

NARRATING TEACHER LEADER IDENTITIES: VOICES FROM THE FIELD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES.....	8
ABSTRACT.....	9
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	10
Problem Statement	10
Purpose of the Study	13
Definition of Terms.....	14
Significance of the Study	15
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE.....	18
Leadership	18
Effective leadership.....	19
Transformational leadership.....	21
Distributed leadership.....	25
Teacher leadership.....	31
School teams.....	36
Summary.....	39
Leadership Preparation.....	41
Teacher leader preparation	43
Summary.....	47
Identity Theory	48
Teacher identity	51
Leader identity.....	53
Summary.....	54
Chapter Summary.....	55
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	59

Introduction	59
Research Design	60
Sampling Strategy	67
Selection of case study site.....	68
Participant selection.....	71
Data Collection and Instrumentation.....	72
Primary participant interviews	73
Secondary participant interviews	74
Participant observations.....	75
Research journal	76
Researcher Identity.....	77
Data Analysis	78
Analysis of narrative: Categories for understanding study context.....	79
Narrative analysis: Teacher leader identity stories.....	81
Trustworthiness	84
Limitations	84
Summary	86
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	88
Analysis of Narrative: Categories for Understanding Study Context	88
District leadership.....	88
School-level teams.....	92
Cactus Creek High School PBIS Team	94
History	94
Team purpose/identity	95
Team participation/membership.....	98

Team functioning	102
Principal leadership	108
Team leadership	112
Teacher leadership defined.....	114
Narrative Analysis: Teacher Leader Identity Stories	115
Kevin Richards: Data Guy.....	117
Evan Jones: The enthusiastic leader	150
Terry Endor: The reluctant leader	189
Michael Gregory: The emerging leader	227
Summary.....	255
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	257
Question 1: How are Teacher Leader Identities Narrated?	258
What stories are told about teacher leadership by teacher leaders?	258
What stories are told about teacher leadership by other team members?.....	267
How do these stories of teacher leadership convey contextual influences?	269
Question 2: How do Teacher Leaders Come to See Themselves as Leaders?	274
How do team interactions shape teacher leader identity?	274
How do contextual factors contribute to or hinder teacher leader identity development?.....	277
Researcher Reflection	281
Limitations	282
Recommendations	284
Conclusions and Implications	288
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	291
REFERENCES	293

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Table 2.1: Comparison of shared leadership, collaborative leadership, and collective leadership	27
Table 2.2: Sample of teacher leader preparation programs	45
Figure 2.1: The factors influencing the development of teacher leader identity	58
Table 3.1: Primary participant characteristics	72
Table 3.2: Secondary participant characteristics	73
Table 4.1: Personal attributes and actions of teacher leaders	116
Table 4.2: Teacher leader typology characteristics.....	256

Abstract

Over the years, the landscape of educational leadership has evolved, but with a continued focus on leadership in relation to an official title or role. While it used to be practical for schools and districts to rely on the leadership of a single leader, times have changed and leadership has become more complex; the dependence on a single leader has become unrealistic. In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on teacher leadership in general and teacher leadership in the context of leadership teams in particular. The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to better understand teacher leader identity within the context of a leadership team by examining the narratives of teacher leaders participating on a team as well as narratives from other team members. Specifically, this study examined: 1) How are teacher leader identities narrated? and 2) How do teacher leaders come to see themselves as leaders? Four teacher leaders and four team members from a PBIS Team were interviewed, and four team meetings and one staff meeting were observed. Transcripts and field notes were analyzed to compose the identity narratives of each teacher leader, and to understand the context and influential factors. Findings indicate that teacher leaders had leadership identities that were a part of their teacher identities but different from their classroom identities and also had passion for creating positive school climates. Additionally, the district and school contexts and the role of the principal influenced teacher leader involvement, development, and leadership practice.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Problem Statement

Over the years, the landscape of educational leadership has evolved, but with a continued focus on leadership in relation to an official title or role. Transformational leadership is one of the most prominent educational leadership theories which emphasizes the roles and tasks of formal leaders, specifically principals and superintendents (Bass, 1997; Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). While it used to be practical for schools and districts to rely on the leadership of a single leader, times have changed and leadership has become more complex; the dependence on a single leader has become unrealistic.

The reliance on other school personnel to lead has often been referred to as distributed leadership. However, distributed leadership is more than just sharing leadership roles. Many educational scholars, including Spillane (2005, 2006), define distributed leadership as leadership practice that is stretched over two or more leaders in formal leadership roles (e.g., principals), followers, *and* the situation. Leaders in this situation are not necessarily formal leaders but can be other school personnel, usually teachers.

The concept of teacher leadership has been around for a long time. Through the years, teacher leaders have served in formal roles (i.e., department chairs, instructional leaders) and informal roles (i.e., day-to-day interactions with other teachers; Frost & Harris, 2003; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). More recently, and commonly, teacher leaders

are asked to participate on leadership teams to help plan, make decisions, and problem solve (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Smylie et al., 2002). Due to the changing roles over time, a common definition of teacher leaders has eluded researchers. For the purpose of this study, I will concentrate on teacher leaders within the context of school teams. While teams have been defined in many ways, I will consider teams to be groups whose members have a common purpose, are interdependent, and have complementary skills (Yukl, 1998, cited in Smylie et al., 2002).

Many studies have explored school teams but have failed to go beyond discussing team member roles and team functioning (i.e., Kruse & Louis, 1997; Olsen & Chrispeels, 2009; Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007). While these studies also highlight the importance of leadership preparation for team members (specifically teachers), little attention has been given to how leaders develop. The literature that does exist highlights leadership preparation that occurs through university certificate and degree programs and focuses on traditional, formal school-level and district-level leadership roles (i.e., principals, superintendents). Programs specifically designed for teacher leaders do exist but the literature on teacher leader preparation reveals that many teacher leaders do not receive formal training (i.e., Crow & Pounder, 2000; Crowther, 2009; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Sanders, 2006).

Whether they receive formal training or not, teacher leaders are asked to serve in various leadership positions including on leadership teams. Many authors argue that teacher leaders need opportunities to develop their leadership skills, even if through just informal discussions with other teacher leaders (e.g., Crow & Pounder, 2000; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Sanders, 2006). Skills such as organizational and communication are

important for carrying out leadership tasks, but Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) posit that “before teachers presume to lead others, they should understand themselves” (p. 66). In other words, teachers need to understand their leader identities before they can lead others. However, teacher leader identities are rarely addressed, let alone developed.

Identity scholars have conceptualized identity in many different ways. For this study, I will approach identity as narrative as proposed by Sfard and Prusak (2005) and Connelly and Clandinin (1999). These perspectives argue that identities are narrative expressions of who we are as opposed to solely what we do or know. Sfard and Prusak (2005) posited that identities develop through several narratives: an individual’s narrative and the narratives that others tell about that individual. The prominent focus of identity in education has been on teacher identity (focusing on classroom practice) and leader identity (focusing on formal leaders). While the idea of teacher leader identity has been mentioned in the literature by several other authors (e.g., Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009), it has not been clearly defined or explored.

This study examined several gaps in the literature related to teacher leadership identity and development. First, there is limited research on teacher leadership within the context of teams. Existing studies mostly examined who participated on teams and the tasks that teams and individuals completed. Second, the teacher leader preparation literature has emphasized the preparation of teacher leaders for roles related to academic issues rather than whole-school issues. Last, teacher leader identity in general and identity development in particular have not been extensively examined, and research on

teacher leader identity in relation to teams seems to be missing. The findings from my study contribute to the gaps in the literature mentioned above.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to better understand teacher leader identity within the context of a leadership team by examining the narratives of teacher leaders participating on a team, as well as narratives of other team members. The concept of teacher leader identity has been mentioned in the literature but not extensively examined. In my study, I examined how teacher leaders came to see themselves as leaders, including personal experiences and training, as well as other factors influencing teacher leaders' identities and roles. The data collected from this study were used to develop a composite view of teacher leader identity at one school, Cactus Creek High School.

In order to better understand teacher leader identity, my research questions focused on conceptualizing teacher leadership within a leadership team, understanding the development of teacher leader identity, and identifying influential factors.

Specifically, this study asked:

1. Within the context of a leadership team, how are teacher leader identities narrated?
 - a. What stories are told about teacher leadership by teacher leaders?
 - b. What stories are told about teacher leadership by other team members?
 - c. How do these stories of teacher leadership convey contextual influences (i.e., team, school, district expectations and priorities)?
2. How do teacher leaders come to see themselves as leaders?
 - a. How do team interactions shape teacher leader identity?

- b. How do contextual factors contribute to or hinder teacher leader identity development?

To answer these questions, I situated this study within an interpretive paradigm, featuring a case study and narrative design (Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2002). One high school in the Southwestern United States, Cactus Creek High School (CCHS), served as the site for my study. This school, and specifically their PBIS Leadership Team, was targeted for this study due to several unique features including the longevity of the team and the emphasis on teacher leadership. Participants included teacher leaders as primary participants, and an administrator, two counselors and one administrative assistant as secondary participants. Data sources included semi-structured interviews emphasizing narratives, and observations of team and staff meetings.

The data were analyzed in two parts: analysis of narrative and narrative analysis. For the narrative analysis, the findings are reported as stories told by teacher leaders, with contributions by administrator and other staff member interviews. The analysis of narrative followed Glaser and Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method through which themes were identified in relation to teacher leader identity development as well as factors influencing identity development.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity, I will provide definitions of important terms in this section.

Distributed leadership refers to leadership practice that is stretched over two or more leaders in formal leadership roles (e.g., principals), followers, *and* the situation

(Spillane, 2005, 2006). Distributed leadership considers not only the structural but also relational aspects of leadership.

Identity is conceptualized as *identity as narrative* and defined in relation to “how collective discourses shape personal worlds and how individual voices combine into the voice of a community” (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 15).

Narrative is defined as stories that are told by participants and “may be oral or written and may be elicited or heard during fieldwork, an interview, or naturally occurring conversation” (Chase, 2005, p. 652).

School teams are defined as groups whose members have a common purpose, are interdependent, and have complementary skills (Yukl, 1998, cited in Smylie et al., 2002). For the purpose of this study, I examined a school team that I will refer to as a leadership team or the Team. This Team is comprised of teacher leaders, administrators, other staff members, students and parents whose focus is on whole-school issues such as school climate and safety.

Teacher leadership is defined as “lead[ing] within and beyond the classroom; identify[ing] with and contribut[ing] to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influenc[ing] others toward improved educational practice; and accept[ing] responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 6).

Significance of the Study

In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on teacher leadership and the use of team approaches to planning and decision-making (i.e., Harris & Muijs, 2005; Muijs & Harris, 2007; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teams may be assembled for a variety of reasons, including addressing curriculum and school climate issues. Further, teams

may be established due to a leader's belief in distributed leadership or mandated by a school's participation in a reform initiative. However, most of the literature on school teams has failed to go beyond discussing team membership and team member roles (i.e., Kruse & Louis, 1997; Olsen & Chrispeels, 2009; Scribner et al., 2007).

As schools come to rely more on teachers to be leaders, though, interest in understanding teacher leadership in general has grown (e.g., Muijs & Harris, 2007; Smylie et al., 2002). In particular, there has been an increased emphasis on improving preparation of teacher leaders for the roles that they play in schools (e.g., Crowther, 2009). Much of this literature has focused on the academic roles filled by teacher leaders, and fails to fully explore the non-academic leadership activities in which teachers leaders participate, especially within the context of leadership teams.

The purpose of my study was to understand teacher leader identity within the context of leadership teams and to understand the context and influential factors for teacher leader identity development. While the findings are not generalizable, they do contribute to our understanding of teacher leadership and factors influencing their development and involvement on teams. Some of my findings are consistent with other studies including the characteristics of teacher leaders, the importance of the principal in identifying and supporting teacher leaders, and the influence of district and school context on leadership opportunities and development. Although these findings are similar to other studies, they are presented from the context of teacher leadership on teams, and thus broaden our perspective of teacher leadership. Other findings were unique to my study. Specifically, teacher leaders had distinct leadership identities that were separate

from their classroom teacher identities, and passion played a role in teacher leaders' motivation for participating on the PBIS team.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Most of the literature on teacher leadership has emphasized who teacher leaders are and what they do. In recent years, however, researchers have begun to dig deeper and explore teacher leader identity – how teachers see themselves as leaders and how they develop as leaders. This study will contribute to the literature on teacher leadership in general as well as teacher leader development. To frame this study, I reviewed relevant literature on teacher leader identity: leadership theories, leadership preparation, and identity theory. First, I will discuss the literature on leadership that contextualizes teacher leadership on school teams. Next, I examine the literature on leadership preparation that addresses the development of leaders in general and describes preparation models specifically designed for teacher leaders. Last, the literature on identity provides a perspective on teacher leadership for which there is limited research.

Leadership

Leadership in general has been defined in a number of ways. Researchers have attempted to identify leadership practices deemed effective in an effort to apply such practices to all schools. Some of the practices identified are reflected in two prominent leadership theories: transformational leadership and distributed leadership. Traditionally, leadership in schools has been attributed to a single person in a position of power (i.e., Bass, 1997; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). This view, referred to as *transformational leadership* by these authors, identifies an individual, usually the principal, as the one who provides the

vision and professional development, and arranges the structures needed for collaboration (e.g., reflective dialogue).

Other researchers (i.e., Gronn, 2003; Harris, 2007; Spillane, 2006) argue that the interactions among people should be the emphasis of leadership rather than a formal role. According to Gronn (2003), distributed leadership involves several people as collaborators in accomplishing tasks. Distributed leadership has become a popular construct in recent years but lacks a clear definition or explanation of what it looks like in practice. The following section reviews literature related to effective leadership, transformational leadership, and distributed leadership.

Effective leadership. Although leadership has been defined in many ways, certain leadership practices have been identified that positively impact learning and are thus deemed “effective”. These strategies include building a vision, developing people, and managing teaching and learning (i.e., Day, Leithwood, & Sammons, 2008; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). In one study, Day et al. (2008) surveyed and interviewed headteachers and their key staff. They found that headteachers remain the major driving force for increasing or sustaining effectiveness and improvement in academic achievement. More specifically, they found that the headteachers aligned structures and the school culture with the vision and direction that they had set, broadened participation of staff in decision-making, and established a consistent and sustained focus on improving teaching and learning over several years.

In a similar study, Day et al. (2001) conducted individual and group interviews with principals, teachers, parents, and students. They found that vision, values, high expectations and individualized support were most often associated with effective

leadership. The principals in their study led the cognitive and affective lives of the schools by combining different leadership skills, including structural (developing clear goals), political (building alliances), educational (professional development), symbolic (inspiration), and human (demonstrating care and support). Additionally, the principals empowered staff by developing climates of collaboration; providing opportunities for teachers to meet together and plan.

Studies from the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP) have provided a more global perspective about successful school leadership practices. These studies have examined schools of varying sizes, in different geographic locations, and having students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. In one study, Mulford, Kendall, Edmunds, Kendall, Ewington, and Silins (2007) surveyed over 600 teachers and principals in Tasmania about leadership characteristics, perceptions of school success, school capacity building, values and beliefs, tensions and dilemmas, learning and development, decision making, and evaluation and accountability. They found that school success measures were only weakly related to principal characteristics but strongly related to school capacity (trust and respect, empowerment of students and teachers, a shared and monitored vision, supported experimentation).

Other studies from the ISSPP have acknowledged the importance of teams to successful leadership. For example, Moller, Eggen, Fuglestad, Langfeldt, Presthus, Skrovset, Stjernstrom, and Vedoy (2005) conducted a multi-site case study in Norway in which they observed and interviewed principals at eight schools. These schools were identified as “good practice schools” by the Ministry of Education. Two key elements were common to these eight schools: students’ learning was the focal point of the

schools' philosophy and team-centered leadership which consisted of collaboration and teamwork. They found that the teams were crucial to building conditions for and encouraging democratic participation because trust was developed through "trustworthy uses of power" (p. 592). Additionally, they identified collaboration, defined as teachers taking responsibility and making decisions, as a distinct feature of the teams.

The literature on effective leadership alludes to several strategies that are often attributed to transformational and distributed leadership practices. In the sections that follow, I provide a more detailed review of the literature on these two leadership theories.

Transformational leadership. For several decades, transformational leadership has been a major leadership theory in education, with the focus on improving school conditions (Stewart, 2006). Leithwood and colleagues are often recognized for their research on transformational leadership. Specifically, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) proposed a model consisting of three categories of transformational leadership practice: *setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization*. The first step, setting direction, can be accomplished by building the school's vision, developing goals, and establishing high expectations. Once the direction has been set, staff commitment must be secured through what Bass (1997) refers to as *inspirational motivation*: the articulation of a vision and the challenge of followers to achieve that vision.

Day et al.'s (2001) study of characteristics of effective leadership supports Bass' claims. Specifically, they found that the most effective transformational leaders clearly communicated the schools' vision and values. With schools increasingly relying on teams for planning and problem solving, not only do transformational leaders set direction for the entire school, but also for the teams. For example, a transformational leader may

establish a team to examine ways to improve math scores. In establishing a team to specifically look at math scores, the leader has established the goal of the team and thus sets the tone for how team members collaborate (i.e., what they discuss during meetings).

The second dimension of transformational leadership as described by Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) is *developing people*; the development of skills and knowledge to carry out certain tasks. By developing people, transformational leaders ensure that followers not only have skills and knowledge to successfully fulfill their roles, but also to achieve the schools' vision (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Bass (1997) identified that developing people involves more than improving skills and knowledge; people need to be encouraged and stimulated to explore new perspectives as well. As leadership becomes more complex, transformational leaders not only need to develop staff members in regards to classroom practices but also in participation in leadership opportunities. This may occur formally (i.e., scheduling workshops) or informally (i.e., day-to-day interactions).

The final dimension of transformational leadership practice is redesigning the organization (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Transformational leaders redesign the organization by developing a collaborative school culture, creating productive community relationships, and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. For example, a transformational leader may establish teams so that staff members may collaborate on curriculum planning and decision-making.

Transformational leaders can influence collaboration by determining who participates on the team, when they meet, and what team members will discuss. Day et al. (2001) found that transformational leaders developed positive relationships with staff and consulted

with staff on various issues affecting the school (i.e., curriculum implementation). The communication and relationships helped leaders establish collaborative climates.

While transformational leadership provides a lens by which we can understand what school leaders do, this theory has been criticized by some authors (e.g., Gronn, 1997; Stewart, 2006). One critique is that transformational leadership theory relies too heavily on the skills of a single leader whose influence is deemed legitimate by followers (Gronn, 1997); also referred to as ‘heroic leaders’ (Furman, 2004) and ‘charismatic leaders’ (Bass & Steidlmeir, 1999). Specifically, Leithwood and Jantzi’s (2006) model identifies transformational leaders as persons in formal positions (i.e., principals) and depicts relationships as hierarchical, with significant knowledge being a characteristic of positional authority (Crowther, 1996). The danger of relying mostly upon a formal leader to lead change, for example, was identified by Giles and Hargreaves (2006) as a contributing factor to “attrition of change” (p. 125). If one, or a few, leaders at a school develop the vision for and enact change that change will likely not sustain if they leave the school. Additionally, the reliance on a single ‘heroic’ leader is unrealistic as many people in schools have knowledge and skills useful for leading (Furman, 2004).

A second critique of transformational leadership is that it does not focus enough on others who may be involved in leadership activities; the emphasis is on formal leaders (principals, superintendents) with little consideration for teachers, students, and community members who also may be involved in leadership activities (i.e., decision making, supervising). Transformational leadership also does not consider or explain the interactions that occur within leadership practice (Stewart, 2006). Gronn (1996) argued that transformational leadership situates the leader in a causal chain in which the leader

internally processes information and then acts on those processes, without accounting for others who may need to carry out certain tasks. For example, transformational leaders may establish a team to address the adoption of a new curriculum. The transformational leader may select team members, arrange meetings (time and place) and facilitate discussions, however, transformational leadership theory does not provide a lens through which we can understand how leadership emerges during team meetings.

While transformational leadership has been criticized, this lens is necessary for understanding the conditions in which leadership occurs. Specifically, transformational leaders set and communicate a vision, and establish and support collaborative school conditions. In their study of the impact of collaboration on teacher and student performance, Marks and Printy (2003) found that “strong transformational leadership by the principal is essential in supporting the commitment of teachers” (p. 393). They contend that since teachers do not often seek out leadership roles, transformational leaders need to invite teachers to do so. The role of leaders in formal positions (i.e., principals) in times of change cannot be overlooked. Copland (2003) also found that principals served an important role in collaboration efforts. In his longitudinal study of 16 schools implementing collaborative efforts, Copland (2003) found that the principal’s role shifted to that of “catalyst for change, protector of vision, and leader of inquiry” (Copland, 2003, p. 392). Principals in this study did have to let go of some functions (i.e., facilitating team discussions) but they still played a key role in supporting collaborative cultures (i.e., acting as a buffer between the schools and district, engaging in framing questions and problems).

As schools implement more collaborative efforts (e.g., teams), some authors argue that educational scholarship must expand beyond the traditional single leader to conceptualize leadership as involving many people within the school community. For example, Heller and Firestone (1994) argued that successful change resulted from a series of leadership functions rather than the work of one key leader: “change leadership is more of a team enterprise than the work of a single hero” (p. 32). As demonstrated by Copland (2003), while principals were involved in collaboration, other team members assumed roles most often attributed to the principal (i.e., facilitating team meetings). Similarly, Furman (2004) argues that the concept of the “heroic” leader has become unrealistic and that leadership as community can help schools “achieve valued outcomes such as social justice, racial equity, and learning for all children in schools” (p. 227).

As Copland (2003), Furman (2004), and Heller and Firestone (1994) suggest, schools are increasingly looking to expand their definition of leadership to incorporate more people within the school community. These efforts are driven by pressures of local and federal educational policies (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Mitchell & Sackney, 2009; Spillane, 2005). While transformational leaders may be needed to invite teachers to share leadership functions (Hallinger, 2003), another theory, distributed leadership, acknowledges the involvement of more than a single leader in the process of leadership and offers a way to examine interactions that comprise leadership practice.

Distributed leadership. While transformational leadership focuses more on impacting school conditions, distributed leadership emphasizes the emergence of leadership from interactions and relationships among individuals in an organization (Scribner et al., 2007). Transformational leadership and distributed leadership are not

mutually exclusive; they complement each other. For example, transformational leadership practices establish the conditions for distributed leadership to be implemented (i.e., arranging the time and a place for teams to meet). Distributed leadership theorists view leadership as a collective activity that involves many people in leadership activities, tasks, and responsibilities (Copland, 2003; Gronn, 1997, 2003; Spillane, 2005, 2006). But distributed leadership is more than acknowledging a division of labor; leadership emerges from interactions among individuals and their situation (i.e., Copland, 2003; Spillane, 2005, 2006).

While educational leadership scholars are increasingly using distributed leadership as a lens for understanding leadership in schools, the term “distributed leadership” has been used interchangeably with other terms such as shared leadership (e.g., Moos, Krejsler, Kofold & Jensen, 2005; Printy & Marks, 2006), collaborative leadership (e.g., Hallinger & Heck, 2010), and collective leadership (e.g., Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; see Table 1).

Some of the above authors conceptualize leadership as specific behaviors or actions. For example, Moos et al. (2005) discussed leadership as decision-making and Hallinger and Heck (2010) specifically discussed actions related to school improvement (i.e., encourage broad participation). On the other hand, Printy and Marks (2006) conceptualize leadership as embedded in and emerging from interactions. Regardless of the conceptualization, the implication is that leadership is equally shared among many people and less hierarchical.

The reality of leadership in schools, however, makes the removal of the hierarchical nature of leadership difficult; principals are still charged with organizing the

Table 2.1:

Comparison of shared leadership, collaborative leadership, and collective leadership

Authors	Term(s)	Conceptualization
Moos et al., 2005	Shared leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community decision-making and community building without coercion • People who make decisions are able to in competent way • Principal shows trust in teachers' decision-making
Printy & Marks, 2006	Shared leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed and interdependent social interactions that are embedded within the process of learning • Not attributes or behaviors – created by leaders and followers together • Consists of individual skill development, group process, and relationship skills
Leithwood & Mascall, 2008	Shared leadership, Collective leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form of distributive influence
Hallinger & Heck, 2010	Shared leadership, Collaborative leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal and informal sources of leadership focused on school-wide actions related to school improvement • Shared among administrators and teachers • Encourage broad participation and foster shared accountability

school-day and providing guidance on instruction. Unlike shared, collective, and collaborative leadership, distributed leadership conceptualizes leadership with some hierarchy and formal leadership implied. Spillane (2005) further argues that distributed leadership is a relative of these terms not a synonym, as they focus more on the process (who is involved, what their role is at the school and on the team) rather than how leadership *emerges* from the interactions. Distributed leadership is more than just leadership roles; distributed leadership should be conceptualized as leadership practice that is stretched over two or more leaders in formal leadership roles (e.g., principals),

followers, *and* the situation (Spillane, 2005, 2006). Distributed leadership considers not only the structural but also relational aspects of leadership.

What distributed leadership looks like in schools depends on several factors. First, the *configuration* of leadership, the “creation of an organizational structure that formally designates leadership statuses within a school” (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003, p. 350), influences not only who will be involved in leadership activities but also the extent to which they can do so. For example, schools are increasingly using teams as a way to distribute planning and decision-making. The purpose of teams and their ability to accomplish goals relies in part on their configuration: who is on the team, how the team was established, and how the team fits into the larger organizational structure of the school and district. In many cases, the functioning of teams is determined by those in positional power: the principal or superintendent. While many studies have found that the principal was essential for creating conditions for distributed leadership to occur (i.e., Camburn et al., 2003; Chrispeels & Martin, 2002; Kruse & Louis, 1997), many school personnel, specifically teachers, are involved in leadership. However, Spillane (2005, 2006) argued that this *leader-plus* aspect is not sufficient to capture the complexity of leadership; consideration should be given not only to *who* is involved in leadership but also to the interactions (i.e., content and methods of communication) that occur.

These interactions include the social processes that encourage formal leaders to actively perform leader functions; what Camburn et al. (2003) refer to as *activation*. For example, discussions that occur during team meetings where teachers articulate their needs and opinions may influence decisions that are made by formal leaders. This idea of activation can be applied beyond the formal leaders to teacher leaders on teams. Social

processes on teams would include norms for discussions and decision-making; communal processes that encourage full participation and open inquiry (Furman, 2004). Spillane (2006) stated that as “individuals play off one another, there is a reciprocal relationship among their actions, and it is through this interrelating that the leadership practice takes shape” (p. 72). As people engage in discussions during team meetings, their opinions are influenced and decisions are made. According to Spillane (2005, 2006), social interactions play a key role in defining leadership.

While configuration and activation can help explain what distributed leadership looks like and how it happens, they fail to account for all factors that may affect distributed leadership. Schools and times have changed, making context an essential component to consider. Different schools and situations may require different processes to achieve goals. Spillane (2005, 2006) refers to this as *the situation*; the tools and routines that support and encourage social interactions, such as forms for data analysis and regularly scheduled times to discuss data. Teams in schools often examine student data to inform decisions related to classroom practice. The topics of discussion depend on the situation. For example, data discussions in “high performing schools” (most students demonstrate proficiency on standardized tests) will emphasize different points than discussions in “low performing schools”. “High performing schools” may focus their discussions on academic supports to be implemented outside of the classroom since they have a relatively small proportion of students requiring these supports. “Low performing schools”, on the other hand, may discuss strategies to be integrated in the classroom due to the higher proportion of students in need of these supports.

While distributed leadership offers a lens through which to view leadership as interaction, the motivation behind adopting this approach has been criticized (Storey, 2004). Distributed leadership in schools may occur because it is a practice utilized commonly within the field. For example, a school's participation in a federal grant may require that they adopt practices associated with distributed leadership (i.e., creating a team, completion of an assessment by stakeholders). Distributed leadership may not necessarily be valued, but it legitimizes the school.

Another critique of distributed leadership is that it may still isolate decision-making amongst a few individuals within a school. Thus, only a few individuals make decisions that impact the entire school. Similarly, if principals develop distributed leadership opportunities (i.e., establishes a leadership team), they may have different goals than other individuals within their schools. This conflict can impact the effectiveness of distributed leadership to meet the goals of the school.

A third critique of distributed leadership is the lack of evidence of its effectiveness. In their review of distributed leadership, Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, and Hopkins (2007) found that "distributing leadership does not automatically result in organizational improvement" (p. 345). Effectiveness depends on how leadership is distributed (i.e., who is involved) and why (i.e., internal motivation vs. external motivation such as federal mandates). Harris et al. (2007) acknowledge that few empirical studies have been conducted, and the ones that have focus on how leadership is distributed and who is involved. They also argue, though, that the existing evidence demonstrates that a relationship exists between distributed leadership and organizational

change. Since there is limited research in this area, they call for others to study distributed leadership further.

Despite the criticism, a distributed leadership approach is being increasingly utilized in schools to address a number of issues from specific curriculum issues to school-wide issues. Most studies on distributed leadership have focused generally on how leadership is distributed and who is involved. Few studies have examined the interactions that occur; the interactions that Spillane (2005, 2006) argues are key to understanding leadership as it emerges from such interactions. Until recently, the work on distributed leadership has been mostly theoretical. Additional studies on the nature of the interactions that comprise leadership activities are needed to increase the capacity of distributed leadership practices. In the section that follows, I will explore two ways that distributed leadership has been operationalized: teacher leadership and leadership teams.

Teacher leadership. Although several authors have criticized distributed leadership, others have found that student outcomes were more likely to experience positive effects when leadership was distributed among teachers who engage in leadership roles and responsibilities (e.g., Bell, Bolam, & Cubillo, 2003; Silins & Mulford, 2002). In recent years, the concept of teacher leadership has gained traction within the larger discussion of school leadership, although the idea of teacher leadership has been around for a long time. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009), the most recent attention has evolved through four main phases. Beginning in the 1980's, teachers fulfilled leadership roles as department chairpersons or team leaders. The emphasis of these positions was on subject-matter or grade-level expertise. In the second phase (early to mid 1990's), teacher leadership roles expanded to the all-school level with the

increased emphasis on whole-school reform and shared decision-making. The third phase (mid to late 1990's) introduced the idea of collective teacher leadership. This was in response to the increased focus on standards-based reform and the concept of professional learning communities. Currently, teacher leaders are seen in relation to school-based instructional leadership as a response to the focus on accountability.

As a result of this evolution, how teacher leadership has been defined has not been consistent. Most commonly, teacher leadership is defined in relation to formal leadership roles (i.e., department heads). For example, Frost and Harris (2003) categorized teacher leaders as lead teachers, middle managers, coordinators of professional development, and representatives (on district-level and school-level committees or teams). Similarly, in their review of the teacher leadership literature, York-Barr and Duke (2004) identified several roles of teacher leaders including coordinating, managing, school or district curriculum work, professional development, participation in school change/improvement, parent and community involvement, involvement in professional organizations, and pre-service teacher education.

Harris and Muijs (2005) also identified categories of formal leadership: lead teachers, subject leaders, and coordinators. However, Harris and Muijs (2005) argued that conceptions of teacher leadership should also consider informal roles (i.e., day-to-day interactions among teachers). The inclusion of informal roles is reflected in their definition of teacher leaders as “*all staff* engaged in supporting teaching and learning processes, including non-teaching and support staff” (p. 14, italics in original). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) agree and provide a broader definition of teacher leadership: “lead[ing] within and beyond the classroom; identify[ing] with and

contribut[ing] to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influenc[ing] others toward improved educational practice; and accept[ing] responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership” (p. 6).

Smylie et al. (2002) provide another lens with which to view teacher leadership. Specifically, they identified three additional approaches to teacher leadership: *teacher research*, *distributive leadership*, and *self-managed teams*. First, *teacher research* includes “all forms of teacher inquiry involving any systematic, intentional, and self-critical study of one’s work” (p. 168). For example, teachers may engage in action research through which they identify a problem within their classrooms, plan for improvement, collect and evaluate data, and reflect. Similar to conceptions of distributed leadership previously discussed, Smylie et al. (2002) defined *distributive leadership* as “leadership that was exercised not only by people in formal positions of authority but also by people outside these positions” (p. 172). The emphasis is less on leadership characteristics and more on the tasks that constitute leadership.

Last, *self-managed teams* (e.g., grade-level and content-area teams) promote collaboration, improve teaching and student learning, and address issues within the school organization. Self-managed teams are defined as “small task groups in which members have a common purpose, interdependent roles, and complementary skills” (Yukl, 1998, cited in Smylie et al., p. 177). In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on the use of team approaches to planning and decision-making. Teams may be assembled for a variety of reasons, including addressing curriculum and school climate issues. Often these teams consist of teachers who take on team roles such as facilitator and recorder.

The various ways that teacher leadership has been conceptualized demonstrates the complexity of leadership in education. Contextual factors (i.e., federal mandates, student needs) influence what teacher leadership will look like in any given school or district. For example, a school may use grant money to hire experts to lead professional development, whereas a school without grant money may rely on teacher leaders to provide the same professional development. As a result, teacher leadership may look different from school to school and district to district.

Although teacher leadership has been defined and conceptualized in different ways, some common characteristics exist. First, teacher leaders are effective teachers; they have knowledge of content and educational materials and structures, as well as extensive classroom experience (Shulman, 1987, cited in Rogus, 1988). Second, teachers are more than classroom instructors; they “work with peers, administrators, and parents to build a school community” (Rogus, 1988, p. 46). Teacher leaders do not isolate themselves within their classrooms but rather engage others in efforts to improve instruction or the larger school community, for example.

As to the research on the effectiveness of teacher leaders, much emphasis has been on identifying teacher leaders and defining their roles. For example, Smylie and Denny (1990) conducted a case study during which they interviewed and surveyed teacher leaders in one district. First, they found that teacher leaders defined their roles mostly in terms of helping and supporting other teachers in the day-to-day work with students and in improving classroom practice. Additionally, they found that teacher leaders engaged in such activities as attending meetings, participating in school-level decision making, developing district-level and school-level curricular programs, planning

staff development activities, meeting with principals and promoting implementation of programs. While teacher leaders defined their roles at the classroom level (i.e., day-to-day interactions), they reported that their most common activities occurred at the school or district level (i.e., decision making). Smylie and Denny (1990) acknowledged that this discrepancy may be attributed to several factors including school structure (time and access), practice, and belief (i.e., professional norms, rights and obligations). Their findings suggest that “attention to the structure of roles and organizational contexts is necessary but insufficient to promote teacher leadership performance” (p. 257) and that attention must also be given to other issues that shape teacher leadership roles, such as teacher leader identity.

Muijs and Harris (2007) examined the conditions that shape teacher leader roles. They analyzed interviews and found some key conditions that support teacher leadership. First, they found that teacher leadership needs to be a carefully directed and deliberate process; it must be embedded in the culture of a school. Teacher leadership must be supported not only by formal leaders but also organizational structures. For example, principals need to support decisions made by teacher leaders and provide time for teacher leaders to perform leadership tasks (i.e., an extra planning period). Muijs and Harris (2007) also stated that teacher leader development must be supported. Not only must teachers understand what teacher leadership is but they must also have the skills (i.e., facilitation, observation) to carry out associated roles and responsibilities. The type of skills depends on the role being filled by teacher leaders.

While there are many ways that teacher leadership is defined and conceptualized, for the purpose of this study, I will focus on teacher leadership in relation to school

teams. As described by Smylie et al. (2002), teams are groups of individuals who are assigned specific tasks or issues of inquiry. Schools are increasingly implementing teams for a number of reasons including curriculum planning and school-wide decision-making. Most research on school teams has focused on the structure (who are the team members, who leads the team) and function (purpose). The studies that have examined teacher leaders in relation to school teams have emphasized who they are and what they do in relation to the team; little emphasis has been placed on understanding how teacher leaders come to see themselves as leaders on teams. In the section that follows, I will further examine the literature on schools teams to better understand how school teams have been studied.

School teams. Teams have become a common way for schools to approach issues related to planning and decision-making. As described in the previous section, these teams are often comprised of teacher leaders. Working in teams allows teachers to become catalysts for change and take on many roles necessary for leading change (Harris & Muijs, 2005). These teams are known by many different names including interdisciplinary teams, school-improvement teams, site-based teams, grade-level teams, and leadership teams. Although teachers play a role on all of these teams, each one has a different focus. For example, grade-level teams focus on the students and instruction within a given grade-level, while site-based teams focus on issues pertaining to the entire campus (e.g., safety).

Regardless of the function of the team, researchers identify similar team processes that contribute to a team's effectiveness including having a vision, collaboration (working together on common goals), reflexivity (opportunities to reflect on practice), collective

action (planning and implementing changes), and promotion of group as well as individual learning (opportunities for professional development for individuals and teams; Firestone & Martinez, 2007; Heller & Firestone, 1994; Mitchell & Sackney, 2009; Olsen & Chrispeels, 2009). Most of the research on school team functioning has focused on organizational factors such as context, formal leadership, and leadership skills (e.g., Chrispeels & Martin, 2002; Chrispeels, Castillo, & Brown, 2000; Crow & Pounder, 2000; Firestone & Martinez, 2007; Heller & Firestone, 1994; Sanders, 2006; Scribner et al., 2007). First, team functioning results in part from and is influenced by various contextual factors including the established purpose of the team, the level of autonomy, and how the team is situated within the larger organization of the school and district. These factors, in turn, are influenced by the nature of schools as open systems, and impacted by federal, state, and local policies (Bidwell, 1965). For example, federal requirements related to student achievement may influence schools and districts to adopt practices where student data is examined and teaching methods are discussed among teams of teachers. The purpose of the teams is established by schools' and districts' response to the federal requirements. Further, the schools and districts determine how the teams fit within the larger school organization (i.e., who is on the team, accountability to other teams and administration). Last, teams must work within the parameters of federal requirements, thus influencing the team's level of autonomy (i.e., what data to look at).

At the school level, several studies have examined the impact of organizational context (conditions and climate) on team functioning. For example, in their multi-case study of leadership teams, Chrispeels and Martin (2002) examined how leadership teams defined and assumed their roles. They found that team roles were influenced by

interactions among pre-existing organizational structures (i.e., use of teams or ad hoc committees for decision-making). Additionally, interactions were influenced by political and cultural norms already established at the school, and the relationships among the principal and the team, the team and other committees, and the team and other teachers. Chrispeels and Martin (2002) determined that it was essential for teams to know their schools' organizational conditions in order to function within the school. For example, teams developed diagrams in which they situated themselves in relation to individual people (who was on the team and who they reported to) as well as other teams and the formal leaders.

Formal leadership (principal, superintendents) also influences team functioning. For example, Kruse and Louis' (1997) multi-case study examined the impact of school teams on the larger school community. Through interviews, classroom and meeting observations, and document analysis, they found that although teams were given some autonomy, there was still some reliance on the principal and other formal leaders. Kruse and Louis (1997) acknowledged that formal leaders have the big picture of the school; they have information related to the school and district expectations and requirements (i.e., reported to the federal government) and must ensure that all activities relate to and promote the school's vision. As a result, formal leaders determined the level of autonomy of the team.

Similarly, Scribner et al. (2007) explored situational and social aspects of distributed leadership through a discourse analysis of school team meetings. They analyzed audiotape and videotape of team meetings, as well as observer field notes and found that administrators determined the level of team involvement in school-level

processes by assigning individuals to a team, defining the purpose of the team, and supporting the ideas of the team. Formal leaders also impacted team functioning by identifying and scheduling time for teams to meet. This is what Furman (2004) refers to as “‘spaces’ ...for dialogue and deliberation” (p. 226). Furman (2004) further states that these spaces are essential for team members to participate in team processes.

A third factor impacting team functioning is the level of team members’ leadership skills. Such skills include deep listening, understanding and valuing multiple perspectives, inquiry, and dialogue (talking together to build understandings; Furman, 2004). Some authors (i.e., Crow & Pounder, 2000; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Sanders, 2006) recommend that teams and team members participate in preparation programs or professional development opportunities in order to develop these skills. Preparation and professional development should include not only knowledge of organizational functioning (i.e., how to access resources, methods of communication) but also leadership skills (Sanders, 2006; Kruse & Louis, 1997). In Sanders’s (2006) study of novice teachers’ experiences with team leadership, she concluded that if teachers were expected to participate on teams, they need to be prepared to be effective in their team roles. However, the literature on school teams, and more broadly on educational leadership, does not address how to prepare leaders, specifically teacher leaders, for participating on teams. Further, this literature emphasizes structural and functional aspects of the teams and fails to deeply examine the people that comprise the teams.

Summary. The effective schools literature identifies leadership characteristics often cited in relation to transformational and distributed leadership theories.

Transformational leadership is often applied to formal leadership, but this emphasis has

become unrealistic. Another theory has emerged in discussions of effective schools: distributed leadership. While there are many conceptions of distributed leadership, this study draws on Spillane's (2005, 2006) definition: that distributed leadership emerges from interactions among leaders, followers, and the situation.

Most specifically, this study will focus on teacher leaders. While a common definition of teacher leaders has eluded researchers, this study will focus on teacher leaders within the context of school teams as conceptualized by Smylie et al. (2002). On these teams, members have a common purpose, are interdependent, and have complementary skills (Yukl, 1998, cited in Smylie et al., 2002). For the purposes of this study, I will examine school teams that I will refer to as leadership teams. These leadership teams are comprised of teacher leaders and administrators whose focus is on whole-school issues such as school climate and safety. Such teams tend to have broader representation of school staff than grade-level or content-area teams.

Many studies have explored school teams but have failed to go beyond discussing team member roles and team functioning (i.e., Kruse & Louis, 1997; Olsen & Chrispeels, 2009; Scribner, et al., 2007). While these studies also highlight the importance of leadership preparation for team members (specifically teachers), little attention has been given to how leaders develop.

To deepen my understanding of leadership development, I explored the literature on leadership preparation. Most of the literature on the preparation of educational leaders emphasizes the growth of teachers' classroom practice or the practice of formal leaders. Often, such leadership preparation occurs through university certificate and degree programs and focuses on traditional, formal school-level and district-level leadership

(i.e., principals, superintendents). In the section that follows, I will review the literature on leadership preparation in general and leadership preparation models that specifically focus on leadership development of teachers.

Leadership Preparation

The literature on school teams has acknowledged that team members' level of leadership skills impacts team functioning. They further acknowledged that these leadership skills are not often focused on teacher preparation programs. Additionally, schools often do not provide preparation for team members to participate on teams but rather assume teachers can naturally work together on teams.

The preparation of school leaders has varied over the years in response in particular to criticisms directed at school leaders and university programs (McCarthy, 2002). In the 1800's, the main role of school leaders was supervision so the education school leaders received emphasized curriculum and instruction (Murphy, 1998). In the early 1900's (1900-1946), universities became more involved in the preparation of school leaders specifically in the area of school management. Many states required formal coursework in educational leadership, which focused on technical aspects of administration as well as specific tasks to be performed (Murphy, 1998).

From the 1940's on, the preparation of educational leaders proceeded through several phases ranging from a theory-base to emphasizing the role of school leaders in school improvement to a focus on school leadership in context (acknowledging local influences on leadership decision-making; McCarthy, 2002; Murphy, 1998). According to McCarthy (2002), each phase was marked by the involvement of foundations such as the Kellogg Foundation, the Danforth Foundation, and the Interstate School Leaders

Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). The latter has influenced most recent program aimed at preparing leaders by developing standards which have influenced licensure and preparation of leaders. These standards are based on the literature of effective schools and school improvement (Murphy, 2005).

The purpose of the ISLLC standards was to provide curriculum content and performance standards that would inform the preparation, professional development, and licensure of principals (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). These standards emphasize the “knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for effective administration of educational organizations” (Jackson & Kelley, 2002, p. 196). In 2008, the ISLLC standards were updated to reflect more current research in educational leadership (The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). Among the main changes in the language of the standards was the replacement of “school administrator” with “education leader”. However, the intent of the standards is the same; to guide current formal school administrators and prepare future administrators with no consideration of other potential educational leaders such as teacher leaders (The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008).

Many states utilize the standards as a framework for establishing expectations for educational leaders (The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). The history of educational leadership and most recently the ISLLC standards has emphasized the preparation of formal school leaders (principals, superintendents). What is missing from this literature, however, is the preparation of leaders other than formal leaders. In recent years, educational leadership research has begun to investigate the preparation of teacher leaders as universities and educational organizations establish programs specifically for

teacher leaders. In the section that follows, I will further examine some of the literature specific to teacher leader preparation.

Teacher leader preparation. Many authors have recognized that the preparation of teacher leaders is essential, specifically in regards to team functioning (e.g., Chrispeels & Martin, 2002; Crow & Pounder, 2000; Harris & Muijs, 2005). The content of teacher leader preparation, they argue, should emphasize organizational functioning (Chrispeels & Martin, 2002; Crow & Pounder, 2000) as well as leadership skills (Kruse & Louis, 1997; Sanders, 2006). Organizational functioning includes knowledge of how the district and school function within the broader context of education (i.e., how standards drive decision-making) and knowledge of how the team supports the district and school. Additionally, teacher leaders should have knowledge and understanding about how the team functions (i.e., purpose, decision-making process). Chrispeels and Martin (2002) found that acquisition of this knowledge “gave teams sources of ‘expert power’ and potential influence to shape decisions” (p. 358). This knowledge provided teams with the resources to set and accomplish goals.

Leadership skills include being able to identify team members and the ability of team members to take action (Sanders, 2006). Additionally, Sanders (2006) recommended that teacher leaders should be skilled at collaboration and processes that impact collaboration (i.e., methods of regular communication, dialogue). Last, Sanders (2006) recommended that teacher leaders need skills for getting support from formal leaders for the team process and decision-making (e.g., communicating, familiarity with consensus building, local and federal policies). Kruse and Louis (1997) added a

recommendation that teacher leaders need skills in communicating within the team and with staff members outside of the team.

Ideally, teachers would acquire these skills through teacher preparation programs. Many authors, including Troen and Boles (1993), have advocated for colleges of education to strengthen their commitment to teaching these skills as a component of their teacher preparation programs. However, that rarely occurs. The main emphases of courses in teacher preparation programs are on instructional methods, learning theories, educational measurement and testing, and educational psychology, sociology, and history (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). As a result, teacher leader preparation has emerged outside of teacher preparation programs. To gain a better understanding of how teacher leaders are being and have been prepared for leadership roles, I reviewed the literature on formal leadership preparation programs. I do acknowledge, though, that many teacher leaders do not benefit from formal programs but rather learn as they participate in leadership activities.

Several models for preparing teacher leaders have emerged over the years. Table 2 summarizes each model including the definition of teacher leadership that forms the foundation for the program as well as the approaches taken for the preparation of teacher leaders. Each of these models develop different leadership skills, but the skills reflect how teacher leadership was defined during the time each model was developed. For example, in the 1980's teacher leadership was viewed primarily in terms of mentoring. The teacher leadership development literature from that time reflects that (e.g., Rogus, 1988; Zimpher, 1988). In the 1990's, teacher leadership was viewed in relation to whole-school reform and shared decision-making (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Professional

Table 2.2:

Sample of teacher leader preparation programs

Timeframe	Author	Definition of teacher leadership	Approach to teacher leader preparation
1980's	Zimpher (1988)	Mentors	Identified 5 domains of knowledge (local needs; interpersonal and adult development; classroom processes and school effectiveness; instructional supervision, observation, and conferencing; reflection)
1990's	Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb (1995)	Mentors, teacher educators, curriculum developers, decision makers, problem solvers, change agents, researchers	Professional Development Schools (PDSs) – collaborations between universities and schools focused on improving classroom practice; establishes teaching teams comprised of experienced teachers and student teachers
2000's	Crowther (2009)	Action that impacts teaching and learning and builds community	Teachers as Leaders Framework (6 elements) - conveying convictions about a better world; facilitating communities of learning; striving for pedagogical excellence; confronting barriers in schools' culture and structures; translating ideas into sustainable systems of action; and nurturing a culture of success.

Development Schools (PDSs), collaborations between universities and schools, emerged with the goal of improving teaching and learning. While PDSs focused on improving classroom practice, the structure and implementation also develops teacher leaders. Experienced teachers formed teaching teams through which they worked with student teachers. Together, experienced and student teachers learned; leadership was not hierarchical but rather emerged through the interactions of these teachers (Darling-Hammond, et al., 1995). In these schools, faculty worked as a team to serve as mentors and teacher educators, curriculum developers and decision makers, problem solvers and change agents, and researchers.

More recently, Crowther (2009) offered another approach to teacher leader development that reflects current views of teacher leadership in relation to standards-based reform and the concept of professional learning communities. Crowther's (2009) approach focused on developing the leadership of school-based processes rather than the development of a particular set of values or personal characteristics. His framework is "a hypothetical portrait, because no one teacher leader whom we observed fulfills the entirety of the sixteen descriptors that are associated with it" (Crowther, 2009, p. 11). He further argued that teacher leadership is best approached as a team activity.

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) proposed a model in the 1990's that has evolved over time, most recently updated in 2009. In *Awakening the Sleeping Giant*, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) provide guidance for individual teachers to explore various aspects of teacher development. The four aspects of their model are: *Personal Assessment*, *Changing Schools*, *Influencing Strategies*, and *Planning for Action*. In this model, for *Personal Assessment*, teachers examine their past and current roles and how they came to

be in a leadership position. With *Changing Schools*, teacher leaders examine their school (past, present, and future) to understand leadership in context. For *Influencing Strategies*, teacher leaders examine how they see themselves as leaders, what influenced that view and how do they define leadership. Last, with *Planning for Action*, teacher leaders identify what they do as leaders. While research on this model has not been conducted, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) caution that their model is merely a resource. They recognize that issues must be resolved and barriers removed for schools to experience the full benefit of teacher leadership.

All of the models previously discussed highlight the need to develop leadership skills, but those skills varied depending on how teacher leadership was defined. Several authors acknowledged that teacher leadership has not been fully realized (e.g., Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Crowther, 2009). The primary emphasis has been on developing such skills as instruction, reflection, and collaboration. Only Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) alluded to the importance of how teachers see themselves as leaders and how they come to see themselves as leaders; in other words their leadership identities. Perhaps looking more closely at identity development of teacher leaders might inform and improve practice, and thus better prepare teachers to lead.

Summary. Much of the literature on the preparation of leaders has focused on formal leaders (i.e., principals, superintendents). Further, the development of school leaders usually occurs through formal programs at universities, for example. The literature on teacher leader preparation reveals that many teacher leaders do not receive formal training, although programs exist that are specifically designed for teacher leaders.

The models reviewed in this chapter varied in their focus depending on how teacher leadership was defined. Most of them emphasized the development of leadership skills. These skills are important for carrying out leadership tasks, but Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) posit that “before teachers presume to lead others, they should understand themselves” (p. 66). In other words, teachers need to understand their leader identities before they can lead others. Whether teacher leaders are formally trained or not, teacher leader identities are rarely addressed, let alone developed. The literature on teacher leader preparation fails to define teacher leader identity and explain if or how it is addressed during leadership preparation. To provide a deeper understanding of identity in relation to teacher leaders, in the section that follows, I review the literature on identity in general and identity in education in particular.

Identity Theory

Teacher leader identity has not been clearly defined by the literature previously reviewed on teacher leaders and teacher leader preparation. This literature emphasized the roles that leaders play and how they perform those roles. As Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) believed, teacher leaders need to understand their identities, especially their leader identities, in order to be successful leaders.

Identity has been conceptualized in many ways. Identity theorists generally recognize an individual’s identity as the meanings an individual attaches “to the multiple roles they typically play in a highly differentiated, contemporary society” (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 284). From a psychological perspective, identities are expressed by behaviors and result from the influence of internal and external mechanisms (Stryker & Burke, 2000). External mechanisms involve the social structures (e.g., teams, schools)

that build commitments and relationships. A person's *role* is external and linked to positions within the social structure (Stryker & Burke, 2000). For example, on a team, a team member's role may be identified as the "secretary;" the person on the team responsible for taking notes during meetings and sending various communications to team members and others in the school. This role then influences the relationships that the "secretary" has with other team members.

Internal mechanisms include individuals' self-perceptions of the roles played in a group, which can adjust depending on the situation (Stryker & Burke, 2000). A person's *identity* refers to the internalized meaning and expectations associated with a role. The secretary on a team may take the role very seriously and begin to develop elaborate ways to communicate with the entire school, such as create an electronic newsletter. The secretary's success at communicating may encourage that person to take responsibility for all regular communication within the school community.

Although individuals have their own identities, oftentimes the identities are tied to membership in a group. Tajfel (1972, as cited in Hogg, 2001) defined *social identity* as an "individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group's membership" (p. 186). Other social identity theorists (e.g., Ellemers, DeGilder, & Haslam, 2004; Stets & Burke, 2003) argue that social identities involve more than just knowledge about group membership. Specifically, this view of social identity addresses social interactions; *how* people come to see themselves as members of one group ("in-group") in comparison with another group ("out-group") (Stets & Burke, 2003).

These prominent conceptions of identity, though, consider identity to be a characteristic possessed by an individual. Other theorists provide an alternate perspective. Sfard and Prusak (2005) and Wojecki (2007) are among more recent scholars to propose another conception of identity from a sociocultural perspective: *identity as narrative*. Specifically, Sfard and Prusak (2005) defined identities in relation to “how collective discourses shape personal worlds and how individual voices combine into the voice of a community” (p. 15). This definition emphasizes the multi-faceted nature of identity as a product (how an individual sees herself) and a process (ongoing interaction with others; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Sfard and Prusak (2005) as well as other identity theorists caution that identity is not an end product but rather continually evolves through social interaction over time.

Identity develops not solely through an individual’s narrative but also through the narratives that others tell about that individual. All of these narratives are in “constant interaction and feed one into another” (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 18). In addition, Sfard and Prusak (2005) recognize that those that hear the narratives also contribute to the identity by interpreting the narrative from their perspective and by re-telling the narrative. Last, our identities are influenced by the narratives we tell about others (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). The level of contribution that a specific “narrator” may play in identity development depends on how significant the person is in the eyes of the individual (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Wortham (2001) cautions, though, that:

Narratives do more than represent events and characters; they also presuppose a certain version of the social world and position the narrator and audience with respect to that social world and with respect to each other. (p. 9)

Similar to Sfard and Prusak (2005), Connelly and Clandinin (1999) coined the term “stories to live by” as the link between knowledge, context, and identity. The stories to live by, the narratives, that they collected from teachers reflected personal (life histories) and social (contexts); “the identities we have, the stories we live by, tend to show different facets depending on the situations in which we find ourselves...Different facets, different identities, can show up, be reshaped and take on a new life in different landscape settings” (p. 95). Connelly and Clandinin (1999) described stories to live by as narrative expressions of who we are as opposed to what we know.

Conceptions of identity generally share a few commonalities. Specifically, it is commonly recognized that identities change with time, context, and relationships, and identities are expressions of who we are not what we do or what we know. In education, studies on identity have focused on student identity (e.g.; Settlage, Southerland, Smith, & Ceglie, 2009), teacher identity (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), and leader identity (e.g., Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Ryan, 2007). Since the focus of this study is on teacher leaders and since there is limited literature on teacher leader identity, I will next review literature related to teacher identity and leader identity.

Teacher identity. The literature on teacher identity has focused mostly on the activities that relate to the classroom. In their review of the literature, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) found defining teacher identity difficult. However, they did find some commonalities including identity conceptualized as dynamic and shifting over time under the influence of internal and external factors. Teachers’ identity development begins with teachers understanding their self (their perception of themselves, how they are perceived

by others, and how they would like to be; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Identity development also “is shaped and reshaped in interaction with others in a professional context” (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 178). As teachers interact with others (i.e., teachers, students, community members), their identities will evolve and thus impact future interactions.

Several other authors acknowledge that teacher identity is an ongoing process (e.g., Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Gee, 2000/2001; Watson, 2006). For example, Connelly and Clandinin (1999) examined the professional identities of teachers and reported that the stories reflect teachers’ identities “made up from an amalgam of children, curriculum, beliefs, values, and personal histories” (p. 171). These stories occur through interactions between individuals (i.e., teachers and teachers, teachers and students) as well as within the individual (i.e., individual’s values influencing who a teacher interacts with and how). For example, a teacher participating on a leadership team interacts with other team members. Through their discussion, team membership becomes part of the teacher’s identity; the teacher sees herself, and others see her, as part of the team.

However, counter to Connelly and Clandinin’s (1999) conception of teacher leaders, many studies focus on what teachers know (professional knowledge) as a major contributing factor to identity. For example, Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2000) conducted a study of secondary school teachers’ current and prior perceptions of their professional identities. Through questionnaires, the authors found that teachers saw themselves in relation to classroom content knowledge and pedagogy. These questionnaires, however, did not capture how teachers’ interactions with others

influenced their identity development, which is central to many conceptions of identity (e.g., Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Further, this study considers only how individual teachers perceive themselves and does not consider how others perceive them as leaders.

While Beijaard et al. (2000) utilized a survey to explore teacher identity, Watson (2006) conducted a narrative analysis of one teacher. Watson (2006) found that several resources contributed to the participant's identity. These included biographical (own history), sources of professional knowledge (formal preparation and experience), context of setting, and wider educational contexts. The participant's stories were all in direct relation to his practice in the classroom. Watson (2006) discovered that the relationship between professional identity and practice is not simple and unidirectional; the narrative allowed the participant to reflect on the stories and "in an important sense '[do]' identity work" (p. 525). However, similar to Beijaard et al. (2000), Watson (2006) does not include others' stories about the teacher.

The teacher identity literature that I reviewed focused on teachers' classroom practice; the literature did not reveal other identities that teachers may develop (e.g., teacher leader identity). Additionally, no studies were found that examined teacher leader identity specifically. Although a teacher leader identity may be part of a teacher's identity, the literature did not discuss this aspect. Since there is limited research on teacher leader identity, and to gain a better understanding of teacher leader identity, I examined the literature on leader identity in general.

Leader identity. While the previous studies focused on teacher identity, other studies in education have focused on leader identity. The studies on school leader identity

defined school leaders in terms of school administrators. For example, Ryan (2007) conducted interviews to determine how school administrators took up identities, how it influenced their dialogue and efforts at inclusion, and how they resolved contradictions. He found that school administrators took on different leadership identities when they were interacting with members of the school community. Most of the identities evolved around the role of mediator (interveners to prevent conflict). Some of the identities include referee (diffusing open conflict), problem solver (after diffusion of conflict, bringing people together), disseminator of information, clarifier (ensuring messages are clear), and interpreter of information.

Connelly and Clandinin (1999) examined administrator identity in addition to teacher identity. Through the stories that administrator's told, Connelly and Clandinin (1999) discovered that school administrators were likely to have strong teacher identities as described earlier. They also reported that the stories gave little sense of the administrators' identity. Instead, the administrators told stories of conformity; that there is "a massive hierarchy above them and that their positions are still those of doing or not doing what is prescribed for them" (p. 173). In essence, the identities that the administrators narrated reflected external expectations of their roles.

Summary. Although there are several conceptions of identity, this study will approach identity as narrative as proposed by Sfard and Prusak (2005) and Connelly and Clandinin (1999). This perspective argues that identities are narrative expressions of who we are as opposed to solely what we do or know. Sfard and Prusak posited that identities develop through several narratives: an individual's narrative and the narratives that others tell about that individual. The prominent focus of identity in education has been on

teacher identity (focusing on classroom practice) and leader identity (focusing on formal leaders). While Connelly and Clandinin (1999) examined both teacher and administrator identities, they only mention a teacher leader identity; they do not clearly define it or describe how it develops. While the idea of teacher leader identity has been mentioned in the literature by several other authors (e.g., Harris & Muijs, 2005; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009), it has not been clearly defined or explored. This study will contribute to the literature on identity in education in general and teacher leader identity in particular.

Chapter Summary

Findings from the literature on teacher leadership, leadership preparation, and identity have contributed to our understanding of factors influencing the development of teacher leader identity. If the expectation is for teachers to take on more leadership roles, understanding these influences can help inform the practices undertaken to develop teacher leaders. Specifically, we need to understand how they develop as leaders and how they come to see themselves as leaders

However, in the literature that was reviewed, several limitations arose. First, there is limited literature on teacher leadership as it is applied to leadership teams. Smylie et al. (2002) conceptualized participation on leadership teams as a form of teacher leadership. Many studies have explored school teams but have failed to go beyond discussing team member roles and team functioning (i.e., Kruse & Louis, 1997; Olsen & Chrispeels, 2009; Scribner, et al., 2007). While these studies also highlight the importance of leadership preparation, little attention has been given to how leaders develop.

A second limitation is in the preparation of teacher leaders. The focus has mostly been on the roles played by teacher leaders not their identities. Katzenmeyer and Moller's

(2009) model alludes to identity, but no studies were found exploring the effectiveness of their model.

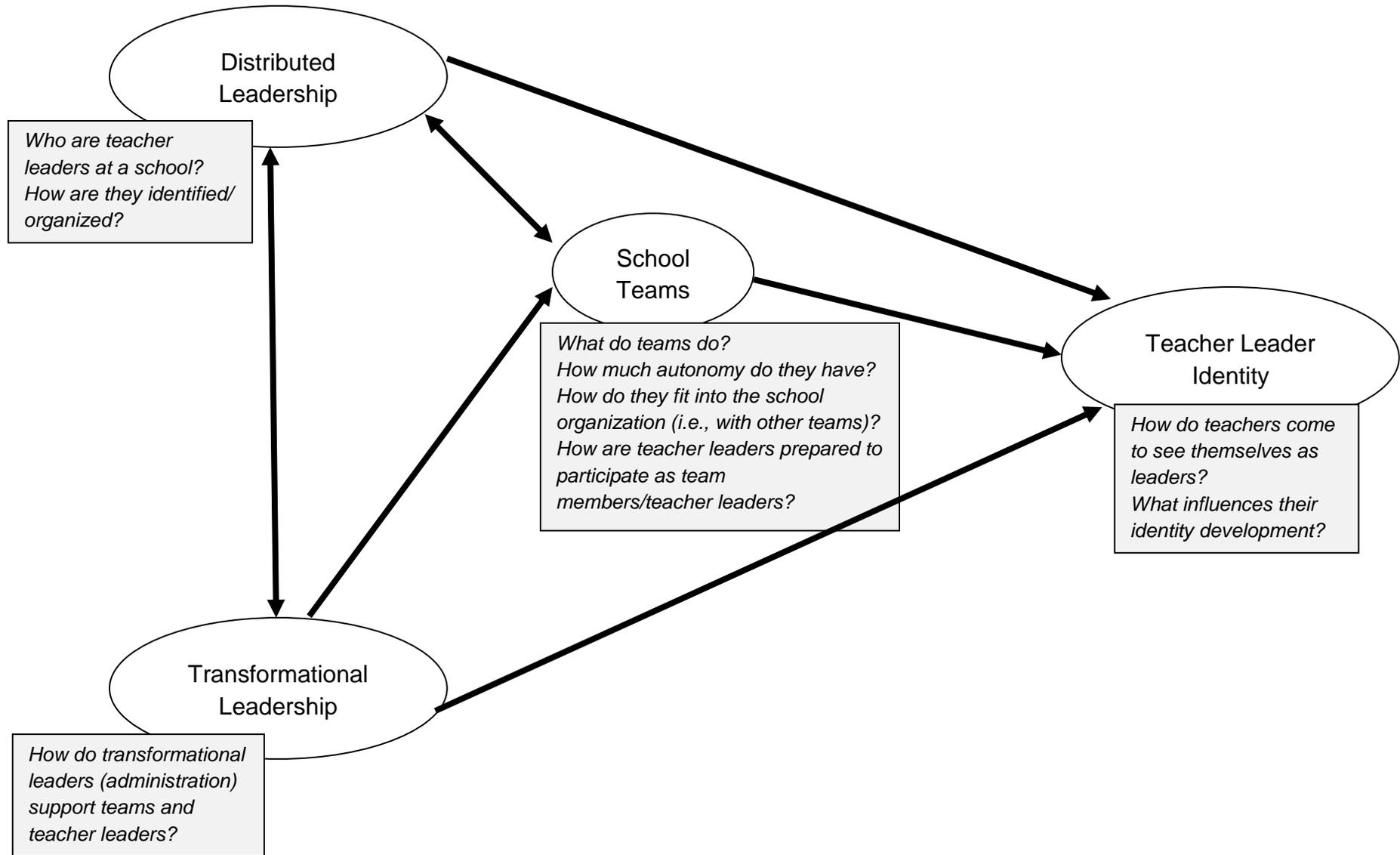
A third limitation is in the literature on teacher leader identity. Much has been studied with regards to teacher identity and leader identity, but teacher leader identity was only found to have been mentioned in the literature (not defined or specifically studied). The literature on leader identity emphasizes administrators not teachers, and some of the literature on teacher identity only mentions leader identity as a component of teacher identity; it is not explored separately. Further, no literature was found about teacher leader identity with respect to teams.

This study draws from the literature on leadership theories, leadership preparation, and identity theory. The literature on leadership contextualizes teacher leaders specifically on school teams. While teachers are increasingly involved in leadership opportunities on teams, they lack preparation for leading and working collaboratively. The literature on leadership preparation focuses on the development of formal leaders and describes some models specifically designed for teacher leaders. However, this development often focuses on what teachers do and know. Some argue that identity must also be considered, as leaders must understand themselves before they can lead others (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). The leadership preparation literature, though, fails to address how teachers define teacher leadership and how they come to see themselves as leaders. The literature on identity provides a perspective on teacher leadership for which there is limited research.

The research that has been reviewed has several gaps which my study addresses. Specifically, I examined teacher leadership in the context of school teams and explored

how teacher leaders narrate their leadership identities including what has influenced their teacher leader identity development (see Figure 1). The findings from this study contribute to the literature and expand our knowledge of teacher leader identity and the preparation of teacher leaders. In the following chapter, I describe the methodology for this study.

Figure 1. *The factors influencing the development of teacher leader identity.*



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of my study was to better understand how teachers narrate their leadership identities within the context of their roles on leadership teams. While identity has been studied in teachers, it has mostly been in relation to classroom practice (i.e., Beijard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Watson, 2006). Leader identity has also been studied but has focused on school administrators (i.e., Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Ryan, 2007). The concept of teacher leader identity has been mentioned in the literature but not extensively examined. Findings from this study illuminate one aspect of teacher identity that has not been previously examined in depth – teacher leader identity. Such findings may inform practice on teacher leader preparation and support.

In consideration of the purpose of my study, to understand teacher leader identity, I situated my study within an interpretive framework. My research questions focused on conceptualizing teacher leadership within a leadership team, understanding the development of teacher leader identity, and identifying influential factors. Specifically, this study asked:

1. Within the context of a leadership team, how are teacher leader identities narrated?
 - a. What stories are told about teacher leadership by teacher leaders?
 - b. What stories are told about teacher leadership by other team members?
 - c. How do these stories of teacher leadership convey contextual influences (e.g., team, school, district expectations and priorities)?

2. How do teacher leaders come to see themselves as leaders?
 - a. How do team interactions shape teacher leader identity?
 - b. How do contextual factors contribute to or hinder teacher leader identity development?

Further, my research design centered on a case study approach using semi-structured interviews with teacher leaders and team members as well as observations of team meetings as data sources. One school, Cactus Creek High School in the Southwestern United States, served as the site for my study. I interviewed four primary participants (teacher leaders) and four secondary participants (one administrator, two counselors, one administrative assistant). Through the data collected from this study, I developed a composite view of the leadership identities of the four teacher leaders. In this chapter, I further describe my research methods and design, including sampling, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

Since the purpose of my study was to understand teacher leader identity, this study was situated in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) interpretive framework; the purpose was to understand and report the findings rather than critique. Studies within the interpretive paradigm share several characteristics (Merriam, 2002). First, the goals of interpretive studies include understanding "how people interpret and make meaning of some object, event, action, perception, etc." (Glesne, 2011, p. 8) and understanding "the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences" (Merriam, 2002, p. 45). In this study, through narratives, I sought to understand how individuals interpreted and constructed their teacher leader identity.

Second, in interpretive studies, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis, and utilizes methods such as interviews, observations, case studies, and ethnographies (Glesne, 2011). These data are descriptive in nature and include field notes, interviews, or audiotapes. Additionally, the findings are presented with quotes, stories, and descriptions. In this study, as the researcher, I collected data through interviews and meeting observations and report my findings in narrative form.

Further, consistent with previous studies on identity and school teams, my study featured a case study design. In previous studies exploring identity (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Ryan, 2007; Watson, 2006), researchers interviewed individuals and recorded stories related to their identities as teachers or administrators. Additionally, some studies of leadership teams have utilized case study designs (e.g., Chrispeels & Martin, 2002; Kruse & Louis, 1997; Scribner et al., 2007). These researchers interviewed team members and observed team meetings but focused on team composition and functioning.

Case study “is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena” (Merriam, 1988, p.2). Merriam (2002) also stated that in order for a study to be considered a case study, the unit of analysis must be identified as either a bounded system (i.e., specific program) or relate experiences of individuals. In my study, as in other research on identity, the unit of analysis is the individual teacher leader and I relate their experiences as narratives in the subsequent chapter.

Generally, case studies are in-depth examinations of a case (or cases) through observations, interviews, and document collection and analysis (Glesne, 2011) and provide “intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an

individual, group, institution, or community” (Merriam, 2002, p. 8). Merriam (1988) identifies four characteristics of case studies: (a) they have a focus on a particular phenomenon; (b) they have a description of the phenomenon as an end product; (c) they are heuristic; and (d) they rely on inductive reasoning. This study followed these characteristics of case studies in that: (a) I focused on teacher leader identity; (b) I report the findings in part as stories; (c) I sought to discover how teacher leader identities were narrated; and (d) I used inductive reasoning in part during data analysis particularly concerning the data establishing the context for this study.

Case studies can be combined with other types of qualitative research, such as narrative inquiry (Merriam, 2002). Several conceptions of narrative inquiry have developed within fields such as psychology, social work, health, and education. Narrative inquiry is considered to be not only a theory but a methodology, and narratives have been defined simply as story (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; McCormack, 2004; Polkinghorne, 1988, 1995). Further, McCormack (2004) argues that narrative inquiry offers researchers with another approach for presenting interview transcripts because such a mode:

- “Retains the situated nature of the participant’s experiences;
- Highlights the individuality and complexity of a life;
- Reveals the in-process nature of a life;
- Includes the multiple voices of the researcher and participant; and
- Offers the reader the possibility of multiple interpretations and the potential to positively re-story their life.” (McCormack, 2004, p. 221-222)

For this study, a narrative inquiry approach allowed me to explore and present the following: the complexity of teacher leader identity, the voices of teacher leaders that are often absent from the literature, and how teacher leaders are situated within a team and with others.

As a methodology, “narrative inquiry can refer to the process of making a story, to the cognitive scheme of the story, or to the result of the process – also called ‘stories,’ ‘tales,’ or ‘histories.’” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.13). Polkinghorne (1995) defined a story as events and actions that are drawn together by a plot; “that combine a succession of incidents into a unified episode” (p. 7). The plot is key to any story and reflects the purpose of a study utilizing narrative.

The methodology, Hollingsworth and Dybdahl (2007) argue, is influenced by the theoretical perspective. They identified three possible perspectives: post-positivist, constructivist, and critical. This study followed the constructivist perspective as it aligns most closely with the interpretive paradigm in which this study was designed.

In the constructivist perspective, the narratives are co-constructed and the researcher’s identity is considered in the research design. Further, the participants are selected based on how well they represent the theoretical frame, and data are collected through semi-structured interviews, conversations, and observations. In my study, I explored teacher leader identity and, thus, recruited teacher leaders as primary participants.

However, once data have been collected, the literature offers little guidance to novice researchers on how to proceed (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007; Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007; McCormack, 2004). When analyzing and reporting the data, several

considerations must be made including the intent of the study, the theoretical perspective, and the context of the study. McCormack (2004) further argues that narrative inquiry be considered as reconstruction on three levels: when the participant recounts a story, as the researcher writes the story, and as a reader reads and reacts to the story. As such, narrative researchers must attend to not only the telling of the story but also in how the story may be interpreted. Glover (2004) suggests that “the more information provided, the more information available for the reader to interpret the narrative and come to his or her own judgment about narrative fidelity” (p. 67).

Many of these researchers do offer thoughts about what narrative inquiry is as a process. For example, Connelly and Clandinin (1999) describe the narrative process as a “collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places and in social interaction with milieus” (p. 20). Their approach to narrative is one of the most cited in educational narrative research. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) conceptualize narrative along three dimensions: *temporal*, *spatial*, and *personal and social*.

In the temporal dimension, the stories told about the past, present, and future are all considered and interrelate. As Polkinghorne (1995) stated, “people are historical beings retaining as part of themselves their previous experiences” (p. 17). Their past experiences are often used to frame present, and potentially, future actions.

In the spatial dimension of inquiry, consideration is given to the space in which the research is conducted. This space refers to not only the immediate, physical space but also the conditions in which the study is conducted (e.g., the specific situation being

study, the context in which the study is conducted). Polkinghorne (1995) argues that descriptions of participants' physicality and personality should also be included.

The final dimension incorporates the personal and the social and includes the interactions and relationships that participants have with others and with the situation or context. Further, the interactions and relationships that the participants have with the researcher cannot be overlooked. As Connelly and Clandinin (1999) stated, "When one engages in narrative inquiry the process becomes even more complex, for, as researchers, we become part of the process" (p. 5). These interactions become part of the narrative and should be included in the findings that are reported.

The literature, though, still lacks specific steps to guide novice researchers in writing narratives. As Amia Lieblich stated in the interview reported by Clandinin and Murphy (2007), "There is no cookbook for doing this. There are not very clear and simple instructions" (p. 645). Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) model of three dimensional inquiry space does provide some guidance for researchers, but Polkinghorne (1995) provides further details in his six guidelines:

1. Attend to the *context* in which the study occurs, specifically identifying stories that offer meaning to the events that ultimately contribute to an understandable plot.
2. Provide a detailed *description of participants*, including physical characteristics and personality.
3. Attend to the "*significant others*" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 17) and how they impact the actions and goals of the storyteller.

4. Focus on the *goals and activities* of participants in order to fully understand each person's plans, motivations, and interests.
5. Attend to the *history* of each storyteller; how they viewed their trajectory to this point as well as their understanding of the history of the team and district.
6. The outcome is a story that has a "bounded temporal period; that is, it needs a beginning, middle, and end" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 17). By doing so, each storyteller is positioned as a unique individual.

These guidelines provide narrative researchers with more specific information to which they must attend. Still, the literature lacks step-by-step instructions for the writing of narratives. Amia Lieblich in the interview reported by Clandinin and Murphy (2007) recommend that narrative researchers read a variety of texts to explore the different ways narratives can be presented and identify the approach that best suits the researcher. In addition, when writing narratives, the same considerations must be made as when the data are being collected: the theoretical frame, the intent and context of the study, and the multiple levels of reconstruction (Glover, 2004; Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007; McCormack, 2004).

Although narrative inquiry has been used to increase understanding of a phenomenon, there are limitations. First, Polkinghorne (2007) recognizes there are limits of language to capture the complexity and depth of experienced meaning. Participants may have difficulty expressing their experiences or feelings, or not feel comfortable doing so.

Closely related to the first limitation, the second limitation is in the data collection procedures, specifically with the researcher as the primary instrument (Merriam, 1988). The relationship between researcher and participant shapes “what is told, as well as the meaning of what is told” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 94-95). Further, as Spector-Mersel (2010) states:

stories are created for the researcher; they are told to him or her and are influenced by the way the teller has understood the purpose of the study, by his or her aims in telling the story to the researcher and by their interpersonal interaction. (p. 213)

Not only can the researcher influence what is asked and said but also in how data are interpreted; there is danger of bias and mis-interpretation of words or actions on the part of the researcher.

Despite the limitations, narrative inquiry allows participants to share their stories. Narratives are used not to gather evidence that an event has occurred but rather to understand the meaning experienced by individuals (Polkinghorne, 2007). The narratives serve as evidence for personal meaning not factual occurrence of events. Steps will be taken to minimize the impact of these limitations. For example, I will conduct multiple interviews and ask participants to review transcripts prior to analysis. In the sections that follow, I further discuss the sampling strategy as well as my data collection and analysis procedures.

Sampling Strategy

Consistent with other interpretive studies, I used purposeful sampling. According to Patton (2002), interpretivist researchers use purposeful sampling because “the logic

and power of purposeful sampling...leads to selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (p. 46, italics in original). Since the focus of my study was on teacher leadership and teacher leader identity within the context of leadership teams, I contacted a district in the Southwest, U. S. which I knew from previous experience utilized leadership teams. Pseudonyms have been used for the district, school, and participants.

Since 2003, I have worked as a professional developer on three federal grants related to school safety and climate issues (2003-2005, 2005-2009, and 2010-present). The goals of each grant included increasing student connectedness to school, building student resiliency, and creating more positive school climates. Over the years, I have worked with over 90 school teams, providing professional development and coaching to the school teams established to address the goals of the grant. The professional development and coaching emphasized team functioning (i.e., running effective meetings, collecting and analyzing data, action planning) and implementation of programs and strategies for meeting grant goals. In addition, during the first two grants, each participating school completed a school climate survey. Our training team was responsible for entering the data and generating reports for each school. Part of my duties as training coordinator included coordinating the administration, collection, entry, and report generation of the survey data for each school.

Selection of case study site. One district, Shadow Lake School District (SLSD), was involved in the second grant for which I worked (2005-2009). SLSD began in 1903 and has grown exponentially, especially in the last 10 years (McCain, personal

communication, August, 2012). Even during the recession, SLSD continued to grow, building and opening a new school each year for four consecutive years. At the time of this study, student demographic data revealed the following ethnic composition: White (70.3%), Hispanic/Latino (21.4%), Black/African American (4.7%), Asian/Pacific Islander (3.1%), and American Indian (0.5%). Additionally, about 30% of students received free/reduced lunch.

The current superintendent has served in this position for more than 20 years. SLSD is well known throughout the state for its innovation, especially in relation to their use of technology. For example, they started a calendaring program within the district where teachers could share effective teaching lessons. Over time, other districts have become involved in this program not only utilizing posted lessons but also contributing lessons of their own.

Cactus Creek High School (CCHS) is one of 18 schools in SLSD (8 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 3 high schools, 1 alternative school, and 1 K-12 school). At the time of this study, CCHS was the largest high school in the district with over 2,000 students enrolled and over 150 faculty and staff members. Student demographic data revealed the following ethnic composition: White (68.1%), Hispanic/Latino (22.9%), Black/African American (5%), Asian/Pacific Islander (3.3%), and American Indian (0.7%).

Since the grant ended in May 2009, I have not had regular contact with SLSD or CCHS nor have I had any formal authority over school personnel. My contact with SLSD and CCHS since May 2009 has been limited to the continued coordination of survey data collection and report generation as requested by the district. Additionally, I have arranged

with CCHS no more than six times for other schools to visit their campus to learn about PBIS implementation at their site.

Approximately 12 years prior to this study, CCHS established a leadership team to develop a plan for implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This leadership team (henceforth referred to as the Team) has been and is still comprised of administrators (principals, assistant principals), certified staff (teachers, counselors), classified staff (security, office personnel), parents, and students. Further, the Team has been responsible for leading PBIS implementation, examining data related to PBIS, presenting to staff and other schools, and making changes to their PBIS implementation (e.g., processes, documentation). Over the years, leadership of the Team has evolved from administrator-driven to teacher-driven.

Based on my work with the SLSD and CCHS since 2005, and the relationships that I have developed, I determined that CCHS would be a unique site for my study for four reasons:

1. My previous work with CCHS related to the grant emphasized team functioning and program implementation. This study allowed me to explore and understand deeper elements of team effectiveness, namely leadership identity.
2. CCHS's PBIS Team was established approximately 12 years before this study (longer than other teams in the district) and continues to meet regularly.
3. The Team has been led by teacher leaders for at least four years.
4. In 2012, CCHS was awarded a Golden Bell Award by the state's School Board Association for their implementation of PBIS.

My previous relationships within the district and school, and the trust I had developed, facilitated my access to the Team. Additionally, because of my previous relationship with them, I was better able to elicit richer stories than someone who is unknown to the school and district.

Prior to conducting my study, I contacted the SLSD superintendent's office by email about the purpose and to request permission to conduct the study at CCHS. Once approval was obtained from the district, I contacted the principal, Dr. Nancy Tobin to provide her with background information about my study, including participation requirements (meeting observations, interviews), and to obtain permission to use CCHS's PBIS Team for my case study.

Participant selection. After receiving Dr. Tobin's approval, and approval from Human Subjects, I arranged with Dr. Tobin to attend a Team meeting to present the background of my study and recruit primary participants (teacher leaders) and secondary participants (other Team members). During the meeting, I specifically presented the purpose of my study, the requirements for participation (two interviews lasting no more than one-hour each, three meeting observations), the consent form, and the study timeline. After my presentation, I provided consent forms and requested that interested individuals contact me directly within two weeks to schedule the first interview. At that meeting, I recruited two primary participants and four secondary participants (principal, two counselors, and one administrative assistant).

Using snowball sampling, I contacted Dr. Tobin to identify other potential primary participants. She provided me with the names of four teacher leaders whom I contacted by email about the purpose of the study, requirements for participation, and a

request for their participation. Two of the four teacher leaders responded and agreed to participate in my study. Table 1 provides additional details about each of my primary participants.

Table 3.1.

Primary participant characteristics

Participant (Pseudonym)	Gender	Number of years teaching	Subject taught	Number of years at the school	Number of years as Team member
Evan Jones	Male	8	Science	8	6
Terry Endor	Male	16	Language arts	12 years	2
Kevin Richards	Male	28	Math, science, computers	12 years	12 years
Michael Gregory	Male	< 1 year	ROTC	< 1 year	< 1 year

All four of the primary participants in this study were Caucasian males. Their years of public school teaching experience ranged from less than one year to 28 years. Further, their years as a Team member ranged from less than one year to 12 years.

Additionally, I interviewed four Team members as secondary participants. Table 2 summarizes their demographic information. All four of the secondary participants were female. One was the principal, two were counselors, and one was an administrative assistant who had been on the Team since it was established.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The process of “making a story” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 13) begins with collecting data. Many of the studies on identity (i.e., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009;

Table 3.2.

Secondary participant characteristics

Participant (Pseudonym)	Gender	Number of years at the school	Current position	Number of years as Team member
Dr. Nancy Tobin	Female	12	Principal	12
Cathy	Female	9	Counselor	9
Mary	Female	12	Administrative Assistant	12
Linda	Female	12	Counselor	< 1 year

Beijaard et al., 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Ryan, 2007; Watson, 2006) teacher leadership (i.e., Muijs & Harris, 2007; Smylie & Denny, 1990), and school teams (i.e., Chrispeels & Martin, 2002; Kruse & Louis, 1997; Scribner et al., 2007) have utilized qualitative methods such as interviews and observations. Further, from this perspective, Chase (2005) offers that “a narrative may be oral or written and may be elicited or heard during fieldwork, an interview, or naturally occurring conversation” (p. 652). Consistent with these studies, I collected data in the form of semi-structured interviews and observations of Team and staff meetings. In the sections that follow, I further describe the interview and observation protocols.

Primary participant interviews. According to Polkinghorne (1995), interviews are the most often used source of narratives. Specifically, the interviewer solicits stories “by simply asking the interviewee to tell how something happened” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 13). Each of the primary participants (teacher leaders) were interviewed twice during the course of the study at a location of their choosing, all of which were on campus either in participants’ offices, in a conference room, in an empty classroom, or in the

library. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted between 35 and 65 minutes. According to Glesne (2011), the strength of semi-structured interviewing is its intent: “to capture the unseen that was, is, will be, or should be; how respondents think or feel about something; and how they explain or account for something” (p.134).

The initial interviews consisted of 15 questions derived from the literature on teacher leadership, school teams and teacher leader identity, and from my observation of the first Team meeting (Appendix A). Additionally, I gathered background information from each participant about the nature of the Team, their experience in education, and their experiences as leaders. To align with a narrative approach, my questions invited participants to tell stories.

Subsequent interviews consisted of questions that were not asked during the first interview and new questions related to the observations I made during meetings. The follow-up interviews allowed for clarification and elaboration of main points made during the initial interviews, and allowed for elaboration and explanation of observations made during Team meetings. Each interview was audiotaped and completely transcribed to ensure accuracy during data analysis. Each participant was sent a copy of the transcript from the interview for review prior to data analysis.

Secondary participant interviews. Sfard and Prusak (2005) stated that identities are more than stories individuals tell about themselves but also stories that others tell about the individuals; that “identities are products of collective storytelling” (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 21). Further, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argued that “people are individuals and need to be understood as such, but

they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in a social context” (p. 2). Thus, for this study, in addition to interviewing teacher leaders, I also interviewed four secondary participants: the principal, two counselors, and an administrative assistant, all of which were members of the PBIS Team. Interviews with these individuals provided additional insights into the complexity of teacher leader identity. Each of these participants was interviewed twice. All but one interview were conducted on campus in participants’ offices. The one off-campus interview was with Linda on a school holiday at a local coffee shop. Each interview lasted between 45 and 65 minutes. The initial interviews consisted of 11 questions (see Appendix A) and followed the same protocol as the interviews for the primary participants.

Participant observations. In addition to the participant interviews, I observed four PBIS Team meetings and one staff meeting. The first Team meeting I observed was the same meeting at which I recruited participants, and occurred prior to conducting the interviews. The intent of this observation was to better understand the context of the research setting (team meeting), the participants, and their behavior (Glesne, 2011). This first observation informed the interviews that followed. The second Team meeting observation occurred one month after the first; the third observation occurred three months after the second; and the fourth observation followed one month later. During the second through fourth observations, I attended to the details which supported or challenged the data collected during the interviews (Glesne, 2011).

Additionally, I was invited by the Team to attend a staff meeting where they presented what they had been working on during the year and to get input on initiatives they planned to begin in the following school year. This meeting occurred two weeks before the fourth Team meeting I attended. By observing this meeting, I was able to see another dimension of the Team and some of the participants who presented during the meeting.

During each meeting, I took detailed notes seeking to understand the Team dynamics, leadership roles and leadership identity. Specifically, I attended to and documented the following in my research journal:

- *Setting* – how the settings and people look
- *Acts* – behaviors; what people do
- *Events* – series of acts involving more than one person during the meeting
- *Processes* – rules, regulations and rituals that describe how the group works
- *Talk* – what people say to each other (Glesne, 2011; Holliday, 2002).

Research journal. Following each interview and Team meeting observation, I audio-recorded my thoughts and reactions, and later wrote them into my research journal, adding notes as necessary when I recalled thoughts and reactions that I had not audio-recorded. Additionally, throughout the research process, I noted my personal feelings and perceptions that arose and influenced my interactions with participants, data collection, and data analysis. Writing in my

research journal provided me with the opportunity to reflect on the research process and how I situated myself within it (Glesne, 2011).

Researcher Identity

Since this study was framed within an interpretive paradigm, as the researcher, I was the primary instrument for data collection. In doing so, I must reveal additional information about my background which influenced site selection, data collection, and data analysis. I have been involved in education for 20 years as a junior high math/science teacher in two states, an education curator at a zoo, and as a professional developer. Most recently, I have worked for 10 years at a local university in the Southwestern U.S. as a professional developer related to three federal grants aimed at improving school climate.

During the 10 years that I have worked on the federal grants, one of my primary responsibilities was to assist schools in establishing, developing, and maintaining school-level leadership teams focused on improving school climate and safety. I acknowledge that as I approached this study, I had a bias about how such leadership teams should function. Based on my experience as a coach at over 90 schools, I identified CCHS as the best site for my study for reasons previously mentioned, and also on my observations over the years of how CCHS's PBIS Team has functioned and continued to grow. I noted many times to colleagues about how impressed I was about their functioning and wondered what made them so different from other teams I had worked with. Specifically, their Team has existed much longer than most teams I have coached, even other teams in the

same district, and have continued to set and meet goals to expand and improve their PBIS implementation.

While access to SLSD and CCHS for this study was been facilitated by my prior relationships, I acknowledge that I also have a bias stemming from my relationships with some of the participants about the school and district. Since I was the primary instrument of data collection, this impacted data collection and analysis. Specifically, although I had previous relationships with some of the participants, they still may not have revealed as much since they knew I was also talking with others at the school. Additionally, what I knew about the school and district impacted how I selected pieces of narrative to include in my findings.

To minimize the impact of these biases, I took several different steps. Specifically, I conducted multiple interviews, asked participants to review transcripts prior to data analysis, and triangulated data with other sources (Team member interviews, Team meeting observations). To further reduce the impact of these biases, I reflected regularly in my research journal specifically noting personal feelings and perceptions that may have arisen and influenced my interactions with participants, and during data collection and analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began after each interview and meeting observation as I recorded my experiences, thoughts, and feelings in my research journal. Once the data were collected and reviewed by participants, I began to consider how to analyze and write the narratives. As mentioned previously, narrative inquiry is conceptualized in many ways. To review, my study is based on a constructivist perspective as described by

Hollingsworth and Dybdahl (2007) in that the participants reflected my theoretical framework, I collected data from semi-structured interviews and observations, and my data analysis is structured and open-ended. However, “capturing and making sense of conversation is a slippery thing” (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007, p. 161). Researchers agree that there is no one right way to analyze and present narratives (e.g., Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; McCormack, 2004). As Connelly and Clandinin (1999) explain, “Part of the difficulty in writing narrative is finding ways to understand and portray the complexity of the ongoing stories being told and retold in the inquiry” (p. 9).

Further, Connelly and Clandinin (1999) suggest three approaches that narrative inquiry can take: *broadening* (making generalizations); *burrowing* (deeply exploring one event); and *restorying* (creating a new story, adding meaning and exploring the significance in the larger life story). For this study, I chose to approach writing the narratives as restorying; I explored the teacher leader identities and positioned each within their own narrative and the narratives of others. In doing so, I visualized my analysis in two parts: I explored the context in which the Team existed and I explored the individual narratives. To further guide my analysis, I utilized two types of narrative inquiry as distinguished by Polkinghorne (1995): analysis of narrative (identification and description of categories) and narrative analysis (teacher leader identity stories).

Analysis of narrative: Categories for understanding study context. For analysis of narrative, I utilized the transcribed interviews and field notes to identify categories, as with more traditional qualitative analyses (Polkinghorne, 1995). Categories were discovered and described within the data, but relationships

among categories were also noted (Polkinghorne, 1995). For this part of my analysis, I specifically focused on categories that helped provide understanding of the context for my study.

In this part of my analysis, I utilized the constant comparative method as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967): (1) initial coding; (2) category integration; (3) reduction of the number of categories; and (4) theory comparison. In the first phase, I used open coding for the interview transcripts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), reading each interview line by line and coding for distinct incidents, ideas, or events. There were two types of categories that I attended to: those that I constructed (which were explanations) and those that were taken from the language found in the literature, such as leadership configuration, team autonomy, and leadership identity (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In the second phase, I re-read transcripts and my field notes to identify the properties of each of the categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I also determined relationships among categories. In the third phase, I reduced the number of categories to emphasize those that addressed my particular research questions, specifically the context in which the Team existed. Last, I compared the categories to those that were found in the literature (e.g., district teaming philosophy and practices, the school team dynamics and leadership, and the principal's involvement). The analysis of narrative is presented in Chapter 4 under four main categories: *district leadership* (hiring practices, leadership development, teaming philosophy); *school-level teams* (types, leadership); *Cactus Creek High School PBIS Team* (history, purpose, membership, functioning, principal leadership, team leadership); and *teacher leadership defined* (personal attributes, actions).

Narrative analysis: Teacher leader identity stories. In the second part of my analysis, narrative analysis, I wrote stories that illuminate perspectives on teacher leadership (Polkinghorne, 1995; Newsom, 2010). Hollingsworth and Dybdahl (2007) offer that because of the contextual nature of narrative, they cannot be confined to one model, making “for interesting studies, interesting reading” (p. 157). Other researchers also argue that storytelling is not a new concept, as many cultures and many people engage in telling stories (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). However, what is new is the way we collect these stories, share them, and interpret their meanings.

This part of my analysis focused on teacher leaders’ identity, as well as factors impacting those identities. Using the data collected through the interviews and observations, I wrote the stories that the teacher leaders told. However, I did not rely solely on the individual’s interview in telling the story, but rather, as Sfard and Prusak (2005) conceptualized, I integrated the narratives of other participants and my observations of meetings. Each source of data contributed events to the story plot that I constructed.

My data analysis consisted of six steps:

1. According to Polkinghorne (1995), the narrative writing process begins by specifying the outcome and locating the view point from which to select the data events for the narrative. For my study, my outcome was to write the teacher leader identity narratives based on my interview and observation data.
2. I read each transcript carefully, and identified key elements that I believed to have meaning and would be useful in crafting my narratives, a process

Connelly and Clandinin (2000) refer to as “narratively cod[ing]” (p. 131). This process involved identifying elements such as places where actions or events occurred, and overlap of events among the different narratives (by the same person or by others). From all of the interview transcripts and field notes, I looked for “patterns, narrative threads, tensions, and themes either within or across an individual’s experience and in the social setting” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000, p. 132). I focused on sections of the transcripts which contributed to the teacher leader narratives. For example, stories of direct actions of teacher leaders, their interactions with others, and the meanings attributed to their actions and interactions. I first coded the interviews for the primary participants and identified sections relating to their own leadership identity and also to the leadership identities of the other teacher leaders. For the interview transcripts for the secondary participants, I identified sections that contributed to the narrative identities of each teacher leader. Similar to the secondary participants’ interview transcripts, for my field notes, I identified sections where my observations described specific actions and interactions of each teacher leader that contributed to each teacher leaders’ identity.

3. After narratively coding the interviews, I organized the data by cutting and pasting identified sections into four separate documents, one for each of the teacher leaders. This allowed me to identify patterns across all of the interviews that would contribute to writing a more accurate narrative around this theme. I kept the primary participants’ coded transcript in chronological

order and added sections from the secondary participants' interviews that contributed to certain parts of the narrative. I deleted sections of the primary participants' transcripts that did not directly contribute to their narrative. For example, I cut sections where they talked about the leadership of other teacher leaders and moved them to the identity documents for the appropriate teacher leader.

4. I coded the re-organized data to identify key elements needed for writing the narratives (the result of the narrative process) following Polkinghorne's (1995) guidelines for generating narratives described previously in this section.
5. Once the organization and coding of the interviews was complete, I added information from my field notes (observations of meetings and personal reflections) to the documents for each of the teacher leaders.
6. After all of the data were organized for each of the teacher leader identity narratives, I wrote the narratives attending to Polkinghorne's (1995) guidelines. Using Connelly and Clandinin (1999) as a model, the final narratives were written chronologically based on my interviews with the teacher leaders. I interjected other data from secondary participants' interviews and observations throughout the final narrative to enhance, explain, or provide a counter example of the stories that emerged from the primary participants' interviews. According to Polkinghorne (1995), the final product, the four teacher leader identity narratives, should follow the final guideline:

the adequacy of the final narrative should be determined. This was accomplished through member checking.

Trustworthiness

According to Connelly and Clandinin (1999), “narrative relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability” (p. 7). To address the concern about trustworthiness, I will first define two key terms: trustworthiness and crystallization. Trustworthiness has been defined as a way, or ways, to ensure that the research is plausible or credible (Glesne, 2011). Crystallization, or triangulation, refers to the “use of multiple data-collection methods, multiple sources, multiple investigators, and/or multiple theoretical perspectives” (Glesne, 2011, p. 49). To contribute to the trustworthiness of my study, I took several approaches including crystallization (e.g., interviewing multiple individuals, utilizing interviews and observations), member checking (participants reviewed transcripts prior to analysis), and I regularly reflected in my research journal.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, this study focused on teacher leader identity at one school, and more specifically on one team at that school. Second, due to the limited number of participants, the findings from this study will not be generalizable. The purpose of this study was not to generalize to other schools or teams but rather to understand a phenomenon: teacher leader identity. Although the findings are not generalizable, they contribute to the literature on teacher leadership and leadership development, advancing the “field’s knowledge base” (Merriam, 1988, p. 33). The findings provide insight into the nature of teacher leadership.

The third limitation is in the method of data collection. Since I was the primary instrument of data collection, human factors influenced data collection and analysis, such as my relationship with participants and my background. Steps were taken to minimize the impact of this limitation. Specifically, I conducted multiple interviews, asked participants to review transcripts and stories prior to data analysis, and triangulated data with other sources (principal and staff interviews, Team meeting observations).

Additionally, as for the use of narratives, Polkinghorne (2007) recognizes there are limits of language to capture the complexity and depth of experienced meaning. Participants may have had difficulty expressing their experiences or feelings, or not felt comfortable doing so. Not only can the researcher influence what is asked and said but also in how data are interpreted; there is danger of bias and mis-interpretation of words or actions on the part of the researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Merriam, 1988).

Despite the limitations, narrative allows participants to share their stories. Narratives are used not to gather evidence that an event has occurred but rather to understand the meaning experienced by individuals (Polkinghorne, 2007). The narratives serve as evidence for personal meaning not factual occurrence of events. As described above, steps were taken to minimize the impact of these limitations.

This study will contribute to the literature in at least four ways. First, the literature on teacher leaders has primarily focused on their roles within the classroom and related to student achievement. However, teacher leaders have roles outside this emphasis, including being leaders on whole-school issues such as climate and safety.

This study explored teacher leadership within this context and thus contributes to the larger landscape of teacher leadership.

Second, while there have been many studies on teacher identity and leader identity, teacher leader identity was only found to have been mentioned in the literature (not defined or specifically studied). The literature on leader identity emphasizes administrators not teachers, and some of the literature on teacher identity only mentions leader identity as a component of teacher identity; it is not explored separately. This study focused on teacher leader identity specifically.

Third, the literature on teacher leader identity is weak especially within the context of leadership teams. As teachers are increasingly asked to participate on such teams and expected to be leaders, it behooves us to understand how they feel about being leaders, how they see themselves as leaders, and how prepared they feel to be leaders. This information can better help schools and districts prepare teachers to be effective leaders and team members, and create conditions that support them.

Last, in the studies on identity, narrative methods have been used. However, the narratives have only been collected from the participants themselves. In this study, using Sfard and Prusak's (2005) framework, I incorporated the narratives of others as well as observation data to relate participants' identities as narratives. In doing so, I hope to share a more composite view of teacher leader identity through the words of the teacher leaders and other Team members.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to better understand teacher leader identity within the context of leadership teams by examining the narratives of teacher leaders and other

Team members. As such, this study was situated in an interpretive paradigm and featured a case study and narrative design (Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2002). Participants included teacher leaders (primary participants), and administrators and other Team members (secondary participants). Data were collected in the form of semi-structured interviews emphasizing narratives, and observations of Team and staff meetings.

The data were analyzed in two parts: analysis of narrative and narrative analysis. The analysis of narrative followed Glaser and Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method through which themes were identified in relation to teacher leader identity development as well as factors influencing identity development. For the narrative analysis, the findings are reported as stories told by teacher leaders, with contributions by secondary participants and field notes.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

I conducted my study of teacher leader identity at a high school in a district in the Southwestern United States. Data were collected through interviews and team and staff meeting observations. Each interview was completely transcribed and coded for themes aligning with the relevant literature on leadership, school teams, and teacher leaders, and related to the development of the teacher leader identity narratives. The analysis of the data was “concerned with both the story itself and the telling of the story” (Glesne, 2011, p. 185).

In this chapter, I present the findings in two parts: an analysis of narrative and narrative analysis. First, in the analysis of narrative, as with more traditional qualitative analysis, I will present data related to the themes that describe the context of this study. In the narrative analysis, I will present stories of the four teacher leaders, Kevin Richards, Terry Endor, Evan Jones, and Michael Gregory, as told through the data collected through participant interviews and my observations of team and staff meetings.

Analysis of Narrative: Categories for Understanding Study Context

For the analysis of narrative, I coded the data as in more traditional qualitative analysis in order to clearly relate the context of the study. Specifically, I present data related to the Shadow Lake School District, school teams within the district in general, the Cactus Creek PBIS Team, and teacher leadership.

District leadership. Shadow Lake School District’s culture impacts leadership at many levels throughout the district. Two aspects of this culture have a particular impact on teacher leadership: hiring practices and teaming philosophy. As these aspects are

important for understanding the context in which the teacher leaders in this study work, I will next present data relevant to each.

Traditionally in the district, administrators are hired from within. Meaning, generally, teachers are identified to be future principals or district leaders, and they are encouraged to participate on a leadership trajectory that includes positions such as cognitive coaches, instructional team leaders, assistant principals, and other leadership positions at the district level (such as district-level teams). As an illustration of this, according to one teacher leader, Kevin Richards,

The last time they hired a new assistant principal which was this last year because one of ours became a principal elsewhere, everyone who interviewed was someone who worked here. And the intent was very much, “We are not looking outside. We want people that already have relationships and know people, and work.” And that is a huge part, I think, of this collaborative environment.....

When they open a new school, I know the next school they are opening up here, I already know who the principal is going to be and he is a principal at an elementary school who is transferring. I’ll bet when they hire in his replacement, it will be a teacher who’s moving into their first time principal role. I mean it is very much a different model.

Several other participants referred to this model as “growing leadership,” meaning that district level leaders are very deliberate about preparing leaders in their schools.

Specifically, one participant stated:

This district is all about ...we are growing leadership. Not that everyone takes advantage of that, but there is that tremendous idea in the minds of everyone that

understands that if I want to I can put myself on a path to move into leadership and move into those kinds of positions.

Generally, though, people are not just put into top leadership positions, such as administration; the leadership trajectory includes opportunities for them to develop their leadership skills through education and involvement at a lower leadership level such as leading a team. In the case of education, the district has arranged to offer a master's in leadership from one of the state universities. The program, taught on-site at the district office, is open to anyone interested in leadership. This opportunity is convenient as many of the faculty in the district live within the district's boundaries (and a distance from the main city). Through participation in, and completion of, the program, faculty not only gain leadership skills and knowledge but also have the opportunity to advance up the salary scale.

While the opportunity is open to all teachers, some are identified and explicitly invited to develop their knowledge and skills. For example, Dr. Nancy Tobin, principal, noted that "there are teachers who are definite leaders; our student achievement teachers are a group of teachers (every school has an achievement teacher who works with our teachers at the site level to look at data)...they are typically invited." Additionally, Dr. Tobin stated that principals also have the autonomy to invite other teachers they identify as future leaders.

Another way that teachers can access leadership opportunities at the district-level is to participate on district-level teams, from curriculum development teams to school planning teams (for new schools). In fact, most major decisions in the district are made by a team rather than an individual. As one participant stated:

This district has teams for everything. So, I would say it is a team-driven district.... I think the district looks at it as the more people we have involved in the decision, the more buy-in we have, and so then the more successful whatever program or teaming at the time is, it can be, because of the buy-in.

Although many of the teams are comprised of school classified and certified personnel, parents and students are often involved on the teams as well. Part of the teaming philosophy stems from the strong belief throughout the district that education is a “community effort.” As a result, the district has teams for everything including curriculum planning and development, technology, Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), and new school planning. As Kevin said, “I do not think of any major initiative or anything huge they have done without having some sort of at least getting together people that are various stakeholders and putting them in a room and having them talk about it.”

The leaders of these teams generally tend to be teachers, with some guidance from the district. According to Dr. Tobin, “No decisions and directions are top down; they're all made starting with teachers and coming up.” Evan Jones described:

Every committee I have been involved with has been ...one of the superintendents starting these and saying, “This is our need and this is our expectation for this group and this is kind of the timeline we’re looking at.” And then whoever is chairing or leading that group can take over.

There are two paths to participation on district-level teams: volunteer or by invitation. For some teams, Dr. Tobin explained that:

The assistant superintendent does a call out and informs principals, and people volunteer. The nice thing about volunteering is you get some teachers who may never have been looked at to be a member of a team, and they just shine because all of a sudden they see their values and their worth instead of being that... person who gets identified and tapped to do everything.

On one specific team, however, participation was more involved and targeted; each school was required to be represented on the district PBIS team, referred to as the Cadre. The purpose of this team was to provide support, training, and data to schools with regards to PBIS implementation. As one team member explained, “We volunteered and wrote a letter to our principal as to why we thought we would be a benefit to the district-level Cadre.” The principal at each school then decided who would best represent the school from the applications and letters received.

On other district-level teams, individuals may be asked to participate based on past experience, area of expertise, or previous involvement on district teams. For example, as one participant explained, “The other committee, team, I have been on was to build the new high school. And that I was picked for because of my involvement with CTE. That’s just the way the team was put together.”

School-level teams. The teams at the school-level, for the most part, mirror the philosophy and structure of the district-level teams. Based on the data collected, Cactus Creek has fewer kinds of teams than the district has at that level. Cactus Creek has teams for departments, grade-levels, and PBIS. In fact, when participants were asked about the teams on campus, they had a difficult time doing so; they could most easily name teams or clubs related to student activities (i.e., Key Club, Chess Club, Green Team).

The department team has a very deliberate and designed structure and function, with Department Heads, referred to as Instructional Team Leaders (ITLs), meeting with the principal regularly. Many times, though, the ITLs solicit feedback from the teachers in the department about certain topics that they can share at their meetings. As Evan explained:

So you have your Team Lead and an administrator that can just deal with communication of policies or problems or what not with that group and let them disseminate the information. So, our Department Leads, our Instructional Team Leaders is what we call them, they meet before our staff meetings on Friday and our admin team has a chance to talk to them and tell them what's coming up and they can collect the feedback.... My science department leader can take the 12 of us and say, "Here's what they want our opinion on," gather the information and take it to Dr. Tobin and with the other department leaders they can then make decisions. So, that's been my experience that the teams make less stress for the leaders and you get to spread the leadership out some so more people have the opportunity to lead.

With this structure, all teachers have an opportunity to influence decisions that are made and impact their practice. Additionally, the teachers serving as ITLs have an opportunity to develop such leadership skills as engaging teachers in decision-making and listening. This is one example of how the structure of leadership at the school develops leaders from within. Dr. Tobin is also able to collect feedback from more teachers in this way, an often difficult task at a large high school.

Cactus Creek High School PBIS team. The team at CCHS that was the focus of this study is concerned with issues pertaining to the implementation of PBIS. This team has existed for more than 10 years and during that time has shifted from administration-led to teacher-led. As with many well-functioning teams (e.g., Firestone & Martinez, 2007; Mitchell & Sackney, 2009; Olsen & Chrispeels, 2009), the CCHS PBIS Team (here on out referred to as the Team) has officers, uses an agenda consistently, and distributes meeting notes to all Team members and makes them available to all staff on a shared network. In order to further develop the context within which this study occurred, I next provide a more detailed description about the Team including a brief history, the Team's purpose or identity, Team membership and participation, Team functioning, the principal's leadership, and the Team leadership.

History. The Team formed as CCHS was being built, some participants said. However, the exact date that the Team formed varied depending on the participant. As Kevin explained:

This is always a matter of debate. We opened this school in 2001, the second half of the year 2001-2002. My personal opinion it was 02-03 when it first started but it might have been in that first year. It was one of those first 2 years. It depends on who you talk to.

According to Principal Tobin, the Team was created the first year of the school – 2001 – with the State Behavioral Initiative [SBI]. She explained in more detail that:

We were a brand new school so we started looking at how are we addressing all the needs and what type of population are we attracting. Kids had an opportunity to go to their home schools or choose our school, and so many students who were

very successful at their current school didn't want to change. So, we were attracting some of the more challenging personalities; kids who were behind in credits, kids who had some significant behavior problems. But we still needed to start a school and start traditions, so we took in those kids and we said, "Alright, what are some ways that we can identify the cliques and what do we need to do to create positive traditions?" so we identified some kids. We watched and we had a teacher go into the dining auditorium and watch lunches. He watched lunches and saw cliques. Then we invited one student from each clique onto the team, and that started SBI. When another grant came in, we changed it to PBS and we still use some of those same students.

The initial Team was led by a behavior specialist and an assistant principal. Over time, however, that leadership has shifted from an administrator to a teacher. Dr. Tobin mentioned that when the new grant was awarded, the focus shifted to PBIS implementation. One participant shared that "when PBIS was introduced to Cactus Creek we realized that it all had the same goals and meanings in mind and so we actually took that committee and ... the people that were on that committee became the PBIS committee."

Team purpose/identity. The initial purpose of the Team, to establish traditions important to students and connect them to their new school, became the anchor for the Team throughout its history. The Team was established with many different people, including administrators, teachers, counselors, and students, similar to the philosophy in the district. Over time, the membership of the Team has changed but the purpose has changed little.

From the beginning, the Team has been concerned with the overall climate of the school, and in particular with students connecting with the school. Some of the team members stated that Dr. Tobin's experience at the elementary level heavily influenced the Team's purpose. Over time, though, this belief in strong connections and a positive school climate has been woven into the fabric of the school through their work implementing PBIS. Kevin explained that,

There is a strong belief I think district-wide and certainly here that school climate is one of the most important factors in the success of students. And if you are going to take academic success past a certain point you have to step out and address school climate. And if kids don't feel comfortable, if they don't feel appreciated, if they don't feel connected, it doesn't matter how great a teacher you have, and how wonderful a program you have in the classroom, if their overall environment isn't there they are not going to go past a certain level of achievement.

This belief is mirrored in the mission statement of the school: *Connections. High Standards. Success*, which is then reflected in the work that the Team does to implement and improve PBIS. Another teacher leader, Terry Endor, explained how the mission statement was related to the work on the Team:

I think that that's what PBIS does is it meets those things and it helps to create connections with students, shows them what we expect...that we have high standards and we are accountable for them and I think it all equals success... it's the culture we are creating and that's what PBIS does.

Even new Team members have a basic understanding of the Team's goals. Michael Gregory, the newest member of the Team and a teacher leader, knew from his first few months that the Team is about "making it a good safe environment for students inside school and outside school."

As mentioned previously, the Team is one of several teams on campus, but it is one of the largest and most active, according to several participants. One of the important aspects of the Team is that they try to integrate other initiatives, programs, or ideas together that address school climate. Kevin said it best: "If it affects school climate, they're willing to talk about it and get interested in it."

In fact, some participants even view the Team as central to much of the activities on campus. For example, one participant explained, "I see us mainly the core of the school and then everybody kind of taking us, throwing out the ideas and people picking them up and running with them." However, several participants emphasized that not just any idea is adopted by the Team. As one Team member explained:

We also serve as a sort of sounding board. You know we are not a program, we are a culture so any programs, anything new we want to bring into the school has to pass the PBIS test before it can become a program or assimilated into our school culture in any way.

Further, Kevin shared that "part of our function as a team is as an enabling group, in that if we have people who have ideas and energy and stuff, we find them resources. We don't manage them as much as we sort of take them under the wing."

While the Team works to integrate initiatives under the umbrella of school climate and student connectedness, they also consider the climate for staff. As Kevin

explained, “To really have students feel like they are connected...the first step – connect staff.” Specifically, one way the Team tries to get staff connected with students, the school, and the positive initiatives going on is to make things easier for them to do. As one participant said:

The people on the Team work harder to make it easier on the people they have to influence. So we, as a team ... are going to work separately on a plan, on a lesson plan, that teachers can use so that they don't have to come up with a lesson plan. They can take one that's already been figured out and use it. Instead of making them have to come up with one more thing. So it was like, how can we work harder so that you don't have to, to get you to buy in to this program?

Team members don't want to become complacent, though; they realize that their work will never be finished. Building and sustaining a positive school climate requires continued efforts. They expect that from themselves, each other, and the Team as a whole. This was exemplified when Kevin said that the goal for the Team was to “keep innovating, keep trying new things, that we keep getting people involved that are interested and excited; giving them a chance.”

Team participation/membership. Over the years, the Team has grown in number from a core group of 10 people to 20 or more, depending on the meeting. This large size, however, does not decrease their effectiveness. As Dr. Tobin explained:

With the size of our school being over 1,800 when we take action plans and we create an action plan, which is one of the things that you observed, people will sign up for their actions, so therefore we can get more accomplished.

Many Team members feel that the large size also allows them to reach more students.

The Team is open to accepting anyone who has ideas or wants to participate, which has contributed to the Team's growth over time. As a result, the Team is very representative of the school's stakeholders; it is comprised of teachers, administrators, counselors, classified staff (office personnel, security), parents, and students. While some of the members were specifically invited to participate on the Team, most volunteered. Kevin explained that:

It has never been about the principal going out picking a person and appointing them to this Team. Since I have been on it, and I was in the initial crew, she went out and asked for anybody who would be interested in working with improving the climate. I am sure she picked out a few people certainly, but I volunteered.

And I would say right now probably the bulk, the far bulk, of our Team are people that at some level or another volunteered because they were interested, they had questions.

Sometimes, people do not plan to join the Team; they just have an idea or a question, attend a meeting, and all of a sudden find themselves a full-fledged member of the Team. As one participant explained:

A couple of different times teachers came and said "I have this really good idea for x." And Dr. Tobin would go "Oh that is part of, you know, trying to...positive behavior... So guess what? You are on the team." They volunteered and didn't even know they were volunteering because they had a concern or something they wanted to do that involved PBIS, at which point they became a part of our team.

Teachers would not be able to do this unless the Team was open to all. This feature, according to Kevin is "almost crucial at some point.... Because that's how you

get people coming in who have new ideas and new energy and see what you're doing and go, 'Wow! I've got an idea for that.'"

The Team, in a sense, advertises their openness by presenting regularly to staff and being visible. One participant said:

It's about almost existing and making yourself known as a group that's involved with this kind of thing and inviting people that have ideas to be a part of it.

Getting that word out. That's really how we have evolved and changed; it's not so much by any deliberate plan on the part of the people on the committee but ideas coming along that administrators like, people on the Team liked, and we followed up on.

While the Team was created with the involvement of students, over time, student membership dwindled and they eventually had no students involved at all. A few years ago, the Team recognized that they needed to have students become active members on the Team again. Therefore, they set out to identify one student from each grade level; students who were "in touch with what's going on around them," according to Evan. Students are equal partners on the Team – they are expected to attend each meeting, take a role in sub-committees, and be involved in actions taken by the Team. Evan further explained that "we all hear stuff about the kids but to actually hear it from a 15-year-old saying, 'I think this is a problem' or 'I think this works well and I appreciate this.' I mean, they're invaluable as members of the team."

Regardless of who they are, adult or student, passion for and commitment to school climate are central to the Team's purpose and drives Team members actions. As Kevin said, "It's a case of these people having the commitment and the passion and the

drive to step up and take on additional leadership responsibilities.” This common purpose brings them all together and helps them work so effectively. Terry said it most passionately:

Well, the mission statement for the school – Connections, High Standards, Success. That’s the whole goal...I mean it is a simple mission and PBIS supports all three aspects of it. So, that’s what I hope to accomplish. And I want this to be ...continue to be a friendly place for the community. It’s a pride thing. I want it to be...it’s awesome when people say, “The Shadow Lake School District’s number one district in the state.” I don’t want to work for any other place; I want to work for the best. And I want to help them continue to be the best.

One Team member, who had been a member of the Team since it began, stated that her reason for continuing her work with the Team was “because I think it makes a difference... I like seeing the difference it’s making and I like being a part of that.”

Similarly, I had an exchange with another Team member who started by stating:

C: I just love being a part of the team.

M: What makes it such a wonderful team to work on?

C: We get stuff done.

M: Ah, you accomplish things.

C: Yes. That is a big difference at this school and this district than a lot of other places I’ve met; it is we meet, we have agenda items, we report on what we’ve done, what we are doing, what our goals are for the next meeting, and we leave, and we get those things done and then we come back.

M: You are very efficient.

C: We are very efficient.

M: What do you attribute that too?

C: We've got a streamlined....I mean our team might be big but it is streamlined, you know. When you look at what makes up a good PBIS team, we've got the one administrator, we've got the one security guard, we've got our one office manager, we've got students, community members – small numbers of all your stakeholders so people tend to know what their role is going to be. It's just kind of logical when there is something specific we are working on, you know?

Although many Team members echoed this and felt positive about the size of their Team, I also discovered in my interviews that many participants could not name other Team members, especially new ones. To me, this seemed to be an essential element to Team functioning, but participants did not seem troubled by this, in fact many laughed when they could not easily recall names of some Team members. This reaction caused me to question to what level they were functioning as a Team as opposed to a group of individuals working on separate projects with the same goal. School teams have been defined as groups whose members have a common purpose, are interdependent, and have complementary skills (Yukl, 1998, cited in Smylie et al., 2002). For CCHS's PBIS Team, consideration must be given to the level that the members are interdependent.

Team functioning. Over the years, the Team has been effective at setting and reaching goals. Several Team characteristics have contributed to their effectiveness including consistency, size, organization, vision, and established processes and procedures. First, they have been consistent. As one participant explained, "We've listened, we've been consistent in having meetings and making sure that we continue to

make the program work.” During this study, the Team consistently met monthly with the exception of one month they planned to skip due to a conflict with a district-wide activity.

Second, their size has allowed them to distribute the workload. With such a large Team comprised of many different roles (i.e., teachers, classified staff, students, parents, administrators), more ideas can be discussed, different perspectives can be shared, and tasks can be distributed. Evan explained that:

None of us are killing ourselves to be part of this committeeIt’s not a very labor intensive committee to be on. A lot of it is...is let’s share ideas and help the people who are passionate about this project we’re working on. And very rarely is it, ‘Here’s this big thing that we need to unwrap. Let’s everyone do a piece and bring it together.’

Further, he stated:

I think it’s easy to be part of a team when you...when you’re willing to contribute but you know you are not going to get killed with stuff to do. So if it was 5 of us trying to run this program then we would all be working a lot harder.

Even though they are a relatively large team, Evan continued, “It’s not a rigid feeling and it’s more relaxed feeling so people can voice their opinions.”

Third, closely tied to their size is their organization. They have established roles, including the roles of chair and recorder, and they have sub-committees so smaller groups can focus on one issue or initiative. During one team meeting that I observed, they opened the meeting all together to take care of old business and then divided into three

sub-committees related to cell phone policy, seat belt concerns, and language registers.¹

The Team divided equally, moving tables to create distance between each other.

On each sub-committee, one Team member, a teacher in each case, emerged as the leader of the discussion; someone just volunteered to lead and everyone else followed. During the meeting, they met for 20 minutes as sub-committees and then presented to the group a summary of their discussion and next steps related to their respective issue. One person described that they like being on the Team because they “get things done.” I witnessed that during this meeting; they didn’t just talk, they took action and made plans.

Fourth, all Team members are committed to the same purpose; they have a clear vision. While the vision has shifted slightly over time, and with different leaders, they have remained committed. As Evan stated, “It was ‘Where is there a little fire starting? Let’s put it out.’ And now it’s gearing more towards, ‘We’ve got a pretty good handle on the grass fires, let’s move the culture.’” This vision and focus on school climate has helped the Team move forward together without conflict. According to one Team member:

There has never been, to my knowledge, like a huge conflict on the team. We tend to all be pretty much going in the same direction. When it comes to maybe what projects we need to focus on, when it comes to narrowing it down, we kind of do that by seeing who wants to do what. You know what I mean? So if there is a

¹ Language registers are styles of language that have different levels of formality, such as casual, formal, and consultative. The most appropriate language register to use is often dictated by the situation. For example, a casual language register consists of slang terms and is thus appropriate for a student to use when talking with friends but not necessarily appropriate when talking with a teacher.

project that no one really wants to work on, then obviously that one is not going to come to fruition that year. But that is kind of how we work that out...I think that, and maybe I am being naive, but I think that any personal differences that anyone might have on the team, they really set them aside and just kind of look at the goals at hand, you know, look at what's best for the kids, how do we get there.

Fifth, they have established procedures and protocols for their team functioning.

For example, they have an agenda for every meeting and they distribute meeting minutes consistently. The agenda is consistently created by Evan, the Team chair, and Mary, an administrative assistant who has been involved with the Team since it began. During meetings, the agenda guided discussions. Specifically, Terry shared, laughing at times:

Evan will go over the agenda, introductions, especially if we have somebody new that's there. Then we just go through the points of the agenda and try to ...everybody gives their input and we move on to the next point. It's straight up.... It's not any different than that. I don't know if there's a better way. I mean, we're just getting things accomplished.

Further, as Kevin explained, "Part of its old business, part of its things we envision, and part of it's reacting to events that have happened." Following each meeting, the recorder for the Team distributes the minutes by email.

Additionally, the Team utilizes behavior-related data to drive their discussions and decisions. They examine several sources of data including referral data, focus group data, and informal feedback from staff and students. They utilize a computer program (School Wide Information System – SWIS) for entering, tracking, and reporting data. Each quarter, they examine some general trends – referrals by time, location, violation,

student, and the average referral per day, per month. Kevin previews the data and identifies areas that might need further discussion and pulls additional data or runs additional reports that can be used during the Team meeting discussions. As one Team member described:

Whenever we come up with a specific topic that we want to talk about like, for instance, cell phone usage. So, we'll have referrals for cell phone usage. So we might ask the data people to pull any information on cell phone usage that they have.

In addition to the formal referral data, the Team also considers data from focus groups or feedback received informally from staff and students. Dr. Tobin shared an example:

Other agenda items come up because of the student focus groups that we have. A member may call Evan and say, "Okay I was talking to this group of kids during advisory and here is a concern." The students may go by and see Mr. Jones saying, "Oh, the kids are talking about this, this, and this." The student body president was the one who just caught me up front and he said, "We need to do some kind of campaign about buckling up." And so I will talk to Evan and tell Evan that we probably need to have, for our January meeting, that as an agenda item. This student wants to have representatives meet with me and somebody from photo and another assistant principal on January 7th which is before our PBIS. And so, that kind of impromptu discussion, we'll put that on the PBIS agenda because it needs to have that positive spin instead of, "you should all wear seat belts or you'll die". And for the kids, it also means that the meeting is

valuable for kids, because the student representatives will then go back and work with student council.

Another key aspect of the Team process is the way they make decisions. When I asked about the Team's decision-making process, participants consistently shared the fact that they do not have a formal decision-making process but rather discuss each issue and make a decision from there; they have never, in Evan's recollection, had an "All in favor, say aye' event EVER." Dr. Tobin replied:

That's interesting. We have never taken a vote, which is interesting, now that I think about that, and we have never written things up on a chart, which is a good style to use. It's been primarily discussion and people throwing out their ideas and the leader saying, "Are we good with this? Or do we want to look at something like this? Or do you want this person to research this and come back?" It has just been more consensus instead of any kind of a formal vote. And it's been like that since we started.

Further elaboration occurred in my discussion with Kevin:

K: This is not Robert's Rule of Order by any means. It's not like we are....because they keep minutes but it is not like anybody is standing there going "Ok, I make a motion. I second it."

M: It is not as formalized as a process.

K: Largely I think it's somebody willing to take the ball and run with it. People come with ideas, they bat them around. Your first kind of feeling out is if your administration is willing to back something like this, I will be honest. But then it's like, "Would someone be willing to do that?" And if someone says, "Yeah, I'll do

it” and somebody help them. Those things get done or get pursued or get brought back the next time. And things that kind of die without interest, it’s really...it certainly hasn’t been in my memory a case of someone from the top trying to push something that we need the committee to do. It’s been people coming with ideas and interest, and if there is enough interest, if you run up the flag and enough people saluted, then it gets done....There is a lot of discussion.

Unless someone on the Team takes responsibility for leading a particular issue or project, it most likely will not be addressed. For example, over the years, the cell phone policy has emerged time and again as a concern but no one has taken enough of an interest in the issue to lead the process toward change. As a result, the cell phone policy remains outside the immediate sphere of concern. At the time of this study, though, the issue re-emerged and several Team members seem motivated to make changes. They presented the issue at a staff meeting and began drafting recommendations for a new policy.

Principal leadership. From all of the interviews, it was clear that Dr. Tobin influenced the work of the Team and the teacher leaders, and that she drives the positive school climate. Dr. Tobin’s personality and actions have played an important role in setting the stage for the work teachers and teams accomplish. Specifically, her belief system, her role on the Team and how she encourages autonomy have influenced how the Team functions. Several participants mentioned Dr. Tobin’s strong belief in building relationships not only with students but with and among staff. Dr. Tobin explained:

My background and my passion has always been relationships and personalization, and that has been, because at the high school level, I firmly believe that they are just like little kids and they need a lot of love and hugs and

people listening to them; they are just in bigger bodies. And so my elementary expertise of relationships and listening to kids and making sure they felt safe was predominately because those were the practices that elementary teachers did and emulated... That is how I created Cactus Creek was based on relationships. My initial staff knew what the relationships needed and what that looked like. So we fit within the PBIS model and we have been touted as one of the top high schools in the state with PBIS. But it's not a program or what we do, it's who we are.

Dr. Tobin, in the early development of Cactus Creek, emphasized relationships with and among staff and students not only the superintendent and school board but also with staff that she hired; it was an important characteristic that she wanted to permeate the school climate.

Participants consistently acknowledged Dr. Tobin for establishing the foundation for positive relationships throughout the school. Specifically, one participant stated, "You couldn't do any of this without Dr. Tobin having this...this goal in mind in the first place of having...a friendly culture at the school." Another shared, "She drives the culture of the school, so it's always just been who we are since I have been here."

While Dr. Tobin sets the vision and goals when it comes to school climate, she really takes a supportive and participant role, rather than a leadership role, in realizing them. Specifically on the Team:

She still attends our meetings but she doesn't chair them, she doesn't organize them...I think that is an important leadership decision; not just that "I am going to do something" but "How fast can I hand off this and go on and do something else?", which is very important when you are as busy as some of our leaders are.

Dr. Tobin agrees with that assessment:

I may ask some questions, but I never start that conversation; I am truly more of a participant, not the leader... I tend to have the freedom to just jump in, because I have a lot of information, and I hold a lot of information, and if something is going to cost money, it's my job to find the resources. That committee and that group should never have to worry about where the money comes from; I should have to worry where the money comes from. They just need to make it happen and get staff to support it. They should never have to worry about funding it.... I do bring in those structures of "ok, we can do this and we can do this." and people can sign up for their interests; that's just part of my leadership style. I have difficulty sitting back, I'm very much a hands on leader, but I also don't want to micromanage.

A third important aspect of Dr. Tobin's leadership that influences Team functioning involves her encouragement of Team member autonomy. According to one Team member, Dr. Tobin:

Gets passionate about things and she finds someone who is passionate about the same thing that she is passionate about... There is as individual choice. But then, at the same time, if there's not a lot, then Dr. Tobin is really good about selecting people and sending them to conferences or different things about that particular thing, to get them passionate about it. And then that...they'll start to build a team and then it just kind of fosters from there.

Teachers recognized and value the autonomy that Dr. Tobin fosters. As Terry stated:

It's one of the reasons I'm still at Cactus Creek, because she is so...she's really good at giving people their own space and I like that a lot. When she speaks up, she's directing us and then leaves it to us, which is what she did with me with Top Cat. I didn't know I was going to be this Top Cat leader; I just thought I had an idea and she's like, 'I like it' and then 'Do it!'...That's one of the things I love about Dr. Tobin is that she is hands-off to you as a teacher if you're doing your job. She doesn't micro-manage and she backs you 100%. So, she's in support of this program, we talked about it, so if somebody is going to complain to her about it, she's not going to go running to me and say, "Teacher A is upset with this part of the program." She's not going to do that. She's going to just listen to the teacher and she's going to explain what her perspective is, which is in support of the program, and she's not going to make it my problem.

The autonomy that Dr. Tobin gives is based on the mutual trust and respect that she has developed with teachers. Specifically, Evan stated:

I think she trusts our decisions. But Terry and I both really have a lot of respect for Dr. Tobin and appreciate the value she has of our leadership skills and wouldn't want to do anything to hurt that. So if we have any doubt, we run it past her.

While teachers feel they have autonomy to run programs, they still ensure that Dr. Tobin is aware of their activities and supports their actions. This may indicate a lack of true autonomy, but as Evan explained, they respect Dr. Tobin and want to make sure their actions align with her overall vision. Additionally, by communicating with Dr. Tobin,

they can garner her support for their efforts which could influence the participation and support of other staff members.

Team leadership. While the principal participates on the Team providing support, she does not lead the Team. Over the years, there have been a number of Team leaders. Initially, Dr. Tobin did not participate at all because she wanted the changes in climate to come from teachers since “other teachers are readily willing to accept the direction from their colleagues rather than a top-down decision.” According to Kevin, she assembled the Team, making a “general invitation...and very quickly handed off the leadership to somebody.”

During the first few years of the Team’s existence, two different assistant principals led the Team. Dr. Tobin admitted that the second leader told her how:

It was very important for the principal to always be at the meetings; not leading, but to be there so that the principal could talk about the possibility of allocating funding and how we are supposed to address some of these things.

For the last few years, though, teacher leaders have been chairing the Team. They refer to their Team “leader” as the “chair.” When I asked each participant about the leader of their Team, most of them hesitated and asked me to clarify what I meant. Although I had worked with this Team in the past, I had forgotten the terminology used throughout the district to identify the leader of teams. Each time I would have to explain that I was referring to the person who organized and led meetings, and is generally considered the “face” of the Team. After that explanation, each participant quickly identified Evan. Although the chair serves a leadership function, they did not relate the term “leader” to their Team’s leadership.

During the year of this study, Evan was in his first year as the chair. Although a teacher is leading the Team, some team members believe that Dr. Tobin still drives the direction. As one participant stated, “Evan is the chair...but I would still consider it to be Dr. Tobin...because ultimately, you know, nothing is going to go without her support.”

Dr. Tobin, however, believes that she has given leadership autonomy to the leaders on the Team. As an example, Dr. Tobin described a typical Team meeting:

They create the agenda and the chair calls the meeting to order and pretty well tries to work through the agenda. If we don't get through all the agenda then that rolls over to the next meeting or he may make it....assign it to somebody. We really try to end at 8:30 because teachers go into class 10 minutes later... sometimes you run a little over, but I leave all that up to the chair. I let the chair take ownership and leadership, it's far more valuable.

Although Evan was generally identified as the chair, in reality, the Team has many leaders. Since the Team is organized around several sub-committees, many people are involved in leadership on the Team. As Kevin explained:

There are leaders and organizers, but you have people that have areas of interest. And that is part of Dr. Tobin, “Oh you want to do this, so that is part of PBIS and we will drag you on the team.” So they are leading in those areas. It's not one person's job to make PBIS happen.

The depth of leadership on the Team allows them to continue to function well despite turnover through the years. They have continued to be productive, meaning that PBIS has continued to be implemented and has in fact expanded. Many participants attribute this in part to the fact that many different people have stepped up to take

leadership roles; people who understand the vision of the Team and are passionate about it.

Teacher leadership defined. Teacher leadership has been defined in many ways in the literature, and this study, in part, contributes to that discussion by describing how participants conceptualized teacher leaders. Specifically, one participant described a teacher leader as:

Someone who isn't going to wait around to be selected as a teacher leader. A teacher leader is someone who is going...to lead even if they are not the chair of the team. They're going to take on responsibility, they're going to work well with others and delegate, and, you know, fight for their cause regardless of if the title is this or not.

This, and other participants' descriptions of teacher leaders, echoed the literature. Specifically, several teachers mentioned how teacher leaders were effective teachers (Shulman, 1987, cited in Rogus, 1988) and were able to engage others in activities (Rogus, 1988). At CCHS, for example, Evan shared that:

I think there is a lot of value in being led by someone who is doing what you do. And as often as Dr. Tobin or one of the AP's can get up there and say, "Oh, we should do this and we should do that. This is a neat program and this is that." They haven't been in the classroom in several years, and so I think a teacher leader is someone who can lead a group of their peers in a project or a group or whatever, with the, I guess, credentials of still being in the trenches and doing what they are saying. Not just "I read about it" or "I heard about this" or

“Someone said this is a good idea” but actually using the concept or the product or whatever they are promoting or what have you.

Teacher leaders play an important role at Cactus Creek, not only to help with the workload but they also lend credibility to initiatives adopted at the school, as Evan suggested in his story. Since Cactus Creek’s teacher leaders remain connected to classroom practice, their peers may be more likely to consider programs or approaches from the Team than from administrators.

Participants in this study also provided additional details and described teacher leaders along two factors: personal attributes and actions (see Table 4.1). The personal attributes include the traits that participants connected to the personalities of teacher leaders, such as connecting with their peers, dependable, respectful, and passionate about their work. The actions described by participants related to what teacher leaders did through their leadership activities such as influencing their peers, communicating well, and stepping outside the classroom.

Narrative Analysis: Teacher Leader Identity Stories

In the section that follows, I present the narratives of each of the four teacher leaders based on the length of their Team membership (longest to shortest): Kevin Richards (the “Data Guy”), Evan Jones (the “Enthusiastic Leader”), Terry Endor (the “Reluctant Leader”), and Michael Gregory (the “Emerging Leader”). As Polkinghorne (1988) explained, narrative is the “kind of organizational scheme expressed in story form” (p. 13). Polkinghorne (1995) and Clandinin (2007) further described *narrative analysis* as the procedure by which experiential data (stories) are collected and organized to create a narrative with a plot that unifies the data. However, according to Sfard and

Table 4.1

Personal attributes and actions of teacher leaders

Personal Attributes	Actions
Has a good rapport, a good connection with other teachers and a good relationship with them	Influences peers, colleagues
“A passion to contribute...if they have a passion in a particular area and they want to contribute, then they are considered a teacher leader”	“Good communicator”
“A great teacher and a good leader”	“Very organized”
“Sets the standard for a lot of other teachers”	“Actively engaged in the change process”
“One that other teachers go to for guidance and support”	“Great listener”
“Dependable”	“A teacher that is willing to step outside of the classroom and help other teachers on their journey as well”
“Well-spoken”	
“Very respectful of other people’s views and opinions”	
“Concern to improve things and make things better and they just get out and start doing stuff”	

Prusak (2005), narratives consist not only of stories told by an individual but also stories told by others about that individual. As such, I wrote each narrative by drawing upon data collected from teacher leader interviews, secondary participant interviews, and my observations of team meetings and staff meetings. The resulting narratives from this study illuminate perspectives on teacher leadership (Newsom, 2010; Polkinghorne, 1995).

Kevin Richards: Data Guy. One of the first teacher leaders to consent to participation in my study was Kevin Richards. Kevin is a man of average height and build, and his hair and beard show signs of gray. He is an experienced educator who had been in education for 27 years at the time of this study. Prior to working in education, Kevin worked as an engineer.

I knew Kevin as an acquaintance through my work on the federal grant his district was awarded in 2005. My interactions with him were limited to the times I saw him at training and at the few team meetings that I attended. I saw him more often after that grant ended and while I began working as a training coordinator on another grant, through which I arranged for other schools to visit Cactus Creek and learn about PBIS implementation.

At the time of this study, I had known Kevin for approximately seven years through my grant work. Kevin, for as long as I have known him, has been the data expert on the Team. I have seen him present to his Team and to schools visiting their campus to learn about PBIS implementation. During presentations to other schools, he explains their Team's use of data: what data they collect, how they collect data, how they analyze data, and which data they share. In my experience, Kevin always came across as very knowledgeable and passionate about data.

While I knew Kevin from past interactions at the school, I saw his participation as an opportunity to learn more about his background and his role on the Team. I knew he had been a part of the Team for a long time and, thus, he would provide a unique perspective about the development of the Team. However, going into my first interview

with him, I made an assumption about his role at the school; I knew he was involved with technology but I did not know that he was also a classroom teacher.

Kevin was one of the first to consent to participation in my study and the first to be interviewed. Our first interview began with a rocky start; we had a miscommunication about the time of the interview and I arrived later than he was expecting. I discovered this miscommunication when I arrived at the school and called him from my cell phone in the parking lot. I was worried that my late arrival might impact the interview, specifically how long we would meet and the quality of his responses. As it turns out, he was very kind about it and did not seem bothered. He did insist, though, that we meet in his office so he could be available to teachers that had any technology issues.

After I spoke with him by phone, I checked in with the front office. After a short exchange with the two receptionists, they directed me to the building in which Kevin's office was located. Although I had been on campus before, they directed me to a building I was not familiar with. I ended up taking a wrong turn and had to ask a student for assistance.

Once I found the right building, I discovered that Kevin's office was set behind a reception area consisting of a desk for an administrative person, a desk occupied by a student, and two chairs lined up against the wall. I introduced myself and the purpose for my visit to the student, and was directed through a short hallway that went through a storage room. When I entered the actual office, it was furnished with two desks, a round table, and shelves packed with equipment. There were three doors: one to the hallway outside, one to the hallway I came through, and one that opened to another room (perhaps a classroom). It was obvious by the amount of equipment that this was a very active

space. Additionally, there were three other people present in the office. I asked Kevin if we should find a quieter, more private space for the interview, but he indicated that he did not have anything to hide from his officemates. When I reminded him that I would be recording the interview, he simply stated that it would be fine but if it got too loud we could move to the library. He added that he needed to be in or near his office in case he was called into a classroom to provide assistance with technology.

I reluctantly agreed and we sat at the round table with one of the staff members in the storage area and the other two sitting at the desks working on other tasks. Although awkward at first, Kevin did not seem hindered by the presence of others. He had a piece of paper and pen in front of him on the table at which we sat. As we began the interview, the other people in the office continued working on the activities they had been engaged in when I first entered the office. When it seemed that they were not really paying attention to us, I began to relax a bit and to ignore their presence. However, several times during the interview, Kevin turned to one of the others in the room to engage her in the questions I had asked or the stories he was telling me.

Throughout the interview, Kevin was very relaxed and open to discussing or sharing anything. He had a sense of humor, and he would often doodle on the paper in front of him as we talked. This did not seem to distract him but rather helped him clarify his thoughts as he spoke.

While I had initially planned to count him as a secondary participant, during the interview I learned that he was also a teacher. As a result, I have included him as a primary participant and had to adjust the questions to accommodate this change. This first

interview focused on questions and stories related to his background, the district structure, and the Team structure.

I began the interview by asking Kevin to describe his background in education, specifically focusing on the path that led him to his current position. He explained:

I started teaching full time I think it was in 1985. I originally got into this from... I had done some engineering work and decided that wasn't for me and shifted over, came back and did a fifth year baccalaureate program at the U of A and later got a Masters from them. I shifted into teaching. I had been subbing before that; I was at Olan High School. I did a number of years out there and then I transferred to North High School because I was able to start a new program there. Over the years I have taught science, specifically physics, math of many, many varieties, and technology and at one point computer aided design because I had a background in that because of the engineering work. So I am vocationally certified in math and so on.

When he paused, I confirmed that he currently is the Site Technology Coordinator for CCHS. He said that he was and further explained that:

I also teach a class still. I am teaching college algebra...But I like teaching a class. Part of what I do is I train teachers and I have found over the years that if you go to teachers and you say, "This is something really cool that you should do in your class" that doesn't work very well. When you go in and say, "In my class, I did this". So the fact that I am teaching one class... I wouldn't have to; in fact none of the other STC's [Site Technology Coordinators] in the district do... But I

find it is tremendously valuable for my work. And not to mention it keeps you grounded with students and stuff like that.

This description caught me off guard because I went into this interview expecting to use him as a secondary participant, not a primary participant; a teacher leader. I did not have readily available the questions I had drafted for the teacher leaders. There were not any major differences but I felt anxious about missing some information.

I tried not to let my misstep show and asked him how long he had been the Site Technology Coordinator. He responded that he had been in his current position since the school opened in 2001 and that he had taught most of those years. As he explained:

I think there was one year that I did not teach...In fact, that was the year I decided I needed to teach a class because all of a sudden it was like falling apart. Just as far as work as well as training and that sort of stuff.

At the time, I felt I knew what he meant by that statement so I did not ask him to clarify. Since he earlier explained how important teaching was for him to stay in touch with classroom teachers and students, I assumed that the year he did not teach, he felt that his duties prevented him from being strongly connected to the classroom practices he taught to teachers.

I turned our conversation to the idea of teacher leadership. He described what he felt defined a teacher leader:

Someone who has influence on other teachers would be one thing. Communicates well...Someone who is actively engaged in the change process. The whole idea of monitoring and improving that sort of thing. Both with others and themselves I mean that is part of what you have to do. Leadership starts at home I guess I

would say. You've got to be looking at your own process and the way it has changed. Manage yourself first.

As he described teacher leaders, I instantly felt he was talking about himself, especially following his explanation for why he continued to teach as the Site Technology Coordinator. I was curious if he felt the same way. When I asked him if he thought he was a teacher leader, he responded, "What I do I think is leadership...because I am involved in new ideas and the change process working and stuff; a big part of what I do is over the years is work with data and informing leaders also." I thought it was interesting that he did not tie his leadership to what he described before – his role as Site Technology Coordinator and his training activities with teachers. Instead he jumped to his role with data, which was the leadership role I was most familiar with. I challenged him to think about when he first realized he was a teacher leader. He responded:

I don't know exactly... Hmm... Realized? About 20 seconds ago when you asked me, when I asked myself whether I would fit that definition. I am not sure it is something... I mean some people set out and say they want to be in leadership. But I think a lot of times it is a matter of something you do. I don't think there is a point where I ever sat down and said "I am going to take over and move into a leadership role and start changing other teachers or how we do teaching."

He went on to talk about other people he considered to be teacher leaders and how teacher leaders became members of the Team. I challenged him again by asking him to think back from before his current position about his teacher leader opportunities. He paused before responding:

Well, I do not know. Certainly early on, I was involved with things like an improvement committee back at North High School in the 80s. I remember specifically I was on a tardy policy committee one time that was trying to improve that situation with the amount of tardies that we had.

He went on to share that one of our current representatives in Congress was on that team. He reminisced for a few minutes about his experiences with the representative and his daughter, who was a student in one of his classes. His story was interesting, but I was curious about his involvement on that team. I asked him how he became involved and he shared:

There is a certain amount of seeking out involved because once you start getting a reputation for having done those things. But in those early days I definitely was... they were saying like we need people to work on this and I went and worked on it. And I think a lot of that comes from being concerned about trying to improve the environment you are in.

After a brief pause, he explained his experience putting another team together, engaging one of his colleagues sitting at a desk behind us to help him remember some of the information. He said to me, "I put together a committee here recently in the last couple of years...", and then as if talking to himself said, "What is our official title now? They changed it. We were a committee but now we are... It's the..." At that point, he turned his head to look at his colleague seated behind him at her desk and asked her the question. She was able to respond and he repeated:

The DLC - the digital learning community now because the big thing is learning communities. We were a committee but now we are a community. But when I

think about... when I set out to build this team, which has been a change group and I am leading it, I looked at all the different departments and said in math, who do I know that is good with technology and has influence on other teachers? And can communicate well? Who do I know in science? Who do I know in English? Who do I know in social studies? And in each one of the major departments I went out and I invited people. I was shooting for two from each department. At points we have had three, but I have at this point at least two people from each department that are part of that group which are playing with technology and researching technology and learning about technology. They are about to bring Apple TVs in here so that group all has ipads; we have been playing with some Apple TVs. I see them as the change group that is going to be able to help the other teachers which is why I recruited them from most of the departments. So in that case I, as someone who has worked here since the place was open, very deliberately sought out and invited people that I knew what their background was. And of course part of that you definitely need people that have a certain level of technological comfort to get into something like that.

He then compared his experience putting a team together to the organization of the PBIS Team on which this study focused. Kevin explained that:

In the case of something like PBIS, I think it is...you want to invite some people but I think it's a lot easier to have an open format like we have done because it is a much broader...when you look at the different talents that come together on a committee like that, they are very broad and they are very different. You have people that are doing videos that are being played over the thing...you have

people that are...were you at the meeting where we were talking about the dress code? I think it might have been the one before the last one. We have people that are very structured...And then you have people that are very much like free-spirited, you know, trying to...I hate to use the word but it really describes them – touchy-feely – very much in relationships. And all of those people’s gifts are important to a committee like that, or a group like that. So, the unifying purpose, I think and a great one, is their concern about the environment and improving the community. It is a lot harder to just pick out and say I want to invite these people.

Based on the stories he had been telling me so far, I was satisfied that he was an example of a teacher leader at Cactus Creek. At this point, he seemed to accept that he was a teacher leader. When I asked him what it meant to him, he did not hesitate before answering, almost as if his stories had also convinced him that he was a teacher leader:

An interesting question. It just means being concerned, working with other teachers to make changes or improve things. A lot of listening, a lot of talking, a lot of trying as much as possible to be aware of what’s going on in terms of what do people struggle with and what their needs are.

I followed up by asking, “Can you imagine not being involved?” He quickly responded:

No, I would have difficulty being in a job, and one of the reasons I got into education was because the work I was doing was very much “Here’s your little cubicle or whatever you’re working in. And here are your very defined tasks.”

And you sit there and do those very defined tasks. Creativity was very low.

Because I would have trouble working a job where I did not have input into the environment and that is who I am. I want to be a part of making things better.

I was not surprised by his response but it did make me think, later on, about how much the school environment means to Kevin. Not just for students but for anyone and everyone that steps foot on Cactus Creek's campus. Kevin also tied his current position and motivation to his past experiences; the lack of opportunities to be creative and have input. His previous work experience obviously impacted his interests and how he leads now, but I was curious about what else influenced his ability and skill at leading. Initially, he had difficulty answering the question, but finally admitted, laughing, that he learned the most by "getting burned a few times in different things." He explained by sharing a story:

Early on in the job as the Tech Guy, as I was called – or the STC [Site Technology Coordinator], there were some times that we were going to do some training on some of the technology and I tried to put 80 people in a room even with other people to help and run the training. And I realized early on that what you run into...there is an old joke that teachers are the worst students...but there is such diverse levels of technology and in ability and in understanding and in interest that when you try to put an entire staff in a room and try to run that, it just doesn't work. Because no one gets what they need. So, very early on we started doing, and we still do this, like our training in Moodle are ...we have levels – 101, 102, 103 – in our training. And we would...teachers would to some extent self -place themselves. We say, "101 is for someone who is struggling with the basics". And we have had people on our staff that have taken that three times.

They have put themselves in that training level, and we are all in a room and we are shooting for that level and we are doing very step-by-step structured stuff. 102 is for people who are comfortable and want to learn some advanced stuff. And 103 is actually like a seminar, almost, where we invite the people who want to come to 103 bring something to present or share that you are doing. And so I figured that out by trying to train an entire staff all at once; that we needed to do something that allowed staff to come in and we could approach them at their levels.

I then asked him about other, more formal opportunities where he learned or developed his leadership skills. Kevin admitted that he had not taken any formal leadership courses, but did share some information about the “in-house” master’s leadership program that the district offers each year through one of the state universities. Kevin also spent several minutes reflecting on the district’s development of leaders through the formal program but also through their use of teaming and identification of future leaders. While much of this information was not new to me, it was important to me to hear from someone within the district as they described what I had seen as an “outsider.” My interpretation of what I had observed over the years was not too far removed from someone within the district, although, Kevin only expressed positive emotions about how the district “grows their own” leaders. As an outsider years before, I was skeptical about the district’s reliance on only leaders from within the district. I always assumed that having diversity of opinions and experiences would be best for schools. However, it seems that in this district, this approach works. I was going to ask a critical question about this homegrown leadership but decided not to; at the time, I felt

that the purpose for the interview was to understand more completely about teacher leaders and their identities within the context of the leadership teams.

The conversation then turned towards Kevin's involvement in leadership at the district-level. He shared:

I have only been involved in two district-level teams. One of them involving writing the technology curriculum and one involving the...what are they calling that?....the group that eventually set up what ended up being at Lincoln High School as far as everyone having laptops and that sort of stuff.

After talking generally for several minutes about teams at the district-level, our conversation turned to focus on the PBIS Team of which he was a member. Based on my previous experience with the school, I knew that their Team had been in place for many years but I wanted to confirm my understanding. Therefore, I asked Kevin about when the Team had been established. He replied:

This is always a matter of debate. We opened this school in 2001, the second half of the year 2001-2002. My personal opinion it was 02-03 when it first started but it might have been in that first year. It was one of those first 2 years. It depends on who you talk to.

Kevin went on to talk about who was on the Team and explained a little more about how he sees his role on the Team: "We have parents, we have...and I am also a parent too as well as a teacher but I wasn't initially on there...I was a staff member."

This statement demonstrated to me the dual role that he perceives that he has – a staff member and a parent. We went on to discuss how PBIS helps address the priorities within the district and at the school. His voice softened as he explained:

There is a strong belief I think district-wide and certainly here that school climate is one of the most important factors in the success of students. And if you are going to take academic success past a certain point you have to step out and address school climate. And if kids don't feel comfortable, if they don't feel appreciated, if they don't feel connected, it doesn't matter how great a teacher you have, and how wonderful a program you have in the classroom, if their overall environment isn't there they are not going to go past a certain level of achievement.

He emphasized how important it was for the district to have this priority and for them to be focusing on school climate by sharing an experience he had when another school visited their campus:

They sent their PBIS people but there was not a single administrator that came down in the group with them. And a couple of the PBIS people were talking about how marginalized their groups feel because the administrators are not involved, and they aren't attending. At one of the meetings someone said, "One of my administrators referred to 'your group' is going to do something." And she was like, "MY group? It's not OUR group?" I know that there are very different attitudes towards that and I think, and Nancy of course was leading all this but I was part of the group in with them, sharing with them that one of their first priorities needs to be change that perception. And that is getting involved with your principals and getting in and talking to them and hopefully getting at least an assistant principal as part of your team and that kind of thing. I know that there are some schools....a couple of them are representing schools that are really

struggling, but if they can't get an attitude that school climate is important....if it's like "I am over here trying to fix academic achievement. You do your school climate stuff." They are going to be in serious....they're never going to fix that academic problem without addressing climate.

Kevin then explained that part of having a positive school climate is making sure that students and staff are connected. He again tapped into a past experience, this one at a school he worked in to contrast the climate at Cactus Creek:

At least one of the other schools I was teaching at, I would say 50% of these teachers at that time had never gone to a graduation. Had never...you know, and many of them perceived themselves as people who came and taught and left. And that has never been the expectation here. That there was a connection to students but also to other staff. I mean literally...I will name it, North High, at that time, could be a totally different climate now. It was a very big school, larger than us – they were about 2600 at the time. But if a teacher was on a lunch shift, he might teach there 5 years and not know who they were. And that was a really difficult situation to try to accomplish anything with. Because not only are your students not connected to a large extent, your staff isn't connected. And it's like, oh my gosh! How do you do anything? I definitelyschool climate...the first step – connect staff.

By this time in the interview, I realized that we had been talking for about an hour, and a teacher had entered the office to request assistance. One of the other staff members in the room was trying to help and I could tell that Kevin was trying to listen to their discussion while also trying to answer my questions. So, I acknowledged the time

and asked if we could get to just a few more questions. I wanted to try to capture just a little more basic, background information about the Team so I could ask more focused, in-depth questions during the next interview. Kevin agreed and told the teacher that we would be done in about five minutes.

I asked him about the membership on the Team, specifically how long people had been on the Team. I learned that he was one of the original members. While he talked before about when the Team began, he did not verbalize that he had been involved since the beginning. Kevin continued by identifying some of the leaders on the Team and described how the Team evolved over time. As he described the evolution, he used “we” which just emphasized to me that they thought of themselves as a unit working together rather than individuals doing activities related to a common goal. The last question I asked him was about decision-making on the Team. He shared a story and concluded by saying, “There has never been any attempt, and I have been on it since the start, to have any kind of Robert’s Rules of Order kind of thing going on, or it has to be voted on by half. There is a lot of discussion.”

I decided this was a good place to stop; my next questions would take us in a different direction and I could tell he was anxious to help the teacher that was waiting. I thanked him and left. As I drove away from this interview, I recorded some of my impressions and thoughts. First, I was very excited by the fact that he was a teacher leader. My recruitment of participants had not gone as well as I had hoped; I had more secondary participants than primary participants.

Second, it struck me as awkward to have others in the room during the interview but that did not bother Kevin. In fact, I thought he seemed to thrive in having people

around him and including them in the conversation. Additionally, many of the stories he told were in relation to other people; his teacher leader identity involved his relationships with others, which confirms what has been expressed in the literature (e.g., Sfard & Prusak, 2005).

My second interview with Kevin occurred three months after the first interview. During that time, I had the opportunity to interview others and observe several Team meetings and a staff meeting. At the Team meeting following my first interview with Kevin, I witnessed another dimension of Kevin's identity; interactions with students. When he arrived for the meeting, he realized that he had brought the wrong handouts for his data presentation. Instead, he had brought some handouts he was going to use in his Algebra class. At the time, the only other people in the room were me, a student, and two other Team members. He directed his comments to the student and joked that he was going to have the Team do Algebra. The student responded that he would have no problem with that; he would love to have the help completing his work. As quick as he had arrived, he left. The rest of the Team began to arrive, set up the room, and grab bagels and coffee. Kevin returned just in time for the meeting to start.

Kevin was first on the agenda after a welcome by the Team chair, Evan. Kevin then handed out a one-page (two-sided) data sheet related to discipline. He started by explaining the data included on the handout and how to read it. The handout was very well organized; it included graphs and some text explaining what they were seeing and possible reasons for the trends observed. The graphs showed the average referrals per day per month and the total number of referrals by time. For the most part, the data were positive, except for an increase in referrals that seemed to occur at the end of the day.

According to Kevin, after further investigation, this was due to students skipping an alternative after-school program offered by Cactus Creek.

The data on the back side of the handout, Kevin reported, were pulled by request. Dr. Tobin and Evan had requested numbers related to fighting and bullying because the district had asked all schools to put more emphasis on bullying. Kevin provided a brief explanation, but overall, the numbers were low. No one on the Team had any questions so they moved on to the next agenda item.

In the interviews with other participants after this meeting, I asked them about this presentation. Most reported that Kevin's presentation was pretty typical. Evan, the Team chair, explained:

Usually he has half the meeting and he'll go through and we'll look at the data, the graphs he's put together based on when the infractions occur, based on where they occur, you know....identifying the ... 2-4-6 versus the 1-3-5 class block days, and whatnot. And then as we...as he picks out things or someone else notices a trend, usually Kevin finds it because he is good at that, then we ...then we'll say, "Ok, what's going on there?" And we'll toss around ideas about what could be the catalyst for that increasing or that high, if everything else is sinking, and toss around some ideas of what to do. A lot of times it's as simple as, "Well, we'll get another teacher out there during lunch." Or "We'll ask security to, you know, swing by that area periodically."

At this presentation, though, several Team members in subsequent interviews reported that Kevin had less time than usual, but they still appreciated the update and did

not feel rushed. In fact, Michael stated that Kevin's presentation was "very easy to follow."

My second interview with Kevin occurred during Cactus Creek's Spring Break, so, while some staff members were on campus, students were not there. I hoped that we would be able to converse without interruption and in privacy, and I requested that we find a place that was quieter and away from distraction. He readily agreed since it was over Spring Break and few people were on campus, decreasing the chance that he would be needed to help with technology. We met in the library, and although we did not have other people in the library to distract us, he did have his computer. He brought it so he could show me some documents and samples of data they examined. Several times during the interview, he was multi-tasking – answering questions while also looking on his computer.

I started the interview with questions that I did not have time to ask the first time we met. Specifically I asked him to elaborate on how he became a member of the team. He responded:

Literally, when it was forming up, they made an announcement that we are building a team and I knew they would need data, or that if they...if it was going to be effective it's going to have data and it was something I was good at and had done, and I just sort of showed up.

From the beginning of the Team, and his involvement, Kevin knew his role would involve data analysis. I was curious, though, as to why he was so interested in this Team since most teams, I believed, used data. So, I asked him why he wanted to get involved in the PBIS Team and he shared:

Well, I think school climate is probably the single most important thing to making a school successful. Years ago, when I first started getting into education, I substituted in NUSD and I did a lot of work on the west side of town. I found out later I was one of the few subs that would go anywhere on the west side of town; a lot of people wouldn't. And even though at that time those schools had some pretty rough reputations, one of the things I discovered is that they varied widely in how it felt when you walked into a school and how you interacted with people. And it really had nothing to do with where they were at, but it had to do with the community, and the people and their attitudes. And you know? This is...I wasn't even fully licensed to teach. I had a degree and I was going in and subbing. And I just...it just made a huge difference. When we started talking about we're going to take a look at systematically addressing school climate, I wanted to be a part of that. And you know at that time, my children were...middle school and elementary, and so, like my son, my youngest, is showing up here next year. And so that's the other thing; I have a personal stake in this. I didn't have any kids there at the time by any means but I could see...he was 4 or 5 at the time, something like that...but that down the road that I would probably bring my kids here and that's a personal stake.

While the Team has existed for many years, Kevin expects the Team to "keep innovating, keep trying new things, that we keep getting people involved that are interested and excited." As for himself, he expects to continue with what he is doing and become more involved in specific foci as the Team takes on new projects. For example, he shared that he has now become part of the cell phone sub-committee "because that

kind of thing affects school climate. I mean, they are tremendously important to students. There's no doubt about it." He continued to explain why the cell phone issue is part of the PBIS Team, as if he really wanted me to understand the underlying emphasis of the Team – school climate. And, it seemed for added emphasis, he compared his current involvement on the Team with his past experience at other schools:

If it affects school climate, they're willing to talk about it and get interested in it... You know, years ago, I remember serving on tardy committees or on you know.... and there were committees about individual issues which when you actually look at them are part of school climate. And the way this is put together it's never been about... we're going to address this little problem or that little problem; we're working on the whole.

As he was talking, I was thinking about what I had observed during the Team meetings I had attended. Everyone is so focused and on-task during discussions. Many people had explained to me, they get things done. Part of it, in my mind, is that the meetings are so well organized with time for sub-committees to meet. Another, and perhaps more important, aspect of their Team functioning is the interactions among Team members. So, I asked him about his relationships with others. He paused and then responded:

Well, it really varies. I mean, some of them have been people I have worked with for 11, 12 years, pre-dates the team, some of them are new folks coming in, some of them are students, some of them are parents. I think it's the same kind of relationship you have in any organization when you are all concerned about the same issues and addressing the same issues. I mean that's the fundamental bond

there if you look at it in the general sense is that we are all there concerned about the same issue, we're all there volunteering. And I think that's real important.

I decided, at this point, that my questions were taking us a little bit away from my primary purpose – to really understand his teacher leader identity. Since he had earlier mentioned data as one of the reasons for being involved with the Team, I thought I would return to that part of his identity. In fact, I recalled that he had been referred to as “The Data Guy” by himself and other participants. So, I asked him about that label:

K: Yes, that's what Dr. Tobin started calling me at some point.

M: Well, that's your official title.

K: That's one of those titles I was given that was sort of... kind of as a joke and I adopted it, you know?

M: You mentioned earlier that you volunteered for it. Were you specifically going in because of your interest with data or more with regard to the school climate and then....?

K: Certainly in regard to school climate but I knew what I could bring to them was a long-standing experience working with data as a math guy, as someone who had originally a degree many years ago in engineering. I could come to that and talk about....you know, that I could do that job and do it well for them. And I didn't know anybody else at the time who could step in that spot.

He does not seem to be bothered by the label, but, in fact, seems very proud of what he has done for the Team in relation to data analysis and discussions. As he explained, early on with the PBIS Team, data were entered into a simple Excel spreadsheet. Kevin created the database and one of the secretaries on campus was

responsible for entering the referral data. Later, Kevin learned about a computer program called School-Wide Information System (SWIS) that made data entry and data report generation easier and faster. Kevin has since become somewhat of an expert in using SWIS and, in fact, trains other schools in the district to utilize the program.

As he was describing this process, I began to wonder how he developed his vision for data use on the Team. After a few seconds of thought, Kevin replied:

You know, I really don't remember; it's been 11 years ago. I do know that I was going in right away wanting to look at the data because data is important to me. How we actually ended up structuring it came about as a process of looking at what information we had and working with it. But it was really a case of knowing the importance of making data-driven decisions and that we...if we were going to have an effect on school climate, a big part of that had to be data. You just can't blindly go around. I have been at way too many meetings over the years where, "How do we deal with this problem?" talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. And what's fun, is SWIS talks about this...having gone through the SWIS training, that they're real big on... when you go to a meeting if you don't have a precisely defined problem, you have those kind of meetings. They started talking about it, and I was going, "Yeah, I've been to that meeting about 29 times." Or, "We're having a problem with tardies? What are we going to do about it?" or "We're having a problem with whatever?" "What do we do?" And it just ends up flopping all over the place.

While he was talking, he was looking on his computer to find an example of one of the old spreadsheets that they had used. Shortly after he finished speaking, he found

one and showed it to me. He wanted to make sure, I think, that I understood how far they had advanced with their data collection and analysis. As he was showing the spreadsheet to me, he said, “If you know anything about Excel, I was doing this pretty primitively.” He further explained that “the set-up was my thing because that was my background. I had actually in the past taught Excel at Crater College.” He then showed me another spreadsheet and commented:

It’s almost scary. She (the secretary) was entering the data into this thing... We’re doing this more sophisticatedly... And I was just wanting to generate and talk about what locations were we having problems, how did that break down. In a way, it almost, as someone who works much with data, these kinds of things seem obvious except it was taking us an incredible amount of time to enter that.

Kevin went on to explain how he would pull the data and generate reports. As he finished that explanation, another staff member entered the library looking for Kevin. One of the administrators needed assistance with some technology and had been calling Kevin. Kevin told him that he would respond after the interview had ended.

Since we had that break in our conversation, I wanted to get us back on track. When the other staff member had left, I provided him a summary of what we were just talking about and he agreed that I had captured the essence of what he was trying to say. I knew his job as the “Data Guy” did not consist only of data analysis and report generation so I asked him to explain how he perceived his job. He replied:

Well, I’ve got a couple of things going on. Some of them are directly to the committee and this is all a part of the SWIS training of course, but it’s what we were doing before – I was making presentations to the staff, and to me one of the

most important parts is sharing the data with the committee, with the staff, with the administration. And one of the effects we found right away is that once we started sharing in general with our teaching staff and our staff as a whole, they started being very concerned about the quality of data.

As the Data Guy, Kevin was instrumental in developing the process to generate data reports that are used for presenting. He further explained his responsibilities on the Team:

At some meetings I am just attending and doing whatever committee work I am on. Once a quarter we try to have, or once a semester certainly, a thing that's got a data focus where I do a presentation, I talk about trends I am seeing. And every so often, like this last meeting...not this last data meeting but the meeting before where we did data, I had been asked to do a focus report to take a look at the possibility of fighting and gang activity...So, sometimes there's a special report or questions I have to answer that they ask me to look at the data for particular things on that end.

I knew from experience that Kevin not only analyzed data and developed reports, but he also presented the data to various groups. Therefore, I asked him to explain a little bit more about how he approaches his presentation of data. Kevin shared:

If you dump data on people, you're not really helping. You need to take a hard look at data, you need to process it, you need to have...highlighted in the sense of if there is a problem, you need to point it out, but also you need to talk about what our successes are. And that's...we're lucky enough to have successes to talk about. And to set that data in context, maybe that's the way I would put it.

They're real big, as you I think are well aware, on giving information to decision-makers that they can use. If you hand someone a 20-page report full of data, which you could easily do, that's not helpful. There's a huge...I was lucky enough years ago in college to have a really good technical writing teacher, and she always talked about how you write for decision-makers. That's a huge thing in techno-writing. And the idea that you may have a 40-page report, but you have a 1-page summary and that summary has every significant thing in it from the report with references to...if they want to look at certain pages or get into more detail, they can. And that's a big part of the data as I present it. You know, you've got 5 minutes, 10 minutes, you want to go in and present the highlights and...in cases, and this hasn't happened in the last couple of meetings, but I have had people say, "Could you mail me the raw data?" and I will. And I'll have it ready for them.

His presentations to the Team, though, are:

A little more detailed. I have more time with the team, typically...go into a little more detail for the Team, although it's still a highlights thing. But it's the super highlights...[The] more we can get people interacting with the data, the better off we are.

During my interviews with other participants, they concurred with what Kevin described, and referred to him as the "Data Guy" or the "Data Guru." As one participant stated, "He's really good at looking at the trends and stuff...and comparing them and saying, 'Look at this' and 'Look at that.'" Kevin's passion for data, and sharing information with others was also noted by one participant who had been on the Team

almost as long as he had: “I know that he loves it; I know that he loves, you know, working with the data, working with the kids, presenting the data, coming up with fun ways to use the data....He’s fantastic!”

Dr. Tobin also shared:

I got him SWIS trained and so he just... so he takes this on with passion and it’s something that he’s very married to, not only as a staff member and a leader, but also he’s a parent. His kids come here. So he wants to also look at the data to... to ensure that his colleagues that, “No, I run the data.” So, he’s been asked to train other school districts with running the numbers and showing the graphs and he knows he only has like 20 minutes at a staff meeting to do it, so he has to be powerful. But, it’s something that I would... he would have to give it up. I’d never take it away from him. He’d have to give it up because he’s very, very good at that and at a moment’s notice he... he’s very good at looking at trends. He can get any information you need.

Many of the stories that other participants shared about Kevin and the data involved how he presented data to others. While Kevin shared with me that he presented to schools that came to Cactus Creek, I did not ask him to elaborate. I had observed his presentations several times, but another participant, Cathy, described it best:

C: He talks about the data and I talk about how we use the interventions. So, that’s how...if we’re going to break it down on paper, that’s what I would say how we....

M: Got it. You complement each other very well.

C: We really do. We are a good team.

At this point in my interview with Kevin, I asked him about some of the other key programs that I was focusing on because they were closely related to the other teacher leaders involved in this study, specifically the Top Cat Program and the cell phone sub-committee. Kevin shared with me his thoughts and experiences about the origins and evolution of the Top Cat program. Although he has not been directly involved with it, Kevin explained that part of the Top Cat program involves identifying students for their responsibility and following expectations consistently, for which they receive benefits and are recognized as Top Cats. However, according to Kevin, some of the benefits have not always worked and students did not view them as benefits. He attributed it to the fact that the people running the program did not consult with students ahead of time about whether or not the benefit was an actual incentive for them. He related it to a personal experience he had: "I always laugh about jeans passes; I hate jeans. I never wear jeans; I like khakis. And they are like 'And if you do this, everyone will get a jeans pass' and I'm like, 'Oh, how exciting.'"

I then turned our conversation to the cell phone policy and sub-committee. Another teacher leader, Michael, was involved in this issue but I was curious about Kevin's perspective. Kevin shared that he also had been involved with this sub-committee, which I did not realize because he had not attended the Team meeting where they broke up into sub-committees. Once I realized he was involved on this sub-committee, I assumed he must have participated during the meeting that I had not attended. I started by asking about the cell phone policy issue in general and its history. He explained:

What my experience is...that depending on the teacher and this is an area that we struggle with a lot, particularly when you think about people who are academics working in education. There is a drive to come up with a method that works and there are a lot of good methods that work. But at the same...I mean...the same time, you get people who are very...do you remember Madeline Hunter?² The method that worked for everything from teaching kindergarten to nuclear physics. There's a tendency to look for that kind of thing...From my viewpoint, and one of the reasons I wanted to get on this committee, is...don't spread this around, but actually you are writing this up...but I was concerned there was going to be a drive for one uniform policy. What I would love to see is support for people who are struggling in this area and at the same time giving enough autonomy and freedom to the teachers who are being successful...I think the point is, is it successful? Is instruction happening and are kids learning stuff? And somehow I wanted to be there to be a voice for that.

Since this sub-committee in particular is in its infancy, no decisions about policy had been made by the end of the school-year in which this study took place. However, from the conversations that I heard from the meetings I attended, it seemed that this sub-committee was leaning in the direction that Kevin hoped: to provide some general guidelines but allow teachers some autonomy. As Kevin said:

² Madeline Hunter developed a system for designing classroom lessons that consisted of seven components: objectives, set, expectations, teaching, guided practice, closure, and independent practice. This system was popular in the latter part of the 20th century, and was utilized by teachers at every grade level and for teaching any subject. (Woolfolk, 1987)

My goal was not to come up with a policy but to hopefully come up with some guidelines that would be supportive and helpful and maybe even be able to talk about the different types of successful policies and how they can be successful. And we've got...at least at some level to the idea that it's important to be consistent inside the classroom. And that's where I've seen a lot of people struggling is their consistency and their policies coming across cleanly.

Kevin further explained the reasoning for his position on the cell phone policy in relation to past influence:

I come from a long line of public school teachers. On my mother's side, we're not sure how far back it goes. It's a minimum of five generations....One of the things, the advice I got real early on, is that you just....about consistency and about the fact...I'll never forget someone saying this to me...I think it was my father who was actually teacher. But he said, "The first thing you have to have is order, then you can teach. And if you allow disorder in your classroom and then try to teach over it, you're never going to be successful." And I have seen that carried out so many times. And it's not that you have to be mean, and you don't have to be nasty but you have to have some consistency and structure and then you can teach into that. In some cases, very successful teachers build that on relationship and a lot of interaction. Some people are very successful building it on a lot of rules. As long as they're consistent and well enforced.

When I asked him why cell phones were an issue right now, he compared the situation with an attempt they made years ago related to students wearing hats:

I think there have been some identified, unsuccessful classroom situations. There has been...attempting to give students as much freedom as possible without creating problems. We went through a cycle, gosh it's been years ago now, with hats; where students *were not allowed to wear hats on campus. Just not allowed to wear hats on campus* (tapping on the table with a lowered, louder voice for emphasis). And they were trying to enforce that and they were cranking it down and a couple of our [top students]...came to our committee and said, "Why is this?" And out of that, evolved some discussions and a policy that they can wear hats anywhere they want except in the classroom.

Kevin emphasized that he believed that the cell phone committee really needed to allow teachers to set their own rules and expectations, but they also needed to help teachers be consistent in enforcing them. His mention of consistency caused him to reflect on his experience at a high school in another district that lacked consistency. Specifically, this school had:

One principal and six assistants and what happened in a given situation varied incredibly depending on which principal you got...But I mean there was really a lack of leadership at that point...and the teachers would kind of laugh about it. You know? "What part of the alphabet is he in? Boy, that kid better be careful." In fact, I actually heard a teacher say one time to a kid, "You're in the wrong part of the alphabet to be acting like that."

As he was sharing this story, I found myself thinking more as a PBIS trainer than a researcher. In each of my interviews, I had felt this way at some time and I found myself straying in my role as a researcher with the conversation shifting more to a

consultative role. This happened in my conversation with Kevin at this time in the interview.

K: We work for that here; we try to be consistent and fair. But I think that's part of what PBIS is too, is the ideas that we want to give as much freedom as humanly possible and at the same time understand that there have to be limits. You know, "Yeah, we're gonna let you wear a hat but we're not gonna let you wear gang colors." You know, where is that line gonna be? And to push that line as open as possible and at the same time not go into an area that's going to create problems. And we have been very successful here.

M: Yeah. I think focusing on what's appropriate, when versus banning for everyone is a much more effective strategy and I think it teaches kids other skills too.

K: You know, I think you make a very valid point there. Because when I think about it, especially in my own kids, I got a daughter who's a senior this year. You treat someone who is a junior or a senior in high school very different than you do even a 7th grader or an 8th grader. And you need to because they are going to be walking out into the world either going to college or going to a workplace environment that has a very different set of rules and a very high expectation that you be able to monitor yourself and maintain your own behavior. And if they have been living in an environment that is largely like a prison...

M: ...that's controlled...

K: It's controlled, heavily controlled. That's not preparing them properly for the world.

M: It's not helping them learn to make appropriate decisions.

K: Appropriate decisions. And to monitor themselves. You know, to some extent, if the only reason the kid isn't acting in certain ways is that they're not getting in trouble for it or somebody's looking over their shoulder all the time...boy, when they go into college or something...when no one's looking over their shoulder....

At this point, I caught myself and shifted back into a researcher role. I was trying to pay attention to the time and I knew I still had a number of questions to ask. I returned again to the cell phone committee and asked him who on the Team was currently leading the discussions. He had a hard time coming up with the name, and true to his technology identity, began to look through his computer to find the name. As he did so, he said laughing, "I can't believe I'm blanking on her name. See, if I didn't have electronics...that's why I'm good with this stuff. 'Why are you so good at this stuff?' Because my brain itself will not do this." I replied, laughing as well, "You've come to rely on it too much so you haven't let your brain...no, I'm kidding!" He responded, "It's interesting because I noticed this in all three of my children, I think their memory...when they started reading, their memory...their ability to memorize large amounts of stuff started going away." I could relate to that statement and said, "Well, why fill your brain memorizing things when you can look it up," at which he responded, "The Sherlock Holmes theory...those unnecessary things in my brain."

We continued to talk informally as he looked up the name of the Team member. After a few minutes, I told him that I just had a few more questions to ask and wondered if he could answer them while also looking up the name. Kevin replied that he could. One of the final questions I asked related to new members on the Team. He had the same

trouble coming up with names so talked generally about who was on the Team – students, teachers, parents.

The final question I asked was in relation to the Team’s leadership. He spent the last few minutes giving me his thoughts about Evan, the current Team chair, and his predecessor. By the time he finished responding to this question, he still had not found the name he was looking for. We concluded there and both agreed to contact the other if additional thoughts or questions came to mind.

Summary. Over the course of two interviews, Kevin shared stories with me about his past work experience (in and out of education), his family (past and present), his identity as the “Data Guy,” and the Team. His motivation for becoming involved in the Team was based not only on his experience with data and his knowing that the Team would need someone with his data expertise, but also his passion for school climate and belief that climate makes a difference for students.

Stories told by all participants revealed several leadership characteristics that comprised Kevin’s leadership identity. Some of his personal attributes include having a good rapport and connection with other teachers, a concern to improve conditions, and a passion to contribute. As a leader, the stories revealed that Kevin communicated well and was actively engaged in the change process.

On the Team, Kevin is known by others consistently as the “Data Guy.” His work with data and especially his presentation of the data has proven valuable in their decision-making. However, Kevin is not just a staff member on the Team with a specific role; he is also a parent concerned with the learning environment for his children. How he approaches Team discussions and his stance on certain issues is heavily influenced by

family members who were former teachers, his belief in what is best for his own children, his experiences as an educator in other schools and districts, and his work experience outside of education.

Evan Jones: The enthusiastic leader. I identified Evan as a participant in my study through snowball sampling. When I presented my study and recruited participants at a Team meeting, Evan was not in attendance and I recruited only two teacher leaders. During my first interview with Dr. Tobin, I asked her for the names of some teacher leaders since I had been unable to recruit the number I had hoped for. Evan's was the first name she gave me and indicated that he was the PBIS Team Chair. After our interview she sent me his contact information. I emailed Evan to introduce myself and my study, and to ask if he would be willing to participate. He responded quickly by email that he would be happy to participate and we set up a time to meet. I was excited to interview the chair of the Team because I thought he would provide an interesting perspective as a teacher but also as the leader of the group.

I met with Evan one day during his planning period the first week of second semester. When I arrived on campus, I checked in at the front office and they directed me to the Freshmen House. I walked across campus and observed students walking around. Since there were so many students out of class, I assumed it was passing time. I entered the Freshmen House and as I checked in with the administrative assistant, Evan approached me and greeted me warmly. He had a broad grin and acted as if we had known each other for some time. In fact, he mentioned that it was good to see me again. I played along but could not remember when I had met him before. I have worked with so many people in so many different schools so I was not surprised that I could not

specifically remember meeting him. However, I usually am good at remembering faces; it's the names I struggle with. And since he had such a gregarious personality, I kept wondering to myself why I had not remembered him. In fact, I remembered an interview with another participant who alluded to my having met Evan previously. At the time I could not remember him but thought I would recognize him once I saw him. That turned out to not be true.

Evan led me to the conference room that they had in the Freshmen House; he had reserved the space for our use. The room was very business-like; the table was made of a dark wood and the padded chairs had high backs and looked very comfortable. The room was conservatively decorated with a plant in one corner and a few pieces of artwork on the wall. We sat at one of the ends of the long conference table; he sat at the end and I took a seat at a 90 degree angle to him. As I was getting my recorder, notepad, consent form, and pen out, I explained my study to him since he had not been present at the meeting where I had shared the information. Although I had emailed the information to him, I wanted to make sure he was clear about the purpose of my study and what his participation would entail. He questioned me about who would hear the recording and I assured him that I would be the only one to hear it, and possibly one other person if I hired someone to help me transcribe. I assured him that no one on the Team would hear it, including any administrator. He seemed to accept my assurance and signed the consent form. He was willing to share with me at the end of the official interview and when I had shut the recorder off some additional thoughts about the Team. I promised him that I would not share the information, and I have had to be very careful to not let the information unfairly influence my analysis and write up.

I started the interview by asking Evan to share his background in education. When he spoke, he spoke at a rapid pace, gestured with his hands frequently, and showed emotion through his facial expressions. He explained that he:

Started teaching in '05. Before that I was an EMT for many, many years, and I was a backpacking guide, or a bartender, or retail, or restaurant. I have an eclectic background. So, I started in '05. I started with just teaching earth science which was what my major was. The second year I was here, they wanted to have a...our school doesn't let non-freshmen take freshmen courses, and earth science was a freshmen course. Because you put a senior in there and they are the class clown and a discipline problem all year. So they needed an alternative to earth science to meet the earth science requirement for kids that move into the district because we were constantly growing.

He laughed as he continued:

And so they asked me to teach astronomy, well but first they said geology. And I was like, "I hate rocks." And then they said, "Well, then what do you want to teach." So I said, "Astronomy." So now I have been teaching astronomy for several years. And then last year they changed our freshmen curriculum to physics. Which was my minor. So now I am teaching freshmen algebra-based physics, the honors course and astronomy.

I was taken by the ease at which he spoke, and the energy he exuded. Evan spoke quickly as if he enjoyed sharing the information. I commented that I was expecting him to say he wanted to teach biology since he had an EMT background. He laughed and whispered, "I hate biology...these are the parts of cells. It doesn't do anything for me." I could tell that

he had a sense of humor, but having a biology background myself, I had to defend biology. Jokingly, I started to say, “There is more to biology” when Evan interrupted saying:

I know. But I grew up in Boy Scouting so all that outdoorsy stuff made earth science an easy fit. And then I like the process and the how it works, and how things work together and the ecology kind of portion of it. And so physics works for that to a degree. If you go from this is how rocks and water go together to this is how the car driving and the car crashing work . . .

He spoke with such conviction, although he spoke fast. I could really tell from the passion in his voice that his past experiences had such an influence on his current love for science.

I then confirmed with him that he had been teaching for eight years and he elaborated saying that it was his first and only position and that he did not “plan to leave any time soon.” He explained, laughing, that based on what he had heard from teachers in other districts, he felt privileged working in the Shadow Lake School District. He attributed that to the leadership at the school, particularly Dr. Tobin.

I moved on to asking him how he defined teacher leadership. He responded:

I think there is a lot of value in being led by someone who is doing what you do.

And as often as Dr. Tobin or one of the AP’s can get up there and say, “Oh, we should do this and we should do that. This is a neat program and this is that.”

They haven’t been in the classroom in several years, and so I think a teacher leader is someone who can lead a group of their peers in a project or a group or whatever, with the, I guess, credentials of still being in the trenches and doing

what they are saying. Not just “I read about it” or “I heard about this” or “Someone said this is a good idea” but actually using the concept or the product or whatever they are promoting or what have you.

His comment made me consider my current position where I talk with schools a lot about teaming and school climate. I have not been in the classroom for many years but I feel that I have been able to maintain my credibility because I have remained in contact with schools. The difference, I think, is that I am not teaching teachers how to teach but rather more general skills related to school climate. I hoped that my experience working in so many schools continued to give me credibility, but Evan’s comment gave me pause.

I did not want to dwell on this too much, so I asked him for an example of a teacher leader on the Team. This was the first time that he did not respond right away. His face was full of expression and showed some confusion when he asked, “On my Team?” When I confirmed that, he paused and then gave the names of a couple of people and briefly stated what they did. For one of the people that he named, I asked him to elaborate about his leadership. Evan shared:

He would come in with an agenda that he and Dr. Tobin and Mary [administrative assistant] had worked up. We would spend a lot of time looking at our SWIS data and kind of reacting to that. That era of our Team wasit seemed in my mind was very data driven and looking at, reacting to little things that we were seeing in the SWIS data. And so that was kind of his leadership style is, “Let’s look at the data and see where there’s a problem and fix it.” And he was effective. We could, within the course of a school-year, see an increased amount of referrals during

lunch like drop within a couple of months because we could come up with interventions that kind of solved that problem.

From his tone, I had a sense that while he felt this leader was effective, he thought things could have been done differently. When I asked him to explain what he meant by “effective” he explained that “if we had a lot of referrals at lunch, we would come up with a plan under him. And those numbers would fall.” It seemed he was measuring leadership only by the Team outcomes rather than specific leadership behaviors. His statement alludes to how this leader led meetings, Team discussions, and planning. It was a very general description and I had the sense that Evan felt that he envisioned the Team functioning a little differently. I knew I wanted to get to that, but decided to get there gradually. I first asked Evan to explain when he first considered himself to be a teacher leader. He initially referred to his Scouting experience, but then talked about his first years in education:

Well, like I said earlier, I grew up in Scouting. And so... I kind of... I led my group of 8 Scouts when I was first in, and then the whole troop, and then the [southern part of the state]. So I have done a lot of leadership stuff and so I feel like I naturally can kind of come in and take over... I mean like, not obnoxiously so; I don't mind being in the crowd. But like when I first started here, you know I came in as a 32-year-old, just out of the [university], and lots of new ideas, and out of the College of Science. I think pretty quickly I had other earth science teachers coming and saying “Oh, what do you think about this?” So, maybe not leading them but a lot of respect from the other teachers. And then when we switched to physics, since I had the most physics background because I had a

minor in it, I kind of...of the three of us that were going to be teaching the course, I kind of was helping spearhead that program with....at the same....in that same year, our upper-level physics teacher was becoming an assistant principal. So he was getting more involved with the leadership so he had more time to...so he and I could work together on, you know, what equipment do we need, what standards are appropriate for Algebra students, and what not. I don't mind at all sitting in the crowd and pitching in and being part of the worker bees but when something needs to get done and get led, then, sure, put me in. That's kind of where we are at with PBIS because this is the first year that I have led it and so it was, you know, a pretty well-run machine.

With his energy, I could imagine that he would be comfortable walking into a new situation and assuming leadership. He seemed very confident in when he had become a leader and what had influenced his ability to lead, specifically his Scouting background and strong knowledge of science. Just from my interactions with him so far, though, I knew his personality contributed to his leadership; he had charisma.

Along with charisma, Evan truly cares about what he does and about working with students. Another Team member, Mary, shared that he has "a good heart...when he presents things to you, it's heartfelt and...they are good ideas. So people listen and buy-in and he's just a nice person to talk to, so people listen to him."

Dr. Tobin confirmed this when she explained how she saw Evan as a teacher leader:

His personal background is taking care of kids and being positive with kids and building relationships with kids. And he started becoming a real teacher magnet;

he can be kind of quirky and kids just related to him and they knew he was a really good man of values and integrity. Then the whole piece with PBIS, he had the same philosophy I did: this is what you do for kids, it just is... He naturally became a teacher leader with the other two clubs to start, and then he said he wanted to be involved in PBIS and he has run with PBIS and he was one of the driving forces with our Top Cat program; he just has been there. With the recent death of a student, he emailed out to all staff and said, "We need to be able to do some kind of a safety campaign, let's all put on our thinking caps, what can we come back to, what can we start in January as a safety campaign?" That was just him airing out his feelings and concerns, but he used the word "we" and he wants to be able to have action. So, that's that silent leadership. Because he's not...he's not this person who is like, "Oh look at me! Look at me!"; he just wants to be there for the love and safety of kids. So that was his teacher leadership contribution; he just wanted to be involved knowing that we needed to provide for teenagers.

Based on what others said about Evan, it was clear that his leadership had more to do with who he was as a person as opposed to the actions that he has taken. His deep caring for students, though, manifests in the actions that he takes, such as with the safety campaign after the death of a student. I wondered if his abundance of enthusiasm was a benefit or a hindrance, because high school teachers are traditionally much more reserved. When I asked Dr. Tobin how the other staff responded to him as a leader, she easily answered:

He presents at our staff meetings every four weeks or so, and they respond to him really well. They know that he is a teacher who wants to be involved and he's good for kids. He tries to make teachers lives easier and he always comes up with some kind of research. For instance, if you use the behavioral management plans and you have classroom management and you are able to have relationships with kids, it'll reduce your referral rates so therefore, you won't have problems in your classroom. So he always tries to bring it back that way; if a teacher is struggling with management or is a naysayer about citizenship or about our positive programs, he kills that person with kindness and really just models for them how they too can have this great relationship and autonomy with kids.

Another team member, Linda, also mentioned Evan's enthusiasm as a benefit: Evan is a very positive guy. He's kind of goofy, which I think is a positive trait in that role because he can kind of... again, we hear the same things every year, so he can kind of go, "Yeah, we've been working on that" or "We've been talking about that" and can kind of... I don't want to say make light of the situation, but makes certain situations not as intense, I guess is the best way to say that... If you take somebody in charge of something like that that's too serious, or takes everything personally, then I think you get into a cycle of never being able to solve anything...I appreciate his sense of humor and his style...he's not abrupt; he kind of lets things roll. I think he's a good face for the Team.

I knew that this was Evan's first year as the chair of the Team but it was obvious from the stories I heard from other participants that he was already held in very high regard as a leader. I wondered, though, how Evan became a part of the Team. He

explained that he was asked to be a part of the Team in his second year at CCHS. The invitation stemmed from his involvement with Terry Endor and the Top Cat program. Terry had invited Evan and a counselor to help him develop the idea of Top Cat; “We were already in the PBIS mode, it just wasn’t under that Team umbrella yet. So Nancy was like, ‘This is where you belong because this is what you are doing anyway.’” At about the same time that Evan became involved with the Team, he was asked to represent CCHS on the district PBIS team; “So, I have been on the district team for four years but only the chair of our committee for a semester.”

Although he was new to the leadership on the Team, I wanted to know how he saw himself as a leader; what his style of leadership was. He shared:

Actually, this Team is really kind of out of my normal leadership practices just because Dr. Tobin has a vision and so much background that ...I kind of have to ...I kind of have to, you know, let her.... kind of tell me what needs to be done and then execute it rather than coming in and saying “We’ve got all these plans”.

I could tell by his hesitation that there was more to this point than he was making.

Remembering his concern at the beginning of the interview about who would hear the recording, I decided not to pursue it. I felt that this could be a delicate matter that I should not push.

Others on the Team, though, clearly saw Evan as the chair. For example, Kevin shared his thoughts about Evan’s leadership:

Definitely Evan is the top guy on the team I would say beyond doubt. Evan is one of those teachers who is a precious resource. He is doing so many things, he is involved in so many things, he is good at so many things that ...how would I say,

something new comes along, people are like “Why don’t we ask Evan to get involved?” And he’s had to make I think a few tough decisions now. But you know, he’s got his own kids in the district and he’s an exciting, interesting guy...As most good leaders, part of how he leads is by example. And he throws himself into this. I mean, and ...it’s not just about showing up at the meeting. When I’m presenting at a meeting, I get emails from him in advance, he’s contacting me, we’re talking about what’s going on. He is enthusiastic, I think that’s a huge thing. And...that’s a big part of his personality... I’ve been in his classroom, in fact my daughter was one of his students and with any luck my son will be one of his students next year, but he has a great enthusiasm for what he does and throws himself into it at that level. I have never, and I really would say he is an example of someone who LEADS. He’s not...it’s not about a management style. And you really see that in something like this kind of group. And understand he wasn’t in leadership 2-3 years ago; it’s not that his leadership has been essential to the team all the way along. It’s just that he is a great person who has come forward and done a good job. And does a great job at whatever he leads. That...you know, when you have a group which is 100% volunteer, no one is going to lose pay or gain pay by being there. Management doesn’t work at all; you have to have leadership. Because you just really...you know, management is about these are the rules, and these are the things, and these are your rewards, and these are your punishments. But when you have a group like this, it has to be something about the mission. And the excitement, and that I’m as excited about it

and you need to be excited about it too. And that sort of thing. And that's very much his style.

Evan's leadership style obviously contributed to the progress that the Team made during his first year as chair. His style also contributed to a shift in the Team's functioning. As Evan explained:

We would identify problems and solve them and this it would get to this point where it's like, "We don't have all that many referrals very often." And so, you know, we're looking for fires but there's no fires to put out. And so, recently, we've kind of moved to "Let's now nurture the culture of the school"... So now I feel that I am kind of like taking this project and kind of overseeing it even though I didn't have a whole lot to do with starting it. So I ...as a leader I am still kind of juggling....ok, this is different than what I have done before...so, it's.....I am not just going to say, "Hey! Let's make an agenda. Let's go do this. Let's make some changes." But I am saying, "Ok, you need this done and you have already started it, so what can I do to nurture that while keeping all these other balls in the air over here."

From his description, it seemed that the goals of the Team have not changed over time but how they reach them has changed.

I then asked Evan to describe a typical Team meeting and his role in the meeting. According to Evan, the agenda is really driven by several factors: district priorities, topics identified by Dr. Tobin, and agenda items from previous meetings that require follow-up or that were not addressed. In collaboration with Mary, these items are considered and prioritized for the new agenda. He also explained with a chuckle that he makes sure that

an email goes out to remind Team members of the meeting: “‘Hey! Don’t forget! You have to be at school early on Friday’ and ‘Don’t forget the bagels!’” I laughed and asked him if Dr. Tobin took responsibility for the food, at which he replied that she used to but now one of the front office administrative assistants makes the arrangements.

Since it seemed that a few others, including Dr. Tobin, influenced the agenda and perhaps the direction of the Team, I was curious how he perceived his role as chair of the Team. I asked Evan to describe what he does during the Team meetings. He shared:

I like to not let, like, anyone’s work kind of go unnoticed. So I try and remember to make time to just kind of.....at least every other meeting, let everyone that’s got a specific project like Top Cats have an opportunity to say, “Hey, this is how it’s going, this is what our struggles are, this is how we plan on fixing it, or do we have any ideas on what to do to fix it.” Things like that, so everyone kind of gets a clue as to what’s going on. When something big is coming up then we talk about that for a while and put it on the agenda. So it’s mainly prioritizing that agenda and getting through as much as we can. Everyone on the team is so like.....I don’t think anyone is there just like, “This looks good if I am here.” I think everyone there genuinely loves this school and wants it to be successful, and so it’s hard to get us all to shut up.

He made the last statement laughing and I laughed with him and commented, “It makes your job easy.” Jokingly he continued, “Kind of. ‘I want to get to point J today!’” He must be successful at doing this because several other participants mentioned how Evan ensures that the meetings progress. For example, Cathy stated:

Evan will show up with four or five agenda items and then just sort of make his way through each agenda item. And if we get too off track or...if we start rambling on for too long, then he reins us back in.

Another teacher leader, Terry, mentioned:

Evan is really an organized guy and he takes care of keeping us on track which is very beneficial. I was the English Department Chair a few years back and one of the reasons I didn't want to do it anymore was because the meetings just weren't crisp. Everybody had other things they wanted to talk about and when we put up a bullet and then we went off on this and that. And it wasn't efficient. Evan keeps us efficient and that's one of the reasons why I like him leading the meetings.

Another thing that Evan does, is makes sure that everyone participates, including the student Team members. He explained:

We definitely want to hear from the students and let them say, "That is the dumbest thing I have ever heard" or "We are noticing a problem is this..." So we want to make sure that happens at every meeting and make sure that programs are being supported and fold in these new ideas we are having. And getting the bullying word out there and getting the ideas out there.

I was caught a little off guard by his mention of students, but it should not have been a surprise. In the meetings that I had observed, I was always impressed about how involved the students were and how their voice counted as much as the adults; students did not always wait to be called on for their opinions but rather spoke freely. I attribute this to the adults on the Team creating a safe, welcoming environment for the students. Team members, and Evan in particular, seemed to understand the value of hearing from all

stakeholders, including students, to increase the likelihood that a project will help them achieve their goal.

We went on to discuss the teaming approach at the district. He compared the approach to his past experience in Scouting:

Our department leads, our instructional team leaders is what we call them, they meet before our staff meetings on Friday and our admin team has a chance to talk to them and tell them what's coming up and they can collect the feedback. So that makes the leadership of the school more effective. It's the Boy Scout model so it makes sense to me. The Scout Master talks to the Senior Patrol Leader, the kid in charge. The kid in charge talks to the Patrol Leaders. Each patrol has 8 or 10 kids in it, so you get to spread out the leadership; no one's overwhelmed and it's the more productive meetings. My science department leader can take the 12 of us and say, "Here's what they want our opinion on," gather the information and take it to Dr. Tobin and with the other department leaders they can then make decisions. So, that's been my experience that the teams make less stress for the leaders and you get to spread the leadership out some so more people have the opportunity to lead.

I found it interesting how he related the district's model with his experience in Scouting. It made me consider briefly, based on my limited knowledge of Boy Scouting, about another similarity between the district and Boy Scouting: they "grow their own leaders" by identifying potential leaders and giving them experiences to develop their skills.

I asked Evan to explain his participation on teams at the district level. I knew he was participating on the district PBIS team, but he also shared that he had been a part of

the steering committee when they revised the physics curriculum district-wide. During the meetings, he explained, the physics teachers and the district curriculum staff discussed how to adapt the curriculum for freshmen, the scope and sequence of physics concepts, what students needed to know in order to understand physics concepts, how to align the concepts to the standards, and how to define mastery of the concepts.

By his description of the curriculum committee and what I knew about the district PBIS team, it seemed that involvement on the district-level teams required quite a commitment of time outside of the regular school-day. From my experience in schools, I know that such a commitment is difficult to sustain over time for some people, so I was curious about his motivation for being involved. I asked him if the district compensated staff for their participation on committees or if it was just expected that they would be involved. He paused and then explained:

For the physics thing, no. I mean a couple of meetings we had a sub for half a day so they weren't taking up all of our evenings. And this is the first year that the district or the sites have recognized the PBIS team with any sort of compensation. I mean, we've got CE credits. I'm like, "I'm in the middle of a master's program. I don't need them. Thanks for the certificate but I really don't need it." And so starting this year...well, last year we went to one of the assistant superintendents and said, "We were having a problem with the Cadre with getting representatives from every school every time because it was voluntary." And especially we would have like a meeting in the morning one month and in the afternoon for the next meeting, which would usually be 6 to 8 weeks later. So if you are at an elementary school and are used to being out at 2:30, why do you want to be at a

meeting until 3? It's like everyone wanted to be there but it wasn't a priority, and so the district said, "Ok, we will have a stipend for the chairperson at each site and part of their responsibilities is to make sure that the Cadre is attended." And so, this year, now that's in place, we have been missing like one person at each of our meetings; but out of all of the schools so that's not so bad.

It was nice to hear that staff was recognized for their time and commitment, but I reflected on when I was first teaching and how the expectations were different. I was not compensated for participating on committees; I was expected to participate in something outside my classroom. However, the educational landscape has really changed and staff, especially teachers, are under more pressure to do more during their day. I understand the need to compensate, or recognize in some way, the time staff commit outside of their regular duties.

This thought led me to ask about how the teams formed at the district level. He laughed and responded:

Well, "You're teaching physics next year, you're on the team!" That was that one. And it was voluntary if you wanted to go and be a part of it, but my colleagues here had never taught physics before, hadn't taken physics classes at the college level and so they were like.....they care about what they are doing and being good at it, so they were like, "I want to be there to know what's expected and get whatever information I can and give my 2 cents, like, you know, just dealing with freshmen. I don't think they can have that concept down." For the Cadre, Nancy asked me to be a part...or [an assistant principal] asked me to be a part of it. And so I don't know how other schools do it but I was asked to do it... I totally

understand people that want to advance into leadership positions. I mean we have several people who are teaching with ed leadership degrees that I know want to do other things. And chairing a committee probably looks good and gives them good experience and I don't want to take that away from anybody. I told Nancy, "If you need me for something, I am here. But I don't want to take that away from [other teachers] that want to move up." And finally she said, "Hey, I have a job for you." So I said, "Ok."

This demonstrated to me that while he was not looking for a leadership position; he was willing to step-up when needed. I did not want to interrupt our discussion of district-level teams, so I made a note to myself to later question his leadership aspirations; I was curious if he was considering a formal leadership position (principal, assistant principal) in the future.

We went on to discuss who made up the curriculum committee he was on. He mentioned that they also had 8th grade teachers participate so that they could make sure what they were doing at the high school level logically followed what they learned in middle school. To me, that made perfect sense and I wondered out loud about why we do not hear of more districts taking this approach. He said, "Well, once we started talking about it, all of us were like, 'Duh!'" He could not remember who on the committee came up with the idea of involving the middle school teachers. I then asked him who established the expectations or goals for the district-level teams at which he responded that for all of the committees he had been a part of, someone at the district established the committee and the expectations. But, he added, they ended up being led by teachers or other staff members not district-level staff.

I decided at this point to return to the PBIS Team at CCHS. Since he did not start teaching at CCHS until after the Team was established, I was curious to learn if he knew the history of the Team. His response was vague but he believed that it stemmed from Dr. Tobin's passion for developing a positive school culture: "With Dr. Tobin's Ph.D. work, studying cultures of schools and all that...she drives the culture of the school, so it's always just been who we are since I have been here."

Since it was obvious from his answer that he did not know much more about the history, I asked Evan how the Team fit in with other teams on campus. He struggled a little to respond and looked a little puzzled, but finally said:

Well, we're kind of...we're kind of on the...not the fringe, but we're kind of involved with a lot of stuff but not governing over anything. Like, you know, we have interests in the different clubs on campus, the social clubs...we want to help and nurture those clubs as best we can because we ...you know we really value the connections students have on campus. We like to reach out to different clubs and say, "Hey, we need something. Can you help us with this?" And so, like when...when the Be Kind Club started, we were like, "Hey, what are you guys all about?" and "Come talk to us!" ... And then...we were like, "Hey, we have this opportunity to show this Mean Girls video to all of the girls that are juniors and seniors." And Be Kind was like, "We're on that!"

As he started talking more about the clubs, Evan became animated; he moved in his seat, he moved his hands, and he banged his fist on the table as he made the last statement.

From his explanation, the Team and the student clubs had a mutual relationship; the Team helped support the clubs and the clubs helped the Team do some of the activities

they wanted to do to support school climate. I thought it was interesting, though, that I had asked Evan about other teams on campus. In my mind, I was thinking about other teams that faculty and staff participated on, not students. At the time, I wanted to explore that a little more but reminded myself that I was focusing on the teacher leaders and not the team.

Since he brought up some of the student clubs on campus, I asked him how involved other Team members were with the clubs as advisors. He first named three clubs that he was directly involved with. I joked with him about that because it seemed he was involved in so much already – the PBIS Team, the district PBIS Team, teaching, a family. He laughed along with me but seemed to take it in stride. From the moment I first met him, I had seen his energy. I decided that he must have an endless supply to be involved in so much.

He went on to share how some of the other Team members were involved in clubs. I then asked him about other teams on campus for the staff, and all he could think of were curriculum related, specifically mentioning the math department. This was curious to me since the district had been described to me as being very team-driven, yet at CCHS, the only teams were related to curriculum and PBIS according to Evan. Many schools I have worked with have complained about the number of teams at their sites. I thought a moment about this and remembered another participant referring to the Team as the “core of the school,” with many school-wide activities funneling through them. Perhaps at CCHS, they are able to organize around one team as opposed to many.

I returned to questions that I had about the Team and asked Evan about how the Team fit in with the goals of the school and the district. He responded, “Well, our

school's mission is 'Connections, High Standards, Success.' I mean, connections is our responsibility." And that seemed to be at the heart of what the Team was trying to accomplish. They want to establish a positive school climate, but more specifically they want students to connect, and a positive school climate can help them increase student connections. Evan continued by talking about the students who were on the Team and how much he valued their involvement. I really wanted to ask him more about the students but I again reminded myself of the focus of the study. The Team composition was important, but I really wanted to focus on the teacher leaders.

Returning the focus to the adults on the Team, I asked him about other Team members. He mentioned a few people and their roles at the school and finally said, "I would say there are more veterans than rookies...the group's gotten bigger." At that, I asked, "Why is that?" He explained:

Just because we wanted to include parents and kids and... you know, get a couple more teachers involved with different programs like Link Crew. Get them in there. So I think early on, and this is just me kind of putting puzzle pieces together, but I think early on [the assistant principal] said, "Here's my team and let's get to work." And later they said, "Well this Top Cat program needs support and it's ...it's a huge part of what we are doing with PBIS so why don't we bring one of those people in to be part of this group too. And Link Crew is huge, let's bring them in." So those of us that are you know...were directly involved with a program that is just dripping with PBIS kind of got pulled in to the committee. Or invited in.

I was struck once again as I had been in other interviews and with my meeting observations by how unconcerned they were about the size of their Team; they seemed to function just fine and actually preferred to be large. I commented about that and Evan said:

I think it's easy to be part of a team when you...when you're willing to contribute but you know you are not going to get killed with stuff to do. So if it was five of us trying to run this program then we would all be working a lot harder.

In relation to the large size, I returned to a comment he made earlier about the talkativeness of some Team members. In his response, he gave me a small hint of his leadership style:

It seems like there is a point in a group discussion where everyone is saying the same thing again in their own words. And so much of what we do is so intertwined I find it not too terribly challenging to go, "That's a great point, which brings us to our next item." And just kind of steer the bus.

I wanted him to explain a little more about what he did when someone talked too much or too little and he explained, "Well..... I am a person who can talk a lot about programs I am passionate about and so I am kind of sensitive to their needs. But I don't think we have anyone that really dominates the conversation." And then I asked, "How about those that might be reluctant to participate in the discussion?" Evan laughed and said, "They are few...they are few and far between." I laughed a little and he continued, "They might be quiet for one meeting but the next meeting we are talking about something they are more passionate about. And so I don't think we really have any wallflowers."

I returned again to the size of the Team, sharing an observation I had made at the meeting I had observed; that people willingly volunteered and they were able to divide the labor easily. This aligned with what he said about people talking more about the issues that are of high interest to them. I asked him if this was typical of most meetings and he said:

When something needs to get done, when there's a lot of work to distribute, yeah. If it's a Top Cat thing, Terry and I are going to do it because that's what we do; that's what we are passionate about. But if it's something new, then yeah, that's....I mean....we've got a lot of people.

I followed up with a question about how people are held accountable for the tasks they volunteer for. His sense of humor came through when he replied:

They show up at the next meeting and it's like, "So, Erica, did you get that done?" and she says, "Yes, here it is." And we're like, "Wonderful!" Or they hang their head in shame like...

With the last sentence, Evan demonstrated by hanging his head down and putting on a solemn expression. As he did so, he whispered, "We were counting on you." Then he lifted his head and laughed. I laughed with him and then he continued:

It's not a very labor intensive committee to be on. A lot of it is...is let's share ideas and help the people who are passionate about this project we're working on. And very rarely is it, "Here's this big thing that we need to unwrap. Let's everyone do a piece and bring it together." Which is why I want to know what the meeting minutes say.

His last sentence alluded to the fact that Evan had been unable to attend the meeting I had observed. He had asked another Team member, a teacher, to lead the meeting in his place. This very situation came up in my interview with Dr. Tobin when she shared:

Evan was the one, when he knew he couldn't attend this last meeting, he said "I'm asking Jen to take over." So it didn't fall to the secretary and it didn't fall to the principal. He just sent an email to me and to Mary and said, "By the way we are still having our meeting"... because when they are scheduled they're on the calendar and we keep them. So he said, "Jen is going to lead the meeting," so it was his call.

To me, this was an example of the autonomy he experienced as a leader. Although he was new to the leadership position and often relied on more experienced Team members, specifically Dr. Tobin and Mary, to assist, it seemed he was also establishing himself as a leader and making decisions independently.

At this time, I returned to my list of questions and asked Evan about how the Team had changed during the time he had been a part of it (five years). He reiterated a point he made earlier in the interview about how the focus had changed slightly from "putting out fires" to "moving the culture." Although that statement seemed vague, I felt I knew what he meant based on other things he had shared during the interview and the meetings I had observed. Instead of using the data to address problem after problem, their discussions focused more on how to integrate all of the groups on campus together and emphasize positive behavior and getting students connected.

I then asked him to share how decisions were made on the Team. He laughed again as he said, “We say, ‘Yes, Dr. Tobin.’” And then shook his head, saying “no.” Although I laughed along with him, I had the sense that there was a little truth to what he said. During the one meeting I had attended, I noticed that Dr. Tobin had done much of the talking but I attributed that to the fact that Evan was not there and the meeting was being led by someone else. I decided at that moment that I needed to attend to that during my future Team meeting observations.

Evan then replied honestly:

Well, I mean a lot of us that are running programs, we’re pretty autonomous. So we say, “Hey, we have this Top Cat problem, what do you guys think?” And they can give us advice. We’re like, “Ok. These are great ideas.” And we kind of go with it from there. It’ll be interesting to see how new programs that we’re kind of dreaming up and getting off the ground are...are gonna go about. But I don’t recall ever having a “All in favor, say Aye” event EVER... it’s very much, “Let’s have a discussion” and it just kind of winds up at an agreement. Very rarely has....has there ever been a “Here’s 2 paths that both seem legitimate, let’s pick one.” Usually, it kind of getsin a pretty unified direction by the end of the meeting.

I commented that it seemed, then, that all of the Team members were on the same page. Based on what I had heard in other interviews and in observed meetings, everyone seemed focused on the common goal of creating a positive school climate. I asked him if there had ever been a time when the Team had not come to consensus right away and someone had to be convinced of something. He replied that he could not recall such a

thing happening. I commented again how unique the Team was and asked, “How does this happen?” more to myself than to him. But Evan replied, “Well, you don’t have to be a great leader to lead them!” At which I commented, “Makes your job a lot easier.”

By this time, we had been talking for about one hour and it seemed like a good place to stop. He agreed to schedule another interview so we could continue our conversation. We said goodbye and left the conference room. I walked outside the building while he walked toward his desk. As I drove away from the Cactus Creek, I thought about a few things. First, I was taken by how dynamic he was. He was really what I would refer to as a charismatic leader – he was passionate, had a sense of humor, and seemed to enjoy what he was doing.

Second, his concern about who would hear the recording was of interest. What he shared with the recorder off confirmed what I had felt was occurring with the team leadership. It seemed, though, that Evan was trying to change that although he was only in his first year leading the Team.

My second interview with Evan occurred two months after the first. During the time in between the interviews, I had interviewed several other participants and observed another Team meeting. The questions that I wanted to ask included those that I had not been able to get to during the first interview and questions related to what I had observed at meetings.

We met again during his planning period and when I arrived on campus, I checked in at the front office before walking across campus to the Freshmen House. When I entered the Freshmen House office, I could see Evan through the hallway that led to the teachers’ desks. He smiled and walked towards me. As we moved further into the

room, he started to lead me toward his desk but I reminded him that we needed a private place to talk since I would be recording. He changed direction and started walking toward the conference room where we had met before. Now, though, someone was using the room as an office. There was a desk in the corner to the left as we entered the room. The person sitting at the desk graciously offered to leave so we could use the room for the interview. I asked Evan when the conference room had become an office, thinking it had happened since I had last been there, but he said that it had been an office all year. I was puzzled because I did not recall seeing the desk the last time we met. I thought to myself that perhaps I had been too focused on the interview the last time to have seen that the conference room doubled as an office. Then I wondered to myself, what else I had missed in all of my past interviews.

I decided not to dwell on that and focus on the interview at hand. We sat down in the same seats we occupied in the previous interview. I began by explaining the purpose of the second interview: to get additional details about stories he had shared, to ask questions about some observations that I had made during the meetings, and to get his thoughts about areas of leadership I was attributing to other teacher leaders.

The first story I asked Evan to share related to his involvement with the Top Cat program. I heard versions of the story from other participants but was curious about how Evan would portray it. Although it did not differ from what I had heard from others, Evan added a twist of humor:

So Terry Endor...his wife went to high school in Wisconsin and they had a similar program called the Responsibility....something. And he wanted to bring something like that to Cactus Creek. He....in the middle of summer, he emailed

about six of us and said, “Hey, I’ve got this idea. It sounds kind of fun. You guys want to meet up at Cactus Creek and talk about doing it and then pitch it to Dr. Tobin?” And...it was kind of funny, side note, is that, you know, “Hey Isabel. I want you on this team because you work with so many of the upper level kids and they seem to be real motivated and they would probably be real involved with this. And Ann, I think you would be great because of your connections with some of the kids that are kind of more off the mainstream and whatnot. And Evan, I just need a little more testosterone on the committee.”

He laughed when he made the last statement, and I jokingly said, “So that was your place. I got it.” He replied, still laughing, “Yeah, so I just kind of grunted that first meeting. It was good.” I laughed picturing such a meeting, and said, “Caveman style?” He demonstrated some grunting and then went on to explain a little more seriously about what the Top Cat program looked like initially and how it changed.

As he spoke, he gave an example of how they went about designing part of the program, some obstacles they faced, and how they were able to arrive at some creative solutions:

One of the things we wanted was ...the students have frequently voiced a desire to have off-campus lunch. And so we were thinking, we’ve got....that year we were projected to have almost 2,000 kids on campus and everyone was freaking out a little bit. And I said, “What if the Top Cats could leave? You get 100 kids off campus, you know, that might alleviate some of the problems.” Well, at first Dr. Tobin was on board with that and then they started doing some more research and schools like ours that don’t have fast food right near-by have a lot of traffic

accidents and bad accidents from the good kids trying to race back to school to be on time. And so she said no to that. And we said ok.

We talked for a few minutes about the businesses that were closest to the school and agreed that there really were not a lot of places for students to go. I eventually returned to Top Cat, asking Evan what he knew about when Terry brought the idea to Dr. Tobin. He did not know the details of that but did share some more about what he and Terry had done:

So we had a little bit of a framework and we just met a couple of times and pulled it all together and said, “This is what we want to do.” And then we had to write...a rubric essentially, for how to assess good citizenship and train all the teachers. And the teachers then gave each student a citizenship grade at the end of the first quarter and then Terry and I went through every report card on campus to evaluate each kid individually for their citizenship grade. And it was a pain because it took us a while to figure out how to get a citizenship grade on a digital gradebook that was easy to pull from a database. And so that was...challenging at best. But we did it over hours of looking at every kid’s grades and all that.

I was amazed that they went through every student’s grades to determine Top Cat status initially, but this was just another demonstration in my mind of the passion that drove their actions.

He provided some additional details about how Top Cat had changed over time, specifically the benefits that students received for their Top Cat status. I knew he was involved with Top Cat before he was a member of the PBIS Team, so I asked him how he ended up being a part of the Team. He explained that he was invited to a Team meeting

to present about Top Cat. After that presentation, he said, he was invited to become a part of the Team and to also represent the Team on the district PBIS Team. I asked him why Dr. Tobin had asked him to do both at the same time and he replied:

Just that she thought I had good ideas and would be able to contribute. And Terry does softball and so he's kind of a ghost come softball season....Isabel was a dynamo. I mean she taught all the AP...or she taught some AP courses and the honors freshman courses in history, and then National Honor Society and Fellowship of Christian Students and...ACADECA or debate or some more academic clubs. So she was swamped too, and at the time, I was just doing the Science Club and the Fellowship of Christian Students with Isabel, so I had less on my plate than the other two.

I thought to myself that I had seen this pattern at so many schools where teachers who were involved in sports or clubs were usually involved in more than one. This was just another demonstration to me of how these involved adults were motivated not by recognition or money but rather by the passion they had for working with students and really being positive role models for them.

To Evan, I commented about how it seemed that many of the decisions around Top Cat were made outside of the PBIS Team meetings, but I asked Evan to explain what was discussed in the meetings in relation to Top Cat. He explained:

It's really Terry and I have stayed the decision-makers in that program. And we've had other people that have come in to help...but it's usually a newer teacher and they find a passion somewhere else, or a position somewhere else, so we haven't had anyone stick with us more than a couple of years. But it's kind

of...we run this and we'll go and we'll report to the [PBIS Team] what's happening, if we have any issues that need to be dealt with as far as we need to get some funding together [for Top Cat].

For most things that need funding, though, he said they go straight to Dr. Tobin:

For the supplies, we need....which is stickers for the back of the IDs, and lanyards, we say, "Nancy, we need this stuff!" And she says, "Order it. Have the purchase order ready July 1st." And so that's kind of a given; that's out of our site budget now. And not like [the PBIS Team] has any budget; we just have the ability to go ask for money. We don't have a checkbook.

This was another example of how their principal supported the PBIS Team's activities, not just be providing autonomy but also financial and material support. I thought about how often I had seen motivated teachers get frustrated at not being able to implement activities for which they were passionate because they did not have the support of their principals. While I was teaching, I personally experienced this frustration more often than not.

With the support from Dr. Tobin, I sensed that Evan and Terry felt comfortable adjusting the Top Cat program. I asked Evan about some changes they have made with Top Cat and he shared another example:

There's been....concerns that teachers across campus have brought up saying, "We don't have the opportunity to do anything with a kid who's a punk but he's a Top Cat." And so Terry and I kind of decided and then threw it out to the committee to see if they supported us in it. But we just said, "Well, let's make it that any adult staff member can take your lanyard away from you. Well, without

your lanyard, you're not a Top Cat. So they take your lanyard away then you're not a Top Cat. So don't drop your trash in front of the janitor."

I commented that the teachers probably appreciated that the changes reflected the concerns they had, at which Evan said, "If they're not going to support the program, it doesn't work." Evan touched on a key element to implementation success and sustainability: being responsive to staff concerns so they continue to support the program. I asked Evan how they find out about when teacher's take lanyards away and he replied, "They'll take the lanyard from the student and give it to the house secretary for whichever building they're in, and that goes to Terry."

We talked for another minute about the students' responsibility with the lanyards, and then I asked him to share with me why he was participating on the Team. He replied:

I value my opportunity to teach kids about character more than I value the opportunity to teach them about science. I mean if you want me to teach them about English, our AIMS scores are going to drop but I'll try. You know?

He continued, laughing, "Certainly not highly qualified butI think character is a big deal. And as much as we would like to have, you know, 1800 students on campus that are all intrinsically motivated to be polite, upstanding citizens, they're not." I whispered in response, "They're teenagers." He laughed and said, "There's like maybe six of them, but..." I said again, laughing, "They're teenagers!" Evan then tied that to what they were trying to do with PBIS:

And so if we can recognize them for doing the right thing, I mean, that's the whole PBIS model; I would much rather facilitate that then being involved with the discipline. You know, and the "You haven't been nurtured enough so now

you're a pain in the neck." That's.....A) I think that's a lame excuse but B) I think it's so much more rewarding for them to show up on campus if they're rewarded for the positive things they do, not just their schoolwork. So, I think we're equally as responsible to make these students smart enough to enter the workforce and the college world as we are to make them, as best we can, children with good character. Or young adults with good character I guess is the more appropriate...

I agreed completely with this belief, but we exchanged a few comments about how high school students probably preferred to be referred to as young adults as opposed to children.

After that short side track, I wanted to return to the reason for his being involved on the Team and asked him what he hoped the Team would accomplish. He replied after a moment:

I think at a minimum, if we can just maintain the ...totally drawing a blank...like the character of our school, like our culture. If we can maintain the culture that has been built already, I think we're doing... we're doing well. If we can continue to, you know, have less vandalism, less nonsense with you know tardies and ditching and all that. Yeah they're teenagers but I think if we can continue to bring our numbers from our SWIS data down, then that would be great. But if we can just maintain the culture on campus, then that's ...it's a lot of work but I think it's a good campus and it's a good culture.

From this statement, I believed he was more interested in the bigger picture of helping students, which aligned with other stories he had told. However, I wanted to find out what he expected of himself in contributing to this. He shared:

Do the best I can...you know, keep things rolling and if I can't, then hopefully someone says, "You need to go away." I have absolutely no desire to leave the classroom. And I think there's a lot of people, especially on the District PBIS Team... I think there's a lot of people who do aspire to get into leadership on campus or a district position or whatnot, and it looks good for them to have experience like being on the District Team or an executive on the District Team or whatnot. I don't need that at all. And I'm happy to serve as an executive on the District Team and I will stay as long as they want me to be there, but I certainly understand if a teacher is trying to do something else with their career then I would, you know.

I had a sense from this story that he was not interested in having a formal leadership position, but I asked him, "You mean if you were approached by Nancy or someone from the district office to see if you're interested in like an assistant principal position that's opening..." Before I could finish, he said, "Nope....Nope. No thanks." I commented, "Wow. That was quick." He explained:

No thanks. I mean, my wife and I have a nice house, our kids eat, I don't need the money, I work enough as it is now. I don't, you know....I think I make more of an impact on kids' lives when I see them for four hours a week rather than when they just come to my office.

It was obvious by his quick and unwavering response that he would not pursue a more formal leadership position. I wondered, though, if he would feel differently after teaching a few more years. I returned to the Team and asked Evan about the relationships he had with other Team members. He mentioned that he is not really friends with many outside of the Team, but they have a positive professional relationship; “There are people I know professionally and value who they are and how they work....for some of those people, it’s very different from the way I am.” He went on to explain:

There’s probably a fair portion of the student population that needs that person; needs the, “Oh, you had problem. We need a hug?” more than the “Oh, you had a problem. What happened? What did you do wrong?” “What have you done that can be done differently next time?” That’s sort of my approach. My kids kind of...my personal children, they kind of laugh at me; “Yeah Dad, every time we get hurt you say ‘brush it off’.” I’m like, “Well, that’s because life moves on. So, we brush it off and then we find out what happened.”

He laughed as he shared the story about his own children. I could relate because I have a similar approach to my parenting, so I shared that with him. We had a few laughs swapping stories about our own children, but then I returned to the interview. He picked up by describing one Team member in particular who is a counselor and how much he appreciates her approach to working with students. As he pointed out, students need different kinds of adults in their lives. He then applied that idea to the Team, explaining that having people with different approaches to working with students contributed to the strength of the Team. This brought us back to the size of the Team and I commented, “But as you said, well you didn’t really say this, but basically, ‘More hands make less

work.” “Exactly!” he said. “None of us are killing ourselves to be part of this committee. Which is good since all we get is a bagel every six weeks.”

Our conversation then turned to some of the topics that I had identified in relation to the other teacher leaders in the study. Specifically, I asked him about data and the cell phone policy. With regards to data, he spoke quickly about how Kevin usually guided data discussion during meetings. When I asked about the cell phone policy, however, his response was less direct and sure. He first spoke about how he had seen technology change over the past four years and what students used their phones for. But I sensed he felt conflicted about a cell phone policy; he expressed support for students using their phones for school-related activities (e.g., reading e-books, participating in an electronic poll, using it as a calculator) but he recognized that students could also use it for non-school related activities that distract or disrupt the school-day (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). Although he was not directly involved with the sub-committee discussing this issue, he said, “I don’t want to take autonomy away from teachers; I don’t want to say, ‘This is our policy – no phones out.’” When he used the word “autonomy,” another question jumped into my mind that I wanted to ask him. I did not want to interrupt his story, so I wrote myself a note at the top of my paper. Then he sighed and continued, “I don’t want to tell...to be on a committee that says, ‘Teachers, you can’t have these things anymore’ but I also want to support teachers like, ‘This is driving me crazy!’”

With that, Evan exemplified the complexity of the cell phone issue, and a struggle I had seen played out at many schools. He mentioned that the cell phone policy was on the agenda for the next meeting, and I lamented the fact that I would not be able to attend.

He suggested I email their Team's secretary to get the notes after the meeting. I thanked him and made a note to do so.

When I asked him if he could tell me the name of the teacher who was leading the discussion of the cell phone policy, he could not immediately say the name. He opened his laptop to check his email and see if he could recall the name. I thought that was interesting and wondered to myself if this was one of the negative outcomes of having such a large team – that it was easier to forget the more personal aspects of being a part of a team and easier to complete tasks in isolation or with smaller groups. I saw the benefits of having a large team but I wondered if the size could also detract from working as a more cohesive unit. The size does not seem to prevent this Team from accomplishing its goals, but I wondered if there was more to being a team that they should attend to.

He commented about his computer being slow, so while we waited, I returned to the note I had made to myself earlier and said:

You know, when you said “teacher autonomy”, it sparked in my brain a question that I had intended to ask you earlier with regards to Top Cat. Because it seems like you and Terry are pretty autonomous....I mean, you have a lot of autonomy in making decisions regarding Top Cat. Nancy lets you and trusts that...the decisions that you make...

Evan interrupted saying, “Well, anything we think could possibly be an issue gets run by her first.” I responded, “Ok, but you feel pretty comfortable in being able to make some decisions. Have you always had that autonomy all along in the process or do you think it has been in more recent times?” He thought for a moment and then shared:

The first... the first time we approached her with this...I mean obviously we tried to lay everything out. And then she hasn't...and then she hasn't really asked to be ...to be overly informed. I think she trusts our decisions. But Terry and I both really have a lot of respect for Nancy and appreciate the value she has of our leadership skills and wouldn't want to do anything to hurt that. So if we have any doubt, we run it past her.

Then he whispered and laughed, "So, we've never done anything like, 'Let's see if we can get away with it!'" At which I commented, laughing too, "Yeah, that's really in your character."

By then, Evan had located the name of the person he had been looking for and we returned to discuss briefly the cell phone policy. The last question that I wanted to ask him was in regards to any new Team members. He immediately began discussing the students they had on the Team this year: their names, years in school, and the contributions they made to the Team. He became a little more animated when he spoke about the students and it made me wish I could have interviewed them. When I asked him about new adults, he mentioned a few but not with the same detail he had with the students.

I did not have any further questions to ask him but did mention that I may contact him again as I analyzed my data. He was agreeable to that, and invited me to come to as many meetings that I wanted to. We stood up and I went to shake his hand. He feigned a hurt expression and gave me a hug. This exemplified the warm, caring nature that I had experienced throughout my interviews with him. He was so welcoming and generous

with his thoughts, and I thought about how lucky his students were to have him as a science teacher.

As I left the interview, I couldn't help thinking about Evan's positive, energetic nature and his passion. To me, he really epitomized what it meant to be a teacher leader – working outside the classroom to improve the climate, being organized, being respected by peers, having enthusiasm and passion, and having an ability to work well with others. I wondered how long he would be able to sustain his level of involvement and what it would take to fuel his passion and energy.

Summary. During my interviews with Evan, he shared stories about what influenced his leadership (Scouting, participating on teams) and what he does as the chair of the Team. Additionally, Evan told stories about how he leads in other ways; specifically, he told stories about how his science education background contributed to his expert status in relation to curriculum development. Throughout the interviews, he was very animated, gesturing with his hands and revealing his emotions through his facial expressions. The stories that he told demonstrated his passion for what he does on the Team and for students, and thus I identified him as the “Enthusiastic Leader.” Evan exuded passion as he told stories; passion for making the school a safe and positive learning environment for students. He seemed most concerned with helping students develop into good citizens.

Additionally, his stories and the ones told by others revealed that he had personal attributes associated with teacher leaders including influencing peers, having rapport and connections with other teachers, being concerned with improving conditions on campus, and being a great teacher. Evan's sense of humor and charisma were key to his ability to

build rapport with and influence his peers. Many of the stories shared by participants about Evan specifically mentioned his passion for working with students and helping build their character.

His actions as a teacher leader also align with how teacher leadership was defined by participants, including being organized, being a good communicator, being willing to step outside the classroom, and being actively engaged in the change process.

On the Team, though, Evan shared stories with an undercurrent of tension as he tried to navigate his role as the new Team chair within the history of the Team. Specifically, he relied on the knowledge and experience of Dr. Tobin and Mary early on as he tried to figure out how he wanted to lead the Team. Over the course of this study, though, Evan seemed to assert more of his independence and rely less on the historical expertise of others. Evan had a vision of how he wanted to run the Team but also wanted to honor the Team's past.

Terry Endor: The reluctant leader. I first met Terry at my initial meeting with the Team when I introduced my study and made a plea for participants. Terry was one of three participants to stay after the meeting to obtain and complete the consent form. My first impression of Terry was that he was quiet; I had not even realized he had been present at the meeting because he had not said anything. However, he was one of the first to approach me about participating. Terry is of average height, appeared to be in his mid-40s, and had a gentle smile.

My first interview with Terry occurred after school during the first week of second semester. In our communication prior to the interview, we had planned to meet in his office. When I arrived at the school and checked in at the office however, the front

office staff informed me that I would be meeting with Terry elsewhere, and gave me directions to the classroom where Terry would meet me. It was a familiar route; they directed me to the technology and arts building located adjacent to the library and in the same hallway as Kevin's office. This time, I walked through the library to get to the hallway. As I entered the hallway, I saw Terry conversing with another teacher outside of a classroom. When he saw me, he greeted me warmly and said goodbye to the other person.

The room we entered was the photography classroom that had two rows of computer workstations. The classroom teacher's desk sat just inside the door to the left. In one corner at the back of the room, there was an area set up like a photography studio, equipped with backdrops, camera stands, stools, and lights. The rest of the room looked like a computer lab, so I assumed that most of the photography work that students learned about was digital photography. I considered, briefly, that the focus on digital photography fit with the digital innovations implemented throughout the district.

When we entered the classroom, Terry asked where we should sit and I recommended just at the front table; it was as good a place as any. We sat next to each other at the computer workstations and turned our chairs so we could face each other. Before I started recording, in a soft, quiet voice, Terry expressed that he was nervous and hoped he would give me the answers that I wanted. I tried to put his mind at ease and explained that whatever he shared was what I wanted. I further reminded him about my study and expressed that there were "no right answers;" I was most interested in what he had to share about his teacher leader experiences. He seemed to relax a little and sat back in his chair.

To ease into the questions more specifically about teacher leadership and his role as a teacher leader, I asked Terry to share some information about his background and how he came to be in his current position at CCHS. At the time of this study, Terry had been an educator for 16 years, first at an elementary school and then at CCHS. Prior to teaching, Terry worked at Walmart and also coached his nephew's baseball team. Terry spoke softly and smiled as he explained:

My wife has 15 brothers and sisters who....she had a nephew that was in little league, pretty old; like middle school age. And I went out and helped him...his little league team and I got excited about teaching. And that's when I started my path towards education. And that's when I changed my mind about what I wanted to do. So I went to school to be a teacher and I always did well in English/Language Arts area so I pursued that. And that's how I got to be here.

During the first three years of his teaching career, Terry taught at an elementary school in the Shadow Lake School District where Dr. Nancy Tobin was principal. While he was teaching, he coached at a high school in a different district; the school he actually attended as a high school student. When Dr. Tobin was named the principal at CCHS, he asked to join her in the move. He held an elementary degree and certification, but all of his credits "matched up to be a high school teacher except my student teaching ... so the first years at CCHS was on a temporary certificate; it took the place of my student teaching at a 7th grade or above."

I asked Terry about his transition from elementary to high school. His voice softened as he responded:

I love high school students....I like to say that 5th graders and 9th graders are not much different. There's really not that big of a jump. They are still young and impressionable. And I like being a 9th grade teacher because of that; because I like to help the transition into, you know, an adult education.

His emphasis on the last sentence gave me my first impression of his passion for working with teenagers. I could relate to this passion as it is exactly how I feel about the work I do, and I said to him, "It's really a critical time too. Connecting them to the school so they graduate," to which Terry responded, "Exactly."

Trying to be cognizant of our time, I turned to the main focus of my study: teacher leadership. When I asked him to define a teacher leader, he responded, "A teacher that is willing to step outside of the classroom and help other teachers on their journey as well. And that's why I do cognitive coaching." I was unfamiliar with the role of a cognitive coach so I asked him to explain. He shared:

If teachers are having trouble with classroom management, for example, that is what I did my master's degree in...and I was in ed leadership and my paper was on cooperative learning strategies and classroom management. So, a lot of times when teachers are struggling with that, Frank and Nancy [administrators] will have them come in and observe my class...I don't go poking my nose into people's classrooms. But I am available. Just being available to help other teachers along when they need it.

M: So, that is what you do as a cognitive coach? Is helping....not necessarily with content?

T: Cognitive coaching means that...it's another observation that a teacher gets that's outside of the administration...I script their lessons and then give it back to them. And then we meet up and I read their script so they can hear what they did and they can reflect on it. I don't necessarily give them suggestions unless they ask. And then we talk about...it's just a reflection process and they get the script and they take it with them and we're finished.

Terry explained further that first and second year teachers in the district are assigned a cognitive coach to help mostly with classroom management issues. He had been a cognitive coach for seven years at the time of this study, but when I asked him to give me a specific example of how he had helped a teacher, he paused and could not easily come up with one. He asked if we could come back to it, and I agreed.

Terry's example of cognitive coaching provided me with one example of his teacher leadership. However, I wanted to focus on teacher leadership in relation to the Team so I asked him about it. He immediately spoke about Evan Jones, the Team's chair, and referred to him as a "great teacher and a good leader." I asked, "What does he do that makes you say that?" to which he talked briefly about Evan's skills related to communication, organization, and team facilitation. As he described Evan's communication, he mentioned meeting minutes being typed up and distributed. I asked if they were emailed and he laughed when he said, "They may be attached to something that I haven't seen." I commented about him getting a lot of emails, and he responded laughing again, "I have never opened them up [meeting minutes] and read through them. I am always there and do my part." In this statement, he emphasized the reality of his busy life. Not only does he teach, but he also coaches softball, is a cognitive coach, and is

primarily in charge of the Top Cat program, a student recognition program that is part of their PBIS implementation.

I thought about how he described Evan and wondered if he would describe himself as having those same teacher leader characteristics. I asked Terry when he first realized he was a teacher leader. Terry explained that he had not recognized it himself; his mentor had:

She was very aware of my abilities as a teacher I guess and she encouraged me to take part in some ...breakout sessions during our...what do they call them?...our instructional time, during our half days, you know when we come together as a group and teachers teach. I had never done that before; I had only taught kids. And she encouraged me to teach adults andbecause she thought what I was doing was a good thing and she wanted me to share. And then it just started from there as far as the teacher leader goes. And then I started accepting other positions, because I always said no before. And it wasn't no because I didn't want to it was no because I wasn't confident enough to do it. It takes some time to really... You know how you are; you know as a person ...you're not quite confident in everything that you do and when somebody validates it, then it's like, "Ok, I can do this."

He whispered the very last part of this thought, adding emphasis as if to indicate this was an important point for him. When his mentor first showed confidence in him, he had been teaching four or five years, although he could not remember exactly. He went on to share that before then, he primarily focused just on teaching:

I still...it's hard for me to get out of my classroom. Because my first priority are the kids, you know. And one assistant principal during an evaluation told me that...I got written down on my evaluation for one thing and that was not coming out of my classroom. They wanted...she said, you have too much to give to other teachers and you need to get out of your room. And for me, I was doing my thing with my students and I was tending to their needs and enjoying being in their company. And I needed to get out.

I noted that the examples that he had given me so far about his teacher leadership (cognitive coaching, presenting at inservice days) were all related to instruction, so I asked about his leadership on the Team. He had trouble answering, but likened his involvement on the Team to teaching and learning. He said, "Everything is learning...teaching and learning. It's still instructional ... It's a different kind of instruction; it's more social...social interactions, the community. And what we are doing...creating an atmosphere that is conducive to the instruction."

I followed up by asking him about other leadership opportunities he had taken advantage of, particularly at the district-level. He paused for a long time and was unable to come up with anything. I re-worded the question and he shared that he had participated in some committees related to writing and calendaring curricula. Then he laughed and said:

Everything is revolved around that now that you say that. Well, yeah, I go to the district all the time. I am picked to go and work with 9th grade curriculum or go there and talk about the results and how we can make things better.

I made the observation that he was pretty humble about it, and that all he had talked about was related to leadership. He responded:

I don't think of it as leadership I guess. Because I think of it as helping my students. It's leader in that way, you know? And I want.....and to help the school. I gather what you are talking about...its leading teachers. And I am not necessarily...I don't think of it like what I do with the curriculum is leading the teachers, I think of it as leading the students and leading the school and helping to maintain the integrity of that....our results and data and that kind of stuff.

I was really taken by what he revealed; I had not thought of teacher leadership in this way before so I shared that with him:

This is a really good learning opportunity for me...to learn how people are thinking about themselves. So what does being a teacher leader mean to you? Because I would label you as a teacher leader, even thougheven though you don't think of yourself as a leader of teachers, but you are a teacher and you are a leader. So that is how I am labeling you as a teacher leader.

With that perspective, he asked me to ask the question again, so I did: "What does it mean to you to be a teacher leader?" This time he responded:

It means a lot because it means that my administration has confidence in what I do which validates the reason I'm here. So, I mean, I wouldn't want to be.....I mean, whatever I do, I want to be excellent. And that...to me that means that they are saying that I'm excellent...and that's all I need.

M: To continue to be excellent.

T: Yes, for people to recognize it. I don't need them to shout it from the rooftops, but I think by being, you know, getting an email saying, "I need you to be at this meeting" or "Will you be at this meeting? We want your input." I think that that's what that does. And you don't have to stand up at a meeting and say, you know, "Terry Endor is excellent." You know? That's not what I need.

M: Being invited to participate on things is their way of saying "You are excellent."

T: Right. I mean I just got recently selected for Teacher of the Year for Circle K...

M: Congratulations!

T: Thank you. Well, I am a finalist for...9 teachers.

M: But congratulations!

T: Thank you. And it's kind of embarrassing when you...because I got...I didn't really know how to act, you know, because that's not...I don't try to get out there.

This exchange, to me, represented Terry's humility that came across earlier as he spoke about presenting during teacher inservice days; he did not want to draw attention to his leadership activities because he seemed to view them as something he wants to do rather than what he has to do.

I wanted Evan to share a little more about his nomination for the award because I believed that it was a part of his identity. I asked him to share how he had been nominated for the award to which he responded:

My assistant principal. This is his 2nd year as assistant principal for 9th....for the Freshmen House. And he came in and observed me again this year. Before he was

a teacher... And then he became an assistant principal and he's watched me a few times teaching. On my last evaluation, last year at the beginning of the year, he said he wanted to nominate me. And he nominated me and it went to Nancy and then she approved the nomination and it went to the district. And the district approved the nomination and it went to the university and then went through a bunch of rigmarole and then I got a phone call. And then I was on the news yesterday.

I could tell he was proud by the expression on his face; he had the biggest smile I had seen so far from him. But I could also tell he really did not want to focus on it; as he said he was embarrassed by the attention. I congratulated him but I decided at this point to move on and asked him to share how he had developed his skills as a leader. He reflected that experience had mainly influenced his leadership skills:

I haven't done anything in particular that's to develop them I think it's just the frequency of being...of doing it....develops it you know. I am a softball coach, so when it comes to repetition, that's what makes you...makes you excellent. You know, so I mean...of course that first year you're nervous and you're not sure what to do or what to say and you script everything out. And I think as time goes by, you think off the cuff more often because you are coming from a perspective of...you just know what you're doing. And...and how to communicate it so...I think that's it mostly. And before it was tied to an agenda. Still have the points to talk about but it's not saying...you know, it's more... I guess it's more personal. You get to be more personal in your communication with people instead of so robotic, you know? And I think through that you become more...you are able to

touch more people and make it meaningful to them. I mean because I...you've been in many different classes and you've been in...probably keynote speakers and you hear how keynote speakers....and I admire them so much because they get you. And that's what it's about. I think that as the years have gone by it's easier to do that and to recognize it.

I reminded him about his master's degree in educational leadership and asked if that helped develop his leadership at which he responded, "Definitely." He did not elaborate, however, but instead explained that he had earned his degree through the educational leadership program that one of the state universities put together at their district. Teachers throughout the district could participate in the opportunity. It was convenient for them because the classes were all held at the district office. In most years, the students in the program were all from SLSD so students did not have the opportunity to learn from others in different districts. I already knew of this program from my previous experience and always wondered what participants thought of it. Terry did not offer specific ways that this formal program developed his leadership skills and I did not ask him to elaborate.

I asked Terry if he could think of anything else the district offered that helped develop leadership and he mentioned the committees, and specifically the PBIS committee that was established while CCHS was being planned. Terry had been invited to participate on that initial committee, but, he said, "I didn't join up on all the PBIS. Really the only reason I joined PBIS was because of the Top Cat program." I commented that I had heard he was the mastermind behind that and he shared, "Yes, that is where it

all came and then Nancy said, ‘You need to be on the PBIS committee.’” I asked him to explain how the Top Cat program came about. He shared:

So I had seniors and I got frustrated with seniors because they just thought that they were entitled...they were entitled to rudeness, they were entitled to run the campus. And then I started noticing that they got to leave school early. AND I was able to see their grades. So, we had kids that had F’s that were just marching out of the campus every single day at noon, and it bothered me. So I complained about it to my wife. And my wife said, “Well, in Wisconsin, at my high school, we had this thing called Responsibility. You had to earn Responsibility in order to leave campus.” And I said, “Tell me more about it.” And she told me that the kids...when...once they....it was a citizenship grade. When the kids...when you got your Responsibility, and they called it Responsibility, you said....kids would even have that dialogue; “Do you have Responsibility?” You know? So, I thought that was cool. And she said if you didn’t have Responsibility, those kids....and it was small town in Wisconsin. And when the kids did not have Responsibility, they were not allowed to jump in their cars and go home ...to go to their jobs or whatever. They had to stay on campus at a study hall. And they had a study hall teacher, which was the M room, which was the dining auditorium. And there was a teacher or two and security in there, and the kids would have to shuffle in there and they’d sit there and they’d pull out their books and there’d be supervised homework; it was study hall. And you couldn’t talk. So kids really wanted to earn Responsibility, and part of their Responsibility was their grades. And I thought, “Man, they shouldn’t be leaving if they’re not passing classes” and I brought it to

Nancy. And I looked up their program on their high school website after that and I just went on my own, I went through and I made a plan. And then I brought the plan to her and said, “This is what...” And I never...I didn’t ask about it, if I could do it, I just said, “This is my idea, what do you think?” And she said, “Oh my goodness. Let’s do that. We can’t keep kids from leaving, so what else would kids want?” And we decided that in elementary school, kids get recess; that’s their free time. And when they get in trouble, you take away their free time. So what do kids.....what do kids in high school want control of? Their free time. When is our free time? Our free time is study hall time which is advisor base. So she said...we incorporated the idea of leaving advisor base once a week.

Students awarded Top Cat status were allowed to leave their advisor base class one day a week (the day determined by Evan and Terry) to participate in preferred activities such as socializing outside with other Top Cat students, enjoying an early lunch, playing games in the gym, or going to the library.

During one of my interviews with Dr. Tobin, she provided her perspective on how Top Cat came about, adding a little more detail than Terry provided:

Terry said, “Why aren’t we giving citizenship grades?” We do in the K-8’s, on the report card. We gave citizenship grades, E, S and N. And we... we came in and began talking to a few teachers and they were like, “How in the world are you going to do citizenship grades at the high school level?” And Terry said, “Well, it’s gonna take a little bit more work,” but if... if it’s an intervention then you can. You don’t have to do whole class discipline, which is what happens at the high school level; nobody gets this incentive because three people were the ones who

upset the classroom. And so our philosophy in elementary was we didn't like whole class discipline and so Terry said, "Well, let's take what we've done there and let's come up with a rating scale of 1 to 4." And so he came up with what 1 to 4 meant on the rubric. He got 3 other people to create a team, a Top Cat team. And they developed the rubric and they had time at staff meetings to say, "Okay, this is what a 1 looks like. This is what a 4 looks like. This is what... and this is how you do it."

Another participant further explained how the Top Cat program worked:

The idea of Top Cat is having a citizenship program at the high school level where students get positive rewards for being a good citizen. So being on time to class, being respectful to peers, not talking out of turn in class. Just all around being respectful and a good citizen.....and doing what they're supposed to do. They....you don't have to be extraordinary to be a Top Cat, you just need to do what you are supposed to do all the time, you know? ...So the teachers have a rubric; it's a 1 through 4 rubric. The default is a 3 and if the student...and the student gets a Top Cat grade in every class including Advisory. And so if their average is anything above a 3, and they have no D's or F's and no 1's, then they can be a Top Cat. And what they get for being a Top Cat is once a week they get early release to lunch, once a week they get early release to the busses. Every ...not....every movement day during Advisor Base, if they're not....if the teacher gives them permission, they can be out in the commons or in the library with their lanyard visible, and doing, you know, what they will – having snacks under a tree or, you know, whatever it is they want to do. On top of that, they might get

discounts at school events, there might be random acts of kindness – “All Top Cats, come to the cafeteria for nachos.”

When developing the idea for Top Cat, Terry mentioned that he had been influenced by the initial architectural plans for CCHS that were presented to the district-level committee he had been a part of as the school was being conceptualized:

When Cactus Creek first was proposed to the district, there were pictures of what the campus was going to look like and it had pictures of our courtyard out here with nice grass and kids sitting under the trees doing their homework like a community college. And I said, “We’re not doing that.” We’re telling kids, “You can’t be there. You can’t be under the tree doing your homework. We don’t want you there.” And that... by telling them that was creating problems I thought. And I said, “We need to open it up and say, ‘We want you here. Why don’t you go outside in the sun? Do your homework, and if you’re caught up on your homework, you’re telling us through your responsibility that you have good grades. Kick the soccer ball around.’” So it’s basically high school recess once a week for them. And they get other perks as far as getting out early for lunch and stuff like that.

I asked him about other people being involved and he mentioned attending an administrator meeting to present Top Cat and brainstorm how it could be implemented. Although he did not mention it at the time, other participants I had interviewed mentioned Evan as another leader with Top Cat. I decided to return to that later and asked Terry to share how Top Cat became a part of their PBIS implementation. He explained:

Well now it's just the language of campus; everybody knows what Top Cat is.

And that's another thing that I said to Nancy is that...because I noticed that at our school we were doing lots of things like this; here's a good program and we're going to do it. And then we started it in August and then all of... there's problems, because things have problems. And then at Christmas, there's so many problems people are like, "We're not doing that anymore; we're going to do this."

And that bothered me and ...when I said to Nancy, "I really want to do this Top Cat program but please, I want to have a 5-year plan." I said, "I want to go for 5 years and then if...and we're not going to change it. My idea is not...I do not want it changed until summer. Because we are going to have those problems.

When summer comes we're going to go back and do a revision and then ...we'll add things, take things away, fix things. And then, if after 5 years it's still not working, or there's problems and we want to try something new, let's do it. But I really want...please let me work on it for 5 years." And she said, "Ok."

When he shared this with me, I nodded my head but did not say anything aloud. I thought to myself about my experiences with schools. Since I have been involved with many schools and their implementation of various programs, I could relate to Terry's desire for giving Top Cat several years to get established. All too often, I have witnessed schools implement a new program or strategy only to abandon it at the first sign of adversity instead of working through any complications and making adjustments. I admired Terry for his intuition going into the Top Cat planning and his insistence on a 5-year plan.

One issue I have observed in schools with the implementation of new programs is staff resistance. I wondered how Terry overcame that and asked him about how the Top Cat program had been presented to staff. While he did not directly answer the question, he did admit that not all teachers were in favor of the program because it does not align with their classroom management philosophy:

I am more of a free type person and if you come into my classroom, the kids have certain rules, you know, that are just respect rules really. And beyond that, we give and take. And not everybody's like that, and that's the way Top Cat is designed, is to be give and take and understanding.

Most staff are supportive of Top Cat and actively participate in its implementation. As Kevin stated, "One of the things people like about the program is that it is not in any way, shape, or form, tied to grades...it's really about citizenship and behavior and attendance and all those good things."

Terry further explained that there have been cases where a teacher has had a bad day and given a low citizenship grade to every student in one class, whether every student deserved it or not. I asked him to share an example of when he was able to change a teacher's mind about Top Cat. He proceeded to share the following story about a teacher who:

Gave the whole class a 1 and I just went up to him and just asked him about the situation and said that....and I brought up the example of the student who I knew was a very good student because I had him in my class. And I know....and it's one of those kids who sits...you know, that doesn't make any waves, and is not going to make any waves and sits quietly by and does well. And I just brought

that name to him and said...and made him realize what you were doing by putting that number down, what you were taking away. And he acknowledged that it was probably just, you know, on a whim that he made those grades because he had a bad day, and that he would re-think that and not do that again. Plus he got some emails from some parents. He was just...because a lot of kids are looking forward to that, and they don't get it. And if they don't get it, something that they deserve...you know, good kids they deserve something.

This story demonstrated Terry's autonomy running Top Cat program; he seemed to be the primary decision-maker with regards to this program. I wanted to ensure that my interpretations were accurate so I asked him if teachers go directly to him with issues with Top Cat or to Dr. Tobin, and he answered, "Teachers will email me about individual students a lot and I just handle it on my own with them." He further explained that if teachers have gone to Dr. Tobin, he did not know about it because she supports the program; "She doesn't micromanage and she backs you 100%." In my interview with Dr. Tobin, she acknowledged that Terry had autonomy. She explained that when Terry presented his vision for Top Cat to her, she told him, "Run with it and tell me what you need and I'll get the resources."

The Top Cat program did not always run smoothly; there were many changes along the way to the current program. Several participants shared how the program had changed over time. For example, one participant explained that the Top Cat program:

Used to have attendance and a lot of other weird stuff, and involved a laptop and strange things like that way back in the day. And that kind of got thoroughly erased when the new and improved Top Cat program came in. Initially, it was

really ...I don't want to say it was a challenge to get the teachers on board, but it was a challenge for the teachers to figure out exactly what it was that their responsibility was, you know. Solidifying the rubric that everyone pretty much uses; getting the teachers to enter the grade, having the default was something that came later. Initially they were entering every grade. Initially the people who were running the program were doing everything on an Excel spreadsheet and it wasn't automatically calculated through Power School. It had to be....you know, there were just a lot of bumps in the road. And then the positive rewards that have come out of it have changed as time's gone on; it's gotten more solid as far as "This is the day, this is what you get. This is the day, this is what YOU get."

Not only has the implementation of Top Cat changed over time, but also some of the ways Top Cat was managed. Evan shared a change that affected the teachers' input into the students' Top Cat Status:

There's been....concerns that teachers across campus have brought up saying, "We don't have the opportunity to do anything with a kid who's a punk but he's a Top Cat." And so Terry and I kind of decided and then threw it out to the committee to see if they supported us in it. But we just said, "Well, let's make it that any adult staff member can take your lanyard away from you."

Change has also occurred with regards to the leadership of Top Cat. Terry and Evan have remained consistently involved, but their leadership style has changed. Dr. Tobin shared that over time, Terry and Evan's leadership has really grown in relation to the Top Cat program. She explained:

Terry and Evan used to say, you know, “Look. You guys really should do this.” ...They are no longer afraid to stand up in front of the staff ... and just say, “Look, this is how we’re using this data. And it’s to help you as teachers.” So, people have just typically done it because at 80% we said, “Okay, 80% of the staff want to do it. We’re going to do it.”

Dr. Tobin also stated that the staff respond well to the feedback they receive from Terry and Evan because “they are well respected by staff.”

Through all that I had heard about the Top Cat program, I was curious about how Terry came to be on the PBIS Team. The program seemed to be running smoothly so I wondered if he felt it necessary to be a part of the Team. I reflected back to some information he had shared with me previously and wanted to clarify when his involvement with the Team began. Terry started the Top Cat program about five years previously, he confirmed, but was not asked to be on the Team until about two years ago. He further explained that he really had been running Top Cat with Evan and that Evan, the current Team chair, had been on the Team much longer.

Our conversation was interrupted by a call on the radio that Terry had; Terry was asked about a microphone. After having a short conversation over the radio, he turned to me and said:

Sorry. Today we just did a Top Cat assembly; kids got their....that’s what that microphone was. Kids got their stickers today. And, usually, I pass out the stickers all by myself in my room. So for weeks, even though you say, “We’re going to be done on Friday” you know, kids come straggling in every day, you know, and I don’t ever get my lunch or whatever. So today we did the assembly

and they all came down at once, which was nice and that's done. I mean, there's still kids that are going to come in but the majority are good to go.

I asked him how many students had achieved Top Cat status in this round and he replied "about 400." I commented about how that was quite a few new students to be honoring. As if not wanting to take full credit for coordinating this event, he mentioned that another Team member, who also happened to be his sister, helped develop the lists of students because of her familiarity with the computer program used to generate the list.

As he shared this experience honoring students, I thought to myself about how lucky the students were to be in such a positive environment where there were different ways that they were recognized. In fact, I thought about the positive school climate I had experienced at most of the schools in the district. This made me wonder about the climate district-wide so I asked Terry how the Team fit in with the goals and objectives of the district. He reflected on how their motto (Connections, High Standards, Success) was what PBIS was all about – "it meets those things and it helps to create connections with students, shows them that we have high standards and we are accountable for them and I think it all equals success." At the district-level, he explained, PBIS ties in to the district's goal of positive community relations. He shared that "I've had lots of parents email me and be happy with the program, you know? I think that is a good community relations tool. And everything we do with PBIS does that."

I returned to my list of questions and asked Terry about Team membership. He confirmed what others had said; that the Team is representative and that Evan was the chair. He also confirmed what others had said about their Team functioning; "Somebody leads the meeting, brings up issues - what do we think about them, do we want to pursue

them? And if we can't pursue it this way, how do we change it? And then we volunteer for it." The only conflict he recalled on the Team was in relation to the dress code. He further shared that a student on the Team was the one that came up with the solution they were pursuing as a Team – to focus on encouraging “classy dress” as opposed to saying “You are dress-coded!”

Terry then shared how he had just taken the “classy dress” idea to his freshmen classes and offered extra credit to those students who dressed in “professional dress” on a specific day. He also tied this into what he was teaching in class – expository text, specifically the Constitution and Declaration of Independence. He lowered his voice, almost to a whisper, and smiled as he spoke about teaching students why it was important to dress nicely and respectfully. Terry explained:

I said to them, “I know this is not a history class but we have to study expository text anyway and we have to talk about persuasion, so we’re going to talk about....and no better place than in politics so let’s talk about politics. And let’s learn a little about the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, where our founding fathers were coming from and let’s make some choices.” And I think when we talk about that, it’s kind of....it makes them really perk up and be interested in some adult conversation.

This led our conversation to a topic that came up during a meeting I had observed: language registers. During that meeting, the Team was just starting to talk about how they could incorporate language registers (styles of language with different levels of formality) with PBIS. Terry reminded me that they were also thinking about tying dress code into the language registers. By this time in our conversation, I noticed that we had

been talking for about an hour and I felt that this was a good place to stop. We concluded our discussion and Terry agreed to meet again after I had transcribed this interview.

As I left the interview, several ideas about Terry's leadership came to me and I considered them as I drove away. First, I was taken by how he framed his leadership in regards to students instead of to staff. I had not thought of leadership in this way but it made sense, considering the primary motivation for most teachers to enter the profession is to work with and for students. Terry did not consider himself to be a leader of teachers but a leader in the sense that whatever he did impacted students. He seemed to look beyond his immediate work with teachers to focus on the impact he indirectly had on students. For example, by helping teachers improve their classroom management, Terry was helping create more positive learning spaces for students.

Another idea I considered after the interview was the autonomy that Terry seemed to have with regards to the management of Top Cat. I decided I needed to structure my second interview with Terry to include questions where I could elicit additional stories about his autonomy.

I met with Terry again approximately five weeks following the first interview. We met during his planning period in the early afternoon. It just so happened that on that day an uncharacteristic snowstorm had swept through the area during the school day. School had been dismissed early, so when I arrived, there were only small groups of students around campus talking and playing in the snow.

I was supposed to meet Terry in the photography classroom again but when I checked in at the office, they told me that Terry was waiting for me in the Freshmen House (where all the freshmen teachers had desks). I walked across campus watching the

students playing in the snow and having a great time. As I did so, I heard an announcement over the public address system reminding staff and students that extracurricular activities had been cancelled and all should be careful driving home.

When I arrived at the Freshmen House, I checked in with the administrative assistant and walked to the area where the teachers' desks were located. Shortly after I entered the room, Terry met me and started to direct me to his desk. I reminded him that I would be recording the conversation and thought it best to talk where we could have more privacy. He led me to the break room that had several round tables surrounded by chairs, a kitchen sink, a refrigerator, and a microwave. When we entered the room, two security guards were sitting at a table. Terry engaged them in conversation after which they got up and left. I thanked them and apologized for "running them off", but they said they had to get outside and supervise the remaining students anyway.

After they left, Terry and I sat down at the table furthest from the door. Before I started the official interview, we talked briefly about the weather and the students playing in the snow. He commented that while other extracurricular activities had been canceled, he was still going to hold softball practice, but at an earlier time due to the weather. I acknowledged this and let him know that I had another interview following his, so we agreed to begin the interview. I let him know that I wanted to follow up on some things he shared in the first interview and get clarification on some things that had been said and that I had observed in the team meetings. In addition, I also had some new questions that I wanted to ask related to the themes I had tied to some of the other teacher leaders. After that introduction, a student entered the room looking for Terry to ask him about a writing assignment. He spent a few minutes speaking with her about her essay and giving her

feedback. When she left, Terry smiled; it was obvious he enjoyed the interaction with the student and helping her, which reminded me about how he visualized his leadership in relation to students.

I started the second interview by returning to a question from the first interview that he could not answer at the time: if he could think of a time, as a cognitive coach, that he had helped a teacher. This time, he was ready with an answer: “I have helped numerous teachers with the same issue and that’s classroom management.” He went on to explain that while earning his master’s in educational leadership, he had researched Spencer Kagan and the Kagan Structures. Specifically, he focused on the structures: “There’s like 125 structures that you can do, that you can insert into various lesson plans at any moment. You don’t have to plan around...they are usable within your structure.”

Terry went on to share a couple of his favorites with me, smiling and sitting straighter in his chair. I related some of the strategies to ones that I had used when facilitating training, and he indicated that he had used them in training situations as well. He added, “I have mentioned Kagan a lot with cognitive coaches. And remember, cognitive coaching is not about instructing; it’s about giving answers....helping when they ask for it.” I thought to myself that it was interesting that he wanted to emphasize the goal of cognitive coaching as helping rather than evaluation.

While he could easily relate his role as a cognitive coach to his leadership, I really wanted to talk more about his leadership in relation to the Team. In the first interview, I had asked him how he came to be on the Team. When I reviewed the transcript prior to the second interview, I discovered that he had not provided as much detail as I needed to really understand. In addition, other participants had shared with me their perspectives on

Terry's Team participation, but I really wanted to see if they aligned with how Terry presented it. He explained:

Evan is the leader of PBIS and I was looking for people to help me with Top Cat. I asked Evan if he would like...if he would be willing to help. So he was basically taking...the Top Cat stuff into PBIS and he was making that transition or connection. He and Nancy must have spoken about it because Evan said, "Nancy thinks you should be in PBIS." So that's how I got put in there. She said, "Will you please come to a meeting?" Basically they asked me to a meeting and then I went to one and I talked about something so I was kind of like a guest speaker. You know about... it must have been Top Cat. I don't know; I don't remember. And then they ended up asking me to stay.

I asked Terry to clarify a few points to make sure that I had an accurate chronology of what happened. Terry reminded me that he:

Was actually part of the very first meeting that Cactus Creek had for PBIS. Way back when this was the only building in Cactus Creek. All of us...I was an English Department chair, so all of the English department, or all of the department ITLs [Instructional Team Leaders] were members of PBIS. I don't think we were really official members but we got...we had substitutes and went to a training of some sort.

It seemed from this story, that Terry did not really consider himself part of the Team early on. It was not until he had started Top Cat and had been invited to a meeting that he became a Team member.

I returned to the idea I had posed in the first interview: the autonomy he had to make decisions about the Top Cat program. He responded simply, “I make all of the decisions,” but quickly followed up saying that Nancy had given the autonomy to him more or less because he had created it. And, he admitted, “It’s a big job.” But he quickly went on to explain that it was not that big of a job and that he really was not running the program alone, naming several people who helped pull grades and create the lists each quarter. When teachers have questions or concerns, though, they approach Terry:

And then the lists come out and then if a teacher sees a kid on the list and is like, “Oh no they shouldn’t be,” then they contact me and they tell me why and then I have to talk to the kid and say, “No.” Or if they end up not being on there and should, then I go through and make that happen too. And if a student gets in trouble in class, teachers are allowed to take their lanyard and then they get it to me. And then the kids have to come... basically they come and talk to me and tell me what happened and I’m the judge and jury I guess.

With this story, he demonstrated a bit of his autonomy but I was curious as to how that autonomy came about; did he just assume it or did Dr. Tobin tell him that he had the authority to make the decisions? He shared:

It was Nancy. I think she liked the idea and she wanted it to run smoothly and she knows what the changes are at the beginning of the year and what the rules are and everything. So as far as keeping track of all of that stuff, you know, that’s on me. And if there’s a problem, like if they see too many kids out at a certain time or whatever, then administration will get a hold of me and say, “Hey, what’s going on? Is there some special day?” or whatever.

Dr. Tobin confirmed this when I interviewed her. She stated:

Evan and Terry run a lot of interference, I'm sure. Probably more than what we realize...they're both very personable people and this is so meaningful to them so...[it] has been predominately carried out by them...I just give them the money that they want...Evan and Terry are just really still passionate about it.

Top Cat, it seemed, was functioning well and had been integrated into the school's culture. What I had learned from others and from my observations, though, was that not much Team meeting time was spent on Top Cat. I was curious, then, why he wanted to be a part of the Team; Top Cat had functioned well before he was a member of the Team. He responded:

I think as an educator I believe that students are motivated by positive interactions with adults. And I think that the more ways we can create positive, you know, positive interactions the more compliant the students will be and the happier ...I think happy students, happy parents, good grades. That's what I'm hoping for. So that's why I do it. I'm not a ...I came from a military family so my dad was a real disciplinarian so...I'm more of a grey person. I mean I'm not a crack the whip on the kids but I'm also not a pushover so I think that there...there's teachers on both ends and I view myself as a teacher that's kind of in the middle so that I can try to impart that on other teachers. Because I think that it helps. In my opinion, that's the way to form relationships with high school kids. They have to know that you care; they have to know that you are going to give them leeway when it's necessary. Like in my class, I tell the kids, "Hey, you know, things happen. You know you're away on a track trip to Nogales and you guys get home late and you

have an assignment that's due, don't hide it from me. Come to me and say, 'Hey, Mr. T. I just couldn't get it done.'" And I'm that teacher that's gonna be like, "You've gotten everything else done, you're all up to date so I understand. So give it to me tomorrow. I'm good with that." And that's the way that I roll.

Although he did not answer the question directly, I gleaned that he became involved on the Team because he believed in the broader purpose: creating a positive culture for students. His leadership is not so much about managing a program, but helping establish systems and programs that support his philosophy of caring for students. His involvement with the Team is bigger than just Top Cat. I asked him, "Do you think you could have continued doing Top Cat without being a part of the PBIS Team?" He quickly responded, "Yes," at which I commented, "But you choose to be on the Team." He laughed and said, "Yeah. Well they asked me to be and I say 'Yes'." So I asked him, laughing too, "Well, you just are on there because you can't say no?" He simply commented, "I do have a lot on my plate."

Still trying to understand his true motivation for being a Team member, I asked him what he hoped the Team would accomplish. He stated:

Well, the mission statement for the school – Connections, High Standards, Success. That's the whole goal. Without....and I know that is what Nancy's goal is. I mean it is a simple mission and PBIS supports all three aspects of it. So, that's what I hope to accomplish. And I want this to be ...continue to be a friendly place for the community. It's a pride thing. I want it to be....it's awesome when people say, "The Shadow Lake School District's number one district in the state."

I don't want to work for any other place; I want to work for the best. And I want to help them continue to be the best.

I then asked him to describe the relationship he had with other Team members, since they shared the same mission and vision. He admitted that he really did not have a relationship with other Team members outside of Team meetings:

And that's maybe one of my downfalls as a teacher is that I don't get out of my classroom too often because I spend a lot of time with kids...So I don't spend...any time with them outside of the meeting unless we have a specific task to do.

I reminded him about the story he shared in the first interview about one of his teacher evaluations where he was told that he needed to get out of the classroom more. He seemed surprised that he had shared that previously, but nodded and explained:

I struggle with that... because I'm a teacher. My job in MY mind is to help the kids and if that means that I am making connections with them during lunch then I want to do that. You know? I am not so...I mean I...I'm not...I don't want to sound harsh but I'm not trying to make friends at school. I mean if I make...you know what I mean? I'm not looking for that. I'm married, I have my friends at home, I'm busy. And when I'm here I'm working and I'm working with kids.

To make sure I understood his meaning, I paraphrased by saying, "That's your main goal, your focus is really on the kids." Terry responded, "I'm not a...I mean every once in a while I do come in here at lunch with these guys [reference to the security guards in the break room when we entered] because I need some adult interactions." I laughed and said, "What? 9th graders don't give you that?" He laughed too and responded,

“Sometimes I need to be in here and I’ll wander in. But if you ask anybody, it’ll be...if it’s once a week, it’s a lot.”

Understanding his motivation for participating on the Team, I wanted to understand more the role the Team played in his coordination of Top Cat. In meetings I had observed, Top Cat had been discussed only minimally; just an update on how many students had achieved Top Cat status. I had missed a couple of meetings so I thought perhaps that I had missed more substantial Team conversations, so I asked Terry how Top Cat was typically discussed in Team meetings. He responded:

Usually it’s because I bring up things that are...that I need help with. Like, let’s see, last time I brought up the fact that not all teachers were entering their citizenship grades. So what can we do about that? Because the program isn’t credible. And then you have these good kids who want to be good so this is their incentive yet you have kids that are not being good that are getting Top Cat. You know, and it’s just.....And I hate that part of it. The only way that we can fix it is one of 2 ways: if a kid doesn’t get ...like say they have 5 classes and one teacher doesn’t give them the grade then....Before, last year...last quarter or last year...I was like, “Nope. I’m sorry. Your teacher didn’t give you your grade,” hoping that it would make them mad and parents would say something and you know, go to their teacher, or something. But it just turns into more work for me. Does that make sense? So it’s troubling. I’m like, “I don’t know how to fix this!” And Nancy says....she sends out emails, “You have to enter your grades.” But then, inevitably, there’re teachers around campus that don’t hold it...they don’t think it’s a big deal so they don’t. And all they have to do, it’s so silly, ...all they

have to do...if I'm a teacher that doesn't care about Top Cat. Ok, there's going to be teachers like that. Then go into your grade-book and give everybody a 3. And then you don't have to....really, you don't have to change it; just keep it like that all quarter. And then we can see. So that's what I ended up doing; I'm going ok. I just assume that Teacher X doesn't care about Top Cat, so I'm gonna give that...I'm gonna put a 3. So I average it now with a 3 there. But then, I'll get emails, "This student...." And I'm like, "Well, you didn't do it."

Other Team members confirmed what Terry said about the level of the Team's involvement in managing the Top Cat program. One participant shared that "Top Cat is a set program...it's one of those things where we'll get an update every once in a while as to what percentage of students are in Top Cat, if the numbers have gone up and down, or why." Another Team member confirmed that discussions of Top Cat were kept to a minimum during Team meetings. She explained that Terry:

Shapes it and we talk about it at the beginning of every year, how do we... or actually, the end of the year for the following year. How do we, you know, what do we need to change, what needs to stay the same? And he is pretty adamant about not making changes to it in the middle of the year. He's pretty adamant about that because he wants it to be consistent.

At this point I noticed that we had been talking for nearly one hour. I only had a few other topics that I wanted to address with him, namely the new people on the Team and his leadership aspirations. He did not have much to say about the new people on the Team and could only identify a few of them. Although he participated on the Team, he was very focused on his interactions with those involved in Top Cat.

On the other hand, when I asked him where he saw himself in 10 years, was quick to respond, “Good question. I would like to be an athletic director.” He sat up a little straighter in his chair and leaned on the table toward me as he elaborated:

That is what I would like to do. Whether it’s here, I don’t know. I am passionate about that, you know. And I think that I would do good at it. I would do very well at being an athletic director. Because I want to take care of facilities, I want, you know,...I coach girls. Being fair with boys vs. girls teams, and being a pillar, a face of the community. That’s one of the things that brings parents to campus. And I’m not an artsy guy. I go to the musicals, my niece was in the musicals, and I love those things a lot. I teach Romeo and Juliet in my class and...but that’s not where I would put myself. I could help the...parents come to the school and see...I want them to have a positive experience with athletics. That’s what I want to do. I think in 10 years...I mean, I’m ready now. I already told Nancy that.

Right now, though, there are several people who are filling the role of athletic director; they have one person with the title of athletic director, an assistant principal over athletics, and a teacher/coach who is in charge of transportation. Cactus Creek is a large high school so I understood why they needed several people to manage all the details for the various sports. He emphasized that coordination of the transportation alone was a big job:

If you don’t have one person that’s in contact directly with the transportation department then you end up with kids sitting on the curb waiting for a bus. And that’s happened to me. After we lost the Championship game in 2009, we were at [the university] and [the other high school] was celebrating their victory and we

just wanted to get on the bus and go. And we're waiting, and waiting. And I'm just like, "Really?"

I asked him what steps he had to take to achieve his goal, at which he responded, "Well, I already have my master's degree in ed leadership, so I could make that jump at any time...I think I might have to take some...administration certificate...maybe take a test of something." Unfortunately, he shared, that position will probably not be vacant soon, but:

I know that would be something that I would enjoy. Right now, I feel like...plus it would give me more time with my wife. My daughter just left [for college]. And now it's like, it's just the 2 of us and it's like we're dating again. It's kind of cool...But when I'm home, I'm always working....I would like to be able to find a job in education where I don't always have to be grading. I know that's what everybody wants. It's hard. It's a 24-hour job....And I know that I can help kids. And I'm passionate about sports.

I could tell from his voice and his body language (he sat up straighter, talked a little louder and faster), that this was something that he truly was passionate about and had been thinking about for some time. And just to emphasize this, he shared a dream that he had about how to improve the community connection through athletics:

There's a school... They have the coolest idea of their campus, which I think is awesome, is that when you go into their school, you...you come in the front, you pass the fields. You don't...the fields aren't stuck in the back...So, therefore, the district wants them to look nice, because it's an eyesore if you don't take care of your fields. And one of the things is.....not always do we have good facilities

when we really have the opportunity to. And there's really no reason why you can't. Of course I don't know about money and stuff, but I think that if you make it a priority that it brings the community. That's what school is! It's the community! Everybody wants to go to the football game, you know? And it's a place where people come in a small town, a small community like this, to socialize. I want that....I want those people at my softball game. And I want them at the boys' volleyball game....I just think that there's things you can do on the front side that brings parents in to watch their kids. I wanted my dad at my game when I was young.

Since he could see himself in an administrative position (athletic director), I asked him about being a principal or assistant principal. He responded quickly:

No. I don't want to do that. I'll teach or athletics. That's it. As a matter of fact I wouldn't mind doing....I like doing yearbook. Yearbook is a good thing. I like doing that a lot. My perfect job probably would be a couple of English classes, Yearbook, and athletics....you know, the assistant athletic director. That would be my perfect job.

I joked with him that he should write that job description and give it to Dr. Tobin. He laughed and said, as if reconsidering his perfect job:

Yearbook is a...see that's the thing. Everything is year round, or is, you know, 24 hours a day. So...if I'm not doing yearbook, I'm doing softball. If I'm not doing softball, I'm grading essays. If I'm not grading essays, I'm doing online teaching. So it's all at home... Well, I got lucky that my daughter played softball. That's where we spent our time. And then the summers we do. I mean, I don't mind

working year-round. I would work year-round to have those evenings. And I feel guilty when I take an evening because I get behind and then I don't enter my grades. So that's frustrating. And I want to be a good teacher and I want to be....I don't want to be that teacher that doesn't.....because.....it's a unique perspective having your own kid at the school. And I don't want to be that teacher that doesn't enter grades for 3 weeks, you know?

He then went on to talk about the computer program that is used by the district, where teachers enter grades and parents and students can look up grades. He spoke about how it affected him as a teacher and as a parent. I could relate to the conflict he seemed to feel between his personal and professional lives. I too experienced it, and it was one of the main reasons that I left my public teaching career. I commented about that, and how fortunate I felt that during my last year teaching, my district was just getting ready to implement a computer program for teacher to enter grades and for parents to access their child's grades. I did not have to experience the pressure that he felt around that issue.

We spoke a few more minutes about the pros and cons of such a program, and I noticed we had been speaking for about one hour. I had finished asking all of my questions and felt that I elicited the stories that I needed for Terry's narrative. In addition, I had another interview scheduled and he needed to prepare for softball practice. Before I left, I asked Terry if I could contact him with further questions if they came up during my data analysis. With a soft smile, he agreed. We shook hands and parted ways.

Two months following my second interview with Terry, I observed a Team meeting where I caught a glimpse of another dimension to Terry's leadership identity. During previous meetings I had observed, Terry was relatively quiet, speaking primarily

when providing an update on Top Cat. At this particular meeting, though, Terry was involved with the sub-committee discussing language registers (styles of language with different levels of formality). Terry seemed more engaged in the sub-committee conversations than he had been during other Team discussions. For example, as the sub-committee discussed how to reinforce and display the language registers to students, Terry came up with several examples and ideas. In particular, he gave ideas about how the signs with the language registers could be color-coded to provide students with a visual cue about which register would be appropriate in a given area. A conversation followed in which other sub-committee members suggested, for example, that signs in the classroom could have the “formal” and “consultative” registers shaded green to indicate their appropriateness, “casual” could be yellow indicating that students should use caution using that register, and “intimate” could be red to indicate that the classroom is not an appropriate place to use that register. This led the discussion to how students could relate the colors to something they were familiar with – road signs; green means “go,” yellow means “wait” or “caution,” and red means “stop.” Terry also shared ideas about how the registers could be incorporated into existing programs and strategies like Top Cat and the dress code. Whenever I happened to focus my attention on his sub-committee’s conversation, Terry was engaged; he was either contributing directly to the conversation or actively listening to what others had to say.

Summary. My first impression of Terry was that he was a soft-spoken, gentle teacher. Through my interviews with him, I discovered this to be true and that he was a strong and effective leader. The stories he and others told aligned with how the literature defined and how participants in this study defined teacher leadership. In particular,

through the stories I collected, I learned that Terry possessed many of the personal characteristics of a teacher leader including having a good rapport and connection with teachers, having a passion to contribute, setting high standards for other teachers, and being concerned about improving conditions.

Additionally, the stories revealed his engagement in several actions associated with teacher leaders such as having good communication skills, being actively engaged in the change process, being a great listener, and willing to step out of the classroom. However, stepping out of the classroom, Terry admitted, was difficult for him but his leadership on Top Cat proved his willingness to lead beyond his classroom.

Although he possessed many of the qualities and acted like a teacher leader, at first, Terry was reluctant to label himself as a leader. Terry has a strong passion for making school a positive place for students, and envisions his leadership mostly in relation to students. He is passionate about not only the direct impact he has on students (through his teaching, coaching, and interacting with students) but also on the indirect impact that he has (through working with staff to improve their classroom management and coaching the appropriate implementation of Top Cat). This passion came through every time he spoke about an impact on students – he lowered his voice, became more animated, and smiled broadly.

Terry seemed embarrassed to be considered a leader and I wondered if he associated such a title with authority. He made a point several times to emphasize how he was trying to help not evaluate or control his peers; he framed his leadership around being helpful. Once he reluctantly agreed that he was a teacher leader, his first stories reflected leadership activities related to classroom instruction (e.g., cognitive coaching).

His leadership in this area stemmed from his model classroom practice (as identified by his mentor) and his focus on classroom management in the educational leadership program he completed. Terry also shared one story related to his upbringing that influenced his approach to working with students.

In relation to his leadership on the Team, though, his coordination of Top Cat derives primarily from his passion to develop students' character and his belief in recognizing students for positive behavior. Since he was the driving force behind the Top Cat program, it follows for him to lead those efforts. His stories also revealed a certain level of autonomy which is not addressed extensively in the teacher leadership literature. Terry's autonomy leading the Top Cat program came not only because Dr. Tobin had "given it" to him, but also because he had confidence in the positive impact the program could have on students.

Michael Gregory: The emerging leader: I identified Michael as a participant through snowball sampling. In one of my interviews with Dr. Tobin, I asked her for the names of some possible participants since I had been unable to recruit the number I had planned. Dr. Tobin recommended that I contact Michael because he was new to the school and new to the Team. Additionally, he was involved with the ROTC program, and she felt that he might provide me with a unique perspective on teacher leadership and the Team. After our interview she sent me his contact information. I emailed Michael to introduce myself and my study, and to ask if he would be willing to participate. He responded quickly by email and we set up a time to meet one day after school.

Michael was the last participant that I interviewed in my first round of interviews. I could not picture what Michael looked like; I did not remember seeing him at the first

meeting I had attended. At the second meeting, however, which was right before my first interview with him, I made sure to introduce myself in person and confirm our upcoming interview. He smiled when I introduced myself and seemed to be a calm and quiet individual. This surprised me because I had been expecting to see a stereotypical, overbearing, serious person wearing a uniform. Instead, Michael was of average height with a gentle facial expression, and he was wearing shorts and a sweatshirt. We did not have time to talk as he seemed to be in a hurry.

On the day we were scheduled to meet for the first interview, I arrived at the school and checked in at the office. I was directed to the ROTC classroom that was located around the side of the school. Instead of entering the school grounds, I left the office toward the front of the school and walked to my right around the side of the campus. The front office staff told me that the ROTC classroom was marked and that the entrance was off of the parking lot. I walked around the side of campus and the sidewalk ended at an entrance to a building. There were no markings to indicate what the door led to. I tried the door and it was locked. I could hear on the inside a lot of noise being made from a vacuum cleaner or some other piece of equipment. I started to walk away when the door opened. I turned around, expecting to see Michael, and saw another man in uniform. I introduced myself and explained that I was there to interview Michael. He opened the door so I could enter the building. I walked into a classroom occupied by three students and two adults who seemed to be cleaning. The doorway that I came through led to the back of the classroom; in front of me were rows of desks with their backs to me. To the right, was a doorway to what appeared to be another classroom. To

my left, there were two doorways. One led to what appeared to be a storage room and the other led to a small office.

The man who let me in, struck up a conversation with me, asking me how I was doing and that it was nice to see me again. I stuck out my hand to shake his; I felt that in this formal, military environment that was the appropriate thing to do. He looked familiar, and as he talked, I realized that he too was part of the PBIS Team. Michael emerged from the storage room and welcomed me. I shook his hand too, feeling that the setting required me to do so. He gave some instructions to some of the other people in the room. It seemed that they were doing a bit of organizing. And by the looks of it, it had not been done in quite a while so they had quite a task to complete.

Michael led me to the small office. It was equipped with two desks, both facing the door, a bookcase in the corner, and a couple of other chairs for visitors. Michael walked around the desk to the left and sat behind it, and then directed me to a chair next to the desk. He asked if this arrangement was acceptable for the interview, and I agreed that it was. I was a little nervous about this interview and could not really pinpoint why. I think part of my feeling came from being in an unfamiliar part of the campus and from being in what I considered a very formal environment. Although this was only ROTC, I could sense an air of formality and respect I associated with a military setting.

Michael quickly put my nervousness at ease as he sat down at his desk, leaned back in a relaxed manner, and smiled. He admitted he was a little nervous too. I told him we would start off easy and asked him to share his background. He started:

I just retired from the military after serving almost 24 years of active duty. I joined the military right out of high school; I enlisted. At my 8th year mark, I was

commissioned as an officer. After ... basically the Navy picked me up for an officer commissioning program, sent me to college, and I was able to finish up and get my bachelor's degree. I wanted to be a teacher so I enrolled in the teacher preparation and I got my....my specialization was science, earth science....and life science. So, I was trying to set myself up when I got out of the military to go be a science teacher. But, of course, since the Navy sent me to get my degree and they made me an officer, I owed them.

He laughed as he made the last statement, "I owed them." I laughed with him because I understood that military culture, as my husband had been in the Navy. I did not share that with him but instead said, "There's always a cost." He continued to explain the various roles he served his first four years as an officer; he was on a surface ship as a surface warfare officer and an engineer. He then explained:

So, I did my 4 years. I paid back my dues to the Navy. That made me almost....so that was....12 year mark. So, I started thinking, "Well, I can retire at 20. I would be a fool to get out"....plus the Navy said, "Well, we want you to stay in. Ever thought about going to grad school?" And I said, "Sure." They said, "Well, we have a special program called Graduate Education Voucher Program." And they looked at my record, they liked it and they said, "Well, this is a great program; you can go to grad school wherever you want."

He decided to go to the University of San Diego and enrolled in the education administration program. When he completed the program, he laughed and said, "Now I owed the Navy again." He deployed several times to the Persian Gulf, and when he was about to be deployed to Afghanistan, he had the choice to retire or continue, to which he

said, “Retire. I think I did my time.” He went on to explain what happened after his decision:

So, my original plan was to ...ok, now I get to use my teaching degree; degrees I guess, so I applied for several schools in Texas because that’s where I’m from. And then a colleague of mine said, “Have you ever thought about ROTC, junior ROTC?” And I go, “Well, not really.” And he says, “Well, it’s a great program and you’re a teacher but you still kind of teach what you have been doing as an adult, as a career.” So I looked into it and they said, “Well, there’s this program that’s opening up”... [and I said,]“Well, let’s try it! Why not?” So we...on faith, we left our home in San Diego and then we moved here..., and that’s how I got here. It’s been great.

I asked Michael how long he had been here and he responded that he had only been in his position since September. The school-year in this district starts in July so he had missed most of the first semester. I wondered who had started the school-year off in his position but I pushed the thought away because I did not feel that it was pertinent to my study. When I asked him how he liked his position, he responded:

I love it. It exceeds my expectations. They all warned me, “Well, you’re gonna go...it’s not active duty...you’re gonna go work and boss around a bunch of teenagers. It’s going to be a culture shock.” But it’s been pleasant; I like it. I really do...It feels like home, the culture. So, we’re really happy when we got here. We just live right here within walking distance. And then my daughter comes here too...So far, this is an awesome second career for me.

I did not have a very strong background in ROTC, so I was not sure about his role. I asked him to describe a typical day, at which he responded each day was different. He explained that he had a curriculum developed by the Navy that he used to teach military history, leadership, orienteering, land navigation, physical fitness, and weapons drills. I was amazed at Michael's description; I had no idea that ROTC involved so much. Each day is structured with a different focus, so Mondays they focus on physical fitness, Tuesdays they focus on uniforms and military history, and so on. Michael's description gave me a sense of the structured, regimented military thinking and how it was applied to the school setting. It also gave me pause because I had not considered him to be a teacher; I was planning to use Michael as a secondary participant. At this point, I realized I had the wrong set of questions but I tried not to let it show. I was familiar enough with the questions at this point that I could adapt.

Michael also explained that they have various teams that he puts together based on students' affinities for specific topics. For example, the students who demonstrate a strong ability with orienteering he recruits for their orienteering team. The teams compete with teams from other schools each year. He also described how they are called on to do color guards for various events throughout the district and community.

His ROTC classes are mixed grades and he explained:

It's an elective; at other schools it's an elective slash PE credit because we do a lot of physical fitness. So I have a 0 hour, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th. Zero hour, I have students from all 4 high schools; they come here. They come here and they do the program. And so next year....right now, everybody in the program is what they call Naval Science 1 Students, NS1s. These students next year will go on to be

Naval Science 2 Students, which is another curriculum which is more history, ...they learn ...they learn a bunch of other things, geography. They start learning how to navigate using, you know, latitude and longitude. It gets a little bit more complicated. And then they also start teaching the young NS1s; basic leadership. They become the senior cadets. So that will happen next year. Let's see....I'm sorry I forgot where I was going with that....but it's a lot of....after school. Also the cadets who are really sharp with academics and all that, there's an academic team and they do Brain Brawls and they go and....it's kind of like Jeopardy and they compete with other ROTC units. So, ROTC is kind of unique because there seems to be something for somebody there. If you're athletic then you do this, if you are more academic you do this.

Still curious about ROTC in general, I asked Michael if students typically enrolled in ROTC for four years. He explained:

They come in...it's just like a regular class – a school year. Now, the benefits of being in the program is that if they do 4 years, or even 3 years, of ROTC and they decide to go to the military, well, they can come in as what they call an E3 instead of an E1. Or they get that...there's a lot of scholarships specifically for ROTC. So, right now I am working....there's 2 cadets that I am going to send and interview to the [local university] because they have an ROTC scholarship, Navy scholarship, specifically for this school. They just created it. So, I have two, actually three very sharp female seniors who I am going to send and hopefully they will get the scholarship – full 4-year scholarship - through the Navy. So they would do that and then once they graduate they would get commissioned as an

officer and then do their time... It's a pretty unique program because there's a lot of benefits to it.

I followed up by asking him if many of the students who go into ROTC plan to go into the military after high school. Michael said, "No, I don't. There's a lot of kids that just want to just try it out. I would say half... They're just in it just to see what it's about and half are, 'Yeah, I want to go into the military.'"

I commented that he was teaching, which was one of his dreams, but he just was not teaching science. I also commented that he seemed very pleased with where he was and what he was doing. Michael replied, "I am pretty happy, yes. Yeah, I do think about, 'Well, how would it be if I was just a regular teacher teaching science? Would I be having as much fun?' I don't know. Maybe, maybe not."

Although he is not tied to traditional standards that have been employed in education, Michael is held to military standards; not only ones that are developed by the military but also ones he has developed for himself. The curriculum that he follows is written by the military. He sends his military supervisor a report about how things are going at Cactus Creek. At the same time, he said, he sends a report to Dr. Tobin. He smiled as he explained:

I have implementedwhat they call end-of-week report, because in the military we usually do that for our superiors. So, I..."Dr. Tobin, this is what we did this week, so you're in the know." So, it's funny, yeah – I have 2 bosses: The Navy and then I have the school district.

He does not seem fazed by the added bureaucracy; having been in the military perhaps prepared him for that.

At this point, I felt that I understood the context of Michael's role at the school and I felt confident that I could include him as one of my teacher leaders. Dr. Tobin had commented that she felt Michael would provide an interesting perspective on the Team since he was new to the school, and I agreed. I decided, then, to ask about how he became part of the PBIS Team. Michael explained that:

When I got here, I wanted to be involved in the school not just be in my own little...what I call my little "pooka" here; nobody comes in and bugs me, I kind of hide. I didn't want to do that. I wanted to...I guess maybe that is just my character; I like to go out there and "what can I do for you?" you know? Even though I am just the ROTC teacher, instructor, I want to be part of the school. So...that's how I came to be on it. I said, "I'll do it." Just like I volunteered at the school district to be on the benefits committee. So, I said, "Yeah, I'll do it." Because I want to be involved, you know, in school. I just don't want to be the guy who just runs around in the uniform and pushes the cadets around. And whatever else they need from me, I am happy to do. Because, right now I am feeling very fortunate to have this position. It fell in my lap and I really like it and enjoy it and I kind of just want to give back. I also enjoy [this town]. I am coming from San Diego; it's really fast-paced and coming to [this town], it's a little..."Oh look! There's a cow in the road." Pretty slow, you know?

He laughed as he made the last few comments comparing the location of the school district with his previous location. I found his explanation interesting for a few reasons. First, although he is military, and I had the initial impression of his seriousness, he does have a lighter side and easily smiled and laughed. Second, I was struck by his need to be

part of the school; part of the bigger community. I wondered if that came from so many years being in the military when you have to work as a unit and be with others, or if he just was naturally gregarious. I suspected it was a little of both. In one interview with Dr. Tobin, she also mentioned Michael's desire to be a part of the school community:

I think Michael was just really trying to learn the culture of the school and then he ties it right back in to ROTC and the discipline... he also wants to probably make sure that he's connected with the.... the school and those expectations...he's very interested in the different runnings of the school and how that all happens, but he's also interested as a father and as a new teacher. Even though he... he student taught 15 years ago and was in the military, but he just likes to see how all of that works.

Third, I considered his expression of service; that he felt fortunate and wanted to give back. This could be influenced by his experiences in Scouting as a youth and his military experience. Based on my personal experiences with people in the military, it seems that those that commit to a life in the military often have a strong sense of duty and commitment to whatever service they have pledged to. It seemed that Michael possessed some of those qualities as well.

Michael went on to explain that the first meeting he had attended was the one when I had presented. He said, "That's why I said, 'Well, if you need help, I'll do it.' That's why I said I would help you out." Again, his sense of duty and service came through as the motivation for being involved. I was appreciative for his involvement regardless of his motivation. I was also curious at this point about his impressions of the PBIS Team. As an outsider, I thought that he might confirm or counter the impressions I

had of the Team. I first asked him what he knew about the Team before participating. He explained that he had learned a little about the Team from his ROTC teaching colleague, Matt; “He’s been here forever I guess so I always ask him, ‘So, is this a good thing, a teacher thing to get into?’ And he said, ‘Oh yeah.’” So sure, why not?”

Prior to this interview, he had only attended two Team meetings. I asked him, then, what his impressions were based on his observations. He described the Team as such:

Last Friday we had a staff meeting so they made a presentation, and I really like what they are trying to do; they are trying to make this a safe school environment. They’re doing...it looks like statistics as when do...when students get in trouble, when they are not getting in trouble. They are trying to designate spots here in the school that are safe zones; places that need attention. And then, stuff outside school like proper seat belts. Basically protecting the student, which is what I like; it’s to see, “Ok, yeah. We are focusing on this student safety not just in school but outside of school.” And that’s why I kind of like that, you know. Students see what I can do to help that out. Safe zones site, for example here,...and I go back to the incident that happened up in CT is...I have this great office I can look out and I see the school and I can actually see the preschool, and if there is anything going on that’s something like that... you know, I am happy to kind of be of the front line first and try to see if I can warn anybody.

I was impressed that in just two meetings, Michael was able to truly understand the essence of the Team. That told me that the Team, as a unit, was on the right track; they remain focused on their goal of sustaining a positive school climate and that comes

through during their meetings. In my opinion, that is part of being a successful Team; that your passion and goals are obvious in all that you do.

I explained to Michael that I considered him to be a teacher leader and asked him what he thought that meant. He thought for a moment and then shared:

To be a good...teacher leader...it's like maybe I mentioned I don't want to just be here in my little office and I don't care what everybody else is doing. I like to go out and show, "Hey, this is..." I want to be a good example...as a teacher this is how I run my classroom, this is how I expect my students to behave, to act, you know? They have a code of conduct they need to follow. So, as a teacher leader, I am out there and if...and I am always quick to correct on the spot. So if I see something going on, then I correct it on the spot. And I am hoping that other teachers will do the same. Me beingI guess...been around the block a few times not as a teacher, but you know I consider...this is my 2nd career and I have already retired; the younger teachers I hope look at me and say....even though I just started, I have a career under my belt and I think I also have the education. I am hoping the younger teachers can see or come to me and say, "Yeah, I have this...I have this student in my class who is just acting up all the time. Do you have any pointers or...?" Maybe they don't want to go to their department head or maybe they don't want to bring it up. I would hope that they'd be comfortable enough to "Hey, come talk to me."

I followed up with him and asked what he did to make people more comfortable with him. He replied, "I just walk around all the time. I try to be as friendly as I can." He laughed and continued, "Everybody knows me because I kind of stand out." Then he got

a serious expression on his face and said, “I do notice that around here is... a lot of teachers just stay in their classrooms.” I thought to myself that I hear that a lot from people working in schools; that teachers tend to work in isolation and like to keep to themselves. However, I thought things were a little different at Cactus Creek because at the school and district they rely heavily on collaboration for everything; there is a prominent “team” culture throughout.

Since I was surprised by his observation, I said, “Really?” Michael replied, “They’re not out or... maybe I am out at the wrong times but I don’t see a lot going around. And the only time I see teachers a lot is in the staff meeting.” He laughed and continued, “And I know they are a teacher because they have... they have their little badge.” I laughed too because I could relate to that statement. I see that all the time when I am on campuses, especially high schools where some teachers are not much older than students. And then I recalled to myself about when I was first teaching at a junior high school and was often mistaken for a student by other staff and faculty until they got to know me.

I then asked Michael if he had been invited into other teachers’ classes to just present about himself and the ROTC program. He explained that he only presents during assemblies, but that he has invited teachers into his classroom to present. Several teachers have done so, especially the ones who have been in the military:

They want to come and talk about their experience.... “I was in the Marine Corps, I was this and that and now I’m a teacher.” And then I try to tell cadets, “You see, if you work hard you can be a teacher, you know. You don’t have to just... You can join the military but you can come out and do something like this. Also, too,

you know, for those of you who join the military you have the GI bill that helps pay for your college and....there's a lot of teacher preparation programs." So I try to build up the teacher, you know.....Maybe I've had three or four teachers come in and talk to me about their....experiences.

I returned to his own military experience and asked if he had taught when he was in the military. He explained that he had not done so formally, but in everything he did, he was teaching others:

As a junior officer, I would teach the troops...As a senior officer, you teach junior officers, this is how you do leadership, this is how you run things. So you're always...I would say you're always teaching...and then you've probably heard the term, "You're always teaching your relief"; the guy who's gonna...when you leave, is gonna take over.

I had recalled from his previous descriptions that he was tapped early on for leadership when he was in the military. I figured that his military experience probably heavily influenced his current leadership but I asked him if he always considered himself to be a leader. Michael replied:

Well, I think so, yes. Because when I first enlisted in the military, I could have been one of these guys who just stand in the background and ok, stay out of trouble, this and that. For me, I was always taking charge, and that was why I was selected"Hey you! You'd be a good officer. You should apply for the program." And they don't just pick anybody to be an officer. So, yeah, sure I would consider myself to be a leader. And then once you become an officer, you

are a leader; that's your title, you're job title. You have hundreds of people working for you.

I commented that it seemed that he naturally just took those leadership roles, and then asked him what past experiences built that confidence. He thought for a moment and the replied:

I don't know. I just always liked to take charge. In high school, I played sports. I wasn't the best, but I always...always "Come on guys! Let's go!" And then I was in junior ROTC in high school too, so I learned that from military just like these kids here. I took on leadership roles and then ...Scouts, Boy Scouts; I was a Boy Scout. Of course you become a leader there. And then once I joined the military, I just naturally took on...I decided to run with it.

I began to consider the different leadership roles he had accepted in the short time he had been at Cactus Creek: as a teacher, Team member, and member of the district benefits committee. In an interview with another participant, I learned about his involvement on the district committee but I wanted to learn from Michael how he came to be a part of that, so I asked him. He replied, "I volunteered." The Benefits Committee did not seem like a very exciting committee to be on so I was curious about his motivation for volunteering. He explained that an email had gone out to staff asking for volunteers. "So one day went and then another email came out, 'We need somebody.' Nobody's stepping up. So then I saw another email so I wrote, 'I'll do it. I don't know what it's about but I'll do it.'" He laughed a little and then continued:

To me, that's painful when they ask for something and then....and then it goes on. And then they ask again, and nobody steps up, and they ask again andI just

...I'll do it. This is easy compared to active duty. In active duty, you deploy, you work around the clock. Sure, I'll do it. I don't know it but I'll do it. I'll raise my hand, "Yeah sure I'll do it."

I could tell from this story that he has a strong sense of duty and commitment that serves to drive his motivation for involvement, whether he is interested in the topic or not.

At this point, I was trying to decide which direction to take with my questions. I referred to my list to see what I had not covered yet and noticed that my next few questions related to the history of the Team and the nature of teaming in the district. I was honest with Michael and explained my dilemma and asked him if he would be able to respond to any of those questions. He simply said, "No." So I decided to return to a topic that I knew he could talk about: ROTC. I confirmed with him that his classes were the only ROTC classes in the district and that students from other district high schools attended class at Cactus Creek. Since his program was the only one in the district, I said, "You don't have anyone to collaborate with other than your colleagues here." Michael explained that he has a mentor that is based in a town that is about one hour away; he is the only other ROTC instructor in the area. He went on to explain that they meet frequently and that he calls his mentor to ask questions.

Michael also explained that he is teaching Matt too because:

He was in the military a long time ago. So, he's forgot so...in a way I have been teaching cadets and I have been kind of refreshing him...So, I'm like, "You've got to stop being a Spanish teacher, you are an ROTC teacher."

I was surprised by Michael's last comment and said, "Oh, that was his background?"

Michael explained:

Yes, and now he is doing this. Because normally, it's another retired person. But the school district decided to bring him on until we get bigger and then....I don't know what the plan is but I think that is what it is. But right now he is helping me. Michael continued by stating that Matt was a Marine and the program they have is Navy ROTC so "you have to be in the sea service. So you could either be Navy, Coast Guard, or Marine." He smiled and continued, "And why the Navy decided in the middle of the desert to establish a unit, that's another thing too." I laughed and shared with him a little about my husband's Navy experience; one of the school's he attended was in Idaho which I always found interesting since it is nowhere near water. We talked for several minutes, and joked, about the stereotypes of certain jobs in the Navy.

Once this part of the conversation had run its course, I returned to the interview and focused on questions related to the Team. I asked him if he knew who the Team chair was and he laughed saying, "If I pull out my notes." So then I asked him about his impressions of the Team dynamics and functioning. He explained:

I'm still in observation mode. A lot of people don't say much, or they wait until everybody shows up and....I don't see a lot of cross-talk like "Hey, let's do this, that..." That's a point of pressure, I know, is like just sitting and watching what's going on; what's the plan. Do we just meet once every couple of months. That's my impression is what are we doing here? I am slowly seeing it getting stuff done, but other than that.....it could also be because I don't know most of the people on it. I mean I know the big heads; you know Dr. Tobin, Ms. Smith, Ms. Costas. But the other teachers....I know who they are, but ask me what they teach and I don't know.

I commented that it was early yet and that he will eventually learn. He replied, “Everybody knows what I teach.” He commented that he did know Kevin because he was interested in Navy literature, which Michael has shared with him. Since that door opened, I decided to ask him about Kevin and what he saw Kevin’s role as. He explained what he had observed so far related to how Kevin shared data.

The only other person that he really knew on the Team, he shared, was Matt. At the point, I remembered the last meeting I had observed when both Michael and Matt sat away from the rest of the group. Further, I remembered inviting them to sit at the table but they declined. So I asked Michael about that. He replied uncertainly, “Well, the table was full, so...plus, I felt...that was our day...Thursdays and Fridays is the day we go and do physical training and so...” I commented, “I saw you duck out early.” He explained:

Yeah because we were....I felt unprofessional because here I am in a sweatshirt and shorts and I am ready to go run and everybody else is nice. And so....so that is why I kind of...my military training was, ok, you are not presentable, go sit in the back with all the riff-raff, right. That is one reason why I did that. Second reason, because I needed to duck out.

I found his comment about being dressed professionally to be interesting. His military training really kicked in even though he was not in a traditional military setting. He took his code of conduct very seriously and I realized that might be an area to explore further the next time we met.

He explained a little more about the ROTC schedule for Thursdays and Fridays. I shared with him what he had missed by ducking out: breakouts into 3 groups related to seatbelts, cell phones, and language registers. I asked him, if he had stayed, which group

he would have joined. He immediately said, “Cell phones.” “What would you say?” I asked, and he said, without hesitation:

I would say that those need to be put away. Because I see too many teachers just....they’re there. I know my cadets, if they are using cell phones they’re mine and they can get them after school. I just think that they are too distracting. Very distracting. Very distracting to the teacher, very distracting to the student. Plus you can text, and you buzz....and....coming from an old guy. I didn’t have a cell phone until...not until recently. And even then, I get lectured by my wife because I don’t know...

He laughed, looked around his desk, and continued:

Where it’s at. I think it’s in my backpack. Oh no, it’s not even in there. Oh here it is...And I have to check it because I will mute it or I will buzz it. But that is the generation I came from. Plus, in the military, I...”Sir, sorry I didn’t call you back. I didn’t have a cell phone. Stop calling me on Saturday night” or something.

He seemed very sure about his opinion on cell phones and so I asked if he would be comfortable expressing his opinion in the smaller group. Since he was new to the Team, I wondered if he would be reluctant to do so. He replied without hesitating again:

Yes, sure. What is the point of having cell phone during the work week, during the work day. Or school day I should say, not work day. Other than emergency issues, or if mom needs to call you they can do the old fashioned route – go to the office, somebody can send you a message “Call mom.” Like the old days. I just think it’s getting out of hand. They’re playing Angry Birds or whatever else. It’s very distracting. But they don’t do it in my class because they know better.

I commented that he has established that expectation and hinted that that was probably the underlying issue that might be discussed in the smaller group.

By this point, we had been talking for about 45 minutes. I needed a break in asking questions because so many of his responses caught me off guard and I was unprepared to continue. I needed to think about what he had shared already and develop some additional questions to dig deeper into his leadership. We concluded the interview and he agreed to meet with me again so I could ask some additional questions.

As I left the interview, I thought about several things. First, I considered where Michael was in relation to his leadership at Cactus Creek; he is brand new to the school and is at the beginning stages of developing his leadership within a school setting. Although he has a strong leadership background in the military, I wondered how his development as a leader at the school will unfold. The second thing I thought about was how interesting it will be to document the beginning stages of leadership development in relation to the Team. I knew that this study would be limited to capturing the beginning stages of his leadership, but I feel that it is a worthwhile endeavor as a way to understand the leadership development on the Team long-term. The last thought that I had was wondering what I would observe in the upcoming Team meetings; what involvement I would see from Michael.

It was over three months before I met with Michael again. In that time, I had conducted second interviews with all of the other participants and observed two Team meetings and one staff meeting during which Team members presented about some of the activities related to their PBIS implementation. My second interview with Michael occurred near the end of the school-year after I had had a chance to transcribe all of the

other interviews. We met after the last Team meeting of the school-year. After the meeting, we walked over to his office and met. He only had a short time to meet, and asked Matt to take the class until we had finished speaking.

Since we did not have much time, I decided to focus mostly on his leadership as I had observed during the meetings and comments that had been made during other interviews. During one Team meeting, the Team members divided into three sub-committees by the following topics: language registers, cell phone policy, and seat belt campaign. Michael had been a part of the cell phone policy sub-committee. During that meeting, I had placed myself in a location where I could observe all three groups; I was not comfortable walking around and sitting in on the conversation as I felt that I may distract them or influence their discussions. Since the teacher leaders for this study were involved in all three groups, I situated myself where I could see them all and observe the teacher leaders' involvement in the discussions. Since I was not able to closely observe all three groups, I started my second interview with Michael asking him to describe his sub-committee's discussion. He shared:

I think the big discussion was there is no ...standardization between the teachers. So the students are from one extreme...sorry, the teacher's rules are from one extreme to the other. Me, I'm extreme because I run a military class. I say, "No phones. They're mine. It's rude. You don't need them for my course. If I see them, they are going to go in one of my cabinets." And I did that on active duty with my sailors. Say, "If you're bringing them out, they're mine. And then you owe me stuff" because we are more restrictive in the military. So I kind of carried this here. And I've had zero incidents, zero complaints. But then I've heard of

other teachers saying, “Oh yeah. You can take them out. That’s ok. Whatever.”

And I’ve seen that because I have a freshman A/B non-ROTC class, so the freshman, and I’ve had that issue where I say “no cell phones,” “But Miss So-and-So lets me do it,” “Mr. So-and-So lets me...”, “I need....I need to call my dad,” “I need to call my mom,” “I need....all my....I have to read my book and it’s on my cell phone.” So then I’ll walk around and they’re playing Angry Birds or something, right? So that was in my discussion...my input was, well, you really don’t need them. And I kind of talked to them about my military experience. I said, “I worked in a lot of Top Secret places where you’re not allowed to bring any kind of electronic device so you would check them in. There’s little lockers; you get a key, put everything away.” So I was kind of making a suggestion is...you really don’t need cell phones while you’re giving instruction. You don’t. If they need to make a phone call to mom or dad or something, then that’s a case by case “sure, go ahead.” And I’ve done that with these students. “Go ahead and come in here, close the door. Do whatever you need to.” I said, “If there’s no locker in the front....” so I was making all sorts of suggestions. “Well, have the kids put them in their backpack and throw them in the back.” So a lot of the discussions we had, “Ok, so you have these kids that have cell phones and you’ve just given them a quiz. So, they’re breaking them out now and texting the ‘answer to #4 is..’ whatever.” So, I was kind of a bit of an extreme I say. They shouldn’t be around. They shouldn’t. But then some other arguments were, “Well, you know, they really help if there is an emergency situation and blah blah blah.” And

I said, “Well, yes and no, because they could also clog up the system.” So that was my...those were my inputs.

I asked him what he felt the response was from the other members of the group and he shared that the one person who is on the security team essentially agreed with him. He also shared that the student in the group also agreed, especially with the point about parents not needing to call their children directly during the school day.

I asked if any of the other members said anything that would change his mind and he replied, “Not really. They were trying to convince me...” before he could finish, a student walked into his office to get something. Michael looked at him with an expression of surprise, and reprimanded the student. He had a serious tone as he reminded the student about being respectful, but then softened when he said, “You should knock next time, ok?” He laughed softly and shook his head as the student left the office.

Once the door was closed, he started talking again about how his students try using their cell phones. He pretended to hold a phone in his lap and said, “So they have a cell phone like this and...’Well, Sir. I’m reading. My book is here.’ I just don’t buy it...That argument wasn’t convincing to me.” I asked him if the other members talked about other ways teachers have students use cell phones such as for cell phones or responders. He replied, “No, like, for example, those are my responders down there” and he pointed to a shelf that was to my right. He continued:

And that’s what the Navy gave me. So, they don’t need cell phones to respond.

But I have heard teachers use them to do homework or....We have that “drop everything and read” during A/B where....”I’m just going to email you my

paper”. I said, “Well, that’s fine, get on a computer and you can do it on the computer.” I know some kids are very talented.

From his tone, I could tell that these thoughts did not persuade him to change his position on cell phones. I was not convinced that anything would change his mind. I wondered if he was just concerned about cell phones or technology in general. I mentioned to him about the fact that Cactus Creek was going to get rid of text books the following year and use Chrome Books. He replied, “But that’s something different. You can’t call home or text.” This told me that his frustration was just with the communication aspects of cell phones as opposed to technology in general.

I returned to the sub-committee meeting and mentioned that their group had shared some recommendations at the end of their meeting time. I also mentioned that it seemed that much of what they shared reflected what he had just told me. I asked him to predict whether or not any of the suggestions would be implemented. He thought for a moment and then shared, laughing occasionally:

Let’s see....I went home and thought about everything. And during the discussion, “Well, somebody needs to put a PowerPoint together.” So, I went home and put the PowerPoint together. So I’m the one who did it. And I put the pictures on there...I found two great pictures. I don’t know if you saw it but...the teacher over the student and the kid is, “Excuse me but the teacher is bothering me” or something like that. That was my...those were my inputs, right? So I did the PowerPoint for that thing. And I said, “Well, here’s my rough draft.” I never saw the ending so I don’t know if it was... I don’t know what happened to it but I think it was modified, which is just fine. I did my input; here’s what I thought.

Where's this going? I think that....this is my thing is that there are too many chiefs and not enough Indians. I think the administration has to say, "This is our phone policy. Teacher A, B, C, D, E, you all have to get on the same book and do it" because Teacher D does it this way so...that's what I think. So, until the....you can't empower the students because...what are they going to say? "I want my cell phone. I want it. I want to play with it. I want to do whatever." That's where I think it's going. Until ...gotta get the administration to say, "This is our cell phone policy and that's that." I don't think this is something we have to throw at the kids. It's nice to get their input but we need to have.....Can everybody use them or cannot everybody use them?.

This story represented to me a key piece of his leadership; his willingness to take initiative and speak for what he believes in. Additionally, I learned from this story that he seems to be fairly rigid with regards to policies and procedures, most likely influenced by his experience in the military.

Although he took initiative with the presentation, and it is obvious he is passionate about the issue, other Team members did not link him to the cell phone issue possibly because they do not know him well yet as a new Team member. For example, Cathy said:

I don't think there's anyone who feels passionately enough one way or the other to really take hold of it. And I am not even sure I feel passionately enough. I have a strong opinion, but if you're asking me if it is a priority over even language registers I would say probably not.

Since Michael is new to the Team, perhaps over time he will emerge as a leader on this issue.

I decided at this point to move on to the second topic that I wanted to address with him before our interview time was over. I asked him to describe where he saw himself in the future, specifically in five or ten years. He quickly replied:

I'd like to continue; I like it. But I've talked to my wife and I said, "Well, I went and got my master's degree in administration so maybe I would like to go do that." Being brought up in the military, being in charge... naturally I'd like to do that. I think I'm a good administrator. I'm not sure about school... I'm the new guy so I'm still learning. But maybe that's where I want to go. If not, I'm happy with just doing this a while.

I asked him to focus on just the next year and what he saw his involvement looking like.

He said:

I think it's going to grow. I think this year I had my finger in a lot of things. Not me actively seeking, but people coming to me. And I've really enjoyed it. Where teachers come to me and tell me, "One of your students is acting up in my class. Will you do something about it?" And then... I like having the student come in here and then I dress them down like a military person and then I talk to them. And then, "Do you need me to do this again for you?" and blah, blah, blah. I see that continuing. And community involvement is big... I see myself more involved with the other high schools.

As he spoke particularly about disciplining students, I wondered if he would change his approach to reflect a more positive one as he increased his understanding of the PBIS

philosophy. I wondered what the Team, and particularly the leaders on the Team, did to orient new members to their philosophy and the various projects. Based on what Michael had shared so far, it seemed that the Team did not provide new members with any background. Further, I wondered if they just assumed that everyone who chose to join the Team was coming from the same frame. With Michael's background though, his frame is slightly different and more disciplinarian than that of PBIS.

Michael went on to explain several additional changes that would occur with the ROTC program in the next school-year, namely a new ROTC teacher that he will be training, more students, and more competitions. I asked him if he planned to stay involved with the Team and he replied:

I think so. I think it's helping me to be a better teacher. To understand how...not being so much a military person but to actually be a high school teacher. That's kind of why I wandered into that; I need to find something that teaches me to be a ...teacher, a classroom teacher. And I would like to continue with that.

I was really taken by this reflection. He acknowledged that he could learn from being a member of the Team. I was hopeful that maybe his rigidity about the cell phone policy might lessen a bit over time. I asked Michael if he would like to get involved in any of the other projects through the Team:

I think other one would be maybe the seat belt or the traffic safety. I think that's...if not cell phones it would be that. I'm...I always tell the kids that ...in my 24 years active duty, I never lost a kid to...or a sailor to hostile fire or combat...anything like that. I always lost a sailor to car accidents because they would either drive drunk or they'd get a 3-day pass and "I'm going to visit parents

in NY” and they drive from California to New York in a couple of days, you know. Stuff like that. And then of course this year we’ve had a couple of car accidents with kids here, so... If not the cell phone, that’s what I would like to do; just to continue that safety discussion or make people more aware.

That seemed like a good place to stop the interview, and the fact that we were out of time. But this final story hinted at the underlying passion that he had. I was surprised that this had not come out earlier in the interviews. If I had more time, I would have explored this further.

Summary. Although Michael’s leadership on the Team was in its infancy, at the time of this study, he possessed many of the characteristics identified in relation to teacher leadership. As for personal attributes, Michael had a strong passion to contribute, aspired to be a teacher to whom others could go to for guidance and support, and was dependable. Michael’s stories revealed that he was influenced by his Scouting and military background. With such a strong service background, his desire to belong and contribute to the school, not just teach ROTC, made sense. Many of his stories also revealed his passion for student safety, reflecting on his military experience when he had lost people under his command.

Additionally, many stories that he told and were told by others revealed teacher leadership actions in which he engaged. For example, he contributed to conversations about the cell phone policy and took initiative to create a presentation for use by the sub-committee. This demonstrated his involvement in the change process. Since he participated on the Team and also a district-level committee, he demonstrated his

willingness to step outside the classroom, another action attributed to teacher leaders by participants.

Although Michael was new to the Team, by the end of the school-year in which this study took place, he began to assert himself more as a leader in relation to the cell phone policy. Michael did express a desire to remain involved on the Team and with this particular issue. Only time will reveal if he will emerge as a leader in this area.

Summary

Each of the primary participants told unique stories about their teacher leadership in general and on the Team in particular. Based on observations and interview transcripts, many similar characteristics emerged for the teacher leaders in relation to their general teacher leader identity. However, some unique characteristics also emerged that define the typology labels that I assigned. Table 4.2 summarizes the characteristics of each teacher leader, with unique characteristics underlined. The unique characteristics identified for each teacher leader are related to actions that each played on the Team and in other leadership roles. Since Michael had been a teacher leader at Cactus Creek for less than a year, his typology contains fewer characteristics. Kevin, Evan and Terry had been teacher leaders for several years and thus had more characteristics attributed to them.

Table 4.2

Teacher leader typology characteristics

	Kevin: “Data Guy”	Evan: “Enthusiastic Leader”	Terry: “Reluctant Leader”	Michael “Emerging Leader”
Personal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good rapport • Passion to contribute • Dependable • Well-spoken • Respectful • Concern to improve things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good rapport • Passion to contribute • Dependable • Well-spoken • Respectful • Concern to improve things • Great teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good rapport • Passion to contribute • Dependable • Well-spoken • Respectful • Concern to improve things • Great teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion to contribute • Dependable • Respectful • Concern to improve things
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communicator • Step outside the classroom • Actively engaged in the change process • <u>Analyzes data</u> • <u>Prepares data reports</u> • <u>Present data to Team, staff, and visiting schools</u> • <u>Provides workshops on using technology in the classroom</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communicator • Step outside the classroom • Actively engaged in the change process • Organized • <u>Involved in many activities at school and district</u> • <u>Animated during interviews when talking about students</u> • <u>Dramatic facial expressions and hand gestures</u> • <u>Sense of humor</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communicator • Step outside the classroom • Actively engaged in the change process • Organized • <u>Defined own leadership in relation to students not adults</u> • <u>Softball coach</u> • <u>Provided workshops on classroom management</u> • <u>Cognitive coach</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step outside the classroom • Actively engaged in the change process • <u>Prepared a presentation for the cell phone sub-committee</u> • <u>Contributed to discussions on the cell phone sub-committee</u>

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of my study was to understand teacher leader identity within the context of leadership teams and to understand the context and influential factors for teacher leader identity development. Through participant interviews and observations of team and staff meetings, I generated narratives for each teacher leader and identified several factors influencing teacher leader identity development. Specifically, themes emerged for contextual factors impacting teacher leadership, their background influences, and their characteristics as teacher leaders.

The Team at CCHS was embedded in a school and district culture with a strong teaming philosophy. The district, for example, established district-wide protocols for teaming and utilized teams to address academics, PBIS, and new school planning. These teams allowed teachers to participate as leaders. At the school-level, the principal influenced teacher leadership in a number of ways by establishing the vision for the Team, encouraging Team membership, and supporting Team activities.

The participants in my study told a variety of stories; however, several common background influences surfaced including the influence of family members and experiences in their youth such as Boy Scouting. All of the teacher leaders in my study were in their second careers (they had worked in another field prior to teaching) and their current leadership was influenced to varying degrees by those careers. In addition, as teachers, they all had *opportunities* to be leaders outside of the classroom.

Finally, from the stories collected, it became evident that the teacher leaders shared some common characteristics: passion for working with students and creating

positive climates, good rapport with their peers, and concern for improving conditions within the school. Additionally, stories revealed that teacher leaders stepped outside of their classrooms and actively engaged in the change process.

In many ways, the data collected and analyzed for my study support what other researchers have discussed concerning school leadership teams (i.e., Chrispeels & Martin, 2002; Crow & Pounder, 2000; Marks & Printy, 2003; Printy & Marks, 2006) and teacher identities (i.e., Beijaard et al, 2004; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Smylie & Denny, 1990). However, some new ideas and considerations were also illuminated. In this chapter, I will first discuss my findings in relation to my research questions and in reference to reviewed literature. Next, I will address some limitations of my study. Last, I will discuss the implications of my findings for practice and future research.

Question 1: How are Teacher Leader Identities Narrated?

To answer my first research question, “Within the context of a leadership team, how are teacher leader identities narrated?”, I focused on the stories that participants told about specific teacher leaders: their personalities, their actions, and their leadership identity. Generally, the stories that teacher leaders told about themselves and what others told about them were similar. Additionally, participants identified similar contextual factors through their stories.

What stories are told about teacher leadership by teacher leaders? Each of the teacher leaders shared similar stories about their leadership and what had influenced and prepared them for their current leadership positions. Specifically, they shared stories in five general areas: (1) background influences; (2) preparation for being a leader; (3)

leadership roles; (4) motivation for Team involvement; and (5) leadership in relation to others.

Background influences. Some teacher leader researchers have found that teachers' biographies contributed to their identities, specifically educational experiences throughout their lives (e.g., Beijaard et al., 2004; Watson, 2006) and family life (e.g., discipline approach in the family, socioeconomic status; Beijaard et al., 2004). While their studies examined teacher leaders' classroom identities, similar biographical factors impacted the roles and identities outside of the classroom of the teacher leaders in my study. Most of the stories that these teacher leaders told were in relation to family influences and previous employment.

My initial questions solicited stories from teacher leaders about how they arrived at a teaching career and specifically how they arrived in their current positions. All of the teacher leaders included stories about their families and previous employment (teaching was a second career for each teacher leader). For Kevin and Terry, family influenced their career choices and the approach they took toward discipline. Kevin told stories about other teachers in his family who advised him about classroom discipline, specifically encouraging him to attend to establishing classroom "order" before teaching content. This philosophy aligns with that of PBIS and contributes to Kevin's motivation for participating on the Team.

Terry told a brief story about growing up in a highly disciplined military family; specifically mentioning that his father was a "real disciplinarian." He shared the story to explain where he was coming from with regards to discipline; he was not a "crack the whip on the kids but I'm also not a pushover." He aligned himself in the middle of that

discipline spectrum almost as if to counter the high level of discipline he experienced growing up. From his experience, he explained, he believed that building relationships not strict discipline was the best approach when working with high school students. Although they had very different backgrounds, both Kevin and Terry shared that their families influenced their current beliefs and approaches to discipline.

Other stories told by the teacher leaders related to their previous employment, which is an aspect missing from the literature. The teacher leadership identity literature has generally focused on new teachers or career teachers (teachers who have been teaching for their entire working lives; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Watson, 2006). In my study, all four teacher leaders were previously employed in fields outside of education. Evan and Terry merely mentioned some of the jobs they held while Michael and Kevin seemed more heavily influenced by their previous careers. For example, Michael was a retired military officer and his education and leadership preparation were in conjunction with that career (the military paid for his college education). Michael earned his teaching certificate and master's degree in educational leadership, which, along with his military background, prepared him to be an ROTC teacher. Through his stories about his military experience, Michael shared that he led in nearly every position he held whether through formal rank or just stepping into a leadership role as needed. Additionally, in the military, individuals in a unit are interdependent and also responsible for a specific job. These skills that Michael developed relate directly to working on any team, including school leadership teams.

As for Kevin, prior to becoming a teacher, he was an engineer and told stories about his dissatisfaction with his work environment. Specifically, Kevin had “very

defined tasks” with “low creativity” and reported that he had no input into the organization of his environment. Kevin felt it was important to “be a part of making things better,” which he explained was part of his motivation for entering a teaching career as well as part of his motivation for becoming involved on the Team. Specifically, he wanted to have an impact on the conditions in which he worked, which is one of the major goals of PBIS.

Leadership preparation. Researchers who have examined teacher leader preparation (e.g., Harris & Muijs, 2005; Sanders, 2006) have recommended training for teacher leaders. Leadership preparation for teachers can occur in a number of forms including formal leadership courses as through a university program, mentoring, and coaching (Harris & Muijs, 2005). Although teacher leader preparation programs exist, teacher leaders rarely receive any form of specific teacher leadership training. Researchers argue that teacher leader preparation, specifically in regards to participation on teams, should include organizational functioning (school and district functioning within the broader context of education, how the team supports the school and district, and how the team functions; Chrispeels & Martin, 2002; Crow & Pounder, 2000) as well as development of skills related to communication (Kruse & Louis, 1997), collaboration, obtaining support from formal leaders, and decision-making (Sanders, 2006).

In my study, none of the teacher leaders reported having training or formal preparation to be a teacher leader specifically. However, Michael and Terry had completed educational leadership master’s programs. In their stories, though, they did not attribute their current leadership skills to their degree programs. Terry shared stories about how his degree prepared him for another leadership role as a cognitive coach, but

did not attribute any of his formal leadership training to his current involvement on the Team.

Evan and Kevin reported that on-the-job experience prepared them most for their current leadership roles. Kevin, for example, learned by “getting burned a few times” when providing professional development to teachers. In relation to his role on the Team as the “Data Guy,” his leadership skills derived from his knowledge of, confidence with, and repeated experience examining and reporting about data. Kevin continued that he felt it unnecessary for teachers to have teacher leadership training, as he believed that, generally, teachers already have the skills needed for leading.

While Evan did not have formal leadership training, his science degree impacted his leadership roles related to academics. Specifically, he shared that since he had the knowledge about physics, other science teachers considered him a content-area expert and looked to him to represent them at the district-level when the science curricula were being re-considered. In this case, his leadership preparation stemmed from his content-area expertise, as was suggested by Shulman (1987, cited in Rogus, 1988). In relation to his leadership on the Team, though, he attributed his current leadership skills to his past experiences in Boy Scouting and as a Team member on other teams. While other authors mention on-the-job training for teacher leaders (e.g., Harris & Muijs, 2005; Smylie et al., 2002), they do not mention the possible impact of youth leadership experiences on current and future leadership.

Leadership roles. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) identified teachers leaders as those who “lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher leaders and leaders; influence others toward improved educational

practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership” (p. 6). This broad definition encompasses many roles that teacher leaders fill. In their review of teacher leader literature, York-Barr and Duke (2004) identified several specific roles filled by teacher leaders including participating in school change/improvement efforts (e.g., participating in school-wide decisions, working with peers for school change), coordination and management (e.g., monitoring improvement efforts, participating in meetings), school or district curricula work (e.g., defining outcomes and standards; selecting and developing curricula), and professional development (e.g., mentoring, leading workshops). As members of the Team, all four teacher leaders in my study participated in school change/improvement by participating on the Team. Even Michael, who was new to the Team, began taking on a leadership role by the end of the study. Further, Terry, Kevin, and Evan coordinated and managed specific activities related to the Team: the Top Cat program, data analysis and reporting, and general Team functioning, respectively. They each participated in meetings and attended to the day-to-day tasks needed for monitoring the activities in which they were involved.

In the teacher leadership literature, research on district-level opportunities for teacher leaders is lacking. York-Barr and Duke (2004), however, did identify a few studies that mentioned district opportunities. These studies found that district-level teacher leadership emphasized academic-based work such as curricula and standards development. In my study, all four teacher leaders shared stories of participating on district-level teams. Specifically, Kevin, Terry, and Evan participated on curricula-related teams for technology, language arts, and science respectively. Two of the teacher leaders, Evan and Michael, participated on non-academic teams: Evan was a member of the

district PBIS team and Michael represented CCHS on the Benefits Committee. Teacher leadership literature fails to mention or explore teacher leaders' involvement in non-academic, district-level leadership opportunities.

Finally, teacher leaders also play a role in professional development through activities such as mentoring (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995) and leading workshops (Harris & Muijs, 2005). Terry and Kevin directly taught classes or workshops while Evan worked with the entire staff at meetings to provide updates on PBIS implementation. Although Michael had not directly participated as a leader in professional development, he did create materials for use at a staff meeting, specifically a PowerPoint presentation.

Motivation for team involvement. Most teams on which teachers participate focus on grade-level or content-area topics or issues at the school level (e.g., Chrispeels & Martin, 2002; Chrispeels et al., 2000; Crow & Pounder, 2000). On these teams, teachers often do not have a choice about being a team member; if they are a teacher at a certain grade-level or in a specific content area, they must participate. In these cases, their required membership on a team may impact their participation in team discussions and activities. For example, if they resent the required membership, they may not participate at all (Chrispeels et al., 2000; Crow & Pounder, 2000). In my study, the Team represented a non-traditional team since the focus was on non-academic, whole-school issues. Their stories reveal that teacher leaders' motivation for participating on the Team was personal for them rather than being an obligation.

One key factor that emerged from the teacher leaders' stories was a passion to contribute to school climate in some way. For example, although Evan and Terry were invited to be a part of the Team, they agreed because they had a passion for the mission

of the school and Team: to create a safe and supportive environment for students. On the other hand, while Michael and Kevin also expressed an interest in contributing to school safety and a positive school climate, they volunteered to participate; Michael in order to learn more about the school and contribute to the school community and Kevin because he believed his skill set related to data would be of value.

Literature on teacher passion exists (e.g., Day, 2004) but is limited to passion related to classroom teaching. In my study, though, passion played a role in teacher leaders' motivation for participating on the Team. According to Day (2004), "passion is associated with enthusiasm, caring, commitment, and hope" (p. 10). Although the stories teacher leaders told were not about classroom teaching, they still expressed passion as Day (2004) explained in regards to their roles on the Team.

Specifically, all four teacher leaders exhibited enthusiasm as they spoke about particular aspects of their leadership; their voice level rose, they used more hand gestures, and their face showed more expression. For example, Terry and Evan's enthusiasm emerged as they spoke about their interactions with students; Kevin's enthusiasm emerged when he spoke about data, and Michael's emerged when he spoke about the cell phone policy. Within the literature on leadership teams, passion and enthusiasm are not addressed. In their review of the teacher leadership literature, York-Barr and Duke (2004) found only a few studies that identified, but did not discuss, enthusiasm for teaching among the characteristics attributed to teacher leaders. As such, findings from my study contribute to this facet of teacher leadership; passion plays a role in leadership outside of the classroom and should not be overlooked.

Leadership in relation to others. In the literature on distributed leadership, several authors (e.g., Scribner et al., 2007; Spillane, 2005, 2006) argue that leadership emerges from the interactions and relationships among individuals. However, these authors fall short of specifically describing the interactions to which they refer. Spillane (2005), in fact, calls for researchers to examine the interactions that comprise distributed leadership.

In my study, the teacher leaders' stories revealed that they led in relation to others; they often used "we" instead of "I" as they discussed their leadership activities. For example, Evan and Terry worked together to lead efforts on the Top Cat program. While Terry developed the program and was considered to be the leader, he relied on Evan and others to help manage Top Cat activities. Kevin, too, worked with others but in relation to data; he relied on someone else to enter the data for him before he analyzed and created reports. Essentially, the teacher leaders did not lead alone. Just as leadership had been distributed to them, they were distributing leadership to others.

Not only does leadership emerge through interactions among individuals responsible for the management of a program, but also through interactions the leaders have with other staff members. For example, Evan and Terry designed, monitored, and managed the Top Cat program, and worked with staff to ensure their commitment to the program, making adjustments to the program based on staff feedback. These interactions occurred outside of Team meetings, so I relied on stories that Evan and Terry shared. Specifically, they shared stories about how they awarded Top Cat status to students, how they used feedback from staff to adjust the program, and how they worked with staff who struggled with program implementation. In this case, the leadership of the Top Cat

program emerged through the interactions that Evan and Terry had with the staff and the students as well.

As is evidenced by the stories that I collected, the nature of the teacher leaders' interactions was complex: the interactions varied depending on the stakeholders who they were engaged with during leadership activities. I did not review literature specifically on team or teacher leader interactions as my intention was to simply identify the types of interactions that the teacher leaders were engaged in rather than on the interactions themselves. As was suggested by Spillane (2006), these interactions should be examined further to determine the impact on team functioning and teacher leaders.

What stories are told about teacher leadership by other team members?

Researchers examining teacher leadership have generally collected data through primary sources, namely teacher leaders. Specifically, researchers have utilized surveys (e.g., Beijaard et al., 2000; Smylie & Denny, 1990), interviews (e.g., Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Sanders, 2006; Smylie & Denny, 1990), and document analysis (e.g., Sanders, 2006). No studies were found that included data collected from secondary participants (persons other than teacher leaders). In my study, I interviewed secondary participants in order to gain a different perspective on teacher leadership in general and the participating teacher leaders in particular.

The secondary participants shared a variety of stories about teacher leaders around two main themes: teacher leader personal attributes and teacher leader actions. First, the stories from the secondary participants revealed several common personal attributes: a passion to contribute, influential and a good rapport with peers, a great teacher, and concerned with improving conditions. Although phrased differently, some of

these characteristics are echoed in the literature (e.g., Rogus, 1988; Shulman, 1987, cited in Rogus, 1988; Smylie & Denny, 1990). For example, good teaching comes, in part, from knowledge of content and educational materials and structures, as well as extensive classroom experience (Shulman, 1987, cited in Rogus, 1988). Terry, Evan, and Kevin were all recognized as good teachers and experts in specific areas: Terry was an expert in relation to classroom management, Evan was a science content expert, and Kevin was considered an expert with technology and data.

Another personal attribute of teacher leaders is their ability to build rapport and influence their peers. Rogus (1988) states that teacher leaders accomplish this by working with others to build community (i.e., working with others to solve problems, communicating) and not isolating themselves in their classrooms. As is evidenced by their participation on the Team, all four teacher leaders in this study reached out beyond their classrooms to impact the entire school. Further, to build community, the teacher leaders built rapport with other teachers and were able to influence them. For example, Dr. Tobin reported that Evan and Terry were both well respected which allowed them to influence their peers in relation to implementing the Top Cat program. Several participants also shared that Kevin's data presentations were well received by staff. I observed one of Kevin's presentations; he engaged Team members in examining the data, making predictions, and asking questions.

Along with the above personal attributes, secondary participants attributed several leadership actions to teacher leaders as well. For example, Sanders (2006) identified communication as a key leadership skill contributing to successful team collaboration. In my study, many participants reported that the teacher leaders were good communicators,

not only among individuals on the Team but also with groups such as sub-committees and staff. For example, as the chair, Evan was responsible for communicating with team members prior to and following each meeting. Kevin shared that Evan communicated with him prior to his presentations to ensure that he was prepared. On the sub-committees, I observed Michael and Terry sharing their ideas, asking questions, and at times directing the discussions.

In addition to good teaching and strong communication skills, Smylie and Denny (1990) also found that teacher leaders were willing to step outside of the classroom to share experiences with and assist other teachers, generally in matters related to classroom teaching. In my study, the teacher leaders did step outside of the classroom to participate on the Team, but their involvement and support focused on school climate rather than specific classroom concerns as has been reported by other researchers (e.g., Smylie & Denny, 1990). Three of the teacher leaders willingly stepped outside of the classroom whether they were asked specifically (Evan) or they volunteered (Kevin, Michael). Terry, on the other hand, needed to be invited. He admitted that it was not until others expressed confidence in him that he felt he had something to offer to other teachers, namely his classroom management expertise. Even though he was a cognitive coach and had provided workshops on classroom management, during the interviews, Terry remained reluctant to consider himself a teacher leader; he considered his leadership in relation to students rather than to staff.

How do these stories of teacher leadership convey contextual influences?

While certain leadership characteristics have been attributed to teacher leaders, they are insufficient for teachers to lead (Smylie & Denny, 1990); context plays a role. The stories

I collected revealed the following contextual influences impacting teacher leadership roles: the school and district context, formal leadership and the leadership skills of teacher leaders (e.g., Kruse & Louis, 1997; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Scribner et al., 2007; Smylie & Denny, 1990). In my study, the district and the school contexts both influenced teacher leadership. The literature that I reviewed, though, emphasized the school context rather than district influence (Camburn et al., 2003; Kruse & Louis, 1997). My findings indicate, however, that the district context does impact teacher leadership at the district- and school-levels in two ways.

First, the district is organized around a traditional, hierarchical conceptualization of leadership. For example, although Dr. Tobin mentioned that “no decisions and directions are top-down; they’re all made starting with teachers and coming up,” other participants indicated that district-level leaders established the purpose of district-level teams and influenced team membership.

Second, the district, throughout its history, had established a collaborative environment through which district leaders established teams related to academics, PBIS, and the design of new schools. As participants mentioned, Shadow Lake School District is a very team-driven district; “this district has team for everything... anything that we decide to do, a team is convened to carry it out.” Thus, as described by participants, a teaming philosophy is deeply infused in the district’s culture. Specifically, the teams represented stakeholders from the school community including certified staff (e.g., administrators, teachers, counselors), classified staff (e.g., administrative assistants, security), parents, and community members. District leaders modeled team organization (who was on the team, how they functioned) and identified teachers for a leadership

trajectory that included participation on teams. Further, district leaders provided structure (time and process for teams), the practice (through modeling and many opportunities), and the beliefs (established the professional norms around team organization and process), all of which have been identified as influential to teacher leadership (Smylie & Denny, 1990).

The teaming attributes described above in relation to the district were also reflected in the data collected about school teams in general and CCHS's PBIS Team in particular. At the school-level though, in addition to the structural and functional aspects of teaming described by Smylie and Denny (1990), Muijs and Harris (2007) found that vision and trust contributed to shaping teacher leadership. At CCHS, Dr. Tobin followed the lead of the district, established teams related to academics and whole-school issues, provided structure and a vision, and developed trust with and among Team members. Her motivation for this is beyond the scope of this study but could be attributed to district pressure to conform to the teaming philosophy or her own personal philosophy about building relationships. Regardless of her motivation, the involvement of teachers as leaders in many aspects of school and district life has become embedded into the culture of the school, a key condition for shaping teacher leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2007).

The second contextual influence on teacher leaders was the support from the principal, which has been identified as necessary for shaping teacher leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2007). With regards to teacher leaders participating on teams, researchers have argued that principals in particular have an understanding of the bigger picture in which the school is set and thus may influence the team's autonomy, composition, and purpose or vision (e.g., Kruse & Louis, 1997; Scribner et al., 2007). At CCHS, Dr. Tobin had a

direct influence on the purpose and level of autonomy of the Team, as well as how the Team was situated within the school. Specifically, Dr. Tobin impacted how the team was established, why the Team was established, and who were the initial Team members (Camburn et al., 2003; Spillane, 2005, 2006).

According to several participants, when Dr. Tobin opened the school, she set the vision for the original Team: to create a safe and caring environment. Additionally, she invited ITLs to participate on this Team. Other studies have indicated that principals play a pivotal role by controlling who sits on teams (e.g., Printy & Marks, 2006). While Dr. Tobin controlled the Team membership initially, over time she has exerted less control and instead welcomed people, along with other Team members, who expressed an interest in participating.

Researchers also state that the principal's involvement is necessary for scheduling time for meetings, providing resources, and helping team members navigate obstacles (Kruse & Louis, 1997; Scribner et al., 2007). Dr. Tobin was not the leader of the Team but was a Team member. As the principal, though, she believed that her role was to support the Team's efforts by ensuring they had the resources for realizing their plans. Dr. Tobin also helped Team members navigate school and district policies and procedures in order to implement the programs supporting their vision. For example, Evan shared a story in which they wanted to allow Top Cat students to leave campus for lunch. Dr. Tobin presented the idea to district leaders. However, due to safety concerns, the district would not approve the plan. As a result, Dr. Tobin worked with Evan and Terry to identify other incentives for students.

Chrispeels and Martin (2002) found that the principal played a key role on the impact teams had on the school community as well. Specifically, because the principal was in a position of power, the flow of communication and the teams' influence were limited. However, on the Team at CCHS, this proved to not be the case. Several participants stated that teacher leaders had autonomy in managing their individual programs or projects, but they also indicated that teacher leaders still consulted with Dr. Tobin prior to implementation. For example, with regards to Top Cat, Terry, along with a few other staff, managed the program. Dr. Tobin allocated funds and supported the program with staff; she wanted to "be a resource for the Team; making sure that if they have ideas, that I can support it and fund it." Evan admitted, though, that they presented ideas to Dr. Tobin before securing resources.

While the district and the principal influenced the roles of teacher leaders, Smylie and Denny (1990) argue that the structure of roles and the context "is necessary but insufficient to promote teacher leadership performance" (p. 257); teacher leaders must also be personally prepared to lead. The literature on teacher leadership recommends that teacher leaders receive training related to organizational functioning (i.e., how standards drive decision-making, how to access resources, methods of communication) as well as leadership skills (i.e., communication, decision-making processes; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Kruse & Louis, 1997; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Sanders, 2006).

However, in my study, only Michael and Terry had completed a general educational leadership degree. Kevin and Evan had not received formal leadership training related to their roles on the Team; they had not participated in a teacher leadership program or a general leadership program at a university. The literature on

teacher leader development (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Crowther, 2009; Kruse & Louis, 1997; Sanders, 2006) does not address other sources of influence such as childhood leadership experiences, previous employment, or on-the-job experiences. In my study, though, some of the teacher leaders' knowledge of organizational functioning and the development of their leadership skills came from past experiences in such activities as Boy Scouts and participation on school teams. Based on the stories that were told, the Team seems to be identifying and meeting goals consistently despite the lack of formal leadership training of their Team leaders.

Question 2: How do Teacher Leaders Come to See Themselves as Leaders?

To answer my second research questions, "How do teacher leaders come to see themselves as leaders?", I focused primarily on observations of Team meetings but also relied on stories that participants told. Specifically, I attended to how teacher leaders interacted with others and the stories told about what influenced their identities as leaders.

How do team interactions shape teacher leader identity? According to some authors (e.g., Camburn et al., 2003; Spillane, 2005, 2006), the Team's configuration, social processes, and tools (i.e., team documents, data forms) impact Team interactions. A team's configuration includes the composition of the Team (who is on it, what roles do they fill on and off the team), the purpose of the team, and how the team is situated within the school and district. In my study, the Team was representative of the school as it included certified staff (teachers, counselors, administrators), classified staff (administrative assistants, security), students, and parents.

Additionally, the Team was relatively large with up to 20 members or more at times. The size of typical teams has been reported as between three and seven people (Camburn et al., 2003). While a representative team is ideal, smaller teams are more effective and have better teamwork (collaborative group process; Hoegl, 2005). Crow and Pounder (2000) found that on large teams (identified as comprised of 7 to 12 members), team members reported mixed perceptions about the effect of team size on team functioning. Specifically, some team members positively reported that a large team allowed many opportunities for everyone to have a role on the team. Other team members negatively reported that the large team enabled some people to elude responsibility and also made it difficult for people to work together.

In my study, the Team utilized several strategies to avoid the negative effects reported by Crow and Pounder (2000). One of the strategies was to organize around three sub-committees each focusing on one topic: the cell phone policy, language registers, and seat belt safety. This approach was not addressed in the literature that I reviewed for this study. While the Team met altogether at times, discussions and planning were mostly done by these sub-committees. Additional sub-committees existed, such as for Top Cat, but they met outside of regular Team meetings.

The size of the Team coupled with the organization around sub-committees impacted the level of participation and the interactions of two teacher leaders in particular: Terry and Michael. Specifically, Terry and Michael did not participate regularly when the meetings included the entire Team. However, when they participated in the sub-committees, they were more engaged in discussions, asking questions and offering suggestions. Michael initially sat away from the larger group and did not

contribute to the discussions at all. By the end of this study, though, he had increased his interactions within a sub-committee, specifically the cell phone sub-committee. His increased participation may be attributed to the smaller group setting or possibly his increased comfort at being a part of the Team. The reviewed literature on school teams does not discuss the impact of team size on team member participation, making this finding unique and perhaps a topic for future research.

Although Terry led the Top Cat program, he limited his interactions with other Team members to his brief updates on Top Cat. Occasionally, Terry did ask questions or make suggestions on other issues. On the language registers sub-committee, however, he engaged in the conversation, commenting regularly and at times directing the conversation although he was not the leader of the sub-committee.

Additionally, the forms and processes, what Spillane (2005, 2006) refers to as the *situation* (Spillane, 2005, 2006), influenced Team interactions. For example, on the Team, they consistently utilized an agenda and sent out meeting minutes. Most of the participants merely mentioned the use of an agenda. Evan, however, mentioned the agenda and meeting minutes frequently as he used these tools to organize Team meetings and keep a record of decisions made during the meetings. As the chair of the Team, communication played a key role in his identity as the leader; the agenda and meeting minutes were tools he used to communicate.

Team meetings were also organized consistently and included data presentations, program or activity updates, and time for sub-committees to meet. The consistent agenda helped shape when Team members would discuss certain aspects of their activities. For example, Kevin, known as the “Data Guy,” examined data and created reports in addition

to presenting to the Team. When he presented, he engaged Team members in looking at the data and asked them questions. According to Michael, Kevin “gathers the information, packages it up, puts it up and so everybody can see...then he explains it; it was very easy to follow.” These opportunities, along with the reports he created, demonstrated his expertise with data and shaped his identity as the “Data Guy.”

According to Beijaard et al. (2000), expertise contributes to the foundation for teacher leader identity. While their study examined teacher leaders within a classroom context, I contend that expertise also applies to teacher leaders in other contexts, namely teams.

How do contextual factors contribute to or hinder teacher leader identity development? The findings from my study illuminate three factors that contribute to or hinder teacher leader development: formal leadership training or education, district leadership practice, and the Team structure. According to Muijs and Harris (2007), one key condition for shaping teacher leaders is the support for teacher leader development including what teacher leadership is and skills needed for the position. They and other authors (e.g., Kruse & Louis, 1997; Sanders, 2006) allude to the need for formal leadership training for teacher leaders. However, few teacher leaders actually receive formal training and instead learn through experience. The teacher leaders in my study had not received specific teacher leadership training. Michael and Terry both completed master’s degrees in educational leadership, but only Terry shared specific stories about how his degree program specifically influenced his leadership: he studied Kagan structures that he used when coaching other teachers in matters related to classroom management.

Evan and Kevin, though, did not participate in any formal leadership education or training. Although the district provided an opportunity to complete a master's degree at the district office through one of the state universities, they had not participated in the program. In fact, Kevin even stated that teachers have many of the skills needed to lead. Specifically, he felt that teachers are used to talking in front of people and organizing and structuring material. Kevin also expressed that an interest in leading and an encouraging environment were also necessary for teachers to lead. His statement confirms what has been said by researchers (e.g., Smylie & Denny, 1990): teachers need skills, opportunity, and support to lead.

Kevin illuminates the fact that leadership is more than just taking classes and having the skills; the desire to lead must also be there. Identity theorists argue that identity is more than what someone does (and the skills a person has); identity is about the meaning one attaches to what is said and actions taken (e.g., Sfard & Prusak, 2005; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Teacher leaders must understand their motivation for wanting to lead and then have the confidence and the opportunity to do so.

Although teacher leaders may reflect on their own motivation and desire to lead, that may not be enough. Evan, for example, was confident in his abilities to lead and was willing to do so as needed. However, not all teacher leaders have that confidence or desire, as was the case with Terry. He did not identify in himself the skills to lead yet his mentor teacher did and became the source of his confidence to step into leadership roles. The teacher leadership literature has consistently acknowledged the role of the principal in inviting teachers to lead (e.g., Kruse & Louis, 1997; Sanders, 2006; Scribner et al., 2007). However, the literature reviewed has not mentioned the role that other teacher

leaders might play in identifying and supporting teacher leaders. Thus, this finding is unique to teacher leadership literature. Although Terry had been a teacher leader for many years, during my interviews with him, he was still reluctant to refer to himself in this way: he was more focused on what he does to help students.

A second factor impacting teacher leadership development was the district's "growing leadership" approach. Several participants shared that school and district leaders identified teachers for future administrator roles and then invited them to participate in leadership activities. For example, as mentioned previously, the district had arranged for a state university to provide a master's in educational leadership program through the district. As reported by Dr. Tobin, she identified teacher leaders to participate in the master's program. Although this program is open to all teachers who are interested, not all teachers take advantage of it. Some teachers who may be interested in leadership development may be overlooked unless specifically invited or encouraged to do so. In this respect, as York-Barr and Duke (2004) found in their review, the principal can play a pivotal role in developing teacher leaders by inviting them to and supporting their interest in leadership activities.

In addition to the master's program in educational leadership offered at the district office, the district organized many teams in which teachers could participate. Several participants in my study reported that teachers may be invited to participate on some teams or they could volunteer for others. Dr. Tobin shared that volunteer opportunities allow teachers to step into leadership roles when they otherwise might have been overlooked. Principals, she continued, may not always know which teachers are interested in leadership until they volunteer. However, Dr. Tobin recognized that it was

still essential for principals to “really [know] their teachers and [give] them a personal invitation”.

The third factor impacting teacher leader identity development was the structure of the Team, such as size and composition (Crow & Pounder, 2000). Dr. Tobin established the vision for the Team when she created it as the school was being designed. She was passionate about creating a school where students felt safe, cared for, and where they could participate. When the Team was established, the vision played a large part in their activities. The ITLs made up the original Team, but over time, Team membership opened to whoever was willing to contribute to the Team’s vision. As a result, people who wanted to participate on the Team were welcomed and given opportunities to lead and develop their identities.

The Team has since grown in size to include 20 or more members. While Team members reported this as a positive characteristic, their size could hinder leader identity development. For example, new Team members like Michael, were not easily identified by participants. Additionally, participants did not tell any stories that indicated whether or not Michael, or any relatively new member, had received any form of orientation to the Team in general and the Team’s activities in particular. While new team member orientation has not been examined in the literature on teacher leadership or teaming, new teacher orientation has been explored (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The main purpose of new teacher orientation or induction is to increase teacher retention and engagement (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). This purpose can also be applied to a team context; providing an orientation may help new team members engage in team activities and, thus, improve retention of team members. Like new teachers, over time, new team members may

discover this information on their own, but receiving the information early on in their involvement may encourage them to engage in leadership activities sooner.

Researcher Reflection

While this study was focused on teacher leader identity, I found that I explored my own identity along the way. As I conducted the interviews, I found it challenging to navigate among my different identities: researcher, student, professional developer, parent, and former colleague. I constantly had to attend to my identity so I did not influence the direction of the stories too much. I wanted to elicit stories about specific topics, but constantly had to check myself so I did not deviate too much from my researcher identity to my other identities. According to narrative researchers (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), this conflict is expected and what brings value to narrative; it helps us remember and consider our participants in relation to us and each other, which is how our identities develop. Further, as Connelly and Clandinin (1999) believe, identities emerge through our interactions with others. I was part of the data collection, but while the teacher leader identities emerged through the stories they told about themselves and the stories that others shared about them, they also emerged as they interacted with me.

I really thought of my interviews with teacher leaders and my writing of their narratives as traveling down a winding road, with many turns and detours. When I engaged them in conversations that seemed at the time to distract from my main purpose, stories were told that might not have been told otherwise, and, thus, revealed another dimension of their identities. We always returned to the main path of teacher leader identity, though, and several important ideas joined us along the way: the role of the

principal and the district in strengthening or weakening teacher leadership and the importance of attending to passion as influencing not only teaching practices but also leadership practices.

Identities are constantly evolving and I wonder how my questions, and how they thought about the interviews, impacted their future work as leaders? Narrative inquiry researchers (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1995; Sfard & Prusak, 2005) report that identity development occurs through interactions with others. Since I was interacting with the teacher leaders in my study, I have to wonder if the interview process impacted the way they viewed their leadership and their identities on the Team. As a researcher, I would welcome the opportunity to follow up with the Evan, Terry, Kevin, and Michael to learn how they felt about the study and how things have changed since I collected data.

Limitations

This study has several limitations, which I will address in this section. First, due to the limited number of participants, the findings from this study are not generalizable. The purpose of this study was not to generalize to other schools or teams but rather to understand a phenomenon: teacher leader identity at CCHS. Although the findings are not generalizable, they contribute to the literature on teacher leadership and leadership development, advancing the “field’s knowledge base” (Merriam, 1988, p. 33). In this case, my findings contribute to what we know about teacher leadership in relation to their work on Teams. Specifically, I have identified several influential factors that have not been explored extensively in the teacher leadership or school team literature: the role of passion, the role of the principal in supporting teacher leadership, the role of other teacher

leaders in identifying and supporting teacher leaders, previous employment, and youth leadership opportunities. Additionally, I identified several other gaps in the literature in relation to the role of the district in teacher leadership development and the impact of team structures on teacher leadership.

The second limitation is in the method of data collection. Since I was the primary instrument of data collection, human factors influenced data collection and analysis, such as my relationship with participants and my background. Steps were taken to minimize the impact of this limitation. Specifically, I conducted multiple interviews, asked participants to review transcripts and stories prior to data analysis, and triangulated data with other sources (principal and staff interviews, Team meeting observations).

Third, all of the primary participants were white males, and thus my findings are limited to this specific population. The voices of teacher leaders who are female and of different races/ethnicities are missing. However, my findings still contribute to the literature on teacher leadership, specifically in understanding the nature of teacher leadership identity on teams. Future research, though, could contribute further by exploring teacher leadership with different populations.

Additionally, as for the use of narratives, Polkinghorne (2007) recognizes the limits of language to capture the complexity and depth of experienced meaning. Participants may have had difficulty expressing their experiences or feelings, or not felt comfortable doing so. Not only can the researcher influence what is asked and said but also in how data are interpreted; bias and mis-interpretation of words or actions on the part of the researcher are constant dangers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Merriam, 1988).

Despite the limitations, a narrative inquiry approach allowed participants to share their stories. Narratives are used not to gather evidence that an event has occurred but rather to understand the meaning experienced by individuals (Polkinghorne, 2007). The narratives serve as evidence for personal meaning not factual occurrence of events.

Recommendations

This study contributes to the literature in a number of ways and has implications for future research and practice. While teacher leaders and leadership teams have been researched, teacher leadership on teams has not. The teacher leader literature emphasizes the role of teachers in relation to classroom practice and has overlooked the roles that teacher leaders play in the larger school context. Teachers are asked to participate in many ways at schools but not all aspects have been examined. This study contributes to this gap in the literature. To expand our knowledge base about teacher leadership on teams, future research should include teachers from other districts, teachers at other grade-levels, and teachers involved in other types of teams. Additionally, since all of my participants were male, future research could explore gender and racial/ethnicity differences in teacher leader identity and perceptions of influential factors. Additionally, grade-level and type of team could influence teacher leader identity and thus should be further explored.

As schools are increasingly relying on teachers to lead change efforts not just related to curriculum but to whole-school issues such as climate and safety, we must better understand how to support teachers. Teaching has become more complex and teachers are asked to do more during their day, usually related to academics. Whole-

school issues are often viewed as an added duty that detracts from the primary duties of a teacher. However, teachers do become involved in whole-school issues so understanding their motivation and what they need to be successful may illuminate ways others can be supported. In my study, it was apparent that passion played a key role in each teacher leader's identity; specifically, passion contributed to teacher leaders' motivation for participating on the Team. Participant stories consistently included teacher passion or enthusiasm as the motivation for their actions. In the literature, though, teacher passion and enthusiasm are not explored with regards to teacher leaders' identities or teacher leader development. Future research should explore passion and enthusiasm further as they have implications for how teacher leaders are identified and prepared to lead.

However, passion alone was not enough; the teacher leaders also needed the support from the principal and the opportunity to lead. Without principal support, teacher leaders may not have the opportunities or confidence to lead. As such, the role of the principal cannot be overlooked. Dr. Tobin seemed able to recognize and support teacher leaders well. Her strong belief in building relationships between and among students and staff influenced her actions. Additionally, Dr. Tobin established the school's vision, created space, identified and secured resources, and encouraged teacher leaders in their activities. The data collected for this study, though, did not explore her leadership preparation so I am unable to speculate as to how much influence that had on her identification and support of teacher leaders.

While beyond the scope of this study, the impact of principal support is an important finding and has implications for principal and superintendent preparation. Specifically, principals and superintendents may not inherently know how to identify and

create environments to support teacher leaders. Such skills are not generally addressed in leadership preparation programs. In fact, Hess and Kelly (2007) found in their review of literature on leadership preparation programs that only 6% of the content was devoted to topics related to teacher leadership, such as leadership versus management, creating a school culture, and the frames of leadership. Identification and support of teacher leaders was not specifically identified within program content.

Previous research and findings from this study, though, reveal that teacher leadership is complex; there are many conceptualizations of teacher leadership and a range of skills or knowledge needed to lead. As summarized in Table 4.2, while teacher leaders share some common characteristics, they also have some unique characteristics that contribute to their leadership identities. Principals and superintendents should be aware of this complexity and learn strategies to attend to the various skills and characteristics needed for different leadership roles, and then identify teachers with those skills and characteristics to fill those roles.

Often when teachers are asked to participate on teams, they are asked to do so without training in leadership. While the literature states that leadership training is an important aspect of teacher leadership (e.g., Muijs & Harris, 2007; Smylie & Denny, 1990), most teachers do not receive formal training. Only two of the teacher leaders in my study had received formal leadership training, so my findings are consistent with what other authors have found (e.g., Muijs & Harris, 2007; Smylie & Denny, 1990).

However, what is interesting to note is that the teacher leaders did not necessarily think that such formal education was necessary. Only Terry directly utilized content from his formal leadership education, namely classroom management knowledge, in his

actions as a teacher leader. Michael also had a degree in educational leadership but did not indicate that what he learned through his program contributed to his leadership at the school generally and on the Team in particular. Evan and Kevin seemed to be able to lead although they primarily developed their skills through experience. Muijs and Harris (2007) found in their study, though, that the most successful schools at engaging teachers as leaders provided professional development (leadership courses, district-led workshops, coaching, or mentoring) and suggest that “some form of professional development needs to be in place to equip teachers to lead effectively” (p. 130). What is meant by “lead effectively” is unclear and should be examined and defined further to determine the impact of leadership development on teachers’ ability to lead and their leadership practice.

Future research on how teachers understand, accept, and perform team roles may contribute to leadership development practice. Specifically, teacher leader identity and district and school context should be addressed. Smylie and Denny (1990) proposed that teacher leadership should be approached as an issue of organizational development rather than an issue of individual empowerment. Instead of developing “isolated” programs away from the school setting (such as at universities), it may be more practical and beneficial to prepare leaders within their own context. Another recommendation is to create specializations within teacher leader preparation programs, such as coaching, curriculum development, and team leadership. These areas are worth considering as the research on teacher leader preparation expands.

Last, my methodology has not been utilized previously in teacher leader identity research. While teacher leader identity narratives have been reported by

other researchers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Watson, 2006), the stories collected have been solely from the teacher leaders and not others with whom they interact. In my study, following Sfard and Prusak (2005), I contend that teacher leader identity narratives should include not only stories from individuals but also stories about those individuals by others. As such, I collected stories from teacher leaders and Team members who could share stories about the teacher leaders. In doing so, I share a more composite view of teacher leader identity through the words of the teacher leaders, the principal, and other team members. Since Spillane (2005, 2006) argued that leadership emerges from our interactions with others, it follows that we should collect stories from everyone involved in leadership not just the primary participants.

Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of my study was to understand teacher leader identity within the context of leadership teams and to understand the context and influential factors for teacher leader identity development. While the findings are not generalizable, they do contribute to our understanding of teacher leadership and factors influencing their development and involvement on teams. Additionally, my findings have uncovered other questions that may be worth exploring to deepen our understanding of teacher leadership and thus impact the field.

From my data analysis and discussion, I have drawn four main conclusions related to teacher passion, distinct teacher leader identities on the Team, the role of the principal, and the importance of context. First, passion and enthusiasm surfaced as key elements to the teacher leaders' identities. Not only did secondary participants mention

these characteristics, but they were demonstrated by the teacher leaders when they told stories about students, their leadership activities, and inspirations. The literature on teacher passion, however, is in reference to teachers' role in the classroom and as educators in general. In the literature on teacher leadership and school teams, passion is not addressed. However, in my study, passion was key to teacher leaders' motivation for participating on the Team and their identities as leaders. As a result, I recommend that passion be considered in the teacher leader preparation research and practice.

Second, my findings indicate that teacher leaders have distinct identities related to their involvement on the Team. Many studies have explored teacher identity and leader identity, but teacher leader identity was only found to have been mentioned in the literature (not defined or specifically studied). The literature on leader identity emphasizes administrators not teachers, and some of the literature on teacher identity only mentions leader identity as a component of teacher identity; it is not explored separately. Teacher leadership was a part of each teacher's identity and also apart from the classroom teacher identities; the meanings they attributed to their actions as teacher leaders reached beyond the classroom to the broader school climate. Teacher leadership was a distinct part of their identities. This study provides a glimpse into the identities of teacher leaders as they participate on teams, specifically illuminating how teacher leaders see themselves as leaders, how they have developed as leaders, and factors that impact their ability to lead and participate on teams.

Third, the importance of the principal in supporting teacher leaders cannot be overlooked. As school leaders, including principals, rely more on teachers to fill leadership roles, it is important that they be prepared to support teachers. Principals need

to carefully consider the tasks performed by teacher leaders, the skills needed to perform the tasks, and the development that individual teacher leaders need. Additionally, principals should know how teachers understand, accept, and enact leadership roles. These are topics that should be considered for inclusion in administrator preparation programs.

Last, my findings indicate that district and school context really does matter in the level of teacher leaders' involvement and the activities in which they participate. Teacher leadership needs to be a carefully directed and deliberate process; it must be embedded in the culture of a school (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Additionally, teacher leadership must be supported not only by formal leaders but also organizational structures. Particularly, the context determines the leadership roles filled by teachers, the level of autonomy, and the development of leadership skills.

This study has provided insight into teacher leader identity within the context of a leadership team at one school. My findings contribute to our understanding of one aspect within the larger landscape of teacher leadership. Specifically, my findings illuminate how teachers see themselves as leaders and what factors influence their leadership practice and identity development. Additionally, my findings have uncovered other questions that may be worth exploring to deepen our understanding of teacher leadership and thus impact the field.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Teacher Leader

1. Describe your background in education.
 - a. What roles have you had as an educator?
2. Tell me how you define/ identify a teacher leader.
3. Tell me about when you first realized you were a teacher leader.
4. Tell me about how you developed your skills as a leader.
5. Tell me about the leadership team of which you are a part (probe for role, function, organization).
6. What are the roles of team members?
 - a. How are the roles determined?
 - b. What do the roles look like outside of team meetings?
7. Why are you participating on this team?
 - a. What expectations do you have of the team?
 - b. What expectations do you have for yourself in relation to the team?
8. Describe your relationship with other team members.
9. Is there anything you would like to add?
10. Can you recommend to me at least one staff member who is not on the team who might be willing to participate in this study?

Administrator

1. Describe your background in education.
 - a. What roles have you had as an educator?

2. Tell me how you define/ identify a teacher leader.
3. Tell me about a specific teacher leader – without using names. Describe what they do, how you recognize that person as a leader.
4. Tell me how you know if someone is a teacher leader.
5. Tell me about the leadership team (probe for role, function, organization).
6. What are the roles of team members?
 - a. How are the roles determined?
 - b. What do the roles look like outside of team meetings?
7. Is there anything you would like to add?

Other Staff Member

1. Describe your history at this school.
 - a. What roles have you had?
2. Tell me how you define/ identify a teacher leader.
3. Tell me about a specific teacher leader – without using names. Describe what they do, how you recognize that person as a leader.
4. Tell me how you know if someone is a teacher leader.
5. Tell me about the leadership team (probe for role, function, organization).
6. What are the roles of team members?
 - a. How are the roles determined?
 - b. What do the roles look like outside of team meetings?
7. Is there anything you would like to add?

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