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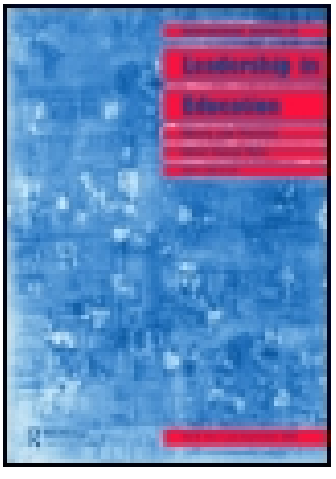

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How teacher leaders influence others and understand their leadership

JANET C. FAIRMAN and SARAH V. MACKENZIE

This study elaborates the many ways that teachers lead work with colleagues to improve teaching and learning, and their understanding of their work as leadership. Through qualitative case studies of seven Maine schools and a review of the literature, the authors developed a conceptual model, Spheres of Teacher Leadership Action for Learning. They describe the various strategies teachers used to influence colleagues in direct and indirect ways, through formal and informal leadership. The authors discuss the importance of relationships, informal collaboration, trust and collegiality in supporting teachers' leadership development and school improvement. However, they also found teachers engaging in leadership to build these supportive conditions where they did not exist in schools. Teachers leading school improvement work were reluctant to see themselves as leaders, and rarely referred to themselves or others as 'leaders'. In fact, they viewed their informal and collaborative work as having greater impact on school improvement than formal efforts directed by school administrators. Yet, teachers did recognize the contributions and individual strengths that colleagues brought to their collective efforts. The authors suggest that in advancing the focus on school improvement and a shared accountability for the learning of all children, the term 'teacher leader' may be counterproductive.

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Introduction

The notion of teachers as leaders has come a long way. Barth's *School: A community of leaders* (1988), followed by articles specifically on the topic (1999, 2001), coupled with Wasley's (1991) exploration of the experiences of teacher leaders have given way to innumerable research studies and definitions of the concept over the last few decades. A notable study in that compilation is Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan's (2000) description of the development of teacher leadership as coming in three waves: in the first wave, teacher leaders took on managerial roles; in the second wave, they used their instructional expertise in tasks such as curriculum development or coordination of improvement efforts. The third wave of teacher leadership is emerging. These authors see it originating in the

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classroom and evolving as teachers learn about their own practice and help colleagues inquire into and adopt strategies for improving student learning. This development exemplifies Ogawa and Bossert's (1995) conclusion regarding leadership as an organizational quality and their comment at the end of their paper that, 'a new conception of leadership is emerging, one that sees it everywhere' (p. 55).

All of the various roles and functions of teacher leadership still exist, but educators and administrators are coming to see the individuals, their actions and their influences differently. Harris and Muijs (2004) offer these dimensions of teacher leadership from Harris's work: *brokering*, where teachers implement recommended effective practices; *participative leadership*, where teachers develop and own new strategies; *mediating*, where teachers use craft knowledge and also help to interpret and seek help on various improvement plans; and forging close *relationships* with other teachers, so that reciprocity of teacher learning as well as change and improvement in student learning occur (pp. 23–24).

To capture the essence of teacher leadership, York-Barr and Duke (2004) reviewed 140 studies of teacher leadership. Their meta-analysis helped them develop a conceptualization, Teacher Leadership for Student Learning Framework (p. 289). Their model depicts the characteristics and supporting conditions of teacher leaders and their work and how teachers lead through relationships with a focus on improving teaching and student learning. York-Barr and Duke (2004) cited the need for more research to explore how teacher leadership develops and its effects for students and teachers.

Conceptual framework for teacher leadership action for learning

Although not following York-Barr and Duke's conceptual frame specifically, many authors in an *Educational Leadership* issue (2007) devoted to teacher leadership teased out even more fully the variables that support, the qualities that characterize and the kinds of relationships that involve teacher leaders (Danielson, 2007; Donaldson, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Lattimer, 2007). In a recent issue of *Professional Development in Education* (2012), we presented our work that expands on the York-Barr and Duke framework by elaborating on the contexts, initiation, and the scope and focus of teacher leadership. Our descriptive model of teacher leadership action describes spheres of leadership and depicts the complexity and multi-dimensionality of teacher leadership.

In our model, we opened the boxes of the York-Barr and Duke (2004) conceptualization by expanding the parts of their framework that describe the 'Means of Leadership Influence' (teaching and learning, trusting and constructive relationships, and formal and informal interactions) and the 'Targets of Leadership Influence' (individuals, groups and organizational capacity). We validated their conceptual framework, fleshed it out by explaining the contents of the boxes more fully, and showed the various ways teachers work and influence others to establish the conditions for improved student learning. We recognized leadership activity at

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the individual (Angelle & Schmid, 2007; Barth, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 2001; Little, 1990) and collective levels (Lambert, 2003a; Westheimer, 1998), as well as formal and informal roles (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005; Harris & Muijs, 2003; Poekert, 2012; Stoelinga, 2008; Supovitz, 2008).

We conceived of teachers' work as spheres of teacher leadership activity. The spheres describe who is involved in the activity, what they are doing and the scope of the activity. The framework is best represented in a three-dimensional model with the spheres rotating around the goal of student learning that depicts the non-linear, non-continuous nature of teacher leadership activity. We expanded the conventional notion of teacher leadership which has often emphasized formal leadership roles and teachers actively leading other adults in that we saw leadership activity occurring within teachers' individual classrooms and through the informal interactions and relationships among teachers, where teachers were leading *with* others. We saw teachers working in more than one sphere simultaneously and jumping across spheres in some cases, while other teachers moved through the spheres in a more step-wise fashion (and counter-clockwise with respect to our diagram). Figure 1 depicts the model, Spheres of Teacher Leadership Action for Learning (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012), and Table 1 provides a description of each sphere.

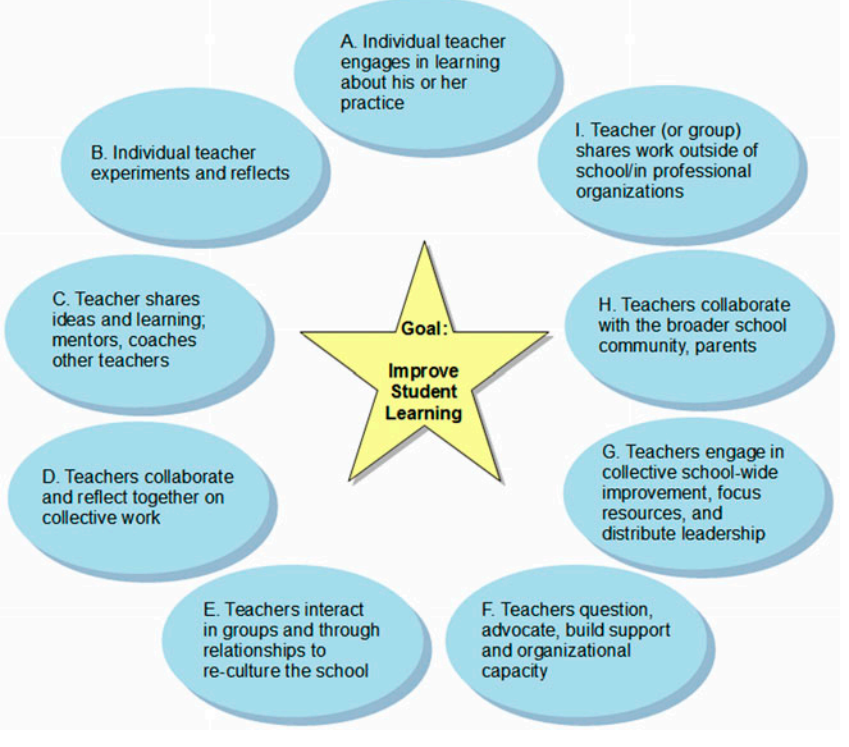

Figure 1. Spheres of Teacher Leadership Action for Learning (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012)

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Table 1. Descriptions of the Spheres of Teacher Leadership Action for Learning

Sphere	Description
A	Teachers decide to extend, deepen their professional knowledge and skills, show a commitment to engage in professional learning and improvement and build professional expertise in preparation for making instructional changes in their classrooms
B	Teachers experiment, innovate, reflect on their beliefs as well as efforts to change practice in classrooms to improve student learning (Barth, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001; Little, 1990)
C	Teachers share pedagogical views, instructional ideas and approaches to learning within the school (Harris & Muijs, 2003; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Silva et al., 2000)
D	Teachers collaborate to experiment with new instructional approaches and curricular projects. They develop new work together, implement it and reflect on the implementation and impact on student learning (Harris & Muijs, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Wasley, 1991)
E	Teachers work with and through various groups and relationships in the school to influence a change in norms, pedagogical beliefs and practices (Foster, 2005; Donaldson, 2006; Donaldson, 2007; Little, 1990; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Silva et al., 2000; Westheimer, 1998)
F	Teachers question existing practices in the school, publicly advocate for change, build support for change, organize for school-wide change, thus building a foundation for distributed leadership capacity (Crowther et al., 2002; Frost, 2008; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Spillane, 2006)
G	Teachers participate in planned school-wide improvement efforts, utilizing multiple leadership skills and focusing resources on shared goals (Foster, 2005; Harris & Muijs, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2007)
H	Teachers collaborate with the wider school community—parents and students—for school improvement efforts (Crowther et al., 2002; Foster, 2005)
I	Teachers share and present their work outside their own school, learning and stimulating change among other teachers, e.g. through mentoring, presenting at conferences, professional organizations (Silva et al., 2000)

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Emergence of teacher leadership

In an earlier article (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012), we presented findings related to the initiation of teacher leadership. We found that teachers, rather than administrators, initiated teacher leadership activity, and that it were primarily veteran teachers who led improvement efforts. Further, teacher leadership activity reflected a continuum, from individual or independent work with a limited improvement focus and scope (spheres A and B) to increasingly collective work with a broader focus and scope (spheres C through I). While some teachers moved across the spheres in no particular order and often jumped over several spheres, many teachers moved along the continuum in a way that indicated a developmental shift in their professional growth.

Like York-Barr and Duke, we found that teacher leaders are galvanized by the desire to improve and thus ensure learning for all students. Other writers, of course, have said the same thing (Barth, 1999; Lambert, 2003b; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Poekert, 2012). In our study, many teachers were driven to experiment, take risks, collaborate, seek feedback and question their own or others' practices (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012;

Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, Poekert, 2012). Furthermore, building on Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice, Professional Learning Communities focused on improved student learning energizes the potential of teachers as leaders (Dufour, Eaker, & Dufour, 2005; Poekert, 2012; Wilson, 2011).

Focus of the study

This paper further elaborates on York-Barr and Duke's Teacher Leadership for Student Learning Framework (p. 289). Within spheres of teacher leadership activity, we examine where and how teachers influence improvement of student learning both within and beyond their own classrooms. In addition, we capture teachers' understandings of the work in which they are engaged, if and how they see their work as leadership, and the extent to which the concept of leadership has meaning for them.

The specific research questions were:

- How do teachers influence their colleagues to improve teaching and student learning?
- How do teachers understand the concept of teacher leadership, their work and their development as leaders?

Methods

For this investigation, we drew on interview data and case studies we had developed through two separate studies of teacher leadership in 2006–2007 that included seven Maine schools. The first study included two elementary schools and three high schools that were purposefully selected because they had instituted formal or informal school leadership teams. A teacher leader from each of those schools assisted the second author as part of a graduate course in educational leadership. A total of 24 interviews with teachers who were members of the ad hoc or formal leadership teams were conducted and narrative case studies were developed describing each of the five schools. The interviews focused on the backgrounds, experiences and perceptions of the teachers as they engaged in leadership activities (see Appendix A).

A second study included two middle schools that were purposefully selected based on their reputation for implementing multi-grade classroom groupings as well as other innovative instructional practices. The two schools were comparable in terms of school size, demographics and student assessment results. Teachers were selected based on their experience with multi-grade grouping and innovative practice. In one school, teachers used multi-grade grouping consistently throughout the day across most subjects, so all multi-grade teams and teachers were invited to participate in interviews, and 9 of the 11 teachers were interviewed. In the other school, five teams were designated as multi-grade but only two teams consistently used this grouping structure and also had reputations for highly innovative teaching practices. Two high innovating teams and

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one low innovating team were selected, resulting in interviews with 7 of the 12 teachers on multi-grade teams. Thus, 16 teachers were interviewed in the second study.

Across both studies, we had a total of seven schools representing all grade levels, and a total of 40 teachers who were interviewed representing 24% of all regular FTE classroom teachers in the schools at that time. Again, our aim was to select teachers who were involved in leadership activity in their schools, rather than to achieve a representative sample of all teachers. The two middle schools were roughly equivalent in enrolment size, but there was variation in enrolment size for the two elementary schools and among the three secondary schools. Maine is predominantly rural; the schools in the study fall in that category. Table 2 describes the school cases, and Table 3 describes the teachers in the sample.

Data analysis included coding the interviews by hand and with software (N7 by QSR) to identify themes and patterns and development of case study narratives of each school (see Appendix B). We shared the written case studies with the teacher participants to verify our findings and interpretations. For the analysis presented in this paper, we examined the interviews and the case studies and constructed analytical tables describing examples and dimensions of leadership for teachers and schools (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). We also used analytical tables to compare teachers' understandings of their leadership and the different ways they influenced their colleagues to enact positive change in their schools. The tables allowed us to explore different dimensions of teacher leadership across school cases and across the nine leadership spheres.

School contexts

Teacher leadership arose in the study schools under somewhat different conditions, and these contextual differences may be important for

Table 2. Description of school cases

School	Grade level	Approx. enrolment	No. teachers in school	No. teachers interviewed		No. (%) all teachers interviewed
				Male	Female	
Sallie Mae	Elem. (K-4)	125	7	0	4	4 (57)
Thompson	Elem. (K-8)	425	30	1	6	7 (23)
Main St.	MS (6–8)	325	22	2	5	7 (32)
Lakeview	MS (6–8)	350	29	1	8	9 (31)
Johnson	HS (9–12)	175	15	2	1	3 (20)
Drummond	HS (9–12)	350	26	2	3	5 (19)
Oberon	HS (9–12)	600	39	2	3	5 (13)
TOTAL:		2,350	168	10	30	40 (24)

Note: All school names are pseudonyms. Approximate enrolment is shown to maintain confidentiality. The number of teachers is based on total number of FTE regular classroom teachers.
Data source: Maine Department of Education, 2006–2007.

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Table 3. Description of teacher demographics

Job role	Classroom teacher	Teacher and team leader	Teacher and assistant principal	School librarian	
Number of participants	25	11	2	2	
Subject area	Multiple subjects	Core subjects English	Allied arts	Library/ media	
Number of participants	25	10	3	2	
Grade range	K-4	5–8	6–12	9–12	
Number of participants	7	20	2	11	
Years of teaching experience	1–5 years	6–10	11–15	16–20	21+
Number participants	8	6	6	6	14

Core subjects include: English, math, science, social studies.
Allied Arts subjects include: music, technology, foreign language.

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understanding the leadership activity that emerged. There was considerable variation in how and why leadership teams were developed across the elementary and secondary schools. Sallie Mae School's principal was the coordinator of technology integration for all six elementary schools in the district. The 'leadership team' at that school was organized by one of the teachers who saw that her colleagues needed support and that together they could help each other and improve learning in the school. By contrast, Thompson School's team was formed by the principal who facilitated meetings. It was initially called the Building Staff Development Team but it had recently become the School Leadership Team. Team membership was designed to represent grade levels or other configurations of teacher groups in the building.

The high schools were all part of the Team Leadership Collaborative (TLC), a programme sponsored by the Mitchell Institute and Great Maine Schools. The purpose of the TLC initiative was to develop team leadership in high schools in order to improve learning for students. The Drummond High School Leadership Team was outside the school's administrative structure and had some latitude to identify issues and suggest solutions. Similarly, the Johnson High School Team also formed as part of the Collaborative. Its purpose was to encourage shared leadership in this small school that had little opportunity for teachers to participate in decision-making. At Oberon High School, the Leadership Support Team was created to help support the leadership of the school and to guide the direction of the school to give it a more positive public image. The principal selected a group of teachers who could help set goals and work to achieve them. Principals were members of all of these teams, but the team meetings were regularly facilitated by teachers.

The two middle schools in the study also had school leadership teams, but these were implemented somewhat differently. At both schools,

grade-level teams decided on a team representative who served on the leadership team. At Main Street Middle School, the principal set the agenda and led formal leadership meetings. At Lakeview Middle School, the teachers had more of a shared governance role with their principal, and they had more of a role in determining the meeting agendas and facilitating the meetings. The school climate and principal leadership styles also contrasted in the two middle schools. Main Street Middle school suffered from low teacher morale, conflicts over pedagogy and high turnover in their principals. At Lakeview, the school board hired a principal to implement change in their middle school, and the principal was strongly supported in her efforts by the administration and her teachers. She engaged in collaborative learning with her teachers and there was a common vision for teaching and learning.

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Findings

In all seven school cases we studied, teachers articulated a clear motivation to initiate change because of their strong desire to improve the conditions and outcomes of student learning. They targeted this goal through a wide variety of leadership actions. In this section, we describe how teachers exerted influence, and understood their own and others' leadership as well as their own leadership development. Pseudonyms are used throughout.

Strategies for influencing others

Teachers used a variety of strategies within the spheres of leadership action to influence others toward the goal of improving teaching and learning. First, they *modelled* certain professional attitudes or dispositions, including: a commitment to their own professional learning and development; openness to alternative ideas and teaching approaches; a willingness to *share* their ideas, work and resources with colleagues; courage to reflect on and question practices; and a willingness to take risks through collaboration and advocacy. Second, teachers *coached* colleagues in the use of new curriculum, instructional or grouping practices, or implementation of new structures and initiatives. Third, teachers *collaborated* with colleagues in planning, co-creating or evaluating curriculum units and instructional practice. Fourth, teachers *advocated* for change in educational practices by engaging with their administrators and colleagues, with parents and the broader school community or with their professional community on a state, regional or national level.

The strategies of sharing, coaching, collaborating and advocating all necessitated working through professional relationships—either forging new relationships or starting from existing relationships. Modelling was sometimes less direct, and did not always involve working through relationships. Teachers' leadership work served to improve the professional climate in the schools, and it occurred through direct and indirect, as well as formal and informal interactions with colleagues.

Negotiating relationships

In our study, teachers talked about the challenges of building trusting relationships with their colleagues and the positive results that occurred once they were established. This effort typically happened in spheres of leadership activity where teachers moved outside their own classrooms to interact with, co-create and plan with other teachers (spheres C through G). In two schools (Lakeview Middle School and Johnson High School), teachers also interacted with parents and the broader school community to plan for school improvement initiatives.

As a teacher with only four years of experience, first-grade teacher Tracy felt a need to connect with other teachers in Sallie Mae Elementary School, to overcome her sense of isolation. She started an informal cross-grade group of teachers to reflect on practice and student learning (sphere D). She found that by sharing questions about her own practice, she was able to establish a sense of trust among her colleagues. In this way, she also modelled the benefits of risk taking, honesty, reflection and sharing. In other schools, teachers sometimes reached out to a colleague who shared their educational philosophy and goals for student learning. These professional relationships occurred both within teaching teams and across different teams or grade levels.

Other teachers said that sharing and modelling were not enough; they had to more directly break down the barriers of teacher autonomy and apathy, and prod their colleagues to take risks and change practices. They talked about helping reluctant colleagues 'move beyond their comfort zone'. At Lakeview Middle School, teachers implemented an interdisciplinary approach to teaching using thematic units built around the state learning standards and students' interests. Small teacher teams developed the curriculum units together to implement within a multi-grade classroom (sphere D). When teachers were hesitant to teach outside their subject area, their teammates gently prodded them to take risks and expand their teaching repertoire but also provided support or coaching (sphere C). Similarly, at Main Street Middle School, Donna and Sue invited teachers from other teams to collaborate with them to co-create a new interdisciplinary unit of study (sphere D). They obtained the principal's support to creatively adjust the school schedule to support both integrated and single-subject instruction.

Engaging in learning together was another effective way that teachers deepened their working relationships with their colleagues to support school improvement efforts. As a district librarian working at Johnson High School, Martha knew that teachers would need to shift their beliefs in order to embrace the district's goal of promoting literacy instruction across all subjects. She organized a small informal group of teachers across various subject areas to meet monthly for the purpose of sharing student work and providing peer feedback (sphere E). Martha described how members of the ad hoc group approached their work together:

> We encourage each other to grow cognitively, to have a positive impact on student learning and on the climate of our school, to develop those interpersonal relationships that will contribute to

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> our success, and to share our inner thoughts and feelings in a supportive, non-judgmental way. I believe a good part of our success is a result of our joint efforts. In a sense, we are demonstrating our leadership as we go.

Martha's description underscores the importance of creating a safe, supportive environment in which teachers can learn and grow together, as well as developing teachers' interpersonal skills to interact and communicate in effective ways with each other within a group setting.

Mutual respect and recognition of colleagues' individual strengths was another important theme when teachers described how they established positive, professional relationships. At Drummond High School, one teacher described the school improvement team's meetings (sphere G) this way: 'There are no formal roles or agendas for meetings. Members realize and value the different roles each takes on … [Team] members have an understanding and appreciation for each other professionally and personally'. In this teacher work group, one person became the data person because of his skill in organizing and interpreting data; another facilitated meetings; another documented the work.

Thus, teachers employed different strategies (sharing, modelling, coaching, collaborating and learning together, and advocating), professional dispositions and behaviours (e.g. honesty and openness, reflection, respect, communication, encouragement, prodding and support), and supportive conditions (e.g. trust, safety, time/scheduling and support from administrators) to establish and deepen their professional working relationships within various spheres of leadership activity. As teachers moved outside their own classrooms to engage with others they took risks and learned as they went, allowing colleagues to assume different leadership roles as they felt ready to do so. As they ventured from interactions with individual colleagues to groups of colleagues and even the broader school community, they encountered higher levels of risk, more complex relationships and a greater demand on their interpersonal skills. The informal groups that Tracy and Martha organized in their schools encouraged teachers to share and discuss their practice and their students' work. This opened up the possibility of receiving critical feedback or having one's favourite projects de-valued by others. Managing these interactions in a positive way required effort to strengthen intra- and inter-personal skills. Donna and Sue initially received hostile reactions from colleagues when they experimented with changes in their own classrooms, but over time other teachers expressed an interest in adopting these changes and even collaborating. Donna and Sue had to proceed carefully and show respect for their colleagues' work. At Lakeside Middle School, teachers stepped up their advocacy to adopt multi-grade classrooms school-wide by making public presentations to parents and the school board, and by inviting parents to observe their classrooms. Teachers had different levels of comfort with this heightened level of public scrutiny of teaching practice. When a small group of parents organized a public campaign to prevent the changes recommended by the principal and teachers, teachers felt demoralized.

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Building a collegial climate

Teachers engaged their colleagues in shared reflection, learning or other work in order to break down their sense of isolation and to build support for whole-school improvement efforts. Yet, teachers also engaged with their colleagues for the purpose of improving morale, collaboration and the conditions for student learning in schools where the climate was less collegial. In three of the seven schools we studied (Oberon High School, Main Street Middle School and Sallie Mae Elementary School), teachers described challenges of low teacher morale, low trust, low collegiality, high principal turnover, a high value on autonomy, uneven commitment to professional learning and a fragmented approach to curriculum and instruction.

At Main Street Middle School, Donna and Sue were frustrated by the lack of collegiality in their school, low morale and apathy toward improved practice. Their experimentation with different instructional approaches and grouping practices within their own classrooms resulted in positive attention and praise from administrators and parents, but also sparked resentment and hostility from some of their colleagues who perceived that the bar had been raised for professional practice. To improve communication and build more collegial relationships with their colleagues, Donna and Sue initiated more regular grade-level meetings among teachers to share ideas and reflect on student performance (spheres D and E) and invited colleagues to co-create units of study with them (sphere D). To improve morale, they arranged for the parent support group to provide food for staff meetings (sphere E). Their efforts paid off over time. Gradually, colleagues began to ask about the non-traditional practices they had observed in Donna's and Sue's classrooms, borrowed resources from them to read and experimented on their own. Teachers became less judgmental of colleagues whose pedagogical views and practices differed from theirs. Interactions became friendlier, which paved the way to a more open exchange of ideas and a willingness to collaborate.

Another school targeting teacher collegiality was Drummond High School. A Drummond leadership group initiated faculty luncheons, which paved the way for professional learning communities that encouraged better communication and sharing among teachers (sphere G).

Teachers' efforts to build collegial relationships sometimes extended to the broader school community. At Johnson High School, Martha organized and shared data to make the case for continuation of the student advisory programme. The programme had an in-school component but also supported student visits to colleges and workshops on financial planning. Martha helped to plan a retreat involving teachers, parents, the principal and a higher education faculty member to write a grant proposal to support the programme (sphere H). Their collaborative effort fostered a closer relationship between the school and parents, increased support for the advisory programme across the school community, generated funding to continue the programme, and supported student learning and success both in school and beyond.

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Across our cases, we found that a collegial climate was an important condition supporting teacher leadership and school-wide improvement across most spheres of leadership action. However, we also found examples of teachers taking the initiative to improve the professional climate in their schools, demonstrating leadership in an adverse or even hostile setting. Collegiality provided a foundation of trust and supportive relationships to foster teacher leadership opportunities and activity, but teacher leadership also helped to establish trust, collegiality and collaboration where it was not strong. Teacher leaders experimented with different strategies to influence their colleagues and became more skilful in dealing effectively with resistance and discord over time.

Across the leadership spheres, teacher collegiality was most critical for spheres C through G, where teachers interacted with their colleagues for a particular purpose or goal. Negotiating differences in personality, pedagogical views and goals were more challenging for activities with a wider scope and larger spectrum of teachers (spheres F and G). A collegial school climate was less critical for spheres H and I, where teachers interacted with others outside the school, or for spheres A and B where teachers focused on their own individual learning and experimentation within their classroom.

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Direct and indirect influence

One dimension of teacher leadership related to whether the influence was direct or indirect. Across spheres C through G, teachers shared ideas directly with their colleagues through conversation, small group discussion, mentoring and collaboration. Teachers influenced other members of the school community by sharing ideas and advocating for change or collaborating on specific initiatives in spheres F and G. Teachers directly influenced other teachers beyond their own schools by sharing ideas and practices through professional presentations or publishing professional writing in sphere I.

Changing school structures for teachers or students was another way that teachers had a direct influence on their colleagues. This type of activity occurred across spheres C through H. For example, teachers initiated the creation of grade-level teams, school improvement teams and discussion or study groups. At the middle level, they created smaller teaching teams, made teacher teams interdisciplinary, grouped students together in multi-grade groups, and developed and implemented student advisory programmes. Altering school structures brought people together who did not normally work together and also changed how people interacted. New school structures broadened the scope of teacher work and allowed for thinking 'outside the box'.

We found across all nine spheres of leadership action that teachers also indirectly influenced their colleagues by modelling certain professional attitudes or dispositions. In fact, teacher influence was primarily indirect within spheres A and B. Where teachers engaged in advanced degree programmes, workshops, observation of other teachers or professional reading about a new instructional approach to inform their

own practice (sphere A), or experimented with new approaches and reflecting on the results (sphere B), they were indirectly modelling professional dispositions and behaviours. While they may not have directly engaged with their colleagues in these spheres, these teachers had a positive influence on their colleagues over time. While some might view the more individual work within spheres A and B as nascent leadership, we feel these teachers demonstrated leadership by modelling a commitment to professional learning and by their courage to challenge the status quo, even when faced with scepticism or hostility from colleagues.

Formal and informal influence

Another dimension of teacher leadership action related to the formality of influence. Teachers initiated and facilitated formal groups for sharing and collaborating on tasks in spheres C through H. For example, teachers at two high schools (Drummond and Johnson) participated in formal school leadership teams and then worked both formally and informally to build consensus in their faculties to improve literacy instruction, teacher learning and student support (sphere G). Other formal leadership roles were more traditional: team leader, department head, curriculum committee member and school leadership team member.

Despite the fact that one of our studies began as an examination of teachers' work within formal and semi-formal school leadership teams, we were surprised to find that informal leadership predominated in all of our school cases. Teachers initiated and facilitated informal groups in their schools to share ideas about practice and to mentor each other (sphere C) or to collaborate on curriculum, instruction or assessment and to reflect on collective work (sphere D). They also initiated small informal groups to examine problems with school climate, structures or programmes (spheres E through H). Tracy met with her six teacher colleagues informally across elementary grade levels to share ideas and improve curriculum alignment. Donna and Sue invited colleagues across two grade levels to collaborate on developing an interdisciplinary unit (sphere D).

Moreover, teachers emphasized that informal leadership had greater potential than formal leadership to influence improvement in teaching and student learning. Aileen, an English teacher and member of her school leadership team at Drummond High School described the team this way: 'Formal leaders are considered leaders because of the positions they hold and may or may not be effective. Informal leaders, while they may not hold a defined leadership position, are always effective'.

In the following subsections, we discuss how teachers described their work in terms of leadership and how teachers developed as leaders within different spheres of leadership.

Conceptions of leadership

Across all the cases, teachers in this study voiced appreciation for the instructional skills and knowledge of others. They also described how

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their colleagues' skills—such as communicating, listening, analysing data or mediating conflict—helped their collaborative work. As a teacher on the Thompson Elementary building leadership team said, 'Most team members recognize what each person offers. What is interesting is that many people did not necessarily call that leadership'.

We found that teachers intentionally downplayed their formal leadership. At Drummond High School, teachers who acted as an ad hoc school leadership team thought of themselves more as 'innovators' than leaders. One of the teachers described the team, 'All members define the group as a "think tank"', stressing it is outside of the school hierarchy. Teachers in the study viewed formal roles as being concerned with managerial and administrative tasks, like taking on extra responsibilities, having special training and organizing meetings. They acknowledged the necessity of those roles, but they were neither impressed by nor desirous of them. Similarly, teachers viewed the principal's role as involving too many tasks they perceived as irrelevant to teaching and learning, and not necessarily an example of real leadership.

There was no consensus on what real leadership is but, at Thompson, leaders were respected based on their knowledge about instruction in their particular grade/content, the range of experiences in the school, and their risk-taking ability. Leaders had influence, brought clear information to the team, collaborated with the group to plan action steps and were willing to contribute time to a project.

In fact, teachers viewed the work of an entire group, rather than individual action, as exemplifying the power of leadership. At Drummond High School, the leadership team trusted each other and had a shared vision of where they wanted to go in terms of improved student learning so that together they were 'an agent of change'. At Oberon High School and Sallie Mae Elementary, however, there was little sense of collective power: At Sallie Mae, group members had little experience with or understanding of their potential as a leadership team; at Oberon, the leadership team was frustrated by a lack of voice in decisions, the principal's lack of decision-making skills and the absence of a clear direction for the school.

Perceptions of their own and others' leadership

Although many teachers recognized their work as constituting leadership in their schools, they generally did not use the term 'leader' to refer to themselves or others in their school. One teacher at Thompson Elementary referred to herself as a 'leader' when she collaborated with others on multi-grade plans because she had prior knowledge and experience she shared with the group (sphere C). She felt her leadership derived from the cognitive dimension rather than inter-personal skills or intra-personal dispositions. She also held the formal role of team leader and was on a leadership team, where members advocated for school-wide changes in practice (sphere G).

If they described their work as leadership it referred to what they did as part of a group of educators working together to improve student

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learning. One teacher, Aileen, called herself a 'pioneer'. Semis stay outside quotation marks—see below too. Martha spoke of collaboration or 'pulling together'. Two high school teams (Drummond and Johnson) described their work as shared or collaborative leadership, or as a 'think tank' where they 'lead by example'. They cherished their informal roles and their membership in a group, and they actively resisted making these roles more formal. Their sentiments were expressed in these ways: 'We are part of what makes things happen here'; 'I am a team member, a willing co-labourer'; and 'It is about us, not me'.

Some teachers did not recognize their efforts as constituting leadership in their schools. They felt they were just doing their jobs, specifically at the two elementary schools, Sallie Mae and Thompson. Some teachers felt they lacked legitimacy because the principal had appointed them to a leadership position or they had a formal role which gave them only a narrow scope of authority or none at all. Leadership team members at Drummond High School expressed negative attitudes toward formal teacher leader roles, such as department heads. Teacher leaders at Oberon High School and Thompson Elementary felt they were not recognized by colleagues as real leaders since they were following the principal's agenda or were primarily engaged in collecting information.

A lack of self-confidence caused some teachers to doubt they were leaders in their schools. Furthermore, their conception of leadership still seemed tied to formal, hierarchical roles. For teachers on effective leadership teams, however, leadership was *what* the team recommended and then accomplished rather than *how* they did it. Some teachers in the study could describe their leadership skills, but generally the interviews conveyed the sense that this is 'what we do, not who we are' (Drummond High School teacher leader).

Teachers in all the cases viewed their colleagues as having wisdom, being reflective and possessing skills that were valuable for working on a specific task. Across the study, teachers did not usually refer to others as 'teacher leaders'. In spheres D, E, F and G, many teachers described their work as 'teamwork'. Teachers appreciated what others brought to the group, and they differentiated roles based on expertise. Teachers found their niche within leadership teams in a natural way without creating a hierarchy. While they sometimes attended to administrative tasks, they saw their work being focused on teacher and student learning. They expressed satisfaction and a greater sense of legitimacy in being part of a collective effort to move their school toward a goal. We might call it collaborative leadership or informal leadership, but the term 'leadership' rarely appeared in the interview transcripts.

Leadership development

In spite of the fact that many teachers in the study did not refer to themselves as leaders, many of them described what and how they were learning to influence others to effect change. They were generally quick to acknowledge the professional growth of colleagues, but they did not

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necessarily celebrate that growth in any public way. Their celebrations or acknowledgements of success derived from seeing improvements in children's learning.

Teachers on high school leadership teams talked about the importance of inter-personal skills such as respectful listening and openness to others' ideas. Teachers who led collaborative work across the school cases learned how to effect change in a complex organization. They gained inter-personal skills such as mentoring, negotiating and encouraging reflection. They also gained intra-personal knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses as leaders. Martha, the Johnson librarian said, 'My involvement in our local critical friends group has contributed both to important and rewarding learning and to my influence with other staff members'. Teachers involved in school change described how their leadership activity reduced their own professional isolation and improved the level of collegiality and collaboration in their schools. A member of the Drummond High School ad hoc leadership team said, 'We often use leadership skills in other groups in the school and district … and contribute positively to the climate of the school'. Teachers credited collegial relationships with sustaining their enthusiasm. At Drummond, leadership team members said their respect for other members increased when those members grew and demonstrated they were able to look at an issue from a new perspective. From their own experience, they recognized how difficult that growth could be.

Although our model, the Spheres of Teacher Leadership Action for Learning (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012), does not necessarily represent a continuum of teachers' professional development, some teachers' leadership experience progressed in a linear fashion. Experience, context and opportunity played a role in teachers' professional growth. In our study, collaboration and professional learning were key factors in the development of teacher leadership. We saw developmental growth in some teachers such as Linda of Lakeview Middle School. Linda's curiosity about multi-grade teaching in middle grades (sphere A) led her to share her interest with other teachers (sphere C) and to experiment with this grouping structure (sphere B). She collaborated with other teachers and reflected on practice and student outcomes (sphere D). Linda expanded her influence through relationships across the school (sphere E). She advocated for change with teachers and parents through meetings and newsletters (sphere F). Linda was part of a group effort working on whole-school reform (sphere G). Other teachers might well call her a teacher leader, but she did not describe her work or role as leadership.

Other teachers seemed to jump over several spheres of teacher leadership. Aileen at Drummond had little experience outside her own classroom except as a member of the high school English department and district literacy committee. Yet, her membership on the school leadership team moved her to engage in school-wide improvement plans with others (sphere G). The team members were stimulated by the notion of a 'think tank', outside the school's formal hierarchy, with more freedom to imagine 'what could be'. As they developed and implemented plans (sphere D), Aileen saw how much the team's questioning of current practices and

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advocacy (sphere F) affected the relationships and culture of the school (sphere E). Student learning was the focus, but they found it equally exciting to be involved in their own learning as they pursued their vision for the school.

In this study, we found a variety of responses to leadership responsibility. Most teachers did not seem interested or motivated unless they could see the potential for improving student learning. We saw varying degrees of awareness of teachers' roles beyond the classroom, coupled with some understanding of the importance of the influence teachers have on the climate, culture or vision of the school. We found different understandings of individual and collective leadership. Teachers' ability to see their efforts as leadership was somewhat dependent on the maturity of teachers, their experience in the classroom and their ability to analyse what they were doing and why.

Discussion

Using York-Barr and Duke's model (2004) as a lens for looking at teacher leadership, we found we could validate and expand the model by showing the many ways that teachers engage in leadership activity. In the discussion that follows, we connect our broad findings to the literature and also describe some implications for the concept of teacher leadership.

Importance of relationships

A major finding of this study, but one that has been mentioned more and more in the leadership literature, is the importance of relationships in facilitating the work within schools—the daily interactions and management of schools, both technical and adaptive work (Heifitz, 1998), and improvements in organizational effectiveness (Berg, Bosch, & Souvanna, 2013; Donaldson, 2006; Drago-Severson, 2012; Evans, 1996; Wheatley, 2006). As schools become more accustomed to and dependent on team work, teachers deepen their understanding of how to work together and how to influence each other. Teachers recognize that the answers to their problems related to teaching and learning are within the faculty, those people who know the students and have been working on similar issues through the years. Furthermore, as Margolis (2008) points out, there is an emotional component to teachers working with teachers that needs to be acknowledged and fostered.

We cannot say that all the schools had arrived at what Barth (2006) describes as collegiality as opposed to congeniality, but many teachers were on the way toward being able to be vulnerable to each other about their teaching and to accept critique and support as they sought to improve. Trust in each other and the process were crucial (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). That is why they needed leadership from within their own ranks in order to guide and coach them. Their trusted leaders were often the formal leaders, but just as important were the informal leaders who

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took on tasks, acted as cheerleader, or offered encouragement and support (Roby, 2011).

Because of their relationships, teachers could accept the messiness and ambiguity of their reform efforts. Reciprocity in these relationships allowed both novice and veteran teachers to feel rewarded. Together, they developed norms and built skills of negotiation, decision-making and collaboration. They were quick to compliment others for their contributions and for their skill development. Learning—about teaching strategies and of the process of team work—helped teachers appreciate their own growth and that of others. Through relationships, they fulfilled one function of school leadership as described by Donaldson (2006) to support the leadership of others in order to develop the capacity of the entire school to improve.

Ambivalence toward leadership

Many teachers in the study equated leadership with formal leadership roles; yet they described the work of formal leaders as less compelling than the informal work of teachers. Most teachers did not want to put themselves in any kind of hierarchical relationship to their colleagues. For many reasons, teachers cling to an 'us against them' mentality, so being seen as part of the administration can be risky. Teachers do not even like to be thought of as experts for fear that it will harm relationships and trust with colleagues (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2011). The culture of teaching is one of egalitarianism that supports the notion of collaboration even as it protects teacher autonomy. That culture, though, can have a stifling effect on moving the school forward unless teachers see their collaborative work as leadership (Johnson & Donaldson, 2007). In addition, they do not view formal leadership roles as being focused on teaching and learning. Middle schools and high schools generally have more opportunities for formal leadership than elementary schools. Still, even the individuals in these roles downplayed their importance.

We have to acknowledge, though, that some teachers in the study have been involved in graduate work in leadership and thus have developed a nuanced understanding of school leadership. Furthermore, many of the teachers held a variety of formal roles and voluntarily accepted the managerial tasks required in those roles. They recognized that organization and management were important, but their hearts were definitely in classrooms with children organizing, managing and directing their learning.

Across the board, teachers admired others who demonstrated leadership by questioning the status quo, collaborating with others, reflecting on and revising their own efforts, and articulating and defending their beliefs about teaching and learning. However, teachers did not describe these colleagues as teacher leaders, even if they saw the tasks they engaged in as leadership work. It may well be that since teachers think of teaching as a subtle, multi-faceted activity they are more able to appreciate the indirect ways they create change (Stoelinga, 2008; Supovitz, 2008). They see

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informal activities they engage in—modelling, sharing, reflecting, questioning, advocating and collaborating—as more meaningful and influential than formal meetings convened by a supervisor or department head (Mullen & Jones, 2008).

We were struck by the many efforts on the part of both principals and teachers to mitigate the hierarchy that some teachers may perceive when teachers are on leadership teams or when one teacher facilitates a critical friends group or a curriculum meeting (Drago-Severson, 2012; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Spillane, 2006). Nevertheless, teachers did not desire a completely flat organizational structure as they wanted someone to fill formal leadership roles with responsibility for overseeing change initiatives. Many teachers preferred to focus on their own teaching and its improvement, yet they appreciated that others focused on the larger picture.

The 'binary' leadership of teachers and principals that Evans (1996) described can be seen as more multi-faceted. The creative tension is not just between the administration and teachers, but also among the teachers interacting with each other and formal leaders (Donaldson, 2007; Fullan, 2004; Wheatley, 2006). The principal has a role, but leadership does not rest with one person, rather in the interactions of all of the actors. In this way, leadership (learning and change), occurs all the time (Donaldson, 2006; Foster, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2005; Smylie & Hart, 1999). Yet, the resistance of some teachers and the barriers to collegiality, collective responsibility and collaboration cannot be ignored (Barth, 2006; Meier, 2003).

Our model differs somewhat from the York-Barr and Duke (2004) model in that we see teacher learning as both a process and one of the products of teacher leadership. In fact, we found that the strength of teacher leadership lies in teachers' openness and commitment to themselves as learners, where learning is reciprocal and multi-directional. Teachers describe what they need in a learning situation as things like invitation, support, safety, trust, respect and conversation. In this place, they can be affected, nudged, guided, coached, influenced and challenged. We found that teachers were open to these actions in various ways, depending on their development and experience as well as the context (Drago-Severson, 2012; Lambert, 2003b; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008).

Changing conceptions of school leadership

Despite some variability across the schools, we saw that teachers had often made a shift from a narrow concern for students in their own classrooms to a gradual acceptance of responsibility for improving learning for all students in the school. This is where their collective work has potential for the greatest effect. Researchers have noted the impact of collective efficacy in schools (Bandura, 1986; Hoy & Hoy, 2009), when teachers believe that together they can make a difference. This study offers some glimpses of collective responsibility in schools where teachers realize not only their own accountability for the learning of all students, but they also perceive how others contribute to that goal.

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Many teachers who led change were aware that they had raised the bar for expectations of teachers and students in their school, which sometimes created conflict. Such conflict is uncomfortable for teachers, which may explain why they took refuge and solace in the leadership team venue. They relied on a network of collegial or like-minded co-workers to strengthen their commitment.

This study suggests that the context for teaching has changed somewhat from when Lortie (1975) studied it in the late sixties. Less isolation of teachers helps schools move in the direction of change. But teachers also need time to reflect, experiment and converse with others as well as to collaborate on tasks which require safety, trust and respect, none of which develops in a vacuum (Drago-Severson, 2012; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2011;Tschannen-Moran, 2004). And, as many others have noted, teachers need time to develop the skills and dispositions for effective collaboration (Berg et al., 2013; Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, and Hann, 2002; Donaldson, 2006; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). The development of standards for teacher leadership (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011) holds promise for heightening the awareness of teachers, administrators, policy-makers and teacher educators of how to nurture the leadership capacity of all teachers.

Although standards for teacher leadership call for more recognition of teacher leadership, we might consider how the terms 'teacher leadership' and 'teacher leader' hinder progress toward teachers embracing collective responsibility. Few scholars have questioned the prevalent use of these terms and structures in schools or their implications for teachers. Teachers may resist taking on leadership work because they are not comfortable with the fact that leadership titles suggest a hierarchical relationship among peers. Or, in settings where schools are organized with multiple layers of formal leadership roles, teachers may perceive that only a few designated individuals have the power and responsibility to lead (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008). The teachers we studied described leadership in terms of formal roles, and generally did not think of the important work they did as constituting leadership. The findings signal a need for different conceptions of leadership and its terminology. We conceive of school leadership embedded in the process of learning and change and in the informal and formal interactions among participants so that everyone is a 'school leader'.

One of us has argued for 'teacherly' leadership of schools (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012). Such a view implies that the central purpose of the school is learning and the primary function is teaching. The adverb form connotes a way of functioning such that teaching and learning describe the activities of everyone working in the school. The key point is, 'Collaborative leadership … exists in the relationships among teachers and administrators to develop, implement, and be responsible for a shared vision of learning for all members of the school community' (p. 381).

Changes in teacher behaviour will accompany changes in beliefs about their roles and their capacity—as individuals and as a collective. As they learn about effective practice and then model, advocate and create structures that infuse their learning throughout the school, they can see the

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teaching-learning capacity of the entire school increase. Its leadership capacity, too, increases because priority-setting and decision-making revolve around shared goals for improved student learning (Helterbran, 2010; Lambert, 2003b).

Final thoughts

In this paper, we advocate for a shift away from notions of leadership in the narrow sense of the qualities a person has or what role he or she holds. For individual teachers, it is about influencing each other to improve their own learning and ultimately student learning. Through their collective work, they learn how interdependent they are and thus work harder to be effective as a collective. Without realizing it at first, they act with the notion that together they are stronger and thus more able to accomplish goals. Teachers in the study emphasized the view that it is 'what we do, not who we are'. Teacher leadership implies that it is the job of all teachers to engage fully in fuelling the forward movement toward improving learning for students. Because it is an interactive and on-going process, such leadership evolves just as do the people engaged in it.

In place of 'teacher leader', we might consider phrases that capture more precisely what teachers are actually doing, e.g. 'professional learner' (Dufour et al., 2005), 'organizational leader' (Smylie & Hart, 1999), 'learning leader' (Barth, 1988, 1990) or 'teacher connector' (Weiner, 2011). Is the term 'teacher' enough to convey all that should be involved in the job? In other words, is it likely that the responsibilities of leadership need to be understood as part of the expected professional role of the teacher such that we do not need the term 'teacher leader' at all? As Berry and Hess (2013) say, 'reengineering' teachers' roles so that they have the possibilities of a career 'lattice' is a way to think about expanding and broadening leadership to meet the needs of contemporary schools.

The kinds of teachers needed are the igniters and catalysts who can create situations where school community members build on each other's efforts to create the vision of the whole school (Lambert, 2003a). Some recent work in this area is promising. Reeves (2009), for example, describes how in one school system low test scores convinced veteran high school teachers that they all had to play a part in improving the school. They adjusted schedules so some students had more class time, studied and implemented effective strategies, and committed to teaching students who needed more support. This kind of collective commitment is real teacher leadership. As Berry (2011) says, 'It is time to blur the lines of distinction of those who teach in schools and those who lead them'.

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Appendix A. Sample teacher interview questions

The data for this inquiry came from two initial studies: one focused on teacher leadership teams and the other focused on teacher leadership in implementing innovative practices, such as multi-grade grouping for instruction. Interview questions that produced rich data on aspects of teacher leadership and teachers influencing their colleagues for this inquiry are indicated below.

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Study of teacher leadership within school leadership teams

- What are the different ways that teacher leaders enact their leadership in collaborative groups?
- Describe the opportunities you have to participate in leadership at this school outside of the classroom.
- Choose anyone in our group and describe how that person demonstrates leadership.
- Is there anyone you have observed growing in leadership? How?
- How has your leadership ability evolved in relation to your participation on the team?
- What strengths do you bring to the group?
- What does this team contribute to the climate of the school?
- What does this team contribute to student learning?
- How effective do you (personally) think you are in fulfilling your role as a team member? Is there a way you might be more effective?
- Who do you see as an effective leader in this group? In what ways do you see the leadership demonstrated?
- How do team members recognize, value, and actively support differentiation within the team? What gets in the way of you expressing your ideas on the team?
- What encourages you to express your ideas on the team?

Study of teacher leadership implementing multi-grade grouping and other innovative practices

- How did you become involved in teaching in a multi-grade classroom at your school?
- From your perspective, what were the reasons for this grouping change in your school?
- In what ways were teachers involved in the decision to make this

change?
- How did your school go about making this grouping change?
- How did your school or district prepare you to teach in a multi-grade classroom? What professional development was offered? What have you participated in?
- What other things have been helpful to you in making this change?
- What things were challenging for you in making this change?
- What other kinds of support would you find helpful?
- How has the use of multi-grade grouping impacted you as a teacher?
- How has this grouping practice impacted your instructional approach?
- As you reflect on your experience with multi-grade grouping, what lessons have you learned?
- If you could give other administrators or teachers in another school advice on how to go about implementing multi-grade grouping, what would you tell them?

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Appendix B. Sample of coding categories and analytical dimensions

The data for this inquiry came from two earlier studies conducted by the authors. Thus, the data analysis proceeded in multiple steps as described in the methods section of this paper. Interview transcripts were initially coded by hand or with software. Full case studies were developed for the two studies, describing the school contexts and teacher leaders or leadership teams.

Some of the initial coding of teachers' interview transcripts with software that focused on aspects of teacher leadership activity related to the focus of this inquiry included the following broad categories:

- School climate/culture
- Reasons teachers experiment with new practices
- Sources of knowledge to learn new ideas about practice
- Experimentation within teacher's own classroom
- Learning from colleagues
- Beliefs about new practices being implemented
- How teachers implement new practices
- Teams and teacher relationships
- Teacher innovation and risk taking
- School head/principal role and leadership
- School and Community relationships
- School priorities/initiatives
- Teacher collaboration within teams
- Teacher collaboration across teams
- Teacher collaboration with parents/community

- Supports for innovative practices
- Barriers for innovative practices
- Lessons learned from implementing new practices
- Leadership development
- Differentiation of roles
- Student learning
- School improvement

For the inquiry reported in this paper, we drew on the interview transcripts and case studies and developed a series of analytical tables to explore different dimensions of teacher leadership across the nine spheres, and to describe the activity and perceptions of individual teacher leaders. These tables explored the following dimensions:

- Formality of leadership (formal vs. informal ways of leading)
- Directness of leadership influence (direct vs. indirect influences)
- Strategies teacher leaders employed to influence colleagues
  - Modelling professional dispositions
    - Commitment to learning
    - Openness to new ideas, critiques
    - Willingness to share
    - Willingness to take risks
  - Coaching
  - Collaborating
  - Advocating
- School climate variables
  - Collegiality
  - Trust
  - Principal's role
- Teacher leaders' perceptions of their own leadership
- Teacher leaders' perceptions of others' leadership (e.g. on leadership teams)
- Teacher leaders' concept of leadership (e.g. purpose of leadership, who should lead, most effective way to lead, necessary dispositions and skills to lead)
- How leadership emerged within schools
- Who initiated leadership activity
- Scope and focus of leadership activity
- Factors that supported leadership activity
  - Resources (ideas and knowledge, time, funding)
  - School head/principal or district support
  - School goals/vision of student learning
  - School norms, collegiality
  - Opportunity to engage in leadership activity
  - Teacher relationships
  - Trust
- Factors that challenged leadership efforts
  - Low interest among colleagues
  - Low self-confidence

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- Reluctance to take risks
- Insufficient knowledge/skill in how to lead within a particular sphere
- Insufficient time
- Lack of shared goals/vision for teaching and learning
- Insufficient trust
- Norms of autonomy/isolation
- Norms of egalitarianism
- Low support from school head/principal

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