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**TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES
FROM WITHIN A SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY**

by

Sheridan L. Barker

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Education

University of San Diego

1998

Dissertation Committee

**Mary Woods Scherr, Ph.D., Director
Edward R. DeRoche, Ph.D.
Janet Chrispeels, Ed.D.**

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Abstract of Dissertation

Teachers' Perspectives from Within a School Leadership Team:

A Phenomenological Study

by Sheridan L. Barker, Ed.D.

Dissertation Director: Mary Woods Scherr, Ph.D.

University of San Diego, March 1998.

This qualitative study explored a different type of leadership by investigating leadership among peers in a California School Leadership Team (SLT). Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher asked ten teachers to describe their experience as members and as leaders in a schoolwide change team.

The teachers characterized the SLT as: a positive force in the school, a vehicle for communication, and a support group. They described the experience as: eye opening, unique, challenging, and transforming. Five themes emerged as the essence of the experience: (a) the interdependent relationship among the team members; (b) the teachers' growing capacity to discern fine differences in school culture and professional practice; (c) their strengthened commitment to their school, their students, and their role in effecting change; (d) their enhanced sense of empowerment; and (e) their growing understanding of leadership as it is practiced among peers.

These teacher leaders (a) led by example; (b) took responsibility; (c) listened; (d) facilitated collaborative learning; (e) worked together; (f) did whatever was necessary; (g) took an equitable role on the team; (h) strove to live up to the responsibility; and (i) assumed the mantle of leadership.

Unlike the reports from their colleagues in the literature, the teachers on the SLT were (a) willing to refer to themselves as leaders; (b) confident in their leadership role; (c) comfortable with being simultaneously teachers and leaders on a schoolwide change team that included the principal; and (d) nurtured by a "growth fostering relationship" with

their colleagues on the team (Miller, 1986). In addition, these teachers were provided adequate time for training and collaboration, and were supported by district and site administration.

The California School Leadership Team program provided many benefits to these teacher leaders and served as an integral part of the school reform efforts on their campus. This study concluded that the SLT program has the potential to make a significant difference in the lives of the teachers on the teams, to provide strong support for the development of teacher leadership, and to galvanize teacher commitment to enhancing success for all students.

DEDICATION

To Dave, my soul mate and friend,
for your constancy and unflagging belief in me
and your loving support during this arduous journey:

To Lisa, my joy and inspiration,
for your unconditional love and patience:

To my parents, my first teachers and ongoing guides,
for the gift of life and a rich childhood which nurtured my curiosity and
instilled a lifelong love of learning:

My heartfelt thanks and God's richest blessings
for your warm, unselfish support. I love you.
You are my life.

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This dissertation represents the collective support and assistance of many wonderful, faithful friends and guides. Each one has contributed inspiring ideas, moral support, important information, and ongoing encouragement, making this dissertation a celebration of the spirit and a wonderful example of synergy at work.

I thank God for the capacity, opportunities, and relationships which made this journey rich and rewarding.

My deepest gratitude to my family for their many sacrifices over the last eight years, for their understanding and patience as I struggled through this process, and for their constant encouragement and love which made this journey possible.

To the ten teachers who shared their lives, their thoughts, and their insights with me, I am eternally grateful. Thank you for your sincerity, enthusiasm and willingness to share of yourselves. You have enriched our understanding of teachers, teacher leadership, and School Leadership Teams. Your contributions will impact the design of future professional development and the support systems established to enhance teacher leadership.

Thank you, Dr. Mary Scherr, for reassuring me, at the beginning of this doctoral program, that I was qualified to be a doctoral student and encouraging me to enjoy the journey. I have! I sincerely appreciated your guidance, your encouragement, your interest in teacher leadership, and your willingness to spend countless hours reading and assisting in revisions. Together, we have created a study that contributes to the field of educational leadership.

To Dr. Janet Chrispeels, my deepest gratitude for being a guiding light in the fog. You helped me find my niche, design a meaningful study, explore my learnings, and make a useful contribution to our collective understanding of teacher leadership. Thank you for taking me under your wing and allowing me to join your research team. Your generosity and friendship have enriched my life.

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**TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVES
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Leadership is generally perceived as what one does when taking charge. The term “leadership” connotes position, power and a role which includes title and formal authority. The leader is set apart from those who are led, elevated by station, power and ultimate responsibility. This study explores a different type of leadership: leadership among peers. Such leadership is grounded in personal power and evolves through a relationship of trust and caring. The study of leadership among peers is a relatively new field, yet crucial to an holistic understanding of the complexity of leadership as it is practiced in the real world (Heifetz, 1994). Leadership among peers is also important because it often serves as the proving ground for individuals who eventually take on more formal, positional leadership roles.

Statement of the Problem

With increasingly complex problems facing schools, many sites are using leadership teams composed of teachers, administrators and other stakeholders to identify new solutions and lead new initiatives. Until recently, research on leadership in schools has focused on the experiences of the principal as the leader of schoolwide change (e.g., Cawelti, 1984; DuFour & Eaker, 1987; Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992) or teachers as leaders in the context of curricular change (e.g., Fay, 1991; Johnson, 1993; Rackliffe, 1991; Smith & Scott, 1990; Wasley, 1991). Only in the last few years has research begun to look at teachers as leaders in the context of whole school change

(e.g., Bellon, 1994; Perry, 1996; Stone, 1996). Missing from the literature to date is the unique perspective of teachers who serve on school leadership teams that are grappling with systemic change.

In order to find the essence of teacher leadership in this context, the researcher needs to employ an approach that is personal and insightful, an approach that encourages the researcher to be a learner with the participants as they investigate the total experience together. This research requires an inquiry method that allows the insights of the participants and researcher to emerge in the course of the study, rather than beginning with preconceived notions about the experiences of teachers who are leading whole school change from within a school leadership team.

To gain meaningful insight into the experience of teachers who are serving on school leadership teams, the “beliefs, values, moral judgments, feelings, motives, intentions, dreams, hopes, and illusions” of the teacher leaders need to be explored (Mitchell, 1990, p. 18). These insights will help clarify how the teachers interact and approach their tasks. Since beliefs, values, feelings and intentions reveal the essence of an experience which is deeply personal and unique, this research engages the participants in an open-ended dialogue that allows them to uncover, explore, and reflect upon their lived experiences. Phenomenology is a particularly appropriate research method for the purposes of this study.

Context of this Research

In 1992, the California School Leadership Academy (CSLA), under the auspices of the State Department of Education, established the School Leadership Team Program in an effort to improve student achievement in California public schools. The School Leadership Team program is designed:

To develop the capacity for School Leadership Teams to facilitate actions within their schools that lead to powerful learning for all students, to build a learning community built on a rich diversity of relationships, and to guide whole school change that results in continuous improvement in the interest of all. (Chrispeels, Wiley, Jelinek, & Morgan, 1995, p. 1)

The School Leadership Team (SLT) program does not advocate any particular restructuring model; each site is expected to find its own best combination of research-based strategies that will lead to the above outcomes. The SLT training provides the teams with a broad base of knowledge and skills that are designed to inform, motivate, and assist the team in leading a variety of professional development activities on site. This training is intended to prepare the School Leadership Team to serve as a change agent within its members' individual schools. The SLT program is a large scale reform initiative that involves over 230 schools throughout California.

Prior to its selection for participation in the SLT training, a school must (a) assemble the required leadership team composed of the principal, three to seven teachers, a counselor and other key staff or community members such as parents and/or students; (b) agree to participate in ten day-long seminars over a two year period; (c) "be initiating or willing to initiate systemic change affecting a significant number of students" (Kearney & Chrispeels, 1995, p. 1).

Since the SLT program had completed its first two-year cycle of training, a comprehensive study of team development and functioning in participating schools is being coordinated by Janet Chrispeels at the Graduate School of Education, University of

California at Santa Barbara. This phenomenological study built on the initial data collected by Chrispeels, Brown, Castillo and Wiley (1997) and complements a multi-year quantitative and qualitative study that is designed to understand how the teams (a) function, (b) share knowledge and skills learned at the SLT seminars with the whole school, and (c) facilitate school change.

Research Questions

The overarching question for this study was: What is it like to be a teacher on a School Leadership Team that is engaged in creating schoolwide change? Within this umbrella question, three sub-questions drove this study:

1. What is the experience of teachers who are members of a School Leadership Team (SLT) that is engaged in schoolwide change?
2. What is leadership as these ten teachers experience it from within an SLT?
3. What kind of support and encouragement might enhance the personal and professional growth of teachers who serve on SLTs?

The first question sought the essence of the teachers' experience by listening to and reflecting upon the voices of the teachers who have served on an SLT. The second question sought to uncover the values and beliefs about leadership that were held by teachers on an established SLT. Since prior leadership experience was not a prerequisite for membership on an SLT, the teachers' perceptions about leadership were critical to developing a comprehensive understanding of their unique role.

As the researcher and the participants jointly explored the teachers' experience, they anticipated that the findings could lead to new insights into the School Leadership Team program: its purposes, processes, and outcomes. Van Manen (1990) suggested that, while creating personal descriptions of lived experience, participants may become aware that their own experiences are also the possible experiences of others. The researcher anticipated that the recurrent process of interviewing several teacher members of an

established School Leadership Team could reveal mirrored experience and a consistency of interpretation leading to valuable information for the future design of SLT training.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this phenomenological study was limited to ten teachers who were members of an established School Leadership Team. The team was selected based on its members' mean score on the two evaluation instruments employed by Chrispeels et al. and the recommendation of the regional Director of the School Leadership Center who was responsible for training the School Leadership Teams in the selected area. The team was selected from the SLT cohort that was completing its second year of training and was evaluated by Chrispeels et al. in Spring, 1996.

Definition of Terms

School Leadership Team (SLT) - A team that represented one of the schools selected by a California School Leadership Center to participate in the two-year SLT professional development program.

Teacher - A member of an SLT who was classified as a teacher in the district's employment contract and had direct contact with students during at least 50% of the teaching day.

Leadership - A multi-directional influence relationship among leaders and collaborators who intended real changes that reflected their mutual purposes (Rost, 1991).

Limitations of Study

This study of teachers on a School Leadership Team is not, by any means, definitive work on either teacher leaders or school leadership teams. It is, rather, a snapshot of the experience as described by ten teachers on a specific, metropolitan team. This team scored above the mean on the two measures used by Chrispeels et al. (1997) and

were highly recommended by the regional director of the School Leadership Center that was responsible for training this particular cohort. As a result, it was perceived as an above average team in both “teamness” and capacity to meet the goals of the School Leadership Team training. The team did not represent, however, either a top team in the state on either measure, or a bottom team. Thus the team was representative of median SLT’s, but not the extremes.

The use of phenomenological research methods was also a limitation. Phenomenology is the study of a particular phenomenon from an individual participant’s perspective, as well as the collective view of a group of individuals who share the same experience. It is intended only to report and reflect upon that unique view. As a result, it is not intended to be generalizable to the experiences of others in similar circumstances. In phenomenological research, however, it is common to find that, in addition to participants, others in like circumstances also feel resonance with the experience as reported (Van Manen, 1990).

Selecting ten teachers on the same School Leadership Team allowed for significant depth in the data and clearly indicated common as well as diverse perspectives among the team members. A larger sample would definitely have provided additional data and would have created a more powerful view of the experience of teachers serving on School Leadership Teams, although the data collected provided substantial information regarding the experience.

The participating team was involved in three concurrent studies. On the macro level, the school was completing a Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation self study during the 1996-97 school year, which overlaid all other work. Chrispeels conducted interviews with the same team members for her ongoing study of the SLT in September, 1996, after one year of School Leadership Team training (Chrispeels et al., 1997). Both the accreditation self study and Chrispeel’s interviews may actually have enhanced the capacity of the team members to provide thoughtful answers and

to participate in dialogue pertaining to their experience on the School Leadership Team. On the other hand, although it did not impede the interviews, several team members referred to increased stress as a result of the WASC accreditation process.

This study focused specifically on the words of the ten selected teachers, their tone of voice and, ultimately, the meaning of the words to the teachers themselves. The researcher consciously chose to withhold any questions related to issues described in other research on teacher leadership. Only after completing the interviews did the researcher conduct an in-depth study of the literature on teacher leaders and school leadership teams to enhance the final analysis and summary.

Time was another limitation in this study. The data was collected between February and May, 1997. During this time, the teachers on the team had significant leadership responsibilities in finalizing the accreditation self study: one was the Site Coordinator for the entire process, several were focus group leaders, and all participated in the final writing and editing of the report as well as preparation of the action plan.

All individual interviews were conducted between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., on the school site at the convenience of the teacher. This limited the time available for the interview and required teachers to give up valuable preparation time to participate. The final focus group interview, held on a Friday evening in one of the participant's homes, was more open ended and relaxed, but only 6 of the original 10 participants were available to participate. All ten participants, however, were given an opportunity to review and respond to the final analysis of their experience, as described in Chapter 4, prior to final publication of this study.

To some extent, as the interviewer/research instrument, the author may have been a liability to this study. Although an attempt was made to bracket prior experience and maintain an open mind in order to view the experience of these teachers in an unbiased way, existing biases of the author have influenced the quotes that were chosen, the themes that emerged, and the way the data has been presented. On the other hand, the author is

reasonably certain that anyone looking at the data would derive many of the same conclusions; as a result, significant data has been presented in Chapter 4 to encourage the reader's own participation in this study. The final analysis was verified by the co-researcher/participants' personal reflections on the emerging themes and implications on three different occasions: during the second interview, during the focus group, and in a review of Chapter 4 prior to the final editing.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation explores the experience of ten teachers who served on an established School Leadership Team. The study begins by providing an overview of the current research on teacher leadership. In Chapter 2, the opening section describes the changing paradigm of educational leadership, which is moving from principal centered to shared leadership, and from control to empowerment. Then follows a brief historical overview of teacher leadership within the context of the new paradigm and the current operating definitions of "teacher leader." The third section delineates the importance of teacher leadership to the teacher, the students, the school and the profession. This section compares empowerment to teacher leadership.

The center section of Chapter 2 summarizes current research on teacher leaders, identifying who the teacher leaders are, what they do, and what they know. This section explores (a) the formal and informal roles teacher leaders fill in schools and districts; and (b) the characteristics, skills, and knowledge of teachers in leadership roles

Five barriers to teacher leadership are identified in the next section of Chapter 2: (a) the reluctance to see themselves as leaders; (b) the cultural taboo that inhibits teachers from taking leadership roles; (c) the lack of time for training, collaboration, or fulfillment of teacher leadership roles; (d) the lack of administrative support and adequate preparation for teacher leadership, and (e) the isolation of teachers that inhibits the development of teacher

leadership. This section is followed by an overview of environmental and interpersonal factors that support teacher leadership and promote “Communities of Leaders” (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996).

An overview of the limited research available regarding school leadership teams concludes Chapter 2. These studies focus on (a) characteristics of effective school teams, (b) factors that inhibit success, and (c) the impact of successful school leadership teams. This chapter ends by noticing how leadership is neither linear nor rational; it is dynamic and interconnected. This complexity requires that leaders use both the head and the heart as the basis for leadership, and compels us to use research methods that address both the intellect and intuition in the study of leadership.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research methods prescribed by the questions that guided this study. The chapter opens with a brief overview of the differences between quantitative and qualitative study, making a case for qualitative as the appropriate method for this dissertation. An introduction to phenomenology follows which includes the historical context and a description of the phenomenological approach to research. The specific research procedures that were used to conduct this study conclude Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 presents a rich description and clarifying analysis of the experience of ten teachers who serve on a single School Leadership Team. Opening the chapter is an overview of the school site that provides a context for the study, along with a brief profile of each teacher leader who participated as a co-researcher. The profiles are provided, quoting the teachers' own words, to acquaint the reader with the variety of backgrounds and personalities that contributed to this study. The remainder of Chapter 4 is dedicated to answering the following three research questions: (a) What is the experience of teachers who are members of a School Leadership Team (SLT) that is engaged in schoolwide change? (b) What is leadership as these ten teachers experience it from within a School Leadership Team? (c) What kind of support and encouragement might enhance the

personal and professional growth of teachers who serve on School Leadership Teams? Each of these questions is answered using the teachers' own words, their analyses of the experience, and the co-researchers' synthesis of twenty-three hours of interviews.

Chapter 5 encourages further reflection by summarizing five major themes that seem to capture the essence of the experience of ten teacher leaders on a single School Leadership Team. The themes are: (a) relationship, (b) discernment, (c) commitment, (d) empowerment, and (e) leadership. Although the purpose of phenomenology is simply to uncover or reveal the essence of an experience, and not to master, predict or define it, several important implications emerge from these themes. Chapter 5 concludes with recommendations for the preparation and support of both School Leadership Teams and teacher leaders, as well as recommendations for future research.

This study is intended to provide insight into the unique perspectives of the teachers on a specific School Leadership Team, challenge the reader to see the familiar as new, encourage others with the success and perseverance of the teachers who participated in this study, and provoke further study of this fascinating topic.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Educational leadership is a field that has been well researched, but the majority of the research has centered around the principal as the leader--the traits, characteristics, behaviors and tasks that appear to influence the school (e.g., Cawelti, 1984; Dufour & Eaker, 1987; Geltner, 1992; National Association of Elementary Principals, 1990). In the 1980s research began to reveal the changing role of the principal, and the focus was expanded to include research regarding the principal's interactions with other school-based leaders such as counselors, teachers, and parents (Bird & Little, 1985; Hall & Hord, 1986).

The wave of educational reform documents that emerged in the late 80s (e.g., A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century by The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Tomorrow's Teachers by the Holmes Group, 1986) called for more collegial approaches to decision making and a changing role for teachers as collaborators in leadership. These reform documents reflected "a reorientation in transformed schools from control to empowerment" (Murphy, 1991, p.18).

Fullan (1992) recommended principals replace the traditional hierarchical structure of schools with a more collaborative culture. Rather than imposing their own visions or change-agendas on the school, Fullan encouraged principals to start with a small group and gradually expand the involvement of teachers, students, parents and the surrounding community, allowing a vision to develop through the interactive involvement of all stakeholders.

Recent studies in educational leadership have begun to document the evolution of a more inclusive, collaborative model operating in schools today. Bredeson (1995) noted that principals use two leadership styles in schools today: traditional and group-centered. Traditional leaders more often use top-down, controlling behaviors; while the

group-centered leaders share responsibility and control with a group. They listen, attend, facilitate, and nurture diverse ideas and feelings, while modeling and assisting the group in processing problems.

Many researchers (e.g., Barth, 1988; Gardner, 1989; Griffin, 1991; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Sergiovani, 1995) have suggested that this shared leadership has emerged because the problems schools face today are too large and too complex for any one person to administer. No one individual has all the knowledge, skills, insight and time necessary to carry out the complex tasks which shape schools today.

The capacity to discern new approaches to governing schools has emerged as "leadership" itself has been redefined. Rost (1991), a political scientist and leadership theorist, was one of the first to posit a new definition of leadership in a dynamic system such as schools: "Leadership is a [multi-directional] influence relationship among leaders and collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102). This definition challenged the heart of traditional leadership, proposing that (a) leadership is primarily a function of dynamic relationship; (b) it is an influence relationship that is multi-directional rather than hierarchical in nature; (c) there are many leaders in the relationship, each with unique expertise available to and utilized by the whole; (d) there are no followers in the traditional sense; there are only collaborators who share responsibility, authority and commitment that is derived from the group's mutually agreed upon purposes and goals.

Other researchers have expanded and enriched this definition over the last several years. Block (1994), an expert and consultant in organization change, proposed that leadership is more accurately stewardship, "the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating in service, rather than in control, of those around us" (p. xx). Being a steward of an organization means sharing decision making, responsibility, authority, and accountability. Block suggested that this occurs in successful organizations through dialogue that develops common vision, shares and generates

extensive information and data, and fosters innovation and ownership. Although more collaborative in nature, Block was still immersed in a hierarchical model of leadership and a perception that empowerment is giving people enough control so that they will do what the leader wants.

As a physician and biologist, Heifetz (1994) observed that leadership is much more interactive and systemic than the traditional view suggested. He proposed that facilitating deep dialogue which assists people in clarifying “what matters most” within the context of the current environment is the central task of leaders. Facilitating “adaptive work” that supports the members of the organization in tackling the tough problems, learning from and adapting to new pressures with deliberation and planning and, ultimately, getting the work done is the goal of leadership (p. 30). “Like living systems, social systems under threat try to restore equilibrium” or stability, thus creating an environment for leadership to emerge (p. 35).

Within social systems, Heifetz identified three basic approaches to restoring equilibrium:

1. If the problem is familiar, the group may apply a response from the current repertoire of experience and easily resolve the issue (p. 35).
2. If the system has no ready or obvious solution for the problem, it may still apply responses from its repertoire, restoring equilibrium briefly without addressing the underlying issue. This response requires the organization to repeatedly face the same problem, often resulting in a sense of despondency, a “retreat to a constricted level of functioning,” and perhaps death (p. 36).
3. The system may also mobilize, seek new information and data regarding the underlying problem, and “produce a new adaptation sufficient to meet the challenge.” The process creates new learning that opens the options for future solutions (p. 36).

Heifetz observed that, in order to adapt and survive, complex social systems require leadership from those with formal authority, as well as leadership by those within the system who have the capacity “to see through the blind spots of the dominant viewpoint” (p. 183). Traditionally such internal or informal leaders have been perceived as “entrepreneurs and deviants, organizers and troublemakers” (p. 183). Heifetz suggested that such leadership from within is critical to the success and survival of social systems.

Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner and Slack (1995) translated Heifetz’s perspective into an educational setting when they connected leadership to the constructivist theory of knowing and “coming to know.” The emphasis in the work of Lambert et al. is the act of learning which is the central focus of educational reform. Drawn from the fields of philosophy, psychology and science, constructivism combines (a) knowing, i.e., the capacity of an organism or system to assimilate new information into existing mental models, with (b) coming to know, i.e., the developmental process of creating new meaning through “reflection, mediation, and social interaction” (p. 2).

Reflecting the growing awareness that (a) learning is a lifelong process and that (b) the current physical, social and political structure of schools frequently inhibits dynamic, meaningful interactions that promote learning among adults, Lambert et al. proposed a new conception of leadership for schools. They defined leadership as a concept that transcends individuals, roles and behaviors (p. 29); it is, instead, “the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose of schooling” (p.32). Leadership, in this context, is not limited to formal authority or power; “it permeates a healthy school culture and is undertaken by whoever sees a need or an opportunity” (p. 33). Lambert et al. equate leadership with energy: unlimited, transformational, permeating all interactions, and capable of producing dynamic effects.

The study of educational leadership has gained momentum as theorists, researchers and practitioners have begun to collaborate, seeking new ways of thinking about leadership

and reform, new insights into current educational culture and practice, and new opportunities for growth that will substantively improve success for all students. In this context, a significant and growing body of information regarding teacher leadership is developing.

The Evolution of Teacher Leadership

Until the late 1980s, the study of teacher leadership could be described as narrow in focus. In 1985, Bird and Little described teacher leadership as a necessary, but unique, component in the advancement of teachers. This could be attributed to two major factors: (a) the traditional view of leadership that was limited to the principal or others with formal authority, such as a union representative or department head, and (b) the “egg-crate” model of schools that kept teachers isolated from each other and nurtured autonomy and competition, hindering teachers from acquiring the perspectives, skills, or responsibilities of leadership (Troen & Boles, 1994).

As researchers began to look at teacher leadership more closely in recent years, studies revealed that teachers have provided more formal schoolwide leadership than previously noted. Teachers have served as team and grade leaders, department chairs, advisors, mentors, curriculum committee chairs, master teachers, and union representatives (Gehrke, 1991; Johnson, 1993). Studies have also shown that teachers have been identified as leaders by their fellow teachers as well as administrators (King, 1988; Pitner, 1986; Rackliffe, 1991; Wilson, 1993).

Lieberman and Miller (1992) observed that restructuring efforts were creating new leadership roles for teachers. A comprehensive review of the literature related to teacher leadership revealed that interest and attention to this phenomenon has escalated, especially in the last five years (e.g., Bellon, 1994; Boles & Troen, 1996; Castillo, Chrispeels & Brown, 1997; Fine, 1994; Perry, 1996; Schmidt, 1996).

In Becoming a Teacher Leader: From Isolation to Collaboration, Bolman and Deal (1994) observed that teachers actually act, in many ways in their day to day classroom role, as leaders. "Teaching and leadership are both about infusing life and work with passion, meaning and purpose. Leadership, like teaching, is essentially a relationship between leaders and those they hope to lead" (p. 3). Gardner (1989) foreshadowed this perspective when he stated, "Leaders teach . . . Teaching and leading are distinguishable occupations, but every great leader is clearly teaching" (p. 18). Schlechty (1990) went even further when he declared that teaching is a leadership profession, rather than a craft profession such as law. One of the teacher leaders in Schmidt's (1996) study saw a similar relationship in her own life--"the process of learning to teach had helped her learn to lead" (p. 147).

Boles and Troen (1996) listed three criteria that they believe define teacher leaders:

- (a) "Leaders are role models who facilitate the development of those around them;
- (b) leaders challenge the status quo; and (c) leaders have influence in domains outside the classroom" (p. 42). This definition certainly reflects the characteristics of teachers in traditional leadership roles such as department chair, mentor teacher, or union representative. A new paradigm is emerging, however, which more explicitly includes schoolwide impact as a characteristic of teacher leadership.

Harrison and Lembeck (1996) noticed that teacher leaders are "individuals who are actively involved in promoting change, effectively communicate with multiple constituents, possess a global understanding of school and district organizations, and continue to grow professionally" (p. 102).

Moller and Katzenmeyer (1996) proposed that "teachers are leaders when they contribute to school reform or student learning (within or beyond the classroom), influencing others to improve their professional practice, or identifying with and contributing to a community of leaders" (p. 5).

The teacher leaders studied by Stone (1996) described a teacher leader as one who is respected by and represents others, is an expert teacher, a risk taker, a communicator, a collaborator, and an important decision maker who works toward schoolwide improvement" (p. 265). Stone found that the definition provided by administrators differed slightly in that they described the role more in terms of impact than activities. Administrators defined a teacher leader as a "catalyst to other teachers' learning and a change agent who works toward schoolwide innovation and improvement" (p. 265).

The Importance of Teacher Leadership

There are many benefits of teacher leadership--for the teachers themselves, for their peers, for students, and for the educational system as a whole. Some of these benefits are noticeable to teachers before they become involved and motivate them to take on the extra responsibilities; other benefits are apparent in retrospect.

Horejs (1996) and Stone (1996) identified several reasons teachers get involved in leadership roles that extend beyond their full-time teaching responsibilities. The teacher leaders they studied took on the extra work for a variety of reasons: (a) they were encouraged by others, i.e., colleagues, administrators, mentors; (b) they wanted to see things done right, or respond to a perceived need; (c) they enjoyed collaborating with colleagues; (d) they wanted to shape a specific outcome, influence decision making or improve the school; or (e) they were seeking professional growth.

When queried about the benefits they derived from their participation in teacher leadership, teachers have observed that their new roles resulted in (a) improved attitudes toward teaching, (b) improved working relationships, (c) broader knowledge and understanding of self, students, school, and the educational system, (d) enhanced teaching capacity, and (e) increased self confidence (Bird & Little, 1985; Horejs, 1996; O'Connor & Boles, 1992).

Teacher leadership also increases teacher influence in schools and districts in positive ways. Because teacher leaders often have opportunities to collaborate with a wide range of adults in and around the school community, the teachers' capacity to gather information, share ideas, give and receive feedback, and interact in a variety of meaningful ways is significantly enhanced (Bird & Little, 1985; Horejs, 1996; O'Connor & Boles, 1992). Barth (1990) stated that this interaction, and the resulting shared leadership, directly contributes to the improved attitudes mentioned above. By being more involved outside their own classrooms, teachers feel more ownership of decisions affecting the school and their work, feel validated for their expertise and competence, and feel more enthusiastic about their roles in education. This positive, proactive perspective opens multi-directional communication and, ultimately, expands the "circle of influence" for teacher leaders from their classrooms, to their grade level or department, to their school, to the district, region, state and sometimes national level of education (Covey, 1989).

Schlechty (1988) reinforced the importance of teacher leadership when he noted, "For change to occur, it is essential that those who are most directly affected by the change be involved both in defining the problem and in identifying the solution; even more important, they must perceive themselves as being involved" (p. 187).

It is not difficult to ascertain how the personal benefits teachers derive from participating in leadership also benefit the organization as a whole. Bird & Little (1985) noted that teacher leadership becomes a vehicle for transmitting teacher lore in productive ways, providing an effective counterbalance to the negative teacher talk which so often dominates the faculty lounge and schools at large. In addition, teacher leaders are more likely to make teaching a lifetime career. Rather than feeling compelled to leave the classroom to "move up" in the organization, they exercise their competence and expertise in the classroom, continuing to be a rich resource to their colleagues and the educational system.

Wasley (1991a) noted that those calling for increased opportunities for teacher leadership had some specific outcomes in mind: (a) stimulate career opportunities that allow excellent teachers to grow professionally and personally without needing to leave the classroom; (b) develop school cultures that nurture life-long learning for all members of the school community--adults and students; and (c) reduce the isolation and autonomy that have encouraged teachers to engage in "parallel play" rather than collaborative, learning communities. The research on teacher leadership has begun to validate that these outcomes actually occur when teachers are given the opportunity and support to develop as leaders.

The documented benefits of teacher leadership provide hope to those who are invested in the success of public education because "America's schools draw vitality from the creativity and commitment of their teachers" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996, p. vii). The efforts of dedicated, talented teachers provide the energy needed to make schools sensitive to the complex needs of a growing, diverse student population.

Empowerment and Teacher Leadership

As the dialogue around teacher leadership and its importance has expanded over the last few years, many use the term empowerment rather than leadership to describe this phenomenon. Empowerment is an important term because it recognizes that, historically, schools have been bureaucratic, hierarchical, and have significantly limited teacher involvement or control over any aspect of their work except what goes on when the door is closed.

Until the mid 1900s, teachers were primarily women who were transitioning between home and a family of their own; they were not expected to remain in teaching for more than a few years. These women worked in an environment managed by men who were better educated and/or held a higher rank in the community. As a result, the views of teachers were not valued by society or the school. For more than two hundred years, teachers have traditionally been denied access to decisions pertaining to curriculum,

instruction and school improvement. They have been told what to teach and how to teach; all expertise and authority has resided in the principal's office, the district office, with textbook publishers or external experts (Lambert, Collay, Dietz, Kent & Richert, 1996; Stone, 1996). As a result, teacher empowerment has been antithetical to the context of teacher's work (Webster, 1994).

Empowerment occurs when one gives power or authority to another, authorizing the other to make decisions that would normally be denied them by social or political forces. (Fried, 1980; Webster's New World Dictionary, 1968). Power, therefore, is at the heart of empowerment and, ultimately, teacher leadership. Bredeson (1989) described three aspects of power embedded in teacher empowerment. Teachers are empowered when they achieve (a) position power that derives formal authority from title and public recognition, (b) personal power that flows from individual expertise and informal contribution to the organization, and (c) political power that provides access to and control over decision making processes.

The word "power" is problematic in educational communities, however; it strikes the heart of the hierarchy and challenges traditional models of educational leadership (Heller, 1994; Lambert et al., 1996). As a result, many mistakenly perceive that empowerment is about making others do what we want. Rather than opening many doors for unlimited access, such traditional leaders would like to channel shared power down a specific, pre-determined hallway.

Heller (1994) defined empowerment as "the ability to control oneself" (p. 288). His definition seems to limit teachers to the decision making processes that are obviously within the purview of their current responsibilities, i.e., classroom issues, departmental decisions, and limited concerns outside the classroom. Heller explained that teachers empower students to take control of their lives, and schools empower teachers to take control of their professional lives and make decisions that are best for students.

Ceroni and Garman (1994) expanded the definition specifically to include a larger circle of influence, moving the power beyond the classroom. They asserted that empowerment is enabling someone to “recognize, create, and channel their own power, not merely to share limited institutional power” (p. 142). This is an important distinction when related to teacher leadership. The definition suggests that when teachers feel empowered, they take more ownership for themselves, their students, and the school at large. Rather than waiting for someone in authority to tell them what to do, or waiting for permission to do something that they think is appropriate, empowered teachers assume responsibility, take initiative, and act on issues they perceive as important. By recognizing, creating and channeling their own power, teacher leaders have the capacity to exert more authority and “make things happen.”

Using facilitation, relationship and participation “with” others as the basis for their power rather than control “over,” teacher leaders are in a unique position to help reframe the perceptions and use of power in schools (Lambert et al., 1996). A paradox exists, however. Although teachers often lament their position of powerlessness and capacity to impact schoolwide and district decisions that affect them, teacher-power is present in schools and is often used to restrain the system from moving or limited to changing contract-based working conditions and benefits. Teachers have seldom recognized and used their personal power to influence schoolwide commitment and accountability, working closely with principals and others in formal positions of authority to improve student achievement and success.

In Leaders with Vision: The Quest for School Renewal, Starratt (1995) expanded the concept of empowerment to include a reciprocal, complementary relationship, in which one party is not perceived as being power-full and another power-less. Starratt did not see empowerment as a favor granted, but responsibility shared:

Empowerment is not a process of administrators giving power to teachers. Rather, it is a process that involves mutual respect, dialogue, and invitation; it implies

recognition that each person enjoys talents, competencies, and potentials that can be exercised in responsible and creative ways within the school setting for the benefit of children and youth. (p. 42)

Maeroff (1988) was one of the first to suggest that the complementary relationship described above is “synonymous with professionalism” (p. 6). He indicated that professionalism emerges when teachers work in an environment where (a) they act as professionals and are treated as professionals, (b) their voices are heard and respected, (c) their needs and opinions are reflected in policy and, finally, (d) they are engaged in consultation and collaboration that influences the school and student achievement.

More recently, Bennis and Townsend (1995) confirmed this perspective when they asserted that empowerment occurs when people feel significant; when the organization models and celebrates that learning and competence matter; when members sense they are part of a community effort, and, finally, when they find their work challenging and stimulating.

As early as 1988, Miller tied teacher leadership directly to the professional status of teachers and a changing perception of one's potential that grows out of empowerment:

As teachers become leaders, they come to view themselves as serious theoreticians as well as capable practitioners, as contributors to a collaborative process as well as individuals in classrooms, and as major decision makers in the educational process as well as implementors of programs. They come to value themselves . . . and each other; and in so doing, they transform the professional culture in which they work. (p. 172)

Transformation of the professional culture of teaching is important only if it directly affects student achievement, otherwise reform simply becomes a process of “rearranging the chairs on the Titanic.” Although it's often difficult to document a direct relationship

between reform efforts and student achievement, Ashton and Webb (1986) found a strong relationship between teacher efficacy and student achievement (as cited in Frase & Conley, 1994, p. 28).

Teachers who are successful with students and believe they make a difference exhibit efficacy; they approach their teaching and other responsibilities with a confidence and certainty of one who can document success with a wide range of students. Efficacious teachers place less blame on factors beyond their control, such as students' attitudes and home environments; efficacious teachers take personal responsibility for student learning and use a variety of strategies to ensure success. Rather than perceiving themselves as victims in a disintegrating system, teachers who exhibit efficacy tend to be proactive in all areas of their professional life (Ashton & Webb, 1986, as cited in Rosenholtz, 1989).

Several researchers (e.g., Clift, 1991; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 1996) believe efficacy is expanded by involvement in teacher leadership. "If teachers feel confident in their abilities to be leaders, they will share responsibility for the learning of all students. This single outcome from teacher leadership can affect teaching and learning throughout the school" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996, p. 3).

When teachers are respected and engaged as professional partners in reform efforts rather than "individuals on whom reform is imposed," teacher attitudes and behaviors change from "cynicism to cooperation" (Futrell, 1994). Empowered teachers move from "this too shall pass" to "how can we really make our school work better for students?" Empowering teachers to move beyond partnership and into leadership is even more powerful; it insures that teachers share both the responsibility and the authority for transforming schools. As Maeroff (1988) reminded us, "empowerment is not an end in itself;" it is, instead, a process that is critical to the improvement of student achievement, the fundamental goal of all educational reform (p. 106).

In ten years of working closely with over 3,000 teacher leaders in a variety of environments, Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) noted that "where teacher leadership is

flourishing in a school, there is substantive reform taking place" (p. viii). They asserted that "within every school, there is a sleeping giant of teacher leadership that can be the catalyst to push school reform into the next century" (p. 2). Because many agree with Katzenmeyer and Moller (e.g., Hart & Baptist, 1996; Lieberman & Miller, 1992; Lunney, 1996; Maeroff, 1988; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Walling, 1994), there has been a growing interest in who the teacher leaders are, what they do, how they learn their roles, how they interact with their peers, and what helps or hinders them.

Potential, Formal and Informal Teacher Leadership

There are three types of teacher leadership operating in schools today: potential, formal and informal. In A Handbook for Teacher Leaders, Pellicer and Anderson (1995) noted that the development of a teacher into a teacher leader takes place over time. Good teachers exhibit the behavior of potential teacher leaders when they explore "the possibility of what could be rather than remaining entrenched in what is. As they grow, they include new ideas and techniques into their practice" (Harrison and Lembeck, 1996, p. 112).

In the beginning, potential teacher leaders are good teachers of students; then emerging teacher leaders take on new roles and responsibilities, often becoming teachers of teachers, coaches or contributing members of a school governance or leadership team. As they mature in confidence and competence, these teachers eventually become leaders of teachers. This process takes several years to develop and mature, even when supported by an environment that openly encourages such growth, where time is provided to perform leadership duties, and where authentic shared decision making is practiced (Stone, 1996). The teacher leaders in Bellon's (1994) study consistently noted that their leadership capabilities were "the result of their personal characteristics and the experiential background they had developed over time" (p. 207).

A formal teacher leader is selected by the administration or colleagues to serve as a chairperson, lead teacher, peer coach or other role with a title and formal recognition

(Harrison and Lembeck, 1996). This is the type of teacher leadership that has received the most attention, and appears to be the only form that was studied prior to 1994.

Thinking about teacher leadership in new ways has led several researchers to investigate the characteristics of informal teacher leaders as well as those in formal positions. Hart and Baptist (1996) observed that “most people still define teacher leaders in terms of traditional, formal roles such as department chairperson. Until there is an awareness that all teachers can assume leadership responsibilities, we will continue to attract [to leadership training] only those who want to be formal leaders” (p. 98). Fullan (1994) confirmed this perspective when he asserted, “Teacher leadership is not for a few; it is for all” (p. 246).

Corallo (1995) described an informal teacher leader as a classroom teacher who influences other teachers through the use of specific skills or personality traits. Harrison and Lembeck (1996) expanded the definition when they described an informal teacher leader as one who is committed to enhancing their own practices, as well as the profession as a whole. This better defines the motivation an informal teacher leader would have for influencing others. These are the folks who willingly volunteer for new responsibilities, seek professional growth opportunities, introduce new ideas into their own practice, and share enthusiastically with colleagues. They actively promote the mission of the school through conscious and conscientious involvement at all levels of the educational community.

In Informal Teacher Leadership: An Untapped Resource for Schools,

Brown-Provost (1996) described informal teacher leaders as those closest to the core of the school (the students), who also have the capacity to impact teacher practice and student learning. Because these teacher leaders have no formal authority or positional power, Brown-Provost concluded their strength is derived from their credibility with their peers and administrators.

Brown-Provost validated that informal teacher leaders practice the behaviors that support Kouzes and Posner's Credibility Theory (1993). This theory espouses that effective leadership is fundamentally a "reciprocal relationship between those who lead and those who decide to follow" (p. 1). She found that the fifteen informal teacher leaders she studied "were perceived by their constituent group as exhibiting behaviors that would make them highly effective and credible leaders" (Brown-Provost, 1996, p. 130). She also noted that their peers and administrators had rated the informal teacher leaders' credibility higher than the teachers rated themselves. Brown-Provost observed that neither clearly defined leadership roles nor reduced teaching loads were necessary for these informal teacher leaders to have a positive impact on their school and their peers.

Barth (1990) summarized the issue when he noted that everyone within a school is capable of leading and becoming an active member in "a community of leaders." This suggests a network of formal and informal leadership roles held by teachers, and was part of his solution for accessing the energy, inventiveness and idealism that often lies closeted within the school and the teachers--a major untapped resource, as Barth pointed out, for improving schools.

Leadership Roles for Teacher Leaders

Twenty years of research reveals both expanded and dramatically different roles for teachers. These new roles for teacher leaders range from formal to informal roles, and from superficial or symbolic roles to genuine, purposeful roles that are intrinsic to systemic change. Table 1 presents six components of teacher leadership that surfaced in the literature (e.g., Hart & Baptist, 1996; Lambert et al., 1996; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Yoder, 1994): authorization, authority, purpose, focus, preparation and evaluation. Each component is examined through the lens of formal and informal leadership roles. Because teacher leadership is much more dynamic and complex than the table indicates, it is used to assist the reader in understanding some of the essential elements of the roles, rather than indicate discrete aspects of teacher leadership.

Table 1

Teacher Leader Roles:Authorization, Authority, Purpose, Focus, Preparation and Evaluation

Formal/Traditional Teacher Leadership	Informal/Traditional Teacher Leadership
Authorization	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role created by school authorities or teacher organizations • Appointed by administrators or elected by peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role created by teachers or self selected • Evolved informally through daily interaction with peers
Authority	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derived from position power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derived from personal power
Purpose	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to support the existing school structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolved to address teacher perceived problems in classrooms or on campus
Focus	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction or working conditions • Limited to specific tasks within the school or district • Subject-matter or specific issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction or limited issues of teacher concern • Limited to teacher's colleagues or specific agendas within the school • Subject-matter or generalist in nature

• Directly connected to the classroom, department and/or teaching staff or providing direct support to the classroom or school such as grant writing and project leadership • Described in technical language or “educationese,” i.e., words specific to public education such as mentor teacher or self-study coordinator	• Directly connected to issues related to the classroom, department and/or teaching staff • Described in collegial language such as team member and mentor

Preparation

• Requiring expert knowledge or training in areas such as content area, presentation skills, grant writing, etc.	• One-time and/or informal activities initiated by a teacher or a group of teachers

Evaluation

• Individual contributions, measured by completion of specific tasks	• Individual contributions, measured by satisfaction of colleagues
-

In a study of a statewide teacher leadership initiative, Hart and Baptist (1996) identified 167 different leadership roles for which teachers were responsible on their sites. “Approximately 41 percent of the teachers surveyed were members of their school improvement teams, and 38 percent held a department or team leader position” (p. 96). Other teacher leader roles included membership on school advisory councils, committee

chairmanships for special school projects, and membership on district task forces in all areas of curriculum, instruction and staff development. A few of the teacher leaders also reported that they served as peer coaches. These roles are significantly expanded from the narrow management activities that characterized teacher leadership until the mid 1980s, when most teacher leaders acted merely as textbook managers, department or grade level “supply clerks,” or liaison between teachers and administration (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996).

Katzenmeyer and Moller suggested current teacher leader roles could be categorized into three leadership functions: leading students or colleagues in day-to-day classroom responsibilities; contributing to the operations of the school and beyond; and participating in governance of the school, district or other education related forums. Although Katzenmeyer and Moller noted three easily identifiable categories, most teacher leadership roles are “enormously complex . . . as they play out in practice” (Wasley, 1991b, p. 154). Teacher leaders are engaged in a variety of singular and overlapping activities, all which exist within a framework of power, authority, decision making, and collaboration (Lambert et al., 1996).

Characteristics of Teacher Leaders

The most common outcome of research into teacher leadership is a description of teacher leaders. Terms such as master teacher, role model, risk taker, and collaborator dominate the literature (e.g., Bellon, 1994; Hart & Baptist, 1996; Lieberman, Saxl & Miles, 1988; Wilson, 1991; Yoder, 1994).

The first, and most powerful characteristic of teacher leaders is that they are “teachers first” (Leogrande, 1995). Teacher leaders often see themselves as average, effective teachers, typical of the other professionals on their sites. The credibility of teacher leaders is grounded in their image of themselves, and the perception of their peers, that they are primarily teachers who fill leadership roles. This teacher role is often augmented by an

understanding of current research that helps teacher leaders mediate the complexity of teaching and learning in their own classrooms and apply their insight to a variety of other contexts. Despite the inclination of teacher leaders to downplay their “above average” status, several studies (e.g., Lieberman et al., 1988; Vandiver, 1996; Wilson, 1991) have noted that teacher leaders are usually experienced, competent teachers or “master” teachers who derive their potency “from their proficiency as leaders of students” (Wilson, 1991, p. 63). A respected colleague and a teacher, a teacher leader has the capacity to facilitate change within the existing context of his or her school (Fullan, 1994).

The status of role model grows out of the expertise and attitudes teacher leaders exhibit. They “promote professional competence” among their peers by offering encouragement and emotional support, and by sharing materials, resources and ideas (Hart & Baptist, 1996; Wilson, 1991; Vandiver, 1996). Their peers are motivated by the hard work and innovation of teacher leaders, as well as their ability to achieve success with diverse students (Wilson, 1993). Perhaps even more important, teacher leaders model “co-learner behaviors” and habits of “critical reflection” that allow them to be “learners with” rather than “teachers of” their colleagues (Fullan, 1994; Vandiver, 1996). This commitment to professional development and lifelong learning for themselves, their students and their peers significantly contributes to the capacity of teacher leaders to serve as role models and influence change within their schools (Fullan, 1994; Wilson, 1993).

Risk taker is a common descriptor applied to teacher leaders (Hart & Baptist, 1996; Lieberman et al., 1988; Vandiver, 1996). As risk takers, teacher leaders are “opportunists who seek challenges that promote the growth and learning of their students and themselves” (Wilson, 1991, p. 50). “Dreamers with a desire to make things happen” (p. 54), teacher leaders “thrive on change and novelty and are not afraid of making mistakes” (p. 52). With high expectations for themselves and others, and a sense of

efficacy or capacity to have an impact both as teachers and leaders, teacher leaders “represent an agenda for improvement” and create a vision that their peers can identify with and value (Leogrande, 1995, p. 237).

At a very basic level, teacher leaders must be good managers; they must be competent planners and skillful organizers (Fraser, 1991; Hart & Baptist, 1996; O'Connor & Boles, 1992; Wilson, 1991). Teacher leaders must manage the complex mix of work related to their multiple roles, often juggling competing needs, desires and expectations (Lieberman et al., 1988). This organizational competence creates opportunity for personal and professional growth, both for the teacher leader and his or her peers, ultimately making “small successes possible” (Wilson, 1991). These small successes create the potential for significant change within the context of the school.

Because their personal and professional experiences are intertwined in the work of teacher leaders, as are their experiences of teaching and leading, teacher leaders must hold a strong, positive sense of self-worth in both roles (Leogrande, 1993). This confidence makes teacher leaders “forthright communicators” who feel compelled to speak out (Hart & Baptist, 1996; Wilson, 1991). The impetus is a commitment to action that is grounded in making a difference in students' lives (Fullan, 1994).

At the center of teacher leadership is the capacity to manage interpersonal relationships and build collaborative cultures in schools (Fullan, 1994; Hart & Baptist, 1996; O'Connor & Boles, 1992). In order to do this, teacher leaders must first be “socially skillful individuals who nurture trust and cooperation” (Wilson, 1991, p. 62). They must be collaborators who foster “teamwork by maintaining informal, reciprocal and familial relationships” (p. 58). Teacher leaders must successfully address resistance and mediate conflict through open, supportive communication, in order to create an environment that nurtures “buy in” and, ultimately, change (Fullan, 1994; Hart & Baptist, 1996; Lieberman et al., 1988; O'Connor & Boles, 1992).

The power of teacher leaders to effect change is derived from “relational authority” rather than positional authority (Hart & Baptist, 1994; Pane, 1996). The relational authority of teacher leaders emanates “from individual expertise, personal loyalty, and charisma” (Bredeson, 1995, p. 33). They are engaged in leadership that is grounded in “influencing others to achieve mutually agreed upon purposes for the organization,” and their capacity to influence others is directly related to the relationships they foster (Patterson, 1993, p. 3). Bellon (1994) noted that the collaborative leadership style used by teachers, which “engages both the leader and the follower in the improvement process,” is often described in the literature as transformational leadership (p. 198), and occurs in sharp contrast to the bureaucratic power structure that exists in schools (Pane, 1996).

The bureaucratic context of schooling requires teacher leaders to “walk a very fine line between being seen as a leader of teachers and being viewed as an outsider” (Stone, 1996, p. 276). Teacher leaders fill a “unique, and somewhat lonely” role, simultaneously respected by “two sometimes adversarial groups”—teachers and administrators (Leogrande, 1995, p. 232). In Walking the Tightrope of Teacher Leadership, Fraser (1991) observed that, as the only teacher on a site restructuring team, she felt a definite barrier between the administrators and herself, even though she believed her role was respected and her ideas were well received. At the same time, she thought that her colleagues often perceived her as one of the administrators and no longer a “teacher” because she participated in regular meetings with administrators and held a leadership role. Stone (1996) observed that “an effective teacher leader is both knowledgeable of the precarious situation and highly skilled in being a teacher first and a teacher leader second” (p. 276).

Killion (1996) identified stewardship as another essential attribute of teacher leaders. Stewardship as defined by Block (1993) is “the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the organization by operating in service, rather than in control, of those around us. Simply stated, it is accountability without control or compliance” (p. xx). “Teacher leaders must accept accountability without control, service over self interest, and

trust over dependency” (Killion, 1996, p. 69). Stewardship, by this definition, is a tall order, but a recognizable characteristic of teacher leaders who are driven by a moral commitment to students and depend on their relational authority to get the job done (Fullan, 1994; Pane, 1996).

Barriers to Teacher Leadership

A survey of the literature on teacher leadership reveals five persistent barriers that consistently get in the way of teachers reaching their full potential in this area:

(a) teachers are reluctant to see themselves as leaders; (b) the egalitarian culture of teaching fosters the status quo, creating significant distrust of those who assume new roles in teacher leadership; (c) the structure of schooling makes little accommodation for the time required to learn about leadership and assume new leadership responsibilities; (d) lack of administrative support and adequate preparation undermine the development of teacher leaders; and (e) the structure of schooling inhibits interaction between teachers and, ultimately, the development of teacher leadership.

Reluctance to See Themselves as Leaders

The first barrier to teacher leadership is the reluctance of teachers to refer to themselves as leaders or to acknowledge their capacity as leaders. Teachers are socialized to be followers, not leaders, from their first induction into teacher training programs, and that role is consistently reinforced throughout their educational careers unless a conscious effort is made to do otherwise (Moller and Katzenmeyer, 1996). Teacher leaders tend to describe themselves using informal and invitational processes, regularly replacing the word “lead” with “share” when they describe their roles and responsibilities (Barker, 1997; Bellon, 1996; Vandiver, 1996). Some teacher leaders are so anxious about the term “leader” that they overtly deny “leading anyone anywhere for any reason” (Vandiver, 1996). Aside from the socialization that ensures that teachers “know their place,” this attitude appears to be grounded in a fear of separating themselves from their colleagues.

Teacher leaders are concerned about being perceived by their peers as using “top-down management approaches,” or of being affiliated with the bureaucracy, i.e., administration (Bellon, 1994; Fraser, 1991; Leogrande, 1995; Stone, 1996).

Only a small percentage of teachers who serve in formal leadership roles actually identify themselves as teacher leaders (Barker, 1997; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Vance, 1991; Wilson, 1991). The remainder choose not to identify themselves as leaders, even when the context of their work validates their ability to influence colleagues, or when they have occupied a formal position of leadership for a number of years (AVID, 1997; Barker, 1997; Wilson, 1991). Teacher leaders often appear to be unable to change their definition of leadership, continuing to view it as control, power and position, synonymous with administration. Teacher leaders are often either unwilling or unable to separate the concept or the process of leadership from the traditional, hierarchical model (Bellon, 1994).

By their unwillingness to take on schoolwide leadership roles, or at least acknowledging their capacity to lead, “teachers move from a level of almost complete authority (in the classroom) to a level of powerlessness (schoolwide)” (Lieberman & Miller, 1992, p, 14, parentheses in original).

A Cultural Taboo

The second obstacle to teacher leadership is the belief that it is a social indiscretion to set themselves apart from their peers (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996). The initial reactions of teachers to leadership roles are often fearful or tentative. They fear the possibility of decline in their status among their peers. They are skeptical that they will be respected or able to make a real difference, and they are often frustrated by the ambiguity of their leadership role (Bird and Little, 1985).

The hierarchical structure of schooling reinforces the view of “leader” as “boss,” and teachers frequently do not want to be perceived by their peers as better than, more important than, or in any way affiliated with an administrative role. “Teaching is not a profession that values or encourages leadership within its ranks” (Boles & Troen, p. 41).

Most teachers move into leadership roles, formal and informal, through a passion for teaching; they are less interested in moving into formal, administratively based leadership positions than in enhancing their professional capacity as teachers (McLaughlin and Yee, 1988). In fact, several of the teacher leaders in Wilson's (1991) study clearly expressed an "aversion to seeking an administrative role" with language such as "No way," and "I sure as hell wouldn't want to be Principal or something like that" (p. 84).

The egalitarian culture of teaching consistently encourages teachers to maintain the status quo--to be wary of anyone who steps out of the norm, who differentiates themselves in any way (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Schmoker & Wilson, 1994; Stone, 1996; Wasley, 1991b). "When teacher leaders emerge, they encounter resistance not just from the principal, but from other teachers who have been heard to say, 'Just who does she think she is?'" (Troen and Boles, 1993, as cited in Schmoker & Wilson, 1994, p. 148). This culture is so strong that many teachers who have sought national certification or similar honors have been treated with scorn (Bradley, 1995).

Therefore, teachers risk rejection and a loss of collegiality in their day to day interactions throughout the school when they take on additional responsibilities or leadership roles (Yarger & Lee, 1994). On a more humorous note, but no less telling, Barth observed, "A teacher is like a mushroom. It thrives in the darkness, but when it sticks its neck out, its head immediately gets cut off" (as cited in Troen & Boles, 1994, p. 276).

Teacher leaders report they spend "much of the initial contact with their colleagues trying not to appear like a leader and 'smoothing down the ruffles'" (Schmidt, 1996, p. 150). Teacher leaders describe a concern about the "us" v. "them" mentality that often exists in schools. In other words, if you're not one of "us," you must be one of "them," i.e., an administrator (Fraser, 1991; Schmidt, 1996). As soon as a teacher leader becomes aligned with "them," or is perceived as "the teacher's (i.e., administrator's) pet," a significant barrier to the teacher's capacity to influence his or her peers is erected. Teacher

leaders believe encouragement is critical to their success, yet they fear public, repeated recognition because it stirs resentment among their colleagues and highlights the fact that they are challenging the cultural taboo (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Vandiver, 1996).

Teacher leaders believe their role is “to support the teaching and learning process” (Schmidt, 1996, p. 151). In contrast, teacher leaders meet conflict and resistance from many of their colleagues. Schmidt observed that “although teaching is a profession built on learning, it seems teachers find it conflicting to be learners, and more specifically, to learn from each other” (p. 152). She hypothesized that perhaps the problem is rooted in the fact that “teachers do not accept their peers as experts” (p. 152).

Duke (1994) called this a “crab-bucket culture.” He noted that it is unnecessary to put a lid on a crab bucket “because as soon as one crab tries to scuttle out, the others drag it back down. Some faculties function the same way, actively resisting the efforts of any member to press beyond normal practice” (p. 269).

Lack of Time

A reluctance to provide adequate time for training or implementation of teacher leader roles seems to imply a belief that “teacher leaders are born, not made” (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996, p. 9). The number of teachers who have access to the formal activities which help build capacity for teacher leadership is limited by three factors: (a) the constraints of a full student load during the school year, (b) week-long or multi-week academies which require time away from family during breaks, and (3) the lack of funding to support specialized training, even when teachers are willing to attend on their own time.

Teacher are restricted from developing their leadership potential by the time demands of their traditional teaching roles (O'Connor & Boles, 1992; Smylie & Denny, 1990). Teacher leaders are often caught between a desire to participate in professional development and other leadership roles, and a desire to be with their students. Currently,

teachers must make a difficult choice--time for leadership or time for students; there is never enough of either. Teachers report they do not want their students to suffer as a result of the additional duties they assume (Schmidt, 1996).

Senge (ASCD, 1997) suggested the crux of the problem is that schools are teaching institutions rather than learning institutions. Fullan (1994) was a little more generous when he described schools as learning institutions, but the following critique is no less challenging:

Schools as learning organizations are basically non-intellectual in the sense that the way they are organized, structurally and normatively, is not amenable to experimentation, critical reflection, continuous learning, assessment, or rethinking. This is not a criticism of teachers *per se*. But it is a fact that schools, by and large, are not reflective, learning places when it comes to their own continuous development. It would be a mistake to expect school-based teacher development to generate teacher leadership on a large scale.” (p. 243, italics in original)

Yoder's (1994) comprehensive analysis of literature on teacher leadership, noted that there is almost total agreement in one area: teacher leadership requires time. Teachers need “time for developing, training, experimenting, revising, talking, sharing, and doing” and, finally, the literature strongly affirms that teachers need time to spend with each other in productive collegial dialogue (p. iii).

Hart and Baptist (1996) also noticed a dilemma that arises when teacher leaders are successful: teacher overload.

The natural tendency of administrators, and even the teachers themselves, is to expect successful teacher leaders to take on additional roles, usually without eliminating other responsibilities. The result is overload--teacher leaders trying to accomplish too much with too few resources (p. 97).

Overload is a serious liability of teacher leadership (Perry, 1996). Teacher leaders experience “high self-imposed demands on their time and energy” that involve both concerns over meeting student needs and fulfilling schoolwide leadership responsibilities (p. 249).

The teacher leaders, teaching principals, and principals in the Maine Academy for School Leaders mentioned similar concerns when they noted:

We all struggle with raising the stakes in schools where both educators and citizens find the status quo more appetizing than change. We all face interpersonal quandaries as others resist our efforts: To collaborate or compel? To confront or to connive? To trust or to distrust our colleagues' motives? And we all wonder whether the investment of time, care and energy inherent in leading (and the debt incurred to our personal time and families) are worth it. (Donaldson & Marnik, 1995, p. x)

Lack of Administrative Support and Adequate Preparation

The lack of administrative support and formal preparation for teacher leadership significantly inhibits the capacity of teachers to lead. Teitel (1996) has been working with and studying teacher leaders since 1992. She has identified six common issues teacher leaders consistently struggle with as they develop their skills and leadership capacity. Teacher leaders are concerned about (a) redefining their relationships with those in positions of authority, (b) understanding their own attitudes toward their colleagues who are resistant to change, (c) developing skills for approaching and involving others, (d) defining what teacher leadership means, (e) coping with a sense of personal isolation, and (f) finding the courage and stamina to persist.

When considering their relationship with the principal, many teacher leaders exhibit a sense of disappointment, and sometimes even hostility, toward the principal because of the lack of support they have received (Teitel, 1996). In a year-long action research seminar affiliated with the Accelerated Schools Network, Teitel's participants displayed

fear of retribution and increasing levels of concern over what the principal's reaction would be to data they were collecting which led to disturbing conclusions about their schools.

In several instances in Bellon's (1994) study, the teacher leaders demonstrated some anxiety about authority when they declined to be audio-taped or "made non-verbal gestures indicating that a disparaging remark or the unwillingness to answer a question was related to another person that I understood to be the principal" (p. 201).

Power is an issue that is intimately tied to teacher leadership and administrative support, although many teacher leaders would run in the other direction if the word power were associated with their role (Bellon, 1994). Teacher leaders do not seem to "seek or value power and control over other people in their environment, but they unequivocally seek power and control over the decision-making" processes that impact their daily work (Wilson, 1991, p. 98). When teacher leaders are denied such access, the results are sometimes tragic; the energy that enhances the potential for positive change is smothered and reappears in equally strong negative effects. The downward spiral is nurtured by

contradictory expectations concerning the teacher's power and authority to introduce change; ambivalent and even hostile attitudes about administrative prerogative to control the implementation of change; and frustration with the curtailment of the teacher's influence with regard to managing change. (p. 101)

Wilson hypothesized that this lack of trust and the resulting potential lack of cooperation, even from teacher leaders, has led to "the emergence of misdirected initiatives that fail to come to fruition and disintegrate into 'sabotage'" (p. 103).

Moller & Katzenmeyer (1996) suggested that embedded in the issue of lack of support is the feeling that dedicated teachers must make themselves into leaders. Just as, not so long ago, many coaches were hired as principals without adequate training to fulfill the many responsibilities of their new role, teachers are often expected to take on new roles

without sufficient, on-going support and training. There has previously been little support for and shared concern about developing teacher leaders. Moller and Katzenmeyer asserted:

the promise of teacher leadership cannot be accomplished without a belief among educators and other stakeholders that leadership development is a shared responsibility. If efforts were initiated on a widespread basis--if the goal of preparing all teachers as leaders were systematically pursued by colleges and universities, principals, district staff members, and teachers themselves--then teacher leadership would not be a novel idea. It would be expected of all teachers. (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996, p. 11)

This process of focusing on all teachers and their development as leaders would provide a way to develop “not only the eager learners but also the reticent” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996, p. 28). Broad teacher leadership is facilitated by a structure that supports collegial relationships among teachers, which engages them in shared decision making, and provides opportunities to develop new skills and capacity.

When Schmidt (1996) asked a group of teacher leaders about factors that hindered their capacity to lead, they identified the lack of three important resources: (a) “preparation for a leadership role,” (b) “experience in working collaboratively with colleagues,” and “knowledge of the change process” (p. 147). Each of the teacher leaders described themselves as risk takers, while acknowledging that this critical attribute allowed them to take on leadership roles without the desired preparation.

Part of the risky business of teacher leadership is motivating colleagues and, in the worse case scenario, dealing with the resistors or “deadbeats” among peers. Teitel (1996) noted that because teacher leaders wield no positional authority, they must depend on “moral leadership, simple persuasion, or attempts to cajole teachers to do something.”

Teacher leaders must spend a significant amount of time seeking ways to motivate others in a “kindly” way, or as one teacher put it, “to be a leader without intimidating people” (p. 143).

As teachers sort out what their leadership roles are, two questions often emerge: (a) How can teachers share ownership of a change effort? and (b) What is the difference between shared ownership and delegation? (Teitel, 1996). Because the only model of leadership many teacher leaders have seen is one of authority and delegation, they often lack an understanding of strategies to engage others in the change process and build capacity for shared ownership. Providing teacher leaders with skills that will help maintain and build relationships with their colleagues is a crucial aspect of their professional development (Little & McLaughlin, 1993).

Isolation

In the past, many studies confirm that working relationships among adults in most schools fit Wieck’s (1976) definition of a loosely coupled system. Barth (1988) even referred to the nature of teacher work in schools as “independent parallel play,” typical of pre-schoolers who play next to each other yet rarely interact and play together. Corkery (1995), a veteran teacher and a teacher leader, created a vivid image of the isolation teacher leaders experience:

I have been at sea without benefit of charts, without the food or equipment necessary for survival, and without companionship. In spite of pouring my heart and soul into my work with students and being a tireless advocate for children, I have had to struggle to survive and earn a place as a legitimate educator and as a leader of school improvement. With few exceptions, my efforts to improve my school led to an isolated existence for me, one in which I felt typecast as a rabble-rouser. It has left me feeling as though I have been kicked in the teeth. (p. 54)

Corkery suggested that the code that serves “as an underpinning for the design of secondary schools is: “ISOLATION + INDEPENDENCE = COMPETENCE” (p. 56, format in original).

The teacher leaders in Schmidt's (1996) study attributed their isolation and lack of time to collaborate to the “egg crate” model that dominates school design (Troen & Boles, 1994). “The day is structured to keep teachers isolated within their classrooms” (Schmidt, 1996, p. 149). This isolation significantly inhibits the capacity of the teacher leaders to influence decisions or to assist in the development of a collaborative school community.

Meena Wilson (1993) summarized the barriers to teacher leadership in her study when she noted that teacher leadership is curtailed by professional norms, the school culture, and sometimes by teachers' own, self-imposed limits. Kelly (1994) offered a pessimistic, but equally recognizable summary of the barriers to teacher leadership:

In part through physical and psychic exhaustion, in part through simmering resentment, and in part through a long-standing conditioning that results in teachers seeing themselves as “subjects” rather than “agents,” many teachers avoid opportunities for leadership in their schools, however meager those opportunities may be. (p. 311)

All of these barriers seem to lead to a teacher's question in Teitel's (1996) study: “Do I have the courage to do this?” (p. 144). This is a fundamental question as teachers look carefully at the possible consequences of leadership among their peers--rejection from their peers, overwork and retribution by the principal. When teacher leaders face this issue head on, they are often tempted to retreat to their classrooms and shut the door, returning to the safety and security of isolation and anonymity. It is only courage, persistence and a passion for the profession that keeps teacher leaders engaged in the battle.

Support for Teacher Leadership

Considering all the factors inhibiting the development of teacher leadership and the potential benefits for students, school communities, and teachers, support for teacher leadership is a critical variable in school improvement. The literature on teacher leadership provides consistent guidance in this area.

Benoy (1996) identified a triangle of political power that influences teacher empowerment. The central figure in Benoy's work was the principal. He noted that a combination of the principal's positional power, the principal's knowledge and expertise, and his/her capacity to support the personal and professional growth of teachers creates an environment that promotes empowerment. Benoy's research revealed three strategies principals use to empower teachers: (a) training teachers in relevant knowledge, (b) involving teachers in as many aspects of school functioning as possible, and (c) valuing teacher contributions and participation in the governance of the school. Benoy noted that active involvement of teachers in schoolwide issues creates a "complex, interdependent circle of influence that incrementally changes and matures" all participants in the process (p.2).

Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) clustered these concepts under two factors that they determined support teacher leadership: (a) commitment to the value of teacher leadership and (b) active involvement of all members of the school and district community in creating an environment that supports the development and maintenance of teacher leadership. Stone (1996) echoed the same sentiments when she noted that although the "principal is the pivotal player in teacher leadership," such leadership will flourish only when the principal, district office and fellow teachers are receptive to and supportive of the new roles and responsibilities of teachers (p. 275).

There are six major factors that appear critical in the support of teacher leadership; all of the variables are directly within the control of the principal and/or teacher colleagues. The key variables appear to be: (a) interpersonal support, (b) tangible support such as

release time and funds for professional development, (c) open, multi-directional communication with opportunities for expanded responsibility and authentic participation in decision making, (d) active support of a learning community within the school, (e) autonomy, and (f) a positive climate protected by effective administration (Hart & Baptist, 1996).

Teacher leadership is grounded in interpersonal support from colleagues and administration (Brown-Provost, 1996). Peer support includes respect and encouragement from colleagues and a commitment to collaborative relationships, as well as mentoring by other teacher leaders (Corallo, 1995; Wilson, 1991). The interpersonal support from administration includes nurturing innovative teachers, demonstrating respect for teacher contributions, and providing adequate rewards (Hart & Baptist, 1996). Some of the rewards teachers value are recognition, resources, professional development opportunities, and "participation in projects and events that are 'fun' and allow association with like-minded colleagues" (Wilson, 1991, p. 114).

Teacher leadership will flourish if all stakeholders (teachers, unions, site and district administrators, and parents) value it enough to allocate important resources and provide tangible support (Harrison & Lembeck, 1996). Teacher leaders need professional development opportunities to enhance their expertise as teachers that, in turn, enhances their credibility with peers (Brown-Provost, 1996; Corallo, 1995; Wilson, 1991). Teacher leadership requires release time--time to talk, consult, collaborate, and coach (Hart & Baptist, 1996; Wilson, 1991). In some cases, such release time is created by altering the structure of the school day to provide sufficient time for schoolwide collaboration and planning (Harrison & Lembeck, 1996). Finally, even though teacher leadership evolves from personal passion and commitment, financial incentives help teacher leaders feel sincerely valued and help balance the negative effects of peer resistance and personal sacrifice that are the daily fare of teacher leaders.

When the hierarchical structure of schooling is de-emphasized, teachers are more likely to assert professional autonomy and seek genuine collegial involvement in decisions (Hart & Baptist, 1996; Stone, 1996). Open, multi-directional communication, access to information, and authentic participation in decision making empower teachers to take more responsibility for their own work and the school as a whole (Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Hart & Baptist, 1996; Wilson, 1991).

All of the above support is most powerful when it operates within a school and district culture which (a) encourages teacher leadership; (b) provides stable, competent site and district management over a number of years; (c) nurtures a culture of inquiry and the development of a learning community, (d) and fosters and protects a positive school climate (Brown-Provost, 1996; Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Hart & Baptist, 1996; Wilson, 1991).

The type of leadership environment described above leads to the principal becoming a leader of leaders or co-leader (Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Johnson, 1992; Lambert et al., 1996; NAESP, 1990), which suggests that leadership is the purview of everyone in the school, that it is not the exclusive role of the principal or a few teachers in formal leadership roles. This view of leadership reflects Rost's definition of leadership: A multi-directional "influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (Rost, 1991). It implies that everyone has something to contribute; it honors the experience, education, insight, and capacity of every teacher to work toward the betterment of the educational process for their students and themselves. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) reflected a similar perspective when they professed, "Every teacher is a leader. *All teachers have a leadership contribution to make beyond their own classrooms, and should take action accordingly*" (p. 78, italics in original). Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) concurred, "Schools will improve when individual teachers change their behavior, attitudes, and beliefs to take on leadership roles" (p. 13).

School Leadership Teams

In recent years, much research has focused on the extent and degree to which teachers are actually participating in leadership roles, the difficulties of assuming schoolwide leadership roles, and the training required for teacher leaders (Corallo, 1995; Hart & Baptist, 1996; Johnson, 1993; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Teitel, 1996; Wilson, 1991). Until very recently, however, few studies have focused on teachers who share leadership with a school leadership team.

The first reference to a school site team is found in Glatthorn and Newberg's (1984) study. Their definition of team referred to a number of staff members within an individual school who are involved in leadership. Their description implied that each individual was responsible for a specific function, rather than a true collaborative approach. Glatthorn and Newberg made no mention of ongoing interaction or sharing of responsibilities, either formal or informal, among the team members. They did not describe a team as it is defined in the educational and organizational literature today.

Hall and Hord (1986) were the first to identify a site team that operated as a dynamic, interactive force for leadership and change. Their study initially focused on the intervention behaviors of principals and their effects in classroom implementation of a curricular innovation. As the study unfolded, however, Hall and Hord began to notice that change facilitation teams were actually operating at all nine study sites. They discovered that there was at least one other person, in addition to the principal, who was working closely with the principal to encourage the innovation. In the most active school sites, they discovered a third change facilitator who was not necessarily a person in a designated leadership role. Hall and Hord were surprised by the fact that "although there was little, if any, official recognition of the multiple actors who were serving on this change facilitation team, a pattern of relationships was observed in these schools where the change process was more successful" (p. 12).

Watkins and Lusi (1989) studied three site-based teams that were responsible for guiding restructuring efforts connected with the Coalition of Essential Schools. The teams were limited to three members each, usually a counselor, department chair, and principal. Watkins and Lusi noted that several teams lacked “legitimacy” or authority within the school they sought to lead and one team included “no currently practicing classroom teachers” (p. 15).

The research of Watkins and Lusi (1989) focused on how the initial training assisted the teams with incorporating action research into their site work. This study indicated that a team’s capacity to engage in action research was limited by six factors: (a) lack of legitimacy of the team that was trained, (b) the limited content and process of the training provided, (c) the poor quality of strategies developed by the team for ongoing work, (d) the limited capacity of the team to understand change as an holistic process, (e) the unwillingness of the school to “grapple with the hard choices” (p. 16), and (f) the incapacity of the teams to engage their site colleagues in the process of inquiry. None of these issues was developed with any depth in the report of findings, nor did this study appear to address any aspect of the members’ personal perspectives.

Thirty-three school site teams connected with the Positive Attitudes in Tennessee Schools Project (PATs) were studied by Butler and Alberg (1990). These teams included the principal, a guidance counselor (if available), and two or three teachers from each site. The PATs research focused on changes in school climate that were perceived by teachers, administrators, and students.

The PATs study identified leadership in the schools as a critical factor in the improvement of school climate. The capacity of the teams to impact school climate was hindered by (a) a change in principal during the first year of implementation, (b) the principal’s lack of skills to use the information provided, (c) the principal’s perception of the project as threatening, or (d) the “lack of sustained commitment to the project and

limited use of the information by overworked school personnel” (p. 8). This study did not address any issues related to team interactions, or the individual member beliefs, values, perceptions or perspectives.

Foster (1991) described an instructional leadership team that was initiated by a small group of classroom teachers who sought to restructure their school. The group met regularly with four administrators to study the literature on restructuring, the process of change, and strategies to move their school from a hierarchical to a collaborative organization. Foster’s article outlined their journey and the problems they encountered. The teachers noted that their work was especially difficult because (a) the district office treated them with suspicion and withheld information, (b) the principal was reluctant to be held responsible for the risks the team wished to take, and (c) the older staff was resistant to change, with some viewing the team as an elitist group. In spite of the stated difficulties, the team reported that the school made progress toward establishing some new behavioral norms and creating a climate which supported change

Holcomb’s (1993) study of school leadership teams focused on the impact of a staff development program, the School-Based Instructional Leadership program that was developed under the auspices of the National Center for Effective Schools. The teams trained in this program included “administrators, teachers and representatives of stakeholder groups” (p. 3). This study focused on the outcomes affiliated with the work of the team: development of a site mission statement, increased teacher involvement in decision-making, increased use of data to drive site planning, implementation of new teaching strategies, increases in parent involvement, improved student motivation and attendance. This study did not, however, include any detail regarding the team itself or insight into the members.

Much of the research into teams and teacher leadership has evolved from the implementation of site-based decision making as a restructuring tool. Bellon (1994)

explored the “leadership roles teachers were expected to play within one school-based decision making team and the extent to which they were prepared to fulfill these roles” (p. 6). Focusing on seven schools, she interviewed 49 department or grade-level chairperson and 6 principals. The teacher leaders viewed themselves as “a communication link between administrators, teachers and parents;” “bottom-up facilitators of change;” and, most importantly, “classroom instructional professionals” (p. 194). Although the principals perceived the most important role of the teacher leaders on the team to be leadership, the teachers continued to view their classroom teacher role as holding greater significance. These teachers believed their leadership capacity resulted from a combination of personal characteristics and experiential background, and suggested that training for teacher leaders should build upon their prior experiences and students’ successes.

Nichols (1994) also investigated shared decision making and the effect of shared leadership on teachers. She uncovered four benefits that emerge from engaging teachers in schoolwide leadership in some form of leadership team: (a) more collaborative and interdependent relationships developed; (b) teachers gained an enhanced understanding of schoolwide issues; (c) the teacher leaders became important linchpins and power holders in the school community; (d) teacher participation increased when they were given a process for input and opportunity to influence the school at large.

Lyon (1994) documented the impact of team participation on teachers engaged in interdisciplinary teams. In her case study of four middle school teams, she noted that, in teaming, teachers derive professional benefits and personal satisfaction, along with a reduction of stress.

In her dissertation, which focused on reconceptualizing the role of teacher leaders on leadership teams, Skarstad (1994) took a unique approach. Based on the research of Keirse and Bates (1984), she noted that schools need four different kinds of leadership styles within a leadership team in order to support and sustain change: stabilizer, catalyst, troubleshooter, and visionary. Skarstad also observed that teachers tend to be

predominately stabilizers or catalysts, and that schools need to recruit troubleshooters and visionaries for leadership teams. Her study reaffirmed the importance of collaboration and diversity among the teacher leaders on school improvement teams.

Fine's (1994) study of two school teams, one an interdisciplinary teaching team and the other an ongoing teacher leadership group, focused on the process of change that is led by a collaborative team. Fine noted that change is simultaneous demolition and construction of cultural norms, a developmental process, and a given when collegial groups are involved. She also noted significant change occurs only when all voices are valued, and when conflict is accepted as a natural part of the collaborative process.

In A Symphony of Humanness: Teachers, Teams, . . . and Their Students, Gordon (1995) considered the impact school teams have on the attitudes teachers have about their work and the conditions which support effective teams. Using a qualitative approach that mirrored Lortie's research for Schoolteachers in the early 1960s, Gordon interviewed 43 middle school teachers from four schools that had "adopted team principles" in two separate districts (p. 48). Participants in his study represented each of the interdisciplinary grade level teams as well as "the complete range of viewpoints held at each school" (p. 51). An important, and seemingly obvious, observation Gordon made was that "not any grouping of teachers constitutes a team, and not all teams achieve" the expected results (p. 202). Gordon noted that those teams he studied which did not directly focus on student needs were significantly less effective, echoing Maeroff's (1993) observation:

Team building that seems not to be sufficiently focused on the most serious needs of students runs the risk of appearing peripheral to the show being performed in the main ring. Team building in such circumstances would be little more than another sideshow, and education already has enough of these. (p. 519)

In all the middle schools Gordon (1995) studied, teaming had, however, "altered the daily work lives of teachers by providing greater opportunities for interaction with their colleagues. For many teachers, this has been a positive change" (p. 204). He noted that

teachers on the most effective teams were “beginning to view their colleagues as contributors to their effectiveness with students, to take collective responsibility for student learning outcomes, and to see their involvement in decision making expanding their professional autonomy” (p. iii).

Team learning was the focus of Herrmann’s (1995) year-long study of school governance/school improvement teams in six high schools. Using field study procedures, she explored how team activities, behaviors and member perceptions change and develop over time in a structured team development program. She determined that the conditions that seem to have the greatest impact on team learning and development were:

- (a) the active participation of the principal, (b) clarity of team purpose and goals, (c) clarity of roles, relationships and team structure, (d) continuous and effective communication processes, (e) representative and diverse team membership, and (f) a purpose and process that are aligned with a larger systemic improvement effort. (p. 159)

Conclusions from Herrmann’s study revealed additional insights into the functioning of school leadership teams. The data show that:

1. The greatest potential for team effectiveness in influencing improvement in schools is not in inherently sustaining or institutionalizing the team as an entity, but in allowing “the team” to continuously evolve into something of greater significance.
2. As teams develop and work collaboratively within the larger school community, they enhance professional and organizational capability for problem-solving and renewal.
3. Effective teams promote leadership density within the school community.
4. In effective teams, members seek out diversity of perspective and freely challenge each other to enhance shared learning. (p. 154)

Kouba (1996) examined collaborative, governance teams in three suburban high schools. These teams represented the various constituencies in the school, including the principal and teachers. Her research highlighted the importance of: (a) a balanced team, representing all constituencies; (b) a principal who actively supports collaborative leadership; (c) a process that values diverse perspectives; (d) specific training in governance and group process skills, (e) meeting schedules that allow adequate time for group work, (f) data driven problem solving and decision making processes, and (g) frequent, focused reflection by the team regarding the work accomplished and the processes employed.

Smialek (1996) sought to develop guidelines for the implementation of cross-functional teams in K-12 education by studying teams from four districts in Pennsylvania. Using The Quality Empowerment Survey for Teams (QUEST) and a team interview questionnaire, she identified ten behaviors which support empowered, effective and efficient cross-functional or collaborative teams that are involved in problem solving and shared decision making. These ten behaviors are:

1. Treat staff members as professionals.
2. Include a true representation of groups on teams to voice their own concerns.
3. Provide needed team building training including both technical skills and interpersonal relationship skills.
4. Include necessary time in the school schedule for the teaming process.
5. Respect and trust team members.
6. Provide an environment where there is an openness to team and member's opinions and ideas and an environment of support and encouragement for new ideas.
7. Insure effective and efficient methods of communication among team members, staff, administrators, parents and community members.

8. Provide well organized teams with a balanced participation of representative members to voice their own concerns, to facilitate and enhance decision making and problem solving outcomes.
9. Recognize team members for their time and efforts.
10. Insure goal clarity on teams by establishing understanding and commitment to team goals and matching individual goals to team goals. (Abstract)

Boles and Troen (1996) have been collecting data on teacher leadership teams since the inception of the Learning/Teaching Collaborative in 1987. Focused on "providing opportunities for teachers to assume new professional roles while remaining in the classroom," the collaborative has grown from "one team of three teachers and a half-time special education teacher in one school to nine teams of four to ten teachers in six schools" (p. 46). These teacher teams were engaged in four roles: (a) team teaching, (b) collaborating with college staff regarding the induction of new teachers and professional development, (c) consulting regarding special education and bilingual inclusion, and (d) pursuing an alternative leadership role, e.g., "curriculum writer, researcher, student teacher supervisor or college teacher" during a release day each week (p. 46). Boles and Troen noted that the teacher leaders on these teams have "left the isolation of the classroom behind, gaining new information about the functioning and culture of their school. They are able to maneuver (tentatively at first, but more and more confidently) in the larger realm" (p. 56).

A multi-faceted, longitudinal study of the 142 school leadership teams that have been trained by the 12 regional California School Leadership Academy Centers has been underway since 1996. A brief description of the School Leadership Team (SLT) program is provided in Chapter 1. In a facet of the study documented in School Leadership Teams: A Process Model, Castillo, Chrispeels and Brown (1997) analyzed the "specific school and

team variables that contribute significantly to the achievement of the SLT program objectives: using research and student data to enhance teaching and learning for all students” (p. 2).

Using surveys to collect perceptions of team effectiveness, achievement of SLT objectives, and school demographics, Castillo et al. conducted a factor analysis of the data received from 88 of the participating middle and high school SLTs, which had completed one year of the SLT training. The original 25 factors analyzed by one of the instruments, the SLT Continuum, was clustered into five final factors: (a) professional relations, (b) school and community relations, (c) district relations, (d) teaching and learning: fundamentals (the collection and use of data to guide improvement), and (e) teaching and learning: advanced (the development of a shared vision in service of powerful learning for all students and staff). Castillo et al. then developed a tentative causal model for the SLT process in order to analyze the interaction of the five major factors. The most important finding from this analysis was that positive professional relationships among team members and with the rest of the school staff directly affect the team’s capacity to use student data to guide school improvement. The researchers also found that the use of student data to drive school improvement had, in turn, a direct effect on the expected outcome of the SLT: “moving the school toward implementing more powerful teaching and learning strategies” (p.37).

Another facet of this longitudinal research was documented in School Leadership Teams: Factors that Influence Their Effectiveness in Bringing About School Change (Chrispeels, Brown, Castillo, & Wiley, 1997). This qualitative study of one middle and one high school SLT was conducted to more fully explore the dimensions embedded in each of the five factors in the process model mentioned above. In-depth interviews with 14 of the 18 teacher members of the two School Leadership Teams confirmed the correlation of positive professional relationships to team effectiveness. The interview data

especially emphasized the importance of team relationships with the principal, other school groups, and the district. Another important variable that surfaced as critical to a team's effectiveness was the clear delineation of its role in the school.

The sixteen studies selected for this literature review demonstrate the evolving use and impact of school leadership teams. Over the last 14 years, school teams have progressed from small groups with narrow membership that were focused on curricular issues to broad based, inclusive teams that have been established to provide schoolwide governance or leadership in restructuring efforts.

Between 1984 and 1992, the research on school teams (e.g., Glatthorn & Newberg, 1984; Hall & Hord, 1986; Watkins & Lusi, 1989; Butler & Alberg, 1990; Foster, 1991) revealed the limited structures evident in early teams and/or significant issues which hindered team success such as: (a) the lack of legitimacy or authority of the team; (b) unskilled, insecure, or unstable (i.e., frequently changing) leadership; (c) insufficient team training in the change process, collaborative inquiry, group process, or governance strategies, (d) lack of support from the district level, and (e) older staff who were resistant to change and unwilling to grapple with the challenging issues.

In the last five years, the capacity of school leadership teams to create change or govern effectively seems to have been tied to correcting many of the above concerns. In addition, research on school-based teams (e.g., Bellon, 1994; Castillo et al., 1997; Chrispeels et al., 1997; Fine, 1994; Gordon, 1995; Herrmann, 1995; Holcomb, 1993; Kouba, 1996; Nichols, 1994; Smialek, 1996) has demonstrated that successful teams have (a) adequate, on-going training in both school improvement strategies and interpersonal skills; (b) clear purpose and goals which are aligned with school and district improvement efforts, (c) clear role in relation to other school and district groups, (d) balanced participation representing all stakeholders, (e) consistent, multi-directional communication processes, (f) adequate time to meet, work collaboratively, and reflect on the work and

group process, (g) student success as the focus of their work, (h) strong interpersonal relationships that are grounded in respect for diverse perspectives and leadership styles, (i) data-driven decision making processes, and (j) a principal who actively supports collaborative leadership.

The benefits of productive school leadership teams are numerous and have significant implications for future school improvement. The research (e.g., Bellon, 1994; Boles & Troen, 1996; Gordon, 1995; Herrmann, 1995; Holcomb, 1993; Lyon, 1994; Nichols, 1994) confirms that effective school leadership teams have been able to (a) establish new behavioral norms for staff which are grounded in respect and interdependence, (b) increase teacher participation, collaboration, and responsibility for student success, (c) increase teacher satisfaction, (d) decrease stress and unproductive conflict, (e) nurture a climate which supports change and innovation, (f) expand teacher power and influence through increased knowledge of schoolwide issues and collaborative decision making processes that, in turn, (g) expands professional autonomy.

As Maeroff (1993) suggested, all of these positive effects are simply pleasant changes in school culture and climate if they do not directly affect student achievement. The good news is that research (e.g., Castillo et al., 1997; Chrispeels et al., 1997; Gordon, 1995; Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Hart & Baptist, 1996; Holcomb, 1993; Kouba, 1996; Wilson, 1991) has begun to reveal an increase in the use of data to analyze student progress and that teachers actively engaged in school leadership are taking more professional responsibility for student success or the lack thereof. However, clear evidence of impact on student achievement is still missing. Judging from the few years effective school leadership or governance teams have been in place and the relatively few studies that document their progress, it could be several years before the relationship is explicitly documented.

In the meantime, school leadership or governance teams hold the hope for the future of school improvement. In addition to understanding the direct relationship to

improvement in student achievement, it would be helpful to better understand the teachers' experience on such a team. The research to date has explored the characteristics, barriers, features of successful teams, benefits and school-related outcomes, but minimal attention has been paid to the teacher members of the teams. The research (e.g., Bellon, 1994; Gordon, 1995; Lyon, 1994; Nichols, 1994; Troen & Boles, 1996) has delineated the importance of teacher membership on school leadership teams, but little energy has been spent listening to the teachers themselves. Their day-to-day experiences may give insight into (a) the workings of the team and the school; (b) their relationships with colleagues, both within the team and without; (c) their personal accomplishments and challenges; (d) their perceptions, motivations, intentions, values and beliefs about leadership. This insight may reveal an experience similar to or very different from the prior research on teacher leadership. Either way, a study of the teachers on school leadership teams will provide new information to expand the knowledge base, and lead to new learnings that could further inform the preparation of and support for school governance or leadership teams.

Educational Leadership: A Call for A New Perspective

Much of previous research into school and teacher leadership has been guided by a belief that both schools and school leaders operate in a rational, linear world that could be tracked, measured and assessed based on some previously defined framework. Marlene Johnson, in her 1993 review of selected research on educational leadership, observed that "by functioning under the assumption of rationality and utilizing research methods based on this assumption, what is overlooked is the possibility that leadership is neither rational nor linear" (p. 16). New thinking in the area of leadership (e.g., Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1992; Wheatly, 1994) would suggest that leadership is much more chaotic

and unplanned, more a reflection of the feelings, beliefs and motives of the participants at a given moment in time. The research of Havens (1996) reinforces this perspective as she notes that

concepts and metaphors from the new science provide a new way of perceiving schools and educational leadership, one which reflects wholeness, dynamic interconnectedness, and change based on uncertainty and coevolution. This new paradigm views schools as learning communities and collaborative cultures within which teacher leadership is an integral process of the school network. (Abstract)

Twenty years ago Peter Drucker reflected this change in thinking when he noted, "we are shifting from a Cartesian view of the universe, in which the accent has been on parts and elements, to a configuration view, with emphasis on wholes and patterns" (as cited in Richards, 1991, p. 197). These wholes and patterns emerge out of a seemingly chaotic personal reality, much like the Strange Attractors emerge from the repeated patterns of chaos (Parker, 1996).

Sergiovanni (1992) describes the complexity of leadership as a relationship between the head and the heart, clearly reflecting the need to study leadership from a new perspective:

The heart of leadership has to do with what a person believes, values, dreams about, and is committed to--the person's *personal vision*, to use the popular word. But it is more than vision. It is the person's interior world which becomes the foundation of her or his reality. The head of leadership has to do with the mindscapes, or theories of practice, that leaders develop over time, and with their ability, in light of these theories, to reflect on the situations they face. Reflection, combined with personal vision and an internal system of values, becomes the basis of leadership strategies and actions. If the heart and the head are separated from the hand, then the leader's actions, decisions, and behavior cannot be

understood. The head of leadership is shaped by the heart and drives the hand; in turn, reflections on decisions and actions affirm or reshape the heart and head. (p. 7, italics in original)

Senge (ASCD, 1997) agreed when he asserted that only through examining our mental models or assumptions and perceptions about leadership and teacher roles will we be able to change our behaviors. Therefore, an ongoing exploration into the beliefs, perceptions and values of teachers and teacher leaders engaged in educating children in our schools is essential to school reform. The goal of this study is to do just that: uncover and jointly reflect upon the feelings, beliefs, motives, mental models, and mindscapes of the teachers engaged in this complex leadership relationship, seeking patterns and meaning that will provide insight into the experience of teachers who serve on a School Leadership Team.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research study is to understand the experience of teachers who serve on School Leadership Teams, not to explain, predict or master it, but to arrive at the essence of this human experience. Hence, the research is exploratory, allowing the researcher, and participants as co-researchers, to uncover unexpected data and new perspectives of school leadership.

A qualitative method of analysis and synthesis permits the co-researchers to move beyond a deductive, linear approach to one that sees multiple realities within a phenomenon, "like the layers of an onion, nest within or complement one another. Each layer provides a different perspective of reality, and none can be considered more 'true' than any other" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 57) This approach is referred to as naturalistic and seeks the gestalt of the experience--an understanding rather than mastery of the phenomenon. The naturalistic researcher tends to favor "thick descriptions" and evolving hypotheses over generalizations and pre-established hypotheses (Geertz, 1973). As a result, the researcher becomes part of the process in qualitative research, an essential element in an approach that builds an interconnected web of data through stories, anecdotes, and extended conversation.

Wolf and Tymitz (1976) suggested that the researcher's background, along with his or her expanding knowledge and understanding, provide: (a) a mirror which reflects the learnings back to the participant for confirmation and expansion, (b) a springboard to new insights, and (c) a recorder which captures and attempts to "present 'slice of life' episodes documented through natural language and representing as closely as possible how people feel, what they know, and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions, and understandings are" (as cited in Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 78).

The naturalistic approach of qualitative research is inductive and holistic. It seeks to understand the phenomenon from the participant's perspective, through the recounting and analysis of a messy, complex, and often bewildering array of interconnected experiences. This approach seeks the essence of experience that is synergistic and responsive, a "truth" that is a function of how an individual sees and describes the world--a world that cannot be confined to a list, a numerical analysis, or a predetermined hypothesis.

Since the researcher takes the place of the computer and statistical analysis, it is probable that both researcher and participant will be transformed by the process, developing new insight and capacity as a result of the personal interaction. Qualitative research is grounded in rigor that is defined by the reciprocal relationship between systematic data collection, recurrent analysis and the emerging insights. The validity is determined by the capacity of the study to describe an experience that rings true to the participants.

As early as 1974, Stogdill described the positivistic research applied to leadership as "a bewildering mass of findings" and an "endless accumulation of data" that "has not produced an integrated understanding of leadership" (p. vii). As a result, there has been a move toward expanding the research from traditional, positivistic studies focused on leadership competencies and the technical skills of leaders, toward "inductive, naturalistic theory or the development of grounded theory based upon 'thick description' of real leaders in real settings" (Howe, 1994, p. 3279).

Phenomenology: An Overview

Since the purpose of this study is to gain insight into the teachers' experience on a School Leadership Team, the personal, interactive process of phenomenology appears to be the most appropriate research method. This process seeks to understand phenomena from the participant's view as a psychological experience. Phenomenology does not seek to understand the culture of school leadership as in ethnography that is based in anthropology,

or the social context of school leadership as in case study that is grounded in sociology. The primary task of phenomenology is to capture a personal description of the phenomena and to elicit the meanings participants have created for themselves and what they are doing. The goal is to capture the "is-ness," the "kernel of meaning," which makes a specific phenomenon unique (Mitchell, 1990, p. 256).

Phenomenology is often criticized for its obscurity and awkward wording (Barritt, Beekman, Bleeker & Mulderij, n.d., chap. 1, p. 11). The author has attempted in this study to explore of the topic of teacher leadership from within a School Leadership Team in a way that is both scholarly and accessible to all who seek insight here. By so doing, this research may be useful to teachers, teacher organizations, administrators, and others interested in supporting teacher leadership by heightening awareness of, and empathy for teacher leaders.

Herbert Spiegelberg (1975) identified three minimum requirements for any research method to be called phenomenology:

1. A phenomenological approach must start from a direct exploration of the experienced phenomena as they present themselves in our consciousness . . . without committing . . . to belief or disbelief in their reality.
2. It must attempt to grasp the essential structures of these experienced phenomena and their essential interrelations.
3. It should also explore the constitution of these phenomena in our consciousness, i.e., the way in which these phenomena take shape in our experience. (p. 267)

To fully understand phenomenology as a research method, it is useful to view it as an approach to living and learning which grew out of the 19th Century philosophies of existentialism and hermeneutics (Kockelmans, 1967a; Macann, 1993; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990)

Phenomenology: An Historical Context

Husserl

The term “phenomenon” is derived from the Greek expression “phainomenon” that signifies “that which shows itself in itself” (Kockelmans, 1967a, p. 296). The term “phenomenology,” meaning the science of phenomena, was used in philosophical writings as early as 1765, but it wasn’t until the German philosopher Edmund Husserl’s use of the term between 1904 and 1913 that the concept, as we know it today, began to take shape. Strongly influenced by Stuart Mill, Descartes and Kant, Husserl was a prolific writer in the areas of mathematics, philosophy, phenomenology, and logic (Kockelmans, 1967a).

Husserl rejected the “natural attitude” that dominated scientific thinking in the early 1900’s and sought an “objectively existing, fully explainable world that can be expressed in exact, objective laws” (Kockelmans, 1967c). He favored intuition, where we go “To the things! (Zu den Sachen)” themselves seeking the immediate, original data, the “uncensored phenomena” (Spiegelberg, 1975, p. 58). Husserl (1950) sought neither deduction nor induction, but intuition that was based on an exacting analysis and description. He asserted:

the fundamental principle of this research approach is that every originally giving intuition is a legitimate source of knowledge, that everything which presents itself to us originally in “intuition,” so to speak in its bodily presence, has to be taken simply as what it presents itself to be, but only within the limits in which it presents itself (as cited in Kockelmans, 1967c, p. 29).

Through a process Husserl called “reduction,” we “learn to see the things we previously thought to perceive, in a different way--an original and radical way. We penetrate deeper into things and learn to see the more profound ‘layers’ behind what we first thought to see.” (Kockelmans, 1967c, p. 30) This reduction process leads us from the realm of facts to that of essence; it is the method by which we analyze the data of experience.

Derived from Aristotelian philosophy, Husserl focused on “intentionality” as the mental state that allows us to internalize the meaning of an experience or phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). When we intently study a phenomenon, the object begins to exist in an intentional way in the mind. This was important to Husserl in that he viewed all consciousness as intentional, and all consciousness is “conscious-of-something.” Phenomenology is the exploration of that “something”--its meaning in the context of personal experience. “Husserl called his philosophy an “archeology” of human experience, a search for the ultimate, constitutive foundations of experience of the world as the world of human consciousness” (Kockelmans, 1967b, p. 241). “It is not a description of the ‘real world,’ but it is a description of the ‘experience’ of the perceived world as the primary reality” (p. 245). The goal of Husserl’s phenomenology was to determine the “essence” of an experience, i.e., that which is “common or universal, the condition or quality without which a thing would not be what it is” (as cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 100).

Merleau-Ponty

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a contemporary of Jean-Paul Sartre, is generally considered “one of the greatest French philosophers of our time” and was a student of Husserl, Heidegger, Hegel and other phenomenological philosophers (Kockelmans, 1967d, p. 349) Merleu-Ponty described phenomenology as

the search for a philosophy which shall be a “rigorous science,” but it also offers an account of space, time and the world as we “live” them. It tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian, or the sociologist may be able to provide (Merleau-Ponty, 1967, p. 357).

He went on to describe phenomenology as “a manner or style of thinking,” a way of looking at the world, which “is less a question of counting up quotations than of determining and expressing in concrete form this *phenomenology for ourselves*”

(p. 358, italics in original). This view suggests that phenomenology may be less a philosophy than a state of being for many people, an innate way of relating to the world that has found words through Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenological philosophers.

Merleau-Ponty identified the following as some of the essential elements of the phenomenological approach:

1. Phenomenology is a matter of describing, not of explaining or analyzing.
2. Phenomenological reduction is reflection that does not withdraw from the world, rather "it steps back to watch the forms of transcendence fly up like sparks from a fire; it slackens the intentional threads that attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice; it . . . reveals that world as strange and paradoxical" (p.365).
3. Essence is not looking for what the world is after it has been reduced to a theme; "it is looking for what is as a fact for us, before any thematization" (p. 367).
4. Phenomenology is "as painstaking as the works of Balzac, Proust, Valéry, or Cézanne." It requires the same kind of attentiveness and wonder, the same focus and awareness, the same will to capture the meaning of the moment as that meaning comes into being (p. 374).

The Phenomenological Approach

Buytendijk (1968) labels phenomenology a method of investigation rather than a philosophy in the usual sense, since its basic aim is to let reality "speak for itself" (p. 2). Phenomenology focuses on individual experience, the subjective experience as one makes sense of his or her world. It permits an outsider to know what a particular experience is like. The information takes the reader beyond generalizations that suggest laws, rules, or explanations into the realm of empathy and insight. It enables the researcher to capture

the range of meanings that an individual may attach to a situation or event, thus creating a perspective from which to think about a person's behavior and a basis for developing meaningful empathy.

Phenomenological research probes the richness of human experience and illuminates individual perception and action against the background of the reader's own knowledge and experience. Phenomenology is committed to (a) understanding the ordinary, the daily experience of those who participate in the study; (b) taking the experience seriously; and (c) granting the phenomenon an opportunity to reveal itself to us in much the same way that a photographer, musician or poet captures an image which is instantly recognizable as both familiar and unique.

In the context of this study of teachers who are engaged in systemic change from within a School Leadership Team, a phenomenological understanding of their experience (their perceptions, concerns, and victories) may help us be more sensitive to the complexity of their world. For principals, outside facilitators, internal change agents, and others interested in school reform and redefining the roles and responsibilities of teachers, this study may serve as a point from which to begin a personal phenomenological journey. This study will, hopefully, encourage others to listen more carefully, to ask more open-ended questions, to open their hearts with empathy to the teachers who are stretching out of their traditional roles into new arenas and shared leadership.

There is not one specific set of steps that govern phenomenological research; instead, there is (a) the conceptual framework described above, (b) a strong orientation to scholarship which calls for careful attention to the subtleties of everyday life as well as an in-depth grounding in the area of study, and (c) a "dynamic interplay among six

methodological activities” which guide the research. The methodological activities are not discreet, but indistinct and overlapping, the separation described by Van Manen (1990) as “somewhat artificial.” The methodological activities are:

1. turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (p. 30)

As a result, phenomenological data collection may include diaries, journals, observation, interview, artwork, literature or any other data the researcher determines is significant to understanding the experience. The analysis may include individual feedback, focus group or collaborative analysis, the use of predetermined filters based on past phenomenological research or an intuitive, open-ended approach.

The final writing may be presented as (a) reconstructed life stories, (b) a summary elucidated through relevant anecdotes, (c) the current belief about the phenomenon contrasted with information collected in the study, (d) a dialogue engaging the thinking of another author, (e) the experience filtered through the “existentials of temporality (lived time), spaciality (lived space), corporeality (lived body), and sociality (lived relationship to others)”, or (f) an invented approach which flows naturally from the phenomenon being studied, and the methods that appear appropriate to it (Van Manen, 1978, p. 172).

This study employed multiple interviews augmented by observation as the method of data collection, recurrent analysis of the emerging data and themes, both individually and collectively; and the development of brief profiles of each participant followed by a synthesis of the emergent themes supported by the participants' own words and interpretations.

Bracketing or Epoché

The first principle of phenomenological research is to explore “the things in themselves,” as Husserl said (as cited in Kockelmans, 1967c, p. 28). As a result the researcher strives to approach the research topic, or phenomenon, as free as possible from preconceived notions. In order to accomplish this task, the researcher specifically brackets, or consciously identifies, his or her biases prior to entering the dialogue, in order to create a fresh viewpoint from which to study the phenomenon (Van Manen, 1990).

The term “bracketing” was borrowed by Husserl from mathematics and is used to set aside one portion of the equation while conducting other operations (p. 176). “Husserl called the freedom from suppositions the *Epoche*, a Greek word meaning to stay away from or abstain” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85, italics in original). These terms are currently used interchangeably in the literature on phenomenological research. By bracketing the researcher’s prior experience, knowledge, and assumptions, the researcher holds it aside and abstains from making it a central part of initial dialogue.

The process of bracketing or Epoché is essential in that the participant is the expert in the context of the phenomenological study. As a result, the participants are considered co-researchers in the process rather than informants as in the case of ethnography or subjects as in quantitative study. Every attempt is made in the phenomenological process to maintain an open, interactive, reflective dialogue.

Even though the researcher’s own prior knowledge and beliefs are initially set aside to make room for the participant’s perspective, they are simultaneously used to assist in identifying the salient moments that explicitly define the experience. The goal is to “proceed with the highest degree of open-mindedness of which one is capable, to let “the things speak for themselves” (Tesch, 1984, p. 28).

Van Manen (1990) reconfirmed the value of the researcher’s experience when he described phenomenology as “a philosophy of action; a person who turns toward phenomenological reflections does so out of personal engagement” (p. 154). “Traditional

behavioral research leads to instrumental knowledge principles: useful techniques, managerial policies, and rules-for-acting. In contrast, phenomenological research gives us tactful thoughtfulness: situational perceptiveness, discernment and depthful understanding" (p. 156). Phenomenology is the synergy created by the participant's personal interpretation of his or her lived experience connecting with the insight of the knowledgeable researcher.

In this context, dialogue represents its richest connotation, described by Senge (1990) as a "genuine thinking together." From the Greek word "dia-logos," dialogue is "a free-flowing of meaning through a group, allowing the group to discover insights not attainable individually" (p. 10). As a result, the primary method for data collection in a phenomenological study is an interview that seeks, as noted physicist David Bohm defines it as, "a free flow of meaning between two people, in the sense of a stream that flows between two banks" (cited in Senge, 1990, p. 240).

Language

Language is the major source of information for phenomenological research, although all aspects of observation including eye contact, body language, tonality, silence, personal space, appearance, and so forth are important in relating the experience in context. Language, however, "is a major force in binding subjective experience together. It becomes a major tool for affirming one's vision of reality" (Barritt et al., n.d., chap. 2, p. 5).

It has often been said, "I don't know what I think until I write it." In phenomenological research, the participants may write or speak their thoughts, using the language of their everyday world in a comfortable, informal setting. If spoken, then a transcript of their conversations is provided so they can review, edit, and reflect upon the words, the context and the meaning that was intended or which, in retrospect, is generated by reviewing the text. This allows the participants to tell their own story in their own words. In each succeeding interview, the co-researchers explore the meaning of the words

and phrases that have been elicited in previous conversation. Each revisit confirms, expands or revises the original perception of the experience, deepening the understanding for researcher and participant alike. Language, therefore, is the tool of description, data collection, and analysis in phenomenology.

Metaphor

“The use of imagination is often necessary to create truths which overcome the limitations of our language” (Barritt et al., n.d., chap. 2, p. 6). As a result, the participants are encouraged to use metaphor, similes and analogies in further defining their experience. These imaginative processes assist us in making connections “between seemingly unconnected things, thereby opening up new possibilities by unveiling what had been undetected” (Patton, 1987, p. 83). Metaphor, simile and analogy are part of the co-researcher experience because “metaphors and similes don’t just happen. They are created by the aware and searching mind” (p. 84). The metaphors, similes and analogies that are shared by these teachers allow us to draw new connections between their words and our own experience; they are bridges between our individual realities.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) go even further in asserting that “human thought processes are largely metaphorical . . . and that the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined” (p. 6). Thus, by noticing not only the overt metaphors, but also those imbedded in the structure of conversation, we gain additional insight into the experience.

Intentionality

Accurate description is the foundation of a phenomenological study. When one focuses on describing an experience, consciousness becomes intentional. That intentionality is fundamental to phenomenology. “Consciousness is not: an empty bucket to be filled, a variable, a stable factor; it is an activity, a living, moving stream” (Barritt et al., n.d., chap. 2, p. 8). Since consciousness is always conscious “of” something, in phenomenology the participants are asked to be conscious of life as they have lived or are

living it. This intentional focusing of the consciousness allows the participants to reflect on the important aspects of their experience at a level that is seldom given opportunity to surface or, when is surfaced, is seldom given voice. Only for those who engage in some sort of reflective practice such as regular journal writing, on-going study or support groups does this kind of intentionality become an important aspect of personal experience.

Data Collection

Selection of Participants

Twelve teachers, who are current members of an active School Leadership Team (SLT), and who have direct contact with students at least 50% of the day, were asked to participate in this study. Ten of the twelve potential participants volunteered. These teachers were selected from one team in a cohort that was completing Year 2 of training in the School Leadership Team program during the 1996-97 school year.

Selection Criteria

The team selected to participate in this study was identified using two criteria: (a) their ranking in the state as determined in the study completed by Chrispeels et. al. (1996) and (b) the recommendation by the regional Director of the California School Leadership Center who facilitated their training.

Chrispeels et. al. (1996) used two measures of team functioning to determine the state ranking of the selected School Leadership Team. The first measure of team functioning was a team assessment questionnaire adapted from the U.S. Department of Labor (Committee Effectiveness Training, U.S. Department of Labor, 1990). The second measure was the SLT Implementation Continuum developed by Chrispeels et al. (1996). In order to be considered for this study, the selected team needed to be a comprehensive high school that scored above the aggregate mean on each measure as established by the 122 School Leadership Teams assessed in Chrispeel's et al. study during Spring, 1996.

The SLT Team Assessment instrument (adapted from a Department of Labor questionnaire) consisted of 32 items that explore team effectiveness and team process, as perceived by the members of the team. On a 5 level Likert scale, participants were asked to respond to items covering 8 aspects of team effectiveness: “team planning, team problem solving, team communication, team interpersonal relations, team dynamics, team understanding of self, team meetings, and team decision making” (Chrispeels et al., 1997, p. 13). The individual scores on the items were averaged to obtain an overall score for each school team. See Table 2 for data regarding selected School Leadership Team.

Since the Likert instrument did not specifically address the SLT program goals and objectives, the SLT Implementation Continuum was developed. On this 25 item, rubric style instrument, the team's members noted the degree to which their team had implemented the 1994-95 SLT professional development goals. Since the purpose of the SLT program “is to develop the capacity of teams to lead their schools in a process of school change and restructuring that leads to powerful learning by both students and the adults who work with them,” the rubric was designed to measure whether “the implementation process was still at an individual, at a team or at a schoolwide level” (Chrispeels et al., 1997, p. 14). Low points (1 or 2) on the Continuum represented initial discussion by the team, mid points (3 or 4) represented beginning schoolwide use, and the highest point (5) represented routine use or schoolwide implementation. Table 2 contains data pertaining to score of selected SLT.

Table 2

Selection Criteria for Participating School Leadership Team

Assessment Instrument	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Team Score
Team Assessment	3.92	0.37	1.84	4.52	4.10
SLT Continuum	2.52	0.54	1.11	4.43	2.96

Note. n = 122

Risk Management Procedures

Care was taken throughout the study to make the participants comfortable with the process and the outcomes. The participants were encouraged to select a quiet, private location for the interviews where distractions could be held to a minimum. Prior to the study, the researcher met with the principal to obtain permission to complete the study on the school site and have the principal sign the Site Consent Form (Appendix A).

Each participant was asked to read the description of the study with care, ask questions to clarify the expectations and process, and sign the Participant Consent Form, which described the outcomes, expectations and safeguards related to the study (Appendix B).

The participants were informed that each interview would be tape recorded and a confidential transcript created. After each interview, the participant received a written transcript and was invited to delete or clarify any portion of the transcript before the final

analysis of the data. After each round of interviews, the researcher invited each participant to clarify and expand ideas discussed in the previous interview. Following the conclusion of this study, all tapes were destroyed.

Anonymity was protected to the extent that no other person, other than the confidential transcriber, saw the transcripts or heard the tapes. In addition, the names of the participants and the school were changed in the dissertation to protect the participants' privacy.

The Interviews

In preparation for the interview and data analysis process, the researcher prepared herself by bracketing her prior experience and assumptions about teacher leadership in an Epoché (Appendix C). This process allowed her to enter the interviews with a minimum of bias and preconceived assumptions about the participants' experience on an established School Leadership Team.

Two in-depth interviews, approximately one hour each, were conducted with nine of the ten participants. The tenth participant was available for only one personal interview, but also participated in the focus group. The first interviews were conducted in February, 1997; the second set a month later. A final group interview or focus group with six of the ten participants was conducted in May, 1997, and lasted approximately two-and-a-half hours. Twenty-three hours of dialogue provided the data for this study.

The purpose of the interview was to obtain the participants' views of their experience in their own words and in the order that was most meaningful to them. Since the opportunity to talk and reflect on one's own experiences with someone who intently cares is such a rare phenomenon in itself, a little preparation of the interviewees was needed prior to the first interview. As a result, participants were provided with Suggestions for Describing a Lived Experience (Appendix D) adapted from Van Manen (1990) to assist them in providing the kind of descriptions that would enrich the research and lead to new

insights and understanding. To avoid spending limited interview time collecting routine data, the participants were also asked to complete a brief Participant Background Survey prior to the first interview (Appendix E).

The First Interview

Each of the first round interviews began with a review of the central question focusing the study, "What is it like to be a teacher on a School Leadership Team that is initiating systemic change?" Because this question was too broad to allow participants to speak comfortably, a grand tour question was used to begin the actual conversation: "Please take me on a tour of the important milestones in your experience as a teacher, so we can frame the experience of being a teacher on the SLT. What are the important things which stand out in your mind about becoming a teacher or being a teacher?" This question was followed by a second grand tour question: "Can you describe your journey on the SLT? How did you get into the SLT? Are there some events or experiences which stand out in your mind in your journey with the SLT?" As the conversation continued, clarifying questions were used to further reveal the participant's experience and perspective. Questions similar to the following were used throughout the two interviews and the focus group: "Can you help me understand what you mean when you say . . . ?"

The researcher often used open-ended prompts followed by a pause that invited the participant to expand on a recent thought, such as, "You say that you felt as though you were in control" or "You described the experience as unique" The researcher consciously attempted to keep such prompts in a statement rather than a question tone so that it would feel like part of the interviewee's own thinking rather than an intrusion. In addition, the researcher tried to maintain a peaceful silence when the participant paused, to encourage further reflection and expansion on an idea. Sometimes the participant continued after the pause; at other times the researcher summarized or clarified a key point from the previous statements as a prompt for additional sharing.

In most phenomenological studies, the interviewees tell long stories, unified narratives of their experience. Since the teachers' experience on the School Leadership Team was intertwined with many other daily experiences, guiding questions were initially required to assist the participants in separating their SLT experience from other experiences in the school. Therefore, each time the participants appeared to have exhausted their thinking on the topic during the first interview, the researcher used additional prompts to elicit additional personal life stories (Appendix F).

Each interview was taped and notes were taken (either during or after the interview) which highlighted the participant's mood, context of the interview, and unique or emotional responses. After each round of interviews, each interview was confidentially transcribed and shared with the participant for reflection and, if the participant desired, revision. After completing the transcription and analysis of the first round interviews, the researcher delivered a list of the Preliminary Themes and Descriptors Identified After Round 1 of the Interviews to the participants prior to the second interview (See Table 3).

Table 3

Preliminary Themes and Descriptors Identified After Round 1 of the Interviews

Themes Describing the Teachers' Experience on the SLT:

1. The importance of being chosen or invited to be on the SLT
 2. A sense of responsibility which extended beyond the teachers' classrooms
 3. A strong commitment to "my school, my kids, my colleagues"
 4. An awareness of being involved in the "big picture"
 5. New perceptions of self and new roles within the school
-

Descriptors of the SLT:

1. A vehicle for change
 2. Communication link
 3. A support group
 4. An intensive critical thinking experience
 5. A positive force in the school
 6. An equitable team
-

Descriptors of the Teachers' Leadership Role:

1. Facilitator
 2. Collaborator
 3. Role model
-

The Second Interview

The researcher opened the second interview by asking the following question: "Do any of these themes or descriptors evoke a strong feeling or image? If the theme or descriptor stimulates a strong response, can you describe why the idea is important? Can you describe a specific time when you were aware of this particular issue?" The context of all questions in the second interview was drawn directly from the ongoing dialogue in a more conversational approach than the first interview. While the researcher took comprehensive notes during the first interview, she found it difficult to concentrate and listen as carefully while taking notes during the second interview and, as a result, limited note-taking. Note-taking significantly interrupted the flow or "play" of the conversation. Abascal-Hildebrand (1997) described a similar experience that occurred during another study:

In talking to . . . and in thinking about our conversation, I could not think of questions simply as tools which somehow uncovered only her thinking. I could not think of questions as if they could be linked only to the answers they might prompt, or the reverse. I had to think of both questions and answers as reflecting the thinking that emerged from the conversation as a whole, as part of all we spoke to one another.

As this researcher noted patterns and relationships in the participants' stories, these patterns were shared with the co-researchers in phrases such as, " You mentioned _____ three times. Can you help me understand how these three situations are connected or related?" or "You talked about Can you talk a little more about why that's important to you?" Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher paid special attention to words or images that seemed to evoke strong emotion, and frequently asked the participants to describe the thoughts or feelings that prompted such words. New learnings that emerged in the dialogue were noted and discussed at length.

The Focus Group

The last interview was conducted in a focus group format and completed after dinner in the home of one of the participants. The teacher leaders spent several hours talking about their experience on the SLT. The researcher used the following prompt to begin the focus group: "Several themes have emerged as a result of the second round of interviews. Do any of these ideas ring true for you?" Using the Preliminary Themes Identified After Round 2 of the Interviews (Table 4), the researcher asked the participants to think of a specific time when one of the themes had seemed especially relevant to their individual or collective experience on the SLT.

Table 4

Preliminary Themes Identified After Round 2 of the Interviews

Preliminary Themes:

1. An eye-opening experience
 2. An opportunity to create lasting change
 3. A unique role
 4. A painful or frightening experience
 5. A bridge-building opportunity
 6. A way to keep my "professional soul intact"
 7. An energizing experience
-

The dialogue immediately commenced, with minimal input or interaction from the primary researcher, who took the role of "a fly on the wall" and watched a group of individuals, who obviously genuinely care for each other, laugh, cry, tease, banter back and forth, and build on each other's ideas as they looped in and out of a conversation about

their experiences on the SLT. The only time the conversation came back to the primary researcher was when one of the participants would ask if they were still on the topic. The researcher reinforced the value of the conversation that was in progress, and then refocused the group on the themes or something specific someone had said prior to the interruption.

After an hour, the primary researcher introduced five Overarching Themes (Table 5). The ensuing conversation lasted another hour. The researcher closed the focus group with one final question to summarize all that had gone before: "If SLT were an animal, what kind of animal would it be?" The answers to this question were insightful, fun and personal, ending the focus group with a heightened sense of camaraderie.

Table 5

Overarching Themes Identified After Round 2 of the Interviews

-
1. Commitment
 2. Discernment
 3. Empowerment
 4. Relationship
 5. Leadership
-

Data Analysis

Data analysis in phenomenological studies is an on-going process beginning with the first interview and ending, at a formal level, when the text is published. The analysis process employed for this study included ten steps:

1. The researcher analyzed the transcripts after the first round of interviews, seeking emerging themes.
2. The participants responded to and elaborated on the emerging themes during the second interview.
3. The researcher used the intuitive process of “mind mapping” or clustering to analyze the data collected in Round 2 of the interviews.
4. Prior to the focus group interview, the researcher searched for relationships among all themes surfaced during the previous three steps.
5. The co-researchers responded to and elaborated on the emerging themes during the focus group interview.
6. Using QSR NUD.IST software (Richards & Richards, 1996), the researcher sought words and images in context which either supported, denied or expanded emerging themes.
7. The researcher constructed anecdotal narratives which described the phenomenon from each participant's individual perspective.
8. Seeking to “re-think, re-reflect and re-cognize” the essence of the experience in order to “do justice to the fullness and ambiguity” of the phenomenon, the researcher engaged in extensive reflective writing (Van Manen, 1990, p. 131).
9. The co-researchers were invited to respond to the reflective writing.
10. Intuitively integrating the thoughts and images, the researcher sought to capture the essence of the experience in a way which was thoughtful, provocative, and compelling.

Analysis of Round 1 Interviews

While conducting the first round of interviews, the researcher took comprehensive notes that served as a foundation for the first step of analysis. After the tapes were transcribed, she listened to the tapes while reading and rereading the interview transcripts. While listening, she marked the most “meaningful chunks” of the transcript that related to the research topic (Seidman, 1991, p. 89). The researcher worked with each interview as a single entity, combining the insight from interview notes with the auditory processing of the tape--listening for inflection, detail, connection--and the visual context of the printed transcript. She then sought specific language used by each participant to assist in identifying the essential elements of the experience.

Through listening to and reviewing each interview, the researcher began to notice repeated words, images, and context. After reviewing the first round of transcripts, the researcher compared her notes with the units of meaning that were culled from the text of the interviews. Sitting back and taking several deep breaths to enhance her sense of calmness and centeredness, the researcher opened her consciousness to the patterns and connections among the excerpts that could be reconstructed into clustered units of meaning. She sought those clustered units of meaning that might ultimately reveal the essential elements of the experience. “Phenomenology requires that the researcher return again and again to the phenomena in order to see clearly, to perceive directly with a minimum of biases, and to grasp the meaning of what is viewed” (Mitchell, 1990, p. 161). The data analysis process is “ongoing, emergent, recursive and dynamic” (Merriam, 1988, p. 41).

As the clustered units of meaning began to emerge, they became tentative themes. Theme refers to the central focus, the meaning or the point of text or anecdotes that occur in the dialogue or other data. In phenomenology, “theme describes an aspect of the structure of lived experience” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 87). It is the process of insightful invention, discovery and disclosure that leads the co-researchers to new levels of understanding about their experience. Thematic analysis seeks to make sense of the apparent randomness and

complexity of recounted experience, by putting it into symbols and words that have meaning to the co-researchers, i.e., the researcher and participants in the study. Van Manen describes themes as “the stars that make up the universes of meaning we live through. By the light of these themes we can navigate and explore such universes” (p. 90).

After noting the clustered units of meaning, the transcripts were returned to the co-researchers along with the researcher’s perception of important issues relating to the experience of a teacher on a School Leadership Team (Appendix G). The co-researchers were asked to read the transcript, consider the emerging themes that were identified, and identify one or more which struck a chord of significant recognition (Table 3). This, then, became the focus for the second interviews.

Analysis of Round 2 Interviews

The researcher approached the second set of interview transcripts in a similar fashion, but with a slight difference, attempting to bring more of the right brain, intuitive perspective to the process. First she scanned the transcripts quickly, seeking concepts rather than detail. Then she repeated the process deliberately, extracting the key words and phrases--those which “flew up like sparks” (Merleau-Ponty, 1967).

The next step was the creation of a mind map or cluster diagram of the words and phrases as they emerged from the interview text. Mindmapping is a strategy that moves from the linear, sequential format of the text to the conceptual, intuitive context of the language, allowing one to experience the “key concepts in an interlinked and integrated manner” (Alexander, 1992, p. 116). This analysis method is seldom applied to qualitative research, but intuitively fits phenomenology, since it allows the words to speak for themselves and invites new understandings and unexpected discoveries.

Center page was the governing concept of the research: “A Teachers’ Perspectives from within a School Leadership Team.” This focused the researcher’s thinking and helped identify each new concept in relationship to the whole. Then several spokes were drawn

from the center, indicating the key themes that appeared to be emerging. As words or images “flew up” from the interviews, these words were placed in the diagram, in some manner demonstrating their relationship to the topic and each of the emerging sub-themes.

After completing a mind map for each of the ten transcripts in the second set of interviews, the researcher created a summary mind map of the key concepts that seemed central to all, using the actual language lifted from each transcript (Appendix H). At that point, the researcher again sat silently, consciously creating a space for new learnings to emerge from the relationships displayed in the mind map and the participants' language (Heifetz, 1994, p. 6). Several new and important issues arose from the text; the new list of themes reflected the participants' emotional responses to the SLT rather than the characteristics that emerged from Round 1 (Table 4). This new list was clearly a reflection of the introspective focus of the second round of interviews, characterized by inquiry into the participants' thoughts and feelings rather than specific events or pre-determined questions. These new themes were forwarded to the co-researchers for reflection prior to the focus group discussion (Appendix I).

Preparing for the Focus Group

In preparing a final summary for the co-researchers' review and reflection during the focus group, the researcher revisited the mind maps, notes and themes identified after each round of interviews, seeking tentative overarching themes that characterized the experience of the teachers on Lindbergh High School's SLT (Table 5). Both the preliminary themes that emerged from the second set of interviews and the final five overarching themes became the topic of conversation in the focus group. This on-going consideration of themes permitted the co-researchers to discover those qualities that made the phenomenon what it was, and without which the phenomenon could not be what it was. (Van Manen, 1990).

Identification of Major Themes Which Characterized the Experience

The final analysis required frequent queries of the transcripts: seeking exact words, noting repeating images, and the capturing the fullness of the original context. The qualitative data analysis software QSR NUD.IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing) was employed to assist in this stage of data analysis (Richards & Richards, 1996). The researcher began by loading all of the original transcripts into the program, which allowed instant access to the full text and exploration without oversimplifying individual comments or losing their context.

The next step entailed developing an index system to manage the data. The categories of clustered ideas and themes that emerged during the five months of interviews and reflection were entered into an "index tree." In an index tree, the relationship between a topic and its subsections is "shown as a tree which starts with a root from which branches or subtrees sprout . . . Such trees are usually shown inverted, with the root the most general category, at the top" (Richards & Richards, *User's Guide*, 1996, p. 12). Like a table of contents, "the structure helps the reader see the subsections under a more major section as a set belonging together" (p. 12). "The point where a branch on an index tree splits is called a "node," "just as the point at which a leaf or twig on a botanical tree emerges from a branch is called a node" (p. 12). Each node has a numerical address that identifies its position on the index tree, i.e., 1 7 6 indicates the node is in the first branch, seventh section of the first branch, and sixth subsection under section seven. QSR NUD.IST allowed on-going, interactive inquiry as questions emerged from previous inquiries and new ideas grew out of old ones. The researcher completed nearly 200 searches and sorted the data into 112 nodes in the index tree while moving through the data analysis process. The List of QSR NUD.IST Nodes (topics) which comprised the index tree for this study is included in Appendix J.

The researcher used QSR NUD.IST as a tool to organize and investigate the data collected. Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher carefully read each QSR NUD.IST report (a) seeking common experience as well as unique perspectives, and (b) analyzing concepts and language to discover how the participants understood their experience.

The researcher sought variations as well as common themes because unique views can sometimes be even more significant for their disparate perspective. When apparent disagreements emerged, such as conflicting perspectives regarding a particular aspect of the experience, they were noted and subjected to further analysis. Since the individual is the expert on his or her own experience, it would be disrespectful and inappropriate to try to force those experiences into an interconnected, generalized whole if the participants did not experience the phenomenon in the same way. "It is always a central question, left open in the conduct of each study whether there is in fact agreement in the experiences of people" (Barritt et al., n.d., chap. 3, p. 8) A negative conclusion is just as significant as a positive one, as long as it is perceived as accurate by the participants. The capacity of phenomenology to reveal both the agreements and discrepancies among participants, as they describe their lived-experience, is much like studying a diamond; each angle of perception enhances our understanding of the phenomenon. In the final analysis of the data related to this study, however, the researcher was surprised by the consistency of the participants' responses. Although some variation was noted among the co-researchers, there was also remarkable repetition in language, emotional responses and highlighted events.

During the final analysis of the data, all themes identified in Rounds 1 and 2 of the interviews were carefully analyzed to determine if they were unique aspects of the experience or subsumed in a larger issue. For example, the importance of being chosen to join the SLT appeared to be one aspect of what made the SLT a unique experience in the teachers' lives. The pain or fear the participants experienced seemed to be mediated by the

relationship of the team members, and was often directly tied to some aspect of having their eyes opened or demonstrated how they had been changed by the experience. The Final Themes Which Describe the Essence of the Experience (Table 6), as well as the Overarching Themes (Table 5) which were reinforced through the study of the data using QSR NUD.IST, formed the basis of the final analysis conducted through the phenomenological writing process.

Table 6

Final Themes Which Describe the Essence of the Teachers' Experience

The Teachers' Experience on the Team:

1. A vehicle for communication
 2. A support group
 3. A positive force in the school
 4. An eye opening experience
 5. A unique experience
 6. A challenging experience
 7. A growing confidence and commitment
-

The Teachers' Experience of Leadership:

1. Lead by example
 2. Take responsibility
 3. Listen
 4. Facilitate learning
 5. Help things happen
 6. Work together toward a common goal
 7. Involved and always there
 8. Can give and take direction for the common good
 9. Have earned their place
 10. Have put in some work and are knowledgeable
-

Phenomenological Writing

Following extensive data analysis, the next step in phenomenological research is “describing in textural language just what one sees” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). The author weaves the woof and the warp of the experience into an artistic representation of reality, seeking the “rhythm and the relationship between the phenomenon and self” (p. 90). This task is called “phenomenological reduction” and involves the recursive process of reading, reflecting, and writing. In phenomenology, Barthes (1986) asserted that “research is the work of writing--writing is its very essence” (as cited in Van Manen, 1990, p. 126). Three forms of writing are the essence of this phenomenological study: anecdotal narrative, reflective writing, and intuitive integration.

Anecdotal Narrative

The anecdotal narrative is a description based on one person's view of the phenomenon; it engages the reader at a personal level, captures the imagination, and prompts reflection. Permitting the reader to see the phenomenon from the perspective of each of the co-researchers, the anecdotal narrative provides a personal, introspective view in the individual's own words. Brief anecdotal narratives are included at the beginning of Chapter 4, framing the context of the study and providing insight into each of the study participants.

Reflective Writing

The second form of writing is reflective; it explores and teaches us what we know, and “gives appearance and body to thought” (Van Manen, 1978, p. 127). This dialectic process allows the reader to discover what previously has been hidden from view and from conscious understanding--to expose the “essence” of the experience. Reflective writing reveals the patterns in an abundance of words and images that initially appear chaotic and random.

Scientists have labeled the order that emerges out of chaos a “strange attractor” or a “window of order” (Parker, 1996, p. 117). Strange attractors take many shapes when the chaotic behaviors of nature are plotted on a computer. The “windows of order” look like butterflies, three winged birds, and spirals--each one a unique and surprising pattern that emerges from apparent chaos. Such is the process of phenomenological reflection. It is a process that, in the initial stages, feels fragmented and confusing, full of light and darkness, a blur of images. It is only through the writing and rewriting; reflecting and exploring; focusing on individual words, phrases and sentences; focusing on stories and anecdotes; standing in the middle, and then looking back from afar, that the boundaries of the phenomenon and patterns within emerge.

Intuitive Integration

The final step in the phenomenological writing process is the “intuitive integration” of the fundamental “descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100) This is the opportunity to identify the universal or common qualities that comprise a particular experience, creating a composite perspective that represents the group as a whole, “the essence of the phenomenon” as Husserl described it. This composite perspective constitutes the majority of Chapter 4.

Validity

The final step of the analytical process occurs after the anecdotal narrative has been developed, the phenomenological reflection has been completed, and the intuitive integration has been written. This step is important in correcting any misunderstandings and in validating or clarifying the interpretation of the experience. The participants in this study were invited to read the intuitive integration of their experience and comment on or reflect upon the accuracy of the primary researcher’s interpretation (Appendix K). The co-researchers received a draft of Chapter 4 in December, 1997, and were asked to respond by mid-January, 1997.

The four participants who responded in writing observed that the narrative sounded “just like us.” One of the teachers noted that “it was a comfort to see what other teachers had said and that ‘some’ of it was the same as how I felt.” This last comment revealed both the consistency and the variety that emerged in the teachers’ experiences on the School Leadership Team. Three other researchers responded in person indicating that, after reading the transcript, they could think of nothing to add. Each expressed pleasure in reading about their experience and said they “had fun” figuring out who said what. One participant noted she had read Chapter 4 twice and cried both times because the narrative captured the emotional essence of the experience for her.

Validity in phenomenology is based on consistency and repetition of themes and ideas. The validity in this study is derived from the structure of the interviews; the extensive, reflective interview and analysis process; the consistency or diversity of the participants’ syntax, diction and nonverbal behaviors, as well as the sense of discovery and learning that emerges from reading the study (Van Manen, 1990). In the final analysis, the researcher sought a collective validity among the participants, as well as a relationship between the participants’ experience and other related research. Just as literature lives when read because the reader finds a part of him or herself within the text, the success of phenomenology rests in the capacity of the text to touch the reader.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter provides insight into the experience of ten high school teachers who served on an established School Leadership Team (SLT). The teachers, who also served as co-researchers in this project, collectively spent twenty-three hours discussing and exploring their experience. They participated in a combination of individual reflective interviews, a focus group, and written responses to a draft of this chapter prior to its final editing.

Following an introduction to the research site, profiles provide insight into the individual personalities and backgrounds of each of the teacher participants. Pseudonyms were used to protect the privacy of the participants/co-researchers and the school in which they taught. The primary researcher (hereafter referred to as the researcher) suggested pseudonyms and the teachers either agreed with the choice or provided another name for use in the study.

The next three sections answer the research questions: (a) What is the experience of teachers who are members of a School Leadership Team (SLT) that is engaged in schoolwide change? (b) What is leadership as these ten teachers experienced it from within a School Leadership Team? (c) What kind of support and encouragement might enhance the personal and professional growth of teachers who serve on school leadership teams?

In order to answer the research questions, the participants' own words are woven together to create an integrated image that captures the essence of the experience of ten teachers who serve on a School Leadership Team. This section responds directly to the overarching question that has driven this phenomenological study: "What is it like to be a teacher on a School Leadership Team that is engaged in schoolwide change?" Each

anecdote enhances the reader's understanding of the essence of this phenomenon and, hopefully, engenders empathy for the experience of teacher leaders who serve on a School Leadership Team that is engaged in systemic change.

Setting of the Study

Charles Lindbergh High School (CLHS) is a comprehensive high school located in a large metropolitan area in Southern California. The 2,000 students in grades 9-12 are drawn from a culturally rich, highly mobile, diverse and rapidly growing community. The multi-cultural student population is approximately 70% Latino, 15% Filipino, 5% Anglo, 5% African American, 3% Asian, and 2% Pacific Islander. The school has received state and national recognition for several innovative student programs; therefore, Charles Lindbergh is considered a model for other schools. It is also a typical American secondary school with a percentage of highly motivated students and staff counterbalanced by a percentage of disinterested students and "stuck" staff, i.e., people who are simply waiting out their time in the school.

Charles Lindbergh is located in a district that has mandated that each school participate in the School Leadership Team program. The SLT is a program that has been embraced by the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees as a means to support the development of a learning community in each school with the expectation that student achievement will improve.

In addition to the School Leadership Team program, Lindbergh High has instituted a schedule that allows staff to meet on a regular basis for school planning and instructional improvement. A variety of parent committees and local business partnerships have also been formed to assist the school in its goal of providing a quality education that meets "the needs of all students" (Accountability Report Card, 1995-96).

Charles Lindbergh's School Leadership Team came into being the same year a new principal arrived at the school. This individual is well respected and multi-talented, with a

successful track record as a site and district administrator. She brought significant expertise in a wide range of areas that have contributed to the school's success. She is skilled in supporting professional development, community building, participatory leadership and change. This principal augments her skills with passion and congeniality. After nearly a decade of fairly stable, passive administration, the staff was ready for a change and responsive to the new leadership.

The teachers who participated in the study joined the School Leadership Team in two different groups. Catherine, Elizabeth, Ernie, Paulina, and Lorna reported that the principal selected them at the beginning the two year training program. At the beginning of the second year, several SLT members chose not to continue for a variety of personal reasons. The remaining team members made an announcement to the total staff, inviting anyone who was interested to apply. The new SLT team members described the essential question on the application as: "What could you contribute to the team?" The final selection of new team members, according to the participants in this study, was a consensus of continuing members who selected applicants to complement the current team and assist them in achieving their goals. Robert, Eileen, Felizardo, Michelle, and Jen reported that they were selected in this way.

Participant Background

The teachers on Charles Lindbergh's School Leadership Team participated in this study during the second year of SLT training. As mentioned above, five of the interviewees joined the team in September, 1996, and had been on the team for four months when this study began. The team, at the time of the study, included the principal, twelve classroom teachers (one of whom is a library media teacher, commonly called a librarian and classified as a teacher on the district contract), and two classified employees. Ten teachers, including the library media teacher, volunteered to participate in this study after the purpose and processes were explained to the entire team.

The following chart (Table 7) includes general demographic data describing the participants in this study. The participant/co-researchers represent diverse ethnic, educational, and leadership backgrounds. The column entitled Previous Leadership Roles refers to the number of roles reported on the Participant Background Survey. The specific leadership roles listed by the participants include: Categorical Coordinator, Director of Student Activities, Social Committee, Attendance Supervisor, Technology Coordinator, Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC), School Site Council, Parent Teacher Student Association officer, WASC/CDE Focus on Learning (accreditation) Coordinator, Restructuring Committee, Media Institute Coordinator, department chair, resource teacher, coach, club advisor, member of a state advisory committee, staff developer, officer/board member in professional organizations, and curriculum writer.

Table 7

School Leadership Team: Research Participant Background Data

Teaching Experience	Ethnicity	Masters. Degree	Prior Leadership Roles	Credentials
<hr/>				
Robert				
5 years	Hispanic	No	None	Math
Paulina				
5 years	Asian	Yes	13	English, Filipino
Catherine				
31 years	White	Yes	13	English, Language Development Specialist
Felizardo				
29 years	Asian	Yes	17	History, English as a Second Language, Filipino, Administration
Jen				
21 years	White	Yes	10+	Physical Education, Adaptive Physical Education
Eileen				
9 years	White	Yes	5	Social Science, Library Media Teacher

Michelle

5 years Hispanic No 1 English, English as a
Second Language

Ernie

26 years Hispanic No 2 English, Spanish

Lorna

25 years White Yes 4 Social Studies, English,
Physical Education

Elizabeth

8 years White No 5+ Math

Participant Profiles

A profile of each of the ten participants is included below to give the reader a sense of the background, perceptions and personal experiences of the co-researchers who served on the School Leadership Team at Charles Lindbergh High School. Each profile highlights the personality and individual perspective of its respective participant. The themes and narratives that follow represent the composite experience of these ten teachers who serve on Lindbergh's SLT, a team that was engaged in creating systemic change.

The profiles include the participants' own words as they each told their individual stories during the initial round of interviews. Every effort has been made to preserve the style, content and context of each participant's experience within the narrative developed by the writer. Ellipses have been used to indicate a significant pause in the participant's response. Speech patterns such as "um," "ah," and "you knows" have also been omitted, since these would "not do the participant justice in a written version of what he or

she has said” and could be significantly distracting to the reader (Seidman, 1991, p. 92). Finally, words that received unusual emphasis from the speaker have been highlighted with underlining.

Robert

Robert “didn’t start off to be a teacher,” but he “did a lot of tutoring and mentoring” in college, working with “at-risk students” in after school programs. One day he visited a middle school to ask about starting such a program and the principal asked him if he wanted to be a teacher. He “accepted the offer, obtained an emergency credential and became a teacher.”

Robert feels a kinship with some of the Mexican-American students he teaches in that he doesn’t feel wholly Mexican nor completely American. He was raised in Northern California and bears an Anglo-American name, so he doesn’t feel a strong identity with the Mexican culture or Mexico. On the other hand, neither does he feel a strong affiliation with the American culture. Instead, he feels “kind of tossed in the middle” or “caught in limbo” between the two cultures. As a Mexican-American, he is “treated differently in Mexico” than other Mexicans; and he does not always feel as though he is treated like an American in the United States.

Robert was “invited by the principal” to join the SLT. He laughingly admitted he probably would not have volunteered to join on his own. “I have enough work already. I don’t go seeking extra work, but I don’t turn a shoulder to it. If it comes my way, I’ll do it.” Because it “seemed like a good learning experience,” Robert willingly joined the SLT.

Smiling, Robert described himself as the “new kid on the block” in the SLT. He laughed heartily when he declared, “I didn’t know what I was getting into when I first got into the SLT, so I thought, ‘I’ll sit back and I’ll watch, and when something presents itself, I’ll be involved.’ Now, I’m seeing that there are a lot of chances to get involved in a lot of things!” he noted enthusiastically.

Robert is an energetic, dedicated teacher; and, for the first two years at Lindbergh High, teaching was his primary focus. Robert routinely began his school day almost an hour before his first class and remained in his room at least an hour after his last class. He taught classes every period of the day, tutored students daily at lunch, and seldom left his classroom. As a result, he “didn’t know anybody.” He observed, “I was just in my own little world; there are some good things about that. I would say to kids, ‘At least when you’re in my world, I try to provide a safe world. No matter what’s going on outside--you may be getting in a fight when you’re out there--when you’re in here you’re going to be safe and we’re going to learn.’”

Since joining the SLT, Robert has experienced a significant shift in his role in the school. “I used to say, ‘Oh well, whatever’s going on in the rest of the school is fine because I have my own little world here.’ But now I see the need to be connected to other teachers, to let my students know that we (the teachers) are connected and have common goals. I think it’s important for students to know that when we talk about the ESLR’s (Expected Schoolwide Learning Results) and stuff, that it’s not just one teacher . . . that we’re all a part of it.”

Robert smiled with pride when he reflected, “It feels good to be an SLT member. It feels good to be involved with what goes on in the school--the direction and future planning. When I return from an SLT training day and the kids ask me where I’ve been, I can say, ‘I was involved in some important meetings,’” He laughed, squaring his shoulders a little, obviously enjoying the sound of the words as well as the implications.

Paulina

Paulina describes herself as fluent in French, Spanish, English and Tagalog (the language of the Philippines) with “truly European” tastes. After graduation from college, she was considering a variety of options when someone said, “You know there’s an

opportunity for you to become an educator. You're good at it." Today Paulina agrees that education is the career for her, "I've experienced a lot of success with students. I take pride in being a teacher. This is play for me, not work."

Following her student teaching at Lindbergh High, Paulina hired on as a full time teacher. "After I got through the testing period of my first teaching assignment, I started doing extra things for the school. Because I spoke the language of many parents, there were natural things I was expected to do: parent groups, translations, curriculum I was an enthusiastic young person who had a lot of energy to do things, and I got in the 'yes' syndrome, 'I'll do it; that's not a problem.' In my third year, I started burning out."

Two years prior to this study, when the new principal came to Lindbergh High, Paulina found the support and encouragement she sought: recognition for her contributions in the classroom and to the school at large, a more equitable distribution of extra-curricular roles, and a mentor to assist her in developing her leadership capacity. As a result, she happily reaffirmed her passion for Lindbergh and continued her active involvement.

Paulina was asked to join the SLT at its inception. "I don't remember exactly how I was asked, or if I was asked, or if I was just asked to show up at this particular meeting. I know, though, that we were chosen; that this was not voluntary. We asked the principal why we were chosen. She said, 'For a variety of reasons, such as recommendations and my observations.' We were chosen; we did not volunteer."

Once she began the training, Paulina thought, "This is a great thing! I like learning. I love soaking up ideas. I'm very good at visualizing things and seeing how things should work." As if summing up the above descriptors, Paulina closed with, "I'm naturally a very positive person. I like to see the good in everything."

When Paulina reflected on her role in the SLT, she saw a natural match between the SLT and the schoolwide accreditation which Lindbergh High completed in Spring, 1997. As the accreditation coordinator, she realized that "the SLT ultimately needed to be the

accreditation team.” She thought, “Why make stuff harder than it is?” Laughing heartily, she relishes the image that, “people still joke about how they got conned into being on the SLT so they could work for me.”

Paulina sees herself as a visionary, cheerleader, mediator and helping hand on the SLT. “I look at myself as the person who sees ideas, visions, and ‘Rah! Rah! Rah!’ I see myself as the person who would say, ‘I’ll help you. I’m willing to do extra work. If you give me the general direction, I will do my best.’ I don’t mind putting in extra hours. I don’t mind meetings after school. I like to reconcile stuff and make it work, rather than say something is one or the other. If we can merge it, if it’s not so diametrically opposed that we can help combine the idea . . . heck, why not? Keeps everybody happy.”

Catherine

“Teaching wasn’t something that I always wanted to do. When I was in college, I just sort of fell into it.” As Catherine talked about her career, beginning with several years of teaching in Asia and South America, her passion for the profession became obvious, and sometimes overwhelming: “It’s amazing just how consuming--from day one--I have allowed teaching to be.”

Her passion is derived from the challenge and meaning she experiences in teaching. “It’s personally satisfying. I feel that I grow personally, and it’s a giving thing. I need to feel that I’m doing something every day, giving my time for a worthwhile cause. Teaching might be frustrating. It might be tiring, but it’s always worthwhile.”

Catherine attributed her invitation to join the SLT to her previous leadership experience. “The principal was new to the campus when the SLT training began. She asked certain ones of us to join. She wanted representatives from various parts of the school, people who already had an established leadership role, and so we came together. She has also said that she wanted us to be positive people. I felt qualified in those areas. I was positive and caring about my program, which is why I was asked to be on the SLT.”

Catherine smiled thoughtfully when she described her role on the team, "When our SLT team meets, I am the voice for critical thinking. That is a special interest of mine--in the classroom, and also as a staff developer. I develop and explore strategies with other teachers--seeking ways to encourage critical thinking in the classroom. And so, in the SLT, whenever there's an opportunity, that's my angle. Another role I play in the SLT is to try to move things along, summarize what people have said, and then express what we need to do now. I'm less of a 'Let's sit around and talk about it some more.' I'm, 'Okay, we've talked about it now. Now, this is what we said, what do we need to do?'"

Catherine's pleasure in the SLT is derived from her capacity to make a positive contribution to the team as well as from a sense of belonging. "Being an SLT member means that I have a little family here. That's how I feel, and I get the feeling that the other members share that. We have bonded. The SLT is an opportunity to connect--not just within the department but across the board--to get to know people. It's wonderful," Catherine added with a warm smile.

Felizardo

In his native Philippines, Felizardo completed law school, earned a masters degree in educational administration, and worked in the National Congress before coming to the United States. After nine years at the middle level in a neighboring school, he moved to Lindbergh High three years ago.

"At the beginning of this year, the principal asked for volunteers, for people who are interested in joining the SLT. I was interested immediately. At the request of the principal, I wrote my intention based on the criteria and I was appointed."

"My primary goal in joining the SLT is to have more training in leadership. I believe that a teacher should be, first of all, a leader. I am also pursuing my ambition to be an administrator in the near future. So, being an SLT member gives me experience in being a collaborator, a leader, a communicator, and a challenger."

As an SLT member, Felizardo believes he is “a contributor, first of all. My background is different from the rest of my team members. Where I came from, my experience, and the educational level that I have obtained could, perhaps, have an impact on whatever the SLT is working on.”

Felizardo affirmed, “The name SLT connotes that it's a school leadership team and, being a member of this, I must be a leader in innovations which support the educational goals of the school. We call that the mission of the school.” He repeated the phrase, “I must be a leader” three times; each repetition was spoken with varying inflection, implying multiple interpretations. It sounded like an admonition to live up to his responsibility, an affirmation of his importance, and a description of his role in the school.

Jen

“I was a P.E. (physical education) major in college. I did one semester of student teaching here at CLHS and then, the second semester, I was in an elementary school.

“This is my twelfth year in this district and my 21st year of teaching. My focus here at CLHS is to educate students without disabilities and our staff members about people with disabilities.”

Jen joined the SLT at the beginning of the second year, after responding to the principal's open invitation. In her letter of application, she identified several qualities that she could contribute to the SLT. “I wanted to represent the special abilities type students on campus because, often, they are overlooked. I'm organized, detail oriented, and I'm a very good planner. I also liked seeing what the SLT had done at staff meetings before I joined. The SLT had a year of training under their belt that I wish that I had been involved in; some of the things that they did at staff meetings were really fun and I thought, ‘I want to be a part of this!’”

As a relatively new member of the SLT, Jen does “a lot of listening.” “Although I feel very safe and comfortable in sharing my own thoughts, and I have done that a lot , I do more listening than I do sharing. I think it's because I'm new and I'm still learning

how it all transpires.” When she does contribute, Jen first described herself as a taskmaster and then on reflection, she added, “well . . . I don't want to say as a taskmaster, but I try to keep people focused on our goal and time commitments and that type of thing.”

Eileen

Eileen proudly described going back to school when she was 32 years old to get her teaching credential, “That was quite a milestone and very important to me. I wanted to be a history teacher--that is my first love; then I realized finding a job would be fairly difficult. So, here I am nine years into my career, the librarian at Charles Lindbergh High School.”

Eileen joined the SLT at the beginning of its second year. “The principal put a letter out to the staff asking us if we'd be interested. We had to write a letter telling why we were interested. I think, as a library media teacher, I need to be involved in as much as I can and still do my job extremely well. For that reason alone, I signed up.”

As she has gained confidence and a clearer understanding of her role on the SLT, Eileen has expanded her involvement. “When I first started, I would come back here and cloister myself in this office. But now I'm finding myself coming across articles, and wanting to share information from the workshops. I want to help people get back some of the enthusiasm that twenty or more years of teaching has rubbed away. So I'm doing articles and sending them out to various people and hoping they'll read them. I also try to share what we've learned.”

Smiling with pleasure, Eileen described her experience on the SLT, “It's been such an eye opening experience for me. I've learned so much about so many different things here on campus and off campus, and I think it's broadened my future.”

Michelle

“My mom is a teacher, and so I always thought that I never ever wanted to be a teacher because I had heard all the horror stories. So, when I went to college, I was a business major. My first semester of college, a professor asked me, ‘What is it that you

really love?' I answered, 'English.' He said, 'Don't you think that if you're going to be here for four years that you should do something that you love?' I thought about it and decided that I would be an English teacher. I've found that I have fallen in love with teaching, and I love these kids."

"When the SLT started this year, the principal sent out a flyer saying, 'If you are interested in change and in helping Charles Lindbergh High School change, we want you to join the SLT.' I thought about it, and when she said, 'after school meetings,' I thought, 'I can't do after school meetings. I have to go get my daughter!'" The smile of a new mother lit up her eyes for a moment before she proceeded with resolve, "But, I decided that if there was going to be change here, that I wanted to be a part of it; that's why I signed up."

Reflecting on her role on the SLT, Michelle referred to an activity during a recent SLT training. "We went around and we decided what kind of person we were. I was the Instigator!" Her conspiratorial laughter gave credence to her comment and demonstrated her pleasure in the title. "I'm the person who always brings up the negative perspective. My husband tells me that I'm a pessimist," she added with a laugh. "I always look at the negative side of everything. I'm always the one who challenges. When the others come up with all these wonderful ideas, I say, 'It's not going to work.' They get kind of cranky, and then they find ways to make it work." In this capacity, Michelle regularly provides a reality check for the team, making sure that what they talk about "over there in the haven of SLT is actually going to be realistic when we come back to Lindbergh High."

Michelle values her Devil's Advocate role on the SLT because "it means that I am one of the people who is responsible for making some of these changes actually happen. It means that I am stepping out of my role as classroom teacher, and it's giving me an opportunity to broaden my scope, as a teacher and a person. I know that if I didn't have SLT, my life would be 'come to school, go home and be with my daughter, and come back.' But with SLT, my life is bigger. It's a challenge for me because we can use the

skills that we have, use leadership and not be negative.” Laughing, she added, “And that’s very important for me because I am a very negative person. I don’t know if it’s negative, but I’m just very realistic. So to be with a lot of people who are very positive, it’s really neat for me.”

Michelle’s view of Lindbergh High, as well as her role as a teacher, have changed significantly since she joined the SLT. The first three years of her teaching career, Michelle thought the school was “lost --not focused. It was somewhere that I came to do a job.” She used to feel, “I’m not going to have a whole lot of effect on very many students. So long as they sit down and shut up and I get my stuff done, then I don’t really care. It’s somewhere that I’m stuck.”

Now Michelle smiles as she observes, “SLT gives me a lot of hope.” Her previous pessimistic view of the school seemed to be heavily influenced by “a lot of negativity” from some of the teachers “who have been here for a long, long time.” The influence of the new principal, her colleagues on the SLT, and her belief that she can actually help improve the school have given Michelle a new perspective, “I do have a lot of hope.”

Ernie

With an experience similar to Robert’s and Catherine’s, Ernie observed that he “got into teaching by mistake,” but loves it. “I fell into it. I had just opened up the jewelry department at J.C. Penny’s when somebody came in and said, ‘Hey, why don’t you get your credential; there’s a demand for bilingual teachers!’ I said, ‘Sure, I’ll do that.’ I went to get my teaching credential during the summer, and while I was in school I applied for a job teaching here at Lindbergh and I got it.”

In retrospect, Ernie realized that this has always been an appropriate career for him, “Dealing with kids has always been neat for me . . .even when I was a kid. It’s fun! It’s exciting! Kids have a more open and honest approach to everything. They challenge you,

and it keeps you honest. In the years since I started teaching--and I've been teaching for quite a while--I have yet to meet a real rotten kid, I mean, to the core. There's something good about everybody."

When he described his approach to teaching, Ernie observed, "I thrive on change; I have to do different things every year. I don't think I've ever taught a class the same. I usually keep the stuff that I use for the class, but when I open it up I don't want to deal with it; I want to do it differently. I cannot see standing still."

One of the original "invited" members of the SLT, Ernie enthusiastically described the experience as "a feeding trough." "I'm basically a positive person and this is a positive experience. I go to the meetings and I feed. I get re-energized and I come back and want to do something."

Ernie confidently described his role on the SLT as a lens, "focusing, extracting what's essential. I'm a good listener and, if two or three people are talking, but they're shooting past each other, I can usually say, 'Listen, what you're saying is this . . . and what you're saying is this. . . . It doesn't coincide, but you do have a meeting point.' I'm the type of person who likes to get to the point."

Lorna

Lorna decided to become a teacher when she was in high school. "I had a teacher whom I enjoyed tremendously, and I guess I wanted to be like her. She was very athletic. She was very friendly, very knowledgeable, she just seemed like such a real person to me. After graduating from college, I took a half-time position here at Charles Lindbergh. The next September, I was hired as a middle school teacher. Five or six years later, I came back to CLHS and I've enjoyed being here so much that I've stayed."

Like Felizardo, Lorna aspires to administration and is ready for new challenges in her career. "This past semester, I started working on my masters in educational administration. I'm excited because it's kind of energized me. I'm looking forward to something different."

Soon after the new principal came to Lindbergh High, she asked Lorna to join the SLT. "She just casually said, 'Would you like to be a member of my School Leadership Team?' And silly me, I said, 'Okay.' I'm saying silly me, because at the time I honestly had no idea what the heck it was. So I committed myself, not knowing that it was a two year, perhaps a three year commitment, and it involved after school, before school, during school meetings, and workshops."

"Generally, it has been a good experience for me. I extremely enjoy the opportunity to go off campus with a group of my peers here at school and discuss things, talk about restructuring, and talk about staff development and things like that, which I think are just critical to improving the success of our students."

Lorna believes her role on campus has changed since she joined the SLT. "It means I'm a leader on campus in a way that I never have been before." Prior to the SLT, her leadership role on campus was primarily a result of her longevity and experience, complemented by a variety of job specific roles such as department chair. The SLT means she is a leader in a systemic change initiative, "I'm part of a new focus in the District." It means that she is part of an important movement to improve student achievement. "That's real meaningful to me because I have these kids in class that I like, that I enjoy working with. Then I look at their test scores, and I'm very concerned. I'm real glad to be a part of something that I believe will improve those scores and cause these kids to be a greater success."

"I think my role on the SLT is to be an honest evaluator of what's going on here at Lindbergh High School, to discuss whatever the current topic happens to be, to help make it happen here at Charles Lindbergh--to lead staff development, plan workshops, be an accreditation focus leader, or whatever is needed. I think it's also to help explain to staff what we're doing, and where we're going, to the best of my ability, whenever I'm asked in that negative way that people have of questioning."

“Because I’m a site liaison on the district SLT committee, I also am a recorder. I take notes for the team; I keep a log of what we’re doing, what we’ve talked about, any resolutions that we came to. I guess my job, primarily, is to just be there, to give my input as an experienced teacher. I think that’s one thing the SLT has taught me too, that I’m a teacher with a lot of knowledge; I’ve been around a long time and my input is valued. The SLT makes me feel that way--that I have ideas and feelings about things that are important. It’s a real nice feeling.”

Elizabeth

With eight years of experience, Elizabeth describes herself as “a relatively new teacher.” Like three of her colleagues, Elizabeth admits, “I did not want to be a teacher originally, I thought I wanted to be a CPA, and so I went into banking. I fell asleep in business law, but I fell in love with my math classes, and decided then I wanted to teach. I was always the kind of person who wanted to help people. The summer after graduation, I met a teacher from Charles Lindbergh; she told me there was an opening. I was hired the next semester.”

“The year the SLT started, I was out of the classroom except for one class, serving as the Coordinator of Categorical Programs. When the principal asked me if I’d like to be on the SLT, I said, ‘Yeah, of course! Absolutely!’ It was an opportunity to get to know more of my colleagues. I had been the department chair and knew my department very well, and I knew some of my neighbors, but I didn’t know a lot of the other people in the school. I hadn’t gotten to work with anyone, and I knew there was a lot of talent out there.” In preparation for a possible future administrative position, Elizabeth was also interested in “learning how to do staff development.” Elizabeth sees the SLT as “a tremendous opportunity, and not something that comes up” for teachers on a regular basis.

Elizabeth’s sees herself as “more analytic and product oriented than some of the SLT members.” “I try to keep grounded and see where this is going to go. ‘What’s our

output supposed to be? What's logical? What's feasible? What will be received well? What won't be received well?" Like Michelle, she observes, "Sometimes I'm a Devil's Advocate."

Elizabeth smiled with pride when she acknowledged, "It's an honor. It's an opportunity. It's a privilege. I like growth and I like change, and I like new things--within limits," she added with a laugh of one who has recently experienced the limit and survived.

Summary

Despite the diverse ethnic and experiential backgrounds of the ten teachers who participated in this study, all were united in their commitment to the SLT. The teachers cited a variety of reasons for their commitment, with five common themes emerging: a shared passion for teaching; a reaffirmed sense of value as a teaching professional; an assurance of the importance of the SLT's work; a sense of belonging to a team of like-minded, yet diverse, colleagues; and a renewed sense of hope for the future.

The Teachers' Experience on the Team

The first research question that guided this study is: What is the experience of teachers who are members of a School Leadership Team (SLT) that is engaged in schoolwide change? This research sought to understand the essence of the teachers' experience by listening to and reflecting upon the voices of ten teachers who served on an established high school team.

The teachers on Lindbergh High School's SLT characterized the team as: "a positive force in the school," "a communication vehicle," and "a support group." In the process of living out the above roles, the teacher leaders described their experience on the SLT as "unique," "eye opening," "challenging," and transforming in that the co-researchers felt they had been "changed" by the experience.

The Teachers' Description of the School Leadership Team

"A Positive Force in the School."

Creating "change in a positive direction" was the central focus of the SLT as described by the ten teacher members, and they perceived it to be equally important to the principal's perception. "I think she sees the SLT as a vehicle for change, for positive change." This perspective echoes the literature that defines teacher leaders as individuals who challenge the status quo and serve as change agents, working toward schoolwide improvement (Boles & Troen, 1996; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Stone, 1996).

The best way to understand what positive change has meant to these ten teachers is in the context of their collective experience at Lindbergh High School. The following section contrasts the participants' classroom teacher perspective of Lindbergh with their view of the school through their SLT lens, demonstrating the co-researchers' understanding of the students, the staff and the culture in which the SLT operates.

"With my teacher's hat on." As the teachers described CLHS from their classroom teacher perspectives, they offered a vivid image of a complex, comprehensive high school in a diverse community. Their perspectives revealed both loyalty to the school and an awareness of the problems that are grounded in their day-to-day experiences with students and adult colleagues.

Four teacher leaders began by describing Lindbergh High from a demographic perspective. "Lindbergh High is a microcosm of the society." "It is located in a middle to low income area, which means that our students have more limited resources than other students in terms of examples, role models and technical resources." "A lot of the families are single parent, or have two working parents. I don't think there are a lot of 'traditional' families. I think a lot of these kids are raising themselves."

For five of the teacher leaders, the cultural plurality that comes from being "a minority school with lots of kids of color," makes CLHS "an exciting place." "You get a

lot of input from the kids about their families, and things that are important to them culturally. That's wonderful! Anytime someone brings you food, you know it's not going to be a bologna and cheese sandwich."

At the institutional level, four of the teachers described CLHS as "basically a good school, with a lot of good programs and a lot of areas for potential growth." One interviewee was more exuberant in her description: "It's a wonderful place to be for students and staff. It's a safe place; our kids feel safe here, our staff members feel safe, and as a teacher I feel safe here. It's a great place!" Another teacher defined what "safe" meant: "I don't think there's much gang activity or much real violence here. I think the kids are fairly typical teenagers."

Several co-researchers spoke of respect for teachers as a cornerstone of their student profile. "Teachers are more respected than at other schools." "Our students may not always do what the teachers say, but they're pretty congenial and loving and respectful of their teachers." While respect for teachers is important, academic success was even more important to these teacher leaders. "A lot of students don't read and write very well." "We have a lot of D's and F's, for a lot of reasons. I think the largest reason is that so many of them have a second-language handicap coming into their curricular classes, and they can't read the material."

In the context of the district and society, one of the teacher leaders observed, "Our kids have a lot of uphill climbing to do." She related a perception that CLHS students are the underdogs, with fewer resources and opportunities to achieve success in the mainstream culture than their peers in neighboring communities:

Over the years, I have realized that Lindbergh isn't the diamond in the district. We're sort of the diamond in the rough; our capacity is not fully recognized. Our kids know we're not fully recognized and, in some instances, it will give them that

extra boost that they need. They just have to keep pushing a little harder to prove themselves. I've seen that very clearly, especially in the band program and in sports.

One of the younger teachers, a recent graduate of a neighboring high school confirmed her colleague's perception:

When I went to high school, Lindbergh was the place you went if you didn't have anywhere else to go. And I have found, through a number of different activities, that the kids here still feel that way. They're very negative about this school. "This school is cheap. This school doesn't care. Why would I tell someone that I go to Lindbergh High School? I'm embarrassed." They've said these things to me, and it makes me feel really really sad because my alma mater had so much history and so much spirit; I would love for these kids to feel the same way about Lindbergh. I don't think that it's only a student perspective . . . it's a teacher perspective, it's a parent . . . it's a community perspective.

After focusing on the school at large, and then focusing on the students, the SLT members described their colleagues on the staff. Several teacher leaders offered optimistic views of their peers, while one was outright enthusiastic, offering the ultimate compliment from a teacher to her peers. "I know so many excellent teachers; I want my children to be in their classrooms." Another teacher leader noted, "I see a tremendous amount of potential and creativity. That potential is limited, to some extent, by the fact that there is never enough money . . . never enough time. But, there are a lot of ideas! I have a lot of ideas and other people have a lot of ideas for improvement in curriculum and in discipline." Several teacher members of the SLT believe this potential is enhanced by "the camaraderie among staff and the good relationship between students and teachers, in general" "Of course," one of the teacher leaders added with a laugh, "there are isolated cases."

Other SLT members were not so kind to their colleagues. Most saw those “isolated cases” as a significant issue for the CLHS staff, students and community:

There is a lot of history here. There are a lot of teachers who have been here for a long, long time. Some of them are wonderful and I learn a lot from them, but there are other people--and I'm sure that it's probably like this on all campuses--there's a lot of negativity . . . a lot of negativity.

Another teacher offered a similar perspective, adding this explanation: “I think it's a place where long-time staff members are very comfortable. We have a real camaraderie here. For the ones who have been here all along, it's a real good place to be.” She was less positive about the adjustment of new staff members into the school, however, noting that they have not been integrated well into the staff, and have frequently been disturbed by the negative attitudes of their more senior colleagues.

In their description of Lindbergh High from their classroom teacher perspective, the co-researchers highlighted both school strengths and challenges, as well as the diversity of attitudes among students and staff, demonstrating an understanding of the complexity of the context in which they work.

“With my SLT hat on.” As the teachers shifted from a classroom teacher's perspective to an SLT perspective, they demonstrated an understanding of the staff culture that operates at Charles Lindbergh and they offered insight into their role in that culture.

When asked about her view of Lindbergh High from an SLT perspective, one teacher leader described the primary role of the SLT and its initial activities with staff:

In SLT we have spent quite a bit of time talking about powerful teaching techniques. It's very challenging to think about new strategies to reach these students, to develop their potential, to motivate them. That's our job and that's our challenge. The SLT has addressed itself to that; we've presented it to staff and had good discussions with them. That is how we started: “What's the purpose of school? What is the ideal school? . . . the ideal classroom?”

All of the co-researchers saw “lot of potential” in the staff, but admit it feels like the SLT is “pulling teeth sometimes.” The SLT is constantly asking, “How do we get everybody seeing the same picture, seeing the same goal, and then seeing the same way to get there?” The SLT members were clear that there was no panacea, no magic bullet that would help them answer those questions, nor did they already know what the specific goal or the “way” was, prior to their work with the staff. Clearly an understatement of the complexity, one teacher summarized the dilemma: “Our goals are not easily attainable.”

Another teacher leader, who offered a relatively negative view of the school from her perspective as a classroom teacher, laughed heartily when asked if the SLT perspective would differ:

No, it would probably be even worse, because when you're in the leadership role during an inservice, you see the looks on the teachers' faces. You can see them thinking, “Why are we doing this crap? Why are you wasting my time? I'd rather be anywhere else than sitting here doing this!”

“Frustrating and sometimes uncooperative--both students and staff,” was the first response of another co-researcher when asked to describe the school from an SLT perspective. After a pause to reflect on the meaning of these words, she added,

I mean the staff may be professional, but sometimes just not willing to bend an inch. We're a very militant staff. We're the school that is on the front lines when there is a union issue. For every person from a neighboring school, there will be four of us doing whatever needs to be done. Our staff is aggressive that way, they don't just lie down. I see them as, sometimes, pretty stubborn. When they get something in their craw, they're not about to change.

This “stubbornness” has strongly influenced the way the SLT works, as evidenced later in the chapter. “As SLT members, we're going to have to come up with some real innovative ways to make our colleagues believe that some change may be productive.”

With resignation about the time required to make that happen, and determination born from her commitment to the mission, one of the teachers mused, "I may retire before we have that accomplished."

One of the more experienced members of the SLT offered a similar view of the staff, checking off each of the factions as she went through the school:

There are a lot of people who like to get involved and like to contribute. There are some people who don't, who just sit back and expect everything to be done for them. Then there are the people who are digging in their heels, and are going to fight you--they're very vocal. These are the people who resist change; these are the people who have been here since I did my student teaching (twenty years ago) and are very outspoken. They are the rabble rousers.

Another teacher leader briefly described the problems from a students' perspective, balancing it with the proactive view of the SLT.

Lindbergh is a school with a lot of long-term teachers, people who have been using the traditional format of teacher-lecturing-students-listening. I think some of them are locked into that. Lindbergh High School is a school in need of change. I think we need to focus more on data, and to plan around what the data show. We have a lot of kids reading below grade level. We have a lot of kids getting Ds and Fs. We have a lot of kids with excessive absences. Those are all things that affect what we should be doing here.

One of the younger teacher leaders summarized the perspective and commitment of the SLT, and then provided the contrasting view of those same problems from a classroom teacher's perspective:

I look at ways of changing the school with my SLT hat on. I say, "OK, What could we do to actually fix the problems or work toward making improvements in those areas?" Whereas, as a teacher I might say, "The problems are too big to work on." That is a big difference.

From team origin to present practice. The concept of being a positive force was apparently set in motion from the team's inception. One teacher described the process for the team formation:

The principal specifically set it up so that positive people, people who were going to be part of the solution, were on the team. After she got the first group together, there were additional openings and she said, "Who would you ask?" We responded, "This person or that person because they have a lot to offer. No, we wouldn't ask this person because we wouldn't get as far as fast; we would have to fight some negativity."

When asked if the selection of positive people for the team eliminated important negative perspectives, another teacher explained, "I think having some of the more negative voices on campus on the team might have helped them see more easily where we were, and might have made some of our transitions here on campus easier." This comment also reflected a "Monday morning quarterback" view which, in retrospect, recognized the potential for co-opting naysayers by including them in the process. The comment also revealed an understanding of the representative nature of the SLT, where each of the members was responsible for gathering information and sharing information with their colleagues. And in that context, the speaker acknowledged that the team may have missed some crucial input by excluding overtly negative people.

During the year this team was studied, the school was going through a mandated Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation process. In several ways the process both assisted and impeded their capacity to be a positive force in the school. On the down side, the accreditation process was, in many ways, perceived by the staff as "something they had to do," "as a job, a project," a chore which had little to do with their day-to-day work. The members of the SLT, although they eventually perceived

“a clear connection between the work of the SLT and the accreditation process,” were stymied by the feeling that, to some extent, the accreditation process was as an interruption to the work the team had begun the year before.

On the positive side, the WASC provided an avenue for the team to take a more proactive school leadership role because many of the teachers on the SLT (a) served as Focus Group leaders or small group facilitators, (b) assisted in writing and editing both the accreditation report and the action plan, and (c) were leading the staff development process required by the action plan. The hope of the SLT was that they could “get on with it.” One teacher clearly described what “get on with it” meant:

I'm hoping, as the accreditation process comes to completion and we start concentrating on where we're going to go instead of examining where we were and where we want to go, as we start doing staff development and begin achieving our goals, hopefully we will have a greater impact on the school. This year it's all been the accreditation, that has been the SLT's role, and that has had a huge impact on staff. Maybe I'm hoping, instead of having an impact, maybe I'm wanting to make a positive change.

When this teacher discriminated between an impact and positive change, she was echoing the desires of each of the teachers involved in this study. It was not enough for them to just make changes in their school. They were driven to create changes that positively affect students, and were, eventually, perceived as positive by staff. As one realistic teacher so graphically put it, the SLT hoped the staff would eventually see the changes as, “something different because, even though it was ‘a pain-in-the-butt’ experience, it was a positive experience.”

How will the members of the SLT help staff make such difficult changes and remain positive? One of the interviewees described her perspective:

I see myself saying, “Hey guys, we’re here for you. We’re not here as your enemies. We’re not the principal’s “yes-men.” We’re here to help you and we are

a team. I want to reach out and say, "Come on, get on the bandwagon! This is going to be great! It's going to be a change and change is hard, but we're the leaders and we will stay positive about it, and be ready for all the storming that's going to happen.

Her comments reflected the thoughts and commitments of the teachers on the team; they were anxious for their peers to understand their role, as positive supporters of the work teachers do. They perceived themselves as "coaches," cheerleaders, and "guides." They recognized that there would be storming (conflict) as they took on the real issues of student success, but they were girded for battle, united in the importance of the work, and committed to seeing it through.

"A Communication Vehicle"

The most obvious role the SLT members played was as a "communication vehicle" or "link," "conduit" between staff and the SLT. Eight of the ten teacher leaders directly referred to some aspect of this role: listener, information gatherer, clarifier, facilitator, and interpreter. This role was also documented in current research as a critical aspect of teacher leadership (Bellon, 1994; Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Stone, 1996; Wilson, 1991).

One of the most important aspects of their role as a "communication link" appeared to be "listener." Although they were not elected by their colleagues to serve on the SLT, the team members felt a responsibility to represent their colleagues' voices at SLT meetings. "If we're in the faculty room and something comes up, when we're in SLT we'll share what we heard. What we hear, we discuss. We bring up the concerns because we know other people are having those same concerns." This feedback loop guided their SLT activities, both formal and informal, and is further described later in this chapter.

The team was also intensely concerned about clarifying their role in the school. There had been confusion among staff about the purpose and responsibilities of the SLT,

but it was obvious there was no confusion among the teacher members on the team. Using another governance group on campus for comparison, the team clearly articulated their role in the school.

As a relatively new group on campus, with no precedent for their unique role, the SLT had been referred to as a “fake FAC.” The FAC (Faculty Advisory Committee) was an official, contract-driven, “decision making body” responsible for the “budget,” “master schedule” and other work-related issues on campus such as “graduation procedures.”

All of teacher leaders described a significant difference between the FAC and the SLT. “The FAC really has a lot of power. They decide important issues such as whether or not we should have new classes, how many sections of classes are going to be taught, and all kinds of policy issues.” “They deal with immediate problems. For example, if a teacher or a department has a problem, they get on the agenda at the FAC. The FAC discusses it and that body, with the help of the administration, will make certain decisions.”

In contrast, “the SLT is not a decision making body;” “It is more of an information gathering group.” The SLT gathers information, provides an opportunity for the staff to process that information and assists them in arriving at a site agreement about what to do next. The SLT then “helps the school go in that direction.”

When the researcher asked, “Do you think the SLT can have a powerful impact on the school without making the kinds of decisions the FAC makes?” one of interviewees responded:

Oh, I think we certainly can. What you're discussing is power. Can we have influence without power? Maybe we can have more influence because there isn't a real bone of contention associated with the SLT, since we're not in the position of making a decision for anyone. We're more neutral, and our impact depends on us as individuals. If we have persuasive abilities and knowledge about things, we can have a lot of power.

This last phrase was almost inaudible, as if fearful someone would overhear the SLT associated with the term “power.” The concern about associating the word “power” with teacher leadership is also documented in the literature, (e.g., Bellon, 1994; Wilson, 1991). This reluctance to discuss the “power” in relationship to the SLT hinted at the delicate balance these teachers faced in creating a new kind of school leadership without threatening the FAC or other established governance groups. It also validated their need to communicate the purpose of the SLT more explicitly to staff.

Another teacher leader described the difference between the SLT and FAC in terms of perspective and product:

Instead of asking, “What’s going on at the school?” SLT asks, “What can go on at the school?” SLT is broader, and FAC is more focused. There was a stamp “Paid” on almost everything we looked at in the FAC. We had a product, good or bad.

By “broader,” this teacher leader was referring to three characteristics of the SLT: (a) the future-oriented perspective which seeks “what’s possible;” (b) the group’s focus on process, i.e., “consensus,” “data analysis,” and “critical thinking;” and (c) the team’s goal of improving “student achievement” and school climate which extends beyond budgets and schedules. Another teacher leader explained the term “broader” when she observed, “The FAC is more teacher centered than student centered. The SLT’s bottom line is always, ‘Is it better for the students?’”

Two other teachers defined the difference between the FAC and SLT as the difference between “management and leadership.” “The FAC is basically monetary; they don’t deal with change.” “The FAC is there to make decisions about very specific, particular things. I don’t see FAC as having any kind of leadership role. A lot of times I think the FAC reps are just whoever’s left over, maybe whoever missed the meeting gets to go.” This view reflected the pride the SLT members felt in the work they did and their image of leadership--topics which are further described later in this chapter.

The capacity of Lindbergh's team members to see themselves in a leadership role evolved over the first 18 months of SLT involvement. The team initially chose to call itself the "School Liaison Team," rather than the School Leadership Team. The team was preparing to actively communicate a new image to their non-SLT colleagues at the time of this study. Although fairly unified on the importance of changing their name, or at least the visibility of their role, the team members reflected a wide range of attitudes toward the name change.

One of the senior members of the team noted that the title "depends on your definition of leadership and, as far as naming it, it's only terminology. Liaison really is a type of leadership. We originally chose that word because the connotation seemed maybe less telling, and more facilitating". Although described as an issue of semantics, the choice of liaison over leadership "feels very important, because we were not elected by the teachers!" The comment implied two important assumptions about leadership:

(a) leadership, in its traditional interpretation in schools, means "telling" others what to do, and (b) the only teachers who have authority to "tell" their colleagues are those who are elected, such as department chairpersons or union representatives.

Another teacher outlined the issue and the transition of the group's thinking, revealing a more aggressive approach to the team's leadership role:

I think we're in a time of transition as a group, because we want to be more visible on campus now. We want to take a more active leadership role. We want people to say, "Oh yeah, the SLT." We want them to be able to talk about us as though they know what the heck we're doing, and who the heck we are. Initially, we wanted to keep our role low key. We didn't want to walk on campus and say, "Hey, we're bad! We're the School Leadership Team!" So we renamed ourselves the School Liaison Team. Now we're ready to step into the role of School Leadership Team and say, "Look, this is where we're going, and this is what we're going to do. It's going to happen. You can fight it or not; either way, it's going to happen." I

think the name change will happen without too much trouble because our peers see us more in that role already. I think there's been a good transitional step: from being a school liaison team member, to being an accreditation focus group leader, to being more of a leader on campus, in general.

A young teacher described the dilemma from his point of view, defining some of the issues related to the team's communication with staff:

Initially, we just saw ourselves as an infusion of new strategies, supporting learning for the faculty. We didn't want to stand out like sore thumbs, but we found that might not have been the best way to approach it. We have to be visible; we have to share the ideas; we have to say, "This is what we learned and this is what's happening, etc., etc. We experienced some strategies that might help us deal with what we're doing now." I think we have to publicize what we're doing, so we are not seen as a select group or as the principal's "yes men."

The concern about being a "select group" or the "principal's yes men" was shared by every one of the teacher leaders. Being one of "the chosen" was positive; SLT members they took great pride in the fact they were "invited" to serve on the SLT. The concept had a negative connotation among their peers, however. It smacked of favoritism and fostered mistrust, jealousy, and resistance.

The term "yes men" came from a comment in the faculty lounge that was relayed to the team through one of the teacher members. The team did not want to be seen as a "rubber stamp" for the principal, existing "to support the principal's agenda." The team believed this perception could seriously harm their capacity to effect change, a concern validated by other teacher leaders in similar circumstances (Schmidt, 1996; Vandiver, 1996).

The teachers on the SLT were frustrated that the rest of the staff did not understand that the principal was seen as an "equal" on the team. "She has her ideas and opinions, but she also respects the opinions that we bring to the meetings." "Of course, she's still

ultimately responsible for the school, but she consciously tries to stay back, and not have us all look to her. She tries to play down her role." "In the SLT I think we're all equals in that we all have an opportunity to share ideas and give our feedback." The concern about being seen as the principal's "yes men," intensified the need to communicate the SLT's role more clearly to the staff:

"We want to make sure that there's more communication and that people know what we're doing, or what we're responsible for . . . that our goals are shared goals, not just what we think is right, but what the goals of the students are. I think the role of communication is going to be increased. That's what we're working on: how to do that, how to let people know that we're not there because we think we know it all, nor are we there as "Yes" men."

When the School Leadership Team spoke about being a "communication link" within the school, they consciously used a variety of strategies. They focused on (a) enhancing their personal influence with peers and the team's visibility, (b) establishing a clear relationship between the SLT and other decision making groups on campus, and (c) maintaining a consistent focus on students. Each of these strategies was important in furthering the work of the SLT and, ultimately, the work of the school.

"A Support Group"

Each of the ten co-researchers identified the interrelationships he or she had developed as the most important aspect of the SLT experience. Several researchers (e.g., Chrispeels et. al., 1997; Gordon, 1995; Nichols, 1994) have documented that more collaborative and interdependent relationships develop among teachers who share leadership on a schoolwide team. The teachers on Lindbergh's SLT described an even more complex relationship, however. The teachers noted that the team served as "a support group" that provided shelter, encouragement, and moral support for the work they were doing. As one of the teachers observed, "It's kind of like a booster club behind you, a team of people linked together going in the same direction. You don't have to do it alone."

Because enhanced relationships are seldom obvious while they are developing, and are seldom overtly included in the expectations of school supported activities for teachers, the team members only gradually became aware of the importance of their mutual relationships as the study progressed. Direct questions about personal relationships were not used as prompts during the interviews. As a result, this concept did not emerge until the second round of interviews when the participants began to identify issues of relationship, and the topic was not fully explored until the co-researchers convened as a focus group.

Eileen, a second year member of the SLT and the library media teacher, began the focus group by relating a recent, harrowing experience. As an SLT representative to the FAC, Eileen was one of fifteen staff members involved in a new master-schedule-building process, which had been initiated to increase staff participation and to increase the focus on student needs. After the first draft of the master schedule was completed, it was posted on a bulletin board in the office for all staff to review before the committee reconvened at a later date to make needed changes and finalize the schedule. Eileen described the scene to her colleagues,

You know what that means . . . everybody crowding around, looking for their own class schedule--angry because it doesn't give them their favorite second period prep or it shows three sections of a class they don't like to teach. I was prepared, knowing someone would attack me since I helped make the draft.

Exhausted from a difficult day negotiating the master schedule with 14 of her peers in "a room without air," Eileen rested a moment in her office before heading home. The door suddenly opened and she was confronted by an angry woman who started to "yell" at her.

Eileen paused before she went on with the story, then she observed, "Before I spoke, I put my umbrella up . . . I didn't want to strangle anyone, so I put up my umbrella." Eileen held her breath, hunched her shoulders, clenched her teeth and, holding

an imaginary handle close to her face, moved her hands as though opening an umbrella in front of her. Then she continued, "I put up my [imaginary] umbrella and I listened to her."

The others in the focus group nodded in agreement, murmuring support and hanging on every word. Ernie responded enthusiastically, "And it didn't crush you!" "No, it didn't crush me," added Eileen triumphantly,

In the past I would have been crushed. I would have withdrawn, cried, come apart; instead, I put up my umbrella! The SLT is my umbrella. I know I am not alone; I have courage because I know you are there with me when I face the storm.

Eileen introduced the concept of the umbrella with this story; it did not appear to have been part of their conversation before. As the focus group continued, the umbrella became a central symbol for the teacher members of the team. The umbrella seemed to represent the unity and support which they provided for each other in the face of hostility, difficulty or fearful circumstances. It seemed to communicate protection and strength. As Eileen put it, "It keeps my professional soul intact." This powerful image implied that she no longer felt vulnerable in the face of resistance or intimidation; she had developed courage and resilience that gave her confidence in confrontational situations. This new confidence and courage was drawn from the power of the team and the knowledge that she did not need to face the problem alone.

Paulina, the chair of the schoolwide accreditation process, echoed this perspective when she noted, "The SLT surrounded me with umbrellas during the tough times of the accreditation. I would not have made it without you." The focus group hastily agreed and spent some time musing about the fate of the leader of the last accreditation who had "a breakdown." "Her head was gone . . . pffft! Gone . . . and she had to be replaced!" The teachers who lived through the previous accreditation process attributed the problem to lack of support. Ernie agreed, "I worked with the accreditation chair last time; she didn't have the umbrellas." Another teacher added, "She was out there on the end of the limb by herself and they were sawing it off." The pronoun "they" clearly referred to a percentage

of their colleagues on the staff, who consistently undermined the previous accreditation process through their lack of support, negative attitudes, and aggressive resistance.

Later in the focus group, one of the teacher leaders referred to another aspect of the team relationship and added two new interpretations to the “umbrella” metaphor. Earlier that week, she had “yelled” at another SLT member. In reflecting on the event, she turned to her teammate and said, “I really wasn't mad at you. You know that I took it wrong.” Her colleague smiled in response, “I put my umbrella up. I can protect myself in a rainstorm.” Another teacher chimed in with a wry laugh, “Yeah, you can either protect yourself or kill someone,” demonstrating how the umbrella also served to protect the person who was attacking, whether a team member or another colleague, from an angry retort or future vengeance.

In addition, for these SLT colleagues, the umbrella represented the connection they felt with each other, protecting one another from permanently hurting each other's feelings, allowing them to be “real” with each other. Being “real” with each other came from feeling safe in the group, where “a level of openness, of sharing” was encouraged and nurtured.

Michelle also referred to the SLT as important in “keeping my professional soul intact.” She described how the SLT supported her after one of her colleagues lied and usurped her position in the master schedule session mentioned earlier:

The SLT has been really good because, even though I've only been teaching a few years, I've never felt the family type thing that I do now. If you (addressing several of her teammates) hadn't been there after I discovered I had been tricked, I don't know what I would have done! I went into the principal's office to steal my M & Ms back! And then you asked (nodding to one of her SLT colleagues and assuming a tone of genuine concern), “Is something wrong?” Of course you said that and I started crying. It was like “Waaa!” (hysterical sound of child crying, followed by calm control) And . . . then it got a little bit better!

Paulina added triumphantly, "And you didn't eat all the M & Ms. I'm so proud of you!" "No, I didn't," Michelle smiled with pleasure, remembering her control and basking in the glow of feeling cared for and understood. Eileen recounted a similar experience and laughed with celebration when she recalled the moment, several months earlier, when she realized, "Hey! I'm part of the team and they really care."

This genuine sense of being cared for was perceived by Paulina as "a wall to lean on," an image she recalled from high school. "The teacher drew a picture of a man carrying a heavy load. Behind the man was another man supporting the load, making the load lighter. Behind that man were many men in a row, each one easing the load by his support. The SLT is like that . . . it lightens my load."

Another way the team has supported each other is in adopting a particular phrase that helps them let go of fear or anxiety when faced with resistance from their non-SLT colleagues. Ernie explained it best:

I listen to people and their opinions of things that they can't deal with, and I've adopted Lorna's phrase. During one of our meetings, she said, "Get over it!" And I thought, "God, what a wonderful thing to say." "Hey, you can't handle it? Get over it! It'll pass." It's so good! If you get over it, no problem!

Transferring the concept to the workings of the SLT, where the good of the group or the students came before the individual, Eileen chimed in, "Absolutely. You just get over it. Then you move on, you pat each other on the back and go, 'We're adults here, and now we're going to do this.'" Ernie added, "And until that moment comes, there's a collision course," indicating that the alternative to "getting over it" was "taking it on," fighting back, or letting the resistor get you down. The phrase "get over it" was also important because it indicated that the team was much more focused on what they had control over, on a proactive approach to the problems they faced, than on wasting time or energy on what they could not control, such as the attitudes of their non-SLT colleagues who actively cultivate negativity and use it to derail intended change.

The impact of the SLT as a support group extended beyond the interactions of the teacher members with staff; it enhanced commitment to the mission of the team and the school. The depth of commitment and how it was demonstrated by the team members is described in more detail later in the chapter, but summarized by Jen:

It fired me up to do a lot more than I used to do--to volunteer for committees, or extra duty stuff, even things you're not being paid for--because I felt appreciated.

And I felt that there was a tie-in, a support system where, before, I didn't feel I had support.

The Teachers' Description of the Experience

"A Unique Experience"

All of the teacher leaders who participated in this study described the SLT as a unique experience. They referred to three major aspects that made it unique from a teachers' perspective: relationships, support, and opportunity. Each of the co-researchers described a different aspect and, together, they completed the picture like the facets of a gem stone.

Several teachers spoke of the unparalleled relationships that have developed in the context of the SLT. One of the less experienced teachers spoke of the uncommon opportunity to build a collegial relationship with the principal--an extraordinary opportunity seldom afforded a new teacher. "There is no reason that she would listen to me, but she does. That's a real good thing for me, real positive. It validates what I'm doing."

A more experienced teacher also referred to a new relationship with the principal, reflecting a value that goes beyond giving input or receiving recognition:

The SLT was a real rejuvenating process, part of that is working with people like Ernie, Catherine, Paulina, and a closer professional relationship with the principal. Just knowing how she's thinking about things and being part of her thinking, knowing that you gave her input--that's a real satisfying experience.

Unlike teachers in previous research on teacher leadership (Corkery, 1995; Schmidt, 1996), two teachers noted that the SLT decreased the isolation they have felt as classroom teachers. An experienced teacher leader observed:

Over the years, I have felt the segmentation, the compartmental way that teachers are in their own classrooms with their own kids. You don't have the opportunity to interact with your peers; you're kind of alone. I have good relationships with other teachers here at Lindbergh, but it's definitely a very individual task once you're in the classroom. In the SLT, I was an equal member among my peers; my ideas were listened to with the same respect that the ideas of the principal or anyone else were listened to. I think that's something teachers don't get to do very often, on school time especially.

This exceptional opportunity for the teacher leaders to be heard as equal members of a cross-functional team, to be allowed the chance "to articulate their emerging views; to share their personal experiences and observations, and to hear and understand diverse perspectives" allowed the teachers on the SLT to develop an enhanced sense of self worth and a greater sense of empowerment (Scherr, 1995, p. 12). The teachers were treated as professionals on the team, with equal voice and responsibility, and have emerged with enhanced professional status, commitment, and capacity (Maeroff, 1988; Miller, 1988).

Another unique aspect of the SLT is the district support that provided release time for training and collaboration. This feature was exclusive, both in the literature and in the experience of the teachers who participated in this study. The district provided six full days a year of release time, approximately one day a month, for the team members to participate in SLT inservice and planning. In addition, the district scheduled approximately seven full days for on-site professional development, days which were planned and facilitated by the SLT for their colleagues.

Echoing the observations of teachers in the school leadership literature, one of Lindbergh's SLT members observed:

If you want to get together with a group of your peers and discuss all these great things that are changing in education, you either have to give up your lunch time or do it after school. I'm not saying those things aren't valuable. But, when you're doing that, you're missing out on things in your own life. Just to have the time to do that made me realize that this is a real important thing that we're doing. We're actually getting release time to do this.

Another teacher offered a similar observation, "Those opportunities don't come up very often. You're not able to get out of the classroom and brainstorm, and plan and envision for our school." The release time was a critical indication of the "commitment of the district to the process" and gave the entire SLT training more credibility with the co-researchers and their non-SLT peers.

Another unique aspect of the SLT program was its longevity--two years of consistent investment and support with a third year planned. Revealing this as an "unusual" approach to innovation in the district, one of the teacher leaders related the traditional scenario:

They say, "This year we will do this," and halfway through the year, someone will say, "We don't have enough money to keep it going," or "We're going to do something else!" or "Whatever you have learned is good enough!" That's where innovation usually stops!

This comment reflected what teachers in the district often referred to as the "program of the month." Teachers of long standing in the district have been regularly stymied by the lack of stability in professional development and academic focus. Seldom has a particular program or focus persisted for longer than a year or two. Just as the "trail blazers," who lead the pack in every initiative, have begun to rally some of their colleagues to take on a significant issue of student achievement or school reform, the rug has been

pulled from underneath them. The support, in time, money, or administration, disappeared in a puff of smoke. The teachers have been left to hear the death knell through the grapevine or in some pronouncement from above, with no opportunity to defend the success they've achieved or bargain for a continuance. As Schlechty (1993) observed, it is no wonder that some of those trail blazers eventually become saboteurs in their disillusionment, suffering from a profound loss of hope for the future.

The School Leadership Team stood in stark contrast to this disillusioned image, however. The teacher members were hopeful, committed, and felt empowered to make a difference:

The team itself is different. It's not like a meeting or a group that's gathered at a faculty meeting where someone will say, "We need a committee for 'da da da,' and we need five volunteers." We volunteered because we wanted to. We want to be on this team and we want to see a certain amount of success.

Eight of the ten teachers described a strong contrast between the commitment of the SLT and that of other committees or groups found on campus. They listed several "little things" that exemplified that "higher level of commitment," but the most telling anecdote was offered by one of the newer members of the SLT:

We've been asked to be at the SLT training forty-five minutes before any of the other teams get there, so we can do some team building. Rarely is anyone late, and if they're late, it's "Oh, I'm sorry, I had to" Whereas other committees are sometimes blown off pretty easily with, "They'll never miss me." Nobody misses these SLT meetings; the members want to be there.

When asked about a unique feature of the SLT, one of the younger teacher leaders asked a question in reply, "How many teachers are going through training that teaches them to be leaders, not only in the classroom, but among their peers? Or gives them ideas on how to do it?"

The teacher went on to explain the difference between being a leader of students and a leader of peers. "It's easy to lead your students. You have a hold on them; it's called grades. Students are captive audiences." In contrast, she observed, "It's different to lead staff members, because now you're all equals, you're all adults--so-called adults." This last comment reflected the challenge many teacher leaders face, that of facilitating training for resistant peers who so often "act worse than their kids."

With a grin, one of the teacher leaders summarized the unique image of the SLT in a metaphor. "I was thinking that the SLT is like a platypus since we're kind of rare." With a simple, yet startling image, he captured the unusual opportunity for teachers, the unusual perspective of the team, the exceptional training the team has received, and, most importantly, the nurturing relationship that makes the work of the team possible.

"An Eye Opening Experience"

Every interviewee described the School Leadership Team as an "eye opening," "learning" or "personal growth" experience. "This has been a real growing experience for me. The SLT has really expanded my horizons, where I see myself on the team and on the team of Lindbergh, as well." This image captured the essence of the learning experience for all of the teachers in this study, and was an important benefit documented in the literature on teacher leadership (Horejs, 1996; O'Connor & Boles, 1992; Schlechty, 1988).

The teachers' view of the world had changed as a result of their leadership experience. They perceived themselves differently in terms of capacity and actual role in the school. They thought of themselves as principal actors in an intimate ensemble, rather than independents in an anonymous crowd scene. They saw themselves in a multi-directional, influence relationship with their peers and school at large, rather than as the "tellers" or "the ones who know it all."

The co-researchers were engaged in creating a new future for the students and staff through a process of reciprocal learning and leadership, similar to the leadership described by Lambert et al. (1996). The team members were creating their own meaning and leading

their non-SLT colleagues through a variety of collaborative, inquiry-based activities that encouraged participants to: (a) explore their individual experiences, beliefs, and assumptions about schooling; (b) create a dissonance with old assumptions by studying current educational research and schoolwide student data, (c) analyze the current environment in light of research and extensive data, (d) construct new meaning related to student achievement and school success; and (e) design and implement innovations that had the potential for supporting systemic change.

Because the teachers on the team had never been part of an interdisciplinary leadership team that was expected to facilitate systemic change, there was much confusion in the early months of the training. A co-researcher described the process, echoing the words of five other team members:

People were lost in the beginning. "What is this training for? Where are we going? Why are we doing this? What's our focus?" We were looking for the objective, and there is no universal objective, no daily lesson plan handed out to us. As we went along, we kind of grew to understand more of what the SLT was through our fourth or fifth inservice.

The teachers began to see that the SLT was clearly focused on "improving student achievement." The team was challenged to examine what students were learning, how they were learning it, and what evidence clearly demonstrated that learning. This focus was enhanced when the school began their accreditation self study. Since learning is assumed to be a product of the teaching that goes on in a classroom, the teachers on the SLT saw immediate application to their daily lives:

When I come back to the classroom after an SLT meeting, I try to step out of myself and look at what I'm doing a little more critically, to see if I am doing some of the things that need to be done.

One of the initial steps of the accreditation process is the development of the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs). In an extensive, collaborative activity, a school staff identifies what they believe a student should know and be able to do upon graduation at the end of four years in high school. The Lindbergh staff, led by the several SLT members, created their ESLRs during the first year of the SLT training. The SLT members, understanding that the ESLRs held more significance for the school than merely an exercise to meet the accreditation requirements, took them very seriously. The teachers regularly asked themselves, "Am I addressing the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results in class today?"

The SLT spent a great deal of time thinking about what the ESLRs meant, how to measure or collect data on student progress toward the ESLRs, and how students acquire the ESLRs. The SLT "has probably talked more about the ESLRs than the rest of the staff."

I'm very conscious now when I'm teaching. Am I following ESLRs? Am I trying to communicate that to my students? Now, as I'm teaching I'll say, "This is a particular type of problem. This formula is called 'slope'. And here is a distance formula. Can you apply it? Can you use these ideas to analyze a problem?" I try to get them to realize that there are different levels of thinking; that's what we're supposed to be teaching.

This teacher leader went on to observe that, "a lot of teachers don't take our ESLR statements seriously, and they don't have ownership of them." On the other hand, as an SLT member, "I have a lot of ownership of them," he added with a chuckle of pride. "They're pertinent in my classroom. They have become very real. They've become daily guidelines of how things are going to get done."

When asked about her most important learning as an SLT member, an experienced staff developer referred to the design of the SLT training rather than the content:

The process of first doing our own individual thinking, writing in our journals, and then conferring with a partner or a small group, discovering concepts and common ground, then sharing with a large group--it's an excellent way to clarify issues, to work with large groups.

As an experienced staff developer, she was vividly aware of "the challenge" the SLT faced in providing inservice for the entire staff; after all, "a hundred people can be a very unwieldy number." Facilitating staff development was one of the primary strategies the SLT was taught to use as they focused on schoolwide change. Echoing the concerns mentioned earlier in this chapter, she described the challenge:

Nobody on the staff wants to do an inservice activity and yet, once everyone gets into it, they get the job done. People have strong opinions, yet have to agree upon something; they have to have an outcome--a product. Only through having a good process can a large group arrive at consensus and move forward. We've done that process a lot in the SLT training, so we very naturally do it with the faculty and it works well.

One of the younger teachers also valued "learning how to train people. I'm interested in administration, and staff development is a valuable skill." She smiled as she acknowledged, "I feel a little more confidence in presenting to peers, knowing what to do and how to do it--the nuts and bolts kinds of things that I've learned in the SLT training."

Two of the teacher leaders referred to an eye-opening learning experience that grew out of the "Beyond Diversity" training provided during the second year of the School Leadership Team project. The central focus of the training was a video tape of students from several schools who were talking very frankly about their experience with racism in school.

One teacher came away with a much clearer understanding about the impact of racism on student success. "I was brought up in an all white community and the students that I went to school with were all white. It was hard for me to see how people feel prejudicial (sic)." The experience allowed her to walk a moment in the shoes of those who suffer prejudice, and the teacher was amazed by her new perspective. The experience left her changed, more empathetic and sensitive to the needs of her diverse students.

After the team members experienced the racism training, they replicated the training for staff. The discussion "got rather heated because of some very strong, opinionated people." During the workshop, several staff members stood up and, referring to students of color, said, "They're lazy. They're unmotivated. They don't come to school. They don't do this; they don't do that." One of the team members, a person of color, observed,

I sat there and listened to what the other staff members were saying . . . it horrified me! People would say, "I'm not racist, but I think . . . da, da, da." I did not have enough guts to say, "You're saying that about our students! Excuse me, our school is 95% minority! What are you trying to tell me?"

Two issues surfaced for this teacher. The first was an awareness that a significant faction of her colleagues outright denied the credibility of the student voices and their experiences of racism. The second was the heart-sickening knowledge that, "They were talking about me, experiences that I have had." As a result, the teacher perceived her credibility as an educator and a person of color was in question, as well.

As a percentage of teachers blamed the students, parents and society for student failure, it became apparent they were unwilling to assume responsibility for the lack of success among their minority students. The co-researcher was "shocked" by the face-to-face encounter with the bigoted attitudes of her colleagues, who by their words and actions, often pre-determine the academic fate of many minority students in the school.

Another teacher leader reflected a similar disillusionment with her peers, "My blinders were taken off. My God, my eyes were opened. I lost respect for some of the teachers because I could see how selfish some people are in trying to manipulate things to meet their own needs."

In contrast, one of their colleagues has found hope through the work of the SLT. "Learning not to be so discouraged" has been a critical by-product of the SLT experience. "I've brought stuff back from conferences and given it to my colleagues. Teachers go, 'I've been doing this for 25 years; I'm not going to change.' I got real discouraged." As a result of the SLT experience, the teacher saw her role as transitional, "sort of chipping away" at the resistance. Rather than feeling hopeless and defeated, she now understood how change occurs and how her role was important in nurturing that change.

Also at a personal level, one of the more experienced teachers gained personal insight into her own biases. "I learned I need to be more flexible in accepting other people's styles and looking at what their needs are." As a person who is "goal oriented, detailed . . . let's just do it and go," the School Leadership Team experience taught her that, "It doesn't have to be totally 'bam, bam, bam; okay, we're out of here!'" She had learned that reflective dialogue, collaboration, and careful planning require time and patience, and create major payoffs for students and staff.

Another team member described a similar self awareness that evolved from a staff development activity the SLT had facilitated for their peers. The SLT had originally brainstormed all of the changes that had occurred on campus in recent years. When they

reviewed the list with their colleagues and invited them to brainstorm additional innovations, the staff almost doubled the SLT's original list. One of the co-researchers observed,

I was reminded that there are so many points of view, because we're all in our separate little worlds here, and yet, in the same big world. It's so important to get input from everyone. There were entire fields of study that we might have forgotten that were very important.

The capacity of the team members to learn from their experience, and to discern new solutions and possibilities instead of road blocks, was evident in Eileen's actions the day after the master schedule session mentioned earlier in this chapter. She approached the principal with an alternative plan, a way to help every staff member understand the complexities of building a master schedule, without making the process any more unwieldy. Eileen suggested a "fishbowl," similar to an activity the team had experienced in their SLT training:

Next year, we build the master schedule like we built it this year, but we do it in the drama building instead of the principal's office. The master schedule design team could be on the floor in the drama building, and you could build a gallery up on the stage where teachers could come in and observe. They wouldn't be able to say a thing while they were on the stage, but they could observe. Then after the initial draft of the master schedule was completed, the design team could switch places with the observers. The observers could have a discussion about the draft of the master schedule and the design team could listen and learn. Then the design team would return to the floor of the drama building to continue their work with new input, and the observers would go back to the stage to watch quietly.

As excited murmurs of agreement swirled around her, Eileen went on to explain, "I learned yesterday that teachers don't see the entire picture! They're into, 'I want what's best for my program,' not what's best for our students! Our whole master schedule this year is student-based!"

A quick-paced dialogue followed Eileen's description. One of the teachers offered, "Then they couldn't complain." Several others agreed before the reality sank in and someone added, "Well, they could complain. But they would have to come back and justify their concerns in a fishbowl."

As the group quickly processed the possibilities of Eileen's suggestion, she added, "Yesterday there were fifteen pairs of eyes looking at this master schedule" trying to figure out the implications and conflicts of each move on the schedule. "Maybe all it would take would be sixteen pairs of eyes; that one extra pair of eyes (one of the observers) could go, 'Well, you could do this, and you can do this, and it would all fall into place!'" Eileen understood that, not only would the fishbowl provide an opportunity for the rest of the staff to see the challenge of building a master schedule as it unfolds, but that one of the watchers may be able to bring fresh eyes to the process and provide the linchpin which the original committee members could not see from their perspective "in the trenches."

In debriefing the above discussion, the teachers deepened their understanding of the frustration and anger they saw in their peers after the draft of the master schedule was posted. Ernie observed,

Because this is the very first time we have created a master schedule that is student-based rather than teacher-based, it hurts. People don't understand what has happened; they don't understand why they have to give up their prize class assignments in order to meet student needs. As we progress, as we're changing, people will come to realize this is what we're trying to accomplish. This is going to be the worst part, right now!

The others nodded their agreement and offered validation for his perspective. Their comments confirmed the participants' own growing understanding of the change process and their role in it. During this dialogue, the teachers clearly operated as a learning community, valuing each others' input, building on each others' ideas, constructing new understanding as they worked together in their quest to create schoolwide change.

Seeing the "big picture" or having one's "blindness" removed were both images of a growing awareness and understanding that characterize the experience of the teacher leaders in this study. Almost all of the teachers described the SLT meetings as an "intensive critical thinking experience" that has helped them "see things differently:"

Every time I come back from one of the meetings, I look at myself a little bit differently. I see things differently. I can see, sometimes all at once, how teachers behave. I guess I see them not in as good a light as I saw them before. I'm thinking differently now. It's kind of like my eyes have opened up a little bit more; I'm looking for different things that measure what a good teacher is, or what a good classroom is, or what a good learning experience is. I look at myself every day and say, "Did that go over well? And if not, how can I change it?"

Several of the teacher leaders felt they had experienced a "permanent perspective change:"

Whether I'm on the SLT or not, I don't see myself as ever going back, closing the door and sitting at my desk the rest of my life. I see myself moving out into the community; they'll know that I'm a proactive person. Because I've sat on the School Leadership Team, I've come away with a certain knowledge that will travel with me through time. No, I'm not going back there and shutting the door.

This view is in contrast to previous experience, "It's easy to just go in and cocoon and think, 'Well, as long as I'm quiet and I'm not making waves, everything's fine.'"

The teacher leaders on this School Leadership Team can no longer sit back and avoid making waves; they are seeing the world differently. They have had their blindness

removed in four areas: (a) the evidence of prejudice and lack of professionalism among their peers, (b) the characteristics of classroom and schoolwide practice that either contribute to or inhibit student success, (c) the challenges of practicing leadership from among peers, and (d) the self awareness that is derived from discussion, reflection, and collaboration involving deeply held beliefs and values about education.

One teacher's statement, echoing the sentiments of her peers, summarized the perspective of the team members: "My blinders were removed--about myself, about the way I operate, about the way I feel about people, about carrying out this process of schoolwide change and about keeping my professional soul intact."

A Challenging Experience"

As illustrated by the earlier descriptions of Lindbergh High, the teachers who participated in this study were very realistic about the challenges that they faced in their leadership role. They were aware of the resistance of their peers, the complexity of the problems, and the limitations of their roles.

Balancing teaching responsibilities with leadership responsibilities is a common concern among teacher leaders (e.g., O'Connor & Boles, 1992; Perry, 1996; Schmidt, 1996; Smylie & Denny, 1990). The SLT was fortunate to have six release days a year for training and problem solving, a time they referred to as SLT meetings rather than inservice or training. Extensive work was done on their own time, however--before school, after school, during lunch or preparation periods.

Three of the participants described the challenges they faced in keeping up with their teaching while fulfilling their leadership responsibilities for the SLT and the current accreditation process. "Time," was the most difficult challenge. One teacher noted, "I am behind in my grading, and in planning activities I want to do in class." Each teacher has devised different strategies to cope with the lack of time. One teacher observed,

I've given more two day lessons this semester than ever before. I let students work on their own so I can work on my own. I give them a small chunk of it and let them practice. Then, the next day, I give them the rest of it and let them practice that, so I can work at my desk.

Although a necessity, this sort of lesson planning left this teacher feeling "like I'm not giving them my hundred percent while I'm with them. It feels a little unprofessional--on the teacher end." Specifying that the "unprofessional" feeling was related to the "teacher end," revealed that spending time doing leadership work was another aspect of professionalism and felt equally important. "We can't be a hundred percent - a hundred percent all the time." This statement acknowledged the desire to give one hundred percent in both roles at all times, but realistically faced the fact that no one can achieve such perfection:

It's a hard thing to balance because our jobs in the classroom are so demanding.

Our classroom responsibilities can just take every moment of the day from us and, before you know it, it's time to go home.

A more experienced teacher echoed this concern, "I have to budget my time." As a classroom teacher with several different subjects to teach, this was not new, but increased responsibilities of the SLT put even more pressure on this teacher to ensure he continued to be "an effective teacher and an effective SLT member."

When one teacher referred to the stress of being on the SLT, the researcher asked whether the stress came from lack of time to prepare or time missed with students. The teacher replied,

There are maybe a dozen kids that I've gotten really close to. Leaving them--and I know it sounds kind of sappy--leaving them, even for a day, is hard. I wonder, "Are you going to second period? I'm not there to kick you in the butt, are you doing what you're supposed to do?" It's probably good for them because, obviously, I can't do it for them, but it's still hard.

The teacher leaders described three significant concerns that attribute to their anxiety: not being able to follow up on student commitments, not serving as a good role model for student attendance, and not being able to ensure students will get the same quality education from a substitute that the teacher can provide. Another teacher substantially described the second and third concerns:

The painful part of the SLT experience is leaving my students. I feel that I need to be a good example; I feel that they don't understand when I tell them that I have to go off to this. They sort of understand, but basically, what they see is that I'm not there. The students see a substitute, who might be an interesting person who enhances and enriches their life. I think substitutes can do that. But it's painful because I have an agenda, and I don't feel that students are in school enough anyway, so we get even further behind because I've been gone. I feel bad about that.

When asked what the SLT means to them personally, two of the co-researchers answered with deliberate emphasis, "More work." Both went on to describe what "extra work" meant. One mentioned the accreditation self study report and "trying to help the staff keep their energy level up so that they're willing to do this and put their best effort out." The second singled out, "After school meetings. Instead of leaving here at 2:30, I'm often here until 4:00." So as not to be misunderstood, she quickly added, "I don't mind doing that as long as it's structured and organized and we're accomplishing something."

Thinking about accomplishing something worthwhile, one of the less experienced members of the team reflected on the challenges the team faced in completing the accreditation process. He was most concerned about "getting the final draft of the self study and the action plan" approved by the staff. He sighed, "It's going to be very tough." He was concerned about "resistance to some of the ideas and the wording. We know where we're going to be--not attacked--yes, we may even be attacked. There may be some

confrontation.” His waffling about the correct use of the word “attack” to describe the potential confrontation demonstrated his reluctance to exaggerate the issue, followed by an awareness that “attack” accurately described the way he felt.

When asked how he felt about being “attacked” by his peers, the co-researcher’s response reflected the power of the SLT training in preparing the teachers for the inevitable:

Before the SLT training, I would have been worried, but now I think I’m a little bit more prepared. We talked about how to recognize confrontation, how confrontation allows growth if you expect it. If you know how to redirect it and use it to your benefit, then it’s not a bad thing.

Teacher resistance is one of the greatest challenges teacher leaders face (Bradley, 1995; Schmidt, 1996; Troen and Boles, 1993). As the teachers reflected on their staff developer role, they tried to keep the teacher resistance in perspective. “There are people who can make it more difficult, and those are the vocal minority.” This comment revealed an awareness that the naysayers exist, that they must be dealt with, and that they represent an important minority voice on campus. Because the minority voices have often been excluded from the most important conversations in schools, however, they have developed powerful strategies to maintain the status quo and to keep teachers in the “crab bucket” (Duke, 1994).

One of the newer teachers described a conversation that illustrates how veteran staff co-opt new teachers into resisting change. The dialogue is transcribed below, taken intact from the focus group transcript:

Teacher X:	“So how many years until you retire?”
SLT Member:	“Excuse me?” (feeling the question was both too personal and impertinent)
Teacher X:	“How many years until you retire?”
SLT Member:	“12-14 years.”
Teacher X:	“So how many administrators have you seen?”

SLT Member: "Two."

Teacher X: "How many times are we going to go through this? Who's going to be here longer, you or the administrator?"

The SLT member went on to describe Teacher X's point: "As a teacher, I might decide if the administrator isn't in sync with my program, I probably have a longer life span at this school than an administrator. So, I'll just out-wait him or her." This resistance to change and the coping strategy was familiar to the teachers, but brought the problem into stark relief.

The teacher leaders on the SLT understood their challenge: to "learn to deal with rejection" from their peers and "all that kind of stuff." To the teacher who was questioned, the rejection scenario was "in her face," her colleague was trying to undermine her commitment to change and the SLT. As the teacher recalled the conversation, she reflected on her personal commitment to the school and, ultimately, the current administration since they were on the "same team." Her eyes began to tear up and her lip trembled, "I'm glad that I volunteered for the SLT, because I've grown in an immense way," referring to her capacity to face the challenge offered by her more senior colleague, and continue to stand firm in her convictions.

A younger teacher shared a similar perspective, revealing her frustration with her more jaded peers:

I have gotten this close to actually punching people in the face--not because they were not doing what they were asked to do in an inservice, I have no problem with that--but because these are the very same people who have the attitude, "It'll come and go and I'm still going to be here. So kill me."

Another co-researcher described the same challenge when a non-SLT peer said, "Yeah, we should do this because it's good for kids, but" She gritted her teeth and continued, "The 'buts' . . . I'm having difficulty with that. For me, it's like, 'It can work, period. So let's try and work this out for the sake of the kids.'"

Nine of the teacher leaders spoke of losing respect for some of their non-SLT peers because of their negative attitudes. The teachers hear their colleagues whine, "Well, here we go again." or "Why do I need to be there?" or "It's a staff development day, so I'm going to take a personal day because all of this crap is just getting in my way and is anything really going to change?"

One of the younger co-researchers described the progress of her thinking about the malcontents:

I have thought, more than once, "Okay, they only have three years left before retirement so, maybe, after they're gone things'll get better. I've lost some of that perspective since I joined the SLT. It really, really bothers me that there are things that are not being done at school because, if they were to be suggested, it would piss some people off majorly, so it's just not being done. You don't want to ruffle those feathers, so why even bring it up. Before the SLT, I didn't quite know just how much of that attitude there was out there.

As she continued to talk, this same teacher began to reveal an unusual level of discrimination that the SLT had developed. The teacher leaders have gone beyond a broad categorization that divided the staff into (a) those teachers who are supportive and (b) those who are not:

There are people that have really good intentions and they do wonderful things in their classrooms, but they still aren't helping the whole school. They're wonderful teachers, on their own, but they don't believe that change is possible. They don't believe that any of this SLT training or accreditation process is going to do any good, and that really bothers me. It really makes me sad to think that we went through all of this work with the SLT and the accreditation process, and there are still so many people on this staff who go, "Yeah, right. Like this is ever going to change."

Resistance from peers was a persistent concern among these teacher leaders. This concern seemed to stem from both a fear of reprisal or rejection and an awareness that resistance is an obstacle to student success. One teacher described the dilemma she faced, caught between her anxiety and her passion:

I am frightened because of some of the old-school attitudes: "We don't do it that way at Lindbergh High School." The SLT is going to have to be ready to take on some very assertive teachers, and I'm not sure that I can. It's not my style. I don't like confrontation, but I want to be supportive. I want to learn how to do it; I want this to work for our school!

This willingness to "face the fear and do it anyway" was an essential characteristic of the teacher members of Lindbergh High School's SLT. When asked what his greatest challenge was, a relatively young teacher replied, "Finding and enlarging my comfort zone, trying new things." Although he had not been involved in the actual presentation of the staff development activities, he was an active participant in the planning and a support person during the inservice. He mused, "The next time maybe I will lead the inservice." He recognized that he needed to go through a series of experiences before he will be ready, before he will have expanded his comfort zone enough for him to succeed in a visible, presenting role. "I'm stepping up there. I see those guys get up there--it's not easy," he laughed, relieved he does not have to be "up there" yet. He demonstrated a growing sense that he will be able to provide that visible leadership in the future, and "even would look forward to and want to because I think I have something to contribute." Clear that he had no fantasies about the challenge ahead of him, he quickly added with a hearty laugh, "But I want to be ready."

Another teacher, with less than ten years of experience, referred to her expanding "comfort zone" in the SLT meetings, sitting at the table with her peers and the principal. She spoke of the difficulty she had had with "stepping out and talking about issues that can be very emotional. It's been most difficult to say, 'I have something to say about that.'"

The challenge stemmed from a fear of administrators that had been passed down by the storytellers in the school culture, "You don't want to say the wrong thing in front of an administrator, that could ruin your life here in the district."

In spite of all the frustrations, fears, and obstacles, one teacher summarized the feelings of her colleagues when she observed, "I know the resistance that's out there but, I am a change maker." The other members of the team confirmed this image of strength, persistence, and commitment when they offered metaphors for the School Leadership Team. Jen chose "a turtle. It moves very, very slowly. It has a hard shell that's shaped like an umbrella. But, if the turtle grabs onto something, it doesn't let go." One of her colleagues added with conviction, "And things will change." The umbrella shape was a direct reference to the shelter and support the team members experienced in the relationship of the SLT.

Referring to the reflective, yet determined nature of the SLT, Eileen described a cat. "A cat lays back and thinks about what it's going to do. It's very cautious. A cat is a decision maker and goes forward with what it sees as the right thing." She drew her image back to the SLT when she noted, "We are reaching out cautiously, as a cat would. We don't have claws in the front; we only have claws in the back." The image of claws was important because the SLT needed back claws for propulsion and grip as they sought to make inroads into the school culture, while front claws was too aggressive an image and would undermine the influence-based credibility and relationship that was the foundation of their power in the school.

Ernie referred to the team's resilience when he decided that the SLT resembled a skunk. "Skunks are very protective of their young. They're extremely persistent and they protect whatever they think is important." He went on to describe a time he tried to chase a skunk out from under his deck at home. "I squirted a hose right at the face of the animal, and it wouldn't back down. Have we been squirted in the face? Some of us have, but have we survived?" The nods around the room indicated they knew clearly what he meant.

Eileen expanded and clarified the image, returning to the cat metaphor to describe how the team had been “squirted in the face” and “survived,”

You can totally neglect a cat; totally forget he’s there; give him a bad time; just push him away and that cat still comes back. I see our group as that cat. We’ve had stones thrown at us. We’ve had some verbal abuse. We’ve had all of this, and we’re still holding on. We all have that unconditional love for the school, and we’re still there.

Their non-SLT peers had tried, on a variety of occasions, to throw “stones” at the team. Their colleagues had tried to discourage, dissuade, and resist the schoolwide work of the SLT, but the team continued and appeared to have gained strength in the process. Eileen suggested that the team persisted because they loved their school unconditionally, just as a cat loves its master.

Catherine described the persistence of the SLT in another way, expanding it to the relationships that the team had built among the team members and throughout the school community:

I think of us as a spider; I think people respect spiders. They are able to weave intricate, beautiful webs. It takes them a while, but they’re patient; they don’t give up. It’s real important to them. The web makes connections; it’s their way of reaching their goal.

The image of the web making connections between each of the different departments, populations of students, and teachers was echoed by Lorna when she moved her hands outward like tentacles. “The SLT is like an octopus with things going in different directions, pulling in all areas of campus.”

Robert’s image of resilience was not as positive as the others, but no less powerful. “There’s a new strain of bacteria that’s resistant to almost every form of penicillin, and it won’t go away.” One of his colleagues shuddered, “That’s so scary.” But Robert reinforced the image, “Well, that’s what it is, and we better not give in either. We’d better

stick to it.” With conviction, he added, “We’re not going away.” Several others picked up the refrain, nodding their agreement, “We’re not going away.” The image, although rather intimidating, represented the challenge these teachers felt when faced with changing the school around them. In the past, someone has described school change as remodeling a 747 in mid-air. Robert’s metaphor captured the difficulty of the task and the nature of the conviction that is required to make substantive change possible.

Paulina pulled all the images together when she described the SLT as “a horse.” Once she began, the others in the focus group built a collective metaphor. Horses are “graceful,” “intelligent,” and “beautiful.” Horses are “beasts of burden,” “hard working,” and “strong.” “How do people move things? With a team of horses.” “We’re a team; the SLT is a team. We work together to move the school.”

As the team added image after image, like popcorn over heat, they laughed with glee when someone finally captured the images into one: “The twenty mule team!” The metaphor of “the twenty mule team” encapsulated the persistence, strength, intelligence, and unity of the images that had preceded it. “A twenty mule team pulling a wagon train full of kids!” cried one of the teachers victoriously. Schlechty’s (1993) wagon train metaphor was one of the first images of school change the team met in the SLT training. One of the teachers observed with amazement, “We came right back to the beginning!” referring to their full rotation back to the opening SLT activity, and the cyclical process of schoolwide change that was becoming increasingly apparent to the team.

“I’ve Changed”

As they moved through their reflective study and collaborative work on the SLT within the context of Lindbergh High, the ten co-researchers described a journey marked by personal change. They became increasingly aware of the institutionalized resistance, fear, and barriers to student success that had become “the way we do things around here.” As they began to seriously ask the question, “What is keeping students from succeeding?” these teacher leaders began to perceive possible solutions, and developed a growing

impatience with their peers who seemed more focused on maintaining the status quo than on improving student success. This growing sense of separateness from their non-SLT peers, as well as their increasing commitment to the mission of the SLT, seemed to stem from a changing image of themselves in the context of the school.

Reflecting on the difference the SLT experience had made in his role on campus, one co-researcher observed, "Before, I might have participated in just sitting there and complaining." Laughing at the image that came to mind, he continued, "I don't think I do that as much any more because I realize that sitting there complaining doesn't really do a whole lot. You know, sometimes you complain just because it makes you feel better, but" Pausing briefly, apparently unable to conjure up a recent image of himself participating in a gripe session, he continued with an air of finality, "Yeah, I've changed my role."

Another teacher described a similar transition, "I used to hang out with a whole bunch of people, and I found that I'm really consciously trying to avoid them because I don't want to be like them so I need to move away from them."

One of the younger teachers described a refrain she had heard from her more experienced, non-SLT colleagues, "If teachers are happy, students are going to be happy." This statement implied that the needs of teachers supersede the needs of students. It also implied that if students are happy, they are learning. The corollary was: students cannot learn if teachers are unhappy with their class schedule, their salary, or any other issue that dominates the political agenda of teacher organizations. The statement suggested that schools are built for teachers and the students are simply a passing inconvenience in larger scheme of things. Many, who have been in schools for several years, have heard teachers joke, "This would be a great place, if it weren't for the kids."

The old joke no longer seemed funny to the teacher members of this School Leadership Team. After making her statement about the correlation between teacher happiness and student happiness, the young teacher passionately declared,

I don't believe so! That's my problem. If I bared myself to my colleagues, they would probably hate me forever if I just told them what I really thought. "Stop with the excuses--parents, faculty, community--we have work to do! Stop telling me they can't read! Stop telling me you are overwhelmed with your work as a teacher! Stop telling me you are overwhelmed with the curriculum!" If the methods are not right (her voice trailed off).

Although she did not expand on the image, she was clearly indicating that, instead of blaming the student, the family background, or any of a number of other "good reasons" for student lack of success, teachers must assume responsibility. "I can't blame what I can't control, but I can control what goes on in my classroom." It was apparent that the rose-colored glasses of youth and inexperience were gone. Sighing with frustration she murmured, "I'm tired. There's this anger."

A growing impatience with their peers was evident occasionally in the interviews, but clearly a theme in the focus group. When asked if their relationships with their peers have changed as a result of their experience, the teachers offered, "Some of my relationships are lost, some of the people I've lost total respect for." When they discussed the writing of the accreditation report, another teacher described a problem in one of the schoolwide focus groups. The recorder was "writing exactly what people were saying, but the teachers didn't want it written in the way they said it because it hurts. They wanted the recorder to sugarcoat it.

"Sugarcoating" the problems at the school was no longer within the capacity of the teacher leaders on this SLT. They were committed to seeing the school through clear, realistic lenses and were committed to facing the problems head on, knowing that they would succeed because they are working together. This School Leadership Team had found common ground: "We love our school; we love our students and that's why we want the best for them."

Conclusions

As the researcher studied the connections between the themes mentioned above, five overarching themes emerged as the essence of the experience: (a) the interdependent relationship of the team members; (b) their expanding capacity to discern fine differences in school culture and professional practice; (c) their strengthened commitment to their school, their students, and their role in effecting change; (d) their enhanced sense of empowerment or capacity to create substantive change, and (e) their growing understanding of leadership as it is practiced among peers. Although there may appear to be a linear relationship suggested by these five overarching themes with each capacity emerging from the combination of those before, they are, instead, tightly woven threads which form the woof and the warp of the experience as it is described by the teacher leaders on Lindbergh's SLT.

Of the five overarching themes, the unique, mutually supportive relationship of the team members seemed to be the most critical aspect of the teachers' experience. The relationship provided a safe environment for the ten teachers to see themselves, their school and their own work in new ways. It protected them like an "umbrella" protects in a storm, encouraged them like a "booster club" cheers on a team, and provided "a wall to lean on" or extra support when the teachers felt the weight of their work.

As the teachers constructed a collective understanding of current research and schoolwide data during their SLT training and ongoing reflective dialogue, their capacity to discern the strengths and weaknesses of the school grew. This emerging awareness was consistently nurtured and reinforced by the relationship of the team as they created and began to foster a common vision for their school.

As the team planned and implemented schoolwide professional development activities, actively supported the accreditation process, and continued to spend substantial time together in reflective practice, their commitment to creating substantive change was strengthened. This commitment, which grew out of the collective strength of the team and

their shared vision, helped the teachers develop more courage and resilience in the face of their more resistant peers. The teachers felt more confident as they faced the tough issues, brainstormed strategies to address the problems, and took action both individually and collectively.

The teachers were empowered by the relationship, and concomitant activities, to actively and intentionally implement strategies that would support systemic change. Central to that empowerment was the principal's capacity to share power and authority with the team as they collectively planned schoolwide change efforts. Taking an "equal" role when the team met, and giving them full authority to plan and implement staff development activities, allowed the team members to "own" the outcomes. When given the authority to do what they thought was necessary and right, the team members (a) took full responsibility for the success or failure of each activity, (b) developed more confidence in their own decision making capacity, (c) deepened their commitment to the mission of the team and the school, and (d) were revitalized in all aspects of their work.

This revitalization could also be described as a "fire within," similar to Covey's (1989) "deep, burning 'Yes!'" The teachers described experiencing renewed energy and enthusiasm for their teaching, their students, their school and their careers. They were motivated (a) to work extra hours, (b) to "face the fear and do it anyway," and (c) to confront their resistant peers and the cultural norms that fought to keep the teachers "in their place." The teacher leaders described a kind of "intellectual joy" they felt in learning new things, collaborating with respected colleagues, and taking part in important, challenging work for the good of the students.

Since the approach to this study was phenomenological, the above themes were not anticipated and emerged from extensive analysis of the words of the co-researchers. In preparing the conclusions to this research question, however, it became apparent that the teachers were describing an experience that mirrored Miller's (1986) "growth fostering relationship." The teachers described a relationship that led to (a) enhanced knowledge of

self and others (discernment), (b) increased “zest” or energy to address the tasks at hand, (c) growing capacity and motivation to act (commitment and empowerment), (d) enhanced self worth and connection with others.

Although enhanced self esteem was not identified as a major theme by the co-researchers, it was obviously a by-product of the relationship and the activities of the team. The teachers clearly felt more important, valued, and professional. They proudly described their unique contributions to the team in terms of skills, experience and perspective. As noted in the next section of this chapter, nine of the ten teachers described themselves as leaders, using the term with varying degrees of confidence, but clear in its meaning and actively striving to live up to the title.

One of the co-researchers seemed to summarize the experience of the teachers on the School Leadership Team when she observed:

It came to me all of a sudden, as kind of a flashing light, so to speak. I realized, “Hey, we’re supposed to take all this great stuff we’re learning and help the staff at our school understand that change is inevitable, that change is going to be a process, and that we’re the ones who are implementing it and helping them understand where we are.” When I realized what we were doing, I got excited. You know, staff development is nice. You go to workshops and they don’t always seem to have any purpose, other than that you’re learning a little bit of new and good information. But when I realized this whole process was tying together Second to None and a lot of educational research that is out there, I got excited and I thought, “Thank God, it’s about time that we’re finally beginning to realize that maybe the way schools are set up is part of the reason so many kids aren’t succeeding.” That was a real revealing moment to me.

When asked to explain the origin of “thank God,” the teacher continued,

I’ve been here at Lindbergh for a long time; things have changed an awful lot. Things have changed in every way, except here at school. The basic setup of school is exactly as it was when I was in school--and that was a long time ago. The kids have changed. The technology has changed. The community has changed. But where is our change? Why aren’t we moving right along with everyone else? For years I had been reading books about how school had to change, education had to be restructured, yet I didn’t see much of that happening in concrete things that you could hold in your hand and say, “Okay, we’re going to do this now. We’re going to try this.” I think we got stuck for a long time. And I think we lost a lot of kids that we could have reached in different ways, so I’m real glad to see this happening. I think it’s been a long time coming.

It is apparent in the comments of this teacher leader, and in the many quotes that have been interwoven to tell the co-researchers’ story, that this School Leadership Team has faced the complex realities that make up a comprehensive high school. The team members have acknowledged the strengths and are confronting the challenges. It is easy to see why many teachers, who stand alone in this sort of environment, would say, “The problems are too big for me to deal with.” It is easy to see why teachers, who do not have the support of a strong, collegial team, close their doors and “cloister” themselves in the safety of their classrooms. The teachers on this SLT had a support group and a “growth fostering relationship” (Miller, 1986), however, which empowered them to face the problems head on with the confidence that “together, we will succeed!”

The teachers on this School Leadership Team were intent on being a positive force for change in their school. On the other hand, they were realistic. As one teacher observed, “Everybody’s not all bright eyed and looking at the world as if it’s perfect.”

Instead, they saw (a) the many problems students were having, (b) the reluctance of staff to own the lack of student motivation and success, and (c) the challenges of moving any large group of people in the same direction.

Rather than feeling overwhelmed by the experience, however, the more the teachers learned about the school by studying the many forms of data that were available, the more determined they became. They were undaunted by the fact that others would believe these issues “are too time consuming” or difficult. They saw real value and potential in creating a “cohesive” staff, a staff united in their commitment to student achievement.

These teacher leaders had moved out of the “little boxes,” of their classrooms, joining hands, hearts and minds for the benefit of students. “I think students know that, too, and I think if they see teachers do things together outside of the classroom (such as collaboration and problem solving), students will have a good feeling about the school.” This view suggests (a) an understanding of the potential for real change at Lindbergh, and (b) a recognition that, just as children in a family are positively affected by a warm, collaborative relationship between their parents, students are affected by a similar climate among their teachers.

One of the teachers on this School Leadership Team captured the essence of the SLT experience when she observed, “We’re learning to look at ourselves first, and then to take little steps at a time toward changing the school.” Through their work on the School Leadership Team, these ten teachers are learning to see themselves as:

1. **Professional teachers** who are committed to “the technical and ethical standards” of their profession (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1997, p. 930).
2. **Anthropologists** who study the “environment, social relations and the culture” in which students learn and teachers teach (p. 49).
3. **Researchers** who are engaged in an ongoing inquiry into educational practice and student success.

4. Catalysts who are committed to provoking significant change within their school community.
5. Communicators who listen, gather information, clarify, facilitate reflective dialogue, and interpret the SLT's vision in a way which will create a shared, schoolwide vision of success for all students.
6. Spokespersons for diverse student voices which have long been silenced in public schools.
7. Interdependent team members in a learning community, people who share a common purpose and a "growth fostering relationship" (Miller, 1986).
8. Tacticians who are skilled in employing a variety of strategies to accomplish their goals.
9. Leaders who identify with and contribute to a "community of leaders" in a substantive, schoolwide reform effort (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996).

The Teachers' Perception of Leadership

The second research question guiding this study was: What is leadership as these ten teachers experienced it from within a School Leadership Team (SLT)? Examining the perceptions, motivations, intentions, values and beliefs about leadership that were held by teachers in this unique role, this section provides an in-depth analysis of the teachers' experience of leadership. Since the primary researcher approached this question from a phenomenological perspective, the themes that emerged were the direct result of the teachers' description of their experience, rather than the researcher's pre-conceived hypotheses.

The terms "lead," "leader," and "leadership" occurred in 82 text units, i.e., paragraphs, imbedded within 15 of the 20 transcripts included in this study. Since

several of the questions in the first round of interviews directly asked about leaders, and since the group was called the School Leadership Team, frequent co-researcher references were expected.

Of the 31 specific descriptors of leader and leadership provided by the participants, only two referred to a traditional, hierarchical view, and those references were used to contrast traditional leadership with the teachers' own experience. The language the teacher leaders used to describe their perception of leadership revealed a more contemporary view. Their definitions sounded more like Rost's (1991) collaborative leadership that is grounded in a multi-directional influence relationship; Block's (1993) stewardship that focuses on shared responsibility, accountability and authority; Heifetz's (1994) leadership as adaptive work that helps "people clarify what matters most" (p. 22); and Lambert's et al. (1995) constructivist leadership that is grounded in reciprocal learning processes.

One co-researcher succinctly described leadership as the ten teachers in this study lived it: The SLT is not about "pulling people along," but "facilitating" and doing "all that is necessary in order to get the job done." This definition did not directly describe what "the job" was but, as indicated earlier in this chapter, it clearly meant effecting substantive change that sought to enhance success for all students. Neither did this definition directly address the reciprocal learning processes that helped the team clarify what "the job" was and helped them determine what was "necessary" from one day to the next, but the actions described earlier in this chapter clearly indicated that ongoing, collaborative learning was central to their work as a team and their leadership role.

Ten consistent descriptors of leadership recurred throughout the interviews. The teacher leaders on the School Leadership Team believe that leaders "lead by example," "take responsibility," "listen," "facilitate learning" and "help things happen" by "working together toward a common goal," are "involved and always there," "can give and take direction for the common good," and "have earned their place" because "they have put in some work and they're knowledgeable."

"We Lead by Example"

One of the participants described "setting an example for others to follow" as the "strongest" or most important characteristic of leadership, an essential feature of teacher leadership which was also identified in the literature (Boles and Troen, 1996; Wilson, 1991). Seven out of the ten co-researchers included references to being a role model or leading by example as a characteristic of leadership. Their references not only revealed their recognition of role model as an aspect of leadership, but also revealed specifically what they did as role models. One of the newer SLT team members said, "I tried to be a good role model. I contributed, paid attention, and tried to be there as much as possible." He went on to identify a variety of situations where he intentionally modeled these behaviors; the examples were not limited to SLT exercises. He, as many of his peers, was aware that his responsibility as an SLT member extended beyond official SLT events, and therefore required a conscious presence in every school-related activity.

"You can't be a leader if you're not doing what you're expecting other people to do." The concept of leading by doing was echoed by another co-researcher when he talked about how he provided leadership in his day-to-day activities: "I lead by doing it myself. I have to show, not teach, but show what can be done. It's a guiding type of leadership."

When questioned about her intent behind a particular action which she coordinated on behalf of the SLT, a participant clearly recognized her modeling role, "Yes, I was setting an example. We were hoping that people would follow through on that," and replicate the behavior on their own.

Whereas many of the references to role model seemed directed toward the staff at large, one team member clearly saw modeling for the other members of the SLT as a critical aspect of her leadership role: "I think because I made a commitment to the SLT, that my responsibility included going to all meetings that were called, whether I really felt like staying after school or not--setting an example for the rest of the people on the SLT team."

In the context of this study, it was clear that the teachers on the SLT believed that modeling for their peers was a critical aspect of their leadership role. They did not consciously model to set themselves apart from others, but more often as an active demonstration of their own commitment. One teacher affirmed he was a role model because, "I'm hard working. I care. I'm prepared."

"I Am Responsible"

Nine of the ten participants referred to "taking responsibility" as central to their leadership role. This term was more complex than the concept of leading by example; it included initiative, action and a moral responsibility that extended beyond the classroom.

This image of a moral responsibility was similar to the moral purpose Fullan (1994) saw as an important attribute of teacher leadership. He observed that moral purpose keeps teachers closer to the needs of children and drives their willingness to make changes. The importance of assuming responsibility for student success beyond one's own classroom is also a key feature of teacher leadership that is documented in the literature (Boles & Troen, 1996; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996).

When these teachers referred to a leader as one who "takes initiative," they were referring to a person "who is not told what to do," but "takes responsibility" for "doing whatever is necessary" to "help the group accomplish the goals." Initiative, then, was derived from taking responsibility.

One of the newest participants noted, "As a teacher I might say, 'Okay, this is it, the problems here are too big to work on,'" indicating a defeatist attitude which is common among teachers who are overwhelmed by a growing population of "needy" and "at risk" students in their classrooms. In contrast, this SLT member went on to observe with a triumphant laugh, "With my SLT hat on, I said, 'Okay, what could we do to actually fix it or work toward making improvements in those areas?' When you're in the leadership

team, you're responsible for trying to take care of that." He continued, "I guess it's more ownership. When you're in the SLT you see more of what's going on and you have some responsibility." In another conversation, he added,

It's easy to just buy out and say 33% of my students are failing because they don't come to school. It's true a lot of students don't come, but if you are in the SLT you say, "What can we do to make them come here and why aren't they interested in school?"

Another of the interviewees spoke of this ownership as taking "ultimate responsibility," reflecting the popular adage, "If it's going to be, it's up to me." This sense of responsibility was derived from the teachers' commitment to the SLT and the "growth fostering relationship" they have developed over time (Miller, 1986). In describing a challenging task she undertook as a result of her involvement on the SLT, one of the co-researchers explained:

I felt that this was something I had committed to, and so I was going to be responsible and do everything I needed to do. I had to fill in and rewrite one of the focus group reports at the last minute; this surprised me because I'm not a writer. But it was because I was on the SLT, and the only SLT member in our focus group, that I was asked to do this. So I thought, "Okay, you need to be responsible, and you need to follow through." I think it forced me to do things that I might not want to do, because I did make that commitment.

Another teacher leader described her sense of responsibility in terms of others, "I feel a great deal of responsibility to people--whether it's the students or the teachers because I'm representing them at the SLT. Being a leader, then, is listening to staff and students, finding out what their concerns are." When this teacher leader continued to reflect on leadership, she described how the SLT lived this role on a daily basis:

Responsibility for the whole school is a presence we've learned to carry with us. A little click in your head goes, "I need to stop and listen to this," whether it's a

student or a teacher. It's something that has been planted in our brains and, nine times out of ten, we take the moment; our focus has broadened to the school at large.

In the same conversation, this teacher expanded the concept of responsibility to action: "I truly think that the SLT has a responsibility to every staff member and student on this campus, that our professional role is to listen to the concerns and, if we don't have the answer, we go out and explore for the answer."

Another co-researcher referred to the context of this responsibility when he compared the SLT to other leadership groups on campus: "SLT has a broader responsibility because we are dealing with the overall program, the overall goals of the school." When asked how this sense of responsibility compared to that of his classroom teacher role, he responded,

I feel that I have the same responsibility as a classroom teacher. But we have a bigger role in the SLT because it involves the whole school. As a teacher, you are confined in the classroom; your area of influence is limited to the students who are within your reach. If you're an SLT member, you have a bigger role because you are dealing with figuring out how to accomplish the goals of the whole school.

Another SLT member recalled hearing a "revealing comment" at an SLT training meeting, demonstrating how the teams have been prepared to perceive a realm of influence and responsibility that extends beyond their current classroom teacher role: "When we stop looking at this class or this subject matter as our job, and we look at this school as our job, then we're moving in the right direction towards school change."

Each of the teacher members of the SLT either clearly spoke of their responsibility for schoolwide change or modeled it through their behavior. It appears to be responsibility with a capital "R," a moral commitment which extends beyond a simple title or role, permeating everything they do.

"I Listen to People"

Listening was an important aspect of the leadership role that the participants connected to initiative and responsibility. Every participant referred to listening to others and being listened to in his or her description of participation in the SLT. One of the teacher leaders described how listening is a way of closing the loop, providing on-going guidance to the SLT: "As a leader, I need to carry the vision and I need to make sure that the wheels are rolling, and if there are any concerns, that there is a mechanism for feedback and regrouping."

In thinking about their leadership role, another teacher referred to an SLT training where the team discussed "the value of resistance and of listening to everybody's point of view." She observed, "We learned that it's not destructive negativity, necessarily. It's just a balance." The SLT viewed the discordant voices as an opportunity to learn, rather than an obstacle to be overcome or a negative, opposing force to be feared. The team sought to "hear the discontent, not to judge it or deny it, but accept that it is what others perceive" (Binney & Williams, 1995, as cited in Fullan, 1997). The teacher leaders believed that listening helped them "find out what the concerns of their resistant peers were." One teacher affirmed:

Everyone here is a colleague and I consider everyone to be part of my team--pro or con. Even if they're con, they're telling me something that's valuable, something that needs to be heard, understood, listened to, found out where it's coming from. But, you also need to know when to take things with a grain of salt.

This attitude reflected a sense of connectedness and understanding that did not discount her peers, but gave credence and importance to their concerns. This teacher assumed that her peers have valid personal reasons for their negative or challenging complaints and questions, such as, "I don't want to do that. What was the purpose of that activity? How much longer is this going to last?" What is the SLT trying to do? " In taking these perspectives seriously, the teacher leaders on the SLT took a proactive stance

and demonstrated respect for their peers. This reaction seemed to stem from their sense of responsibility to those they represented and their personal commitment to improving the school.

Listening was also seen as a critical aspect of decision making. One participant observed: Leaders not only “listen to people, but are willing to take direction and advice from others.” The capacity to listen to others, complemented by knowledge of “the big picture” was what, she believed, allows a leader to make “really strong decisions.”

The teacher members of the SLT were just as committed to listening to each other as they were to the staff as a whole; this was viewed as “one of the assets we bring to the table:”

If someone has a concern or is not comfortable with the direction we're moving, this team really listens. We listen to the concern and deal with it in a very professional way. Anyone can bring up anything at our team meetings without being perceived as a trouble maker.

Another teacher expanded the image beyond the team to include those “negative” voices that are often ignored:

Occasionally one of us will play the Devil's Advocate: “You say this is going to work, but let me bring in this perspective. . . . What's going to happen then?” If the person with that point of view is not on our team, I think we try to bring an imaginary person to the team meeting.

This conscious decision to bring an imaginary person to the meeting came from being “very aware of voices that aren't at the table.” “It's not that we're spies and bring everything back to the table, but you can mull over a concern that you hear on campus. I can't think of a better place to bring it. You know, you can do that in a professional way, without involving the names of the naysayers.”

"Our Job Is To Facilitate"

Five of the ten teacher leaders referred to facilitating group process as one of the responsibilities of a leader, a perception shared by some of the teacher leaders in the literature (e.g., Hart & Baptist, 1996). One participant explained, "A leader is a person who facilitates, a person who works collaboratively with others. Another participant observed,

Once the staff has agreed upon a direction, then we facilitate and help the school go in that direction. The SLT has facilitated teacher discussions and reaching consensus on issues; so it's more leading discussion than it is actually a decision making body."

The importance of the word "facilitator," rather than "leader" or another traditional label suggesting "one who is ahead or above others," was fervently clarified by one of the teachers in the study:

Being seen as facilitators rather than leaders, in the traditional sense, feels extremely important because we were not elected by the teachers! Teachers don't like to be told what to do. We are not in that position; we are not administrators. It's extremely important to me that we be perceived as people who don't see themselves as having a set agenda that we want to impose upon people, but that we want to help encourage our colleagues, clarify issues, and facilitate the group moving ahead.

A major concern among the SLT members and frequent topic of SLT meetings centered around the question, "How can we facilitate that: trying to fit together where we've been in the past, what we're doing now and where we're going?" Another teacher leader affirmed, "We always do that," indicating that the team is constantly seeking new strategies to help staff make meaning and agree on a shared vision. This is common practice, at the center of their work.

The above interpretation of their role appeared to be rooted in official SLT descriptors. One teacher reported he was reciting a memo from the principal when he said, "The SLT members are expected to be facilitators of staff development; they should take active roles--as people, as coaches, as leaders--in improving student learning, and serve as agents of change for continuous school improvement." The actual process of facilitation was described by another of the co-researchers:

Our job is to educate the staff: to go to the workshops that we're lucky enough to attend, get all these good materials and all this good information, bring it back and present it to staff; teach them. For example, when we came back from the data workshop, we taught the staff how to read data. We helped them think about, "What the heck does all this mean?"

Learning to facilitate "powerful learning" for staff was clearly one of the overt goals of the School Leadership Team training. The many examples provided by the teachers show how completely they have taken this role to heart and have made it central to their leadership role.

"We Work Together Toward One Common Goal"

Although the interviews were filled with the collaborative pronouns "we," "our" and "ours," there were actually few direct references to the terms "collaborate," or "team work." Instead, the participants chose to use stories and examples that actively demonstrated how closely connected they were as a team. One teacher observed, "Two heads are better than one. If we gather ourselves together and then help each other in our thinking and processing, we'll be able to come up with something, such as a next step or solution."

One of the participants described the process of collaboration in her definition of leadership:

Leadership is working together toward one common goal. It is a group of people with the same interests or the same goals, working together to achieve this, from

whatever capacity each person is in. So in terms of my concept of a traditional leader, I'm not there anymore. I no longer think, "Let me find the person to blame, and that's the leader. The leader will tell me what to do." Today I think, "We have this goal; how do we accomplish it? Let's see what we are all accountable for. . . . What is your part?"

This description is vivid; it contrasts a definition reminiscent of Rost's (1991) collaborative leadership or Moller & Katzenmeyer's (1996) concept of a "community of leaders" and with a traditional view of leadership that often permeates schools where teachers assume the role of "victim" rather than "initiator" and "collaborator" (Ashton & Webb, 1986). This teacher's definition also refers to a form of leadership that is not limited by formal roles or responsibilities.

In the context of the SLT, another teacher leader described a view of equity that is implied in a collaborative definition of leadership:

As a teacher I think I have an equal role on the team. It doesn't matter whether you're an administrator or health assistant, we all have an equal opportunity to share our needs and whatever we see as important. We're equals; the barriers come down. We're the people who are concerned about education and it doesn't make any difference where you are in the line of education [i.e., hierarchy].

Two other co-researchers referred to this equitable relationship and shared responsibility when they described the work of the SLT: "I think we share the responsibilities pretty equally. I'll step in if I need to, and someone else is always willing to step in if they need to." "We all participate pretty equally now. Even the new members are speaking up." One of the newer members described how this equitable relationship is fostered during a meeting: "We rotate the meeting roles, especially the facilitator and the one who is writing things down on the board. Everybody has a good idea; you go around and get an idea from everybody, so you're always on your toes."

Collaboration around a common purpose seemed to be the glue that held this team together, with the common purpose being “improving student achievement” and “student success.”

“A Leader Is Involved”

All of the participants described “involvement” as active participation and sustained commitment. A consistent theme reflected by the participants was, “A leader is always there, has good attendance at whatever he or she is leading,” and does “anything that needs to be done, even if they might not want to do it.” This extended to the SLT training, SLT site meetings, and the staff development activities that the team coordinated for the entire staff. Involvement and active participation meant more than just “filling a chair” to the members of this SLT.

When these teacher leaders talked about being involved, they mentioned a broad range of activities: “I follow through on things I say I’m going to follow through on.” “I bring back materials. I lead staff development. I go to meetings, come back and report or disseminate handouts that I received.” “I lead a focus group.” “I take the time to be organized, to do the readings, to make the meetings.” “I help people feel comfortable with new materials and new concepts--whatever is being presented at the inservice.” “I give my input as an experienced teacher.” “I pass on information that we’re learning to motivate teachers to come to things when they might want to say, ‘I’ll go for five minutes, then I’ll be in my room.’”

For some, this involvement and commitment was present at the time they agreed to participate in the SLT. When invited to join, one teacher enthusiastically responded, “Yeah, of course! Absolutely!” For others it was “a gradual dawning” which occurred over time. One of the younger teachers on the SLT, who was also new to the team, noted how his involvement and responsibility had changed over the previous four months: “Originally I thought, ‘I’ll sit back. I’ll watch, and when something presents itself I’ll be involved.’ Now I’m saying, ‘There are a lot of chances to get involved in a lot of things,

so I think it's time.” This did not mean he had sat idly by for four months; he had been an active participant on the team. It was, instead, a commitment to become a more visible member as a presenter during staff development activities.

This commitment to the group and the work was apparent in the teachers' behavior at the SLT training sessions, as well. As one participant observed, “Punctuality is number one for SLT.” The researcher noted that while other teams were straggling into the training between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m., the entire Lindbergh team was at their table between 7:00 and 7:15 a.m. and “ready to work.” Described as “team building” time by one of the teachers, the discussion of SLT business began immediately and continued until the training was officially called to order at 8:00 a.m. The involvement of each member of the team and the commitment to their leadership role was obvious in the intense, focused attention of every member. The team's 100% engagement created a palpable presence that was even more obvious when contrasted to the loosely coupled teams that began to gather at nearby tables.

“A Leader Is A Good Team Player”

Three of the ten teachers in the study referred to the leader's responsibility for being a “good team player” and a “good follower.” Even though the rest of the teacher leaders did not specifically list this as a characteristic of leadership, they demonstrated it through their interactions with each other. As one member defined it, “We share the responsibilities pretty equally.”

Sharing responsibility equally meant the team members equitably distributed roles and responsibilities both during meetings and between meetings. The team rotated the responsibilities for facilitator, recorder and timer at each meeting, allowing members to gain experience and, at the same time, insuring support for the current facilitator because “next time it might be your turn.” During staff development activities, each member assumed some overt role, although roles ranged from handing out materials to being “up-in-front of the staff” with responsibility for presenting or “providing guidance for the tasks that needed

to be done.” Between meetings, as mentioned above, team members were expected to “listen” and gather information to assist the team in “working toward one common goal.”

Leaders “Have Earned Their Place”

The teacher members of this SLT believed that a leader “earns” a place in leadership through their effort and knowledge. Similar to the findings in Stone’s (1996) study, earning a place was synonymous with gaining respect from their fellow SLT team members and the rest of the staff through personal effort.

Effort involved a wide range of commitments, activities and attitudes, i.e., “going to all the meetings that are called,” “staying after school whether I really feel like it or not,” “being responsible and doing everything I needed to do,” “budgeting my time to be an effective team member,” “being a good follower and a good team player,” “getting everybody involved and dealing with the cynics, i.e., people who are saying, ‘I’ve done this before. What’s different about it?’”

The participants used the word “knowledge” rather than “expertise,” indicating a commodity which anyone could acquire, a property which was not exclusive to the leader or leaders. Knowledgeable people “know their material;” they have “knowledge that other people need” in the sense that they “know how to lead the group in accomplishing their goals.” Leaders also know “how to deal with the responsibility” that comes with the leadership role.

The participants described “dealing with the responsibility” in a variety of ways. One teacher referred several times to having “a Teflon back and Teflon shoulders.” A “Teflon back and shoulders” protect her from taking the “negativity said about the SLT personally.” Realistically, she admitted, “I’m not going to forget everything said or expressed or wished or wanted, but I’m not going to hold it against anybody.”

A similar view of “dealing with the responsibility” entailed “recognizing that confrontation” is a natural process of change, and that “confrontation allows growth.” “If you're ready for it and you expect it, you will know how to handle it, redirect it and use it to benefit the group.”

“Dealing with the responsibility” also meant “facing the fear and doing it anyway.”

One co-researcher described her anxiety in facing her peers:

Sometimes I've been a little bit embarrassed during an inservice, feeling that people didn't want to go to it. Actually, our staff is pretty good. Once they're there, and you see the expressions on their faces, you feel okay. You feel they're with you and they're going to do whatever you ask them to do. But I feel embarrassed beforehand because I hear people talking about how they don't want to go. I feel uncomfortable, not when I'm actually doing the inservice, just beforehand.

Because coordinating staff development was the central responsibility of the SLT, it loomed large in the images of “dealing with the responsibility.”. One of the younger teacher leaders, completing the first year of training, described his greatest challenge as a member of the SLT:

It's scary being a leader. Because they're your peers, I guess their opinions count more. I don't particularly mind public speaking; I could get up every day in front of the classroom and go on and on. Then you get me in front of forty teachers . . . I can do it, but there's a lot more effort involved. I am working on enlarging my comfort zone and trying new things. I haven't done many of the presentations to staff, but I am on the committee and I might do something to help in the presentation the next time. And then next time, maybe, I would lead it. So I'm stepping up there. I might be able to do that--and even would look forward and want to--because I think I have something to contribute.

The opposite end of the confidence spectrum is demonstrated by a more experienced teacher on the SLT team when he asserted, "I am able to come across as someone who has a really good idea of what we're doing and why we're doing it, someone who maybe knows how to get there."

"I Am A Leader On Campus"

Unlike many of the teacher leaders in the literature (e.g., AVID, 1997; Bellon, 1994; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Vance, 1991; Vandiver, 1996), all but one teacher in this study directly referred to themselves as a leader at some time during the interviews. A veteran teacher observed, "I am a leader on campus in a way that I've never been before. I've been a leader here in different ways, primarily because I've been here so long." In contrast to her previous leadership roles that were subject matter based and grounded in her longevity, this new role was more visible, collaborative and schoolwide in focus.

Another teacher reflected, "I am on the School Leadership Team. I must be a leader." He repeated "I must be a leader" three times in his statement, each time with a little different inflection. The first time sounded as if he was affirming his role, the second seemed like a clarification of what the word meant, and the last repetition sound like an admonishment to live up to the title.

A less experienced teacher referred to a similar affirmation process when he described how he talked himself through one of his first encounters with the team: "This is the leadership team. I am a leader on campus; this is why I'm on the SLT." Although he was working to convince himself that he deserved to be on the SLT, this affirmation allowed him to maintain his balance and voice when he sat with so many others who had more experience as teachers and as leaders.

The only co-researcher who did not refer to herself directly as a leader was Michelle. As the self-proclaimed Devil's Advocate and one of the youngest teachers on the team, Michelle spoke more often of fear than any of her colleagues. "I am completely and totally terrified of pissing off people in my department." Apparently composed of negative,

veteran teachers, her department had intimidated Michelle and clearly contributed to her pessimistic view of the school, as well as a lack of confidence in her capacity as a teacher. Both issues were central to her profile found in the beginning of this chapter. With less than six months experience on the SLT, however, Michelle affirmed during the Focus Group that she had become “much more positive,” and described a rare moment recently when she had spoken in a department meeting. She observed, “I guess my being able to answer the concern about the SLT, which was voiced in the department meeting, came from the fact that I feel like I’ve gained so much from the experience, and I feel like I’ve grown in my leadership role.” This statement represented Michelle’s first tentative step toward seeing herself as a leader, an extension of the SLT’s leadership role in the school.

Contrasting a traditional view of leadership with his own behavior, another teacher observed:

I’m more of a “Hey, I’ll show you how to do things.” I lead by example. I’m not the type of person who enjoys standing up in front of a group and pontificating. I do enjoy showing people, helping them do something that they want to do and haven’t been able to do. If that’s being a leader, that’s what I am.

The most telling reflection about the personal impact of their leadership role was offered by one of the more experienced teachers when she said, “It’s flattering to hear someone else consider you a leader. Even though you’ve worked your tush off trying to get there, it’s still a big compliment for someone else to notice and refer to you as a leader.”

Conclusions

The teacher leaders on Lindbergh’s School Leadership Team described leadership as an active role which entails (a) leading by example; (b) taking responsibility through initiative and action which are grounded in moral purpose; (c) listening with the intent to understand and respond in meaningful ways; (d) facilitating collaborative learning processes, both formal and informal; (e) consistently working together toward a common vision for “all” students; (f) doing whatever is necessary to help the team accomplish its

purpose; (g) taking an equitable role and responsibility in all team activities; (h) striving to live up to the responsibility which has been entrusted to them by their colleagues; and (i) assuming the mantle of leadership.

The teachers who participated in this study demonstrated a clear grasp of leadership that is grounded in personal ownership, passion, close affiliation with those they seek to lead, reciprocal learning, a commitment to sharing, and self-sacrifice. They were clearly engaged in stretching the boundaries of their own experience and challenging the status quo. They provided a compelling image of “leadership from within,” rather than leadership that is imposed upon or external to the group being led.

School Leadership Teams and Teacher Leadership

What kind of support and encouragement might enhance the personal and professional growth of teachers who serve on School Leadership Teams (SLT)? This was the third question that directed this study. Since the primary goal of the research was to gain insight into the experience of teachers who serve on an SLT through a phenomenological approach, using few direct questions to guide the interviews and focus group, the conclusions in this section are drawn by inference and are a synthesis of data related in the previous sections of this chapter.

As the researcher and the ten teacher participants jointly explored the concerns, joys, and motivations that constituted their experience as members of an established SLT, several insights into the purposes, processes, and outcomes of SLT program emerged. The insights offered in this chapter are provided with the hope that they will influence future design of SLT training and professional development experiences that are intended to develop or enhance teacher leadership.

The primary goal of the School Leadership Teams program was to “develop a community of learners from a school site that has the capacity to create whole school change (CSLA, 1997, p. 1). Designed to foster a learning community within the SLT site

team, the training also sought to enhance the team's capacity to extend that community of learners schoolwide. The individuals on Lindbergh High School's SLT formed strong bonds of trust and commitment as they engaged in inquiry-based activities which were grounded in a solid foundation of research. The SLT program trainers modeled and discussed a rich variety of staff development strategies with the participating teams. Each strategy was replicable and designed to help the SLT engage their peers on the school staff in a discussion about student achievement on their campus. The ultimate goal of the School Leadership Team Program was to create a school environment "in which powerful learning is experienced by all learners" [administrators, teachers, support staff, and students] in a systematic and consistent way (CSLA, 1997, p. 2).

The SLT Training Experience

The foundation of the School Leadership Teams Program (SLT) was a set of fundamental beliefs that govern the California School Leadership Academy, designer and sponsor of the SLT Program. CSLA has designed professional development for educational leaders based on a belief that learning is best facilitated when learners:

- Find tasks meaningful because they emerge from authentic issues and problems.
- Build their own meaning and apply, reflect upon and receive feedback on applications in a real-world setting.
- Are empowered to use their personal strengths and hold themselves and one another accountable for appropriate actions.
- Are viewed as a rich resource, are valued for their diversity, and interact collaboratively as a learning community.
- Are personally connected to the content and context of learning. (CSLA, 1997, p. 11)

According to the teachers in this study, the SLT training they participated in clearly reflected the foundational beliefs of CSLA. The relationship between the beliefs that grounded the program and the teachers' experience is offered below.

Deriving Meaning from Authentic Issues

The teachers on the Lindbergh's SLT were positive, pro-active members of the school community. They cared deeply about their students, and struggled daily with the issues of student success in a diverse school. As one of the newest members of the SLT observed, "Our goals are shared goals, not just what we think is right, but what the goals of the students are." The goals of the students could be translated to read, "the knowledge, skills and attitudes which students need to become successful high school graduates."

Several teachers were asked if they represented a specific student voice on the SLT, each answered with something akin to Robert's response, "I think I represent all students; the problems that the students are having go across the board." In other words, students of all colors and cultural backgrounds experience some of the same challenges and deserve equitable attention. Several of teachers of color observed that they are a little more aware of issues related to students with backgrounds similar to their own, but reiterated that "all students" are within their "circles of influence and concern" since they joined the SLT (Covey, 1990).

The teacher leaders also demonstrated the authenticity of the SLT focus, in their application of the SLT learnings in their classrooms and in the schoolwide professional development activities they facilitated for their colleagues. Suggesting a way the teachers used the SLT learnings in their own classrooms, one teacher described how the research on teaching and learning affected his daily work:

I look at myself everyday and say, "Did that go over well? If not, how can I change it?" It's got to start with me. I can't sit around and tell anybody else what

should be done in their classroom if I'm not practicing it myself--and I need to be good at it. Then I can talk to other teachers about what things work, and what things don't.

When thinking about the value of the SLT training, another teacher referred to the first professional development day the team facilitated on Lindbergh's campus. The teacher noted that, at the end of the first two days of SLT training, the team discussed what its role would be in the school. As the team members began to envision themselves as staff developers, they were immediately confronted by the fact that they "would meet with resistance." Rather than run the other direction, the team brainstormed ways "to minimize that resistance." The team decided to help the staff by revisiting the "efforts we had made to bring about change at our school" over the past few years. "We made a big ol' wagon train chart," replicating Schlechty's (1993) metaphor for schoolwide change which was modeled in the SLT training:

We were leading and leading, inspiring all of the teachers to contribute ideas; they came up with little post-its and added ideas to the chart. I felt that was such a successful focusing exercise. All of us were collaborating, remembering where we've been, then seeing it in the context of where we're going.

The incident exemplified the transfer of SLT professional development activities to the real life and real work of Lindbergh's team, demonstrating the authentic focus of the training they had received.

Building Meaning and Application in a Real-World Setting

The SLT training was carefully designed to engage participants in making their own meaning, applying, reflecting upon and receiving feedback on applications in their own school setting. One of the younger teachers described the importance of this opportunity:

The most rewarding aspect of being on the SLT is the opportunity to learn. Since I am not in a position right now to go back to school, sometimes I feel real separated from me as a student. I feel like a student a lot of the time when I'm at the SLT, because I'm learning so much.

The most important way the teachers on the SLT were encouraged to "build their own meaning" was the planning time incorporated into the SLT training. The teams were given regular opportunities to consider the day's learnings and the potential applications within each team's home school.

The "big ol' wagon train" activity mentioned above was one of seven examples that the teacher leaders recounted in their interviews. Although not a complete list of the professional development activities that the co-researchers replicated with their non-SLT colleagues, the seven activities mentioned during the interviews are listed below in Table 8.

Table 8

SLT Activities that Co-Researchers Reported They Replicated with Lindbergh Staff

Wagon Train documenting history of the school

What is the purpose of school? What is the ideal school ? . . . ideal classroom?

What benchmarks will document our progress toward our vision?

What is powerful learning? How do we know students are learning?

What are our Expected Schoolwide Learning Results? (ESLRs)

What is racism? How does racism affect student success?

How do we analyze student data? What does it tell us about teaching and learning?

Each anecdote demonstrated that the team never blindly adopted any element of training it had received. Carrying their expert capacity as teachers into the professional

development domain, the team members determined their outcomes, brainstormed potential avenues, and adapted the strategies they had experienced in the SLT training. Several co-researchers also referred to times the team debriefed an activity it had facilitated, determined the strengths and weaknesses, and used that information to make the next professional development activity even stronger. The actions of the teacher leaders on the team were purposeful and reflected their capacity to problem solve and successfully apply the concepts and research gained in the SLT training.

Empowered and Accepting Accountability

The teachers on Lindbergh's SLT felt empowered to use their personal strengths and held themselves and one another accountable. They had learned to "recognize, create and channel their own power" (Ceroni & Garman, 1994, p. 142). They were not limited to the traditional power that had historically been permitted by the institution. Instead, they had begun to understand the potential for change that existed in each of them as members of the School Leadership Team and in the team as a whole. These ten teachers began to "take charge of their lives" in at least three areas that were not accessible to them before: (a) guiding systemic, schoolwide professional development; (b) engaging in broad-based research and reflective data analysis; and (c) collaboratively building and facilitating a shared vision for their school.

One of the teachers succinctly described the team members' sense of empowerment when she said,

We're concerned about the success of everyone on this campus. We focus on what we can affect, and our focus has changed from only being able to affect our classroom to being able to affect the entire campus. The principal and the SLT training have given us the power, the ability, and the trust to create positive change.

Her comments revealed an understanding that the team's power came from three areas: (a) the principal's willingness to share power, demonstrated by her "equal" status on the team and the freedom the team was given to make decisions regarding professional

development; (b) the district's willingness to share power, which was demonstrated by the time and resources provided for SLT training including all school sites in the district, and feedback loops which included a meaningful district liaison process and regular participation by district staff and the superintendent in SLT activities; and (c) the tone, content and facilitation of the SLT training.

Accountability for the Lindbergh teacher leaders began with the norms established by the team during the first SLT training meeting, and appeared to be consistently reinforced in all SLT work. The norms of punctuality and shared responsibility were overtly stated and present in almost all of the co-researchers' comments, "No one misses an SLT training." "Punctuality is number one for SLT." "I follow through on things I say I'm going to follow through on." "I take the time to be organized, to do the readings, to make the meetings." "I give my input as an experienced teacher."

Although Lindbergh's teacher leaders did not mention formally holding each other accountable, they did demonstrate a unified commitment to the team and each other. Accountability was a core value of the team and, in order to create the deep level of trust that existed among the team members, commitments must have been consistently fulfilled throughout the life of the team (Covey, 1989).

Valuing Each Other and Interacting Collaboratively

The teacher members of this SLT obviously felt valued as a rich resource. As reported in the participant profiles, each teacher described a different capacity he or she brought to the SLT, and each perceived that capacity was valued and useful to the team. One teacher summarized the issue when she said, "My input is unique because I am a unique person."

It was obvious that the diversity of the team--the variety of experiences, age, and expertise--were valued and reinforced by the SLT, as well. As one teacher observed,

SLT is a personal growth experience. It's getting together with teachers who share the same passion. We want students to succeed! We may have different roads to

get there, maybe different belief systems, but we're on the team because we feel that we are doing something wrong--what we are doing right now is not working. We see that when we look at our data. We need to do something about it; we share a common goal.

Several teachers spoke of the personal validation the SLT provided for them:

It has helped me realize that the creative impulses in me are appreciated by other people. And having the appreciation of your peers is a lot different than having the appreciation of your students. When your peers say, "Wow, that was a really good idea!" or "Your outlook really helps us see this in a different way," you feel valued.

The teachers frequently spoke of the "unique experience" of having their ideas valued by their peers and the principal. Seven teachers actually used a form of the word "validating" in their description of the SLT experience.

The teachers were also tightly connected as a collaborative learning community. They frequently referred, with pleasure, to their "work as a team," their release from the "isolation" of their classrooms or departments, their increased understanding of "the goals of this school" and their capacity "to materialize the goals."

Personally Connecting to the Learning

Every one of the teachers who participated in this study felt personally connected to Lindbergh High School and to his or her work on the SLT: "I love this school." "I love these students." Even when they highlighted the negative aspects of the school such as, "unmotivated students," or "very assertive [i.e., aggressive] teachers," they offered a tempering contrast such as, "a fairly positive staff with the usual curmudgeons." Each teacher closed his or her reflection of the negatives with an affirmation of personal commitment to the school and the School Leadership Team.

Variations of the following refrain echoed throughout the twenty-three hours of interviews, "I feel very proud to be part of this team." These teachers vividly described the school of their dreams, the school which they passionately believed they could midwife

into existence. The teacher members of the SLT envisioned a school filled with “pride and unity,” a place where the SLT could offer “personal growth” for each of the team members and their non-SLT colleagues, and where the SLT could “effect a lasting change” in school culture and, ultimately “student achievement.”

Conclusions

Judging from the experience of the co-researchers, the SLT training was clearly grounded in the foundational beliefs of the California School Leadership Academy (CSLA). The researcher, however, was unaware that such a statement of beliefs existed prior to December, 1997, very late in the analysis and writing process. As a result, the alignment between the data and the beliefs was unanticipated and emerged in the last stages of analysis.

As the foundational beliefs proposed, the teacher leaders on Lindbergh’s SLT found meaning in the training and felt empowered by the process because the work they did in the program was directly tied to authentic problems they faced in their school. The co-researchers created their own meaning through reciprocal learning processes that allowed them to: (a) explore their individual experiences, beliefs, and assumptions; (b) create a dissonance with old assumptions by studying current educational research and student data; (c) analyze the normal ways “we do things around here;” (d) construct new meanings with regard to student achievement and school success; and (e) frame and initiate new actions that had the potential for evoking systemic change (Lambert, 1997). Through these processes, the teacher members of the team felt “empowered to use their personal strengths and held themselves and one another accountable for appropriate actions;” they viewed each other as rich resources and interacted collaboratively as a learning community; and they experienced personal connection with “the content and context” of the SLT program (CSLA, 1997). All of these experiences created a foundation for systemic change and, although it was not an overt goal of the SLT program, the opportunity directly addressed the common barriers to teacher leadership.

New Hope for Teacher Leadership

Chapter 2 explored five significant barriers to teacher leadership that have been identified in schools to date: (a) reluctance of teachers to see themselves as leaders, (b) a cultural taboo that prohibits teachers from setting themselves apart from their peers, (c) the lack of time for leadership training, leadership work or collaboration, (d) lack of administrative support and adequate training, and (e) the isolation inherent in the structure of public schooling.

The teachers on Lindbergh's SLT described an experience of leadership that is both familiar, yet new. The co-researchers, as their predecessors in the literature, related concerns about their persistent, resistant peers and the "crab-bucket" school culture that regularly tried to restrain them (e.g., Duke, 1994; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Vance, 1991; Wilson, 1991); the difficulty in balancing their teaching responsibilities with their leadership roles (e.g., O'Connor & Boles, 1992; Schmidt, 1996; Yoder, 1994); and the isolation they have felt as classroom teachers (e.g., Corkery, 1995; Rosenholtz, 1989; Schmidt, 1996). In contrast, the co-researchers also described a significantly different experience than other teacher leaders in the literature.

Since the researcher used a phenomenological approach to this study, an in-depth analysis of the literature on teacher leadership was not conducted until August, 1997, two months after the last interview and substantial data analysis had been completed. Even then, the researcher did not see an immediate connection between Lindbergh's data and the barriers to teacher leadership. Only when she had completed most of Chapter 4, did the researcher return to the literature review in December, 1997, seeking connections, validation or contrasting images. She was surprised by the overwhelming depth and consistency of Lindbergh's data and the positive impact the SLT experience had on the teachers who participated in the study. As the positive conclusions surfaced, the researcher continued to seek evidence that indicated her interpretation was too generous or in conflict with the reality of the lived-experience of the teachers. After repeated tests of the data, the

researcher concluded the data was valid and the conclusions accurate, including the capacity of the SLT experience to overcome the common barriers to teacher leadership.

Assuming the Mantle of Leadership

Unlike the majority of teacher leaders in previous studies (e.g., AVID, 1997; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Vance, 1991), nine of the ten teachers in this study described themselves as leaders, although they exhibited varying degrees of comfort with the term. The majority of the co-researchers spoke about their leadership role with great confidence, the rest used a tone that suggested they were struggling to live up to the term, anxious to see themselves the way they believed others (i.e., the principal and their SLT colleagues) saw them. All of the teacher leaders in this study defined leadership by describing strategies they used on a daily basis to assist the SLT in accomplishing its goals.

Resisting the "Crab Bucket" Culture

Even though the teachers in this study exhibited a keen awareness of the negative attitudes of their peers and described several incidents where a non-SLT colleague had tried to dissuade them from the team's mission, all of the co-researchers appeared confident in their role and resistant to the pressures that surrounded them, unlike many of their colleagues in the literature (e.g., Stone, 1996; Troen & Boles, 1993; Yarger & Lee, 1994). The capacity to stand strong in the face of intimidation, coercion and outright resistance seemed to stem from the cohesiveness of the team members, their united commitment to enhancing success for "all" students, and the SLT training that provided (a) significant time for collaborative research, dialogue, and problem solving, and (b) sound, structured professional development activities that the members could adapt to their school site.

Another issue highlighted in the literature (e.g., Bird & Little, 1985; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996) was a concern among teacher leaders about being seen as one of "them" (an administrator) rather than one of "us" (a teacher). The teachers in this study related similar concerns when they described the team's evolution from being a "liaison" to a "leadership" team. Although teachers have often felt that their capacity to influence their

peers was significantly decreased by becoming aligned with “them” (Schmidt, 1996), the co-researchers had determined that they needed to take a more visible and public role in site leadership in order to increase their influence. After two years of working in what was perceived as a “behind the scenes” role, the teachers realized they did not need to abandon their teacher identity in order to participate in schoolwide leadership. The co-researchers had come to see themselves as professional educators whose experience and insight was valued and necessary at the schoolwide leadership level. The teachers on Lindbergh’s team saw themselves as equally important contributors and problem solvers, equal to and as important as the principal in their diagnosis and problem solving role on the schoolwide change team.

Time Is of the Essence

The third issue that separated the teacher leaders in this study from their colleagues in the literature (e.g., Fullan, 1994; Yoder, 1994) was the time that was allocated to the SLT for the team’s work. With six days a year for training, deep dialogue about student success or lack thereof, and action planning, the team members felt significantly supported and validated for their work.

On the other hand, several of the co-researchers suffered, like their peers in the literature, in that they constantly struggled with balancing their leadership work with their “teacher first” identity and their commitment to providing a quality instructional program to their students. The ten teachers who participated in this study needed to meet before school, after school and at lunch to fulfill their leadership duties; their extended responsibilities pushed out some of the careful preparation and 100% focus they had previously reserved for their students. Several of them described the challenge, as did their peers in literature (e.g., Hart & Baptist, 1996; Perry, 1996), as sometimes overwhelming. The teacher leaders in this study, however, put the importance of their leadership work on equal footing with their role as professional teachers and had found ways to mediate the

conflict in time and responsibility. The capacity to mediate that conflict appeared to be the direct result of the team's collective commitment to a common mission and the consistent, personal support of their colleagues on the team.

Meaningful Support And Comprehensive Training

Lack of administrative support and adequate training was an issue for many of teacher leaders in the literature (e.g., Bellon, 1994; Schmidt, 1996; Teitel, 1996). Lack of administrative support was not a concern to the teachers in this study. They described the principal as an "equal" on the SLT, as someone who had either specifically "chosen" them or had helped select them for the team, and as a collaborator and encourager who actively supported their role as a "positive force" for schoolwide change.

The only concerns the co-researchers described in the area of training occurred during major transitions in their SLT program: the beginning of each year. All of the team members who had participated in the first year of the two year training, described a level of frustration and confusion that dominated their first few months in the program. Since the role of the SLT was totally new and their role as teacher leaders in schoolwide change was not part of their previous experience, it took them several months to define and clarify that role. This was described as a time of discomfort followed by a "gradual dawning," a growing understanding of the purposes of the SLT and their new roles within the school.

The second challenge occurred at the beginning of the second year when the school began the self-study for the WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation. The teachers on the SLT initially had difficulty redefining their leadership roles in relationship to the accreditation self-study. They felt momentarily derailed from their "self-directed" course of schoolwide change and coerced into a prescribed sequence of "next steps."

As the year progressed, however, the team members eventually began to understand their leadership roles in the self-study. They began to understand their visible roles as Focus Group leaders, self-study authors and editors, and action plan designers, as

well as their invisible roles such as role models and active participants in the focus groups and other accreditation activities. As the self-study came to a close, the team coalesced around a new view of their schoolwide leadership role, implementing the WASC action plan and continuing to foster a schoolwide dialogue related to “student success.”

The team’s yearly struggle to redefine itself in the context of current affairs, confirmed the importance of Herrmann’s (1995) observation that “the greatest potential for team effectiveness in influencing improvement in schools, is not in inherently sustaining or institutionalizing the team as an entity, but in allowing ‘the team’ to continuously evolve into something of greater significance” (p. 154). If Lindbergh’s SLT had, at any time, so narrowly defined it’s role that it could not be open to new opportunities and adjust to changing conditions, the team would have lost its capacity to live out its mission (Fullan, 1993).

As the team members thought about a possible third year, several voiced concerns about continued support of the SLT training and the actual continuance of Lindbergh’s School Leadership Team. “I think it’s really important that the training continues. If it doesn’t, I think the global picture won’t be there.” This teacher acknowledged that change could continue without the SLT, that the action plan committees which had evolved from the accreditation process would implement the current school plan, “but, it won’t be as grandiose.” The word “grandiose” gave the teacher pause as she reflected, “That’s not the word I want.” The concept she was trying to express seemed to be a concern for the magnitude of the change the SLT envisioned. “We don’t want little baby steps; we want the larger picture.” The “larger picture” seemed to refer to potential for substantive improvement in student achievement schoolwide, measured by extensive, cumulative disaggregated data. The potential for change that the SLT envisioned was greater than the individual actions prescribed in the action plan.

Confidently, the teacher continued, “And we can get there; we can hash out a process to get there! But if the SLT training is taken away from us . . . maybe not . . .

maybe not.” Her words trailed off as she tried to envision Lindbergh High without an SLT, as she tried to imagine an SLT without the wind of training that kept it moving across uncharted seas, a team without the ballast of research, a team without the sextant of strategies and external expertise to guide it through the turbulent waters of change on their campus. It was apparent that she could not or would not hold that image in her head for long, and the interview turned to a new topic.

Continuation of the full days for ongoing, systematic training in content and process was critical to the teacher leaders on Lindbergh’s team. They felt the training was the “life blood” of their work; it fed them new ideas to stimulate thinking and proven professional development strategies to enhance their capacity to facilitate meaningful work schoolwide. The training provided time for deep inquiry, collective problem seeking, and collaborative problem solving. The SLT meetings fostered a strong “growth fostering relationship” that sustained, strengthened, and energized the team members to take on the challenging work of systemic change (Miller, 1986).

The continued support of and collaborative relationship with the principal was also noted as an essential element of the team’s success. The principal’s willingness to share power and authority with the team created an environment which fostered risk taking, ownership, and sustained commitment. The teachers’ capacity (a) to utilize the SLT training effectively; (b) to implement, monitor and adjust their individual and collective change efforts; and (c) to challenge the status quo all seemed to be directly connected to the principal’s equal membership on the team and her comfort in sharing both power and authority with the team.

Life In Relationship

Finally, while several teacher leaders on Lindbergh’s team described a time in their professional lives when they felt isolated from their teaching colleagues and the school at large, they related a significantly different experience in the SLT. The teachers described a close, “growth fostering relationship” with their colleagues on the team and an excitement

about working with diverse members of the staff, both certificated and classified (Miller, 1996). The teacher leaders described feeling more “connected” with their colleagues and the school as a whole.

Conclusions

In light of the foundational beliefs of the California School Leadership Academy and current research on teacher leadership, the experiences of the ten teachers on Lindbergh’s School Leadership Team suggest that the SLT program has clear potential for developing teacher leadership, as well as systemic change:

1. The SLT training actively engaged the teachers and their SLT colleagues in meaningful work that emerged from authentic issues and problems on their school site. The team, in turn, was able to utilize many of the strategies (both formal and informal) in meaningful ways to engage the entire staff of Lindbergh High in collective problem seeking and problem solving.
2. The team members created personal meaning and a shared vision for their school as a result of their SLT experiences. In addition, the teachers had consistently worked toward helping their non-SLT colleagues find personal meaning in the professional development activities the team facilitated and establishing a shared vision schoolwide.
3. Each teacher felt empowered to use his or her personal strengths and capacities in service of the team’s shared purpose. They felt valued as professional educators and capable of doing “whatever it takes” to help the team accomplish its goals.
4. The teachers on Lindbergh’s SLT held themselves and one another accountable for appropriate actions that supported the team’s vision. The accountability was demonstrated through the team members’ regular reflective practices and uniform resistance to pressure from non-SLT colleagues to “abandon the fight.”
5. The teacher leaders felt valued as rich resources to the team and the school. They took pride in their individual contributions to the SLT as well as their capacity to support schoolwide change as a group.

6. And, finally, the teachers and their SLT colleagues operated as a learning community. They, individually and collectively, immersed themselves in the research-based content of school reform and the complex cultural context of their school, seeking new paths for student success in a wilderness bound by tradition, fear and retribution.

The SLT training and the team relationship that developed at Lindbergh also seemed to significantly decrease the barriers to teacher leadership that were consistently reinforced in the literature. The teachers, even those with less than 10 years of teaching experience, had begun to see themselves as leaders or in a leadership role. They operated from a definition of leadership that was reciprocal, grounded in relationship, and driven by collective vision. The teachers on the team had developed a resilience that allowed them to challenge the cultural taboos that preserved the status quo. Significant time had been provided for SLT training that fed the team new ideas and strategies, and provided validation for the importance of their work. The activities of the team were actively supported by a principal who shared power and authority, clearing the way for the team members to take ownership for their work. Finally, the teachers left the isolation of their classrooms behind while remaining, steadfastly, "teachers first."

Recommendations Regarding School Leadership Teams

What kind of support and encouragement might enhance the personal and professional growth of teachers who serve on School Leadership Teams? Although this was not a direct question asked of the teacher leaders who participated in this study, the above research and the literature on teacher leadership suggest that the California School Leadership Academy, under the auspices of the State Department of Education and, in collaboration with district and site administrators:

1. Continue the SLT training; both the content and the format are important to sustaining teacher leadership. There is never a time when the teams will "arrive" because the problems and participants change from year to year. A continuous process of team development and support would also nurture the development of a schoolwide "community

of leaders" (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996) which could "enhance professional and organizational capability for problem-solving and renewal" (Herrmann, 1995, p.154).

2. Find ways to encourage and support principals in sharing power and authority, in becoming a "leader of leaders." The principal's capacity to share power and authority is the team's license to work at a schoolwide level (Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Johnson, 1992; Lambert, et. al., 1996; Stone, 1996). The equal status of Lindbergh's principal on the team seemed to be central to the team's capacity to own the work and its willingness to confront the most difficult challenges.

3. Nurture "growth fostering relationships" (Miller, 1986) within the team, not through team building activities per se, but through important, meaningful work that taps into the "deep, burning 'yes!'" which lies within (Covey, 1989).

4. Seek avenues to develop "growth fostering relationships" (Miller, 1968) throughout the school community (among teachers, administrators, support staff, students, and parents), so that the benefits of such relationships are not limited to the members of the School Leadership Team (Benoy, 1996).

5. Promote a broad based SLT that has a stimulating combination of teachers of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, curricular expertise, and years of experience (Fine, 1994; Kouba, 1996; Smialek, 1996). The teachers in this study either had been teaching less than 10 years (three had taught only 5 years) or more than 20 years. The team and schoolwide leadership may have been enriched by the inclusion of teachers with 10-20 years experience, as well.

6. Provide and protect the time necessary for teachers to study, collaborate, communicate, plan, implement and evaluate their work, on issues related to teaching and learning, change, and student achievement (Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Smialek, 1996; Wilson, 1991).

7. Develop strategies to build upon the individual expertise and diverse perspectives of teachers (Herrmann, 1995; Smialek, 1996). Teachers have spent years studying and

thinking about teaching and learning. They have rich resources to contribute to school leadership, but teachers need to be invited to participate and provided with safe opportunities to share their knowledge, collaboratively study research and student data, explore their thinking (individually and collectively), and engage in searching for problems, tendering and implementing solutions, and evaluating impact.

8. Encourage the participation of positive, emotionally mature staff members or those who have the potential for a positive outlook with sufficient support, then engage the team in conscientiously and consistently considering divergent perspectives (Fullan, 1997; Hart & Baptist, 1996).

9. Consider developing districtwide or regional cohorts for school participation in SLT training, similar to the one that surrounded Lindbergh High. The capacity to share strategies and learnings from team to team seemed to be strengthened by proximity, and the team's sense of empowerment was augmented by the districtwide commitment (Hart & Baptist, 1996; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Stone, 1996).

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The preceding chapters of this study have presented research designed to explore the experience of teachers on an established School Leadership Team and their perceptions of leadership. Since cross-functional teams that are engaged in facilitating schoolwide change are a relatively new innovation in schools, little is known about the experience of the team members. In addition, most of the research on teacher leadership has focused on the experience of individual teacher leaders in singular leadership roles rather than their experience in a collaborative leadership capacity.

This study sought to add to the dialogue about teacher leadership and school leadership teams by attending to the voices of ten teachers who served on a single, established School Leadership Team (SLT), a team that was completing its second year in the SLT program sponsored by the California School Leadership Academy. The researcher and participants jointly reflected upon the individual and collective experiences of the teachers in two realms: (a) as members of a diverse collaborative team that was dedicated to creating schoolwide change, and (b) as leaders within a comprehensive metropolitan high school.

Phenomenological in approach, this study is not definitive work on either teacher leaders or school leadership teams. It is, rather, a snapshot of the experience of ten teachers: describing the teachers' experience in their own words, seeking to create empathy for and appreciation of the complexity of their role, and, perhaps, providing insight into strategies that would enhance teacher leadership and school reform using leadership teams.

For principals, outside facilitators, internal change agents, and others interested in school reform and redefining the roles and responsibilities of teachers, this study may serve as a point from which to begin a personal phenomenological journey. This study may

encourage others to listen more carefully, to ask more open-ended questions, to open their hearts with empathy to the teachers who are stretching out of their traditional roles into new arenas and shared leadership.

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the study focusing on: (a) the experience of the teachers on the selected School Leadership Team, (b) the teachers' experience of leadership, and (c) the design and impact of the professional development provided by the School Leadership Team program that guided the work of the team. Each of these sections is augmented by the connections to current literature on teacher leadership.

The Research Design

In order to find the essence of teacher leadership within the context of a School Leadership Team, the researcher needed to employ an approach that was personal and insightful, an approach that supported the participants and researcher in becoming co-learners as they investigated the total experience together. This study required an inquiry method that allowed the insights of the participants and researcher to emerge in the course of the study, rather than beginning with preconceived notions about the experiences of teachers, teacher leaders, or school leadership teams. Phenomenology is committed to (a) understanding the ordinary, the daily experience of those who participate in the study; (b) taking the experience seriously; and (c) granting the phenomenon an opportunity to reveal itself to us in much the same way that a photographer, musician or poet captures an image that is instantly recognizable as both familiar and unique.

A unique aspect of a phenomenological study is the requirement to allow the participants to speak for themselves without preconceived expectations of their experience. As a result, the researcher conducted only a cursory review of the literature prior to the interviews and analysis, completing the in-depth review after substantial analysis of the

teachers' experience had been completed. Only then did the researcher return to the participants' experience and identify the relationship between the experience related in the study and the literature.

Validity in a phenomenological study is based on consistency and repetition of themes and ideas. The validity in this study is derived from the structure of the interviews; the extensive, reflective interview and analysis process; the consistency or diversity of the participants' stories, as well as the relationship between the participants' experience and other related research. This study employed (a) multiple interviews with each participant, (b) recurrent analysis of the emerging data and themes involving the co-researchers' responses on three separate occasions, (c) the development of a brief profile of each participant, and (d) a synthesis of the emergent themes derived from the participants' own words and interpretations. Just as literature lives when read because the reader finds a part of him or herself within the text, the success of a phenomenological study rests in the capacity of the text to touch the reader.

Summary of Findings

The overarching question that prompted this study was: What is it like to be a teacher on a School Leadership Team that is engaged in creating schoolwide change?

Within this umbrella question, three sub-questions drove this study:

1. What is the experience of teachers who are members of a School Leadership Team (SLT) that is engaged in schoolwide change?
2. What is leadership as these ten teachers experience it from within an SLT?
3. What kind of support and encouragement might enhance the personal and professional growth of teachers who serve on School Leadership Teams?

The Teachers' Experience on the Team

Seven essential aspects of the teachers' experience seemed most important and were most consistently validated in the interviews and focus group. The first three described the teachers' perceptions of the School Leadership Team and its most important roles: a positive force in the school, a vehicle for communication, and a support group. The remaining four descriptors characterized the teachers' emotional responses to the experience: eye opening, unique, challenging and transforming.

The Teachers' Description of the SLT

A positive force. Acting as a positive force for change in the school was described by all ten teacher members as the central focus of the SLT. This perspective echoes the literature that defines teacher leaders as individuals who challenge the status quo and serve as change agents, working toward schoolwide improvement (Boles & Troen, 1996; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Stone, 1996). In this capacity, the teachers perceived themselves as "coaches," cheerleaders, and "guides," who believed the school held "a lot of potential" that was untapped and needed direction. The teachers on the team were confident that, with the collaborative support of the principal and on-going SLT training, that they could positively impact schoolwide student achievement.

A communication vehicle. The most obvious role the SLT members played was as a "communication vehicle" or "link," a "conduit" between staff and the SLT. Eight of the ten teacher leaders directly referred to some aspect of this role: listener, information gatherer, clarifier, facilitator, and interpreter. This role was also documented in current research as a critical aspect of teacher leadership (Bellon, 1994; Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Stone, 1996; Wilson, 1991).

When the School Leadership Team members spoke about being a "communication link" within the school, they consciously focused on (a) enhancing their personal influence with peers and the team's visibility, (b) establishing a clear relationship between the SLT

and other decision making groups on campus, and (c) maintaining a consistent focus on students. Each of these strategies was important in furthering the work of the SLT and, ultimately, the work of the school.

A support group. Each of the ten co-researchers identified the interrelationships he or she had developed as the most important aspect of the SLT experience. Several researchers (e.g., Chrispeels et. al., 1997; Gordon, 1995; Nichols, 1994) have documented that more collaborative and interdependent relationships develop among teachers who share leadership on a schoolwide team. The teachers on Lindbergh's SLT described an even more complex relationship, however. The teachers noted that the team served as "a support group" that provided shelter, encouragement, and moral support for the work they were doing. As one of the teachers observed, "It's kind of like a booster club behind you, a team of people linked together going in the same direction. You don't have to do it alone."

The kind of the support the teachers received from the SLT was revealed in a metaphor that emerged during the focus group discussion. The teachers described the SLT as an "umbrella." The umbrella seemed to represent the unity and support which they provided for each other in the face of hostility, difficulty or fearful circumstances. It seemed to communicate protection and strength.

Several teachers observed that the SLT "keeps my professional soul intact." This powerful image implied that the teachers no longer felt vulnerable in the face of resistance or intimidation from their peers; they had developed courage and resilience that gave them confidence in confrontational situations. This new confidence and courage was drawn from the power of the team and the knowledge that none of the team members needed to face a school-related issue alone.

The umbrella was described as having two other meanings, as well, to the teacher members of the SLT. First, it protected the team members from permanently hurting one another's feelings, allowing them to be "real" with each other. Being "real" with each other

came from feeling safe in the group, where openness and sharing was encouraged and nurtured. Secondly, the umbrella protected the person who was being confrontational, whether a team member or another colleague, from an angry retort or future vengeance.

The Teachers' Description of the Experience

A unique experience. All of the teacher leaders who participated in this study described the SLT as an unusual experience, referring to three major aspects that made the SLT rare from a teachers' perspective: relationships, support, and opportunity.

The relationships among the team members, and the support they received from each other, was most prized. The teachers referred to the unparalleled "equal" status they shared on the team with the principal, as well as diverse staff members. This was an especially rare experience for the new teachers on the team who had been in teaching less than five years. Every teacher leader observed that he or she was treated as a professional on the team, with equal voice and responsibility, and that his or her professional status, commitment, and capacity had been enhanced by the experience. These findings echoed the research of Maeroff (1988), Miller (1988), and Scherr (1995).

The teachers recognized that the relationships could not have developed without the unparalleled opportunity to participate in the SLT training, itself. The team members noted that the district provided two years of consistent investment and support with a third year planned, allowing the team to spend six full days a year together in training and planning, enhancing its capacity to create schoolwide change. In addition, every school in the district was concurrently engaged in the SLT program, providing visible district support and enhancing the legitimacy of the team and their work.

As the researcher explored the relationship between the experience of the ten teacher leaders in this study and current research on teacher leadership, new insight emerged regarding another unique aspect of their experience: their role as teacher leaders. The following table (Table 9) presents six components of leadership: authorization, authority, purpose, focus, preparation and evaluation. These topics have been addressed in the

previous literature in teacher leadership (e.g., Hart & Baptist, 1996; Lambert et al., 1996; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Yoder, 1994).

Findings from this study indicate teacher leadership can be conceptualized in new ways from its previous presentation in the literature (Table 8). The researcher added the right hand column of Table 9 to present these new evolving roles. One significant difference is the shift to team as opposed to individual or singular leadership, and the evolution from an individual or departmental focus to schoolwide change. Because teacher leadership is much more dynamic and complex than the table indicates, it is used to assist the reader in understanding some of the essential elements of the roles, rather than indicate discrete aspects of teacher leadership. Table 9 compares the teachers' experience on the SLT with previously documented teacher leader roles, describing the new column as "evolving" teacher leadership.

Table 9

Teacher Leader Roles:Authorization, Authority, Purpose, Focus, Preparation and Evaluation

Formal/Traditional Teacher Leadership	Informal/Traditional Teacher Leadership	Evolving Teacher Leadership
Authorization		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role created by school authorities or teacher organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role created by teachers or self selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role created by administrators and teachers working together
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed by administrators or elected by peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolved informally through daily interaction with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invited, volunteered and/or selected by peers
Authority		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derived from position power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derived from personal power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derived from personal and position power

Purpose

• Designed to support the existing school structure	• Provide support related to the classroom, department and/or teaching staff	• Change and improve the existing school structure

Focus

• Instruction or working conditions	• Instruction or limited issues of teacher concern	• School governance and decision making which affects <u>all</u> students
• Limited to specific tasks within the school or district	• Limited to teacher's colleagues or specific agendas within the school	• Immersed in schoolwide, districtwide, and national agendas
• Subject-matter or specific issues	• Subject-matter or generalist in nature	• Generalist in nature

• Direct connection to the classroom department and/or teaching staff or providing direct support to the classroom or school such as grant writing and project leadership	• Direct connection to issues related to the classroom, department and/or teaching staff	• Direct support for schoolwide agendas such as improved success for <u>all</u> students
• Described in technical language or “educationese,” i.e. words specific to public education such as mentor teacher or self-study coordinator	• Described in collegial language such as friend	• Described in collaborative language such as team member
• Extended and highly formalized activities with specific expectations	• One time and/or informal activities initiated by a teacher or a group of teachers	• Extended involvement in formal and informal activities with mutually developed vision and goals

Preparation

• Requiring expert knowledge or training in areas such as content area, presentation skills, grant writing, etc.	• One-time and/or informal activities initiated by a teacher or a group of teachers	• Requiring expert training in group process, data analysis, and systems thinking
-

Evaluation

• Individual contributions, measured by completion of specific tasks	• Individual contributions, measured by satisfaction of colleagues	• Team contributions, measured by disaggregated data demonstrating improved success for <u>all</u> students
-

An eye opening experience. Every interviewee described the School Leadership Team as an “eye opening,” “learning” or “personal growth” experience. “This has been a real growing experience for me. The SLT has really expanded my horizons, where I see myself on the team and on the team of Lindbergh, as well.” This image captured the essence of the learning experience for all of the teachers in this study, and was an important benefit that was also documented in the literature on teacher leadership (Horejs, 1996; O’Connor & Boles, 1992; Schlechty, 1988).

The teacher leaders on this School Leadership Team found they could no longer sit back and avoid making waves; they had begun to see the world differently. They described having had their “blindness removed” in four areas: (a) the evidence of prejudice and lack of professionalism among their peers, (b) the characteristics of classroom and schoolwide practice that either contribute to or inhibit student success, (c) the challenges of practicing leadership from among peers, and (d) the self awareness that is derived from discussion, reflection, and collaboration involving deeply held beliefs and values about education.

One teacher’s statement, echoing the sentiments of her peers, summarized the perspective of the team members: “My blindness was removed--about myself, about the way I operate, about the way I feel about people, about carrying out this process of schoolwide change and about keeping my professional soul intact.”

A challenging experience. The teachers who participated in this study were very realistic about the challenges that they faced in their leadership role. They were aware of the resistance of their peers, the complexity of the problems, and the limitations of their roles, but they were constantly engaged in collaborating and supporting one another in finding new paths to address the challenges. The two most important challenges the teachers described mirrored their colleagues in the literature (a) balancing time between their teaching and leadership responsibilities (e.g., O’Connor & Boles, 1992; Perry, 1996; Schmidt, 1996; Smylie & Denny, 1990), and (b) dealing with resistant colleagues (e.g., Bradley, 1995; Schmidt, 1996; Troen and Boles, 1993).

A transforming experience. As they moved through their reflective study and collaborative work on the SLT within their school, the ten co-researchers described a journey marked by personal change. They became increasingly aware of the institutionalized resistance, fear, and barriers to student success that had become “the way we do things around here.” As they began to seriously ask the question, “What is keeping students from succeeding?” these teacher leaders began to perceive possible solutions, and developed a growing impatience with their peers who seemed more focused on maintaining

the status quo than on improving student success. This growing sense of separateness from their non-SLT peers, as well as their increasing commitment to the mission of the SLT, seemed to stem from a changing image of themselves in the context of the school.

The teacher leaders on this SLT had begun to see themselves as:

1. Professional teachers who are committed to “the technical and ethical standards” of their profession (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1997, p. 930).
2. Anthropologists who are studying the “environment, social relations and the culture” in which students learn and teachers teach (p. 49).
3. Researchers who are engaged in an ongoing inquiry into educational practice and student success.
4. Catalysts who are committed to provoking significant change within their school community.
5. Communicators who listen, gather information, clarify, facilitate reflective dialogue, and interpret the SLT’s vision in a way that will create a shared, schoolwide vision of success for all students.
6. Spokespersons for diverse student voices that have frequently been silenced in public schools.
7. Interdependent team members in a learning community, people who share a common purpose and a “growth fostering relationship” (Miller, 1986).
8. Tacticians who are skilled in employing a variety of strategies to accomplish their goals.
9. Leaders who identify with and contribute to a “community of leaders” in a substantive, schoolwide reform effort (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996).

The Essence of the Experience

The five major themes that were tightly woven throughout the teachers' experience and reflected the essence of the phenomenon were: (a) the interdependent relationship of the team members; (b) their expanding capacity to discern fine differences in school culture and professional practice; (c) their strengthened commitment to their school, their students, and their role in effecting change; (d) their enhanced sense of empowerment or capacity to create substantive change, and (e) their growing understanding of leadership as it is practiced among peers.

Relationship

Of the five themes, the unique, mutually supportive relationship of the team seemed to be the most critical aspect of the teachers' experience. It provided a safe environment for the ten teachers to see themselves, their school and their own work in new ways. The strong, interdependent relationship the teachers experienced created the foundation for their enhanced capacity to (a) discern the complexity of the school and vision possible solutions, (b) commit wholeheartedly to the challenging work of the team, and (c) establish their own sense of power and capacity to make substantive changes that had the potential of impacting student achievement.

Discernment

The second theme was discernment: the capacity to recognize and comprehend fine differences in character or motive (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1997). As the teachers constructed a collective understanding of current research and schoolwide data during their SLT training and ongoing reflective dialogue, their capacity to discern the strengths and weaknesses of the school grew. This emerging awareness was consistently nurtured and reinforced by the relationship of the team, as they created and began to foster a common vision for their school.

Commitment

As the team planned and implemented schoolwide professional development activities and spent substantial time together in reflective practice, their commitment to creating substantive change was strengthened. This commitment, which grew out of the collective strength of the team and their shared vision, helped the teachers develop more courage and resilience in the face of their more resistant peers. The teachers felt more confident as they faced the tough issues, brainstormed strategies to address the problems, and took action both individually and collectively.

Empowerment

The teachers were empowered by the relationship, and concomitant activities, to actively and intentionally implement strategies that would support systemic change. Central to that empowerment was the principal's capacity to share power and authority with the team as they collectively planned schoolwide change efforts. Taking an "equal" role when the team met, and giving them full authority to plan and implement staff development activities, allowed the team members to "own" the outcomes. When given the authority to do what they thought was necessary and right, the team members (a) began to generate their own power (Ceroni & Garman, 1994), (b) took full responsibility for the success or failure of each activity, (c) developed more confidence in their own decision making capacity, (d) deepened their commitment to the mission of the team and the school, and (e) were revitalized in all aspects of their work.

This revitalization could also be described as a "fire within," similar to Covey's (1989) "deep, burning 'Yes!'" The teachers described experiencing renewed energy and enthusiasm for their teaching, their students, their school and their careers. Like their colleagues in the literature (e.g., Barth, 1990; O'Connor & Boles, 1992), they were motivated to work extra hours, to "face the fear and do it anyway," to confront their resistant peers and the cultural norms that fought to keep the teachers "in their place." The

teacher leaders described a kind of “intellectual joy” they felt in learning new things, collaborating with respected colleagues, and taking part in important, challenging work for the good of the students.

Since the approach to this study was phenomenological, the above themes were not anticipated and emerged from the words of the co-researchers. In preparing the conclusions to this study, however, it became apparent that the teachers were describing an experience that mirrored Miller’s (1986) “growth fostering relationship.” The teachers described a relationship that led to enhanced knowledge of self and others (discernment), increased “zest” or energy to address the tasks at hand, growing capacity and motivation to act (commitment and empowerment), enhanced self worth and connection with others.

Although enhanced self-esteem was not identified as a major theme by the co-researchers, it was obviously a by-product of the relationship and the activities of the team. The teachers clearly felt more important, valued, and professional. Each teacher proudly described his or her unique contributions to the team in terms of skills, experience and perspective, speaking often of the importance of their work.

The Teachers' Perception of Leadership

The second research question guiding this study was: What is leadership as these ten teachers experienced it from within a School Leadership Team (SLT)? The 31 specific descriptors of leader and leadership provided by the participants revealed a contemporary view as opposed to the traditional, hierarchical perspective so prevalent in the literature (e.g., Bellon, 1994; Fraser, 1991; Leogrande, 1995; Stone, 1996). The teachers in this study described an experience that sounded more like Rost’s (1991) collaborative leadership that is grounded in a multi-directional influence relationship; Block’s (1993) stewardship that focuses on shared responsibility, accountability and authority; Heifetz’s (1994) leadership as adaptive work that helps “people clarify what matters most” (p. 22); and Lambert’s et al. (1995) constructivist leadership that is grounded in reciprocal learning processes.

The participating teacher leaders described leadership as an active role that entails (a) leading by example; (b) taking responsibility through initiative and action that are grounded in moral purpose; (c) listening with the intent to understand and respond in meaningful ways; (d) facilitating collaborative learning processes, both formal and informal; (e) consistently working together toward a common vision for all students; (f) doing whatever is necessary to help the team accomplish its purpose; (g) taking an equitable role and responsibility in all team activities; (h) striving to live up to the responsibility which had been entrusted to them by their colleagues; and (i) assuming the mantle of leadership.

Leading by Example

Serving as a role model was listed as one of the most important characteristics of leadership. Seven of the ten co-researchers echoed their colleagues in the literature (e.g., Boles and Troen, 1996; Wilson, 1991) describing their role modeling behaviors as: working hard, caring, being prepared, contributing, paying attention, and being on time for every SLT related activity.

Taking Responsibility

Nine of the ten participants referred to “taking responsibility” as central to their leadership role. This term included taking initiative, following through with action and assuming a moral responsibility that extended beyond the teacher’s individual classroom to the school at large. The importance of assuming responsibility for student success beyond one’s own classroom is also a key feature of teacher leadership that is documented in the literature (Boles & Troen, 1996; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996). When the teachers on the SLT referred to a leader as one who “takes initiative,” they were describing a person “who is not told what to do,” but “takes responsibility” for “doing whatever is necessary” to “help the group accomplish the goals.” Initiative, then, was derived from taking responsibility and driven by a moral commitment that extended beyond a simple title or role, permeating everything the team members did throughout the school.

Listening

Every participant referred to listening to others and being listened to in his or her description of the SLT, connecting it to initiative and responsibility. The teachers used listening as a way to gather feedback from their non-SLT colleagues, and provide ongoing guidance to the SLT. In addition, the co-researchers believed that listening to others, both within the SLT and without, assisted the team in seeing the “big picture” and making better decisions. Although not clearly addressed in the literature on teacher leadership, listening is a sub-set of being “socially skillful” (Hart & Baptist, 1996; O'Connor & Boles, 1992; Wilson, 1991) and practicing the habit of “critical reflection” (Fullan, 1994; Vandiver, 1996)

Facilitating

Five of the ten teacher leaders referred to facilitating group process as one of the responsibilities of a leader, a perception shared by some of the teacher leaders in the literature (i.e., Hart & Baptist, 1996). A major concern among the SLT members and frequent topic of SLT meetings centered around the question, “How can we facilitate that?” The co-researchers gave frequent examples of SLT discussion and activity devoted to facilitating professional development for the entire staff that included facilitating meaningful discussion among their non-SLT colleagues about student achievement.

Working Together Toward a Common Goal

Although the interviews were filled with the collaborative pronouns “we,” “our” and “ours,” there were actually few direct references to the terms “collaborate,” or “team work.” Instead, the participants chose to use stories and examples that actively demonstrated how closely connected they were as a team. One teacher observed, “Two heads are better than one. If we gather ourselves together and then help each other in our thinking and processing, we’ll be able to come up with something, such as a next step or solution.” The team’s capacity to collaborate was enhanced by (a) their equitable

relationship on the team, (b) the SLT training that enhanced their group process skills, and (c) their common purpose that was clearly and consistently described by every teacher in the study.

Doing Whatever Is Necessary

"A leader is always there, has good attendance at whatever he or she is leading," and does "anything that needs to be done, even if they might not want to do it." The teachers applied this standard to the SLT training, SLT site meetings, and the staff development activities that the team coordinated for the entire staff. Active participation and involvement meant more than just "filling a chair" to the members of this SLT.

When these teacher leaders talked about being involved or doing "anything that needs to be done," they mentioned a broad range of activities: following through on commitments; sharing materials received at SLT trainings with non-SLT colleagues; leading staff development; attending meetings; leading other site committees; taking the time to be organized, to do the readings, to make the meetings; helping people feel comfortable with new materials and new concepts--whatever was being presented at an inservice; and giving input as an experienced teacher.

Taking an Equitable Role and Responsibility

Three of the ten teachers in the study referred to the leader's responsibility for being a "good team player" and a "good follower." Even though the rest of the teacher leaders did not specifically list this as a characteristic of leadership, they demonstrated it through their interactions with each other and their anecdotes. As one member defined it, "We share the responsibilities pretty equally."

Striving to Live Up to the Responsibility

Similar to the findings in Stone's (1996) study, earning the title of leader was synonymous with gaining respect from their fellow SLT team members and the rest of the staff through personal effort. Personal effort involved a wide range of commitments, activities and attitudes, i.e. "going to all the meetings that are called," "staying after school

whether I really feel like it or not,” “being responsible and doing everything I needed to do,” “budgeting my time to be an effective team member,” “being a good follower and a good team player,” “getting everybody involved and dealing with the cynics, i.e., people who are saying, ‘I’ve done this before. What’s different about it?’” The most difficult personal effort these teacher leaders described was “facing the fear and doing it anyway,” i.e., stretching their personal comfort zones in a variety of areas and facilitating professional development activities for their vocal, negative non-SLT colleagues.

Assuming the Mantle of Leadership

Unlike many of the teacher leaders in the literature (e.g., AVID, 1997; Bellon, 1994; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Vance, 1991; Vandiver, 1996), all but one teacher in this study directly referred to him or herself as a leader. The participants confirmed their leadership role with varying degrees of confidence, ranging from the veteran teachers who proudly affirmed their leader status to the newer teachers who used the statement, “I am a leader” as a personal rather than public affirmation of status, indicating they were still stretching to fill the role as they perceived it.

The ten teachers, who participated in this study, demonstrated a clear grasp of leadership that is grounded in personal ownership, passion, close affiliation with those they seek to lead, reciprocal learning, a commitment to sharing, and self-sacrifice. They were clearly engaged in stretching the boundaries of their own experience and challenging the status quo. They provided a compelling image of “leadership from within,” rather than leadership that is imposed upon or external to the group being led.

School Leadership Teams and Teacher Leadership

What kind of support and encouragement might enhance the personal and professional growth of teachers who serve on School Leadership Teams (SLT)? This was the third question that directed this study.

The SLT Training Experience

Judging from the experience of the co-researchers, the SLT training was clearly grounded in the foundational beliefs of the California School Leadership Academy that sponsored the professional development program. The teacher leaders who participated in this study found meaning in the training and felt empowered by the process because the work they did in the program was directly tied to authentic problems they faced in their school.

In alignment with the SLT program goals, the co-researchers created their own meaning through reciprocal learning processes that allowed them to: (a) explore their individual experiences, beliefs, and assumptions; (b) create a dissonance with old assumptions by studying current educational research and student data; (c) analyze the normal "way we do things around here;" (d) construct new meanings with regard to student achievement and school success; and (e) frame and initiate new actions that had the potential for evoking systemic change (Lambert, 1997). Through these processes, the teacher members of the team felt "empowered to use their personal strengths and held themselves and one another accountable for appropriate actions;" they viewed each other as rich resources and interacted collaboratively as a learning community; and they experienced personal connection with "the content and context" of the SLT program (CSLA, 1997). All of these experiences created a foundation for systemic change and directly addressed the common barriers to teacher leadership.

New Hope for Teacher Leadership

The co-researchers described an experience of leadership that is both familiar, yet new. As their predecessors in the literature, the teachers related concerns about their persistent, resistant peers and the “crab-bucket” school culture that regularly tried to restrain them (e.g., Duke, 1994; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Vance, 1991; Wilson, 1991); the difficulty in balancing their teaching responsibilities with their leadership roles (e.g., O'Connor & Boles, 1992; Schmidt, 1996; Yoder, 1994); and the isolation they have felt as classroom teachers (e.g., Corkery, 1995; Rosenholtz, 1989; Schmidt, 1996). In contrast, the co-researchers also described a significantly different experience than other teacher leaders in the literature.

1. Unlike the majority of teacher leaders in previous studies (e.g., AVID, 1997; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Vance, 1991), nine of the ten teachers in this study described themselves as leaders, although they exhibited varying degrees of comfort with the term.
2. Even though the teachers in this study exhibited a keen awareness of the negative attitudes of their peers and described several incidents where a non-SLT colleague had tried to dissuade them from the team's mission, all of the co-researchers appeared confident in their role and resistant to the pressures that surrounded them, unlike many of their colleagues in the literature (e.g., Stone, 1996; Troen & Boles, 1993; Yarger & Lee, 1994).

Another issue highlighted in the literature (e.g., Bird & Little, 1985; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996) was a concern among teacher leaders about being seen as one of “them” (an administrator) rather than one of “us” (a teacher). The teachers in this study related similar concerns, but they found they did not need to abandon their teacher identity in order to participate in schoolwide leadership.

3. The third issue that separated the teacher leaders in this study from their colleagues in the literature (e.g., Fullan, 1994; Yoder, 1994) was the time that was allocated to the

SLT for the team's work. With six days a year for training, deep dialogue about student success or lack thereof, and action planning, the team members felt significantly supported and validated for their work.

On the other hand, several of the co-researchers suffered, like their peers in the literature, in that they constantly struggled with balancing their leadership work with their "teacher first" identity and their commitment to providing a quality instructional program to their students. Several of them described the challenge, as did their peers in literature (e.g., Hart & Baptist, 1996; Perry, 1996), as sometimes overwhelming. The teacher leaders in this study, however, put the importance of their leadership work on equal footing with their role as professional teachers and had found ways to mediate the conflict in time and responsibility.

4. Lack of administrative support and adequate training was an issue for many of teacher leaders in the literature (e.g., Bellon, 1994; Schmidt, 1996; Teitel, 1996). Lack of administrative support was not a concern to the teachers in this study. They described the principal as an "equal" on the SLT, as someone who had either specifically "chosen" them or had helped select them for the team, and as a collaborator and encourager who actively supported their role as a "positive force" for schoolwide change.

The only concerns the co-researchers described in the area of training occurred during major transitions in their SLT program: the beginning of each year. The team's yearly struggle to redefine itself in the context of current affairs, confirmed the importance of Herrmann's (1995) observation that "the greatest potential for team effectiveness in influencing improvement in schools, is not in inherently sustaining or institutionalizing the team as an entity, but in allowing 'the team' to continuously evolve into something of greater significance" (p. 154). If this team had, at any time, so narrowly defined its role that it could not be open to new opportunities and adjust to changing conditions, the team would have lost its capacity to live out its mission (Fullan, 1993).

Continuation of the full days for ongoing, systematic training in content and process was critical to the teacher leaders on the participating team. They felt the training was the “life blood” of their work; it fed them new ideas to stimulate thinking and proven professional development strategies to enhance their capacity to facilitate meaningful work schoolwide. The training provided time for deep inquiry, collective problem seeking, and collaborative problem solving. The SLT meetings fostered a strong “growth enhancing relationship” that sustained, strengthened, and energized the team members to take on the challenging work of systemic change (Miller, 1986).

The continued support of and collaborative relationship with the principal was also noted as an essential element of the team’s success. The principal’s willingness to share power and authority with the team created an environment which fostered risk taking, ownership, and sustained commitment. The teachers’ capacity to (a) utilize the SLT training effectively; (b) implement, monitor and adjust their individual and collective change efforts; and (c) challenge the status quo, all seemed to be directly connected to the principal’s equal role on the team and her confidence in the team members.

5. Finally, while several teacher leaders on the team described a time in their professional lives when they felt isolated from their teaching colleagues and the school at large, they related a significantly different experience in the SLT. The teachers described a close, “growth fostering relationship” with their colleagues on the team and an excitement about working with diverse members of the staff, both certificated and classified (Miller, 1986). They felt nurtured, inspired and protected by the team relationship. The teacher leaders described feeling more “connected” with their colleagues and the school as a whole.

Recommendations Regarding School Leadership Teams

What kind of support and encouragement might enhance the personal and professional growth of teachers who serve on School Leadership Teams? Although this was not a direct question asked of the ten teacher leaders, the following recommendations are drawn from the relationship between the findings in this study and the literature on

teacher leadership. The recommendations are prioritized by importance to the participants in this study, and the researcher recommends that, in collaboration with district and site administrators, the California School Leadership Academy:

1. Provide and protect the time necessary for site teams to engage in “reciprocal learning processes” and guided instruction that include research, schoolwide change strategies, and reflective practice (Lambert, et al., 1996). Full days of professional development time, distributed throughout the year, are essential to high quality study, collaboration, communication, planning, implementation and evaluation that has the potential for significant impact on teachers, school climate, and ultimately student achievement (Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Smialek, 1996; Wilson, 1991).
2. Continue the School Leadership Team program; both the content and the format are important to sustaining teacher leadership. There is never a time when the teams will “arrive” or be fully trained because the problems and participants change from year to year. A continuous process of team development and support would also nurture the development of a schoolwide “community of leaders” (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996). A “community of leaders” would “enhance professional and organizational capability for problem-solving and renewal” (Herrmann, 1995, p.154), and increase the probability of positive impact on student achievement (Clift, 1991; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Rosenholtz, 1989).
3. Find ways to encourage and support principals in sharing power and authority, in becoming a “leader of leaders.” The principal’s capacity to share power and authority is the team’s license to work at a schoolwide level (Harrison & Lembeck, 1996; Johnson, 1992; Lambert, et. al., 1996; Stone, 1996). The equal status of the principal on the team that participated in this study seemed to be central to the team’s capacity to own the work and its confidence in confronting the most difficult challenges.
4. Encourage districtwide cohorts of schools to participate in SLT training, similar to the one that surrounded Lindbergh High School’s team. The capacity to share strategies

and learnings from team to team was strengthened by proximity and, most important, the team's power and authority were significantly enhanced by the overt support of the superintendent and the governing board (Hart & Baptist, 1996; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Stone, 1996).

5. Continue to nurture "growth fostering relationships" (Miller, 1986) within the teams, not through team building activities per se, but through important, meaningful work that taps into the "deep, burning 'Yes!'" which lies within (Covey, 1989). The growth fostering relationship among the teacher leaders in this study was the foundation for their work. The relationship enhanced the teachers' (a) insight into the needs of students, the relationship between teaching and learning, and the impact of the "crab bucket" culture of the school which sustains the status quo; (b) resilience in times of stress; (c) energy to address the tasks at hand, (d) motivation to act, (e) sense of empowerment and personal capacity, (f) growing commitment to a shared vision, and ultimately (g) their capacity to lead their colleagues in meaningful inquiry which has the potential for substantive impact on student achievement.

6. Seek avenues to help the teams develop "growth fostering relationships" (Miller, 1986) throughout the school community (among teachers, administrators, support staff, students, and parents), so that the benefits of such relationships are not limited to the members of the School Leadership Team (Benoy, 1996). Although studying the impact of the team's work on their colleagues was not a part of this research, the researcher suspects, based on the anecdotes shared by the participants, that the participating team needed a wide range of strategies to help them promote such relationships schoolwide.

7. Continue to promote a broad-based SLT that has a stimulating combination of teachers of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, curricular expertise, and years of experience (Fine, 1994; Kouba, 1996; Smialek, 1996). The teachers in this study either had been teaching less than 10 years (three had taught only 5 years) or more than 20 years;

the impact on both groups of teachers was significant. The team and schoolwide leadership may have been enriched by the inclusion of teachers with 10-20 years experience, as well.

8. Encourage the participation of positive, emotionally mature staff members or those who have the potential for a positive outlook with sufficient support, then engage the team in conscientiously and consistently considering divergent perspectives (Fullan, 1997; Hart & Baptist, 1996). The capacity of Lindbergh's team to begin the challenging work, even before the members fully understood what the work was and how difficult the task would be, was greatly enhanced by the positive, proactive approach of the individual team members.

9. Continue to develop strategies to build upon the individual expertise and diverse perspectives of teachers (Herrmann, 1995; Smialek, 1996). Teachers have spent years studying and thinking about teaching and learning. They have rich resources to contribute to school leadership, but teachers need to (a) be "invited" to participate in formal and informal leadership roles, (b) learn new skills and strategies that enhance the potential for meaningful inquiry and reflective dialogue, (c) collaboratively study research and extensive student data, (d) explore their thinking (individually and collectively) about teaching and learning, and (e) engage in collaboratively searching for problems, tendering and implementing solutions, and evaluating the impact of innovations on student achievement.

Recommendations for Further Research

As the researcher progressed through this study, several issues arose which would be interesting and appropriate topics for further research:

1. Conduct a longitudinal study of the teachers on a School Leadership Team, beginning with the inception of the team. Develop strategies to monitor the teachers' changing identities as they progress through the program and interact with their non-SLT colleagues within their school site.

2. Examine the reactions of non-SLT colleagues to the activities of a School Leadership Team over time. The teachers who participated in this study believed that their colleagues would probably be resistant to any change initially, but might eventually change their attitudes and behavior after noting increased success for students.
3. Conduct a longitudinal study of the impact of a School Leadership Team over five years or more in order to document evidence of change in school culture, classroom practice and student achievement within their site.
4. Using findings from this study, conduct a similar investigation of a group of teams to note common or unique experiences across school sites. This study might reveal common factors that contribute to the success or failure of a team, or aspects that impact the development of individual members.
5. Examine the impact of a districtwide School Leadership Team initiative on district culture, policy and student achievement.
6. Investigate the lived-experience of all members of a School Leadership Team, i.e., administrators, counselors, support staff, as well as teachers, to examine the similarities and differences in their experiences.
7. Examine the formal and informal processes principals use when they effectively share power and authority.
8. Investigate the correlation between teacher leadership or leadership teams and student achievement.

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Appendix A
Site Consent Form

The following will serve as an agreement for the protection of the rights and welfare of the employees of _____ High School where the teachers who are members of the School Leadership Team (SLT) will act as co-researchers for a dissertation research project by Sheridan L. Barker.

1. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the experience of teachers who are engaged in schoolwide change as members of a School Leadership Team (SLT).
2. The method of research will be a qualitative, phenomenological study that will be descriptive and exploratory in nature. Participants will be asked to engage in a maximum of three indepth interviews that will provide the data for the research. The interviews will each be approximately one hour long, and will occur at the mutual convenience of the participant and the researcher. The interviews will not interfere with the participant's capacity to fulfill his or her work assignment. The interview will be guided by one overarching question, with clarifying questions added as necessary. The overarching question is: *Tell me about your experience as a teacher on a school leadership team which is engaged in schoolwide change.*
3. All participants of the study will be provided with the attached *Participant Consent*, and given the opportunity to ask clarifying questions regarding any aspect of this study prior to signing the form.
4. Participation in this study at my site is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. Similarly, participation by team members at my site is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.
5. The duration of participation of the site and any team members will be from December 15, 1996 through July, 1997.
6. There is no agreement between the site, the participants and Sheridan Barker, either written or oral, beyond that expressed in this consent form.
7. All names and significant identifying characteristics of the school or participants will be changed in the dissertation to ensure identification of participants is not inadvertently revealed. During the research process, all audio tapes of the interviews will be stored in a locked safe, and the tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.
8. A transcript of each interview will be provided to the participant and any portion may be deleted upon his or her request and will not be included in the final study.
9. The findings of the research, embodied in the doctoral dissertation, will be public property. The research, after acceptance by the University of San Diego, will be available for dissemination to interested parties.

Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

I understand that Sheridan L. Barker (Sheri), a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at the University of San Diego, is conducting a study of teachers on a School Leadership Team and that I have been asked to participate in a pilot study in preparation for the research.

1. I understand that Sheri is interested in my perspective as a teacher on the School Leadership Team. She is interested in my thoughts, reactions and stories about my experiences as I have participated in this activity.

2. I understand this research complements the data collected by Dr. Janet Chrispeels last Spring, and that my insight could benefit the preparation of future School Leadership Teams and other professional development for teachers.

3. I will participate in a maximum of two interviews of approximately sixty minutes each with Sheri. These interviews will take place in between January and May, 1997, at a time and place of mutual convenience.

4. I understand each interview will be audio-taped and transcribed for the purposes of this study. I will receive a copy of each transcript and may clarify or delete any statement in the transcript prior to final inclusion in the dissertation.

5. I am comfortable that the data collected from this study concerning me, my school site, our School Leadership Team, or any other identifying information will be masked in the dissertation to ensure that my identify will not be inadvertently revealed. I am assured that all tapes of the interviews will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

6. I understand the resulting dissertation, after acceptance by the University of San Diego, will become public property and available to interested parties.

7. I am voluntarily participating in this study and may withdraw from the study at any time, and I understand there is no agreement, written or verbal, beyond that which is expressed in this consent form.

8. I have had my questions answered at this point, and know I can contact Sheri at any time if I have further questions. I can reach her at the San Diego County Office of Education or at home.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and on that basis, I give my consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

Signature of Participant

Date

Location

Signature of Researcher

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

Appendix C

The Researcher's Epoché

Epoché is an important element of phenomenology for me; upon reflection, it appears to be my ultimate, last resort approach to problem solving. When up I am against the wall or facing a serious challenge, I consciously step out of my current reality and assume a new viewpoint, which is an “if not . . . , then what?” perspective. I consciously--sometimes mentally and sometimes on paper--set aside my current perspective and create a new space for learning and analyzing the possibilities. While realizing I is still present in the new perspective, with all my inherent knowledge and skill, I am unfettered by previous beliefs and assumptions about the situation. Each time I have used this approach in my personal or professional life, I have learned more about myself, my perspective has been enriched, and an entirely new and workable alternative has emerged. I agree wholeheartedly with Moustakas (1994) when he observed, “Epoché offers a resource, a process for potential renewal” (p. 90).

In this light, I have attempted to provide such insight into my own perspective in this Epoché. As a veteran teacher with 28 years in the field, I brought important insights and knowledge to this research. I am grounded in the day-to-day experience of teaching--from the daily extremes of mundane, repetitive activities to the moments of knowing it as a “calling.” I believe there is no other job or career which has more lasting impact on the future of the world than educating the next generation.

My previous experience as an active teacher leader on a site liaison team that served as the intermediary between the administrator and the staff, my prior experience in the home district of the School Leadership Team which I studied, as well as my current role in training a variety of school leaders and site teams has required conscious bracketing of my personal beliefs, values and experiences in order to create a space for the participants' reality. I was also careful to prepare only a brief survey of the literature on teacher

leadership prior to this study, to avoid being influenced by experiences or issues that have been previously defined in the literature. On the other hand, the depth of my knowledge regarding the district, the school, teaching, teacher leaders, school teams and leadership has served as a light to better illuminate the topic.

Researcher's Background

Understanding how leadership is done by those who are not in formal leadership positions has long been a quest of mine. In fact, I can trace my personal journey to my childhood. When I was four years old, my mother had three babies in two and a half years. My role in the family changed from only child to top sergeant very quickly. Many of my responsibilities entailed getting my brothers and sister to do what they were supposed to do, and often extended to getting them to do what I wanted them to do. As they gained weight and grew taller, I discovered I could no longer push, pull, or intimidate them into doing what I wanted. I needed to develop new strategies that would help me gain their cooperation, or at the very least, compliance. I also learned my life was significantly more pleasant when they did the right thing by choice rather than coercion. With coaching from my parents, I began to consciously enhance my listening, modeling, persuasion, influence and relationship building skills. When my skills were too thin, I found myself in shouting matches--almost a physical test of wills--which always left me feeling upset and, even if I had won by getting compliance, I felt I had experienced a significant loss.

At sixteen, I began my formal training in leadership with the first of three summers at the American Youth Foundation Camp in Michigan. Spending two weeks every summer with talented high school and college age youth from around the world, in an intensive program designed to develop young leaders for the future, was a life changing experience. I was immersed in classes, competitions, and self-reflection, all designed to enhance my knowledge of and capacity for leadership.

The Power of a Team

After completing my undergraduate studies at La Crosse State University in Wisconsin, I became a high school teacher. Teaching was not a career I actively chose; it was instead, a “fall back position” while I decided what I really wanted to be when I grew up. After three years in Wisconsin, I followed my Navy husband to California. When I left my teaching position in Wisconsin, I was burned out, discouraged and frustrated. I had thought about or worked on school work 10-15 hours a day for three years with, I believed, minimal impact on students.

When I reached California, I thought about seeking another career, but discovered I couldn't stay away from schools and kids. I briefly worked as an instructional aide, then a high school teacher and finally I was hired as a junior high teacher. I found my niche in junior high. I found a team of teachers who were about the same age and stage in teaching. They were enthusiastic, energetic, and dedicated to making a difference with kids. It was my first, long term experience on a team--informal and loosely coupled as it was. This team of teachers shared files, insights, frustrations, and laughter as we struggled daily with the challenges of teaching.

Even though I was part of this team, I was not in any way concerned with the running of the school at large and I had no desire to be. When my colleagues took an exam that earned them an administrative credential, my attitude was, “Not me! I don't ever want anyone thinking I might want to be an administrator!” Twenty years, 60 graduate units, and \$40,000 later, the wisdom of that decision escapes me. At the time, however, I saw no rewards in any position other than classroom teacher. In addition, I gave so much to my teaching that I could not imagine teaching an extra period, taking a graduate class during the school year, or doing any extra curricular activities that were not absolutely required. My students were the center of my world; I gave them my best and I took great pride in their achievement.

New Leadership Roles

My world changed, however, when I returned from a year's leave of absence. I came back to my clean, comfortable campus and found it covered in trash, students running everywhere, the disturbing sounds of foul language filling the air, and a general disregard for people and property. I could not fathom what had happened in a twelve month period, but I was keenly aware of the impact. At first, I closed my door and focused on making my own little world as safe and productive as possible, with little attention to the problems on the campus at large. After all, this myopic view had served me well for the first nine years of my career, and had actually been critical to my growing competence as a teacher.

Then I noticed that the disrespect and disruptive behavior of the campus spilled over into my classroom. When I could not stem the tide from without, I decided to get involved in changing the campus at large. I began to connect with other teachers and found they were of like mind; we created a coalition and approached the principal to request a schoolwide discipline plan. I became the Chair of the Liaison Committee, the bridge between the teachers and administration. When we polled the staff, over 50% of the teachers recognized the problem and agreed to work in committees to seek campus-wide solutions. The new principal, however, saw no serious problems. A year of nose-to-nose negotiations with the principal, building a strong support base with parents, and struggling daily to take control of the campus eventually led to a mutually agreed upon, and fairly rigorous schoolwide discipline plan. Within three months, the impact on the campus and classroom culture was obvious, and I had been transformed by the experience. I felt powerful, important to the school at large, and capable. My image of myself as a leader in a professional context blossomed and grew.

Over the next six years I stretched out in other ways, actively seeking new information to enhance student achievement and expand my professional knowledge. I became a trainer for several research-based and skillfully designed, pre-packaged staff development programs. My circle of influence began to expand as new participants were

drawn to my workshops by word of mouth. I experienced a growing sense of myself as a leader and sought new ways to influence and support positive change in the classrooms of the teachers who participated in my seminars.

Then I was invited to work in “Camelot” as the coordinator of the district staff development program for 1500 certificated and classified employees. I was part of a team of ten visionary, collaborative educational leaders who were engaged in creating systemic, districtwide change. Our weekly staff meetings were the formal place we shared information, sought new connections, and struggled with the overarching question, “How do we increase student achievement for all students, and especially for students of underrepresented groups in our large, suburban district?” Our team members represented diverse backgrounds, expertise and belief systems, but we strongly agreed on one thing: “Every child is entitled to the best education possible and deserves the same quality educational experience we expect for our own children.” Our quest was to create that opportunity for each of the 25,000 students in the district, who were served by 1200 teachers in 19 schools--not an easy task, but one which we believed was absolutely do-able.

Over the five years we worked together, we noted consistent progress toward our goal in the teaching and learning demonstrated in classrooms throughout the district, in student achievement on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and a variety of other standardized tests, in significant growth in college-going rates for underrepresented students, and in improved attendance and discipline records. My understanding of, and respect for, the power of leadership grew as I saw our impact expand through multi-directional influence relationships, a clearly defined and mutually agreed upon purpose, and the ever-expanding number of leaders who were engaged in the mission.

While I was engaged in this stimulating and, at times, stressful team, I also had the opportunity to participate in the California School Leadership Academy (CSLA). This three year program immersed me in the same conversation at a County-wide level, with 45

leaders from other districts who were struggling with the same goal. We shared ideas, challenged each other to grow, and engaged in exploring cutting edge ideas about teaching, learning, change and leadership. During this same period, I completed my Masters in Educational Administration, several business-oriented courses in leadership, and served as an Assistant Principal in a comprehensive high school of 1,500 students.

A Learner and Facilitator

In 1989, I enrolled in a doctoral program. An interdisciplinary approach to leadership, it seemed the perfect complement to my previous experience. The doctoral program broadened my perspective of leadership, giving me the opportunity to work closely with leaders in business, medicine, non-profit organizations and the military. I read extensively, discussed each topic from a variety of perspectives, and enjoyed the luxury of dialogue which was dedicated to deepening our understanding of leadership rather than immediate problem solving. The experience greatly enhanced my capacity to see a problem from a variety of perspectives and renewed my commitment to educational change.

My next opportunity for growth was an invitation to work at the County Office of Education in the School Leadership Center. My primary responsibility has been assisting and supporting groups within schools and districts in their growth as teams. This work entails collaboratively developing their mission and goals, establishing group norms, and engaging in productive problem seeking and solving strategies which will assist them in better meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Over the last four years I have worked with teams in over 150 schools in 40 districts. Most of this work extends over several months or years with multiple coaching opportunities to enhance team capacity to work productively together. Within this work, I have been engaged in helping to design and deliver team training for School Site Councils, AVID Site Teams, and School Leadership Teams, such as the one studied in this research.

Throughout this journey, I have felt most closely aligned with the teachers on the various teams. As a classroom teacher for 17 of my 28 years in education, I still perceive

myself as a teacher first. In addition, I believe the only place real change can occur which will affect the outcome of student achievement is between the teacher and the student. I also believe that no change can be made in the structure or culture of schooling which will significantly affect student achievement unless teachers are actively engaged in the dialogue--where their knowledge, insight, and experience are valued and nourished. I also believe the challenges of improving student achievement are so complex that no one person can possibly understand all the issues or all the potential solutions. As a result, I believe a well-developed team of life-long learners, consisting of a broad base of diverse stakeholders who are in pursuit of a common goal and value each other, holds the only promise for lasting change and improvement in schools.

Appendix D

Suggestions for Describing a Lived-Experience

Phenomenology is a research method that studies personal experience. You and I are co-researchers as we explore your experiences as a teacher member of the School Leadership Team. I encourage you to think about specific situations, thoughts, and reactions that describe what it is like to be a teacher on a School Leadership Team. For each interview, please

1. Think of a specific experience, instance, situation, person, or event. Explore it in depth; consider the sights, sounds, smells, physical reactions, thoughts, and observations you remember.
2. Try to focus on an example which stands out for its vividness.
3. Describe the experience as you lived through it or are currently experiencing it. Describe it in as much detail as you can.
4. Attend to how you felt, what you heard, what you said, what you saw, what you thought.
5. Describe the experience from the inside, almost like a state of mind or stream of consciousness: the feelings, the mood, the emotions, etc.
6. There is no need to beautify your account with fancy phrases or flowery terminology. Be yourself and unpack the experience in the language and manner which is most comfortable for you.
7. Remember there are no right answers or pre-conceived expectations about your descriptions. We are co-researchers in discovering what your experience as a teacher on a School Leadership Team has been, or is currently like.

Adapted from:
Researching Lived Experience, 1990
Max Van Manen, p. 64

Appendix E

Participant Background Survey

To assist me in establishing a background for the teacher members of the SLT, I would appreciate the following information. As I have mentioned before, the specifics will be masked in the final dissertation. If you already have this information contained in a resume or other pertinent document, you can certainly send a copy of that instead of rewriting the information. Please return this to me in the enclosed self addressed, stamped envelope at your convenience. Thanks!

Name: _____

Cultural affiliation: _____

Employed as a teacher ____ years

Credentials held:

Subjects taught

Grade levels

Other Site responsibilities/positions held

Year(s)

Professional aspirations - next 5 - 10 years

Feel free to use the reverse side of page if needed.

Appendix F**Additional Prompts**

Prompts used to elicit additional personal life stories and assist participants in discriminating between the SLT and other school-related experiences.

1. As a teacher member of the SLT, how would you describe your role on the team?
... in the school?
2. What does being on the SLT mean to you? What do you think the SLT means to other teachers? What does it mean to the principal?
3. In your role as a teacher, what has been the most difficult challenge you have faced on the SLT?
4. What does being a leader mean to you?
5. What kind of leadership role do you take on the SLT? How do you think your leadership role is different from the principal? ... other members of the SLT?
... a department chair? ... the Faculty Advisory Committee?
6. Please put on your classroom teacher "hat." How would you describe this school from your point of view as a classroom teacher?
7. Please put on your SLT member "hat." How would you now describe this school from your point of view as a member of the SLT?

Appendix G

Letter Following Round 1 of Interviews

Dear

Thank you for making time to meet with me two weeks ago. I thoroughly enjoyed discussing your experience on the SLT, and I was struck by your thoughtful reflection and concrete examples. I appreciate your willingness to share your detailed stories and thoughts with me. Combined with the stories of your teacher colleagues, I can already hear common themes and concepts emerging from your work.

In preparation for our conversation this week, I have enclosed a transcript of our last interview, please:

1. Read the transcript while thinking about the research topic: A Teacher's Perspective from Within a School Leadership Team. In other words, what is it like to be a teacher on a school leadership team which is engaged in facilitating systemic change?
2. Circle any idea or thought in the transcript that you would like to talk more about. Can you think of any specific memory or incident which would illustrate any of your points regarding the SLT or your experience on the SLT?
3. Please consider the following themes which seemed to spring from the nine conversations I have had to date. If any of these bring up a strong feeling for you, would you circle them and think about them. Why are they important? Can you describe a specific time when you have been aware of . . .
 - a. The importance of being chosen or invited to be on the SLT
 - b. A sense of responsibility which goes beyond my classroom
 - c. A strong commitment to this school, these kids, my colleagues
 - d. Being involved in the "big picture"
 - e. New perceptions of myself or taking new roles in my school
 - f. SLT as
 - a vehicle for change
 - a communication vehicle
 - a support group
 - an intensive critical thinking experience
 - a positive force in the school
 - an equitable team
 - g. A leader as
 - a facilitator
 - a collaborator
 - a role model

Thank you for taking the time to review the transcript and think a little about these themes. I look forward to meeting with you next week, and deepening our understanding of your SLT experience. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at work or at home.

Sincerely,

Sheridan L. Barker

Appendix I

Letter Following Round 2 of Interviews

Dear

Here is the transcript of our last conversation. I think you will find it very interesting reading. We really began to get more deeply into the "lived experience" which phenomenology strives to explore: the experience of teachers on a School Leadership Team which is engaged in facilitating systemic change.

As you will see in your transcript, we focused even more closely on specific situations, thoughts, and reactions which describe what it is like to be a teacher on a School Leadership Team. You were able to more readily recall specific experiences, instances, people or events and explore them in depth. You included more of what you saw, felt, heard, said, and thought. I sincerely appreciated your openness in allowing us to look closely at the meaning of words, phrases and examples.

The next step will be to engage in a group conversation about the same topic. Paulina has volunteered to host this meeting of all ten of the teacher members on the team, and I hope you will be able to arrange your busy schedule to be there and help us complete this last step of the research.

As co-researchers engaged in exploring this experience, I hope you will think about the following themes which seem to be emerging from the 19 hours of transcripts I have already collected. If any of these themes bring up a strong feeling for you, would you please circle the theme(s) and spend a few moments reflecting upon: Does this idea ring true for me? When, specifically, have I been aware of the SLT as . . .?

- a. An eye-opening experience
- b. An opportunity to create lasting change
- c. A unique role
- d. A painful or frightening experience
- e. A bridge-building opportunity
- f. A way to keep my "professional soul intact"
- g. An energizing experience

I will be at the SLT meeting at 7:30 a.m. on Monday to check in with you and confirm the date for our final discussion of the research topic. Thank you SO much for your assistance in this matter.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at work or at home. Until next week, I am

Sincerely yours,

Sheri Barker

Appendix J

List of QSR NUD.IST Nodes

PROJECT: USD Interview Analysis, User Sheri Barker, 7:23 pm, Feb 18, 1998.

```

*****
(1) /leadership
*** No Definition
This node indexes 0 documents.
*****
(1 1) /leadership/collaborator
*** No Definition
This node indexes 15 documents.
*****
(1 1 1) /leadership/collaborator/cheerleader
*** No Definition
This node indexes 8 documents.
*****
(1 1 2) /leadership/collaborator/collaborate-word
*** Definition:
Specific word use of collaborator/collaborate
This node indexes 6 documents.
*****
(1 1 3) /leadership/collaborator/Listener
*** Definition:
Specific Word Search: Listen/listener/listened
This node indexes 10 documents.
*****
(1 1 4) /leadership/collaborator/Share rotate
*** Definition:
Specific Word Search - Share/Sharing/Rotate
This node indexes 9 documents.
*****
(1 2) /leadership/Facilitator
*** No Definition
This node indexes 17 documents.
*****
(1 2 1) /leadership/Facilitator/Facilitate
*** Definition:
Specific word use: Facilitator/Facilitate
This node indexes 11 documents.
*****
(1 2 2) /leadership/Facilitator/Direct follow yr 1
*** Definition:
Specific Word Search: Direction/Follow/Team - yr 1
This node indexes 4 documents.
*****
(1 2 3) /leadership/Facilitator/Direct follow 2 yr
*** Definition:
Specific Word Use: Direct/follower/team player - 2 year
This node indexes 5 documents.
*****

```

(1 3) /leadership/Role Model
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 11 documents.

(1 3 1) /leadership/Role Model/Role-Model
 *** Definition:
 Specific word search
 This node indexes 11 documents.

(1 4) /leadership/Responsibility
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 16 documents.

(1 4 1) /leadership/Responsibility/Responsible-ity
 *** Definition:
 Specific Word Search
 This node indexes 15 documents.

(1 5) /leadership/Big Picture
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 18 documents.

(1 5 1) /leadership/Big Picture/Picture-related
 *** Definition:
 Specific Word Search: Big picture/whole school/all children
 This node indexes 10 documents.

(1 5 2) /leadership/Big Picture/Awareness
 *** Definition:
 Dawning/Gradual/Awareness
 This node indexes 0 documents.

(1 6) /leadership/Definition
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 15 documents.

(1 6 1) /leadership/Definition/Personal
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 13 documents.

(1 6 2) /leadership/Definition/Lead-s-er-ship
 *** Definition:
 Specific Word Search: lead/s/er/ship
 This node indexes 15 documents.

(1 7) /leadership/On campus
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 10 documents.

(1 7 1) /leadership/On campus/Principal
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 9 documents.

(1 7 2) /leadership/On campus/Dept/tchr

*** No Definition

This node indexes 8 documents.

(1 7 3) /leadership/On campus/OtherSLT

*** No Definition

This node indexes 8 documents.

(1 7 4) /leadership/On campus/FAC

*** No Definition

This node indexes 11 documents.

(1 7 5) /leadership/On campus/SSC

*** No Definition

This node indexes 5 documents.

(1 7 6) /leadership/On campus/LdrshpCampus

*** Definition:

Search 1 7, 3 7, 3 7 2

This node indexes 13 documents.

(2) /Teaching

*** No Definition

This node indexes 1 document.

(2 1) /Teaching/Commitment

*** No Definition

This node indexes 13 documents.

(2 1 1) /Teaching/Commitment/Time

*** No Definition

This node indexes 13 documents.

(2 1 2) /Teaching/Commitment/Balance-challenge

*** Definition:

Specific Word Search: Challenge/Balance

This node indexes 12 documents.

(2 1 3) /Teaching/Commitment/Challenging

*** Definition:

Specific Word Search: Challenging

This node indexes 13 documents.

(2 1 4) /Teaching/Commitment/Related-love

*** Definition:

Specific Word Search: Commitment/Love/Important/Care

This node indexes 13 documents.

(2 2) /Teaching/Capacity

*** No Definition

This node indexes 3 documents.

(2 5) /Teaching/Background

*** No Definition

This node indexes 12 documents.

(2 5 1) /Teaching/Background/Ethnicity

*** No Definition

This node indexes 5 documents.

(3) /SLT

*** No Definition

This node indexes 1 document.

(3 1) /SLT/Communication Vehicle

*** No Definition

This node indexes 13 documents.

(3 1 1) /SLT/Communication Vehicle/Related

*** Definition:

Specific Word Search: Communicate/Communication

This node indexes 7 documents.

(3 2) /SLT/Support Group

*** No Definition

This node indexes 15 documents.

(3 2 1) /SLT/Support Group/courage

*** No Definition

This node indexes 5 documents.

(3 2 2) /SLT/Support Group/Help-Relationship

*** Definition:

Specific Word Search: Help/Support/Relationship/Umbrella/Friend

This node indexes 0 documents.

(3 2 3) /SLT/Support Group/Preparation

*** No Definition

This node indexes 5 documents.

(3 3) /SLT/Critical Thinking

*** No Definition

This node indexes 11 documents.

(3 3 1) /SLT/Critical Thinking/LearningExperience

*** No Definition

This node indexes 15 documents.

(3 3 2) /SLT/Critical Thinking/Related-SolveThink

*** Definition:

Specific Word Search: Solve/Think

This node indexes 16 documents.

(3 4) /SLT/Positive Force

*** No Definition

This node indexes 16 documents.

 (3 4 1) /SLT/Positive Force/StuFocused
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 6 documents.

(3 4 2) /SLT/Positive Force/NotChange
 *** Definition:
 In Positive Force/NOT in Change Agent
 This node indexes 15 documents.

(3 5) /SLT/Equitable
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 10 documents.

(3 6) /SLT/Invited
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 14 documents.

(3 6 1) /SLT/Invited/Related-Invite
 *** Definition:
 Specific Word Search: Invite/Ask
 This node indexes 0 documents.

(3 7) /SLT/New Roles
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 2 documents.

(3 7 1) /SLT/New Roles/on team
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 12 documents.

(3 7 2) /SLT/New Roles/school
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 13 documents.

(3 8) /SLT/Journey
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 7 documents.

(3 9) /SLT/Meaning
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 1 document.

(3 9 1) /SLT/Meaning/Personal
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 17 documents.

(3 9 2) /SLT/Meaning/Teachers
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 10 documents.

(3 9 3) /SLT/Meaning/Principal
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 7 documents.

```

*****
(3 10)      /SLT/StaffDev
*** No Definition
This node indexes 10 documents.
*****
(3 11)      /SLT/Resource
*** No Definition
This node indexes 2 documents.
*****
(4)         /Experience
*** No Definition
This node indexes 0 documents.
*****
(4 1)       /Experience/eye opening
*** No Definition
This node indexes 12 documents.
*****
(4 1 1)     /Experience/eye opening/Related-aware
*** Definition:
Specific Word Search: Aware/surprise/open/shock
This node indexes 12 documents.
*****
(4 1 2)     /Experience/eye opening/Learning Exp
*** Definition:
Specific Word Search: Learn/Learned/Learning
This node indexes 10 documents.
*****
(4 2)       /Experience/change agent
*** No Definition
This node indexes 15 documents.
*****
(4 2 1)     /Experience/change agent/Related-Change
*** Definition:
Specific Word Search: Difference/change/improve/new
This node indexes 18 documents.
*****
(4 2 2)     /Experience/change agent/RespChangPict
*** Definition:
Intersection of Responsibility/Change Agent/Big Picture
This node indexes 2 documents.
*****
(4 3)       /Experience/Unique role
*** No Definition
This node indexes 10 documents.
*****
(4 3 1)     /Experience/Unique role/Related-new
*** Definition:
Specific Word Search: New/Unique/Unusual
This node indexes 0 documents.
*****
(4 4)       /Experience/Painful
*** No Definition
This node indexes 6 documents.

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 (4 4 1) /Experience/Painful/Related-Pain
 *** Definition:
 Specific Word Search: Pain/Scar/Fear/Worry/Afraid
 This node indexes 6 documents.

(4 5) /Experience/Bridge building
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 7 documents.

(4 5 1) /Experience/Bridge building/Connections
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 8 documents.

(4 6) /Experience/Prof Soul
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 9 documents.

(4 7) /Experience/Energizing
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 7 documents.

(4 7 1) /Experience/Energizing/Related-Energy
 *** Definition:
 Specific Word Search: Excite/Energy/Energize/Motivate
 This node indexes 7 documents.

(4 8) /Experience/Challenging
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 17 documents.

(4 9) /Experience/Rewarding
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 12 documents.

(6) /School
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 0 documents.

(6 1) /School/TchrsHat
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 9 documents.

(6 2) /School/SLTHat
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 8 documents.

(7) /Participants
 *** No Definition
 This node indexes 0 documents.

(7 1) /Participants/Robert

*** Definition:

*Male * 5 years teaching * 1 year SLT * Hispanic

This node indexes 3 documents.

(7 2) /Participants/Catherine

*** Definition:

F* Female * 31 years teaching * 2 years SLT * White

This node indexes 3 documents.

(7 3) /Participants/Elizabeth

*** Definition:

** Female * 8 years teaching * 2 years SLT * White

This node indexes 2 documents.

(7 4) /Participants/Michelle

*** Definition:

** Female * 5 years teaching * 1 year SLT * Hispanic

This node indexes 2 documents.

(7 5) /Participants/Ernie

*** Definition:

* male * 26 years teaching * 2 years SLT * Hispanic

This node indexes 3 documents.

(7 6) /Participants/Eileen

*** Definition:

* female * 9 years teaching * 1 year SLT * White

This node indexes 4 documents.

(7 7) /Participants/Jen

*** Definition:

* female * 21 years teaching * 1 year SLT * White

This node indexes 3 documents.

(7 8) /Participants/Felizardo

*** Definition:

** male * 29 years teaching * 1 year SLT * Filipino

This node indexes 2 documents.

(7 9) /Participants/Paulina

*** Definition:

* female * 5 years teaching * 2 year SLT * Filipino

This node indexes 4 documents.

(7 10) /Participants/Lorna

*** Definition:

* female * 25 years teaching * 2 year SLT * White

This node indexes 2 documents.

(7 11) /Participants/Ethnicity

*** No Definition

This node indexes 0 documents.

```

*****
7 11 1)      /Participants/Ethnicity/Hispanic
*** No Definition
This node indexes 3 documents.
*****
(7 11 2)     /Participants/Ethnicity/Filipino
*** No Definition
This node indexes 2 documents.
*****
(7 11 3)     /Participants/Ethnicity/White
*** No Definition
This node indexes 5 documents.
*****
(7 12)       /Participants/Years Experience
*** No Definition
This node indexes 0 documents.
*****
(7 12 1)     /Participants/Years Experience/Under 5 years
*** No Definition
This node indexes 3 documents.
*****
(7 12 2)     /Participants/Years Experience/Under 10 years
*** No Definition
This node indexes 2 documents.
*****
(7 12 3)     /Participants/Years Experience/Over 20 years
*** No Definition
This node indexes 5 documents.
*****
(7 13)       /Participants/SLT Experience
*** No Definition
This node indexes 0 documents.
*****
(7 13 1)     /Participants/SLT Experience/1 year
*** No Definition
This node indexes 5 documents.
*****
(7 13 2)     /Participants/SLT Experience/2 years
*** No Definition
This node indexes 5 documents.
*****
(7 14)       /Participants/Gender
*** No Definition
This node indexes 0 documents.
*****
(7 14 1)     /Participants/Gender/Male
*** No Definition
This node indexes 3 documents.
*****
(7 14 1 1)   /Participants/Gender/Male/Power-ful
*** Definition:
Specific word search: Powerful
This node indexes 3 documents.

```

```
*****
(7 14 2)      /Participants/Gender/Female
*** No Definition
This node indexes 7 documents.
*****
(7 14 2 1)    /Participants/Gender/Female/Power-ful
*** Definition:
Specific word search: Power/ful
This node indexes 7 documents.
```

Appendix K

Letter Regarding Review of Chapter 4

My Dear Co-Researcher,

I would imagine that you have been wondering what on earth happened to the research we began together last January! Well, twelve months and 227 pages later, I have completed a rough draft of Chapters 1, 2, 3, and most of 4. There are only two parts remaining to complete--the answer to research question number 3 and Chapter 5, which is the final summary of our work together.

Chapter 4

I have enclosed a copy of the "doggy draft" of Chapter 4 for your reaction. This is a "doggy draft" because it is "Rough! Rough!" I have not done final editing for punctuation, sentence structure, or other such fine tuning. I will go through it at least once more for organization and flow, as well. I will share chapters 1 - 3 with you next month, and you will have a copy of the final document when it is published.

What Do You Think?

If you would like to be involved in the last phase of research, I would appreciate your feedback on the content of Chapter 4. Do the ideas and conclusions ring true for you? Have I adequately captured your experience and retold it so you recognize it as your own, and so that other teachers in similar situations might recognize aspects experience? Is there anything I have not given enough emphasis to? Is there something that is really important to you, but I mentioned it only in passing or did not include it at all?

I Would Appreciate Hearing From You

I am enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope for you to use in your response, if you choose.. There are several ways you could respond. (a) You may choose to write your comments directly on the transcript and send it back to me, (b) you could simply send me a note with your comments by snail mail or FAX, (c) you can call me, or (d) I'd be happy to meet with you.

When Will This Be Done?

I was hoping to defend this dissertation in early February, but the writing has not gone as quickly as I had hoped. At the moment, I am praying for late February or early March at the latest. I want to be done long before May graduation, and more than that, I just want to be done!! I started this program in January, 1989! I am excited at the prospect of having my life back. I love being a student, but I really want to be done!

My Heartfelt Thanks & God's Blessings

As you can tell, I've gotten very comfortable writing on my computer, even verbose perhaps. So, with my best wishes for a joyous and blessed holiday season, I thank you with all my heart for your time and interest in this study. Enjoy my holiday gift to you--a "drafty" snapshot of your experiences on the SLT.

Studiously yours,

Sheri Barker