

INFLUENCING CHANGE FOR TEACHER LEADER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Kevin Reichert, and our children.

The drive to continue this process and the support needed to do so while raising a family came from Kevin. He has inspired me, given me encouragement, allowed me hours of time, and has done all of this while also being a “Super-Dad” to our children. I could not have asked for a more wonderful person with whom to spend my life. Kevin, Grace, and Hannah are the light and inspiration behind this work.

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ABSTRACT

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SUPERVISING PROFESSORS: MIKE BOONE AND JENNIFER JACOBS

Implementing district level change to an established teacher leader professional development model calls for an understanding of the power and influence structures within the school district. Levels of power and influence are impacted by four main factors in the change process: roles in the organization, ability to communicate, personal motivations or agendas, and resource control. Within this phenomenological study, perception of self and perception of others significantly affected levels of power and influence to make district level change. The essence of the research is based on a district leader's choice to take action in the change process and be mindful of his or her ability to choose operating styles that promote, rather than inhibit, the change process.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

According to historical research on teacher leadership and school improvement (Smylie & Denny, 1990) and recent studies on teacher leader models and implementation (Lieberman & Miller, 2005; Mujis & Harris, 2007), there is a lack of appropriate training for identified teacher leaders that allows them to build and sustain their skills as teacher leaders. Teachers are the central cog in the way schools operate and impact student achievement. The goal in teacher leadership is to provide consistent opportunities to improve teaching and learning through professional learning communities (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Case studies and other research (Lieberman & Miller, 2005; Mujis & Harris, 2007) identified that teachers taking on leadership positions require training to be effective in their practice and to overcome challenges associated with transitioning into a teacher leader role.

In order to sustain their leadership skills and to continue to be viewed as a valuable resource to the teachers they serve, teachers must not only view these master level teachers as content specialists, but also as instructional specialists, professional developers, peer coaches, and effective communicators (Rogus, 1988). However, each study identified that teacher leaders require training to initially be effective in their practice as a teacher leader, to overcome challenges associated with transitioning into a

teacher leader role, and sustain their leadership skills in order to continue to be viewed as a valuable resource to the teachers they serve.

School districts across the nation have established teacher leader models and support systems for these teacher leaders. As these districts experience the challenges associated with teacher leadership and the requirements within an effective teacher leader model involving a professional development component, there comes a need to shift from current practices in a program or model by evaluating areas for improvement and beginning to act on those. This change process to impact school improvement is one that district leaders struggle with regardless of the attempted change being addressed. Research shows that organizational change of any kind is complex and essentially unique in every situation (Fullan, 1999).

This research study identified issues evident in the training of teacher leaders and through the effective navigation of school district politics implemented changes to the model of training. Within this study, it was necessary to negotiate all political inner-workings of the school district to establish the need for change, implement the changes to the training, and gain feedback from teacher leaders on their implementation at the campus level.

The framework to address this research study was phenomenology which allowed for personal experiences to be documented and analyzed for the purpose of giving rich description of the incidents involved. Data were reduced to a point where themes and underlying factors surfaced to uncover the essence of the change process. In this study, it was necessary to utilize the first person point of view freely due to the researcher being the unit of analysis and the district leader attempting to influence change. The use of “I”

and other personal references created a more vivid picture of my understanding and conceptualization of the change process related to the teacher leader professional development. From this point forward in the description of this research, the use of first person will be utilized where necessary.

Background of the Problem

World changes, demographic shifts, and national and state governmental expectations require a response from our nation's schools; this response cannot be left to campus administration (Lieberman & Miller, 2005). Distributed leadership models are necessary on school campuses because the number of dynamic one-person leaders is not numerous enough to meet the need of school districts across our country (Timperley, 2005). Further, the expanded roles and responsibilities of principals are too much for even the most dynamic of people which makes it crucial that district and school administrators cultivate teachers to successfully share leadership responsibilities (Brown, 2008).

Teacher leadership is not a new trend, as teachers have taken on formal leadership roles for a number of years in education as they acted as team leaders, department chairs, committee members and other positions of responsibility for school campuses. The shift toward decentralization of decision making and distributed leadership has allowed the role of teacher leader to become as common in schools as principal or assistant principal. Teacher leaders take on multiple roles in the school and they see the teaching process as a way to model instructional innovations and professionally develop those around them on the campus (Mimbs, 2002). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) state that teacher leaders are those who "...are leaders within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to

a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice” (p. 5). These definitions identify a broad expanse of characteristics that teacher leaders must have in order to be successful.

A research study of highly effective teachers showed that teacher leaders are able to share and collaborate with their peers for the purpose of building capacity in others to initiate change (Wettersen, 1994). Collaboration and interpersonal communication skills are imperative in all roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders. However, it is also necessary for teacher leaders to be viewed as content specialists and an extremely capable teacher of his or her own students (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Content specialty and faculty view of a teacher helps teacher leaders to pave a way to becoming a teacher leader. Innovative instruction and the ability to meet the needs of diverse adult populations can also be key in a teacher leader’s success. Finally, a teacher leader must be willing to work with other teachers through a variety of professional learning opportunities (Mooney, 1994).

The selection process for teacher leaders must be unbiased and based on leadership traits, instructional practices, and ability to work with adult learners. Further, teacher leaders must have the innate desire to serve peers and collaborate, oftentimes voluntarily, for the improvement of the campus as a whole (Brown, 2008). If certain characteristics are sought out in a campus faculty and the selection process of teacher leaders is not clouded by bureaucracy and political charge, teacher leaders have the potential of having a great impact on school improvement.

Teacher leadership models and research-related studies date back as far as the mid-twentieth century where teachers began to assist others through positions such as

department chair or group leader (Lieberman, 1986). However, during the past decade models of teacher leadership have become more a rule than an exception in most school districts because of the high stakes related to standardized testing and student achievement. Schools must work so that all students are able to meet high standards; in order for this to happen, it is imperative for “teachers to have the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to serve as expert teachers in their classrooms and leaders in their schools” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 3). In order to sustain the continuous learning, schools must develop their capacity to support the ongoing development through effective teacher leadership and professional development.

In the late 1980’s, the role of a lead teacher was to work at the local school level in collaboration with colleagues to improve teaching and serve as an additional level of support (Lieberman, 1986). Only five short years later, additional research showed that teacher leadership roles were multiplying in greater variety than many thought possible (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Common roles of teachers in leadership positions encompass mentoring, professional development trainers, peer coaches, researchers and scholars, along with many others (Lieberman & Miller, 2005). Each of the roles and responsibilities listed can present intense challenges for teachers that transition into leadership roles. Building professional networks, leading collaboration opportunities, and focusing the work of those doing the same job are difficult at times for those that have been through the best educational leadership programs in the country (Dozier, 2007). Often, teacher leaders have not had the experience of higher education in an educational leadership program and yet face those challenges daily. Research has shown that “teacher leaders who lack

sufficient instructional knowledge, or are perceived as lacking knowledge, may encounter resistance from teachers that limits their effectiveness as leaders” (Mangin, 2005, 21).

In order to carry out the multiple roles within teacher leadership in an effective manner while dealing with challenges associated with transitioning into new positions, it is necessary for teachers to be provided with training in skills associated with new leadership positions. Training related to interpersonal relations and communication with adult learners can positively impact the work of a teacher leader (Firestone & Martinez, 2007; Lieberman, 1986).

As part of the recommendations of a case study of teacher leaders, Mujis and Harris (2007) indicated that further study should be done with teacher leaders in the areas of: group leadership, collaboration and teambuilding, mentoring, adult learning styles and methods, action research. Teacher leaders should be exposed to formal learning experiences, gain a personal understanding of their value orientation, continue their development of professionalism through relationships with other colleagues and personal reflection on practice (Lieberman, 1986).

Recent research studies do not identify whether or not these recommendations for training are in fact correct for teacher leaders and at present there is no study to connect the training and teacher leader capacity. Teacher leader models are implemented in most school districts across the nation and in order to determine how to better assess and provide the professional development needs of these teacher leaders it was necessary to look at a school district employing a teacher leader model.

Context of the Problem

This phenomenological research study required contextual information involving not only the overall context from a generalized view, but also the role that I, the research plays within that context. Within this section of the study, references are made to general district information, as well as my personal place within the context and the political climate as a district leader. This understanding from the first person perspective allows the reader to process how my role in the district, the political climate, the teacher leader model, and personal background contributed to the context of the problem being addressed.

Cedar Ridge Independent School District

Cedar Ridge Independent School District covers 110 square miles encompassing high tech manufacturing and urban retail centers, suburban neighborhoods, and farm and ranch land in southern Westin County and northwest Nova County, Texas. The district includes the City of Cedar Ridge, partial areas of the City of Johnsonfield and City of Charlotte (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

Cedar Ridge Independent School District's Strategic Plan defines the vision, mission, goals and core beliefs of the district. The vision and mission of the school district center on providing and exemplary education to all diverse learning populations through partnerships with community, parents, schools, and the district office. The district lists core beliefs which address the need for collaboration within the district, the support that the district provides for advancing of professional growth, and data-driven decision making (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

About 51,000 students currently attend the district's four high schools, nine middle schools, 30 elementary schools, and three alternative learning centers. During the past five years, the number of students has increased by nearly 19%, and the annual growth rate of approximately 4.5% is expected to continue. The district's student population is approximately 25.5% Hispanic, 10.4% African-American, 52.9% Caucasian, and 11.2% other ethnic backgrounds (PEIMS 2006-2007 Fall Collection). The annual dropout rate is just 0.4%. More than 80% of the district's graduating seniors take the SAT and ACT college entrance exams, scoring well above state and national averages (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

The district employs over 5,000 employees, approximately 2,775 of those being classroom teachers. The beginning salary for teachers with a bachelor's degree is \$44,000 per year and the average years of experience for teachers in CRISD is 12.6 years. Approximately 27.9% of the teachers employed in Cedar Ridge hold an advanced level degree (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

In 1993, the creation of the Texas public school accountability system to accredit school districts and rate schools was mandated by the Texas legislature. The accountability system integrated the statewide curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills; the state criterion-referenced assessment system, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills; district and campus recognition for high performance and significant increases in performance; sanctions for performance; and school, district, and state-level reports (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

The commissioner of education set the standards for each rating category within parameters specified in law. The standards were designed to phase in increasingly higher

expectations for districts and campuses annually. Ratings that campuses and districts could have earned were Exemplary if 90% or more students met the state standards in all subject areas, Recognized if 75% or more students met state standards in all subject areas, Acceptable if students met a specified lower criteria on each test, and lastly Unacceptable if a campus or district failed to meet any of the lowest specified state standards in any one subject area.

According to the Texas Education Agency, Cedar Ridge Independent School District had a rating of Acceptable. Within the school district for the 2007-2008 school year, a total of twelve campuses earned the Exemplary rating, eleven earned a rating of Recognized, and seventeen campuses were rated Acceptable. No CRISD campus was rated as Unacceptable by TEA (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

In response to the Texas Education Agency's rating each year and in alignment with specified district data, the CRISD School Board defined district goals. The district identified goals for the 2008-2009 school year were:

- Accelerate Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) gains for economically disadvantaged, African American, and Hispanic students to reduce the achievement gap
- Increase the percentage of underrepresented minority students enrolled in Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, International Baccalaureate, and Algebra I (middle school) courses
- Increase the high school completion rate for economically disadvantaged, African American, and Hispanic students

- Increase the time guidance counselors spend with students to address the different needs of high school students, including the development of personal graduation and after graduation plans
- Develop and implement an instrument to measure staff morale and organizational climate
- Develop a plan that will provide diversity training for all employees
- Implement at least three communication strategies to educate the Cedar Ridge Independent School District community regarding the local impact of state legislative changes
- Identify areas of efficiency that result in significant financial gains for the district.

As part of the continuous improvement effort within Cedar Ridge ISD, programs to address student achievement and teacher professional development along with school and district improvement expectations and frameworks were utilized to address yearly district goals, initiatives, and data presented by the School Board and the Superintendent. Embedded in the district initiatives was a focus on the principles outlined in *Failure is Not an Option* (Blankstein, 2004), and the quality improvement model defined by the *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality* (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2001) process. The last of the *Failure is Not an Option* (Blankstein, 2004) principles, Principle #6 states that schools and districts should focus on building leadership capacity and within the *Baldrige* (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2001) process an entire section of quality improvement focuses on leadership within the organization and how that was distributed to increase achievement of the organization as a whole (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

Though both frameworks were adopted by Cedar Ridge ISD at different points, they supported similar philosophies regarding the distribution of leadership and the impact that building capacity could have within an organization. Cedar Ridge ISD utilized the idea of teacher leadership in varying ways over the years. However, during the 2003-2004 school year, a more formalized effort toward embedded teacher leadership on school campuses was developed by the district and approved for implementation by the Board. The model utilized in Cedar Ridge Independent School District is the Teachers Leading Teachers model created by the CRISD Educational Services Department, supervised by the sub-group of the Professional Development Department, and implemented on each campus within the district (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008). The Professional Development Coordinator holds the district level leadership role over the Teachers Leading Teachers model for elementary and secondary schools. This was the position that I held within Cedar Ridge ISD. For this reason, it is important to understand my background in relation to the school district and experiences related to teacher leadership.

Researcher's Role in the District

During the summer of 2001, I completed my Master of Education degree in Educational Administration at Arizona State University and set my sights on returning to my home state of Texas to continue my career in education. Though I had earned the degree in administration, I knew that after only teaching for two years at the elementary level that I was not ready for a job leading a school campus. I remember distinctly outlining where in Texas I was willing to move and earn my next position. Cedar Ridge ISD had an incredible reputation for being the best in the state—the most forward

thinking and technologically advanced district within miles. Because of this reputation, I submitted my application to teach middle school at a new campus in CRISD. I earned employment as a seventh and eighth grade teacher and team leader for the 2002-2003 school year.

During that school year, I attended trainings in the area of the Baldrige Improvement Model and began to understand the culture of Cedar Ridge Independent School District. My exposure to the political aspects of the campus were minimal and I felt little connection to the political culture of Cedar Ridge Independent School District. The next school year I took the position as Language Arts Department Chair and served on the campus leadership committee where the political climate at the campus level was further uncovered. Since that time, I have served as an assistant principal at an elementary for three years, two of which my campus principal was pulled during the fall semester to cover another struggling campus. These years of administration allowed me to gain further perspective on the inner workings of CRISD at the campus leadership level in both the assistant principal and acting principal roles. My most recent career move within the district was a transition to central office where I served as the Professional Development Coordinator for the district and worked within the Educational Support Services department under an assistant superintendent and a director.

As part of my position in professional development, I was charged with the supervision of the teacher leader model in place in the district. The model, established in 2003, was called the Teachers Leading Teachers (TLT) model. The teacher leaders identified on each campus, the paperwork to document their experiences and services, as well as their professional development was one of my specified job duties. Upon gaining

this position, I was informed that the model was under fire by the district because of complaints at the superintendent level from campus principals and other stakeholders. This was a top priority because of the political undertones attached to the need for improvement. I worked during my first semester to understand where the issues truly were and was made aware that the training piece of the model was under great scrutiny. As I began to address the issue, I was informed that the model was potentially going to be disbanded for the 2008-2009 school year because of the complaints. Within the response to this first major issue, I began my political journey to save the teacher leader model.

My experiences as part of CRISD allowed me multiple views into the culture and political climate of the district. As a teacher, campus administrator, and now a district leader, I felt adequately able to explain the political culture that drove the district's power structure, decision-making processes, and the systems that evidently impacted school improvement and educational change.

Political Climate of the District

A local school system is an organization with a political culture characterized as a competitive environment where various groups within and outside are competing for power and limited resources (Farmer, 2009). Cedar Ridge Independent School District functioned like most large sub-urban or urban school districts wherein there is a hierarchical structure and organizational chart through which all communication flows. At the top of the CRISD organizational chart are our Board of Trustees and our Superintendent of Schools. The next level houses our Deputy Superintendents, followed by our Assistant Superintendents, and then Directors of Departments for all school functions. As mentioned in the Cedar Ridge ISD description, the district grew

exponentially over the last decade causing the organization of departments and the groups that they serve to change tremendously. For example, in 2006 when our current Superintendent of Schools was named the district was organized into vertical teams that followed the attendance patterns of the high schools. Each vertical team was assigned an Assistant Superintendent who ran the vertical team in the way each saw fit with little communication between the four leaders. Upon entering the district, the Superintendent reorganized into a more traditional hierarchy. This traditional model requires collaboration that was not as necessary in the prior administration and this requirement is a struggle for the leaders in these roles. The competitive environment that Farmer (2009) refers to in his research is applicable to the political system at central office of Cedar Ridge Independent School District and this impacts all departments and campuses.

Drory (1993) explains that employees in any environment “attribute the political decision-making climate primarily to the decision-makers namely, the supervisory and managerial levels” (p. 23). The central office administration is the main decision making party for CRISD and because communication is a challenge for those in leadership positions, oftentimes progress toward district goals is hindered. Breakdown in effective communication is a challenge in many school districts across the nation (Drory, 1993). Garza (2008) explains that most central office decision making is political and there is little to do to avoid that in education. Because of this, it often feels that there is a level of isolation and lack of collaboration on action items within the district and that district personnel is not utilized to their full extent.

Fullan (1999) explains that “isolated cultures” do not effectively value the vast sources of knowledge available in the organization and have no way of “mobilizing the

competencies and motivation of organizational members” (p. 16). This description in Fullan’s (1999) work establishes the summary of Cedar Ridge Independent School District’s political climate. CRISD has some incredible resources and numerous brilliant people working in high level positions that could have been resources for large scale change. However, as Fullan (1999) summarizes, school districts operate as educational bureaucracies and the children reap the challenges associated with the system’s inability to meet their needs.

At times in spite of the underlying political culture in CRISD, programs or models are settled upon that have the potential for rippling positive impact at the campus level. The Teachers Leading Teachers model for teacher leadership is one of those programs. The focus of this study is navigating the political climate described in the district to influence change in the TLT program established in CRISD years ago.

Teachers Leading Teachers Model

In 2003, the campus-based Teachers Leading Teachers (TLT) model of professional development was established in Cedar Ridge ISD to promote and support best practice instruction and campus collaboration. The Teachers Leading Teachers model was the first formalized teacher leader position established in CRISD that was created at the district level and not the campus level where many teacher leaders, department chairs, team leaders, and others had existed for years.

The work of Teachers Leading Teachers included, but was not limited to, modeling effective lessons, conducting peer observations and debriefing, sharing resources with staff members, reviewing current best-practice research, data analysis,

coaching, providing professional development sessions and serving as a mentor for new teachers (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

In conjunction with the Teachers Leading Teachers, each campus was also allocated a Professional Development Educational Assistant to support the Teachers Leading Teachers model. This assistant was able to provide coverage for peer observations for the Teachers Leading Teachers or for teachers wishing to watch the Teachers Leading Teachers or other staff members conduct model lessons (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

At the elementary level, all campuses were allocated two Teachers Leading Teachers per campus, one from the primary level and one from the intermediate level. Each elementary campus was also allocated a Professional Development Educational Assistant who was a half-time employee and worked 18.75 hours per week. Teachers Leading Teachers earned a stipend for their work, but still had a full-time teaching load in most cases at the elementary level (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

Secondary campuses elected to identify five Teachers Leading Teachers; one in each of the four content areas and the fifth was a representative from Special Education, English as a Second Language, Languages Other than English, or Fine Arts. Campuses were at liberty to choose the fifth TLT based on their individual campus need. All secondary campuses were allocated a full-time Professional Development Educational Assistant. Most of the identified Teachers Leading Teachers at the secondary campuses also had a full-time teaching load, however some were also serving in the role of department chairperson and/ or other leadership positions which allowed for an additional period off during the school day (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

All Teachers Leading Teachers earned an annual \$400 stipend. As identified in the Teachers Leading Teachers Model (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008), there were certain expectations of Teachers Leading Teachers on all campuses. These expectations included responsibilities such as modeling effective lessons, conducting peer observations and debriefing with colleagues regarding instructional practices or challenges, providing professional development in areas of need as identified with campus administrators, sharing resources with colleagues, mentoring new teachers to the campus, and attending district level meetings or trainings (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

The purpose of the Professional Development Educational Assistant was to support the Teachers Leading Teachers on their assigned campuses with these tasks by covering their classrooms during collaboration time with individuals and/ or teams, providing coverage for colleagues' classrooms during observation or debriefing sessions, and working with campus administration in other areas of support as needed for embedded professional development (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

Campus administrators gained information from the Professional Development department regarding the use of the Teachers Leading Teachers. Each year the Teachers Leading Teachers Model was reviewed and descriptions of job responsibilities and program purpose were distributed to all campus administrators. Presentations on the TLT model were given during new administrator meetings to continue the historical memory of the purpose and goal of the model. As part of the goals, the campus administrator was expected to deliberately choose the TLTs for their campuses with an understanding of the expectations of the position. Upon selection, campus administrators were requested to

meet with the TLTs to define campus expectations and processes for carrying out duties of the TLT model. Over the last five years, the TLTs came together each month for an hour of meeting time and professional development after school hours. TLTs were divided for the meetings into elementary and secondary groups to more effectively meet the needs of the TLTs. During these meetings, the Professional Development Coordinator facilitated topics pertinent to district initiatives and goals, provided relevant literature to coaching, collaborating, and or mentoring other teachers, and conducted mini-professional development sessions that could be taken back to campuses for implementation (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008).

At the close of the 2007-2008 school year, the Teachers Leading Teachers completed a survey with questions regarding the effectiveness of the model, attitudes about the meetings and meeting topics. The survey also included open-ended response questions about how to improve the training TLTs were involved in to help them with the responsibilities on their campuses. The survey showed that 45% of the elementary TLTs felt that the meetings held were not effective (CRISD Teachers Leading Teachers Survey, 2008). In response to this information, district level personnel, including representatives from the Curriculum Leadership Team, developed an alternate training plan for TLTs for the 2008-2009 school year.

An additional contextual understanding necessary to gain a true picture of the need for a change in the training plan and the execution of the TLT model in CRISD is that there was the possibility of the model being abandoned for the 2009-2010 school year and forward. During May of 2008, I was informed that the TLT model and funding utilized to support it was not viewed as a successful use of support in the district and

would be disbanded. I made a formal request to the assistant superintendent that we have the 2008-2009 school year to identify needs for change in the model and alter the trainings provided for the TLTs with hopes of improving the model and its usefulness on campuses throughout the district. Specifically, the complaint regarding the model from campuses was that the TLTs lacked the understanding and the training needed to carry out their leadership and support position on the CRISD campuses. The agreement was that I would implement a new system of training for all TLTs in the district and more clearly define roles and responsibilities of the TLTs for better application at the campus level.

Elementary Teachers Leading Teachers Training Plan

During the fall semester of the 2008-2009 school year the ground work for change was laid. All campus principals submitted names of two identified TLTs for their campuses in the month of August. Previously, the Teachers Leading Teachers at the elementary level had participated in a one hour training after school one day each month to six weeks. I worked to identify dates on a quarterly basis where we could offer half day trainings for the TLTs.

In order to determine the training needs for the full group of elementary TLTs, I conducted an online Elementary TLT Needs Assessment that all TLTs completed. The topics for the Elementary TLT Needs Assessment were based on information from the previous year's evaluation of the program, current research on teacher leadership, and district goals and objectives. All 60 elementary TLTs submitted the needs assessment and this information drove the remainder of the study as the plan for improvement was set. At the time that this work was completed, I could not have predicted how this small

scale change would be received at the district level. I learned quickly that my efforts to save the TLT model and change the training to impact the teacher leaders' work in a more effective way was an extremely political domain because of the background of the model within the district.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to gain understanding of how a district leader navigated the political climate of district office to improve the professional training for current teacher leaders on school campuses. This was accomplished through a phenomenological study where I collected immense amounts of data on my experience of the change process. The literature review helped establish the need for change in the teacher leader professional learning related to studies on teacher leader challenges, the characteristics of successful teacher leaders, the common responsibilities and roles of teacher leaders, and training topics that were necessary for teachers in these positions to exhibit and carry out various expectations of the teacher leader roles at the campus level. This data collection and literature informed this research study so that I was able to effectively depict for readers my experience in navigating the political climate of a large school district to promote change for teacher leader learning.

The need for this study was established through archival data review on current practices in CRISD utilizing teacher leaders that had not been previously successful from a district perspective. Surveys of teacher leaders and a recent program evaluation of the model showed that much improvement was needed for teacher leader training in CRISD. This study and the changes to the training plan as part of the TLT model were significant to the success of CRISD campuses and effective teacher leadership in the district.

This study is also vital to district leaders outside of CRISD, professional developers, campus leaders that are working to improve an established model or program in a school district that has its own political climate to deal with. In conjunction with the impact that this study could potentially have for practitioners wishing to implement change in a bureaucratic environment, even further, the identification of an effective training plan with results to show teacher leader improvement addresses a gap in the current literature.

Recent research showed that “teacher leaders can help build the bridges across classrooms and invent structures and schedules that help promote more collaboration so that every student has the benefit of every teachers’ wisdom” (Killion, 2009). This collective impact from a campus on students through the work of the teacher leaders has great potential to improve the achievement of students all over the district. Ultimately, this was the motivation to continue to house a model of teacher leadership within the district, but in order to impact students the model in place must be research based and have some key components necessary for success.

Current research regarding teacher leadership implementation across the country defined the optimal characteristics of teacher leaders (Senge, 1990) and identified models through which these teacher leaders could be most successful (Spillane, Hallet & Diamond, 2000). Further explanation of the role of administrators as support for teacher leaders (Hart, 1994; Fullan, 1993; Smylie & Denny, 1990) and strong evidence in support of the impact of teacher leaders on instructional practices and thereby student achievement has also been well researched (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Murphy & Beck, 1995; Troen & Boles, 1993).

However, there was limited research to show what training was necessary for identified teachers to build and sustain their teacher leadership capacity or whether implemented teacher leader training significantly impacted the success of the teacher leaders on school campuses. Harris (2005) defined in her recent literature review of teacher leadership as an implication for further research, “We do not know how teacher leaders are best prepared for their role or which models of teacher development are the most effective in generating teacher leadership” (p. 214). This shortcoming in current research drives the need for change and the negotiation of that change within the district provided the framework for this research.

Overview of the Study and Research Questions

This phenomenological study was conducted and written in the first person as I am the district leader that worked to implement change in a political environment. As the district-level leader that accomplished this task, I conducted this research study through the focus of these research questions:

1. What challenges are involved for a leader implementing district level change to professional development for teacher leaders?
 - a. How does a district leader negotiate the politics of this change at the district level?

This qualitative research study was completed utilizing a phenomenological framework. Phenomenology focuses on the person or people that have most directly experienced the phenomenon in question (Patton, 2002). Because it was my responsibility in CRISD to design this training plan for teacher leaders and to implement those changes in the form of professional development, the study was conducted through

the lens of the researcher as the district leader charged with this effort of improvement. For this reason, my experiences as the district leader carrying out the change process was the focus for this study. I focused on the process that I underwent in order to carry out necessary changes in the professional development of current elementary teacher leaders. The rationale for focusing at the elementary level was the amount of data collected regarding the practices in CRISD over the last six years. In order to effectively conduct the study, it was necessary to narrow the focus for a reduction of data to strategically identify patterns and themes among the data set. Though changes identified through the study were implemented across the district, the focus for reflections and specific advisory group topics were on the 60 elementary teacher leaders. Additional work at a later time could focus at the secondary level to define alterations in the training needed to meet the needs of the additional secondary teacher leaders.

The data collection in this research study consisted of review of the archival data from the teacher leader program in CRISD since 2003, my observations and field notes based on experiences related to change, and more in-depth personal reflection through reflective journaling. The current teacher leader model in Cedar Ridge Independent School District was reviewed using criteria drawn from the literature on best practices for educational change, general leadership, teacher leadership, and effective professional development. Current teacher leaders in CRISD had the opportunity to provide feedback on the model through surveys, and finally the group of current teacher leaders served as an advisory group to use historical and current data to develop a framework of training necessary to improve the skills of practicing teacher leaders in CRISD. Through this

process, I worked with this advisory group and served as a liaison to begin to implement the changes identified in training for CRISD teacher leaders.

Navigating the implementation of change within the district and facing challenges at the district and campus level provided a viable topic for rich description of the phenomenon. Intense data analysis processes were defined to lead readers to a deep level of understanding of the experience and strategies utilized so that others might benefit from the labors in this context.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of pertinent literature identified major topics through which questions regarding teacher leadership and effective professional development for teacher leaders can be addressed: educational change, leadership, teacher leadership and professional development including adult learning theory and specific professional development needs for teacher leaders. The topic of educational change is relevant here as school improvement efforts are often closely linked to the role of teachers and the leadership required to make lasting impact for student achievement. Leadership and teacher leadership are also discussed in relation to their role in the school improvement effort and the background on types of leadership that led to formalizing the roles of teacher leaders in schools. The overarching topic of professional development and adult learning theories, specifically relating to the professional development of teacher leaders is the final piece of the review of literature presented. The goal of this literature is to provide a sound basis for understanding the change process in a political environment and the importance of professional development for teacher leaders in our schools.

Educational Change

Living in the current conditions of economic crisis, cultural struggles, and complex circumstances, leadership that promotes change becomes an increasing challenging topic in the world of education. Understanding the change process is identified as one of Fullan's (2001) components essential for leaders. He explains that

successful changes, no matter how big or small, are based in the improvement of relationships. Purposeful interactions between people that are concerned about an issue breed efforts toward problem solving (Fullan, 2001).

Hargreaves (2007) explains that long-term educational change is based in five central factors beginning with educational leaders putting learning first, even before achievement and high stakes testing. Second, leadership should be distributed to promote professional responsibility and avoid top-down control. Disseminated leadership roles ensure that the third factor is in place which is to sustain the change effort even when leadership is altered. The fourth and fifth elements necessary to experience educational change are collaboration among schools to raise the achievement standards and finally connecting future changes to past achievements. In essence, Hargreaves (2007) believes that all educators should be involved in the change effort and should understand the change process as connected and relevant to the individual needs of the students, teachers, and campus.

Because change efforts in schools are often the work of the teachers, educational change leaders must take into consideration the perspective of the teachers to gain trust and buy-in to the innovation or new idea (Mitchell, 2008). As part of an on-going change effort that requires a leap of faith on the part of experienced teachers, coaching and communication are necessary to deeply integrate new ideas into their regular practice. Small-group dialogue is also essential to teachers feeling supported through a change (Mitchell, 2008). Teachers are consistently dealing with change in their worlds of education and it is the job of educational leaders to identify models of leadership that are more democratic in thinking and create collaborative work environments where teachers

and administrators alike are striving together to respond to the diverse needs of the students in their schools (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004).

School improvement and educational change through leadership often rests on the ability of a leader to utilize power and influence for the purpose of gaining support for the desired outcome and the change process. The terms power and influence are often used interchangeably, however in the educational system and in other formal organizational structures the ability to influence change does not always reside in those with powerful positions. In order to understand this concept more fully, it is essential to identify the differences between power and influence and to clearly link leadership to both ideas.

Power and Influence in the Change Process

Power and influence are closely related within the change process, but cannot be confused especially when related to educational systems and political frameworks.

Power and influence have been broadly referred to as the capacity to change the actions of others toward an intended purpose (Mowday, 1978). Researchers have used the terms synonymously (Mowday, 1978; Mechanic, 1962) however, even in these instances writers refer to their definitions of power being about force (Mechanic, 1962). More recent definitions in research studies separate the two concepts which better denote how the terms were used in this research study.

Power

McDonald and Gooding (2005) explain that power is the potential to cause change. Power often comes from position, control over resources, organizational alliances, and ability to use personal characteristics effectively (Anderson, Flynn & Spataro, 2008; Boonstra and Bennebroek-Gravehorst, 1998). Mechanic (1962) defines

power as a force, not a relationship. Considerable control over resources, relating directly to positional power is often the most identifying characteristic of someone with positional power (Mechanic, 1962). Within the idea of positional power, there is no direct correlation to relationship building. In fact, because power is often associated with control over another person, resistance is met with when power is exercised without a level of influence or the building of relationships (Boonstra & Bennebroek-Gravenhorst, 1998). Within this separation of influence and power, it is imperative to understand that formal position or authority with organizational power is not equal to the ability to influence (Mowday, 1978). This leads to the separate definition of influence.

Influence

According to McDonald and Gooding (2005), influence refers to the methods and efforts or behaviors that a leader utilizes to affect the change. Individuals with a high level of influence have personal characteristics that help them “build a network of relationships, provide favors to others and build social capital, lobby co-workers to generate support for their own agendas, and pursue opportunities to expand their domains of control” (Anderson, Flynn & Spataro, p. 703). It is important to note that it is not unusual for stakeholders in lower level positions to assume and wield considerable influence not associated with their formally defined positions (Mechanic, 1962). This elevation in levels of influence is often due to the amount of access an employee has to information or personnel because of their honed interpersonal characteristics and level of respect within the organization (Drory, 1993).

The separation of power and influence outlines clearly that “...even if two individuals have the same level of power, they might differ in their levels of influence...”

(Anderson, Flynn & Spataro, 2008, p. 702). In this research study, the concept of power is that of positional power related specifically to job responsibilities, direct reports and resource control within the school district while influence refers to personal characteristics that one has the ability to change or manipulate as needed in a given instance. Influence within the organization is critical to effectiveness within the change process because stakeholders at all levels of the organization can use it (Anderson, Flynn & Spataro, 2008).

Types of influence. Depending on the level of a person in an organization, the types of influence that are used may be different. Research shows that there are two main types of influence—upward influence and downward influence (McDonald & Gooding, 2005; Kaul, 2003). Downward influence refers to people in formal positions of power utilizing their position to move subordinates in a certain direction (Kaul, 2003). The idea of upward influence is applicable in this research as we discuss teacher leadership and the change process. Upward influence is the ability to impact superiors through multiple tactics to work toward personal or group goals (Kaul, 2003). Employees in an organization attempt to gain support from those higher in the organizational hierarchy using upward influence (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988). Upward influence is a standard organizational behavior, even in education where the systemic hierarchy is more divided than other organizations (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988).

Power, downward influence, and upward influence have their places in formal organizations as part of the change process. Fullan (1999) touts that educational change that is to be embedded and deeply rooted in improvement cannot be mandated, but must be a collaboration between top-down directives and bottom-up energies. A leader must

be able to connect the concepts of upward and downward influence to make system wide change.

Leadership as Influence

The ability of a leader to understand power and the types of influence he or she deliberately or even inadvertently utilizes is vital to the success of the change process (McDonald & Gooding, 2005). In the role of teacher leader, often there is no power associated with serving peer teachers as a resource or model. More often there are opportunities for teacher leaders to utilize the influence factor, specifically upward influence. Donaldson (2007) stated that teacher leaders not only influence colleagues through demonstration and modeling of instruction, but also influence campus leadership because of the following of the peer teachers.

School district leaders in positions with very little formal authority in the organization, often utilize upward influence to encourage changes at the campus and district level (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988). In this situation, reciprocal relationships with subordinates and superiors are necessary to be most effective in influencing change (McDonald & Gooding, 2005). In school districts, it is imperative to utilize influence tactics appropriately and know “how and when to use those tactics” (McDonald & Gooding, 2005, p. 22). Because the components of leadership are massive in number and the ability to utilize power and influence effectively is only one small tenet, then it crucial to understand the theories of leadership that can promote or inhibit the change process.

Theories of Leadership

Over the last sixty years, scholars have spent much time working to understand the types of leadership that exist in education and how leaders impact the school

improvement process. Literature suggests that alternative leadership styles are becoming more prevalent and are replacing those historic top-down organizational views (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006). Focusing specifically on theories of leadership that have surfaced as valuing the participation of others as part of the leadership of an organization, transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978), distributed leadership theory (Gronn, 2002), and most recently parallel leadership theory (Crowther, et al., 2009), it is evident that the rise of the role of teacher leaders on campuses continues, these theories are practiced more widely in our nation's schools.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Bass (1985) brought to light the first of the prevalent leadership theories that valued the input of others within the organization. Developing a vision and gaining the commitment of those that will aid in the mission to meet that vision is the goal of the transformational leader (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Unending amounts of enthusiasm and support of the work in the organization is necessary to be a transformational leader and the help of those that are working alongside the leader should mirror that of the leader himself (Bass, 1985). In the leadership of schools, it has become imperative that the transformational leader at the helm of the ship become a more collective effort rather than the individual effort that it may have begun as (Crowther, et al., 2009). The characteristics of the transformational leader that encouraged others to be a part of the organizational success led way to the need for a more distributed approach to leading schools.

Distributed Leadership Theory

Research shows that effective school leadership can no longer reside in one person because the demands of school campuses are so great and the results are so critical (Ballek, O'Rourke, Provenzano, & Bellamy, 2005) The increasing importance of distributing leadership responsibilities on school campuses to meet the diverse professional needs of teachers requires that teacher leaders be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out tasks previously looked upon as duties of administrators. Results from multiple research studies show that formal teacher leadership roles improve instruction and build on the notion that teacher leaders can provide professional development and support needed for struggling teachers (Mangin, 2005; Remley, 2004; Westbrook, 2001). Focused instructional leadership and effective professional development depend on the ability of practicing teachers to learn from and with each other (Darling-Hammond, 1994).

Additional research is needed to determine how to transcend the social implications of utilizing teachers with great amounts of expertise while balancing the social and political ramifications of teachers becoming leaders and thereby separated from their peers. Further, it is a poor assumption that “distributing leadership among teachers develops instructional capacity” (Timperley, 2005, p. 418). Principals that are interested in building leadership capacity in teachers must be committed to training, modeling, and intellectually stimulating these identified school leaders in the areas of leadership and adult learning processes (Brown, 2008; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Leithwood, 1994). The theory of distributed leadership relates closely to a more modern term associated with schools and districts broadening the base of leadership

responsibility and accountability for professional learning: professional learning communities.

Parallel Leadership Theory

Much like distributed leadership, in parallel leadership there is a focus on sharing the responsibilities of the success of the school campus, however there are specific underpinnings that utilize the teacher leader role. These distinct elements are “mutualism, a sense of shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression” (Crowther, et al., 2009, p. 54). Mutualism, as it is termed here is the need for mutual trust to be nurtured, practiced, and valued between teachers and administrators. The shared purpose demonstrates that the campus vision and mission align with practices supported by leadership and in the classrooms. Teacher leaders promote this alignment through their work with specific teachers. Finally, teacher leaders must be allowed to express their “individual convictions and assertive dispositions” as well as establish the same ability in other teachers on the campus (Crowther, et al., p. 56.)

Quality leadership, no matter the method or framework, requires that leaders develop organizational capacity to improve (Schwahn & Spady, 2002). The idea of professional learning communities surfaced some years ago as one of the answers to creating a continual learning environment within schools while living the idea of organizational improvement through shared leadership.

Professional Learning Communities

DuFour and Eaker (1998) describe the professional learning community as one where “educators create an environment that fosters mutual cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth as they work together to achieve what they cannot

accomplish alone” (p. xii). There are certain characteristics that define a professional learning community (PLC): (1) Shared mission, vision, and values, (2) Collective inquiry, (3) Collaborative teams, (4) Action orientation and experimentation, (5) Continuous improvement, and lastly, (6) Results orientation (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, pp. 25-29). Provided scenarios and examples in the literature demonstrate that in order for a school to move toward the PLC model, the idea of shared leadership and focus on teaming must be present. Contributions from all colleagues in a PLC and the death of isolation among school faculties are considered foundational to the effective implementation of the professional learning community model (Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002).

In support of the professional learning community model, Martin-Kniep (2004) establishes that schools must become better at identifying and utilizing their own professional expertise to embed active professional development into campuses through the leadership of teachers. The leadership theories and models explained above have led to the emergence of formal teacher leaders within our nation’s schools.

Teacher Leadership

Historical Perspective and Definitions

Lieberman (1986) began examining the models of teacher leadership that had been in place formally and informally since the early 1980’s. Formal teacher leader roles have included department chairperson, team leader, instructional coach where individuals are chosen through a specific process and defined expectations are set for the position (Danielson, 2007). Interestingly, the formal teacher leaders at times are not the teachers on the campus that wield the power of change in a campus culture. More often, informal

teacher leaders, identifiable on essentially any campus, are those that command the attention of their faculties not by title, but by reverence (Whitaker, 1995). Informal teacher leaders emerge organically and often have no positional authority or difference than others, but take intrinsic initiative in the change process and gain influence through the respect they gain from colleagues (Danielson, 2007; Donaldson & Sanderson, 1996).

Leadership beyond the classroom walls encapsulates the multiple versions of teacher leader definitions. Teacher leaders take on additional responsibilities and decision-making within a school (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). Teacher leaders have also been defined as those that initiate change and felt encouraged by their campus leadership to do so (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004). According to Lord and Miller (2000), teacher leaders are those that share responsibility with the administration and take on additional instructional leadership tasks that promote teacher professional development. Other teachers have defined teacher leaders as those that advocate for and help to organize other teachers on the campus (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004). Though specific wording that defines who a teacher leader may be on individual campuses, the essence of their work remains the same. A teacher leader works in support of campus learning goals with colleagues to improve professional learning. This may be done formally with specific titles and stipends or informally as the underlying presence that encourages teachers to continually strive to be more for their students.

Current trends in teacher leadership show that multiple teacher leader models are utilized across the nation to address the challenges of carrying out all school responsibilities. In an increasingly complex society where standardized testing, national and state mandates, shifts in demographics in schools and districts, and changes in our

political leadership, teacher leaders are at ground zero and will be the capacity builders that instigate and implement lasting change (Lieberman and Miller, 2005). Donaldson (2007) reiterates the importance of teacher leadership by outlining the three benefits to having teachers identified as instructional leaders on campuses: teachers listen and respect their own, teachers have the respect of colleagues because they can embed their leadership into daily tasks, and finally teacher leaders are not only able to seek change in school environment, but are the ones that will carry the change out and therefore can implement needed changes immediately.

Inevitably, as discussions of teacher leadership surface as a need in school districts, district leaders question the financial constraints associated with stipends or additional salary in relation to the overall impact on student achievement and increase in success on high stakes testing. Henning (2006) conducted a study of twenty-four elementary and middle school teacher leaders that focused on student data analysis for the purpose of increasing student achievement. He concluded that significant impact was made by the in-depth analysis of the data provided to campus teachers by these teacher leaders for the purpose of improving instruction. An alternate example of teacher leadership and the connection to student achievement is a case study conducted on rural elementary campus where teacher leaders were supported in their quest for National Board Certification and through the process of the certification provided support and help to other teachers utilizing skills as part of the accomplished teaching model provided by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (Berry, Johnson & Montgomery, 2005). The teachers were motivated and able to move student achievement on this

campus from an acceptable rating to exemplary because of the change in culture created by the teacher leaders.

Teacher leaders on school campuses have the ability to impact student achievement in reduce the ever-growing achievement gap. However, in order to make these needed gains, it is the responsibility of the identified campus or district leadership to identify the right teachers for formal teacher leader roles and to support the actions of the informal teacher leaders that align their influence with campus and district vision. The selection process for these teacher leaders must be unbiased and based on identified leadership traits, mastery of instructional practices, and ability to work with adult learners (Brown, 2008). Further defining the characteristics of teacher leaders is a key component to this decision-making process.

Characteristics of Teacher Leaders

Much effort has been given to clearly defining the characteristics and traits of teachers that will most effectively take on leadership roles and be successful in their practice with peers. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) state “teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice” (p. 5). Teacher leaders ultimately see their role as being of services beyond their classroom walls and work to identify areas of impact that will serve the school as a community. A study of highly effective teachers showed that they are able to share and collaborate with their peers for the purpose of building capacity in others to initiate change (Wettersen, 1994). Further, effective teacher leaders have a calm disposition and are masters at

building trust with their peers while also demonstrating unfailing determination and innovation (Guiney, 2001).

Teacher leaders are considered hard-working and innovative in instruction, able to meet the needs of diverse populations, and are willing to work with other teachers through a variety of professional learning opportunities (Mooney, 1994). In conjunction with being willing to work with peers, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) state that teacher leaders must be identified by peers as being content specialists and capable teachers in the classroom with students. Teacher leaders are often those that serve in formal and informal leadership roles on school campuses and even within the school district. Mimbs (2002) contends that, teacher leaders see these multiple roles as opportunities to model leadership for peers as well as provide a greater service to students and teachers alike.

A comprehensive understanding of the traits of strong teacher leaders allows campus and district leaders to begin to identify teachers that fit these molds. The question then surfaces as to how to most effectively utilize these teacher leaders to impact the most teachers and students in a positive way. In order to answer this question, it is important to understand common roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders.

Roles and Responsibilities of Teacher Leaders

In defining common responsibilities of teacher leaders, it is important to first establish the different leadership roles that teachers tend to play on school campuses or within school districts. Formal teacher leader roles have been in place for a number of years in education as teachers have served as team leaders, department chairs, committee members and other positions of responsibility for school campuses or at the district level (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001).

As mentioned previously, informal teacher leaders often surface on campuses and work either to support the mission and vision of the campus or at times in opposition of the formal leadership (Whitaker, 1995). Though informal teacher leaders have no specified responsibilities as part of an established role on a school campus, it is important to recognize them and take time to determine if informally they are supporting desired change processes or working against them (Danielson, 2007).

At inception, the role of a lead teacher was to work at the local school level in collaboration with colleagues to improve teaching and serve as an additional level of support (Lieberman, 1986). Currently, roles of teacher leaders include taking on multiple positions in the school while seeing the teaching process as a way to model instructional innovations and professionally develop those around them on the campus (Mimbs, 2002).

Common responsibilities of teachers in leadership positions consist of mentoring, providing professional development, peer coaching, conducting research, leading teacher book studies, working on curriculum projects, providing campus based workshops, and in some cases serving in supervisory roles through observation (Danielson, 2007; Lieberman & Miller, 2005) .

In order to keep the respect of colleagues in all of the responsibilities listed above that often occur outside of the classroom, it is key for a teacher leader to also be able to continue his or her success in the classroom with students. Modeling effective instruction for peers is one of the best ways to begin making lasting impact on school-wide instruction (Garet, et al., 2001). Further, once the teacher leader has effectively modeled instruction, it is imperative that teacher leaders be able to engage in reflective discussions around the goals of a lesson, organization and management of the classroom,

instructional strategies, and impact on student learning are provided in literature as options for teachers that have a lasting impact on practices once back in the classroom (Garet, et al., 2001).

Teacher leader roles and responsibilities require an intense amount of dedication on the part of the teacher leaders and that of the campus leadership. Often, teachers are paid an additional stipend for serving in these roles which is the responsibility of the campus or the district. In order to substantiate the need for this organization and financial burden, benefits of teacher leaders must be evident.

Benefits of Teacher Leadership

The benefits of teacher leadership can be broken into three main areas of impact: the school/ district, the teachers, and most important—the students. Discussion of whole-school reform focus on the role of the teacher as instructional leader in the classroom; teacher leaders can have a lasting impact on instructional leadership on a school campus thereby significantly impacting overall student achievement (Lieberman & Miller, 2004). Barth (2001) cites a study of governance in 1,000 schools and links the distributed leadership utilizing teacher leaders and allowing them the opportunity to take on some of the responsibilities listed in the previous section to one of the single most contributing factors in the high-performing schools. In longitudinal case studies of six schools, Weiss et al. (1992) found that implementation of whole-school reform with teachers as decision makers took longer, but were implemented with greater fidelity and less resistance than on campuses with top-down leadership (Harris, 2005). Donaldson and Sanderson (1996) explain that collaboration through committee leadership, consistent

communication with campus leadership teams, and the ability to work in a collegial environment significantly impact school culture and impacts teaching in all classrooms.

Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, and Cobb (1995) contend that teacher leadership is inextricably “connected to teacher learning” and that embedding teacher leadership into a school campus “may lead to greater profession-wide leadership as the ‘normal’ role of teacher is expanded, thereby improving the capacity of schools to respond to the needs of students” (p. 87). Teachers that are actively involved in the leadership of schools invariably shed the attitude of victim or passive recipient of information and decisions within the school walls and begin to believe that they have the power to shape their own destinies and those of their students (Barth, 2001). Harris (2005) conducted a comprehensive literature review of relationships between teacher leadership and impact on school stakeholders. She contends that literature conclusively reports that teacher self-esteem and self-efficacy is positively impacted by teacher leader roles and exposure to teacher leaders which has been shown to increase performance levels and effectiveness in the classroom.

The final link to benefits of teacher leadership is that of the impact on students. Though the empirical research directly connecting student achievement and teacher leadership is weak, Harris (2005) confirms that teacher leadership focused on instructional improvements in the classroom increases the “chance of positive impact on student learning outcomes” (p. 210). Evidence of a democratic culture on a school campus has a lasting ripple effect that makes its way to the students (Barth, 2001). Harris and Mujis (2004) contend that teacher leadership and participation in school decision making can improve student performance.

The far reaching effects of teacher leadership on school campuses initiates a further investigation of challenges faced by teachers taking on these leadership roles and the struggles that these teachers may face as they carry out duties associated with leadership of peers in schools.

Challenges of Teacher Leader Roles

As teachers' expertise is recognized, their roles expanded and their responsibilities increased, they become more powerful leaders (Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb, 1995). This assertion, based on extensive case study research, still leaves a question unanswered: How do the teachers whose proficiency is recognized and who gain influential roles ensure their effectiveness in the new roles they undertake? Once a teacher has been identified and placed in the role of teacher leader, historically there has been little to no additional training provided to ensure success of that actions expected from this newly "anointed" teacher leader (Smylie & Denny, 1990, p. 237). In fact there is an assumption often made by administrators that a high functioning teacher of students will automatically be a strong teacher leader (Dozier, 2007). However, the skill set required to help develop colleagues and peers through professional development opportunities hosted by these teacher leaders can present a significant challenge for a person with no training in leadership.

Often, teacher leaders have not had the experience of higher education in an educational leadership program and yet face the challenges of leadership daily. Research has shown that "teacher leaders who lack sufficient instructional knowledge, or are perceived as lacking knowledge, may encounter resistance from teachers that limits their effectiveness as leaders" (Mangin, 2005, p. 21). Teacher leaders are expected to model

effective instruction and debrief instructional practices with colleagues without sufficient training in how to conduct effective conversations, especially with a peer that has been identified as struggling by campus administration (Mangin, 2005).

Harris (2005) summarizes the literature on barriers to teacher leadership by stating that isolation has been noted as a consistent issue for teacher leaders as they transition into leadership roles. Cultures of isolation and lack of time, training, and funding often inhibit the potential success of teacher leaders on school campuses (Drago-Severson, 2007). Relational factors impact the success of the teacher leader including those of ability to interpersonally connect with colleagues, maintaining productive relationships with school leadership, and conflict resolution that may be necessary with teachers or administration (Harris, 2005). Collaborative skills necessary to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a teacher leader requires training and knowledge of strategies in dealing with colleagues that may be resistant to the teacher leadership role as a means of assistance (Lieberman, et al., 2000).

The list of negative factors that have the potential to squelch the effect that a teacher leader can have a school campus is an exhaustive one relating to multiple areas of needed support. Some challenges associated with teacher leadership can be addressed through supportive conditions in a school environment.

Conditions to Support Teacher Leadership

In order for teacher leadership to be an integral part of a school community, certain conditions are critical. First and foremost, administrative support of a model of teacher leadership is vital to capacity building and embedded professional development. It may seem that administrative support only refers to campus level administration;

however, Fullan (2005) targets a need for campus, district, and system level leadership to be in sync on issues for reform in schools. In this research, the reform being addressed is the use of teacher leaders. Harris and Lambert (2003) explain that there is an expectation that school leaders, including those in teacher roles of leadership, contribute to the “improved educational performance and achievement” of the campus (p. 2). The investment in the development of others or promotion of collaborative culture is a key condition that must be in place to aid in the success of a teacher leader model and in the improvement of schools in general (Harris & Lambert, 2003). In comparison to administrative leadership and the creation of a collaborative culture, the structure and organization of the school may seem to be an insignificant component not worth mentioning, however without a purposeful structure and organization to support teacher professional development through the use of teacher leaders, the challenges addressed previously in this chapter ultimately squelch any movement that could be made toward achieving campus goals.

Administrative support. As stated previously, it is a common misunderstanding that when discussing implementation of school improvement models, such as a teacher leadership model, the campus administrative leadership will be the only driving force behind successful implementation and sustainability. Capacity building for leadership begins with the school system at the district level and is supported by school boards, superintendents, and other key personnel (Fullan, 2005). The bulk of the work to ingrain the teacher leader model will fall to campus administrative teams, but the district can support this process by embedding opportunities for “lateral capacity building through networks” that would open possibilities for campus administrative teams and teacher

leaders from multiple schools to communicate with each other and create a true professional learning community (Fullan, 2005, p. 17).

At the administrative level, the support of teacher leadership becomes more personal to the campus implementing the model. According to a research study conducted by Beachum and Dentith (2004), administrative teams that encouraged teacher leadership were viewed by the faculty as approachable, open-minded, and created many opportunities for faculty members to collaborate on the school campus. The expectation to take on leadership roles was set by the administration and was clear to all teachers on the campus. Supporting teacher leaders' roles may be individual to campus need and based in the overall vision for how the teacher leader will be involved in school improvement. Moller and Pankake (2006) contend that certain strategies help administrators collaborate with teacher leaders on the school improvement process. These strategies are: (1) collaboratively build and monitor an action plan, (2) negotiate the relationship, (3) be available, (4) provide access to human and fiscal resources, (5) maintain a focus on instructional leadership, (6) help maintain a balance and avoid overload, and finally (7) protect the teacher leader's relationship with his or her peers. Campus administrators should allow teacher leaders to become involved with collecting data and becoming effective decision makers or problem solvers. In addition, there should be time for teacher leader dialogue with administrators which can lead to viewing teachers as joint colleagues in the educational change process (Drago-Severson, 2007). Lambert (1998) touts that "frequent dialogue, shared work, and shared responsibility" create authentic relationships and build leadership capacity in others.

Further, administrators allowed teachers to participate in site-visits within the district and out-of-district to see alternate views of implementation in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and other foundational elements to the campus success. These teachers were instrumental in bringing the information back to their colleagues for review and discussion around areas of improvement that could be focused on in their own school (Drago-Severson, 2007).

Opportunities to use leadership skills honed on school campuses in the outside world are becoming more frequent as state and national conferences are beginning to host sessions and topics focused around teacher leadership. In a recent study, principals that encouraged teacher leaders to model their work as part of professional development in the school as well as at local, state, and national conferences allowed teachers to broaden their perspectives and bring additional expertise back to the campus (Drago-Severson, 2007). Lieberman and Miller (2004) share portraits of teacher leaders where many are able to reach beyond their own district whether electronically by sharing resources via webpages, blogs, wikis or as mentioned above by attending conferences where they share the craft to continue the capacity building in a larger scope. Regardless of the specified plan for a teacher leader model, “Principal support is key to the success of learning communities, as adults change from working in isolation to forming teams to solve student learning problems” (Arnau, 2008, p. 49).

Collaborative culture. In a recently released report from the National Staff Development Council, only 17% of teachers nation-wide reported that they experienced cooperative efforts among faculty to support student learning and teacher professional development (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009). This demonstrates a lack of focus in our

educational change efforts on collaborative cultures that have been shown to promote instructional improvement. Collaborative cultures on school campuses are one of the leading factors that support teacher leadership. Killion (2009) states that “teachers working in the same school with the same students and the same curriculum may better understand how to support one another than do external assistance providers” (p. 2). Beachum and Dentith (2004) explain that teacher leadership is promoted on campuses with collaborative cultures evidenced by teacher teaming and collective commitment to student achievement, curriculum and instruction, and all other campus-related issues.

The collaborative culture necessary to build a team-oriented capacity led by teachers reaches beyond the school walls. In order to promote the success of teacher leaders on school campuses, the model must not only have the support of the administration, but also the staff members, parents, central office personnel, and the school board (Drago-Severson, 2007). Systemic collaborative culture that allows for networking and learning across the district is where the value of teacher leadership will become unmatched (Fullan, 2005). Though this idea of systemic change on a large scale for a district is the ultimate goal, a focus at the campus level with the support of district leadership can be a strong starting point. With the administrative leadership and a collaborative culture firmly in place, the final element that will determine opportunities for success of a teacher leader model is the structure and organization of the campus.

School structure and organization. Tensions relating to the role of teacher leader often link to the organization and structure of the campus to allow these leaders to carry out their responsibilities. Lieberman and Miller (2004) discuss as part of a literature review that much study has been completed on how the lack of time to conduct

leadership responsibilities and the balance between leadership roles and classroom responsibilities often caused conflict and ambiguity for the teacher leader. These structural challenges do not only reside in how the teacher leaders' schedules are arranged, but also those schedules of the teachers they are poised to work with.

Research shows that creating time for collaboration and building of relationships in and among teams and departments makes for a greater consistency in instruction as well as improved willingness to share instructional strategies and try new teaching methods (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009). The administrative leadership has to make the teacher teaming and department time a non-negotiable in order to teacher leaders to be able to effectively reach groups of learners (Lieberman & Miller, 2004).

These consistent meeting times for teacher groups and purposeful conversation also serve as component of the structure and organization of time in the school week to contribute to fostering collective leadership efforts (Arnau, 2008). Campus administration must define the organizational role of the teacher leaders in collaborative settings. Team or department meetings should be focused on goals for students and teachers alike that are aligned with the campus goals described in the campus improvement plan (Arnau, 2008). This process can be led by teacher leaders if the structure is in place for them to serve in that role with those responsibilities (Lieberman & Miller, 2004).

In addition to the time spent with teacher teams, teacher leaders must have a structured time where they get together to discuss their roles as leaders, struggles or challenges they are currently facing, and celebrations or share time for things that are going well in their roles as the leaders of the faculty on the school campus (Fullan, 2005;

Lieberman & Miller, 2004). This requires additional structure and attention from campus administration to make sure that these meetings are embedded as part of the plan for the school year (Arnau, 2008).

The literature review to support effective change in teacher leader professional development first required an understanding of the change process, leadership theories that ultimately led to the teacher leader movement, components of teacher leaderships and conditions that can support or inhibit the success of teacher leaders. The final topic to be addressed as part of this review of literature is professional development including adult learning theories, characteristics of effective professional development and finally the professional development of teacher leaders.

Professional Development

Professional development plays a major role in the process of changing practice in education (Rust & Freidus, 2001). This statement is the reason that educational leaders have spent extensive time understanding the key components of professional development as it relates to all members of the educational community. Fullan (2005) explains clearly that change is a slow and deliberate process supported by professional development and systemic structuring; Lieberman and Miller (2004) discuss the need to focus on the teachers' individual needs and professional growth as determined by them; Guskey (2003) establishes that monitoring progress toward professional goals is imperative to the success of implementation. In short, the professional development of adults on school campuses is vital to the success of the students and makes schools a better place for learning (Donaldson, 2007).

In order for the research of the aforementioned educational leaders to be honored, it is important to understand that there are core components that make professional development effective and useful for all that participate. According to Guskey (2003), the core structure of a creating professional development consists of planning, implementing, and evaluating. The planning of professional development must be deliberate and intentional with a focus on the student learning goals at the forefront to promote a backward design process (Guskey, 2003). It is imperative that staff development leaders focus on the intended outcomes of a training or professional development opportunity while concentrating efforts on analyzing relevant data, and prioritizing needs to establish goals they wish to guide their work.

A study conducted in eleven public schools noted that effective professional development is connected to district goals, offered during the course of the school day, consisted of multiple modes of learning in content established by the stakeholders of the school, and was led by campus-based personnel that allowed for consistent follow up (Lowden, 2005).

Guskey's (2003) implementation phase requires professional developers to look at common practices that have been in place previously and have not been successful. When implementing professional development it is important to note that generalized professional development does not have as great an impact on teacher instruction and student achievement as professional development focused in specific content areas (Kennedy, 1998) and collective participation of teacher from the same grade level or department can also improve the impact of professional development and the effect on

instructional practices (Desimone, et al., 2002). Further information regarding characteristics of effective professional development practice will be provided below.

The final factor in Guskey's (2003) structure is the evaluation of professional development. In order to effectively evaluate professional development, professional development leaders must commit to identifying outcomes that can be evaluated in the professional development plan. During the planning stage, campus leadership and professional developers must determine what evaluation measures will be utilized and create a timeline of when those measures will be assessed to determine a need to change course (Guskey, 2003). Changes to the professional development plan should be implemented formatively as the year progresses based on those evaluations.

According to Killion (2009), only 50% of teachers rate their professional learning and development as effective and useful in their current positions. This statistic demonstrates a need to look further into the reasons that our professional development efforts continue to fall flat. Adults are the focus for professional learning and therefore it is imperative for professional developers to be aware of characteristics and strategies based on adult learning theories that can positively impact professional development efforts for teachers. Adult learning theories outline structures and necessary elements in professional learning that can contribute to the success or failure of development of adults.

Adult Learning Theories

The term "life-long learning" is common and in fact that is the goal of education in general—to produce life-long learners that welcome opportunities to continue their growth well into adulthood. However, in order to continue our effective efforts as

educators, it is vital to understand fundamental differences and be responsive to diverse needs as we go about educating adults in our educational settings. Clarification of the adult learning theories and stages allows professional developers to strengthen their practices for adult educators within the structure of effective professional development and intended content (Drago-Severson, 2007). The adult learning theories give guidance and provide a framework for understanding adult learners and how they are different from younger learners (Trotter, 2006).

Much research has been done in the area of adult learning that sheds light on these differences. In simplified terms, life structure in adulthood is made up of stable periods and transition periods; stable periods being those when life is solidified and maintained and transition periods being when adults are experiencing some significant change (Wolf, 2005). Age theorists state that as people grow older, learning does not cease but simply changes because older people become more reflective and have a more extensive background than younger learners (Trotter, 2006). Stage theorists discuss that learning evolves and adults attempt to make better sense of the world. Loevinger's (1976) examination of ego development, Kohlberg's (1981) exploration of moral development, and Kegan's (1982) further work on the stage development theory all help to draw conclusions about adult learning. According to all of these theorists, adults are consistently moving toward a comfort level with themselves and their individual identity based on previous experiences, age, and stages that they move through in life (Trotter, 2006).

Learning and development are related to ages, stages, and transitions of life because adults respond to their life experiences in varying ways. It is important for

teachers of adults to understand that during periods of transition development and learning may impact professional work and focus on professional development (Wolf, 2005). Functional theory explains that adults prefer “to plan their own educational paths, and most generally chose educational topics and subjects that they could directly apply in their own classrooms” (Trotter, 2006). This is relevant to professional developers as part of the planning stage in Guskey’s (2003) professional development model.

An additional consideration connected to professionally developing adult learners is that of working with older adults in the educational setting who are approaching retirement, but are still firmly planted in the educational setting. Professional developers must consider even the differences between the adults that he or she is working with on a school campus. For example, it is not uncommon for older adults to feel that they have nothing new to learn and that their own professional development came to an end long ago. It is vital for an adult teacher to be patient with this unconscious and sometimes self-deprecating attitude to avoid alienating the older adult away from willingness to try new things related to the new learning (Wolf, 2005). Drago-Severson (2007) states “we need greater knowledge about practices that support teacher learning and growth by focusing on how teachers make sense of their experiences and how such practices actually work, across different school context” (p. 71). The experiences that each educator brings to the table during professional development are relevant and applicable to how they will conceptualize the new learning.

Diverse learning styles in adults requires that educators utilize multiple teaching methods in an effort to reach all participants in adult learning (Wolf, 2005); this mirrors what should be happening in a regular classroom setting and therefore give the

professional developer the opportunity to provide concrete examples of how instructional strategies should be utilized. This is one of the many characteristics of effective professional development.

Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

Currently, “the structures and supports that are needed to sustain teacher learning and change and to foster job-embedded professional development in collegial environments fall short” (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009). It is the responsibility of campus and district professional developers to be aware of the characteristics of effective professional development so that results are evident in classrooms with students. Main components of effective professional development are that it is content relevant and applicable to classrooms, engaging and representative of how the students will learn, focused on teacher time to form collegial relationships with other teachers, and finally sustained opportunities for teachers to learn over time such as embedding learning into the teaching day (Abell & Lee, 2008). This list is representative of many that have surfaced over the past decades to explain the characteristics of effective professional development; however it is essential to look first to the National Staff Development Council who issued a revised list of standards for effective staff development in 2001. According to the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), the standards are for use at the school and district level to increase the effectiveness of staff development with a goal of increasing student achievement (2001). The standards issued by NSDC are listed in Table 1.

Table 1
National Staff Development Council Standards for Staff Development (2001)

Type of Standard	Name	Description
Context Standard	Learning Communities	Staff development that improves learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district
Context Standard	Leadership	Staff development that improves learning of all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement
Context Standard	Resources	Staff development that improves learning of all students requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration
Process Standard	Data-Driven	Staff development that improves learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement
Process Standard	Evaluation	Staff development that improves learning of all students uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact

Process Standard	Research-Based	Staff development that improves learning of all students prepares educators to apply research to decision making
Process Standard	Design	Staff development that improves learning of all students uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.
Process Standard	Learning	Staff development that improves learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.
Process Standard	Collaboration	Staff development that improves learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.
Content Standard	Equity	Staff development that improves learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.

Table 1 cont.

Content Standard	Quality Teaching	Staff development that improves learning of all students deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.
Content Standard	Family Involvement	Staff development that improves learning of all students provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

Guskey (2003) conducted an analytical study of 13 lists of effective professional development characteristics, including those published by the National Staff Development Council, to determine which characteristics were represented most often, derived through similar procedures, or based on similar frames or contexts. As part of the 13 lists, a total of 21 characteristics were identified. Guskey (2003) identifies that effective professional development

- enhances teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge;
- provides sufficient time and other resources;
- promotes collegiality and collaboration;
- includes procedures for evaluation;

- aligns with other reform initiatives;
- models high-quality instruction;
- is school or site-based;
- builds leadership capacity;
- based on teachers' identified needs;
- driven by analyses of student learning data;
- focuses on individual and organizational improvement;
- includes follow up support;
- is ongoing and job-embedded;
- helps accommodate diversity and promote equity;
- based on best available research evidence;
- takes a variety of forms;
- provides opportunities for theoretical understanding;
- driven by an image of effective teaching and learning;
- provides for different phases of change;
- promotes continues inquiry and reflection; and
- involves families and other stakeholders.

As a result of the study, it is evident that a number of the lists reviewed included similar characteristics, the most frequent being the connection to teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge (Guskey, 2003). Guskey (2003) did note that a number of the characteristics aligned with those issued by the National Staff Development Council (2001), however some had no relation. Three main conclusions are cited in Guskey's (2003) summary of the lists reviewed: (1) there is little agreement on criteria for

effectiveness of professional development, (2) many of the currently stated characteristics are dependent upon the extent to which that characteristic is carried out, and finally (3) though research-based professional development is not prevalent yet, there is no reason that it should remain that way. A final statement regarding the characteristics for effective professional development states, “The characteristics that influence the effectiveness of professional development are clearly multiple and highly complex...[therefore] it may be unreasonable to assume that a single list” will ever emerge regardless of the amount of research (Guskey, 2003, p. 16-17).

Additional research provides other characteristics that have been identified as effective in professional development. In alignment with the adult learning theories, Trotter (2006) states that professional development of adults requires that teachers of adults be focused on the adult learners’ background experiences and knowledge, as well as being differentiated to meet individual needs. Drago-Severson’s (2007) more recent list mimics many of the same characteristics evident above: 1) embedded in and derived from practice, 2) ongoing rather than a one-shot experience, 3) on-site and school based, 4) focused on student achievement, 5) integrated with school reform processes, 6) centered around teacher collaboration, and 7) sensitive to teachers’ learning needs.

In thinking about the characteristics of effective professional development, school leaders must determine how to meet the needs of their campuses. Multiple departments, varying learning styles, vast arrays of content, and the need for follow up is much to great a job for campus administrators to implement in isolation. In order to carry out the lofty expectations of campus-based professional development models, it is necessary to look at a distributed leadership model wherein teachers and school personnel take active roles in

the development of one another (Mangin, 2006; Remley, 2004). Teacher leaders, because they are greater in number, have the ability to create professional development that can be embedded within the school day (Desimone, et al., 2002).

Defining professional development plans and implementing them for a full staff requires an immense amount of time and effort as stated above. The expectation that teacher leaders will be involved in the planning, implementing and evaluating of professional development leads to the focus of this study. If one of the purposes of integrating teacher leaders into the campus to carry out roles of professional developer, model teacher, reflective questioner, observer, and others, the need for professional development of these teacher leaders has to be a consideration.

Professional Development of Teacher Leaders

A research study conducted with identified teacher leaders from across 37 states found that 82% of the teacher leaders surveyed stated that they “lack training in the new leadership roles they are asked to assume” (Dozier, 2007). Smylie and Denny (1990) contend that teacher leadership initiatives, as they became more common during the 1980’s, lacked the necessary training for teacher leaders which potentially decreased the teachers’ ability to impact their peers through professional development or individual work opportunities. Further, in 2005 a four-year research study on distributed leadership as part of school improvement indicated that “[t]eacher leaders with high acceptability among their colleagues are not necessarily those with expertise” (Timperley, 2005, p. 418). At times, due to other political issues on school campuses, the teachers that have the expertise are not welcomed by the staff at large to help with instructional practices (Timperley, 2005).

In order for teacher leaders to be viewed as resources, staff members must first recognize that their level of knowledge and skill is significant. Leaders must be able to communicate that knowledge in appropriate ways (Mangin, 2005; Spillane, Hallet & Diamond, 2000). Through a case study of multiple campuses employing various teacher leader models, researchers learned that no matter the model, one of the overarching needs of all teacher leaders is professional development focusing on leadership skills (Mujis & Harris, 2007). More specifically, “professional development for teacher leadership needs to focus on aspects specific to their leadership role” (Mujis & Harris, 2007, p. 114). Two of the campuses studied as part of this research required specified leadership development training from an external entity for their identified teacher leaders, while the third school did not. This training gave specific instruction about mentoring, staff development techniques, and collaboration. The two schools utilizing this training were considerably more successful in the implementation of teacher leaders on their campuses. All three campuses stated needs for additional training in leadership and continued training in all areas upon completion of the study (Mujis & Harris, 2007).

Liebeman and Miller (2005) conducted two in-depth case studies on current teacher leaders, their journey to leadership, and their roles and responsibilities as teacher leaders. Research showed that some teacher leaders transition easily into the role with little to no specified leadership training, while others benefit from intensely focused leadership instruction in order to be successful. While no specifics regarding the focused leadership program was provided, these case studies support that teacher leaders may need training to transition from their own classroom into a leadership role within their faculty.

Harris (2005) established through her extensive literature review that need for professional development opportunities was a consistent finding in her research. Areas of training that most teacher leaders could benefit from include, but are not limited to: leadership, collaboration and communication with adult learners, peer coaching and reflective questioning, mentoring, and effective professional development techniques. Often teacher leaders are defined as teacher coaches and employ strategies such as facilitating a clear focus and vision, differentiating support for alternate clientele such as coaching, collaborating, and consulting, providing mediation techniques for teachers, utilizing paraphrasing and listening skills, and finally organizing time so that all work conducted is followed up on and supported continuously (Lipton & Wellman, 2007). Lipton and Wellman (2007) explain the continuum from coaching, collaborating, to consulting clearly by expounding on the need of teacher leaders to be able to differentiate their skills and communication based on the needs of individual teachers. Depending on the topic or the area of concern for a teacher, one might fall on multiple parts of the continuum during one conversation and it is essential that a teacher leader be equipped to handle the change of their role in that conversation.

Topics for teacher leader training result from research studies of roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders, benefits of the teacher leader model, and challenges that past and current teacher leaders are facing, but certainly do not encompass the full range of training needs that may be necessary for any given teacher leader in a specific school or leadership role that could require additional or diverse professional development for success.

Conclusion

In closing, “the literature suggests that [teacher leadership] will remain a marginal activity within schools unless specific forms of remuneration are put in place to actively encourage teachers to engage in leadership tasks” (Harris, 2005, p. 213). The encouragement that many teachers need to step into the unknown waters of leadership often begin with a plan for support and training that will give them needed skills and strategies to deal with the inevitable challenges that they will face.

This research study identified ways that a district leader implemented change in a less effective teacher leader model by providing effective professional development opportunities aligned with research based practices. The description of this phenomenon from a district perspective will allow other district, campus, and teacher leaders to replicate a similar process and learn from the efforts in this study. Simply put, teacher leaders are the vehicle through which connections are made across classrooms to promote increased collaboration so that every student has the benefit of every teacher (Killion, 2009). For this reason teacher leaders must be trained well.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

A qualitative research design was chosen for this research as it allowed the researcher to focus on the subject matter as it happened in the natural state. Qualitative researchers attempt to make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Hatch (2002) supports this method as understanding the world from multiple perspectives; working to interpret the realities that participants create in response to human experiences.

Understanding the change process within the political domains of the school district was the goal of this study. The skills of the researcher to engage in an in-depth investigation of this topic and then to serve as the vehicle that implemented necessary change processes were imperative to the fidelity of this topic and this study (Crotty, 1998). In order to carry out this qualitative study, a phenomenological framework was settled upon as the most effective way to communicate findings of the experience as a district leader implemented change for teacher leader professional development. Phenomenology was the approach utilized to uncover the themes and the essence of truth to district level change of an established teacher leader model.

Phenomenology

Edmund Husserl (1999), arguably the father of phenomenology, developed the foundations of phenomenology early in the 20th century. He introduced the idea that philosophy of consciousness, while suspending natural attitudes or assumptions, helps to

gain understanding of the essence of a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2006).

Phenomenologists that subsequently followed Husserl (1999) contested some of his arguments, but essentially the basis of phenomenological research can be traced back to his initial theory (Creswell, 2006).

The central purpose of phenomenology is to understand a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2006). In the case of this research, the concept examined was that of the experience of change within the political context of a school district. It is important to note that alternative traditions of inquiry were compared to determine which most closely fit the research question. Creswell (2006) defines phenomenology as a study where “lived experiences for several individuals” are described as related to a concept or phenomenon they have in common (p. 51).

This research diverges from Creswell’s (2006) description of a phenomenological study. There was no group experiencing the same phenomenon in this research; the explanations and descriptions came from me, the district leader who implemented the change. Often, an auto-ethnographic research study focuses on the experiences of the researcher to relate personal to cultural layers of consciousness (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), and where this study did in fact utilize the researcher as the unit of analysis, it was not for the purpose of uncovering connections to personal experiences over time as part of a culture, but was focused on the phenomenon of change as it was experienced in this setting.

Elements of Phenomenology

Van Manen (1990) affirms that phenomenology concentrates on the nature of something; the truth that is created by that thing to make it what it is. Husserl (1999)

determined that the main elements necessary to carry out a true phenomenological study were the search for the essence of the experience, reduction of data to allow for the uncovering of meaningful statements, and epoche or bracketing by the researcher who must attempt to set aside attitudes and judgments to find the meaning presented in the work (Creswell, 2006). Epoche describes a moment when all beliefs of the world are suspended and then once the researcher analyzes those beliefs in relation to the study, he or she is able to ground findings more consciously (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenological data collection consists of in-depth interviews with those that have experienced the phenomenon, self-reflections of the researcher, and gathering information from outside sources about the history leading to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2006). Data analysis in this research study began with in-depth reflection from the researcher followed by a reduction of the data to find meaningful statements. Three types of description were written, in accordance with Creswell's (2006), to continue the reduction of data until the essence of the experience was revealed. Finally, a narrative of the phenomenon was produced (Creswell, 2006). At all times, the researcher was aware of the need for bracketing or epoche as established by Husserl (Creswell, 2006; Husserl, 1999).

Phenomenon of Change

As the review of the literature indicated, the challenges of teacher leadership and their need for training were not difficult to determine. However, the implementation of professional development to address those identified struggles continues to be a gap in the research to this point. The model of teacher leadership, Teachers Leading Teachers (TLT), designed by Cedar Ridge ISD also experienced challenges related to effective

professional development. Though trainings or meetings had been in place since the inception of the program, the district struggled to define and implement necessary trainings to meet the needs of teacher leaders in CRISD. As this topic surfaced as a possibility for further study, the concepts of power, influence, and the political undertones related to the program surfaced in relation to the change process. For this reason, the initial focus of professional development for teacher leaders shifted to effectively navigating the political system of a school district to implement district level change to an established model of teacher leadership. Barriers and successes encountered during the implementation process were noted and analyzed for the study.

This qualitative approach to research provided a way to create understanding of the researcher. In contrast to positivists, phenomenologists believe that the researcher cannot be detached from his/her own presuppositions nor should the researcher pretend otherwise (Hammersley, 2000). In this study, phenomenology was the most appropriate method of inquiry that could be utilized.

As with any phenomenological study, “the phenomenon dictates the method” so it was important to be flexible in data collection and analysis so as to continue to be aware of the need for changes necessary to gain information pertinent to the phenomenon being studied (Hycner, 1999, p. 156).

The Researcher as the Unit of Analysis

Phenomenological research requires that the person with the first-hand experience with the phenomenon be studied (Patton, 2002). I am the person with the first-hand knowledge of this district level change process for teacher leader professional development because the responsibility for the change rests with me. Though the change

process could have been examined in relation to multiple areas of change within the district, it is notable that I focused on the change process through this specific experience. Because background and historical practices impact current experiences, it is necessary to provide insight into my history as the researcher and unit of analysis.

My educational background began as a teacher in a rural school district in Texas where I taught first and fifth grades. During my time at that elementary school, I served in many of the roles of teacher leader as a grade level leader, teacher representative on the site-based decision-making committee, and informally as a mentor to other new teachers on our staff. I transitioned from that position to pursue higher education out-of-state where I earned my degree in educational leadership.

Upon returning to Texas, I could have chosen to move directly into an assistant principal's role; however I knew that my experience teaching at alternate levels would be beneficial to my future in leadership. Consequently, I secured a job at a middle school in Cedar Ridge Independent School District (CRISD) and was immediately put into the role of team leader for my grade level team. I taught seventh and eighth grade at the middle school and had the opportunity to serve as department chairperson and to host many professional development opportunities for the staff as part of that teacher leadership role.

In hopes of rounding out my teaching experience, I moved to a job at a high school in another district to diversify my experience and taught ninth and tenth grade. As part of that year, I completed a principal internship which allowed me to serve in administrative roles on the high school campus at times and conduct some shadowing opportunities at local campuses to learn about the principal position at the elementary and

middle school levels. At the close of that year, I returned to CRISD as an elementary assistant principal where I served three years. During that time, my principal was moved by the district to take over the principal position on other campuses within the district leaving me with responsibility of the school. This campus housed anywhere from 1,000 or more students on any given day and the operations of the campus were an incredible learning experience.

During December of 2007, I became Professional Development Coordinator for CRISD. I implemented the spring semester of training for the Teachers Leading Teachers (TLT) group using the model for training that had been in place for the last five years. This consisted of monthly meetings for one hour after school. I spent that spring semester learning as much as I could about the district perspective on the TLT model and the expectations of the campuses across the district that employed the model. I also conducted two surveys, one in January when I first came on board to gain feedback and understanding of immediate needs that should be addressed and then another in May to get recommendations for the 2008-2009 school year.

At the close of the school year, I was told that discussions at the district level were occurring to dissolve the TLT model. When I asked why this was being considered, I was told that the financial commitment to the program without evidence of improvement in teaching practice and student achievement could not continue to be a focus for the district. I requested the chance to make some changes to the training plan for the 2008-2009 school year and was granted a one year extension of the program. At that time I was told that further recommendations and consideration would be given for the 2009-2010 school year, but most likely the model would not be supported by the

district after spring of 2009. An explanation of the ground work for the fall semester is discussed in the following section.

Context of the Research

As mentioned in Chapter One, the site where this research took place was Cedar Ridge Independent School District (CRISD) in Cedar Ridge, Texas. My position with CRISD is Professional Development Coordinator. I have been in this position for over a year and have been a part of CRISD for six years as a teacher, campus administrator, and now as a central office staff member. The Teachers Leading Teachers (TLT) group and the training provided to them is my responsibility.

The work to initiate change in the training plan for the TLTs in CRISD was a significant undertaking because there were approximately 75 TLTs at the secondary level and 60 TLTs at the elementary level representing primary and intermediate grade levels. The focus of this study was the elementary TLTs. I chose to focus at the elementary level so that I could most accurately document the incidents within the change process of the model for one area rather than taking the chance of spreading myself too thinly. In the background of phenomenological research, it is recommended that a reduction of data take place to allow for the surfacing of themes and patterns during the phenomenon (Creswell, 2006). This reduction was much more effective because of the decision to narrow the focus of the study to the elementary group of TLTs.

In preparation for this year of change, I reviewed archival data from the previous year to gain an understanding of where and how the elementary TLT group had been functioning. As the political undertones began to present themselves, I was made aware by a superior that the curriculum group in the district would be involved in the training of

the TLTs for the school year. This collaboration between professional development and curriculum served to plan and carry out the TLT trainings for the fall semester based on data gathered from the Elementary Needs Assessment at the beginning of the school year. Due to some alterations in the collaboration between professional development and curriculum, during the spring semester I formed an advisory group of Elementary TLTs to assist in review and planning of the trainings. The formation of this group was invaluable to the research study and though it was formed in response to a political barrier in the change process, the group proved to be a large contributor to the effective changes in the professional development of the elementary TLTs.

The Elementary TLT Advisory Group consisted of five elementary TLTs from across the district. The gathering of this group was on a voluntary basis through email by me to all elementary TLTs in the district describing the purpose of the group. The purpose of the Elementary TLT Advisory Group for CRISD was to provide follow up information on trainings attended during the first semester and to gain additional perspective on plans from the curriculum group for future trainings as the semester continued. This group was made up of teacher leaders that had been practicing teacher leadership skills formally and informally in the district for a minimum of two years. The volunteers in the group consisted of two teachers that were new to the TLT position in 2008-2009 and three that had been TLTs at least one year prior. Campuses housing various demographic populations were represented in the group. Teaching experience among the five TLTs ranged from three years to twenty-two years. Some members of the group served in multiple leadership roles on their campuses, while others were solely focused on the TLT model of their individual campuses.

Each member of the group was notified at the time of joining that during the spring semester some of the work conducted by the group would be gathered as part of my dissertation research study. All members agreed to continue participation.

Further descriptions of the data collection methods related to the change to the teacher leader training plan for the elementary TLTs provided a comprehensive explanation of how the phenomenon of change was documented in this research study.

Data Collection

Creswell (2006) notes that data collection in qualitative research should be the purposeful selection of data that most effectively help the researcher “understand the problem and the research question” (p. 185). Further, the selected sites or participants in the study do not have to be great in number or selected at random as they often do in quantitative research (Creswell, 2006). For the purposes of this research, the site was CRISD which is a suburban school district in Texas implementing a teacher leader model that has been in place for six school years. The nature of this phenomenological study with a focus on my role as a change agent for the district’s teacher leader professional development requires only one participant—I served as the researcher, the unit of analysis, and the district leader attempting to make change.

In order to carry out this research, it was necessary to collect multiple forms of data. Creswell (2006) explains that qualitative inquirers spend an immense amount of time collecting data in the natural setting of the research. Most often, the review of archival data serves as a beginning to the research process because it is an “unobtrusive source of information” and “enables the researcher to obtain the language and words of the participants” (p. 187). The ability of the researcher to most clearly reflect experiences

and create an understanding for the reader of the essence of the situation is foundational to the success of the study.

In truth, the collection of data for this study began well before the topic for the study had been considered or approved to be the focus of this research. At the moment that I began my role as the new Professional Development Coordinator, I started my data collection process for implementing change to this model of teacher leadership. Though at the time it could not have been considered such, the surveys and feedback from years past, the initial review of archival data on the program, and the discussions following my plea to keep the model for an additional year all served as background elements to this experience. My reflective field notes and journaling were valuable sets of information that allowed me to go back to those initial moments when the change process began.

Data were recorded and managed purposefully and strategically throughout the research study. The data collection for the study was broken down into categories: Archival Data, Observations and Field Notes, Reflective Journaling.

Archival Data

Creswell (2006) notes that the analysis of public documents is a key part of effective data collection methods in many types of qualitative research. The review of archival data began in January of 2008, as I worked to understand the historical context of the Teachers Leading Teachers model in CRISD and the background of how it had been carried out since 2003. At the time, this archival review was not for the purpose of the research study, but simply to become better informed about my new position at the district level. Review of all types of data including meeting minutes, collected logs from teacher leaders, meeting agendas, printed emails from teacher leaders and from other

central office staff, along with initial descriptions of the model and changes that had been made over the past six years were a part of this initial review. As a part of that review of data, I took notes and continued to do so as I learned more about the teacher leader model and the training that had been provided. Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain that continuous focus on archival data as a support for qualitative investigation adds the ability to triangulate and further analyze findings when it is time to conduct thorough analysis to uncover patterns in the research.

Archival data that were available for review included lists of past teacher leaders, collaboration logs that defined how time as a teacher leader was spent, meeting agendas from previous trainings along with some supplemental training materials, survey data from previous years including the 2007-2008 school year, and various other notes or email communication about the model that was kept. Data that was collected during the 2008-2009 school year includes communication about the possible close of the program, meeting agendas from planning meetings with the curriculum team, initial training plans, the fall needs assessment and results, survey data from the first training this school year and the plus-delta feedback from training part two. In addition, the Elementary Advisory Group met three times and notes were taken at each of those meetings.

The content analysis of these documents is addressed in the Data Analysis section of this chapter, however it is important to note that this archival data and the analysis gained from it is not be the primary source of information for the study, but is supplemental to the reflective journaling process that defines the experience of change as a phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Observation and Field Notes

In a phenomenological study, often the interviews and self-reflective journaling are the primary sources of data (Creswell, 2006). In some studies of phenomenology, the researcher is encouraged to gain “depictions of the experience outside of the context” where the researcher would normally focus (Creswell, 2006). As part of this study, my participation in the planning meetings for the trainings, the Elementary TLT Advisory Group, and my role at the central office were essential parts of being descriptive in my experience of the phenomenon of change. It is important to note here that observations and field notes taken were also dissected in the reflective journal, however notes in the moment or during the actual meeting provided another layer of information for the study. The process is termed “memoing” by Miles and Huberman (1984) as the researcher makes field notes regarding thoughts, feelings, and perceptions while an interaction is occurring. The process of taking field notes or serving as an observer was significantly different than reflective journal entries. These field notes or memos were utilized initially to guide my writing in the reflective journal, but they were also dated and stored for further review throughout the study and during data analysis.

Reflective Journal

According to Creswell (2006), the process for collecting data in a phenomenological study is “primarily in-depth interviews” with many individuals. The interviews may be preceded by some initial self-reflection on the part of the researcher prior to those interviews taking place (p. 122). The purpose of the initial reflection in a phenomenological study relates back to Husserl’s (1999) expectation of bracketing assumptions to avoid as much as possible embedding personal attitudes about

experiences into the research (Creswell, 2006). In this research study, I was the sole source of information regarding the experience of the phenomenon of change to the teacher leader training. For this reason, it was important to begin by creating a purposeful entry into my reflective journal that focused on epoche, the process of outlining all of my own conceptions and beliefs of teacher leadership. I did this by deliberately explaining all of my thoughts, beliefs and attitudes about the change process at central office and about teacher leader training.

The importance of structure in journaling is stressed by qualitative researchers (Marshall and Rossman, 2006; Patton, 2002) so that the transition from data collection to data analysis and interpretation can be somewhat systematic. All entries in the journal were dated and titled with events or incidents that are being addressed. Each entry was made following the taking of field notes where I captured direct quotes and thick and rich description of events and happenings while they occurred (Patton, 2002). My reflections included a focus on questions or thoughts that I was still pondering or focusing on as part of the phenomenon. I purposefully included my emotional feelings toward the given subject or topic. Patton (2002) explains that both the “nature and the intensity of the feelings should be recorded” (p. 303). Each journal entry closed with my insights and interpretations of the event, conversation, meeting, and so on; this also began the analysis process and allowed me to stretch my thinking and pose questions to structure my observations in following situations.

Based on Creswell’s (2006) protocols, the structure of the journal included questions such as: (1) Describe the incident contributing to or inhibiting the change in teacher leader professional development, (2) What has been my role in this incident?, (3)

What impact has this incident had on the change process?, (4) What are the larger issues you see as relevant in relation to the change process and this incident?, and (5) What questions or concerns are still in your head following the incident? These questions served as a guide to the journal and provided some structural consistency to information I gave about experiences related to this change process. It is important to note that not all of the reflective journaling entries followed this specific structure. At times, additions to the entries were made to the data because of the nature of the incident being described.

As I attended planning meetings with the curriculum group, worked with the advisory team, and attended district-level meetings that impacted the TLT model, as well as through the implementation process of making these trainings happen for the TLTs, the reflective journal captured my understanding of critical incidents and daily occurrences as part of this phenomenon.

Data Analysis

According to Patton (2002), a researcher beginning the data analysis process draws from two primary resources. The first of these resources is looking back at the question that the research study initially set out to answer. In this case, what challenges are involved for a leader implementing district level change to professional development for teacher leaders and the sub-question, how does a district leader negotiate the politics of this change at the district level?

The second resource Patton (2002) identifies is “the analytic insights and interpretations that emerged during the data collection” (p. 437). In order to address this advice, the researcher looks to analysis processes relevant to the type of study conducted. Creswell (2006) outlines the data analysis process for a phenomenological study as

encompassing the following elements: (1) read and review all data collected including descriptions and transcripts, (2) extract significant statements from the data, (3) formulate meanings and cluster them into themes or patterns, and lastly (4) integrate the themes into narrative description. Researchers should complete the analysis process by connecting findings to the theoretical base on which the study was created and address implications for stakeholders in the research as well as include information to take the study further.

Managing the Data

Qualitative analysis begins while still in the field collecting data (Patton, 2002). In order to allow for in-depth analysis of this research, thick descriptions of interpretations of the archival data, current survey information, and data on the currently identified teacher leaders were necessary. Patton (2002) explains that “thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting” (p. 437). It was my responsibility as the researcher to provide these information rich descriptions so that others will “understand the phenomenon studied” and begin to draw conclusions to make “interpretations about meanings and significance” (p. 438).

In order to effectively manage the data collected as part of this research study, I organized a filing system where I collected relevant documents or notes that were useful in the analysis process. The most significant management that occurred was the consistent attention to the reflective journal and making sure that all entries followed the guide to make analysis more efficient. The management of the data was an on-going process throughout the research study and special attention paid here during the course of the study saved time during the analysis process (Creswell, 2006).

Analysis of the Archival Data and Field Notes

Documents including collaboration logs completed by Teachers Leading Teachers from previous years, past meeting agendas and survey data as well as other notes or email communication about the TLT model were reviewed and included as part of the beginning of the reflective journal. Data from the 2008-2009 school year included communication about the possible close of the program, meeting agendas from planning meetings with the curriculum team, initial training plans, the fall needs assessment and results, survey data from the first training this school year and the feedback forms from each of the meetings held. In addition, notes from the Elementary Advisory Committee were reviewed. Marginal notes were taken on each of these items and the overarching ideas identified served as the topics for initial writing in the reflective journal. The continued analysis of these documents is reflected in the overall findings from the reflective journal.

Analysis of the Reflective Journal

The reflective journal was organized around guiding questions. Based on Creswell's (2006) protocols, the questions that guided each entry were: (1) Describe the incident contributing to or inhibiting the change in teacher leader professional development, (2) What has been my role in this incident?, (3) What impact has this incident had on the change process?, (4) What are the larger issues you see as relevant in relation to the change process and this incident?, and (5) What questions or concerns are still in your head following the incident? Each journal entry consisted of information aligned with these questions as well as other pertinent reflections addressing elements

that proved important in an interaction, but may not have fit specifically into one of the answers.

The second resource in effective data analysis is the determination of themes or patterns that reach across all data collection methods (Patton, 2002). The researcher looks to analysis processes relevant to the type of study conducted. Researchers should complete the analysis process by connecting findings to the theoretical base on which the study was created and address implications for stakeholders in the research as well as include information to take the study further. A phenomenological study calls for a systematic data analysis process wherein the research focuses on Husserl's (1999) reduction of data to arrive at the essence or meaning of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2006). Data analysis in this study was conducted through the following steps: reading and memoing, describing, classifying, interpreting, and representing (Creswell, 2006).

Reading and memoing. Creswell (2006) explains that when the data collection is coming to an end, the first important part of analysis is to read through and begin to make marginal notes about the data collected. He warns that it is vital to get the whole picture of the phenomenon through the data prior to beginning to break down the data (Creswell, 2006). As part of the reading and re-reading to begin sifting through the massive amounts of data, Marshall and Rossman (2006) remind the researcher that careful attention should be given to the reduction of the data at this point. This reduction is specifically imperative as part of the phenomenological research framework as the goal of the study is to continually sift out superfluous information to begin to frame the essential learnings and the essence in the eyes of the unit of analysis (Creswell, 2006).

In the reading and memoing portion of the data analysis process, I worked through the entire reflective journal making marginal notes about important pieces of each entry (Creswell, 2006). It was evident early in the analysis process that a reduction of data would be necessary to find the true essence of the experience (Creswell, 2006). The marginal notes, as they began to show similarities from one entry to another, allowed me to begin to create initial understandings that took place in this study. These initial elements included (1) time, (2) personal agendas, (3) role playing, (4) collaboration, (5) isolation, (6) vision, (7) communication, (8) flexibility, (9) power, and (10) influence. Utilizing these thoughts and early patterns, I was able to again experience the change process that took a year of learning and effort to accomplish.

Describing. In the describing phase of the data analysis process, initial findings presented themselves through the reading and memoing in the reflective journal. According to Creswell (2006), “the researcher begins with a full description of his or her own experience of the phenomenon” (p. 147). After reading and taking marginal notes to connect the entire data collection period evident in the reflective journal data, Creswell (2006) established that the researcher should create a description of the experience as a whole focusing on the research questions.

The concluding entry in my reflective journal writing was this entry. This entry in the journal encapsulates my experience of change at the district level and how the political underpinnings within a school district impacted the change process. Within this final description of the experience, some of the concepts or initial understandings from my marginal note taking surfaced again; others did not. Specifically, the ideas of *power*, *influence*, *communication*, *collaboration*, *personal agenda*, *isolation*, *time*, and, *roles*

within the organization were major themes of this description. In the overarching description, I began to see *power* and *influence* as elements that reached into all of the other themes in one way or another. In addition, I noted that *perception* and *reality* played a role in the change process with relation to how stakeholders viewed the changing situation which sometimes contrasted with how I viewed the change process.

By completing this final description of the overall experience, I was able to determine that some of the key concepts or ideas identified during my marginal note-taking were really part of a greater category. This relates directly to Creswell's (2006) next phase of the analysis process, classifying.

Classifying. The content analysis of the reflective journal focused on sense-making to identify consistent patterns and themes that surfaced and were imperative as part of the research findings (Patton, 2002). The classification process requires the researcher to pour over the data collected another time to begin identifying patterns, themes, or categories of information under which the elements of the research fall (Patton, 2002). Marshall and Rossman (2006) state that, "the researcher does not search for the exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories of the statistician but, instead, identifies the salient, grounded categories of meaning..." (p. 159). As part of the phenomenological study, this piece of the analysis process allowed me to continue the reduction of data. The categories identified in this portion of the process became the funnel through which all information had to be sifted. In the beginning stages of classifying, I identified eight themes or patterns that had been present through the memoing and description process. These patterns closely matched my initial findings while reading and memoing as well as during the description phase of analysis. The eight

patterns evident in this stage of analysis were: (1) *power*, (2) *influence*, (3) *role playing*, (4) *communication*, (5) *personal agenda*, (6) *time*, (7) *collaboration*, and (8) *isolation*.

Each of these eight patterns was noted more than thirty times during the course of the data collection. There was evidence of multiple meanings within each of the categories, however, direct evidence from the reflective journal showed that these eight areas were consistent, relevant issues related to the change of the teacher leader professional development model within the political system Cedar Ridge Independent School District. Once these initial patterns were named, I began to look deeply at the specific data that supported each concept. I went systematically through each journal entry to identify what was precisely being discussed in relation to these ideas. As additional notes were made and my understanding of the data and its meaning within these concepts grew, I was able to reduce the number of patterns even further.

The organizational chart in *Figure 1* shows visually how the identified patterns in the classifying process were further combined to create the four factors in district level change as shown in this research. The research showed that the concepts of *power* and *influence* were overarching and reached into all four of the identified factors. The four factors were: Roles in the Organization, Ability to Communicate, Personal Motivation or Agenda, and Resource Control.

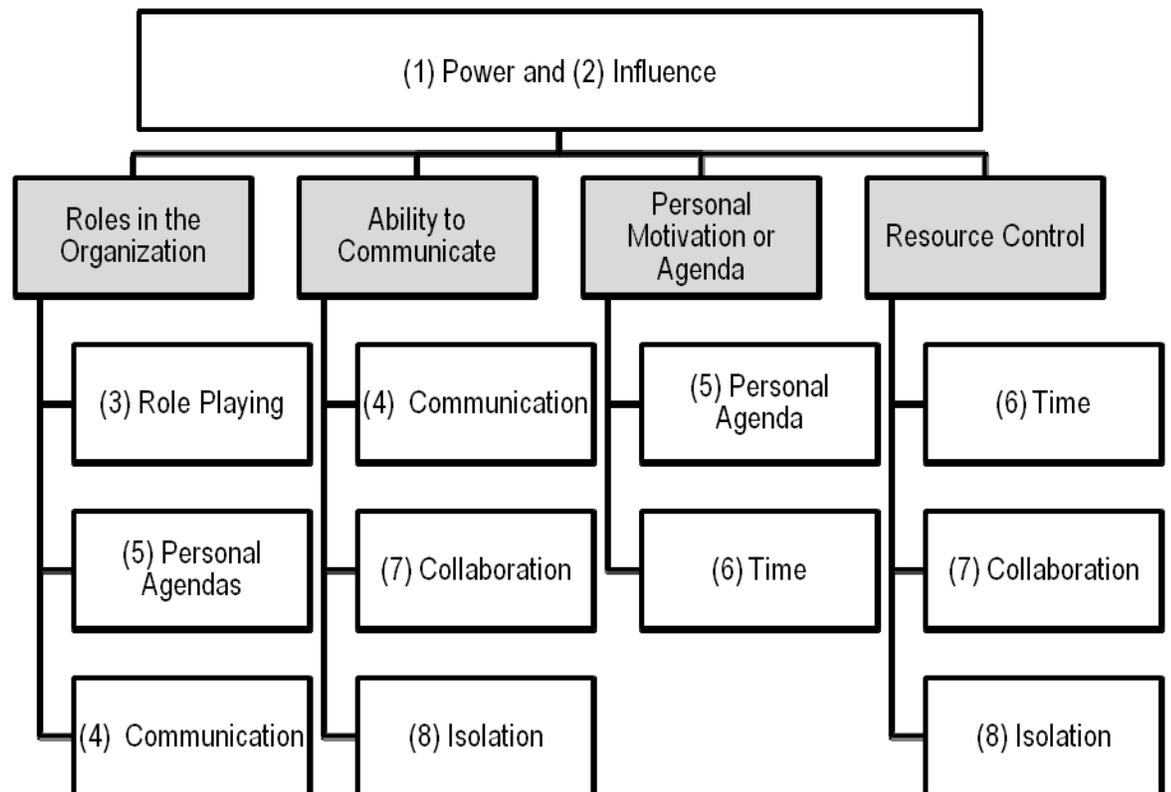


Figure 1. Reduction of initial eight patterns to four factors of change.

The ideas of *perception* and *reality* are still present in the data, however I am not yet able to identify a clear connection to their impact on the factors in the change process or how they are embedded in this visual. The interpretation phase allowed me to digest the additional information to determine further understandings of these factors in the change process as well as the concepts of *power*, *influence*, *perception* and *reality*.

Interpreting. The meaning making or “meaning units” identified through this classification are then utilized to write a “textural description” of the phenomenon including some of the verbatim quotations from the reflective journal (Creswell, 2006, p. 150). Patton (2002) explains that quotations illustrate the power of qualitative research and allow the reader to live a part of what the researcher experienced during the

occurrence of the phenomenon. This textural description focuses specifically on what happened as part of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2006). Upon completion of the textural description, the researcher then focuses on the “structural description” which defines how the phenomenon was experienced considering “all possible meanings and divergent perspectives, varying frames of reference about the phenomenon...” (p. 150). The final stage of interpreting the data is to create an overall description of the “essence of the experience” that demonstrates the meaning of the phenomenon of change (p. 150). Within the results portion of this study, I clearly document the interpretation stage of this research. The transition to the last piece of the analysis process in phenomenology is the researcher’s ability to represent the data for the reader.

Representing and visualizing. The final product of the analysis is the representation of the essence of the phenomenon experienced. Writing about the data cannot be separated from the analysis (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Consideration should be given to the representation of the data and the researcher must take time to create a balance of description and quotation (Patton, 2002). Inclusion of some of the statements of meaning was important in the representation of a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2006). The narration of the findings was determined upon completion of the analysis as there were multiple models of representation to choose from (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The product of the research cannot be considered complete without addressing the trustworthiness of the study and the limitations of the study.

Trustworthiness

Through this research study of the phenomenon of implementing changes to the professional learning experiences of teacher leaders through the eyes of the district

leader, I hope to gain the trust of readers through research methods described previously and changes made during the research process as expected in a phenomenological study. Patton (2002) explains that the trustworthiness of findings is in the eyes of the reader. I did my best as a researcher to present data and interpret my findings utilizing skills learned through extensive study of data analysis, but ultimately the judgment is up to the reader as to whether I presented my perspective and understandings in a way that was useful to them.

Creswell (2006) states that the researcher must clarify the bias to the study by including a narrative regarding open and honest thoughts on the topic and the study. In order for readers of this work to fully understand and accept the findings of the study, it was necessary to explain myself in the most candid way. My experience in education and in Cedar Ridge ISD, the site for the research, was well explained in previous chapters. My work as a teacher leader, formally and informally, prior to entering the campus administrator role contributed to my passion and desire to tell this story. In my move to central office where I felt I would finally gain some power and influence over programs that could have such a lasting positive impact on teacher leaders, I learned that the politics and bureaucracy often impedes progress, even that with a great research base. These lenses of teacher, teacher leader, campus administrator, and central office leader drew me to this topic and this purpose. In order to tell the story of how change happened with professional learning for teacher leaders in my district, I first had to recognize and deal with all of the 'hoops' that were necessary to take minimal steps of progress. It is within this story of my journey through educational change to impact teacher leader

learning, that I feel readers can gain perspective on how to implement the change process themselves as well as some fundamental ideas for effective teacher leader training.

Initially in choosing a site for this research, I had concerns about conducting a study in my district in a program which I was intimately involved. However, Marshall and Rossman (2006) state, “closeness to the people and the phenomenon through intense interactions provides subjective understandings that can greatly increase the quality of the qualitative data” (p. 62). I believe that my experience through this phenomenon was enhanced because of my placement within this district and role that I held as a change agent for this program.

In an effort to increase the trustworthiness of the findings in the study, I utilized a critical peer as a debriefing partner throughout the course of the study. Qualitative research requires the continual reflection on data collected driven by analytic questions that will stretch the researcher to understand perspectives, meanings, themes, and other findings from the information gathered (Creswell, 2006). As the researcher and the unit of analysis for this study, it was imperative to work with a critical peer to adhere to expectations of expanding my thoughts and insights by talking through incidents and journaling as the phenomenon occurred.

I have specifically chosen a colleague that was also working through doctoral research and served as practitioner in a neighboring district. Though the critical peer does not have the exact same position in the school district where he works, he did operate at the central office level and oversaw parts of their professional development system. He had nineteen years of experience in education and had served in positions of teacher, educational diagnostician, campus administrator, and worked in the district

office. We had worked together on projects during doctoral study and his opinions and thoughts often challenged my own.

I worked to avoid identifying a person within CRISD that might have had alternate agendas or expectations because of their own position within the district. It also seemed to create a more open-minded and less insular approach to identify a person outside of our CRISD walls to serve as a sounding board for thoughts, questions, patterns and so forth. This also contributed to the trustworthiness of the study, as my identified critical peer had no personal connection to me or to this work with teacher leaders in CRISD.

Conversations with this critical peer were initially focused on giving him some of the descriptions from field notes and my reflective journal. A focus on the third section of the journal entries was a section to focus the latter part of our conversations; this section dealt with the questions, insights, and personal interpretations of events and conversations. I asked for open feedback on my thoughts, probing questions that he had, or additional questions he had regarding my clarity on topics.

During the conversations with my critical peer, I took detailed notes and included these incidents in my reflective journal writing. This allowed me to revisit conversations and to include specific quotations from my critical peer in my depiction of the phenomenon. Conversations and reflections on these conversations allowed for an alternate option for triangulation which contributed to the trustworthiness of the research.

The use of triangulation to examine evidence and build coherent justification of themes determined from research was applied to my work with the archival data, field notes, reflective journaling, and debriefing with my critical peer (Creswell, 2006). The

process of triangulation requires the researcher to utilize multiple sources to “identify corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective” (Creswell, 2006, p. 202). Uncovering these themes and patterns while supporting them with quotations and direct evidence from the data allowed for a strong case to support findings. During the classification phase of data analysis in phenomenology, triangulation was utilized to support findings. I utilized the reflective journal as the primary source for patterns and then upon completing the classification phase of the data analysis, I looked to secondary sources such as the archival data, the critical peer reflections, and my overall description that aligned support to identified themes.

Member checking was an additional area of trustworthiness in the research study. The Elementary Advisory Group served as a sounding board for the change process and purposefully, I employed their feedback as member checking. Creswell (2006) defines member checking as the soliciting of “informants’ views on the credibility of the findings and interpretations” (p. 202). I distributed typed notes from previous meetings with the Elementary Advisory Group so that they were able to read and give comments during the research process.

Finally, the critical peer debriefing and the inclusion of thoughts and quotations from the critical peer added an element of transferability to the research so that the account resonates with people other than the researcher (Creswell, 2006). This also gave the researcher an “external check of the research process” and provided an outside perspective of my emotions and feelings during the phenomenon of making change at the district level.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations for research studies can be housed in the methods, the researcher, the context, the sample and so on (Patton, 2002). The researcher must be aware of all of these possible restrictions and make up for those with strong research skills, descriptive techniques, and analysis of data. Marshall and Rossman (2006) identify concerns with research in your own work setting and familiarity with the site. They state the possible ethical and political dilemmas in carrying out research in this environment can be challenging. Conducting this phenomenological study in my home district posed some research challenges, however I believe that the benefits outweighed the negative effect for a study in phenomenology.

As part of the research, I included a reflection on preconceptions and feelings about the topic and leadership challenges within the district; however, my position as researcher and district leader with current understandings and background of the model and teacher leadership also limited the scope of the research and the transferability for readers. Objectivity is virtually impossible due to background experiences and will invariably impact reflection can impact the fidelity of the research (Moustakas, 1994). Because I was aware of this possibility and had plans to address it through bracketing, I minimized the effects of this limitation.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The search for the essence of an experience is the culmination of a true phenomenological study as determined by Husserl (1999), the father of phenomenology (Creswell, 2006). Once the data collection is finalized, it is the work of the researcher to follow Husserl's (1999) methods of reduction to examine the underlying patterns and themes evident that ultimately connect to form the true meaning of the experience (Creswell, 2006). In these final stages of analysis of the data, it is imperative for the phenomenological researcher to bracket his or her own judgments and attitudes to arrive at epoche, which Moustakas (1994) describes as a moment when all formerly held beliefs are suspended in order to focus on the elements of the experience itself. Finally, when the researcher is able to uncover these elements and then consciously examine those formerly held convictions, he or she can effectively complete the phenomenological analysis by applying and critically looking at the epoche to determine the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Through this process the results of this study were found.

The initial focus of this research was the need for improvement in the professional development of teacher leaders in Cedar Ridge Independent School District, however very quickly the focus transitioned because of the political challenges within the school district associated with making a change to this established teacher leader model. I refocused my study around the following research questions:

(1) What challenges are involved for a leader implementing district level change to professional development for teacher leaders?

(a) How does a district leader negotiate the politics of this change at the district level?

In order to most effectively answer these research questions, I conducted a phenomenological study wherein I served as the unit of analysis and collected data in an extensive reflective journal documenting the course of the change process. During the analysis process multiple themes surfaced as factors that contributed to or inhibited change at the district level. In conjunction with these patterns or themes, the concepts of *power, influence, perception, and reality* were central to all of the factors in the change of the professional development for teacher leaders in Cedar Ridge Independent School District.

Review of the Research

The Teachers Leading Teachers (TLT) model of professional development was established in Cedar Ridge ISD in 2003 to promote and support best practice instruction and campus collaboration and was the first formalized teacher leader program established at the district level in CRISD (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2007).

The work of Teachers Leading Teachers include, but are not limited to, modeling effective lessons, conducting peer observations and debriefing, sharing resources with staff members, reviewing current best-practice research, data analysis, coaching, providing professional development sessions and serving as a mentor for new teachers (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2008). The roles that TLTs serve in CRISD are consistent with current research in the area of teacher leadership (Lieberman &

Miller, 2005). Most teacher leaders must juggle all of the responsibilities of these outside duties while continuing to be dynamic in the classroom; this is imperative to their continued respect by their colleagues (Danielson, 2007).

At the inception of the model in 2003 until 2008, the training of the TLTs consisted of monthly meetings that lasted anywhere from one hour to one and a half hours focusing on current news and information at the district level, relevant work of departments, or activities that promoted collaboration or understanding of the model on school campuses (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2007). Research shows that professional development for teacher leaders has historically gotten very little attention and most often looks similar to the CRISD model (Smylie and Denny, 1990).

Unfortunately, the assumption is that these high functioning teachers automatically have the skills to be effective leaders (Dozier, 2007).

From 2003 to 2008 information was distributed via email regarding the TLT model and presentations were made at district principal meetings. Monitoring of the TLT group included attendance at the trainings or meetings after school, a collaboration log where teachers documented their work each semester or month, and communication via email (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2007). No directives were given to campus administrators as to how these TLTs had to be utilized and therefore implementation looked very different on each campus (Cedar Ridge Independent School District, 2007). Fullan (2005) claims that systemic level support from the district level is key to school improvement and that the leadership of programs like the TLTs must be structured from a system perspective to have an impact on learning in the classrooms.

Summary of the Results

The findings of this research are based on the establishment of core elements evident in the change process of a model of teacher leadership. Phenomenological research analysis requires multiple description methods whereby the researcher reaches further into the data to expose the central themes and finally the essence of the work. The central themes from this study are *power*, *influence*, *perception*, and *reality*. Within these main themes, I uncovered four factors in the change process. These factors are (a) roles in the organization, (b) ability to communicate, (c) personal motivation or agenda, and (d) resource control. The essence that I define from this phenomenon is a compilation of a graphic design of power and influence quadrants, the four factors in the change process, as well as how *perception* and *reality* affected all parts of the change effort. Further understanding of these components within the analysis of this study allows the reader to see the essence of this phenomenon from the researcher's perspective.

Textural Description

In order to effectively address the research questions, it is necessary to recreate the chronology of the study for the reader. As part of the interpretation stage of data analysis in a phenomenological study, the researcher creates a textural description of the phenomenon experienced.

A review of the chronological background of this research study serves as the textural description called for by Creswell (2006). The main components of the phenomenon of district level change as it happened from June of 2008 to July of 2009 are (a) identifying the need for change, (b) understanding the context, (c) gaining approval, (d) planning for change, (e) implementing change, (f) changing course, and (g)

establishing impact. These major events are represented in *Figure 1* as a cycle because of the nature of the change process identified in this study. Identifying the need for change is where the cycle started for the phenomenon of change to the TLT model in 2008 and through each major event over the course of the year, it was evident that all parts of the phenomenon were critical in their purpose to the next phase of change. Importantly, the idea of navigating district politics was a part of every phase in the change process and therefore is at the central point of the diagram. Rather than a linear model, the cycle in *Figure 2* depicts more clearly how the change process always leads to other opportunities for further improvement.

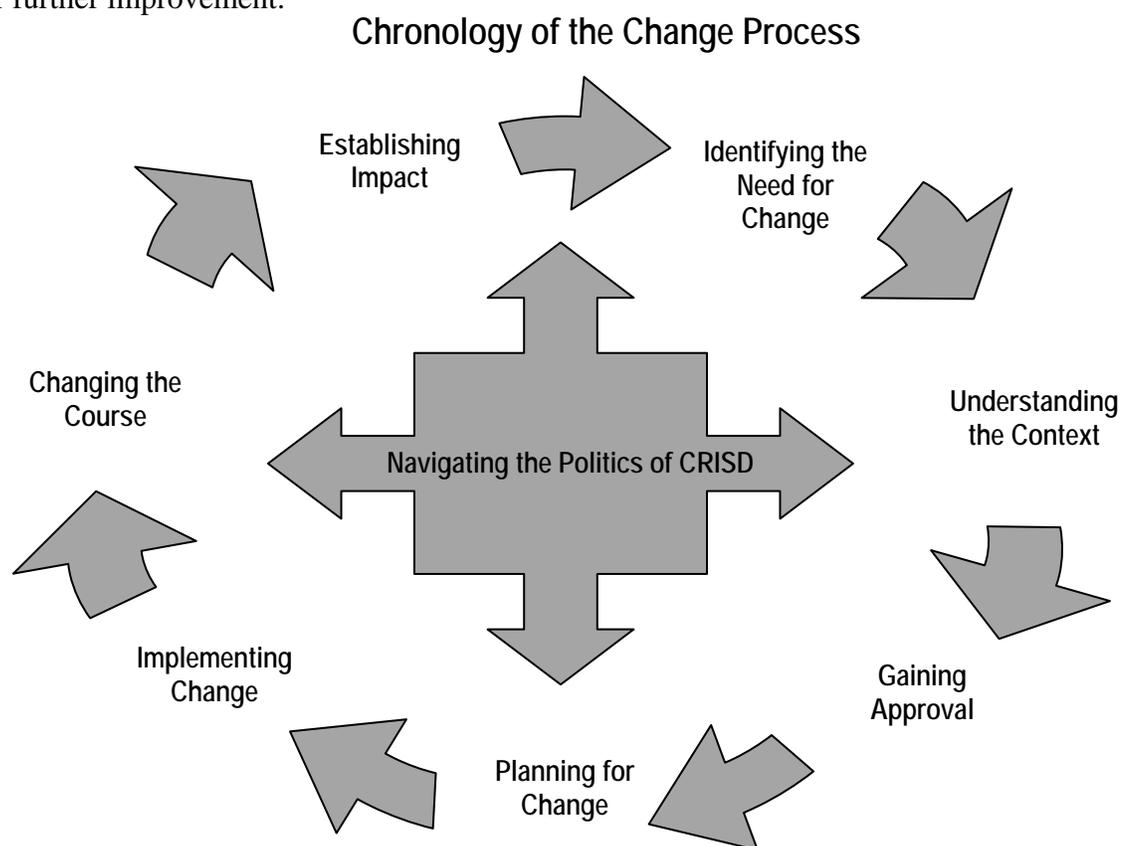


Figure 2: Chronology of the change process. The chronology of the change process to the Teachers Leading Teachers model shows how change is a cycle of continuous improvement.

The cyclical process depicted in *Figure 2* begins by identifying the need for change to the Teachers Leading Teachers model as it began in January 2008.

Identifying the Need for Change

Upon entering my position as Professional Development Coordinator in January 2008, it was evident based upon survey data of current TLTs that some changes needed to occur that to better support the development of the Teachers Leading Teachers model in the district (Teachers Leading Teachers Survey for Spring 2008, 2008). My journal states in response to the survey data,

It appears that after a period of time the investment in the TLT program stagnated. The teachers that have been involved in the model for a period of years were critical of the meetings being too focused on things that could be communicated in email and not on strategies or information that would help do their jobs on campuses. Overall, there seems to be areas within the training that we could improve. This needs to be an effort during the next year. (Reflective Journal, June 24, 2008)

I learned quickly in my role at central office that though I had been promoted, my abilities to effect change quickly were going to be challenging. Schwahn and Spady (2002) state that leaders must develop the capacity to improve at the organizational level. This was my goal for the TLT model and expectations were high in the political structure of our district. In June of 2008, I reflected on my research and work on the teacher leader model, “At this point, I feel powerless to make any change. I don’t know what my next step can even be” (Reflective Journal, June 23, 2008). In order to move forward, I collected survey data and research on other effective training taking place in districts across the nation to create a proposal for the 2008-2009 school year. Research studies show that other districts were struggling to meet the need of teacher leader professional development as we were and that teacher leaders continued to be frustrated due to the

lack of training for the formal positions they had taken (Dozier, 2007; Harris, 2005).

Harris (2005) discovered that the areas of training that most teacher leaders could benefit from included: leadership, collaboration and communication with adult learners, peer coaching and reflective questioning, mentoring, and effective professional development techniques. In my initial discussions and formation of a proposal for the training of the teacher leaders, I included all of that research. Still, I was met with resistance. My reflective journal for June 26, 2008 states,

It continues to amaze me how we as a school district could be so resistant to change. We know the model is not working the way that we want it to. We have seen the research on the impact that teacher leaders can have on campuses and students, however it seems as if I am the only person concerned that we are not taking immediate action. What can I do to help change our course? How can I be instrumental in making this model better? I hope that my voice will be heard. (Reflective Journal, June 26, 2008)

At the time, I was unaware of the extent of the political circle of which I had become a part; one that I would have to navigate effectively to make change for this group. In order to operate within this political context, I needed to fully understand it.

Understanding the Context

The context of Cedar Ridge Independent School District and the inner workings of the organization at the district level were evident quickly as I worked to establish initial needs for change to the Teachers Leading Teachers model. In July of 2008, I explain, “I was told that this change in the training time might be an issue for campuses and for central office. Teachers would be pulled from classrooms to attend. I needed to be prepared with a rationale of why this would be better” (Reflective Journal, July 14, 2008). I felt a looming sense of failure at this point because time was of the essence.

New teacher leaders were being named on each campus and it was time to enact the change in training for the year. In my reflective journal I write,

Teachers that are transitioning into the role of teacher leader for the first time this year are struggling with the lack of direction. I equate their struggle with my own in that I know that the TLT model needs some specified direction and support, but I am not sure how to maneuver so that we align with an ambiguous outline from five years ago. (Reflective Journal, August 26, 2008)

Based on initial responses to my ideas for change, I knew I had stepped into an area of unrest in the district. One of the executive team members had developed this model and the political ramifications of attempting to change it were going to be challenging at best. Farmer (2009) explains that school districts are organizations with a political culture characterized as a competitive environments where various groups within and outside are competing for power and limited resources. My reflective journal from that time period reads,

There are levels of power evident to me in the district. My direct supervisor guides me through the political mine field as we discuss changes to this model. She filters the information I give her and then communicates what is necessary to her supervisor and above. I continue to be thankful for her guidance as I learn my new role. (Reflective Journal, September 3, 2008)

My learning during this time focused on the levels of power within the district and how I could be influential with my group of teacher leaders even though the ultimate decision making about the new training plan was not mine. McDonald and Gooding (2005) show that power is the ability to cause changes and is different than a person's ability to influence. Influence refers to the methods and efforts or behaviors that a leader utilizes to affect the change (McDonald & Gooding, 2005). I had no positional power, but was making my best effort to utilize influence in the situation. It was interesting even at the

beginning how the teacher leaders viewed this change process in their communication with me. One teacher leader shares via email,

I heard that we will actually be doing some training this year? Is that right? I'm so glad that you are on board to make these changes...we have needed them for a while. Will we get to tell you what we want additional training in or have you already determined the topics? Regardless, I am thrilled with the potential change and appreciate your work. (Reflective Journal, September 12, 2008)

This teacher leader perceived me from the beginning as the ultimate decision maker like I was the one with all of the power and influence necessary to make large scale change in our district. Reality was very different as I was still waiting for my proposal for improvement to even get to the approval stage.

Gaining Approval

The approval process to make changes at the district level required an intense amount of planning so that appropriate parties were involved and had the amount of supportive rationale expected in CRISD. The model of training the TLTs had experienced for five years consisted of meeting together once every six weeks for an hour and a half after school. My proposal was to host specific half-day trainings each quarter that addressed common issues surrounding teacher leadership and district initiatives that impacted their work on campuses. This proposal was sent to the executive team member assigned to our department who then shared it with the executive cabinet. This system of approval aligns with Drory's (1993) research which explains that decision making around political issues most often resides at the managerial level due to the sensitive natures of the topics.

The executive team had questions as to why the model was being changed. The group requested that some additional rationale be provided for my training initiative and

plans for conducting needed training (Reflective Journal, August 7, 2008). My rationale was based on the research that showed that failure and ineffectiveness in teacher leader models were directly related to insufficient training. Cultures of isolation, lack of time and training often inhibit the potential success of teacher leaders on school campuses (Drago-Severson, 2007). Skills and strategies to effectively connect with colleagues, maintain productive relationships with school leadership, and work in the area conflict resolution that may be necessary with teachers or administration are key to the success of a teacher leader on a school campus (Harris, 2005). Collaborative skills necessary to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a teacher leader required training and knowledge of strategies in dealing with colleagues that were resistant to the teacher leadership role as a means of assistance (Lieberman, et al., 2000). Up to this point in the Teachers Leading Teachers model of CRISD, we had not provided this type of training and had not seen the level of success that could come from such a model. The training plan presented addressed these needs. In August of 2008 I write,

Change is slow. Affecting change in a district as large as ours is even slower. Affecting change with resistance from executive team members is almost non-existent. The time for change is now and my ideas are research based. I know this is good work and I hope that the people in power will allow this work to be accomplished. (Reflective Journal, August 21, 2008)

Finally, we were asked to make a presentation at the district principal meetings to gain feedback and provide additional clarification on the changes to the model.

Administrative support within the research was a foundational contributor to the success of teacher leader models (Beachum & Dentith, 2004). Upon presenting the new training plan, the campus administrators showed high levels of support of the change and I was approved to move forward with the work on the trainings by my superiors.

Planning for Change

Once the approval process was complete, work began on making the changes to the TLT training model most effective in Cedar Ridge Independent School District. Crowther, et al. (2009) contends that collaboration and collective work around a problem leads to transformational change by a transformational leader. In the initial planning stages of change to the TLT training model, it was important to collaborate with other departments in CRISD so that our groups were aligned and these teacher leaders were hearing a common message from the district. At the beginning of September, I write in my journal,

It is obvious that the collaboration among vested departments will be vital to the change of this program. I hope that our meeting to discuss the future of the TLT model is a fruitful sharing of ideas. Open communication among departments could be a major factor in the success of the training plan. (Reflective Journal, September 8, 2008)

One of the executive team members chose this period of time to become involved in our planning processes. We were told to include the curriculum department as a whole in the planning because they would have valuable information that should be shared with the TLT group (Reflective Journal, September 11, 2008). In response to this, I planned a meeting with the curriculum team and the leaders of the instructional coaches in CRISD to discuss the TLT trainings and how all parties could be involved. From the first meeting, it was evident that personal motivations and agendas were in conflict around the table from each group's representation. Though the meeting was a good effort at collaboration, I felt that future work might prove challenging because of the prevailing attitudes of the district representative group (September 15, 2008).

During the meeting the curriculum representatives shared that they had been told by their superior on the executive team that they would be leading the training of the TLTs in the district. This shift in leadership had not been shared with me and I was surprised by this information as it was sure to have an impact on my intended goals for the training of the TLT group. Curriculum leaders had also been told that the instructional coaches should be participants in the training and would not be used as trainers; unfortunately, the leaders of these groups had not gotten that communication until the meeting either (Reflective Journal, September 12, 2008).

Research in business and educational organizations shows that “employees who have access to sources of organizational power and status, are in a position to take advantage of the political game and to gain a greater share of organizational benefits than they formally deserve” (Drory, 1993, p. 22). In this case, the curriculum group exercised their access to the executive team member with decision making power on this topic and came to the table with information that was instrumental in the changes to the training plan for teacher leaders. I learned of this too late to respond or request to give additional information. My reflection after hosting one meeting and one training for the TLTs reads,

The initial intention of collaboration among departments was to form a true vision for this model that would reach beyond professional development and really show how all CRISD departments can collaborate for success. Time constraints, political agendas, and departmental unrest seem to continually get in the way of this process. (Reflective Journal, October 29, 2008)

This unrest continued through the first semester as I tried to communicate with each group and continue to serve as a liaison. The curriculum group began planning trainings without including me in the process and soon I felt very isolated from the situation that I had worked so hard to bring to fruition. Communication continued to be

challenging and I lacked any level of power to make the communication process change which contributed to my feelings of isolation. Unfortunately, this level of isolation was in conflict with research based professional development planning strategies which state that collaboration and intentional prioritizing of needs must be at the forefront of effective training (Guskey, 2003). Regardless of the ineffectiveness of the planning, implementation still took place.

Implementing Change

The kick-off training for the TLT group under this new professional development model was hosted in September of 2008. The topic was based on a training that our curriculum group was recently exposed to-- *Assessment OF, AS, and FOR Learning*. I questioned the timing of this training topic and expressed that I wanted to spend some time in collaborative groupings so that the teacher leaders could meet and mingle for their first encounter. In research on effective teacher leader training, Mitchell (2008) explains that on-going change efforts required dialogue and continued communication to promote the digestion of new ideas and implementation into regular practice. My goals of the first training and the curriculum department's goals were in conflict. Looking back in reflection at the first training, I explain,

This training process was new to all of these teacher leaders, even the ones that had served as TLTs for the past five years. Wouldn't it seem appropriate that our first training be focused more on their changing roles, their expectations, understanding their true responsibilities on campuses, rather than on assessment? It is like my bubble has been burst and I don't know how to go back and change the first impression. This resulted from a lack of collaboration between professional development and curriculum. (Reflective Journal, October 1, 2008)

Unfortunately, the meeting seemed very disjointed and was not what I had hoped for as our inauguration to the change process. I wrote, "As I am confused about my role in this

change process and how I can be most effective, the same concerns are expressed by those that I am attempting to help” (Reflective Journal, September 28, 2008). In further reflection on the first training of the TLT group, I share,

The teacher leaders are pulled in so many directions on their respective campuses and therefore feel that they must be experts in vast areas of their work. They come to the trainings seeking answers about the vision of the TLT model and the expectations for their roles. I’m not sure we provided any of those today though they communicated in the feedback that they appreciated the exposure to a new topic. (Reflective Journal, September 30, 2008)

Killion (2009) contends that only 50% of teachers feel that their professional learning impacts their practice; I fear that the initial training for our teacher leaders will fall into the 50% that had no lasting impact for their work as TLTs or even in their individual classrooms.

As time went on during the semester, we hosted a second training in the area of reflective coaching, a model of observation and reflection that the teacher leaders could utilize in their observations of others. Coaching and instructional conversation, according to research, is an area that should be addressed with teacher leaders (Harris, 2005). This topic was much better received, though I felt that the training itself could have been more organized. I had not been invited or notified of the planning time for this meeting and therefore was not privy to the plan before implementation. I speculated at the time that the curriculum group did not see my role as instrumental in the success of the training for the group and that they felt they should be the only ones involved in the planning process. Following that training I reflect,

Over time excitement of new possibilities becomes diluted. I know that I must view this semester as a stepping stone...a necessary one...because even though changes are slow, they are evident if I look deeply enough. The direction and collaboration among groups is not what I would have wished, but people are taking an interest and we have been able to provide training to the TLTs. I

continue to have high hopes for next semester. (Reflective Journal, December 20, 2008)

Changing Course

In January of 2009, I got some news that changed the course of my work with the teacher leaders. I write,

The gray cloud of powerlessness has overcome me today. I was told that the curriculum group would no longer be working with us to train the TTL group because their plates are too full. As stated by an employee in that department, discussions had already taken place with executive leadership and this decision was approved at a higher level. (Reflective Journal, January 7, 2009)

Reflecting back on those moments, it is interesting that I felt a sense of powerlessness at that time. After the issues related to the group collaboration during the first semester, the removal of their group from the planning should have been empowering information. I felt such a sense of isolation during the initial months of the change process because I had been left out of key decisions related to who would lead the trainings and even the topics of the trainings. Self-reflection allowed me to see that personal agendas were at play regarding the TLT training plan and once those agendas had been met, involvement in the change process waned. I felt that the curriculum group wanted the power to lead the TLT model and was given that power by the executive team member in charge of their group. However, when alternate priorities surfaced and time constraints with other projects were in conflict with the TLT training, the responsibility for the group was easily passed back to me with little regard to the impact on me or the teacher leaders they worked with for a semester.

The people in the top of the hierarchy in the organization had the positional power to make decisions regardless of who impacted or made additional work for in the organization. Guskey (2003) explains in his implementation phase of professional

development planning that previous practices must be reviewed and teams should determine why those practices were not successful. The first semester of implementation had lacked attention to backward design planning and now I had the chance to alter that operating style (Guskey, 2003). I felt like I could move forward in the manner I would have begun. My journal entry from that time period reads,

The beginning of this new semester has brought with it new challenges. Since the curriculum department has been removed from the planning and training processes of the teacher leaders, I am looking for alternate collaboration opportunities with other departments. It would be my own failure to stop this work and to begin making decisions for this group in isolation, so I plan to form an advisory group made up of volunteers from the TLT group. (Reflective Journal, January 7, 2009)

The formation of the Elementary Advisory Group was an excellent move toward change in the teacher leader training. Trotter (2006) explains that adults prefer to be in charge of their own learning paths and wish to take a lead in creating a plan for implementation in their own work. In reflection on the formation of the advisory group, I write,

Because the group that has volunteered to serve as the advisory board for the TLT model this spring, they are ladies that are extremely passionate about the topic and genuinely vested in the process as they will be on the receiving end of the training that is planned and be implementing the learning on their own campuses. (January 10-12, 2009)

The group's personal motivation was meeting the needs of the teacher leaders because they were part of that group. Purposeful interactions between people that are concerned about an issue breed efforts toward problem solving (Fullan, 2001). Also, these representative teacher leaders brought new perspective to the planning that would not have been available for the previous planning group. The efforts of training for the spring semester proved to be much more aligned with research and the teacher leader communication from the initial surveys. The survey data, along with the research, served

well to meet Guskey's (2003) model of backward design planning. Harris (2005) and Guskey (2003) explain,

It is imperative that staff development leaders focus on the intended outcomes of a training or professional development opportunity while concentrating efforts on analyzing relevant data, and prioritizing needs to establish goals they wish to guide their work. (Guskey, 2003; Harris, 2005)

We hosted two trainings for the TLTs during the spring semester. The first training focused on reading assessments and interventions on campuses, an area identified in the survey as a struggle for teachers the TLTs were working with and the second focused on supporting diverse student learners and collaboration ideas for summer professional development. Both trainings were very positively received and a great amount of time was spent allowing TLTs to collaborate about their roles on campuses which proved more fruitful than any topic we discussed. These discussions among the teacher leaders promoted conversation about implementation of the training and how to effectively work with multiple teacher groups on school campuses (Lipton and Wellman, 2007). I reflect on the final meeting's feedback,

One of the teacher leaders shared with me that she had served as a TLT for three years and that until this year she felt no direction in her work. She thanked me for the changes in the model and though she still felt overwhelmed by all that she could be doing to help improve her campus, she also communicated that she had tools to begin the process. I tried to explain to her personally that she was the one that had made the change, not me. Her changes in meeting the needs on the campus were the ones making the impact. Again perception and reality are unmatched. (Reflective Journal, May 17, 2009)

The TLTs ability to share their work and implement changes related to training or based in their collaboration and conversation with other TLTs at the trainings was evident during the second semester. My journal states,

One principal communicated that she had been leery about her teacher leaders participating in actual training because she already had them doing what she felt

aligned with her campus goals. She went on to state that the change in the training plan had really impacted her campus because her teacher leaders would immediately come back and share their learning. This excitement over the new information had been the change and she was thankful for it. (Reflective Journal, June 4, 2009)

Establishing Impact

Guskey (2003) states that one main factor in effective professional development is the evaluation of the training and whether it met the intended outcomes of the work. In the final surveys for the school year, it was evident that the changes made to the training plan for the teacher leaders were successful from TLTs perspective. In my journal I relate a comment made by a teacher leader,

The trainings this year have been such an improvement over our previous work. I really felt armed with tools to take back and use at my campus. I see teachers on my campus using the skills I am bringing to them. This tells me I am doing something right! My hope is that we will be able to continue this work during next school year because it seems we just scratched the surface. (Reflective Journal, May 24, 2009)

The teacher leaders determined a plan for some summer professional development options and I felt as though they were excited about continuing their work.

The challenge I reflected on at that time were the perceptions of power related to position and influence. The teacher leaders had a perception of how continued changes to the model should be made. My reflection from March 2009 states,

I am still wrestling with my role in relation to power. I am seen by the TLTs as a person in power, however, I tell them at the trainings that in reality they are the ones with the power to change this model. If they as a group return to their schools and utilize their learning, talk to their principals, and work with their teachers to impact students...that is what will make the difference. That is what will make its way back up to the executive team level and ultimately allow for continued progress. (Reflective Journal, March 4, 2008)

The idea that they as teacher leaders had the power to make district level change seemed almost foreign to them; they saw that as my role. Donaldson (2007) states that teacher leaders not only influence colleagues through demonstration and modeling of instruction, but also influence campus leadership because of their impact on peers. Even as I communicated this research to the teacher leaders, they seem to struggle with the idea that they had higher levels of influence to impact change. Their perception was very different from the reality I was living.

From January 2008 when the initial journey began to July 2009 when I concluded my journaling on the study, I worked to understand the change process at the district level. This chronological description of events allowed me to see how my perception and reality changed in relation to the levels of positional power and influence at play in Cedar Ridge Independent School District. My reality was one of political challenge because of my formal role in the organization. I continued to work in the same ways that I had with all of my new learning about the political system, but where the real difference was made was at the campus level with the teacher leaders—that was my perception. Self-perception, perception of others, and the reality of the situation were all in conflict relating to the long-term change of the teacher leader model. In review, this was evident throughout the process of the study and affected the change effort as part of every event. The identification of themes or patterns was easily uncovered within the chronological description of the events in the teacher leader training change process because of this realization.

Structural Description

Phenomenological data analysis calls for three types of description which serve to help the researcher continue the bracketing process and reduce the data collected to get to the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2006). The textural description is the first description written by the researcher and in this study was the chronological timeline of the experience of district level change to the Teachers Leading Teachers model. Upon completion of the textural description, the researcher then focuses on the “structural description” which defines how the phenomenon was experienced considering “all possible meanings and divergent perspectives, varying frames of reference about the phenomenon...” (Creswell, 2006, p. 150). In the structural description the researcher identifies themes and patterns evident in the study that help to focus the researcher on the meaning of the research.

The reflective journal in this study was the main method of data collection as I was the person closest to the phenomenon that was occurring. During the year and a half of research each journal entry established more firmly the connections that I was able to draw from the phenomenon of district level change. I wrote the final entry of the reflective journal after reviewing all of the other entries and formulating my thoughts of the entire experience of change. My initial findings of *power, influence, perception, and reality* continued to prevail as overarching themes within the study. Patton (2002) states that the identification of major patterns and themes forces the researcher to look deeply at the data for support of the patterns to make clear the connections between the research and the identified themes.

Power and Influence within District Level Change

Multiple definitions exist within research for *power* and *influence*. For the purposes of this research study, the concept of power is defined as the ability to impact change through positional responsibilities, communication, and resources. This definition aligns with that of Anderson, Flynn, and Spataro (2008) who state that power comes from position, control over resources, and organizational alliances. McDonald and Gooding (2005) explain that power is the potential to cause change and should not be confused with influence.

Influence, as it is a part of this study, refers to the methods and efforts or behaviors that a leader utilizes to affect the change (McDonald and Gooding, 2005). Influence was not in direct correlation with positional power, as influence took strategy, skill, and desire to exercise. Effectiveness within the change process was often due to people that wielded a high level of influence because of their personal characteristics and ability to build social capital with those around them inside the organization (Anderson, Flynn, & Spataro, 2008). Boonstra and Bennebroek-Gravenhorst establish that power is often associated with control over another person; resistance is met with when power is exercised without a level of influence or the building of relationships (1998).

Within this study, the concepts of *power* and *influence* are the common element in almost every interaction at the district level regarding the change of the teacher leader training model. It was evident that all members of the district utilized their positional power and their influential characteristics differently to impact change. Early in the reflection journal, I state,

Certain members of our organization operate only within the power of their position. Their position allows them to be decision makers, but direct reports have no respect for their work because of their communication or leadership style. In contrast, there are other organizational employees that have little power related to their real job, but they cast a long shadow over decision making due to their connections within the district. I am able to see both power and influence impact decisions. (Reflective Journal, October 12, 2008)

In the initial stages of approval of the change in the training plan, I was asked to create a proposal outlining my ideas for change. Further into the change process, I was asked for a more in-depth rationale for the change because certain district leaders did not agree with altering the teacher leader model. Through many conversations and the creation of an executive summary based on research, I was given the opportunity to present information to the campus principals. My reflection on this string of events states,

Without being aware of the specifics, I have been made aware that there is quite a conversation occurring over the change in the teacher leader model. Some executive team members agree that the model could be improved and this might be the change that is needed; others have communicated that no change is necessary and if the model is not a good one, then it should simply be discarded. The issue was brought to the principals who have a lower level of power, but because of their mass and their implementation of the model, their level of influence is often higher. When the power play came to an end and the issue was brought to the larger group for consideration, then movement in the change process started. (Reflective Journal, September 14, 2008)

The levels of positional power and influence were not only evident in the beginning of the study, but also as the change was implemented,

I was attempting to collaborate with the curriculum department on the topics for the training of the teacher leaders. I have emailed and called to discuss a planning meeting. When I was finally able to reach a contact, I was told that the planning meetings were already scheduled. I felt as if my influence over the training topics and plans had been compromised because of lack of communication. Their group was going to plan the trainings to meet their personal agendas and I was no longer a part of that process. I had to speak with someone in a higher level of positional power to help with the understanding of the collaboration of departments. My supervisor had to become involved and call their supervisor. In the end, I attended the first meeting, but was still met with a level of resistance from the group because they were simply complying with the requirement of inviting

me...that did not mean I had to have input. (Reflective Journal, September 18, 2008)

Levels of power and influence were impacting my ideas for change and I was struggling with how to deal with it effectively. Neither my boss nor the leader of curriculum had time to weigh in on every issue nor should our supervisors be expected to, however our superiors' positional power was a determining factor in compliance to collaborate. At this time, I began to think more deeply about how the power and influence concepts were at play in the change process for the teacher leaders. In my journal, I reflect after the first training,

One teacher leader came up today and said that her principal did not want her to do any of the things that the other TLTs at her table were doing. She had been told that when and if a teacher was put on a growth plan, she would be written in as an intervention, but until then she need not worry about doing anything else. The teacher said that she wanted to serve her teachers more effectively than that. She asked 'What power do I have to change the way the model is being implemented on my campus?' I explained that she had more influence than she realized because if she went back and talked with her administrator to explain her ideas and even got permission to implement one, that her ability to gain a following of the process increased. Her upward influence could make an impact on the change at her campus. (Reflective Journal, December 2, 2008)

Issues around positional power and influence were at play in all levels of this change process. I was not the only one dealing with how to continue implementation of the change, but my teacher leaders were also experiencing similar challenges in their roles on campus. While explaining to this teacher leader who felt powerless in her role that her level of influence could make an impact, I felt that it was necessary to more clearly define this relationship between power and influence that was at play in the change of the TLT model.

Figure 3 depicts a power and influence quadrant that I created to help define the connection between power and influence in this study. I found that in my role in the

change process, power was a significant determining factor in the change effort, but was not always in direct correlation to the level of influence. For example, it was evident in the early decision making stages of the change process that approval from high power entities was necessary to move forward (Reflective Journal, August 7, 2008). However, it was evident from the teacher leaders' responses that decision making on the campus level had not been impacted by this same power structure (Reflective Journal, December 2, 2008). I found myself explaining to teacher leaders that their level of influence would make the difference on their campuses, not any positional power (Reflective Journal, December 2, 2008).

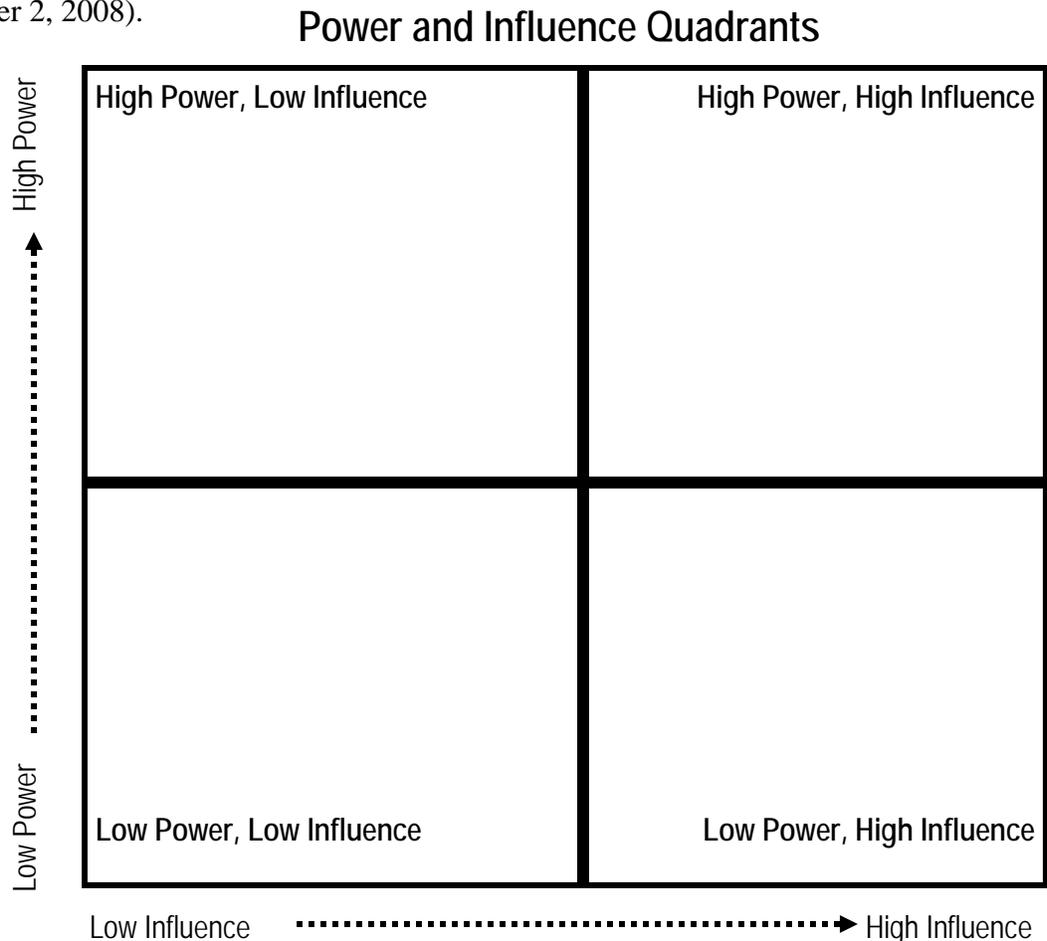


Figure 3. Power and influence quadrants. The power and influence quadrants show a relationship between power and influence.

People in an organization function in a power and influence quadrant to implement change. Direct evidence of this from this study comes from the reflective journal which states,

There are members of the executive team that wield an immense amount of power within our district and have the power to make large-scale change, but certain members choose to use their power in unfortunate ways which in turn damages the relationships and influence that they have on those around them. I find that more is done in our district by those that have cross-functional connections and can mobilize forces to show those higher in the hierarchy that multiple groups want certain things to happen. (Reflective Journal, August 6, 2008)

The connection between power and influence is an important understanding for this research. Each of the quadrants demonstrates a level of power and a level of influence that a person within the district holds. All stakeholders within the district fall into one of the four power-influence quadrants. These quadrants are most related to this research because of their impact within the change process. One of my final reflections explains,

I feel that I have very little power in this district and that any change I wished to make would require the positional approval from a number of district personnel above me in the hierarchy. In the beginning, I also felt I had very little influence because at the time I did not truly understand what influence was. Now I can see that my perception was off. My influential abilities are limitless because of the number of teachers that I work directly with. Just as I expected my TLTs to use upward influence, I must do the same. (Reflective Journal, June 13, 2009).

Within this journal entry and others, it was evident that power and influence were not the only identifiable themes within this study. The concepts of perception and reality were also relevant to many of the incidents and issues related to the change in the teacher leader training model.

Perception and Reality within the District

Perception and reality as themes in this study are evident through the in-depth analysis process required in phenomenological research. It was through considerable reduction of data, that I was able to understand how self-perception, perception of others, and reality played a key role in the change effort (Patton, 2002). In the beginning, my perception of my role was that I had little power to make a large scale change. I state,

My position in CRISD does not have a lot of power. I have one direct report, a small budget that gets partially tapped into by other departments or my superiors, and I am in charge of programs that are often viewed as superfluous in the district by executive team members. I do have the opportunity to talk with a lot of people at the campus and district level. Perhaps this will serve me well as I navigate this political issue. (Reflective Journal, June 26, 2008)

This depiction of my formal position within the district with relation to positional power was true; it was the reality. At the time, I failed to consider the difference or separation of power and influence and that no matter my positional power in the organization, I had a level of influence that I could control. Because of the large groups that I directed in the district, I had the opportunity to exercise a great deal of influence through my work personally with them, my email communication, my explanations to other departments within the district about the work of the teacher leaders, as well opportunities for continued highlighting with my superiors at any given time. These levels of influence, had I recognized them as such, would have empowered me even though I felt lacking in power.

Figure 4 shows that the quadrants of power and influence are shaded or changed by the perception or reality of a person's power and influence.

Impact of Perception and Reality on Power and Influence Quadrants

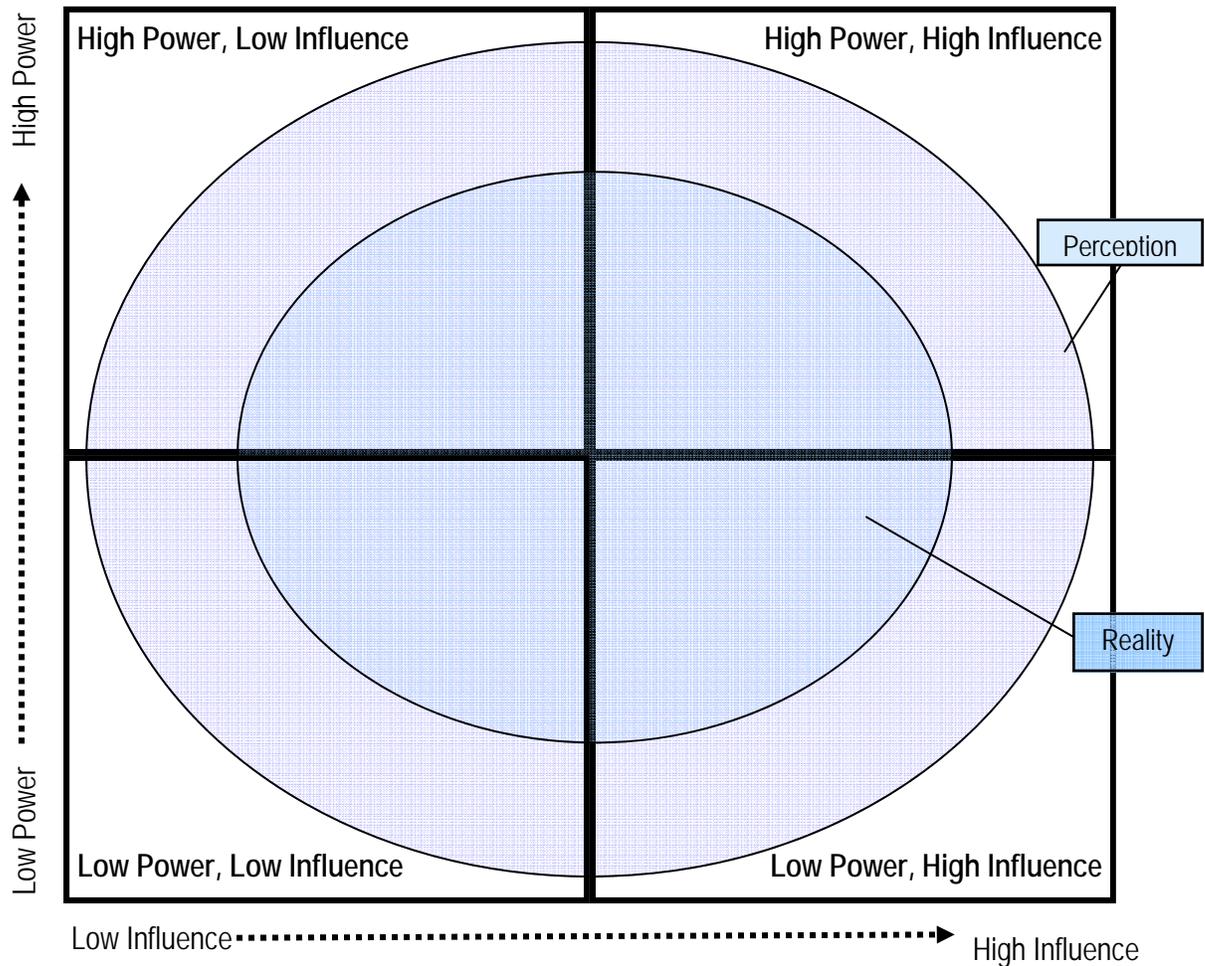


Figure 4: Impact of perception and reality on power and influence quadrants.

Figure 4 demonstrates that the area of perception is larger than that of reality because often self-perception or the perceptions of others have a greater impact on placement within the quadrants.

At the time I did not realize it, but I had already stumbled upon one major theme in the research, levels of positional power and levels of influence within the organization and the impact of perception or reality on those levels. I realized quickly that my self-perception described in that journal entry did not match those of the teacher leaders that I worked with. One teacher leader I spoke with at an alternate district meeting states,

I have heard that you are making changes to the TLT model. I'm so glad. I was really considering not participating for my campus this year because I was so frustrated last year and the year before over our lack of support and training. When I heard that you would be doing things so differently, I changed my mind. I can't wait to come to the first meeting to see what is in store. (Reflective Journal, August 30, 2008)

This teacher leader and others that communicated similar messages perceived me as the person that was going to make this large scale change to an established model of teacher leadership in the district. I attempted to explain that decisions were being made at a much higher level, but it seemed as if the TLTs could not see past me (Reflective Journal, September 20, 2008).

Because I was often the only central office employee that had contact with this group on a regular basis, the teacher leaders perceived my role in the organization as one with a great amount of influence and power. One teacher leader comments, "You are working on behalf of us at the central office...you will continue to make great changes happen" (Reflective Journal, April 4, 2009). The teacher leaders perceived my role in the organization very differently than I did and that impacted their view of my ability to create change.

Throughout the change process, I attempted to explain that the reality of influence did not reside with me, but truly within the abilities of the teacher leaders. Fullan (1999) explains that for school change to occur, a synergy must be in place between all stakeholders. The elementary TLTs numbered sixty and were placed on every campus in the district. This was the reality. They each had a partner to work with on campus that served in the TLT role as well. In collaboration with TLTs from other campuses, they discussed at length the structure and support of the TLT model on individual campuses. During the January meeting, a group of TLTs state,

The TLT model in place on our campuses look so different. Some of the things that are really working should be used everywhere. If we share our ideas and the way we do our work, don't you think we could do it all better? How do we get everyone on board to make this program have more structure? (Reflective Journal, January 30, 2009)

At this point they looked at me for the next step and I turned the charge back to them with a focus on levels of influence and their self perceptions,

The person with the influence on your principal in this room is not standing in the front of this room, it is you. The principals picked you all for a reason. Give them that reason by communicating what you are learning and beginning to share ideas about how to improve the implementation of the TLT model on your campus—that is how you will change your principals, not through me. (Reflective Journal, January 30, 2009)

This was a powerful conversation about self-perception and their view of my role in the change effort. At this point in the study, perceptions began to shift and the teacher leaders began to feel more empowered to use their upward influence to make change on their campuses. Kaul (2003) states that upward influence is the ability to use multiple tactics to impact superiors toward a personal goal. The ability to perceive yourself as a person with that upward influence was important in being able to impact the reality of change. The ideas or themes of power, influence, perception and reality were central to the change process of the TLT model in this study; however, other factors were evident that impacted levels of power and influence as well as the perceptions of others within change effort.

Core Factors that Impact the Change Process

Patton (2002) explains that a researcher must be able to clearly define from the literature and from the data collection how the themes and factors emerged and were supported in the data analysis. In this research study, the power and influence quadrants that we worked within to make change, the perception that we had of ourselves as well as

the perception that others had of us, and the reality of a situation were all directly related to the four core factors of change in an organization: (a) roles within the organization, (b) ability to communicate, (c) personal motivation or agenda, and (d) resource control. *Figure 5* exemplifies how the four factors identified in the study impacted power, influence, perception and reality. Each of these factors contributed to or took away the amount of power or influence every person within this research study exercised.

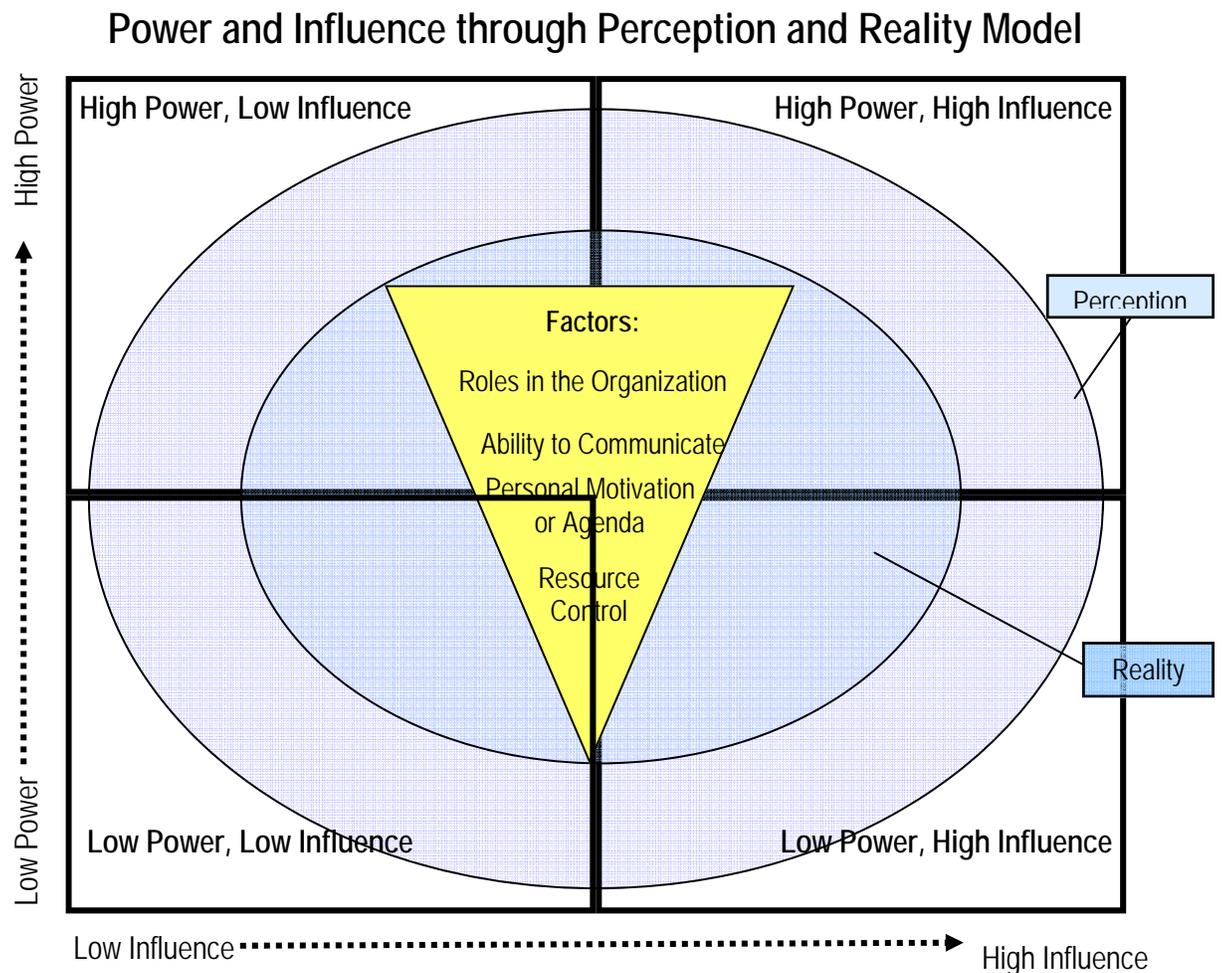


Figure 5. Power and influence through perception and reality model. Power and influence quadrants through perception and reality model with four factors that contributed to or inhibited the change process.

Roles in the organization, ability to communicate, personal motivation or agenda, and resource control were the most prevalent factors in the study of change to the TLT model that altered levels of power and influence, or shaped perceptions. For this reason, additional examples and further explanation of each factor with direct correlation to the research study were the next part of the structural description.

Roles in the organization. The concept of roles in the organization had a significant bearing on my learning in this research as I attempted to navigate the politics of the organization and work within the established parameters of my own position. One of my final entries in the reflective journal states,

I see the multiple roles that I play within the district and how they impact my work. In communicating with certain stakeholders it seems that I am more effective in certain areas than others when I am attempting to explain the new changes. For the teacher leaders, I am their powerful spokesperson, for my colleagues it seems I am a forward thinker, and my perception of how the executive leadership team views me...I am the boat rocker, the problem child, or maybe the instigator. I ask myself how I feel about these things and the answer is that if our teacher leaders are getting the training they need to do their work, then these labels are okay. (Reflective Journal, July 2, 2009)

Even evident in the way that I described my personal roles within the district in correlation to those that I work with, the hierarchy in CRISD was a consideration. I broke down in the journal entry, without doing so purposefully, how those that worked for me, with me and above me viewed my role in the district. These hierarchical levels within CRISD impacted the change in the TLT model at every incident. I write in October of 2008,

I have been told directly that I should carefully consider who I am including in email communication. The organizational chart is clear. Directors speak and email with directors. Those working above and below communicate with each other through the appropriate channels only. It is important to know your place in the organization and understand how to work within it. (Reflective Journal, October 12, 2008)

Though literature suggests that alternative leadership styles are becoming more prevalent and are replacing those historic top-down organizational views (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006), it seemed that in this change effort our district was pre-historic. Roles within the organization, whether formal or informal, consistently determined who would be involved in the change of the TLT trainings, what I could or could not do in relation to the timeline or budget, and how the process would be presented to other stakeholders. I often wrote about the number of informal roles that I was required to play in order to move the change process in one direction or another. For example, in November of 2008 I note,

I'm finding that my role is manipulated at times by certain people or groups to fit their personal vision of what I should be doing with the TLT model. I serve as a mediator, a data collector, a group leader, liaison, or information provider. The roles that I play for the TLTs directly are different because they perceive me as a central office employee with lots of power. Is it even possible to serve in all of these roles effectively? I feel that I do not do justice to the work because I cannot clearly define who I am in the organization. (Reflective Journal, November 18, 2008)

I was feeling that there was a lack of clarity from the district level about what teacher leader professional development should look like and vastly different opinions were communicated by multiple people at the district office. Danielson (2007) and Donaldson and Sanderson (1996) explain that informal leadership roles also surface on school campuses with teacher leaders. Certain teachers hold a level of respect from their colleagues and though specific job responsibilities are not defined within these informal roles, they often have a significant amount of influence over the faculty or staff (Danielson, 2007; Whitaker, 1995). My personal experience with informal roles in the district compared to communications from my teacher leaders about their informal roles,

even though they were identified on campus formally, they were functioning in many informal roles for those they served. A teacher leader communicates in one of our meetings,

I am lucky to be on a campus where my teacher leader role is defined by the administrators, however my colleagues on the staff have elevated my role to things that at times I struggle doing. Somehow, I have become the resident expert in areas that are not my strength or I am nominated to be the spokesperson for any out-of-the-box idea that a grade level team may have. Where do I draw the line on what I can and cannot do for my teachers? (Reflective Journal, February 12, 2009)

This teacher leader was struggling in a different situation, but with the same issues that I faced at the district office within the TLT model (Donaldson & Sanderson, 1996). I was forced to look critically at who I most needed to listen to in order to determine my next step in the change process (Danielson, 2007). In most cases, the formal role in the organization made that determination; in essence, the more elevated in the hierarchy, the more power over the change process one had. For example, my journal reads,

Today, I had an encounter where I was asked for an update on the TLT model in casual conversation. I explained that the trainings were making great strides to help the TLTs in their work. The response from the executive leader was —well, I thought I heard one of the principal groups talking about how well their TLTs were doing this year. I guess it is good that no one is complaining. (Reflective Journal, December 14, 2008)

In a twisted way this was a compliment. The TLT meetings were staying off of the district level meeting agendas and therefore were viewed as a success so far, however it was evident from this exchange that there was some surprise that the training was being looked upon favorably. Because the model was off of the respective district radar, I was able to move more smoothly within the change of the TLT trainings for the second semester.

Informal connections with people or inside information allowed me to navigate effectively and get things to progress more quickly (Danielson, 2007). This was exemplified when it was time to plan trainings during the spring semester that would require the help of some alternate departments. My informal role and personal relationships with members of certain departments allowed me to schedule trainers very quickly where if I had utilized the formal communication process, I would most likely still be waiting for those trainings to occur. This was evident as I worked with a department leader to host the training in May and discussed the experience in my journal,

It is amazing how relationships with people can smooth the road to accomplishment of goals. Today I called a representative from another department and asked if her group would be interested in providing some training in the area of meeting the needs of diverse student populations more effectively. Within minutes, she was asking how long they would have, approximately how many would be at the training, and even communicating her excitement to work with the TLT group on the topic. They are scheduled to take two hours in our May meeting...what an accomplishment for today! (Reflective Journal, April 2, 2009)

This personal connection or relationship that was built informally eased the lines of communication necessary to make decisions quickly and efficiently. Clearly, the informal roles in the organization had a significant impact on the TLT training. Oftentimes in the course of the study, the formal or informal role in the organization was determined by one's ability to communicate within the district. The second factor in the change process identified as a sub-theme in this research was the ability to communicate.

Ability to communicate. The need for effective communication and collaboration within this effort to change training for teacher leaders was imperative and often helped or hurt the process as a whole. Hargreaves (2007) believes that educational change is housed in the ability to effectively collaborate and communicate. He explains

the need to avoid top-down control and promote a distributed leadership model (Hargreaves, 2007).

Through the course of change to the TLT model, it was apparent that communication was a foundational element to the success or failure of my vision. In the beginning stages of my experience, I learned that communication with stakeholders around the Teachers Leading Teachers model had been a concern. My journal reads,

According to campus and central office administration, there have been issues with communication in the past regarding the TLT model. Campus administrators complain that they don't know what their TLT representatives are learning or are supposed to be sharing when they return. This is an issue that can be easily addressed during this new year and has the potential to aid in my efforts to create change for the professional development. (Reflective Journal, September 9, 2008)

In researching further on the unrest with campus administrators and central office staff, I learned that it was always important to pay close attention to the *who*, *what*, and *how* within my communication efforts. My reflective journal demonstrated that the people I had the opportunity to communicate with, how I engaged in that communication, and what I chose to communicate about changed the course of my work in many instances. I write,

This morning I worked with a middle school principal on how to more effectively use her TLTs. She has been an administrator in the district for years and had not been aware of the roles and responsibilities that other campus principals were utilizing their TLTs for and how the structure of the program was supposed to work. She was extremely grateful for the communication and I feel like potential changes are in the works on a small level. (Reflective Journal, September 25, 2008)

This positive example gave me great hope for the change effort. However, it became evident quickly that my ability to communicate was impacted by others and their communication with me. Through the approval process to implement certain change to timing of training or additional support at the campus level, I write "... my passion for the

area of teacher leader professional development is not shared by my superiors...it takes weeks to get a response from executive leadership on requested action items,” (Reflective Journal, October 12, 2008).

The inability to communicate within our organization was paralyzing at times when I felt that impending approval or disapproval, suggestions that were really requirements, and the information I was given or not given made massive transformations to the formulated plan. I state clearly in my reflection,

I cannot move or make a decision without input from multiple sources. Some of these are political and others are simply personally related because they do not want to be left out of any decision making. The challenging part is that often these alternate sources communicate very different expectations or goals for the TLT training and many times are very ambiguous in their communication. I feel very trapped. No matter which way I move, I will be in opposition to someone within the district. (Reflective Journal, April 14, 2009)

Fullan (1999) explains that “isolated cultures” do not effectively value the vast resources of knowledge available in the organization and have no way of “mobilizing the competencies and motivation of organizational members” (p. 16). During much of this study, it felt as if district personnel were operating in this isolated style because they were not communicating with each other. Within my own circle of ability to communicate, I attempted to be as open as possible so that these same challenges were not occurring because of me.

During the course of the research, many teacher leaders approached me to discuss areas of concern or celebration relating to their roles at the campus level. Often, my answer or response was that I was working on the issues they had addressed, but did not have a great way to fix the problems right away. In my journal I relate that one teacher leader explained that she heard others talking about their roles and responsibilities on

their campuses and that she was frustrated because she had no administrative support or understanding of what she should be doing (Reflective Journal, November 14, 2008). I brought the general issue to the whole group at the January meeting and we had a discussion about ways to work with campus administration and effective communication techniques that had been successful on other campuses. Group feedback from that meeting states,

We appreciate your willingness to talk about the hard issues. We know that you can't make a principal support our work, but we appreciate your openness in allowing us to talk about it as a group to brainstorm new ideas. If this is as far as it goes, it was helpful and we need this time to collaborate and discuss how we can effectively communicate with our superiors. (Reflective Journal, January 30, 2009)

In this situation, my ability to communicate centered on *how* I addressed the issue, not that I had the answers. The teacher leaders knew my motivation and that I really wanted to help, but that they could help each other more than I could help them. In open communication, we were able to make small changes for the good of the group. This collective focus and attempt to improve the model for the district as a whole was a motivation with the teacher leader group. The progression of the established teacher leader model in CRISD brought forth many individual motivations among stakeholders within the district. The next factor that emerged in the change process was personal motivation or agenda.

Personal motivation or agenda. As shown in the initial questions driving this research study, I anticipated that the political workings of the school district and formal leaders would be large factors within the change process. However, I found that essentially there was more to this concept than simply politics. The political undertones of the organization were at play from the start, but they seemed to stem from personal

motivations or agendas around issues in CRISD. For example in August when discussing the possibilities around changing the model and the approval process required, I write

There is a significant amount of red tape that must be cut to get to the real work. Creation of proposals, approval at the director level, revisions and creations of executive summaries, approval at the executive team level...a labor intensive process that without the motivation to make the change, no one would go through it. I wonder at times if that is why the process is in place more than for true blessing on the project. Is this all just politics and agendas at play? (Reflective Journal, August 3, 2008)

Regrettably, personal motivations and agendas were consistently at play through this process as individuals or groups attempted to move the change process in a way that most benefitted their group or them individually (Farmer, 2009).

This is evident in my journal when I explain,

Collaboration among district stakeholders has its positive and negative effects on my work with the teacher leaders. Multiple departments would like to use this group to meet a goal or objective they have set, however few of them are interested in discussing the overall mission or vision of the TLT group and how their work looks district-wide. Individual motivations are often a higher level concern than that of the group. This is challenging when I am the person that must protect the TLT model from getting spread so thin to meet all of these individual motivations. (Reflective Journal, March 29, 2009)

Hargreaves (2007) contends that this type of breakdown in communication should be addressed by initially focusing on the main goal and effort of education—learning. If all stakeholders can have that central focus, decision making aligns with the common goal (Hargreaves, 2007). The lack of vision and goals from the district perspective was an issue I identified early in the TLT model and much of the challenge in defining those was due to personal agendas and even egos disallowing true communication to occur and settle on a model that would be supported by all parts of the organization. I discuss this in my reflective journal,

How can a district this large continue to operate without consistent communication to all levels of the organization? In order for the TLT model to work the way that it should, we need a common vision that is supported not only by all parts of our department, but also at the elementary and secondary levels. In order for campuses to be getting the same message from all parts of the district level, all parts of the district office must be communicating. (Reflective Journal, November 3, 2008)

Open lines of communication breed solid organizational vision and work to meet common goals (Danielson, 2007). CRISD was focused more on personal agendas than organizational vision with regard to the TLT model at this phase. The issues around personal motivations and agendas are a component that slowed the change in the teacher leader training plan (Reflective Journal, July 3, 2009).

While a person's motivation and personal agenda can be largely impacted by politics in an organization, I was able to find examples where political and personal agendas were not matched. A specific example from the beginning of my work on changing the teacher leader model showed a conflict in personal and political agenda.

My reflective journal reads,

My direct supervisor communicated that my plans for the year are too lofty; she explains that while she might agree that large scale change to our current teacher leader model could make a great impact, the district is moving away from this model of teacher leaders and it would most likely not be supported financially in the future. Though these thoughts are disheartening, I am passionate about this work and with her support will accomplish as much as I can in the time that I have. (Reflective Journal, September 3, 2008)

She communicated that her personal motivation was supportive of my change efforts, but that politically she knew the work would not be maintained long-term at the district level.

Personal motivation or agenda often is the underlying element in the politics of an organization that no one wishes to acknowledge. The conglomeration of personal agendas or motivations creates the politics within the organization and in any given

instance you may work with the politics or against it (Drory, 1993). I found myself in the middle of a political situation that I could not have imagined.

I note in my journal that it seemed challenging to think that all of these issues were at play and being discussed in relation to the TLT model and all without the knowledge of the TLTs or most campus principals (Reflective Journal, September 27, 2008). Many times it seemed that an issue must be extremely important to a person to fight against the tide of the political force within the organization. For this reason, personal motivation or agenda was usually connected to the resources that one controls and how one utilized those resources to meet personal goals. The final of the four factors relevant to the change process in this study was resource control.

Resource control. Research in business and educational organizations shows,

Employees who have access to sources of organizational power and status, are in a position to take advantage of the political game and to gain a greater share of organizational benefits than they formally deserve. (Drory, 1993, p. 22)

In CRISD, the people involved with the change process of the TLT model that had monetary resource control were those highly placed in the political hierarchy. However, monetary resources were not the only ones that should be noted. The ability to mobilize funding or groups of people allowed certain district employees to have a hand in decision making without being involved at the ground level of the change; this refers to personnel resources.

Monetary resources were relevant immediately in the study. As I was getting the proposal for the change in the model ready, my supervisor asked questions about how the changes would be funded. Her goal was to make sure that the changes I was suggesting could be supported by my budget as she knew that I would not gain additional dollars

from alternate sources in the district (Reflective Journal, August 24, 2008). My resources were key to the implementation of the new training plan as I would not be gaining any additional help in the way of funding from other departments or campuses.

The ability to mobilize personnel resources impacted the change in the TLT model as well. As planning was underway and discussion about the anticipated training topics arose, one of the executive team members mobilized one of the groups in the district to become involved in the process (Reflective Journal, September 4, 2008). My reflection on this topic is,

In the beginning of this initiation for change, I could get next to no attention to the work I hoped to make happen this year. Now that we have been through the approval process, certain district level members are becoming involved. I cannot read this as a great sign at this point, more as an effort to guide the work to meet personal agendas, but the control is with those that have the most resources...in this case people. (Reflective Journal, September 7, 2008)

The executive leader that put this group into action had a purpose in their involvement in the training of the TLTs at the campus level. In a meeting where this collaboration was discussed, I explain,

The additional attention to the training by another department will be helpful. It is the other group's responsibility to train the TLTs in the district. They should be the decision makers in this work and should be at the center of this training plan and should work collaboratively with professional development to make it happen. (Reflective Journal, September 8, 2008)

This additional personnel resource had a direct impact on the change process because suddenly my level of control was much lower and I was sharing decision making power with a group that had been directed to be a part of the training process. The collaboration had the potential to be a positive; unfortunately, because of the way that the year progressed, the other group's involvement was not a priority for them and they pulled out of their part of the work in December after hosting two trainings. This showed

evidence of how influence and power were at play. The group was mobilized because of an executive team member's power over them and they complied with the request without being committed to the work. At the time when other initiatives took precedence, they asked to be removed from the training of the TLTs and were approved. This ability to so easily control resources showed evidence of the use of power in this change process.

Studies have shown that power comes from position, control over monetary and other resources, organizational alliances, and ability to use personal characteristics effectively (Anderson, Flynn & Spataro, 2008; Boonstra & Bennebroek-Gravehorst, 1998). The ideas of power and influence in relation to resource control were evident in my reflection on the change experience as a whole. In the final months of the research I write,

I am amazed at how a word or a direction from certain people in the organization can have such a rippling effect on my work. The course of change in this year has taught me that flexibility and personal connections are foundational to my success in working within this district. The people within power can only be impacted by those with high levels of influence. This is challenging because power seems to come so easily, while influence is long-term work in relationship building and is often impacted by perception more than the real situation. (Reflective Journal, July 12, 2009)

The factors that impacted change in the TLT model were (a) roles in the organization, (b) ability to communicate, (c) personal motivation or agenda, and (d) resource control. Each of these factors relate specifically to the power and influence quadrants discussed as one of the themes in this study, as well as the concepts of perception and reality. As part of a phenomenological research study, the essence of the experience must be determined after extensive reductions in data (Creswell, 2006).

Essence of the Experience

The essence of this research is based on the overall concepts of power, influence, perception, and reality relating to the change process. In reflecting once again on my experience of negotiating the political domain of the school district to improve training for our group of teacher leaders, I was able to clearly make the connections between these themes and patterns as well as the factors in the change process. During the course of the study, I reflected on my self-perception of power and influence in the organization, how I viewed CRISD stakeholders and their levels of power or influence, and finally my view of our teacher leaders and how they exercised power and influence within their work.

It was evident that in self reflection of my own placement within the power and influence quadrant, I viewed my role and my actions as low power and high influence. As explained in relation to the factors of change, my positional power within the district's organizational chart did not carry a lot of decision-making ability, personnel or monetary control, or access to high levels of communication or information. For these reasons, I felt as though my power level was low. However, my thoughts on my influential abilities shifted as I understood more about influence and how one effectively utilizes it within an organization. I learned that because of the number of programs and projects where I got to work with hundreds of teachers and teacher leaders, that I truly had a high level of influence, if I chose to use it. In short, my self-perception changed and therefore I viewed my reality differently. I note this shift in my reflective journal,

The goal of this research was to change the Teachers Leading Teachers model so that it more effectively met the needs of CRISD teacher leaders. I'm not confident that that goal was completely met. I can say that I have changed. In the beginning of this work, I viewed myself as much more helpless than I really am. My reality has not changed, but my view of it has. My level of positional power has not changed, but my ability to exercise influence has. All of this happened to

me. I do not know that the TLTs could have possibly learned as much as I did. (Reflective Journal, July 13, 2009).

My perception of my own level of influence altered within the change process. I thought it was in the lower quadrant, but realized it was not.

In reflecting back on the teacher leaders' comments and views, they saw me as a central office employee in charge of professional development and therefore I had to be a person of great power and influence in our organization. They were looking through a lens of understanding based on their personal knowledge and experience. Their perception was different than mine because they viewed me as high power, high influence. In reality, I may be higher in power than most of them, but still in the low power quadrant because of my position in the organization. Regardless, I learned that self-perception and perception of others can alter one's placement in the power and influence quadrant.

The essence of this work is illustrated in *Figure 6* which demonstrates how all parts of the research came together under the ideas of perception and reality. The circle of reality is smaller even than the circle of perception. The reason for this is that perception had a greater impact on my placement within the power and influence quadrants related to the factors of change as shown by this study. My level of influence changed based on the change in self-perception. While this study focuses specifically on navigating the political domain of district office to implement change to the teacher leader model of professional development, this new learning about my level of influence will impact all areas of my work, hence the reason it serves as the essence of this study.

Impact of Perceptions within the Phenomenon of Change

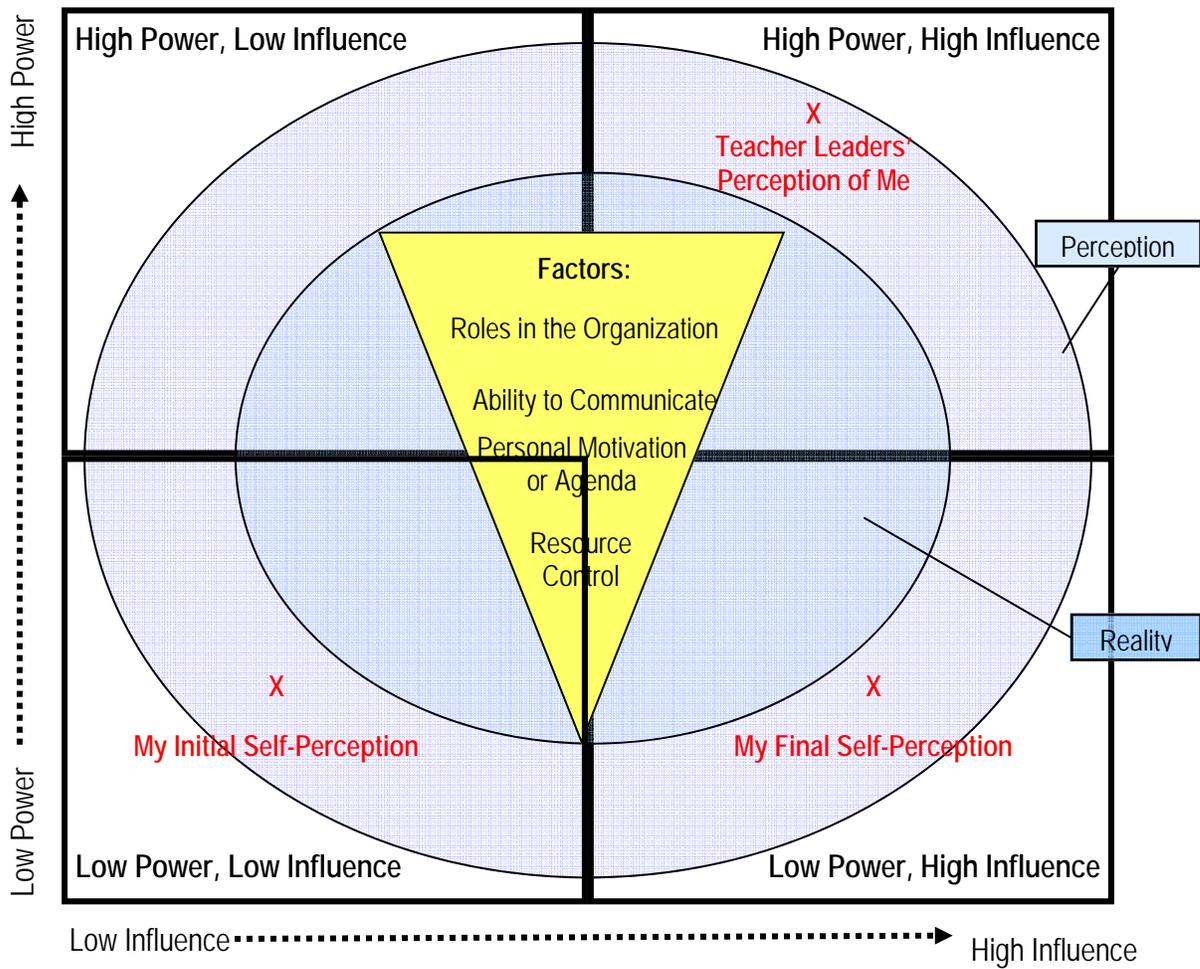


Figure 6. Impact of perceptions within the phenomenon of change. The impact of perception on the power and influence quadrants identifying my perceptions and teacher leaders' perceptions during the phenomenon of change.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to gain understanding of how a district leader navigated the political climate of a school district to create change for the improvement of professional training for teacher leaders. The need for this study was established through review of archival data on professional development practices in Cedar Ridge Independent School District that had not been successful from a district or campus perspective. A phenomenological framework was utilized to complete this research study. Phenomenology focuses on the person or people that have most directly experienced the phenomenon in question (Patton, 2002). Because it was my responsibility in CRISD to design the training plan for teacher leaders and to implement those changes in the form of professional development, the study was conducted through the lens of the researcher as the district leader charged with this effort of improvement. For this reason, this phenomenological study was written in the first person. The research questions for this study were:

1. What challenges are involved for a leader implementing district level change to professional development for teacher leaders?
 - a. How does a district leader negotiate the politics of this change at the district level?

Phenomenological research requires that the person with the first-hand experience with the phenomenon be studied (Patton, 2002). This research study required that I serve

as the unit of analysis because I was the person with the first-hand knowledge of this district level change process for teacher leader professional development because the responsibility for the change rested with me and my position within CRISD. There were no other participants in this study of the change process; however district personnel, teacher leaders, and campus level teachers were impacted by the changes made to the teacher leader training model.

The data collection in this research study consisted of review of the archival data from the teacher leader program in CRISD since 2003, my observations and field notes based on experiences related to change, and more in-depth personal reflection through reflective journaling. My reflective journaling was the most valuable piece of data collection as it captured not only initial thoughts and concerns evident in the archival data, but also each incident within the district related the change of the teacher leader training model. The format of the journal proved to be an integral part of the success in data analysis, but the quotations and overall descriptions provided as support in each journal entry were invaluable to the success of the project.

Intense data analysis processes were implemented to lead readers to a deep level of understanding of the experience. Creswell's (2006) outline of the data analysis process for a phenomenological study encompasses the following elements: (1) read and review all data collected including descriptions and transcripts, (2) extract significant statements from the data, (3) formulate meanings and cluster them into themes or patterns, and lastly (4) integrate the themes into narrative description. This process was followed and aligned with specific analysis areas for a phenomenological study: managing the data, reading and memoing, describing, classifying, interpreting, and

representing (Creswell, 2006). In phenomenological research the goal is to reduce the data to determine the essence or true meaning of the work (Creswell, 2006). In the final stages of analysis, it was my job as the researcher to project visually to the reader the full meaning of the study. I was able to complete this process by providing tables and figures that aided in the explanation of the data that was analyzed over time as well as supporting themes and patterns with direct quotations from my reflective journal.

The major findings of the study were based in the power and influence quadrant that I designed to illustrate how people within an organization, specifically a school district, operate to create change. This study exemplified how I operated within the political structure of CRISD using levels of power or influence to create change. Through the course of the change process, it was evident that there were multiple levels of power and influence working within the district. These levels were impacted in this study by certain factors: (a) roles within the organization, (b) ability to communicate, (c) personal motivation or agenda, and finally (d) resource control. Exhaustive description and examples of each of these factors demonstrated within CRISD and their impact on the change process were provided for the reader.

In further review and description as required by the phenomenological analysis process, I uncovered a final piece of the results which proved to be the essence of the study. My reflective journals and rich descriptions of events, conversations, brief encounters with individuals and groups throughout the data collection process allowed me to understand that the concepts of power and influence as impacted by the identified factors were significantly impacted by perception of self and others. The teacher leaders in this study viewed me as a high power, high influence individual. This was their

perception and it was in conflict with my self-perception. I viewed my role as low power, low influence because of the hierarchy and chain of command above me. However, as the study continued, I understood the idea of upward influence and how I could utilize it within my position, as well as how I could impact the teacher leader model by helping the teacher leaders to see their influential abilities. This realization helped me to review my initial thinking of my placement within the quadrants at low power, low influence and alter my self-perception to low power, high influence.

The remaining part of this chapter provides additional clarification to the findings of this research study. My personal interpretations and conclusions followed my own personal learning and application to my work in education allows the reader to understand how this study impacted the researcher in this study of change at the district level. A reflection on the research process related to process for a phenomenological study and researcher actions, as well as recommendations for practice and future research elucidate the reader who wishes to replicate or extend this study. Final thoughts on the study conclude this work.

Implications

The implications of results and findings within this study are not complex in their scope, but can be complex in their implementation depending on how a person chooses to navigate the political undercurrents of a school district to create change. In this research, I discovered that power and influence were key elements that I dealt with regularly to impact district level change. I came to understand how much my perception of self and the teacher leaders' perception of me affected my location within the power and influence quadrant. This movement within the quadrants of power and influence based on

perception and the factors that impact change are applicable to all people in a school district.

To begin, in a school district there are examples of positions that fall into each of the power and influence quadrants. *Table 2* shows the examples of these positions or people as well as descriptors that better define the type of leader or teacher that would fit into the category.

Table 2. School District Positions within the Power and Influence Quadrants

	High Power/ High Influence	High Power/ Low Influence	Low Power/ High Influence	Low Power/ Low Influence
Examples of Positions in a School District Setting	Effective School Boards or Superintendents, Effective Executive Leadership Teams, District Leadership, or Campus Leadership	Ineffective School Boards or Superintendents, Ineffective Executive Leadership Teams, District Leadership, or Campus Leadership	Effective Teacher Leaders, Central Office Employees or Campus Level Employees Outside of Formal Leadership Roles/ Informal Leaders in any Role	District Employees at lower levels of the hierarchy with little to no ability to communicate, personal motivation or resources

I was able to clearly identify people within my own district that easily fit into the categories of power and influence because of my interaction with them through this change process.

In order to apply this learning to all school districts or organizations, it is important to be aware of and understand the structure of positions within the work environment. With this awareness, one is able to begin to see how the quadrants of power and influence are at play in organizational decision making and change. While not all school district may be easily distinguishable in their power and influence structure, these quadrants are applicable and provide helpful knowledge to those that must navigate the political domain to create change.

As I began to discuss this finding with my critical peer and reflect further back into my own career, it was evident that these levels of power and influence as well as the factors that impact change were relevant in all work environments.

Core Factors that Impact the Change Process

Within this research study, I determined the overarching themes of power, influence, perception and reality that defined the phenomenon of change. Each quadrant of the power and influence model can be explained more fully through the factors that impact change including a description of the characteristics that were evident in the study.

Roles within the organization. As discussed in the literature review, there are formal and informal teacher leader roles (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Through this research, it was evident that there were formal leadership roles and informal leadership roles at all levels of the district. Formal positions in an organization often have a prescribed level of power associated with them (Anderson, Flynn & Spataro, 2008). In essence, the higher in the organizational hierarchy a person is, the more power that he or she is assigned or given related to position. Positional power does not always mean that a person automatically has a large level of influence (Mowday, 1978). He or she can use power to force those working beneath him or her to do certain things because of fear, direct job requirements, or other coercive measures (Boonstra & Bennebroek-Gravenhorst, 1998). Influence is closely related to a person's ability to inspire those around him or her with no relation to positional power (McDonald & Gooding, 2005).

Much like informal teacher leaders, informal leaders within the organization may not always have a high level of power, but most often have a high level of influence

(Mechanic, 1962). Informal roles within the district include people in the district that have established characteristics, connections, additional responsibilities, or decision making power that have little to do with their formal position within the hierarchy (Anderson, Flynn & Spataro, 2008). Again, this mirrors the positions of teacher leaders that have a high level of reverence or influence, but no formal position in leadership (Danielson, 2007). *Table 3* provides detail to the first factor of change in the study: roles in the organization.

Table 3. Roles in the Organization Descriptors Aligned with the Power and Influence

Quadrants

	High Power/ High Influence	High Power/ Low Influence	Low Power/ High Influence	Low Power/ Low Influence
	<i>Formal:</i> Top levels of organizational hierarchy in overall organization or branches of the organization	<i>Formal:</i> Top levels of organizational hierarchy in overall organization or branches of the organization	<i>Formal:</i> Lower levels of the organizational hierarchy; few or no direct reports	<i>Formal:</i> Lower levels of the organizational hierarchy; few or no direct reports
Roles within the Organization	<i>Informal:</i> Strong motivator Inspires direct reports and lower levels of the hierarchy High levels of trust with many members of the organization	<i>Informal:</i> Most often has a poor reputation within the organization by those beneath him or her in the hierarchy Lacks a level of trust with members of the organization	<i>Informal:</i> Strong motivator Inspires those around him or her regardless of position within the hierarchy High levels of trust with many members of the organization	<i>Informal:</i> Most often has a little to no reputation within the organization by those at any level of the hierarchy Lacks a level of trust with members of the organization

Understanding the differences between formal roles and informal roles in a school district or organization helps in the navigation of politics when implementing district level change. District level change, specifically that which is politically charged, takes the support of formal leadership, but many times as was the case in this research study, it also takes movement within the informal leadership roles at the district or campus level.

District leaders working to implement change must recognize the importance of both types of roles so as to effectively deal with and communicate appropriately information needed to gain support. The roles that one plays in a school district or in an organization are closely connected with the second factor identified in this research study that impacted change: ability to communicate.

Ability to communicate. All members of an organization have the ability to communicate with others. Within the explanation of the results of my research study the evidence showed communication as a major determinant in the change process. I identified three parts of the ability to communicate that had significance.

Communication in an organization is connected to *who* a person communicates with, *how* he or she goes about communication, and finally *what* he or she chooses to communicate.

Most often those in positions of high power have a number of people around them that they can communicate with including others in high positions of power as well as a large number of people that report directly or indirectly to them (Drory, 1993). People in high positions of power choose to take the opportunity to communicate with these people or not. The choice to communicate or not impacts the level of influence that a person in a position of power has. For instance, a person at the top of the hierarchy who chooses to communicate using encouragement to promote collaboration among team members and gain buy in or feedback on key issues and consistently sends a common message to all stakeholders will yield a high level of influence. In contrast, a person who chooses not to communicate effectively and focuses on isolation and communication with individuals rather than groups which inevitably leads to inconsistent understanding cannot build a level of influence (Anderson, Flynn & Spataro, 2008).

Though people in lower positions of power may not have formal direct reports or the ear of those at the top of the hierarchy, they can choose to have a high or low level of influence related to their ability to communicate. A person with low power and high influence is one that communicates effectively with smaller groups or individuals (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988). He or she uses many of the same strategies to promote collaboration around topics of passion and displays excellent listening skills to understand all stakeholder positions so that when opportunities arise to make changes, he or she can speak for larger numbers of people in an impactful way (McDonald & Gooding, 2005; Bass, 1985). He or she also shares and communicates on many topics to help others in understanding the decision making processes which breeds trust and reverence from those that work directly and indirectly with the person (Kaul, 2003).

However, a person in a low power position can also choose not to talk with anyone and operate in isolation with the belief that he or she is there to do one job. This type of person often does the minimum that he or she must to stay in compliance with job requirements, but does not believe that his or her work can or does impact others. This low power and low influence group operates in isolation and is only individually motivated to communicate with those that can improve or enhance situations that will move them forward.

Table 4 clearly depicts these explanations of the ability to communicate organized around the power and influence quadrants. The ability to communicate table is split by the *who*, *what* and *how* of the communication process.

Table 4. Ability to Communicate Descriptors Aligned with the Power and Influence Quadrants

	High Power/ High Influence	High Power/ Low Influence	Low Power/ High Influence	Low Power/ Low Influence
Ability to Communicate	<i>Who:</i> Communicates with large groups often through email, phone, or in person	<i>Who:</i> Has the opportunity to communicate with large groups often through email, phone, or in person but may not choose to do so Communicates most frequently with those above him or her but much less often with those below him or her in the hierarchy	<i>Who:</i> Communicates with small groups or individuals often through email, phone, or in person	<i>Who:</i> Has the opportunity to communicate with small groups or individuals often through email, phone, or in person but may not choose to do so
	<i>How:</i> Utilizes encouragement and openness to promote collaboration among all stakeholders Gains feedback and buy in from direct reports and lower levels of the hierarchy by listening and sending a consistent message Explains decision making processes to promote understanding	<i>How:</i> Lacks the ability or motivation to promote collaboration; focuses more on isolation and silo communication Does not see a need to discuss decision making process if he or she is the ultimate decision maker	<i>How:</i> Utilizes encouragement and openness to promote collaboration among all stakeholders Gains feedback and buy in from others within the organization by listening	<i>How:</i> Lacks the ability or motivation to collaborate; focuses more on isolation Sees himself or herself as one person doing one job
	<i>What:</i> Constant communication regarding issues or celebrations Takes consideration of alternative perspectives and how decisions will impact all stakeholders	<i>What:</i> Often inconsistent messages are communicated because of separation of stakeholders; lack of consideration for all perspectives	<i>What:</i> Constant communication regarding issues or celebrations Takes consideration for alternative perspectives and how decisions will impact all stakeholders	<i>What:</i> Communicates only what is necessary to stay off of a radar of supervisory leadership

Roles and communication inside an organization are often driven by an individual's personal motivation or agenda. This is the third factor identified in this study that

impacted the change process for the teacher leader model and translates to impact all types of change in a school district or organization.

Personal motivation or agenda. Within the organization, personal motivation and personal agenda can be strong motivators for change. In the high power, high influence quadrant, a leader is personally motivated by what is best for the team or organization as a whole and personal agenda is always focused on what is best for stakeholders within the district (Crowther, et al., 2009). Personal gain is not a consideration for this type of person when what the majority wants is in conflict with what he or she feels. A person operating in the high power, low influence quadrant is driven by personal motivation and personal agenda without consideration of the team or organization (Crowther, et al. 2009). There is no level of understanding of what those below him or her in the hierarchy may be experiencing and no forward thinking about how they may be impacted by decisions that will be beneficial on a personal level. Often these people compete against those in positions laterally to them and function in an unethical way with those operating above them in the hierarchy, choosing to tell them what they may want to hear, but not what they need to hear.

People that have low amounts of power, but high influence utilize their personal motivation and agendas to be the voice of their team or small group. These people may not have hierarchal power, but gain a level of respect because of their service oriented attitudes and willingness to think globally instead of personally. Often, this is where a teacher leader position would fall within the quadrants relating to personal motivation. Teacher leaders work to meet the needs of others outside of their own classrooms to have a greater impact on campus and on students (Darling-Hammond, 1994). Finally, persons

functioning in the low power, low influence quadrant are primarily motivated by their personal needs, but have often alienated themselves such that those around them know there is not a level of trust and personal agenda will always outrank the good of the group. In *Table 5*, I outline in chart format the four quadrants of power and influence and describe both personal motivation and agenda respectively.

Table 5. Personal Motivation or Agenda Descriptors Aligned with Power and Influence Quadrants

	High Power/ High Influence	High Power/ Low Influence	Low Power/ High Influence	Low Power/ Low Influence
Personal Motivation or Agenda	<i>Motivation:</i> Motivated by team members and their passions	<i>Motivation:</i> Personal motivations drive this person; lacks the ability or want to consider what motivates those below him or her in the hierarchy; most often motivated by personal desire or those he or she reports to	<i>Motivation:</i> Motivated by team members and their passions	<i>Motivation:</i> Personal motivations drive this person; lacks the ability or want to consider what motivates those below him or her in the hierarchy; most often motivated by personal desire or those he or she reports to
	<i>Agenda:</i> Underlying agenda is always what is best for the key stakeholders as a group; personal gain is not a consideration when what is good for the majority is in conflict with personal desires	<i>Agenda:</i> Underlying agenda is most often what is best for him or her; more concerned about how something looks or is perceived by others than how it really is	<i>Agenda:</i> Underlying agenda is always what is best for the key stakeholders as a group; personal gain is not a consideration when what is good for the majority is in conflict with personal desires	<i>Agenda:</i> Underlying agenda is most often what is best for him or her; more concerned about how something looks or is perceived by others than how it really is

Personal motivation and agenda within an organization or school district is often difficult to get people to define, especially if it is in contradiction with the vision or mission of the organization. However, one of the clear indicators of a person's motivation or agenda in the large scope of an organization is how he or she uses resources available to him or her.

The final factor identified in this study as contributing to or inhibiting change was resource control.

Resource control. Resource control refers to a person's ability to mobilize funding, information and people. A person in the high power, high influence category often has a large budget to control and has a high level of trust and respect of those reporting directly or indirectly to him or her which allows for quick mobilization of those people to accomplish a task (Mechanic, 1962). People with high power and low influence may have a large budget and be able to require employees working directly or indirectly for them to do something, but efficiency will be significantly lower because the level of influence over those direct reports does not exist. Boonstra and Bennebroek-Gravenhorst (1998) explain that "information power" allows a person some control over others through their willingness to share, withhold, or redirect information toward certain recipients (p. 102). A person that chooses to withhold information would fall into the high power, low influence because after a period of time those around him or her learn that he or she cannot be trusted. A person with low power, but high influence most likely has very little budget to work with, but in many cases can rally groups of people together to accomplish many tasks because of deep personal connections or reputation (McDonald & Gooding, 2005).

Low power, high influence people would be information sharers because they have created relationships of trust with their willingness to be open (Boonstra & Bennebroek-Gravenhorst, 1998). Lastly, a person with low power and low influence has little budget or monetary control and does not believe that her or she can gather any group around an issue. Usually, people in this quadrant have little confidence and isolate

themselves within the organization which equals the inability to gain the trust of other personnel. *Table 6* shows the descriptions of the resource control factor with specific indicators of monetary, personnel, and informational resources according to the power and influence quadrants.

Table 6. Resource Control Descriptors Aligned with the Power and Influence Quadrants

	High Power/ High Influence	High Power/ Low Influence	Low Power/ High Influence	Low Power/ Low Influence
Resource Control	<i>Monetary:</i> Most often has a large budget to control or work within	<i>Monetary:</i> Most often has a large budget to control or work within	<i>Monetary:</i> Most often has little to no budget to control, but often has the ear of people that have a large budget to control	<i>Monetary:</i> Most often has little to no budget to control
	<i>Personnel:</i> Most often has a large number of people that report directly or indirectly to him or her; held in high regard and trusted so that when action is required, he or she can mobilize people quickly and efficiently	<i>Personnel:</i> Most often has a large number of people that report directly or indirectly to him or her but lacks the level or respect, trust, or reverence from these people to mobilize quickly	<i>Personnel:</i> Most often has few or no people that report directly or indirectly to him or her, however he or she has large resource of people that hold him or her in high enough regard to mobilize based on a request	<i>Personnel:</i> Most often has few or no people that report directly or indirectly to him or her nor does he or she work to develop relationships with those around him or her to increase level of influence
	<i>Information:</i> Most often has access to a large amount of information from multiple sources within and out of the district	<i>Information:</i> Most often has access to a large amount of information from multiple sources within and out of the district	<i>Information:</i> Most often has access to some level of information because of connections within the district	<i>Information:</i> Most often has little access to information within the district or outside of the district

The interpretation of these concepts in relation to the research questions comes down to a final idea: choice. The initial research question asked, what challenges are involved for a leader implementing district level change to professional development for teacher leaders? I believe that this research study demonstrated many challenges, but the factors of change and descriptors outlined here within the quadrants of power and

influence encompass the challenges that one must overcome to implement district level change.

District level leaders working to implement change to programs, policies, or other initiatives could utilize these four factors to effectively address issues associated with change in a proactive way. The descriptors in *Tables 2-6* provide organizational leaders specific characteristics of high power, high influence and low power, high influence people that are often instrumental in creating and supporting district level change. These characteristics also encourage personal reflection that can help district leaders identify areas of needed personal growth that could be impacting change efforts they are attempting to make. Finally, *Tables 2-6* show clearly that even a person in a low power position makes choices about his or her level of influence and this can significantly impact the change process.

The sub-question in this research stated, how does a district leader negotiate the politics of this change at the district level? The answer to this question lies in my interpretations of this study. I believe that the negotiation of politics in the implementation of change in an organization is all about *choice*. Within an organization, each person makes choices about how he or she operates, especially in relation to change. It is important as the culmination of this study to look deeply at the identified themes and factors to determine whether or not they can be a choice. In *Table 7*, I show the themes and factors within the research study with an explanation of how they could or could not be a choice in the change process. I deduced from the study that there were only four elements within the themes or factors that could be easily labeled as not a choice: power, formal role, monetary resource control, and personnel resource control. These pieces of

the research are further explained within the *Table 7* as to why they fit in this part of the chart. In contrast, I believe that this study indicates that all other themes and factors fall within the choice side of the T-chart and that people within an organization have the ability to change or work within those areas. Additional detail on each theme and factor is provided in *Table 7*.

Table 7. Choice T-chart with all Themes and Factors of the Research Study

Not a Choice	Choice
<p>Power: Power in this study relates to specific formal position and unless one chooses to change jobs within the organization or quit, level of power is not a choice.</p>	<p>Influence: Influence within this study relates to a person's ability to work within the factors established that impact change. All people in an organization choose the level of influence they will have by making choices about the factors listed below.</p>
<p>Formal Role: The identified position within the hierarchy of an organization is the formal role that a person holds. Again, unless one chooses to change jobs, quit, or request reorganization, formal role is not a choice.</p>	<p>Informal Role: Because informal roles are not assigned, but assumed because of levels of respect or reverence, knowledge, willingness to complete work outside of job description, and other qualifying characteristics, they are a choice.</p>
<p>Monetary Resource Control: Within a school district, there is most often an assigned budget manager to each budget for all departments and campuses. The budget assigned to your formal position is most often not determined by you, unless you are the Superintendent or School Board.</p>	<p>Who One Communicates With: In the descriptive chart of the factors, this area dealt with the size of the groups that one most often communicates with. This is a choice because one chooses to communicate effectively with team or department members, grade levels, campus personnel, other organizational department members, just as one chooses to take opportunities to place themselves in positions to do so.</p>
<p>Personnel Resource Control: The number of people that report directly to any given position is not a choice.</p>	<p>How One Communicates: In every position within an organization, people choose how to communicate with others. Their communication can exhibit openness, trust, relationship building skills, collaborative problem solving as well as other positive characteristics or it may not. This is a choice.</p>
	<p>What One Communicates: The collaborative nature of open communication that celebrates accomplishments of self and others, shares new found knowledge, and takes into consideration alternative views and perspectives is the what that impacts levels of influence.</p>
	<p>Personal Motivation: One chooses what does or does not motivate actions. Motivations stemming from group consideration rather than personal gain are a choice.</p>

- **Personal Agenda:** An underlying personal agenda is only the choice of that person. Often no one else knows another's true personal agenda and at times it is difficult to admit to self, but it is a choice.
- **Informational Resource Control:** Access to information within the organization often is related to position or power, however, if personal connections are made and collaborative communication is a utilized characteristic, many times the amount of information is based on choice.
- **Perception of Self:** Self perception is always a choice. If you believe you can or you believe you can't, you're right.
- **Perception of Others:** One chooses how to look at others related to their power and influence. The more facts and information one is armed with, the more a person is able to create a more targeted perception of others.

It is evident by looking at *Table 7* that choice determines one's ability to impact change. Purposefully, there is a dotted line in between the two sides of the T-chart in *Table 7*. The reason for this is that ultimately there is choice in everything if one chose to quit working in certain situations or on the other hand was not able to make that choice because of extenuating outside circumstances. The point I try to make clear is that we are in control of our actions in the workplace as much as we wish to be. The change process is challenging and often causes unrest in the organization. For this reason, it is imperative to be aware of the choices that are made within that change process. In answer to the final research question, it is my interpretation of the data that a district leader must make intentional decisions related to all of the categories listed on the T-chart in order to effectively negotiate district politics. If attention is paid to each of these areas, the political undercurrent of an organization is manageable.

Recommendations

There are three significant areas of recommendations pertinent to this research study: recommendations for practice, educational leadership programs, and future research beyond the replication of this study.

Recommendations for Practice

Educational leaders, those in formal and informal positions, have a call to embrace change as a way of life. Teaching practices in place as early as five years ago have now been proven to not be best practice in meeting the needs of our diverse student populations (Danielson, 2007; Dozier, 2007, Donaldson & Sanderson, 1996). Parents used to be proud and excited if their own children had the same eleventh grade math teacher they had in high school; now, unless that teacher has had extensive professional development to change instructional practices, that should be met with fear that their child will be prepared to live a world that is twenty years gone by. This study focused on the need for change in a district level program that was five years old through the experience of a district level leader working to implement that change. The learning from this study that impacts practice in education is that all parts of an educator's operating style within the classroom, campus, or central office impact their levels of influence in an organization. Roles within an organization can be formal or informal and often informal roles are the ones that make the most significant impact (Fullan, 2001; Drory, 1993). This should impact practice because it should be an educator's mission to take on informal roles in areas of passion to help affect change. All members of a school district organization choose who, what and how to communicate. The message is clear—collaboration and connections within the organization breed more efficient change

(Hargreaves, 2007; Fullan, 2005). Choosing individuality over group decision making is not in the best interest of the organization and will ultimately impact levels of influence in the organization. Lastly, resource control is often viewed as open and shut—he who has the budget or the most money is the one with the power. As established in this study, resource control should be viewed as threefold—monetary, personnel, and informational. Even those without a large budget may have high levels of influence in the other areas of resource control (Harris, 2005; Kaul, 2003). These factors in the change process impact practice as educators are made aware of the supplies they have and can use to begin making changes in their areas of passion. Armed with this information, the adage that change takes three to five years should be laughable.

Recommendations for Preparation Programs

The area of educational leadership becomes broader by the day due to the changing needs of our school districts, campuses, and students. The areas of instructional leadership, educational administration, counseling, curriculum and instruction, adult education, and all other preparation programs related to improving our schools deal with these ever-changing needs. Our jobs in education create a living, breathing product that must go out into the world prepared to be contributing members of society and have abilities to adapt to job markets, cultures, and social situations that change so rapidly we could not possibly provide enough resources to support. Because this job is so big, the leaders of our educational systems must be those that are forward thinking, embracing of change, and willing to work within the politics of an organization while continuing to understand that the change process can begin and end in them.

For this reason, educational leadership preparation programs must embed the elements of being a change agent in all areas of study. The factors addressed in this study that impact change are areas that all educational leaders should be aware of as part of their positions. The power and influence quadrants and how one can operate within them are vital to promoting efforts to mobilize change through commitment because of influence, not compliance because of positional power. It is foundational for educational leaders to be aware of how great an impact perception has on the change process and on the level of influence that any one person wields. Self-perception can be a great asset when one begins to believe that they have the influence to change and to marshal others in their efforts.

Higher education programs have the opportunity to insert action research projects around topics that force students to take part in the change process and be the instigators of movement within a school district. With the support of professors and classmates, students can begin their work in change during their program under strong leadership and mentoring support with the help and idea building of others experiencing similar issues in their own districts.

Finally, it is imperative that educational leaders, change leaders, know that change is about making a choice and the choice must be to become actively involved in the school improvement efforts of our campuses, districts, states, and nation for the betterment of the students we serve.

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional research in school improvement is always needed, but it is important for researchers to target their work in topics that are relevant and fill gaps in current

research. As described in the literature review, the areas of teacher leadership and professional development are well documented and studied in isolation, but there are gaps in the literature related to effective professional development to meet the needs of teacher leaders in our schools and districts today.

Further, this research study suggests that the mobilization of change is about one person, no matter their station in the district, making a choice. It would be important to take this finding forward and look more deeply at other school districts where change is happening because of the upward influence of district or campus level employees that lack positional power, but have high levels of influence. In addition, it would be interesting to identify specific district employees that fit into each of the four quadrants of power and influence and determine if the factors defined by this study were applicable across other school organizations. In conclusion, additional work with the concepts of perception and reality and their relation to power and influence in a school district would be viable research for the field that could continue to impact the way that district leaders impact change.

Conclusions

In the beginning of this research, I felt a level of passion for the area of teacher leader professional learning and was excited to spend the amount of time it would take to conduct a study in an area that I felt strongly for in our district. However, it was evident quickly through the guidance of others as part of this project that my passion for the work was not enough to overcome the levels of political issues that came with creating change at the district level. Even though I resisted for a long period of time even admitting that

the politics would impact this work, finally I understood that I was a part of the political circle that had to be addressed effectively to impact change.

I am able to look critically at my own actions within this research project to know that without a doubt challenges that I faced related to this change process related directly to one of the identified factors of change. It is clear that each factor serves a purpose in all parts of the change effort and that people working within the political domain of a school district must learn to recognize these factors and address them proactively. At times, it was evident in my journaling that I was not effectively utilizing my own influence to make change; other times it was evident that people within the organization were not effectively utilizing their power or influence to impact change. I know that perception casts a wider net and has a greater affect on levels of influence than does reality as demonstrated in the study by my personal experience with change related to how I initially perceived my level of influence and how I perceived that level in the end. This research showed that a person's perception of themselves drastically impacted their ability to create change and that a groups' perception could drastically increase or decrease another person's level of influence.

Finally, I have conclusively understood from this research that the majority of the concepts related to change and our ability to mobilize toward a given goal is about choice. We *choose* how we make an impact in an organization by every action that we take, no matter how big or small. It is only ourselves that we can look to if change is not occurring in places we believe that it should.

Personal Learning

The phenomenological framework of this study required a deep look into my own learning and growth through this work. In all areas of my life, change is a constant reality. As a student, I am working hard to grow in my knowledge and understandings of how and why things work the ways that they do. I must adapt in my role as a student consistently to meet new challenges; this dissertation was a significant hurdle, but one that was met with great excitement and anticipation at the end of a long journey. Though the timing of life events were not always within the favor of my work on this project, persistence and perseverance has carried me through. These same qualities are necessary in education to meet goals and create change for school improvement. As a central office administrator working with professional development, I felt that my field required me to be adaptable and able to embrace change to meet the needs of our teachers who work with our continually altered student population.

However, I have been able to look critically at myself and my inner thoughts as part of my work in this study to realize that while I do embrace change in many areas of my life and work, I felt a level of paralysis within my current position. This realization came when I began to listen to the teacher leaders I had the opportunity to work with often as they described clearly their perception of my work. I was able to see myself through another's eyes and begin to understand the influence that was at my fingertips that I was failing to exercise. With this new knowledge, I worked furiously to operate within the political realm of my school district to impact immediate change where I could and to promote smaller levels of change where I had less given power as part of my position. Not only was I able to do this for myself, but I was able to share this new

understanding with the teacher leaders and describe for them the political system we worked within and how their work fit into the mobilization of change. Their work and impact on teachers and students was where the real changing took place; especially in those that began to believe, as I did, that influence was a choice that I could make.

This newfound understanding impacts all parts of my work today as change is the only thing that we can depend on. I am able to more effectively operate within my influential abilities without feeling the paralysis that was so challenging before. I feel that my future as an educator has been forever transformed because of this work and that I am better at my current job because of it. I also feel that in my work toward future goals and professional aspirations, this learning will be invaluable and it is satisfying to feel that this amount of work really did have an impact on me as an educator and as a person.

Reflections on the Research Process

The research design utilized in this study was phenomenology, but with an additional challenge embedded because I served as the unit of study experiencing the phenomenon. In the beginning of this research process, my committee presented the idea of addressing my project through a phenomenological lens. As I worked through the background of understanding what phenomenology consisted of and examined examples of studies that had been conducted using that framework, I experienced some difficulties in understanding how I would serve as the person that had the experience while also being the researcher.

If this format was replicated, I would encourage the researcher to look not only at phenomenological studies in the area of their research, but also at autoethnographic

studies to see how one writes in the first person effectively and professionally. Also, it was imperative to create a journaling style where my reflections could be most well recorded and easily documented so that I was able to capture the meaning of each incident related to the work. The development of the guiding questions that I used for each journal entry were positive because it allowed me to organize my thoughts into specified areas which then impacted the efficiency of my data analysis. I would encourage another researcher to use this same process. Finally, I feel that it was imperative to journal consistently even if I felt that nothing related to the experience was specifically occurring. It was in these journal entries where I opened up personally to my own feelings, shortcomings, celebrations, and frustrations on the change process as a whole and ultimately gained a tremendous amount of insight into the essence of my experience.

While there are many things that I did well in this research, I would be remiss not to point out the areas where I faced issues that if conducting this study again, I would not repeat. The first of these is the need for time management related to the reflective journaling. It is important in this type of study to reflect quickly after an incident has occurred to capture detailed descriptions of actions and then to also have time to digest the incident and come back in an alternate context and relate the same incident to the research and the questions. At times, I did not plan effectively for this extensive commitment and because many incidents occurred during the work day and I needed to wait until after work to begin my work in this study, I feel that I lost opportunities to have as rich a description as possible.

In conjunction with the time commitment of the journaling within the study, it is important within the journal to remind oneself of the research questions. I found myself on tangents completely unrelated to this work that I spent pages going on about which could have been effectively avoided if I had been more diligent about reviewing the research question more frequently. Because of my mistake in this area, the reduction of data was a longer process. In closing, it was challenging to conduct this study in my workplace. This is not something that I could have changed because of the topic I chose to address and its relation to my daily responsibilities, but it has caused a level of unrest about my ability to continue to be candid in my reflection and writing while being cognizant of my loyalty to the district that I serve. All school districts have issues to deal with related to the change process. Our district is no different. In fact, the study shows that if change is not happening, we have only ourselves look at not at those around us. While this is true, I feel that the replication of this study on a topic outside of the workplace might not be as challenging as this one has proven to be.

Closing Thoughts

Teacher leader professional development was the seed of inspiration in this research as I determined that there was a need for change in our professional support for the teacher leaders in our school district. The project morphed into a focus on change at the district level through the experience of a district leader. In the beginning, I was disappointed that I would not be focusing solely on the work of professional development for teacher leaders so that I could see measurable progress for the teachers that I was impacting. I learned quickly as the study grew that my work in the area of change and the conversations that the group of teacher leaders sparked as a result of this study made a

more lasting impact than any training that I could have provided. Discussions about change and a teacher leader's role within that change allowed many talented professionals in our school district to resist seeing themselves as low power and low influence, and begin to form a self perception that matched that of others around them on their campuses—one of high influence.

While there is still an immense amount of work to be addressed in the area of teacher leadership and professional development, this research on the phenomenon of change was the learning that I needed to change my own self perception as well. Because of this work, the teacher leader model in place in this district has continued have a greater impact on campuses, teachers, and students. This has happened even in the face of having to revert back to the old training plan. With my initial research efforts, that would not have happened. The teacher leaders and I are committed to the change that occurred in our work together and regardless of how the program is altered, funded, or even disbanded; the learning that took place allows us all to continue our work as change agents for school improvement.

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