ENGAGING STAFF IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of Gary W. Street find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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Abstract

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December 2011

Chair: Michele Acker-Hocevar

During the 2010-11 school-year at Scootney Springs Elementary, an action research project with 8 teachers was initiated to create a culture of distributed leadership in the school building. Throughout phase 1 of the study, we collected data from interviews, surveys, checklists, meeting minutes, observations, and documented discussions with the action research team and outside educators. Additionally, we reviewed literature on leadership. Data were coded and analyzed by the team throughout phase 2 of the research. After thorough analysis of the data, the team concluded that a shared and distributed leadership model had not developed at Scootney. Four themes emerged that may help explain this: (a) commitment; (b) fear; (c) strong beliefs; and (d) ambiguity.

Based on the conclusions from data, four action plans were created by the action research team. The first action plan is to define leadership. In order for leadership to be “all encompassing” in a school, teachers need to know and agree upon, what leadership and leading means. The second action plan is to promote teacher leadership. In order to create teams of teacher leaders who work with the principal in achieving, managing, organizing, and sustaining building-level instructional goals and practices in our school, teachers need to know the
advantages and disadvantages of taking on leadership. The third action plan is to establish a
culture of teacher leadership. In order to establish a culture of teacher leadership, a set of key
values, assumptions, understandings, and norms must be in place, shared and continually
reviewed by members of the school. The last action plan is to provide support for teacher
leaders. In order to expand teacher leadership, teachers need support in strengthening leadership
skills as related to school improvement and team building.

Positive changes in the school have occurred since the beginning of the 2010-11 school-
year when the action research team initiated research on distributed leadership. Although the
changes cannot be directly attributed to the action research the team undertook, an abundance of
literature supports positive changes in schools that embrace distributed models of leadership.
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all who have supported me in finishing my doctorate, including my loving wife of 37 years, Sherry, my children, Joelle Johnston, Gary Street Jr., and my parents, Bob and Lorraine Street.

Thank you!
Chapter 1

Introduction

“The main mark of an effective principal is not just his or her impact on the bottom line of student achievement, but also on how many leaders he or she leaves behind who can go even further” (Fullan, 2005, p. 31).

This action research study examined how to develop a culture of distributed leadership from the ground up in a school that has had a more traditional approach to leadership. As principal, I co-engaged staff to participate with me to achieve, manage, organize, and sustain building-level instructional goals and practices in a more distributed leadership model than I had done previously.

This study took place in the school where I am the principal and have been for 10 years. Although the school has shown dramatic improvement over the past decade, during the last four years less improvement has been shown. This fact alone made me look at how we are organized at the school, how I lead, and what we might do differently to enhance our school improvement efforts. The leadership structure of the school consisted of grade level leaders and others who were invited to participate as co-researchers in defining distributed leadership and developing action plans to create distributive leadership teams.

Background to the Problem

School leadership is an important factor in school effectiveness and school improvement (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009). Increased demands on school administrators to improve schools, along with a current trend towards restructuring, have prompted school administrators to move away from a more traditional approach to leadership, to one that distributes leadership roles to teachers (Bush & Glover, 2003; Hulpia, et al., 2009). Simply put, the work required to improve schools is too vast to expect one person to accomplish it single-handedly (Lashway,
2003). In addition, the expertise needed for school improvement must come from a broader base of individuals with diverse skills and knowledge regarding curriculum, pedagogy and best practices, assessments, and standards (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001; Watson & Scribner, 2007). In short, teachers and administrators need to rethink how leadership is structured and practiced in schools if they are to improve student achievement (Elmore, 2000). Teachers have the most direct impact on student learning, followed next by the indirect impact of principals through the conditions of work that they create for teachers to be more or less successful (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Walstrom, 2004).

Distributed leadership is a promising theory that expands leadership roles to teachers in order to do the work required of educators in schools today. Distributed leadership focuses on the practices school leaders and followers perform, not on whom formally leads (Mayrowetz, 2008). School leadership is viewed from the organizational level, not the individual level (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Spillane, 2005) in a distributed model. Thus, all members of the school are potentially experts in their own right; all members of school are unique, important sources of knowledge, experience, and wisdom from this perspective (Elmore, 2000; Spillane, 2005). The organizational values, goals, and culture implicate who leads and when they lead (Spillane, 2005) in a distributed model of school leadership rather than the formal structure of discrete principal and teachers’ roles.

Schools with structures that allow for high levels of shared and distributed leadership have a positive impact on classroom instructional practices (Walstrom & Louis, 2008) the institutionalization of program initiatives and agreements (Heller & Firestone, 1995; Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006; Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999; Robinson & Timperley, 2007), reform efforts and organizational capacity (Anderson, 2003; Mayrowetz, 2008), teacher motivation (Leithwood
& Mascall, 2008), organizational change (Hulpia, et al. 2009), teacher latency and commitment (Pounder & Ogawa, 1995), organizational trust (Printy & Marks, 2006), teacher satisfaction (Jordanoglou, 2007), teacher collaboration to improve student learning (Timperley, 2005), team effectiveness (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007), high levels of instruction to improve student learning (Marks & Printy, 2003), working relationships (Louis, Leithwood, Wallace & Anderson 2010), and problem solving (Gronn, 2002). According to Elmore (2000), in a system of standards based accountability, distributed leadership is the “glue of a common task—the improvement of instruction—and a common frame of values for how to approach that task – culture” (p. 16).

Research clearly supports enacting distributed leadership as a viable model to enhance school improvement (Elmore, 2000; Spillane, 2005). It allows for teachers to take on added responsibilities specific to their expertise, knowledge, and skills (Spillane, 2005). Finally, because of the research done on distributed leadership shows positive effects on school improvement, I co-engaged my staff in researching its benefits and then enacted a distributed leadership model that we co-constructed together to fortify our school improvement efforts.

**Action Research Methodology**

A participatory action research (PAR) (Stringer, 2007) approach served as the methodological framework for this study and is based on Stringer’s (2007) qualitative research model – look, think, and act. Stringer’s (2007) framework was chosen because it provided the best opportunities for participants to socially construct meaning of what a distributed model of leadership is in our school. In addition, PAR aligns well with the theoretical principles associated with distributed leadership because it focuses on collegiality to accomplish organizational goals, and works well with staff to solve problems together (Elmore, 2000;
Sergiovanni, 1993). Finally, PAR aligns well with the theoretical principles of constructivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) because it provides opportunities for participants to seek shared agreement and collaboration during the think stage, and to deliberate meanings around what distributed leadership is at our school. These two approaches worked well together in the study. According to Stringer’s (2007) model, the look, think, and act cycles blend hermeneutics, phenomenology, and interpretivism because it allows participants to gain greater clarity and understanding of events and activities from within. To elaborate, action research is hermeneutic because it enables participants to extend their understanding to “construct solutions to the problem on which the study was focused” (Stringer, 2007, p. 20). This was important in this study because teachers examined past traditions of leadership that led us to considering distributed leadership as a viable option at our school.

PAR is phenomenological because it allows participants affected by the same problem to explore their experiences within an organization together, and construct meaning (Stringer, 2007). This approach was relevant to the study because teachers examined their current levels of engagement, and began to explore the areas that they might engage more based on their expertise.

PAR is interpretive because it allows participants to gain greater clarity and make meaning of events and activities from within through analysis of data collected throughout the study (Stinger, 2007, Merriam, 2002). This last phase was critical to the goals of action research. Both the teachers and I reflected on ways we might alter our beliefs and attitudes about more traditional roles of teachers and administrators to enact distributed leadership.

Finally, PAR’s philosophical underpinnings provided an avenue for all voices to be heard; it is a “collaborative approach that seeks to engage subjects as equal and full participants
in the research process” (Stringer, 2007, p. 10). This too was important because during the study I was no longer viewed as the expert but as a partner in learning.

The philosophical foundation for action research in education can be traced to John Dewey (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Dewey (1938) believed that education should be a democratic tool to assist all Americans in accomplishing their aims; to assist them in having a voice in government and becoming critical thinkers and productive members in society. Dewey (1938) advocated for schools that ensured inquiry, active learning, and real-life experiences to facilitate freedom of thought (Herr & Anderson, 2005). These philosophical foundations were central to this study to involve teachers in inquiry, and to have them actively learn with me what distributed leadership could mean for our school.

The term “action research” was coined by Kurt Lewin in the late 30s (as cited in Creswell, 1998). Lewin (as cited in Creswell, 1998) believed that social conditions of the time might be improved if people worked out solutions together. During the 1950s action research in education took a back seat to positivist research (Herr & Anderson, 2005). In the late 1960s quantitative research was challenged by qualitative, case study, and ethnographic research as an alternative paradigm of knowing what works best in schools. Educators found that qualitative research findings, in the form of narratives, closely resembled how educators communicated their knowledge of effective teaching to others (Herr & Anderson, 2005). During the restructuring movement of the 1980s, action research was promoted to facilitate teacher inquiry and reflection because it could promote deep structural and cultural changes.

In 2002, the philosophical foundation and democratic principles of action research in education were challenged again by federal legislation entitled the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The NCLB Act (2002) mandated reform that determined the “ends” and allowed little
school autonomy for the “means”, which worked against collective inquiry. Recently there has been resurgence of action research to improve schools because of the recognition of the importance of more fully engaging everyone to positively affect change efforts. Teachers and administrators found that the action research process was beneficial because it allowed all whom were affected by the problem to create solutions to solve the problem completely (Stringer, 2007). This approach to school improvement worked well with the prevailing notions of continuous and ongoing improvement.

The Study

I collaborated with an action research team at Scootney Springs Elementary, Othello, Washington for the purposes of: (a) co-engaging them in defining distributed leadership in our school, and (b) developing action plans to create an all-encompassing culture of distributive leadership teams consisting of teacher leaders who work with the me in achieving, managing, organizing, and sustaining building-level instructional goals and practices in our school. In addition, this study documented how a distributed leadership model of leadership started to evolve and was enacted by staff and me as the principal. The study also examined the effects of enacting distributed leadership on the school through year-end interviews of the action research team, survey data regarding school climate, and year-end student performance data. Interview questions were framed by me to better understand the team’s perceptions of how decisions were made and who made them (decision making processes), what leadership functions teachers performed and how often they performed them (leadership density), the teachers’ commitment to achieving the goals of the school (culture), and how they felt about changes in leadership structures as we began the study (leadership culture). Survey data came from Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc. (2011). Student performance data emanated from the state’s
annual student examine, the 2011 Measures of Student Progress (MSP). The study responded to growing demands placed on our school to improve, demands that required more leadership from teachers. Research questions guiding the study were as follows:

1) What are the leadership functions performed in our school today, and by whom? (Phenomenological)

2) What are the lived experiences of teachers who perform leadership functions in our school today? (Interpretive)

3) How can teacher leadership be expanded to a distributed model to better achieve organizational goals? (Hermeneutic)

4) What are the teacher, leader and school effects of moving towards a distributed model of leadership at our school?

Setting

Scootney Springs Elementary is a K-5 public school in Othello, Washington. According to the 2009-2010 School Report Card, Scootney Springs Elementary had 600 students, 37 certified staff, 26 classified staff, 1.5 administrators, and one counselor. Seventy-five percent of the students received free or reduced lunch, 80% were Hispanic, 39% were transitional bilingual, and 11% migrant. Scootney Springs Elementary School had sporadics increases in standardized scores for the past nine years. Over a six year period an average of 67% of the students in fourth grade had passed the reading portion of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), a state test that measured mastery of state standards. Over the same period only 48% of fourth grade students passed the math portion of the WASL. In addition, the school had not made adequate yearly progress for four consecutive years in the areas of math and reading, and had been identified as failing because the percentage of students passing the 2007,
2008, 2009, and 2010 state assessment for reading and math that were considered below acceptable levels as per the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (See Table 1).

Although the federal government identified Scootney Springs as failing the State of Washington had not. Since 2005, the school received four recognition awards from the state for making exceptional improvement. In 2009 Scootney Springs Elementary was presented with the Great Schools Award, an award given to 104 Washington State schools for being amongst the 5% highest improving Washington schools in reading and mathematics over a period of five years.

Table 1

*Scootney Springs Elementary Combined MSP/WASL Results, Grades 3-5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>AYP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>117.9</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>121.4</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10 *</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>111.9</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students were given the Measures of Student Progress (MSP) in May, 2010. Prior to 2010, students took the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL).

Even with the extremely conflicting messages, one from the federal government and the other from the state, a majority of the teachers at Scootney Springs demonstrated that they truly desired to improve the performance of the school. But many of their talents to lead improvement efforts were virtually untapped.

As principal I took a supportive and directive approach to developing teacher leadership by framing and directing a majority of the leadership opportunities for teachers to involve themselves in school improvement efforts. For example, I asked for volunteers to serve on
district or school committees and personally approached individuals to lead certain aspects of improvement efforts. Furthermore, I encouraged teachers who were skilled in science, math, reading, or writing, to lead staff development. I also provided release time for teachers to work with other teachers for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. In addition, I praised the efforts of teachers who had taken on leadership opportunities.

Unfortunately my attempts to motivate teachers to lead—to appeal to their moral imperative, to take greater ownership in the mission of the school, and to better align their work with the organization’s goals (Beugre, Acar & Braun, 2006)—did not always work and may have been viewed as manipulative by some teachers. Some teachers believed that leadership should be shared equally and that no one teacher should lead more than another. Others had a soldiering mentality fostered by peer pressure resulting in their refusal to take on additional leadership roles, thus maintaining the status quo. Concerns expressed regarding the lack of leadership displayed at Scootney Springs Elementary primarily originated from the teachers who served as grade chairs, or were on district and school committees. The more traditional top-down approach had a limited impact on the faculty as a whole. My attempts to move away from this approach to a more transformational leadership approach led me to this study.

Because of the above concerns regarding the lack of teacher leadership displayed at Scootney, teacher leaders I identified or who volunteered were invited to co-engage with me and their colleagues in action research on distributed leadership over a five-month period of time. The study began in January 2011 and followed three phases: look, think and act. Teacher leaders who elected to take part in the study completed a consent form explaining the study’s risks and benefits of participation, and the time commitment to complete the study. During the study, teacher leaders participated in interviews throughout the year regarding their lived experiences,
documented evidence of leadership that they and their colleagues displayed in the school, and participated in action research meetings held two or three times each month after school. Data were generated through focus group interviews, evidence of leadership checklist, on-line surveys, meeting minutes, my reflective memos, and my observations. Data collection came from both the teacher leaders and me. Teachers who participated in the study had the option of quitting at any time.

**Look Phase**

In the look phase (phenomenological) the team gathered information to build a picture of leadership in the school and clarify the research problem--the phenomenon. Information came from team members’ lived experiences regarding leadership and was gathered through several means, including focus group interviews conducted by a person outside of the school, anonymous online surveys, and checklists of leadership functions each teacher had performed to date.

To further clarify the problem during the look stage, additional information was gathered from observations, artifacts, and literature (hermeneutical). Literature on leadership provided team members a means to extend their understanding of the historical evolution of leadership. Literature also assisted the team in developing action plans to move toward a more distributed leadership approach. I encouraged team members throughout the action research stages to explore and read leadership articles on their own.

**Think Stage**

In keeping with the guiding principles of PAR, in the think stage--or constructivist stage, the team interpreted and constructed meaning from the data (focus interviews, artifacts, online surveys, and checklists regarding leadership functions) by highlighting ideas, concepts, events,
feelings, quotes, key words, and experiences with a common meaning. Highlighted ideas, concepts, events, etc., were pasted on index cards. The team then coded and organized these data into categories by interview question. From the categories they developed common themes that assisted them in discovering, exposing, and understanding the nature of leadership at our school. The objective for data analysis was to ensure the information clearly represented the perspectives and experiences of the teams as a whole.

During the think stage the action research team used a variety of strategies to boost validity and reliability. To ensure my biases and the biases of other researchers did not distort findings I set up validation meetings with the group. The AR team also presented and defended findings from the data to selected educators outside of our school. The educators were willing to challenge the thinking and assumptions of the AR group, offer their perspectives on issues, and point out inconsistencies.


Action researchers also participated in member checking during the action research meetings to ensure findings were valid. Researchers periodically checked back with other researchers regarding the accuracy of interviews, checklists, observations, interpretations, and conclusions. According to Maxwell (2005), member checking is the “single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and...
the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and understanding of what you observed” (p. 111).

During the three phases of research I kept written accounts of all meetings. In addition, I wrote about my experiences, biases, worldview, assumptions, and theoretical viewpoints regarding leadership that may impact the research inquiry. Clarification of the above, should help the reader better understand how I arrived at my interpretation of the data in the results section. Finally, during the action research process, action researchers were asked to critically examine their own biases.

During all phases of research an audit trail was kept that shows the reader how the researchers arrived at their conclusions (Merriam, 2002). The audit trail included how the study was conducted, how the data were collected, how decisions were made, and how categories and themes were derived. As the primary instrument of research, I was responsible for keeping a detailed log of accounts regarding the above.

At the conclusion of the think stage, team members participated in another focus group interview regarding their perceptions and experiences in leadership. In addition, AR team members again filled out an anonymous online survey and a checklist of leadership functions they performed.

**Act Stage**

In the act stage, the action research team systematically looked for solutions to expanding leadership roles for teachers in the form of distributed leadership teams. Action plans included specific objectives, persons responsible, timelines, anticipated outcomes, and resources. At the conclusion of the study, team members participated in a final focus group interview. Table 2
summarizes the data collected during the look, think and act stages of research. Table 3 summarizes the look, think and act stages of data validation.

Table 2

Data Collected During Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAR</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Focus group interviews</th>
<th>On-line surveys</th>
<th>Leadership checklists</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
<th>Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Act</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Data Validation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAR</th>
<th>Outside interviewer</th>
<th>On-line surveys</th>
<th>Member checking</th>
<th>Literature corroboration</th>
<th>Validation meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Think</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anticipated Outcomes

After one school year of action research on distributed leadership, I anticipated a core group of teachers would be willing to step up and lead at the building and/or district level when opportunities arose. Also anticipated was an improvement in the willingness of all staff to promote active citizenship by sharing responsibility and accountability toward achieving common goals of the school without being directed by the principal to do so. Finally, I
anticipated an emergence of vertical and horizontal distributive leadership teams which would enable all of us to make better decisions and garner increased commitments by all members to attain the goals of the school.

**Positionality**

My views of leadership were primarily shaped by my lived experiences over the past 10 years as a white male principal of a school with a student population of 80% Hispanic and 40% bi-lingual. Therefore, my personal experiences—what I have experienced as the leader of the school—were important in this study. In short, I believed my experiences helped illuminate the culture of leadership that has been framed at our school.

As a white male principal, I was aware of influence my culture and background had on the students and staff I served and worked with. Because of this, I was able to adapt my behavior to the cultural and educational needs of all students. It is important to know for the reader of this study, that I had a moral imperative to serve all students *well*—the disenfranchised, marginalized and privileged. In addition, I have strongly espoused my moral imperative— to serve all students well - to staff, students and parents.

As a member of the staff at Scootney, my view of what effective leadership was in a school, had evolved from a heroic epistemology, where the leader directs others to accomplish tasks, to a more shared perspective of leadership. During the past 10 years I have made an effort to include more teachers as co-leaders in performing a variety of functions spread across the school as related to school improvement efforts. This philosophical change in me was due to the complexity of challenges I have faced in the shadow of the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), specifically, the challenges of sustained improvement. It became very clear to me soon after the NCLB (2002) was enacted, that I could not accomplish the task of school improvement alone.
During the 2002-03 school-year I began including teachers in making school improvement decisions. That year, our school began using a School Improvement Planning Process that was provided by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) (2005). According to OSPI (2005), the improvement process was organized around the premise that in order for school improvement to be effective and sustainable, teachers and others needed to be active, engaged, and empowered during the process. The improvement process was divided into eight steps which culminated with the development of action plans that were crafted collectively by all stakeholders (OSPI, 2005). Since the inception of the initial school improvement plan in 2003, our teachers have met at the end of each school-year to revise the plan based on multiple sources of data. Although the major premise behind the OSPI (2005) improvement process was democracy and teacher empowerment, I have found that teachers continued to look to me for a majority of the day to day decisions on what they could and couldn’t do in regards to teaching and learning. I have also found that the number of teachers willing to accept continuous leadership roles has been rather limited.

Two years ago our district expanded leadership opportunities for teachers by establishing teacher teams to work on a variety of projects and initiatives. A majority of the teachers were selected by principals to participate in these teams. In addition, a majority of the projects and initiatives were generated by leaders in formal positions. I believed that this form of leadership framed by the district and me as principal placed too much emphasis on a dominant echelon of leaders, or in some cases, a single heroic leader, to make decisions for others.

I believed that in order to enhance organizational capacity--the key rationale for distributed leadership (Woods & Gronn, 2009), our school needed to tap into the ideas, creativity, skills, and energies of all staff members, without manipulation and dominance--key
aspects of heroic and transactional leadership theories. During the action research on distributed leadership, I articulated my evolving perspectives on distributed leadership through memoing in journals and field notes. In short, I believed I had bi-directional and reflexive relationship with the other researchers. Creswell (1998) asserted that reflexivity refers to the researcher being aware of, and openly discussing his/her “role in the study in a way that shows respect for the site and for the participants” (p.485). Qualitative researchers Denzin and Lincoln (2000), maintained that reflexivity allows for the researcher to expose to their audiences their “situatedness, their personal investments in the research, various biases they bring to the work, their surprises and undoings” during research, the reasons for suppressing and/or selecting literature and points of view (p. 1027). Through all phases of the research, I explored in depth the ways in which my personal history and my experiences saturated “the ethnographic inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 1028). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) noted that “in all these reflexive moves, the investigator relinquishes the ‘God’s eye view’ and reveals his or her work as historically, culturally, and personally situated” (p. 1028). I believed that I made it clear from the beginning to the AR team that the action research they were engaged in was not “on” the teachers. Since teachers were collectively the “researchers” they developed agreements and understandings among themselves that facilitated respect and regard for their team members, as well as built a “critical reflexivity into the research process” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 60).

**Research Ethics**

Teachers who participated in this study knew the risks and benefits prior to signing a consent form. Teachers knew ahead of time that they could opt out or quit at any time. During the study, teachers were provided with the AR team’s written responses to survey and interview questions. Throughout the research process, recordings and all documents, including my
journals and reflections, were secured in my office. In addition, pseudonyms were used in Chapters three and four to ensure confidentiality.

Finally, throughout the research process, I kept a narrative journal of all meetings, interactions, my personal thoughts regarding the research process, and how my thoughts and perceptions regarding distributed leadership may, or may not have changed. I also kept a journal of my perceptions of how others in the action research team changed—specifically how they viewed their roles in leadership at our school. At the conclusion of the study, I asked the colleague to conduct a recorded open dialogue interview with me regarding my thoughts and perceptions on distributed leadership, and how the study may have changed me personally, and as a leader.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

To provide support, context and a theoretical framework for this study, Chapter two reviews literature central to distributed leadership. The literature review framework examined leadership functions performed in schools today under different assumptions of leadership theories and particularly highlights how distributed leadership is unique in regards to its effects on school improvement efforts.

Background

Successful change in schools results from a network of leaders, both formal and informal, performing a variety of functions spread across the organization (Spillane, 2005; Watson & Scribner, 2007). The distribution of leadership formed from this network means viewing all members of the school as potential experts in their own right; all members as unique, important sources of knowledge, experience, and wisdom (Mayrowetz, 2008). Leadership from this view is about cooperation and trust, not about competition among teachers and administrators. Leadership from this view is at the organizational level, not on an individual level (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). The degree to which leadership is shared in schools impacts classroom instructional practices (Walstrom & Louis, 2008) the institutionalization of program initiatives and agreements (Heller & Firestone, 1995; Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006; Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999; Robinson & Timperley, 2007), reform efforts and organizational capacity (Anderson, 2003; Mayrowetz, 2008), teacher motivation (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008), organizational change (Hulpia, et al. 2009), teacher latency and commitment (Pounder & Ogawa, 1995); organizational trust (Printy & Marks, 2006), teacher satisfaction (Jordanoglou, 2007), teacher collaboration to improve student learning (Timperley, 2005; Scribner, Sawyer, Watson & Myers,
2007), high levels of instruction to improve student learning (Marks & Printy, 2003), working relationships (Louis, Leithwood, Wallace & Anderson 2010), and problem solving (Gronn, 2002).

Elmore (2000) asserted that schools in a system of education reform must rethink leadership and embed new structures, new processes and practices, in order to improve. Schools can no longer afford to view leadership as one person in a hierarchal role, where the achievement of the organizational goals rests on one leader, where the leader manages structures and processes, where the leader buffers the core of teaching from the outside to avoid scrutiny, and where the traits of the leader dictates who leads (Elmore, 2000). Many educators are attached to a traits theory of leadership in schools, believing leadership rests on only one person, the principal (Elmore, 2000). The theory posits that the various traits a leader possesses are the key to success in the classroom and school. The most contemporary example of is form of leadership can be found in the movie, Waiting for Superman (Guggenheim & Kimball, 2010). The movie explored the lives of five children who are hoping to get into a good school (Guggenheim & Kimball, 2010). Throughout the movie, it appeared that only one person – the principal - was responsible for the success of each school documented. What Waiting for Superman (Guggenheim & Kimball, 2010) didn’t show was that teachers were also responsible for the success of the schools documented.

**Leadership**

This section of the literature review describes the historical foundations of leadership relevant to the purposes of this study.

Marion (2002) author of Leadership in Education, asserted, “We can recognize leadership when we see or experience it”, but defining it “is an elusive exercise” (p. 70). Marion
(2002) maintained that the reason leadership is hard to define is because one’s definition is often based on the interest of the researcher and the phenomena studied. To further confound a leadership definition, is a controversy among theorists over the differences between leadership and management (Yukl, 2010). Yukl (2010), author of *Leadership in Organizations*, maintained that some theorists attempt to define effective management and effective leadership as distinct roles, processes or relationships instead of using empirical research to determine what is essential in regards to leadership. According to Yukl (2010), this way of thinking “encourages simplistic theories about effective leadership” (p. 8).

Well known behavioral scientist, Warren Bennis (as cited in Yukl, 2010) observed the following in regards to defining leadership:

> Always, it seems, the concept of leadership eludes us or turns up in another form to taunt us again with its slipperiness and complexity. So we have invented an endless proliferation of terms to deal with it . . . and still the concept is not sufficiently defined (p. 2).

Early researchers defined leadership in terms of traits, behaviors, sources of power, and situations, in relation to influencing followers and accomplishing objectives (Yukl, 2010). Great man and traits theorists defined leadership as inherent—that great leaders are born and that great leaders are endowed with a particular personality or behavioral characteristic shared by other leaders (Marion, 2002). In contrast, behavioral theorists defined leadership based on the actions of the leader—that great leaders are made, not born (Marion, 2002). Management theorists defined leadership in terms of how one supervises employees to improve organizational effectiveness (Marion, 2002; Yukl, 2010). Other theorists described leadership as situational.
Situational theorists believed that different styles of leadership may be more appropriate to use based on differences in situations and readiness levels of followers (Daft, 2002).

Several well-known authors of organizational leadership presented practical definitions of leadership based on leadership theories and research from the 20th century and the last decade. Marion (2002) defined leadership in a general sense, as “those activities that define the goal oriented activities of a system” (p. 70). Daft (2002), in his book, *The Leadership Experience*, defined leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real change and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes” (p.5). Daft (2002) asserted that the elements of leadership are influence, intention, personal responsibility, change, and shared purpose. Yukl (2010) asserted that leadership is a process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done. He maintained that how leadership is exercised in an organization, depends on the beliefs, backgrounds, and aptitude of the leader, as well as the sociopolitical conditions within and outside the organization (Yukl, 2010).

Leithwood and Mascall (2008) conceptualized leadership in terms of functions, providing direction to accomplish organizational goals, and exercising influence to accomplish the goals. They maintained that leadership can be viewed from a sociological perspective – situational, transactional, and transformational, shared, and distributed forms of leadership, or from a psychological perspective, behaviors, effects of leadership on organizations, and political influences (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

Recently, there has been a growing interest in leadership processes involving teams and the distribution of leadership responsibilities. Spillane et al. (2004) framed leadership in an organization based on its social capital. They asserted that it is not who leads that matters, but how leadership is shared and distributed to attain the organizational goals (Spillane, et al., 2004).
Finally, according to Yukl (2010), although there are many interpretations of what leadership is, practitioners and behavioral scientists “seem to believe that leadership is a real phenomenon that is important for the effectiveness of organizations” and therefore should be studied (p. 3).

**Leadership Theories**

The following is an outline of the emergence of leadership theories from the early twentieth century to present that have contributed to our understanding of current leadership models. This section concludes with a portion regarding contemporary leadership.

**Research on Leadership**

Early researchers of the twentieth century focused on leadership traits to identify effective leaders. These theorists portrayed leaders as heroic, mythic, and destined to rise to leadership when needed (Marion, 2002). Traits included intelligence, responsibility, status, and situations (Marion, 2002). The theory posits that the more one possesses of the above traits, the more likely one will be an effective leader. Marion (2002) maintained that traits theory is based on circular logic in which outcomes (organizational effectiveness) are mistaken for causes (leadership traits). He pointed out that the constructs to measure leadership traits on organizational effectiveness, lack reliability and validity (Marion, 2002).

Subsequent researchers focused on leadership behaviors to explain organizational effectiveness (Marion, 2002). Behavioral theorists believed that any person can learn to become a great leader if he/she adopts effective leadership behaviors through teachings and observations (Daft, 2002; Marion, 2002). A few prominent studies on leadership behavior were done by the University of Michigan and Ohio State University.
The University of Michigan studies suggested two styles of leadership behavior at opposite ends of the continuum, production centered behavior and employee centered behavior (Daft, 2002). Production centered leadership behavior is concerned with getting the job done (Daft, 2002). Leaders demonstrating this behavior are more interested in the work subordinates do rather than their satisfaction with their job. Leaders demonstrating employee centered behaviors are concerned about their subordinates’ satisfaction with their jobs (Daft, 2002). They also show interest in developing cohesive work groups, or teams. Relating production centered and employee centered leadership behaviors to effectiveness criteria (job satisfaction, turnover, absenteeism and productivity, and leadership) authors, Hoy and Miskel (1987) noted three generalizations regarding the University of Michigan studies:

1) Effective leaders have good relationships with their subordinates than less effective ones;

2) Effective leaders use more participatory methods of supervision than do less effective leaders;

3) Effective leaders set high performance goals for their organization.

The Ohio State University studies noted two leadership behaviors relating to organizational effectiveness: initiating leadership -- the leader defines formal lines of communication and determines how task are performed, and consideration behavior -- the leader shows concern for subordinates and attempts to establish a warm, supportive and friendly environment (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). Unlike the University of Michigan studies, the two behaviors were not viewed at opposite end of a continuum, but as independent variables; a leader could exhibit both behaviors and be therefore effective (Hoy & Miskel, 1987).
As part of the Ohio State Leadership Studies, the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was developed to determine leadership behavior as viewed by the leader and subordinates, in regards to organizational effectiveness (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). The results from the study indicated that effective leaders score high on initiating and consideration behaviors. Ineffective leaders score low on both initiating and consideration. Finally, supervisors value initiating behaviors more than consideration behaviors (Hoy & Miskel).

Following the Michigan and Ohio State studies, Hersey and Blanchard developed a situational model of leadership theory (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). This theory takes into account not only behaviors but situational variables. The model prescribes to managers the type of leadership behavior to exhibit under specific conditions, or situations (Hoy & Miskel, 1987).

**Transactional and Transformational Leadership**

Since the late 1970s, transactional and transformational leadership has been a topic of discussion among leadership theorists, and was strongly influenced by the work of Burns (as cited in Yukl, 2010). Transactional leadership approaches followers with an eye to exchange one thing for another – e.g. job for votes, more work for better wages (Yukl, 2010). A transactional leader inspires followers by appealing to their self-interests. Transactional leaders are good for keeping things running smoothly. Values in a transactional organization include: honesty, fairness, responsibility and reciprocity. Burns (as cited in Yukl, 2010) also identified a second form of leadership from his studies, transformational leadership. Burns (as cited in Yukl, 2010) contended that a transformational leader is concerned with appealing to the moral values of his/her followers, to raise their self-consciousness about ethical issues, and to work in synergy to reform institutions.
Bass (1990) conducted additional research on transactional and transformational leadership. He posited a distinction between transactional and transformational leadership defined in terms of behaviors to influence followers (Bass, 1990). According to Bass (1990), transformational leaders recognized and sought to satisfy the needs of followers by engaging the full person. In addition, the transformational leader created a synergy in the organization by inspiring others to embrace and achieve collective goals. Bass (1990) maintained that transformational leaders have a moral imperative. He also asserted that transformational leaders must have a certain amount of charisma to get followers to transcend self-interests for the interests of the organization (Bass, 1990).

Bass and Avolio later developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure a broad range of leadership types, from passive leadership to transformational leadership (as cited in Daft, 2002). The conceptual basis for the factor structure for the MLQ began with Burns’ description of transactional and transformational leadership (as cited in Daft, 2002). The MLQ measures transformational behaviors – idealized influence, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, and two transactional behaviors, contingent reward and passive management by exception. Bass and Avolio identified a third dimension to leadership, laissez faire (as cited in Daft, 2002). The MLQ was, and is used today by organizations, to define leadership in relation to organizational effectiveness (Daft, 2002).

In his book, The Leadership Experience, Daft (2002) contended, “Leader style combinations can be effective” (p. 52). Daft (2002) used an example of a former Air Force General who was hired by a district to turn the schools around. He wrote that the superintendent effectively,
…used initiating structure behavior to clarify goals and set performance standards to be achieved. The high degree of initiating structure behavior was necessary to get everyone focused in the same direction, moving ...schools toward higher standards. He also demonstrated consideration by anticipating possible resistance among teachers and involving them in the process. He asks questions and listens to the answers (p.53).

Hoy and Miskel (1987) also related the effectiveness of a leader to initiating structures and consideration behaviors. They contended “school administrators generally are most effective when they score high on both dimensions of leadership behavior” (Hoy & Miskel, 1987, p. 278).

The results of the Ohio State and University of Michigan behavioral studies were later incorporated by Blake and Mouton in developing the “Managerial Grid” (Hoy & Miskel, 1987, p. 299). The Managerial Grid is a tool to help managers know their leadership style in terms of concern for the individual, as well as concern for production, to become more effective personally and to build team synergy (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). The spectrum of the grid ranges from low concern for individuals and low concern for production, to high concern for individuals and high concern for production (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). The theory suggested that the traits of a manager could fall anywhere on the grid, such as a high concern for production, low concern for individuals, or a high concern for individuals and low concern for production, or any combinations (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). This diagnostic process assumed that a high concern for the individual and for production is the most effective style of management. According to Daft (2002), the manager that has a high concern for individual and a high concern for production is the most effective as a leader. Critics suggested that Blake and Moulton’s managerial grid
oversimplified the task of a manager (Hoy and Miskel, 1987). Hoy and Miskel (1987) warned that the Managerial Grid has not “been subjected to rigorous empirical validation” (p. 307).

**Contemporary Leadership**

Several books have been written that espouse views of what effective leadership is – what a leader looks like, acts like, and does. The authors of these books assert leadership theories, behaviors, and approaches that can be learned and applied, resulting in leadership effectiveness. Although the premise behind each book is that leaders can learn to be better leaders, the underlying message is that each author is a “great man” who bases his theories of leadership on his successes and personal accounts of others in leadership roles. These personal accounts are then sold to organizations as silver bullet advice, without adequate scrutiny or testing (Harris, 2007). According to Levin (2006), there are many viewpoints regarding new leadership theories, but “very little solid research supporting them” (p. 43). Levin (2006) maintained that much of “what parades as research is opinion garbed in the language of research” (Levin, p. 43).

Maxwell (2007), author of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Covey (1992; 2001), author of *Principle Centered Leadership* and *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*, and Collins (2002), author of *Good to Great*, are just a few leadership authors who have capitalized on the needs of organizations regarding leadership development. There is no doubt that these books are thought to be important and useful tools for many leaders as evidenced by the number of books sold by each author, e.g. Maxwell (2007) – 19 million books, Covey (1992; 2001) – 20 million books (Top Leadership Gurus, n.d.). According to Harris (2008), the stories and accounts of leadership by such authors as Maxwell, Covey and Collins are useful because they “reinforce that leadership is, what individuals do” (p. 172). Harris (2008) contended that personal accounts of leadership practice are good proxies for empirical data. Much of the advice
given by the above authors regarding leadership aligns with findings from empirical research of leadership behaviors on organizational effectiveness conducted by Bass and Avolio, Blake and Moulton and Burns (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). Finally, it is important to note that the conceptual meaning of leadership effectiveness viewed from the individual and organizational levels, differs not only from author to author, but from within the empirical world of leadership research--from theorist to theorist. Therefore, the silver bullet advice (Harris, 2008) given by Maxwell, Collins and Covey, may, or may not be useful for leaders to improve their practice. As with research, the buyer must beware when it comes to taking advice from only one source with little or no empirical support.

In the book, The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, Maxwell (2007) summarized effective leadership behaviors based on his experiences as a self-confessed expert leader, and on stories of other successful leaders such as President Theodore Roosevelt who helped the United States develop into a world power during the early 20th century. Maxwell (2007) maintained that individuals can learn how to be effective leaders. He asserted that although some individuals are born with greater natural leadership abilities (traits) than others, “the ability to lead is a collection of skills, nearly all of which can be learned and improved” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 25). Maxwell (2007) outlined effective leadership leaders employ in the form of laws. Worth noting for the purposes of this literature review are the The Law of Process and The Law of the Inner Circle.

The Law of Process asserts that leadership can be learned and developed over time, not in a day (Maxwell, 2007). Critical to leadership is developing people skills, emotional strength, vision, momentum, self-discipline, and timing (Maxwell, 2007). Maxwell (2007) related the
Law of Process in telling the story of how Theodore Roosevelt was tenacious in developing his mind and body to become a great American leader.

The Law of the Inner Circle asserts that the ultimate potential of any leader is determined by those closest to him/her, or the “inner circle” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 130). Therefore it is paramount for leaders to strategically develop the inner circle--those who can have a positive impact on the organization - into leaders themselves (Maxwell, 2007). Maxwell (2007) told a personal story of how he helped a church expand its membership in 1981. He set out to bring in new leadership to turn the church around. Leaders were selected based on their abilities to lead and “deliver results” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 136). Within a few years, the congregation tripled in size. Maxwell (2007) attributed the growth to a strong inner circle he developed.

Collins (2001), author of Good to Great, also spoke of the need to develop the inner circle of people to impact an organization. Collins (2001) asserted the need to get the right people in the right seat on the bus to be successful. He maintained that good to great leaders understand that if you begin with “who” gets on the bus, rather than “what” to do when getting on the bus, the organization will adapt and be more successful (Collins, 2001, p. 42). Collins (2001) asserted that if you have the right people on the bus, they don’t need to be “tightly managed or fired up; they will be self-motivated by the inner drive to produce the beset results and to be part of creating something great” (p. 42). Collins (2001) attributed the success of many organizations, to having the right people in key leadership roles.

Covey (1992), author of Principle Centered Leadership, believed that effective leadership behaviors can be learned. Covey (1992) outlined “basic principles” of effective leadership that “uplift, ennable, fulfill, empower and inspire” followers (p. 19). To be an effective leader, Covey (1992) contended, one must replace ineffective ways of doing things, or
habits, with effective ones. A few of the ineffective habits of leaders Covey (1992) identified are: being reactive, working without a clear end in mind, not doing the urgent thing first, thinking win/lose, not seeking to understand first, not compromising, and fearing improvement. He asserted that, “Some habits of ineffectiveness are rooted in our social conditioning towards quick-fix, short term thinking” (Covey, 1992, p. 14). Covey (1992) countered the approach of the “quick fix” with the “Law of the Farm”, writing, “The only thing that endures over time is the law of the farm” (p.17). Covey (1992) continued, “You must prepare the ground, put in the seed, cultivate it, weed it, water it, then gradually nurture growth and development to full maturity” (p. 17). The Law of the Farm, he asserted, helps transform a low performing organization to a high performing organization (Covey, 1992). Covey (1992) contended that for a leader to follow the Law of the Farm, he/she must be able to clearly communicate a vision, clarify a purpose, make his/her behavior congruent with one’s beliefs, and align procedures with principles, roles, and goals. In short, leaders must be willing to give up old ways of doing things, or in other words, past “paradigms” of leadership (Covey, 1992). He outlined several leadership behaviors that are useful to the practitioner to transform an organization to a high performing one (Covey, 1992). Finally, Covey (1992) maintained that a high performing organization has a leader who,

…builds on man’s need for meaning; is preoccupied with purposes and values, morals and ethics; transcends daily affairs; is oriented toward meeting long-term goals without compromising human values and principles; separates causes and symptoms and works at prevention; values profit as the basis of growth; is proactive, catalytic and patient; focuses more on missions and strategies for achieving them; makes full use of human resources; identifies and develops new talent; recognizes and rewards significant
contributions; designs and redesigns jobs to make them meaningful and challenging; releases human potential; models love; leads out in new directions; aligns internal structures and systems to reinforce overarching values and goals (p. 286).

In his book, *The 8th Habit; From Effectiveness to Greatness*, Covey (2001) spoke of building organizational capacity by providing all with a voice in leadership and thus affirming the work and potential of those in the organization. Covey (2001) identified four leadership roles for “everyone in the organization regardless of position” (Covey, 2001, p. 114). The roles he identified are: (a) modeling trustworthiness; (b) path finding--collectively building a vision; (c) aligning goals, structures and systems and processes to encourage and nurture the empowerment of people and culture to serve the vision and the values; and (d) empowering individuals to have a voice--thus affirming the worth of all members of the organization (Covey, 2001). Covey (2001) asserted that the leader frames organizational effectiveness by empowering others and setting the conditions for building capacity, excitement, commitment and cooperation.

**School Leadership**

There is a widespread interest in improving leadership in schools as a key variable to successful implementation of large-scale reform and improving student performance (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Walstrom, 2004). In a report to the Wallace Foundation, Leithwood et al. (2004) stated that effective school leadership makes a difference in improving learning. In fact, they asserted, “Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (Leithwood, et al., 2004, p.3). They continued, “While evidence about leadership effects on student learning can be confusing to interpret, much of the existing research actually underestimates its effects” (Leithwood, et al., 2004, p.3). Findings from several studies showed direct and indirect effects of leadership on
student learning that accounted for about a quarter of total school effects (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Kalb (2002), author of the *Administrator’s Guide to Student Achievement*, pointed out that the most essential function of an administrator “is to provide instructional leadership by overseeing teaching” (p. 314). Kalb (2002) continued, “Effective teaching can be promoted by encouraging teachers to learn how to use a variety of instructional strategies, which will expand their instructional choices” (Kalb, 2002, p. 314). Kalb (2002) identified six actions effective instructional leaders do. Instructional leaders model a wide range of instructional strategies, provide opportunities for teachers to be involved in professional development, extend the impact of professional development by creating and encouraging teachers to participate in learning communities and study teams, continually monitor student progress by collecting and reviewing artifacts, and conduct informal visits and observations and promote the use of a variety of assessment strategies (Kalb, 2002).

Recently, researchers of leadership have viewed school leadership in terms of social capital; all in the organization have the potential to share leadership (Elmore, 2000; Leithwood et al. 2010; Spillane, et al., 2001). According to Spillane et al. (2001), shared and distributed leadership models expand roles for subordinates and promote interdependence. In a shared and distributed model, employees rely on each other to get the job done (Spillane, et al., 2001).

**School Leadership Functions**

When one thinks of leadership functions in schools, many associations come to mind. Heller and Firestone (1995) conducted a study of how six leadership functions were performed in eight elementary schools, who performed these functions, and how the functions contributed to
the institutionalization of a newly implemented school program. The six leadership functions identified for their study were: (a) providing and selling a vision; (b) obtaining resources; (c) providing encouragement and recognition; (d) adapting standard operating procedures; (e) monitoring improvement efforts; and (f) handling disturbances. Based on data collected through interviews in the schools studied, six leadership functions were shared by teachers and administrators in four schools that fully institutionalizing the new program (Heller & Firestone, 1995). Only two of the six leadership functions were present in three schools that implemented the program in a “token” manner. The authors noted a “redundancy” of leadership functions shared by teachers and administrators in the four schools fully institutionalizing the program (Heller & Firestone, 1995).

In order for teachers to perform leadership functions, administrators must support them in doing so. Mayrowetz and Weinstein (1999) found that schools with administrators who supported teachers in performing leadership functions, benefited from program implementation and institutionalization. Using Heller and Firestone’s (1995) leadership functions, Mayrowetz and Weinstein (1999) examined inclusive leadership in three schools in relation to the degree of implementation and institutionalization of special education inclusion. Based on data from teacher and administrator interviews, information from policies and practices, observations of formal and informal staff meetings on inclusion, and information from case studies of four special education children, they concluded that the level of redundancy in leadership functions was consistent with the degree to which inclusion was institutionalized in the three schools. Teachers in the two schools with the highest degree of inclusion performed six of the eight leadership functions. The principals in these two schools also performed six functions. In the
school with the lowest degree of inclusion, teachers performed two leadership functions, while
the principal performed six (Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999).

Robinson and Timperley (2007) examined seventeen leadership studies with evidence of
a positive impact on professional development initiatives resulting in improved student
performance. They then collapsed all demonstrated leadership practices in the studies into five
broad dimensions: (a) goal setting co-constructed by teachers and outside researchers or
professional developers; (b) ensuring strategic alignment of resources and pedagogy; (c) creating
and maintaining a professional learning community that focuses on improvement of student
achievement; (d) engaging in constructive dialogue about problematic instructional practices,
and gaining commitment to address them; and (e) selecting and developing smart tools--the
resources needed to address teaching and learning and impact student performance. Robinson
and Timperley (2007) noted that the five leadership practices were carried out by those in formal
leadership positions (principals and supervisors) and those not in formal leadership positions
(teachers and support personnel). The authors concluded that the leadership practices carried out
by teachers and principals should not be viewed as distinct practices, but integrated into
continual “cycles of inquiry” regarding student and staff needs (Robinson & Timperley, 2007, p.
258).

The redundancy of leadership functions performed by teachers of the successful schools
in Heller and Firestone (1995) and Robinson and Timperley’s (2007) studies, shared the three
common themes: (a) staff members collectively set the vision and goals for the organizations; (b)
staff acquired resources to accomplish the organizations’ goals; and (c) staff collectively engaged
in improvement efforts. Robinson and Timperley’s (2007) view of sharing leadership functions
with all school members, are consistent with improvement efforts that many schools are
undertaking today to establish strong cultures where all staff are committed to working together and sharing responsibilities. In describing research on effective schools, Cunningham and Cresso (1993) maintained that an effective culture depends on shared ethos and collegiality, where “each member feels free and encouraged to participate…and share equally in influencing the group” (p. 100). They asserted that in an effective school culture, “All members feel a sense of responsibility toward the group’s success and are committed to the work of the group” (Cunningham & Cresso, 1993, p. 100). Finally, Peterson and Deal (1998), referring to the importance of school culture, maintained that, “This ephemeral, taken-for-granted aspect of schools, too often over-looked or ignored, is actually one of the most significant features of any educational enterprise” (p. 28).

**Distributed Leadership**

“Transforming schools is too complex to expect one person to accomplish single-handedly” (Lashway, 2003, p. 3).

This section of the literature review describes the nature of distributed leadership from multiple studies, couched in a normative epistemology (what schools and leaders ought to know and do).

One leader cannot do the work that school reform requires. Because of increased federal and state requirements, many schools are structuring new forms of leadership that have emerged from educational research; a school leadership structure that is distributed “in which multiple school members are seen as exercising powerful instructional leadership, sometimes in redundant fashion, in order to effect programmatic change and instructional improvement” (Camburn, Rowan & Taylor, 2003, p. 248). According to Wallach, Lambert, Copeland and Lowry (2005),
“Distributed leadership is a collective activity, focused on collective goals, which comprises a quality or energy that is greater than then the sum of individual actions” (p. 2).

Teachers in many schools are taking on added responsibilities including leadership functions normally understood as administrative. Teacher and principal understanding of distributed leadership is paramount to generate usable knowledge in order to enact it in schools. Potentially problematic though, is that proponents of distributed leadership have many divergent views of what it is (Gronn, 2009). Some proponents may simply view distributed leadership as the principal handing off administrative tasks to individual teachers. Other views include the principal creating teams of teachers to do instructional or administrative work. Harris (2007) asserted that the term “distributed leadership” in education, is an “accumulation of overlapping concepts” that has “served to obscure the precise meaning of the term, rendering it a catch-all phase for any type of devolved, shared or dispersed leadership practice in schools” (p. 315). Gronn (2008) suggested that the reason distributed leadership may be attractive to organizations, is because it “lays the groundwork” for democratic leadership and the idea of “voice”, thus widening the span of employee participation (p.154). Gronn (2008) noted that although many schools are “trumpeting the virtues” of distributed leadership, “none of them are espousing doctrines that come anywhere near…democratic leadership” (Gronn, 2008, p. 154).

Spillane (2005) drew on distributed cognition theory--the study of interactions of people in which cognitive resources are shared in order to accomplish something that an individual could not achieve alone, as well as activity theory--the study of activities of people in various settings, to define distributed leadership as practices and social interactions within a school. He maintained that “distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice rather than leaders, leadership roles, or leadership functions” (Spillane, 2005, p.3). He continued,
“Leadership practice is the core unit of analysis in trying to understand school leadership from a distributed perspective” (Spillane, 2005, p.3). According to Spillane (2005),

The issue here to grapple with is that leadership practice is not equivalent to the actions of the principal or some other school leader. Simply, leadership practice is not a function of what a leader knows and does. From a distributed perspective, leadership practice takes shape in the interactions of people and their situation, rather than from the actions of an individual leader (p. 3).

Distributed leadership can be conceptualized in schools as fluid and emergent practices, activities, social interactions, and organizational influences that are not centered on one person (Elmore, 2000; Gronn, 2008; Spillane, 2005). It can be conceptualized as either additive --where people engage in leadership activities without taking into account the leadership activities of others, and holistic--where there are consciously managed and “synergistic relationships … among some, many, or all sources of leadership in the organization” (Leithwood, et al., 2007, p. 39).

**Role of the Principal**

Common in the research on distributed leadership from a holistic perspective, is the role of the principal. In the articles reviewed, the principal is responsible for activating teacher leadership functions, identifying teacher leaders, and providing them with opportunities to lead. The principal is considered the instructional leader from a distributed perspective, but not necessarily the expert (Spillane, et al., 2001). Expertise from this perspective is distributed through the school environment (Spillane et al., 2001). All members of a school are viewed as experts in their own right; all members are interdependent, relying on each other’s expertise to complete complex tasks (Elmore, 2000; Spillane, et al. 2001). This does not mean that formal
school leadership structures are removed or redundant in a distributed model, or that schools are boss-less or self-managed (Harris, 2008). Instead, leadership is “extended” by those in formal leadership roles who are the “gatekeepers to distributed leadership practice in their schools” (Harris, 2008, p. 175).

Table 4

Distributed Leadership Roles and Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Roles</th>
<th>Leadership Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals and Support</td>
<td>*Design school improvement strategies,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>*Implement incentive structures,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Recruit and evaluate teachers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Broker professional development consistent with improvement strategies,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Allocate school resources towards instruction,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Buffer non-instructional issues from teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>*Design, conduct and participate in professional development,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Participate in recruitment and hiring of new teachers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Evaluate professional development,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Consult and evaluate professional practice of colleagues,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Participate in development of new professional development practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the article, *Building a New Structure for School Leadership*, Elmore (2000) posited a model of distributed leadership that emphasized different roles and functions for administrators, teachers and support personnel. He maintained the use of the term “comparative advantage . . . to emphasize the degree to which large scale improvement requires deference to and respect for expertise, coupled with reciprocity of accountability” (Elmore, 2000, p. 23). Elmore (2000) stressed, “The exact design of roles and functions is less important than the underlying principles of distributed expertise, mutual dependence, reciprocity of accountability and capacity, and the centrality of instructional practice to the definition of leadership roles”, all of which are the
theoretical framework for a distributed model of leadership in schools (p. 24). Table 4 describes
leadership roles and functions of teachers, principals and support personnel (Elmore, 2000).

Hulpia, et al. (2009) viewed distributed leadership as a worthwhile alternative to current
leadership structures that rely on the actions of one person. But they (Hulpia, et al. 2009), like
Elmore (2000), also viewed some leadership functions as administrative. In a quantitative study
aimed at determining which leadership functions are distributed among formal leadership
positions, Hulpia et al. (2009) gave a four point Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) to
principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders of 46 secondary schools in Flanders, Belgium.
Using the variables of (a) average leadership --the average leadership displayed by the principal,
assistant principal, and teacher leaders, (b) maximum leadership--the maximum leadership
displayed by only the principal and assistant principal, (c) support--the developing and
empowering of teachers and setting a vision, and (d) supervision, Hulpia et. al. (2009) found that
supervision was primarily performed by the principal (M=2.70; SD=1.06) and to a lesser degree
by the assistant principal M=2.19; SD=1.16) and teacher leaders (M=1.38; SD=1.08).
Comparing principal, assistant, teacher leaders and average leadership on the variable support--
developing and empowering teacher leaders and setting a vision, Hulpia et al. found a more
distributed form of leadership (principal, M= 2.66, assistant, M=2.53, teacher leaders, M=2.34,
average, M=2.51). These results indicated that in the 46 secondary schools, support was more
equally distributed than was supervision among the leadership team (Hulpia, et. al. 2009).
Hulpia et al. (2009) contended that results of their study confirmed other studies, in that average
leadership functions in schools, are “not the sole domain of one person but” are “distributed
among formal members of the leadership team--teacher leaders, principals and assistant

39
principals” (p. 1030). They concluded, “The results of the DLI underpin that leading schools involve multiple individuals, which differ by type and function” (Hulpia et al., p. 1013).

Based on several leadership studies, Mayrowetz (2008) presented common usages of the term distributed leadership--one descriptive and three prescriptive usages. He maintained that each usage has its strengths and weaknesses (Mayrowetz, 2008). Usage one describes distributed leadership as an activity “stretched over multiple people” (Mayrowetz, 2008, p. 426). Usage 2 views distributed leadership as a democracy and shared among all in a democratic way. Some researchers suggested that democratic leadership can have negative results for teachers and schools. Mayrowetz (2008) noted that usage two shows promise, but that the empirical link to school improvement is weak. Usage three views distributed leadership for the purposes of efficiency and effectiveness. Teachers engage in leadership activities if they have the expertise, e.g. reading coaches, lead teachers. Mayrowetz contended that usage three makes the job of principal do-able (Mayrowetz, 2008). But he warned that not all potential leaders are, or will be, good leaders. He maintained that the distribution of leadership could result in the “distribution of incompetence” (Mayrowetz, 2008, p. 430). He also noted that the link to school improvement is weak for usage three (Mayrowetz, 2008). Usage four views distributed leadership as a means for capacity building, and promotes multiple people engaging in leadership roles so as to learn more about themselves and the problems facing the school (Mayrowetz, 2008). To achieve this, it requires re-culturing a school. Mayrowetz (2008) asserted that usage four may be in the best prescription for school improvement because it promotes all teachers in the engagement of various roles of leadership.

Other terms used by researchers for distributed leadership included shared instructional, transformational, and buffered. Anderson (2003) identified these models and a fourth
“contested” model in a study of six schools noted for their distribution of leadership. He found that the schools that used a shared instructional or transformational leadership model shared decisions with the principal regarding instruction and reform efforts (Anderson, 2003). A reciprocal nature of leadership was prevalent in these schools. Anderson (2003) noted that both forms of leadership distribution focused on building organizational capacity, interactions, and activities. One school used a buffered model of distributed leadership. According to Anderson (2003), the buffered model is conducive to making the job of principal do-able, but does not promote leadership opportunities for other teachers. Anderson (2003) asserted that the buffered model focuses on activities rather in whole school interactions. Finally, in one school studied, Anderson (2003) classified distributed leadership as “contested”. The principal was at odds with staff about decisions. Staff members frequently challenged the principal for the purpose of making their own decisions. Guidelines for establishing and maintaining leadership for school renewal had not been established in this school. In addition, strong relationships had not been forged, and trust had eroded (Anderson, 2003).

Limits to Distributed Leadership

There may be limits to the extent to which teachers in a distributed model can make decisions. Based on the charge of collective groups, autonomy to make final decisions may be limited to making preliminary decisions because formal leadership structures are not, or cannot, be removed (Harris, 2008). According to Harris (2008), leadership structures in a distributed model assume that there is “a powerful relationship between vertical and lateral leadership processes” (p. 174). This is the case when faced with administrative decisions such as the budget and evaluations of employees (Elmore, 2000). For example, teams that collectively focus on teaching and learning, often experience more autonomy (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson & Meyers,
This freedom to make collective decisions has a positive effect on latency and commitment, which impacts team effectiveness (Scribner, et. al., 2007). In contrast, less autonomous teams--teams that are not in a position to make administrative decisions--are often passive when meeting. Their meetings are filled with questions about what they can and can’t do, which has a negative impact on team effectiveness (Scribner et al., 2007). Lima (2008) maintained that there is no guarantee that all members of teams or within schools, can lead. For example, some teams may be ineffective because of lack of leadership training (Lima, 2008).

Finally, as noted earlier, “Distributing leadership is a risky business and may result in the distribution of incompetence” (Timperley, 2005, p. 417). Timperley’s (2005) view of distributed leadership as risky, is supported by Lima (2008) and Mayrowetz (2008).

Hybrid Version of Distributed Leadership

Gronn (2009) proposed a “hybrid” version of distributed leadership, where leadership practice “includes both individual leaders and holistic leadership units working in tandem” (p. 384). He asserted that in studies of distributed leadership practice, “solo leaders continue to figure prominently” (Gronn, 2009, p. 383) in organizations within a distributed framework. Gronn (2009) provided studies where solo leadership conjoined with distributed forms of leadership to form a distributed hybrid model of leadership. A hybrid model of distributed leadership (Gronn, 2009) is supported by Elmore (2000) in his study on the roles and functions of individuals in a distributed model of leadership, by Mayrowetz (2008) in describing distributed leadership usage three -- where teachers and others engage in leadership activities if they have the expertise, and by Hulpia et al. (2009), in noting the findings of their study that showed that there is a delineation of functions performed by formal members of a team in a distributed model of leadership, e.g. principal and teacher.
The Effects of Distributed Leadership

The literature reviewed examined the effects of distributed leadership on schools that enacted it using the following theoretical models: holistic (Gronn, 2002), additive (Spillane, 2005), and hybrid (Gronn, 2009). It is important to note that empirical research on measuring direct and indirect effects of shared and distributed leadership is scarce (Hulpia et al., 2009). Leithwood, et al. (2007) contended that, “With the exception of leadership distributed through formally established committees and teams, we have almost no systematic evidence about the relative contribution to the achievement of organizational goals of different patterns of distributed leadership; limited to school organizations, such evidence is virtually nonexistent” (p. 38). The following draws on empirical literature to explore the direct and indirect effects of distributed leadership in schools.

Marks and Printy (2003) studied the levels of teacher and principal leadership in 24 nationally recognized restructured schools to determine its impact on instruction. One hundred and forty three teachers were rated three times by multiple observers over a course of the year on their instructional effectiveness (Marks & Printy, 2003). Multilevel path analysis indicated that schools using integrated approaches to leadership resulted in higher levels of instruction (.6 SD higher than schools using non-integrated approaches to leadership). Marks and Printy (2003) noted, “When the principal elicits high levels of commitment from teachers and works interactively with teachers in a shared instructional leadership capacity, when schools have the benefits of integrated leadership, schools learn and perform at high levels” (p. 393).

Maxcy and Nguyen (2006) examined the impact of distributed leadership on school initiatives in two Texas schools. They found that the school with higher levels of distributed leadership was more successful at implementing their new school initiative than the school with
lower levels of distributed leadership (Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006). In the study they noted that while teachers in the successful schools embraced the opportunity to lead, distributed leadership was legitimized and steered at a distance by administrators (Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006).

Pounder, Ogawa and Adams (1995) studied relationships between leadership exercised by principals, teachers, and others, on school adaptation, goal achievement, latency, and school effectiveness measures. They found that leadership by principals and teachers positively affected latency and commitment, which in turn affected perceived effectiveness and staff turnover (Pounder, et al., 1995). They also maintained that leadership exerted by individual teachers did not impact the organizational functions (Pounder et al., 1995).

In an analysis of leadership distribution, Louis, et al. (2010) interviewed teachers from six schools on collective leadership measures to make comparisons regarding the range of sources of leadership influence, and the strength of that influence on teachers” (p. 56). Data were collected from teacher and administrator interviews (Louis, et al., 2010). Analysis was conducted in three stages: (a) describing leadership activities based on the work of Spillane’s concept of leadership practice--the actions and sources of leadership linked to goals in specific contexts; (b) recoding scenarios/activities and looking for patterns of leadership distribution; and (c) writing a case report for each school (Louis et al., 2010). Key findings included the following:

1. While there are many sources of leadership in schools, principals remain the central source of leadership;
2. How leadership is distributed in schools depends on what is to be accomplished, on the availability of professional expertise, and on principals’ preferences regarding the use of professional expertise;
3. No single pattern of leadership distribution is consistently linked to student learning; principals are involved in many leadership activities;

4. Others who act as leaders in the school ordinarily do so in respect to one or a few initiatives;

5. Leadership is more distributed for practices aimed at developing people and managing instruction than it is for setting directions and structuring the workplace;

6. More complex and coordinated patterns of distributed leadership appear when school improvement initiatives focus directly on student learning goals, as distinct from the implementation of specific programs (Louis, et al. 2010).

Leadership distribution can have very different results depending on how it is framed in schools. Timperley (2005) sought evidence of distributed leadership during a four-year school improvement literacy intervention initiative in seven Auckland, New Zealand elementary schools known for distributing leadership. Timperley (2005) interviewed teachers and taped meetings regarding the literacy initiative. He then analyzed student achievement data, including classroom based data and national normed assessments (Timperley, 2005). Timperley (2005) found that in high performing schools, teacher leaders expected their colleagues to work together to improve achievement on reading. In contrast, the teacher leader expectations for their colleagues in low performing schools, was to only implement the literacy program, not to work together. Timperley (2005) also found that high performing schools made data transparent to help teachers improve how they teach reading. In low performing schools, data were presented in a way that protected the privacy of teachers (Timperley, 2005). The study highlighted the differences in distributed leadership in schools, as well as the potential consequences and risks of implementing it (Timperley, 2005). Timperley (2005) stressed, “Distributing leadership is only desirable if the
quality of the leadership activities contributes to assisting teachers to provide more effective instruction to their students, and it is on these qualities that we should focus” (p. 417). The influence process by teacher leaders in Timperley’s (2005) study showed an important phenomenon of distributed leadership that may be overlooked -- the process of teacher leaders influencing other teachers in schools (Gronn, 2000).

In a qualitative study on distributed leadership, Leithwood, et al. (2007) used two holistic patterns of distributed leadership identified by Gronn (2002) to determine which leadership functions were conscientiously aligned in eight schools in Ontario, Canada that had demonstrated a commitment to distributed leadership, and had evidence of improved student learning over a 3-year period of time. The two holistic patterns adapted by Leithwood et al. (2007) for the study were: (a) spontaneous alignment--where individuals with different skills are brought together for a period of time with little or no planning and then are disbanded; and (b) planful alignment--where those providing formalized leadership have been given “prior and planful thought by organizational members (Leithwood et. al., 2007, p. 40). Leithwood et al. (2007) also added two additional patterns of distributed leadership: (a) spontaneous misalignment--which mirrors spontaneous alignment but with low results; and (b) anarchic misalignment -- where various leaders (those with influence) actively reject other leaders’ influences and abilities. Leadership functions for the study included direction setting, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program.

A total of fifty-eight non administrator school leaders and formal school leaders were interviewed about “district initiatives, leaders’ practices with respect to initiatives, characteristics of non-administrator nominated leadership, influences on the distribution of leadership, the impact of distributed leadership, and relationships between school and district leadership”
Results showed that planful alignment was prevalent in schools with high priority initiatives. Leithwood et al. (2007) asserted that an obvious reason for distributed leadership in schools with high priority initiatives was the “attention, effort…and focused leadership of the principal” (p. 55). Leithwood et al. (2007) maintained that aligned forms of leadership most likely will not occur without focused leadership and monitoring on the part of the formal leader. The study also looked at who performed a variety of leadership functions. Results showed that informal leaders were more involved in setting high performance expectations under the function setting direction than formal leaders (Leithwood et al., 2007). Formal leaders were more involved in articulating a vision. Under developing people, formal leaders and informal leaders were involved in contributing to professional development (Leithwood et al., 2007). Formal leaders were not as involved as informal leaders in providing individualized support. Under redesigning the organization, all leaders were committed to building collaborative processes and teamwork (Leithwood et al., 2007). Under managing the instructional program, non-administrative leader were more involved with managing programs, committees and meetings (Leithwood et al., 2007). Formal leaders were more involved with delegating. In viewing the eight schools as examples of best practices in regards to distributed leadership, Leithwood et al. (2007) concluded, “While the distribution of leadership functions we discovered may not be perfect, there is a very good chance that it is significantly more productive than average; it may very well represent the current state of ‘best practice’ when it comes to distributing leadership functions” (p. 58).

Conclusion

Leadership in its many forms is one of the most important influences on organizational effectiveness and therefore should be studied (Yukl, 2010). In schools, organizational
effectiveness most often equates to student success through teacher and leader effects. The literature reviewed for this study is clear; a redundancy of leadership functions shared by those in formal and informal positions is evident in schools that are successful.

As the principal of an organization that values shared leadership by those in formal and informal positions—an organization that has had some success in regards to student performance on state tests measuring math, reading and science skills (see Table 1), I do not know what will happen regarding formal and informal structures of leadership after I leave. I am passionate about the continued success of our school well into the future. Therefore, throughout the research, I was committed to co-engaging my staff in defining distributed leadership, and developing action plans to create an all-encompassing culture of distributive leadership teams consisting of teacher leaders to better achieve, manage, organize and sustain building-level instructional goals and practices in our school.

Although leadership has varying meanings to various people, and is hard to define (Marion, 2002), common themes emerged from the literature that painted an overall picture of what “good leadership” is. The literature was an important aspect of my study because it served as a foundation for teachers who participated in the study to better understand leadership as an evolving construct. The literature wove together congruent theoretical principles that are important to all organizations, principles such as the purposes of leadership (Yukl, 2010) the behaviors of successful leaders (Hoy & Miskel, 1987), the sociological approaches leaders use to influence followers (Covey, 2001; Yukl, 2010), and the importance of leadership structures in the motivation of followers (Collins, 2001; Leithwood, 2008; Maxwell, 2007; Yukl, 2010). These principles supported by the literature, were continuing sources for dialogue and inquiry during the look and think stages of the study. The literature also assisted the action research
team in developing action plans at the conclusion of the study for next steps in the school’s
development.
Chapter 3

Report of the Study

Introduction

This chapter describes in detail the setting during the study, a description of the action research team members and how they were involved as co-researchers in this study, a narrative account of how the phases of research were conducted, how literature on leadership informed the study, the data collected, the methods of data analysis, and the findings of the analysis.

Distributed leadership is defined in Chapters one and two as fluid and emergent practices, activities, social interactions, and organizational influences; leadership that is not centered on one person, or whom formally leads (Elmore, 2000; Gronn, 2008; Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane, 2005). School leadership is viewed from the organizational level, not the individual level (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Spillane, 2005) in a distributed model. Thus, all members of the school are potential experts in their own right; all members of the school are unique and important sources of knowledge, experience, and wisdom from this perspective (Elmore, 2000; Spillane, 2005). The organization values, goals, and culture implicate who leads (Spillane, 2005) in a distributed model of school leadership rather than the formal structure of principal and teachers’ roles.

As stated in Chapter one, the purpose of developing shared and distributed leadership is to expand leadership roles for teachers in order to do the work that is needed in schools today.

Setting

This study took place at Scootney Springs Elementary School, Othello, Washington during the 2010-2011 school-year. Scootney Springs is a K-5 elementary with 600 students, 37 certified staff, 26 classified staff, 1.5 administrators, and one counselor. Seventy-five percent of
The students received free or reduced lunch, 80% were Hispanic, 39% were transitional bilingual, and 11% migrant. Scootney Springs has not made adequately yearly progress for four consecutive years in the areas of math and reading. In contrast, Scootney Springs Elementary has been recognized by the State of Washington five times for making exceptional improvement in reading, math, and writing.

Teachers at Scootney Springs showed that they had a desire to improve student performance. According to a perception survey given to certified staff at Scootney in April 2011, a majority of teachers were willing to work at changing the school for the better, welcomed new and innovative ideas, and showed a willingness to collaborate to improve student learning (The Center for Educational Effectiveness, 2011). Although a majority of teachers showed a willingness to improve the performance of the school, I believed that many of their talents to lead improvement efforts have been virtually untapped. The same survey also showed that only 50% report that there was a willingness to address conflict at Scootney (The Center for Educational Effectiveness, 2011).

Concerns have been expressed by staff regarding the small number of teachers who participated in leadership opportunities at Scootney. These concerns came primarily from the ones who served as grade chairs, served on school committees, and/or served on district committees. My efforts to motivate teachers to take on leadership roles, which was viewed as transformational by me but may have been viewed as transactional by teachers, has lead me to this study.

**Action Research Participants**

The action research (AR) team for this study at Scootney Springs consisted of nine members--eight certified teachers in grades K-5, and me. Teaching experience for the teachers
participating in the research ranged from one year to 30 years, with a mean of 12.8 years. I have 20 years of teaching experience, five years of assistant principal experience, and 10 years of principal experience. To protect the identities of those participating, pseudonyms were used in this study. In addition, the participants’ years of teaching experience, specific grade levels taught, and other potentially identifying characteristics, were omitted. Finally, participants knew the potential risks and benefits of participating prior to signing a consent form.

As principal I have been involved in all aspects of school leadership, including designing school improvement strategies, leading improvement efforts, recruiting, supervising and evaluating teachers, managing and allocating resources towards teaching and learning, arranging professional development with outside agencies and/or from within our school consistent with improvement strategies, providing incentives for those I supervise, and buffering non-instructional issues from teachers.

Action research team members had many opportunities to lead during the 2010-11 school-year. According to an online anonymous survey given to the AR team in January 2011 regarding their leadership experiences for the 2010-11 school-year to date, based on leadership functions identified by Elmore (2000), eight AR members have been involved in maintaining a professional learning community that focused on student learning, five have provided staff development to teachers, eight have engaged in discussions to address problematic instructional practices, five have been involved in selecting curriculum, seven have aligned resources and pedagogy to improve student performance, eight have promoted school improvement efforts, nine have provided encouragement to their colleagues, and six have participated in team goal setting.
Phase One of the Study: Look

Research questions one, “What are the leadership functions performed in our school today, and by whom?”, and two, “What are the lived experiences of teachers who perform leadership functions in our school today?” were used as guides for the “look” phase of this study. I generated questions based on discussions with team members I had during the past two years regarding their experiences leading in our school. A person who worked in the Othello School District Office, conducted focus group interviews with the AR team. I created the interview protocol for the interviews. I reviewed the protocol with the interviewer prior to the each focus group interview taking place. I conducted individual interviews, online surveys, leadership checklists, documented discussions, kept meeting minutes, made observations, and shared literature on leadership.

Planning

During the 2009-10 school year, I engaged grade chairs (teacher leaders), individually, and as a group, in discussions about their experiences leading at Scootney Springs Elementary. This was the first time as principal I have asked my teacher leaders about their feelings regarding the leadership they demonstrated in their grade chair roles. From my discussions with grade chairs, it became clear to me that each one of them believed that teacher leadership rested primarily with them. It also became clear to me that the grade chairs at Scootney Springs Elementary were confident and comfortable in their leadership roles, motivated to lead others, and held high expectations and goals for themselves and their teams. Finally, these teacher leaders believed that shared and distributed leadership was not intrinsic of the current school culture.
In December 2010, all members of the grade chair team agreed to participate in a study to develop shared and distributed teacher leadership at Scootney. During a regularly scheduled staff meeting in January, both myself and grade chair members invited all teachers to take part in the study. I answered questions about the general purpose of the study, the time commitment, and what teachers might expect as co-researchers in the action research process. At the conclusion of the meeting, two additional teachers volunteered to participate in the study.

I met with the action research (AR) team during a regularly scheduled grade chair meeting after school in February 2011. To begin the meeting, we read the consent form and purpose for the study. As noted in the consent form, I reminded the AR team that my position in the study would be as a co-researcher in collaboration with them. I then noted the importance of such a relationship in action research, where all work at determining the problem, methods used, goals, and actions to achieve the goals (Herr & Anderson, 2005).

**On-line Survey**

After signing consent forms (see Appendix A), the AR team took an anonymous on-line survey regarding the culture of leadership at Scootney Springs Elementary (see Appendix B). Questions focused on leadership functions AR team members had been involved in, their perceptions of themselves as leaders, and their perceptions of their colleagues as leaders.

After completing the survey the AR team convened to discuss the present culture of leadership they have experienced to date at Scootney. A few members shared that they were frustrated regarding the lack of shared leadership displayed. Luanne, Melinda and Selena stressed that their colleagues were not willing to “step up” and take on added responsibilities, even when they had the ability, knowledge, and expertise to do so. Luanne stated, “Leadership at Scootney comes from a few people, and everyone else sits back and watches.” Melinda stated,
“My team asks and expects me to do everything.” Later, Selena asserted, “There are a lot of couch potato teachers out there.” At the conclusion of our discussion, all AR members agreed that they were interested in researching ways to better distribute leadership at Scootney among their colleagues and themselves.

**Agreement Regarding Data Collection and Methods**

At our first meeting in March, I provided AR team members with an outline of the steps in Stringer’s (2007) action research model. After AR members read the outline, a short discussion followed. A few members related the democratic principles of action research to our school’s improvement efforts. Selena stated, “We already do this (action research).” We then agreed on what data to collect and the methods to collect it (see Table 3). AR team members liked the anonymous online survey given to them as a means to clarify their personal feelings to other team members and me regarding their leadership experiences at Scootney. Team members also agreed that participating in focus group interviews, without me present, would provide them with a venue to tell their stories in an unthreatening manner. Other data we agreed to collect came from meeting minutes, check lists, discussions, one-on-one interviews by me, a staff survey, and literature.

**Literature on Leadership Theories**

As noted in Chapter one, the role of literature in qualitative research is to enable participants to extend their understanding of leadership theories. The literature reviewed by the AR team provided a framework to establish the culture of leadership at Scootney Springs Elementary. Once they had a grasp on the current culture of leadership at their school, the team was able to construct solutions to the problems identified in Chapter one. Literature was also used during the think stage of research to corroborate our findings.
As a prelude to studying shared and distributed leadership, I provided team members with a synopsis of researched leadership theories based on two books, *The leadership experience* (Daft, 2002) and *Leadership in organizations* (Yukl, 2010). Following the readings, the AR team engaged in a discussion about the theories presented. Transformational leadership generated the most discussion among members. Several AR members noted that they liked a transformational leadership theory because it focuses more on inspiring people to achieve organizational goals, and less on management (Burns, as cited in Yukl, 2010). It also appeals to the moral values of followers, to raise self-consciousness about ethical issues, and to work in synergy to reform institutions (Yukl, 2010). A few AR team members then identified leaders from the past and present that may be considered transformational. Nel stated, “Billy Graham is a transformational leader because he influences and inspires others.” Melinda stated, “JFK was a transformational leader…he had charisma and inspired people.” Conversely, AR team members related the transactional model of leadership to behaviors they observed in their setting at Scootney Springs. Luanne, Kathy, Toni, and Selena suggested that a few of their colleagues were more focused on “wanting” something in return for their efforts in achieving the organizational goals. “Something in return” usually meant release time to plan during contracted teaching hours or additional pay.

**Literature on Teacher Leadership**

At our second meeting in March, AR team members read an article on teacher leadership entitled, *Collective Wisdom* (Hinkle & Kinney, 2008). AR members concluded the following from the article: teacher leaders influence the performance of students and other teachers; teacher leadership exists with every staff member; teacher leaders have students’ best interest at heart; and teacher leaders are optimistic and rarely are the negative squawkers. A few AR members
related themselves to the persona of teacher leadership exemplified in the article. Melinda maintained that teachers who take on leadership at Scootney, are the ones who are committed to the goals of the school, and are the ones that refrain from complaining. Kathy then asserted that leadership can exist with every staff member, but that some of her colleagues are unwilling to “step up” and take on leadership. She noted that these teachers would rather “sit back” and watch her lead.

At the conclusion of the meeting, I presented AR members with the definitions of leadership they wrote on the on-line survey given to them in February. A few AR members noted that their definitions of leadership have changed since the beginning of the study.

**Leadership Functions Checklist**

Prior to our second meeting in March, all AR members completed a leadership functions checklist (see Appendix B). At the meeting, each member shared one example of leadership they displayed as either a grade chair or teacher leader. Nell, Tressa and Toni spoke of how they facilitated their teams in discussions regarding resources, pedagogy, and assessments during collaboration times. Tressa stressed that all of her team members have performed many of the leadership functions on the checklist. She stated, “We focus on the ‘we’ in our team.” Nell stressed that as the leader of her grade team, “There’s a lot you do daily…to get people to work together.” A few members maintained that they perform a majority of the leadership functions for their colleagues. Selena stressed, “I’m the resource person…if there’s a problem on the team, they ask me to go to the principal.” Selena continued, “I do almost all the extra work for my team…they don’t step up.” Luanne saw her main leadership role as providing encouragement. She also noted that, “When you’re on a team, you shouldn’t keep score.” All AR team members shared examples of how they provided professional development to others throughout the year.
Luanne listed several examples of professional development that she has provided to staff members. Toni noted that she “facilitated” professional learning communities, but also provided “trainings for new teachers” at the school and district level. Finally, Melinda stressed that the leadership she exhibited last year, is not the leadership she exhibited this year. She stated, “Before, I was the facilitator, now I’m the hand holder.”

After our discussions regarding leadership functions, the AR team read the article, Shared leadership for teacher and student learning (Printy & Marks, 2006). Team members discussed the advantages of teachers sharing leadership with the principal. They concluded that in successful schools, leadership is everyone’s responsibility, not just a few teachers and the principal. They also agreed that the principal is pivotal in framing school conditions that allow for shared leadership to culminate.

**Principal and Teacher Leadership**

At our third meeting in March, two AR team members led an activity to compare and contrast principal leadership and teacher leadership. Working in pairs, team members used the literature discussed to date on leadership, as well as their personal perceptions regarding teacher and principal leadership, to compare and contrast the two. After they completed their diagrams, each member shared out with the other team members. Team members concluded that both principal leaders and teacher leaders are committed to achieving common goals, influence those they work with to work toward achieving common goals, want what’s best for the school and students, hold one another accountable, facilitate meetings and provide staff development, encourage others they work with, and share their knowledge and expertise with colleagues. The team also concluded that the leadership principals and teachers exhibit is often different. For example, principals are usually the ones who make budgetary decisions, not teachers. Also,
principals have the ability to buffer non-instructional issues from teachers. Finally, principals are the only ones who have authority to evaluate and retain teachers.

Literature on Distributed Leadership

To extend the team’s understanding of distributed leadership during the look phase, I presented a power point to them based on research from Elmore (2000), Gronn (2002), Heller and Firestone (1995), Leithwood and Jantzi (1999), Leithwood, et al. (2007), Spillane, et al. (2001), Halverson & Diamond (2001), and Yukl (2010). Team members then read, Distributing leadership: An evolving view of school leadership (Hulme, 2006). Next, team members discussed their evolving perceptions of shared and distributed leadership. Melinda stated, “I see shared leadership as passing off responsibilities, whereas distributed leadership is more intentional.” Melinda referenced Hulme (2006) regarding the intentional matching of expertise with leadership that leads to improved student achievement and organizational effectiveness. Other AR members noted that distributed leadership relies on the culture of the school. Kathy stated, “A strong culture of leadership must come first.” I then pointed out that Spillane, et al. (2001), contended that distributed leadership goes beyond shared leadership, by defining it as a social activity that builds on distributed cognition rather than the thinking, skills, and expertise of individuals alone. In addition, I noted that Spillane et al. (2001) and Spillane (2004) stressed that it is not who leads that matters, but how leadership is shared and distributed to attain the organizational goals.

At the conclusion of our discussion, Toni asserted that distributed leadership must be “enculturated” in a school to be effective. Another AR team member asked Toni to clarify what she meant by “enculturated”. Toni responded, “Enculturated to me means the way we do things around here.” Later, I shared with the team a synopsis of the hidden part of culture that Daft
(2002) speaks of in his book, “The leadership experience”. Daft (2002) maintained that culture can be thought of at three levels: (a) the surface-visible level--what is obvious to outsiders and insiders, what one can see and hear, the artifacts, dress, slogans, ceremonies; (b) the invisible level--the less obvious express in values, beliefs and assumptions that justify or explain what people in the organization do and why they do it, for example, teacher collaboration, decision making, instructional reforms; and (c) the level of underlying beliefs and assumptions--these are so ingrained in the culture, that members may not be aware of them. According to Daft (2002), the underlying beliefs and assumptions are the essence of culture.

**Self-Awareness of Leadership Strengths**

During the “Look” phase of research, AR team members began seeing strengths in each other that were possibly missed by them in the past. After reading articles on leadership and discussing their leadership roles and the functions they have performed, each member was able to articulate their areas of expertise and knowledge. This was important, because literature on distributed leadership stresses the need to match individual expertise with leadership work (Hulme, 2006). Without knowledge of each other’s expertise, leadership talents of staff members can virtually go untapped. Nel spoke of her work with the state in scoring the reading and writing portions of the WASL and MSP. Toni provided trainings to school and district staff on English Language development strategies. Melinda demonstrated leadership by providing encouragement to the new teachers she worked with on her team. All AR team members spoke of the various ways they promoted improvement efforts, and engaged their colleagues in discussions to address problematic areas in teaching and learning. At the conclusion of the meeting, team members took the February on-line leadership survey for a second time.
Focus Group Interview

On March 21, 2011, six action research team members participated in a recorded focus group interview to gather information regarding leadership at our school. A semi structured interview protocol was used by the interviewer with open ended questions (see Appendix D). Interview questions were pertinent to answering the following research questions posed in Chapter one:

1) What are the leadership functions performed in our school today, and by whom?
2) What are the lived experiences of teachers who perform leadership functions in our school today?
3) How can teacher leadership be expanded at our school to better achieve organizational goals?

The interview was later transcribed by an outside agency. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were used for the transcription. A week after the interview, I received an electronic copy of the transcript.

Phase Two of the Study: Think

Research question 3, “How can teacher leadership be expanded toward a distributed model to better achieve the organizational goals?” was used as a guide for the “think” phase of this study. Data for this portion of the study were gathered through focus group interviews, individual interviews, online surveys, leadership checklists, documented discussions, meeting minutes, observations, and literature on leadership.

Coding Focus Group Interview Data

During the last week of March, I read the transcript from the focus group interview and began the process of open coding; extracting from the text key ideas, concepts, feelings, quotes,
key words and events by interview question. I did the initial coding by myself to make the document more workable for the AR team to review and analyze. After extracting key information, I sorted, categorized and colored coded each piece of data. Categories included leadership functions, feelings about leading, reasons for leading, constraints to leading – reasons for not leading, things that nurture leadership, and emergent leadership. Finally, I arranged the data on a spreadsheet by interview question. I then increased the font size of the data to 26 and created seven lamented posters, one for each question, as a working tool for the AR team to finish the coding process.

At the first meeting in April, AR team members analyzed the poster size interview data that I coded. Each team member paired up with a colleague to discuss each set of data. Individuals were asked to make notations on the posters if they thought the quotes, ideas, etc., did not represent them individually, if they believed another category was appropriate, or if they felt something needed to be added to better represent them. For example, some of the quotes from the open coding based on the interview reflected congenial relationship with their peers in regards to sharing leadership. In contrast, a few AR team members stressed that the relationship they had with their peers in regards to sharing leadership, did not exist.

After making notations on the posters, team members were provided with the results of the most recent on-line survey they took. Next, they sorted and grouped key words, phrases, and quantified results, pasted the sorted data on index cards, and placed the cards under one of the categories on the posters.

At the April staff meeting, all certified teachers took the leadership on-line survey. Kathy and Toni led teachers in a discussion about the survey results. Kathy divided teachers into three groups. In their groups, teachers were asked to share out their responses to question 1,
“What is it that you think leadership is?” Each group selected an individual to share out with the whole group. Key words and phrases included: motivating people towards a common goal, guiding others, and sharing responsibility. Toni then asked groups to discuss how they felt about the survey. Three teachers with several years of successful classroom experience responded. A teacher from group one stated, “There’s a difference between being a workhorse and a leader.” This person noted that “workhorses” are willing to take on all the leadership work at the school. She stressed that she was not interested in doing more work. Staff members did not respond to the statements made by the teacher. A teacher from group two stated, “Our group was wondering why only 50% of us are willing to take on additional leadership roles.” Again, no one responded to the statement. A teacher from group three stated, “It’s human nature to let someone else do leadership work.” Kathy responded to the teacher, stating, “Our research team is looking for a more distributed model of leadership at Scootney.” Toni then followed Kathy by stating, “We want to share leadership responsibilities with others...that’s why we are doing this study.”

At the next AR team meeting in April, team members discussed the responses from their certified peers regarding leadership. AR members concluded that the responses from certified staff not taking part in the action research study on shared and distributed leadership, corroborated findings from the data they have collected thus far. Specifically, the findings support the following: a few people do most of the leadership work, leadership is not shared, and the talent of experienced teachers goes untapped. Table 5 shows a frequency distribution of the number of leadership functions performed by the AR team and teachers from September 2010 through April 2011. The mean number of leadership functions performed by the AR group (n=9) is 7.71, with a range of 3 and a variance of 1.91. Variance was determined by subtracting the
mean from each individual score, squaring the resulting number of each score that was subtracted, summing the total from each square, and then dividing the sum of the squares by the number of leadership functions (7). Results suggest that leadership is shared, or stretched, among AR team members. In contrast, the mean number of leadership functions performed by the teacher group (n=17) is 9.28, with a range of 12 and a variance of 19.90. Results suggest that leadership functions performed by the teachers surveyed, is shared in some categories, and not shared in others. For example, only two teachers surveyed have provided staff development, whereas 14 participated in team goal setting.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution of the Number of Leadership Functions Performed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Leadership Functions Do You Perform?</th>
<th>AR Team n=9</th>
<th>Teachers n= 17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining a PLC</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Staff Development</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing Instructional Issues</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting Curriculum</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning Resources and Pedagogy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Improvement</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Goal Setting</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In May, the AR team began the process of axial coding qualitative data from the focus group interview, survey results, the leadership checklist, and meeting minutes during the research process. After thorough analysis and conceptual grouping of the data, the team described a shared and distributed leadership model at Scootney that is not developed. Four themes emerged from axial coding that help explain this: (a) there was ambiguity with some staff regarding the benefits of sharing and distributing leadership; (b) the commitment to take on
leadership varied; (c) some teachers were fearful to take on leadership; and (d) there were strong beliefs among some teachers regarding who should lead.

**Results of Data Analysis**

**Ambiguity.** Teachers at Scootney had mixed views about what constitutes leadership in a school. These mixed views became apparent to the AR team after reviewing data from survey results, discussions, and conversations with their peers. Some teachers believed that leadership was the responsibility of a few teachers and the principal (our current structure with grade chairs leading teams). Most of the responses given by teachers who did not participate in the action research, focused on individual leadership, not organizational leadership when asked, “What is it that you think leadership is?” One teacher responded on the leadership survey, “Leadership is taking charge” of the situation. Another teacher wrote, “Leadership is taking charge in a timely way and not procrastinating.” A few other teachers wrote, “Leadership is knowing what you’re doing”, and “A person who steps up to better our school.” Other teachers noted that a leader “is positive with others”, “serves others and models exemplary behavior”, and “motivates others in a positive direction.” A few teachers who responded, suggested that leadership should be shared with their peers. Based on the survey results, it was clear that there were diverse views of what leadership is.

**Commitment.** The level of commitment to take on leadership roles varied at Scootney between the AR team members and the teachers who did not participate in the research. Some of the teachers not participating believed that leadership should be isolated to only a few people. The level of commitment to take on leadership was quantified with survey results in April that show a low variance of 1.9 and a SD of 1.38 for AR team members regarding the level of leadership displayed in seven leadership function categories, in contrast to a much higher
variance of 19.9 for the teachers who did not participate in the study. The data from the focus group interview suggested that AR team members had a commitment to take on leadership. They saw themselves as stewards of information and ideas for their colleagues. One AR member stated, “We provide staff development to our teams so they can learn from each other.” They also saw themselves in support roles for their grade team members who needed encouragement. One AR team member stated in the interview, “I’m always there for my grade team when they need me…so I lead that way.” Other statements supported a moral imperative to lead in order to make a positive difference in students and the school as a whole. One AR member stated, “We lead because we care about the school.”

**Fear.** Some staff may not have taken on leadership roles because they were fearful that they could not measure up to more experienced teachers with overbearing personalities. Also, some staff members who believed in sharing leadership opportunities may have been afraid to state their opinions regarding leadership at meetings when more vocal teachers spoke out against it. As I previously noted, one teacher at the April staff meeting strongly stated, “There’s a difference between being a workhorse and a leader.” This person stressed that “workhorses” are willing to take on all the leadership work at the school and that she was not interested in extra work. No one spoke up, agreed or disagreed with the comment. When the above comment was made it appeared that teachers were very uncomfortable and unwilling to speak up. During the course of this study, I have witnessed on several occasions, where more experienced and vocal staff members have had an overbearing effect on conversations with their inexperienced, and/or less vocal peers; where their peers appeared to fear stating their opinions during the conversations. In short, fear prevented less vocal staff members from discussing and resolving issues about sharing responsibilities and leadership.
**Strong Beliefs.** Leadership will not flow through the teachers at Scootney unless a majority of them are supportive, cooperative, and willing to step up to leadership roles when they have the expertise to do so. In order for a model of shared and distributed leadership to be sustained, it must be part of the school’s underlying beliefs and assumptions that are engrained in the culture (Daft, 2002). Tacit agreements among staff via the school improvement planning process will not bring about such a culture. The school culture Daft (2002) described in regards to shared and distributed leadership, does not currently exist at Scootney. Results from survey data collected from the AR team and staff, clearly showed that leadership was stretched over only a few people at Scootney. Some teachers believed that leadership should be the work of only a few people. One teacher confirmed this belief when she stated at the April staff meeting, “It’s human nature to have someone else do the work” of leadership.

In an interview at the conclusion of the “think” stage of research, Toni stated that for shared and distributed leadership to work, “it must be enculturated, where everyone takes on leadership role” based on their strengths. She continued, “We should expect everyone to take on leadership.” She asserted, “But it’s not going to be easy….it’s going to take time….and some (teachers) will be negative.” Toni concluded, “If we want an effective school, everyone needs to take a part in leading.”

**Validity Meeting with High School Staff**

As noted in Chapter one, to boost validity, AR team members presented the team’s findings to outside educators. During the second week of May, five action research team members and I, presented and defended the research findings to a group of local high school administrators and teachers. High school staff who attended challenged the thinking of the AR
team, offered their perspectives on issues, offered suggestions, and provided their personal accounts and experiences regarding shared and distributed leadership in their setting.

A few staff members of the high school acknowledged that their school shares some of the same difficulties in establishing a culture where many individual teachers engage in leadership roles based on their expertise and experiences. Shelia related the culture of leadership at her school to Scootney. She stated, “I totally understand the survey results.” She then expanded on the statement noting that the difficulties facing Scootney in expanding teacher leadership were not unique to Scootney; that the problems also exist at the high school also. Later, Shelia stressed that progress has been made at the high school in regards to sharing leadership. She asserted that structures were in place with their school improvement team that facilitated collegial patterns of leadership. She stated, “We have different people lead based on their strength.” She continued, “We’ve learned a lot….and we are now seeing people lead that we have not seen in the past.”

According to Trevor, the high school principal, his school has made progress in promoting leadership opportunities with teachers and his administrative staff. He noted that teachers in the various departments work in their leadership roles two or three years. Afterwards, Trevor asks his staff, “Who’s next?” Alex, the assistant principal at the high school, shared a story of when the principal allowed him to take on an initiative that he strongly believed in, that was not originally supported by the principal, Trevor. Alex stated, “Trevor allowed me to take on an initiative even though he was against it.” Trevor asserted, “I allowed Alex to lead even when mistakes were made.” In comparing shared and distributed leadership with more traditional models of leadership, Trevor maintained, “I don’t have a problem with anyone leading, I have problem with ‘the’ leader.” Trevor then provided the AR team with suggestions
for creating a culture of shared and distributed leadership at Scootney. First he maintained that the leader is paramount in creating such a culture. For example, as principal, Trevor asserted, “I feed the stallions”; suggesting that the teachers who take on leadership roles are rewarded (e.g. attending conferences outside of the district and state). Trevor also suggested that the AR team spend time in “educating staff on what leadership really is.” Finally, Trevor concluded that although the high school has “department” heads, the look and feel of sharing leadership in a high school can be replicated in an elementary school with “grade chairs” and improvement teams. Trevor noted that Scootney was on the right track in regards to efforts to expand leadership.

Following the validity meeting with the high school staff, the AR team met to discuss how they felt about the meeting. All team members felt that their beliefs and assumptions about the study on leadership were validated by the high school teachers and administrators. In addition, a few AR members were impressed with the structures in place at the high school to facilitate share leadership. Other AR members thought some of the ideas presented by Trevor were noteworthy and should be included as actions later in our study.

Summary

In summary, action research to create a culture of distributed leadership from the ground up at Scootney Springs Elementary was conducted by eight teachers and me during the 2010-12 school-year. Throughout phase one of the study, action researchers collected data from interviews, surveys, checklists, documented discussions with the team and with outside educators, meeting minutes, observations and literature on leadership. Data were coded and analyzed by the team throughout phase two of the research. After thorough analysis of the data,
the team concluded that a shared and distributed leadership model was not developed at Scootney. Four themes emerged that may help explain this: (a) ambiguity; (b) commitment; (c) fear; and (d) strong beliefs.
Chapter 4

Recommendations and Reflections

The purpose of this study was to co-engage staff in defining distributed leadership in their school and to develop action plans to create an all-encompassing culture of shared and distributive leadership teams consisting of teacher leaders who work with the principal in achieving, managing, organizing and sustaining building-level instructional goals and practices.

Questions guiding the study were as follows:

1) What are the leadership functions performed in our school today, and by whom? (Phenomenological)

2) What are the lived experiences of teachers who perform leadership functions in our school today? (Interpretive)

3) How can teacher leadership be expanded to a distributed model to better achieve organizational goals? (Hermeneutic)

4) What are the teacher, leader and school effects of moving toward a distributed model of leadership at our school?

Finding of this study support its usefulness to Scootney Springs Elementary and the stakeholders who were co-researchers in the action research process of developing distributed leadership teams.

Phase Three of the Study: Act

In phase three of the study, the Act phase, four action plans were generated by me in collaboration with the action research team. First, for leadership to be “all encompassing” in a school, teachers need to know and agree upon, what leadership and leading, means. Second, in order to create teams of teacher leaders who work with the principal in achieving, managing,
organizing and sustaining building-level instructional goals and practices in our school, teachers need to know the advantages and disadvantages of taking on leadership. Third, to sustain a culture of teacher leadership, a set of key values, assumptions, understandings and norms must be in place, shared and continually reviewed by members of the school. Last, in order to expand teacher leadership, teachers need support in strengthening leadership skills as related to school improvement and team building. Teachers also need to be provided with opportunities to lead.

**Defining Teacher Leadership**

The first conclusion reached was based on our belief that leadership cannot be “all encompassing” unless staff know, and can agree upon, what leadership, distributed leadership, and leading, means. The ambiguity surrounding the various meanings of leadership, not only among researchers, but from within our school, led the team to recommending that I provide staff members with a synopsis of researched leadership theories at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year, based on two books, *The leadership experience* (Daft, 2002) and *Leadership in organizations* (Yukl, 2010). Following the readings, staff will engage in discussions in small groups regarding critical points from the summary. Afterwards, the AR team will challenge staff to delineate between leadership theories – e.g. traits, transactional, transformational, charismatic, shared, and distributed, and then relate the theories presented to leaders of the past and present. Groups will then report back to the entire staff. Prior to Thanksgiving break, staff will read literature on teacher and principal leadership functions by Elmore (2000). The AR team will lead discussions with their peers in brainstorming current leadership functions performed at Scootney. As the year progresses, teachers will read a variety of articles regarding school leadership, including: *Distributing leadership; Moving from high school hierarchy to shared responsibility* (Wallach et al., 2005), *Collective wisdom* (Hinkle & Kinney, 2008), *Building a
new structure for school leadership (Elmore, 2000), and The nature of teacher leadership in schools as reciprocal influences (Anderson, 2003).

Promoting Teacher Leadership

The second conclusion reached is that in order to be successful in creating teams of teacher leaders who work with the principal in achieving, managing, organizing and sustaining building-level instructional goals and practices in our school, teachers need to know the advantages of taking on leadership. As noted in Chapter two, Leithwood et al. (2004) maintained that, “Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (p.3). Also noted in chapter two, are the positive effects on schools when teachers share leadership functions with their peers and the principal (Heller & Firestone, 1995; Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999; Robinson and Timperley, 2007).

To make leadership tangible and appealing to those who may be skeptical of leading, throughout the school year, AR team members will give personal testimony to their grade teams, school improvement teams, and the staff as a whole regarding their journey in leadership throughout the year – e.g. the benefits of leading, and the action research process. As principal, I will acknowledge teachers who step up to a variety of leadership opportunities. The AR team will also encourage teachers to rotate leadership roles during their professional learning community meetings; leadership based on the expertise specific to each individual. According to Eilers and Camacho (2007), professionalism in the form of partnerships, is the key to teachers working together to improve schools. When such partnerships are prevalent in schools, professional respect for each other’s skill and abilities replaces “hierarchical notions of traditional leadership” (Eilers & Camacho, p. 617).
As principal, I will take a lower profile while promoting teacher voice in instructional decision making, and allowing for heightened teacher autonomy. Covey (2001) speaks of building organizational capacity by providing individuals with a voice in leadership and thus affirming the work and potential of those in the organization. It is my hope that by providing teachers with a voice, collective instructional decision making, and teacher leadership specific to the expertise of each individual, a collaborative and collegial culture will be manifested, where all share responsibility for the success of Scootney Springs.

Establishing a Culture of Teacher Leadership

The third conclusion reached, is that in order to build and sustain a culture of teacher leadership where teacher leaders work with the principal in achieving, managing, organizing and sustaining building-level instructional goals and practices in our school, a set of key values, assumptions, understandings and norms must be in place, shared and continually reviewed by members of the school. These key values, assumptions, understandings and norms, establish the culture of the school, or the way of doing things. A culture of agreed upon decision making, collaboration, collegiality, will be paramount when teachers make collective decisions about teaching, learning and curriculum. According to Daft (2002), to build a strong culture, there needs to be and emphasis on team work, communication, collaboration and trust. In a trusting environment, individuals are willing to share ideas, to listen to one another, are open and honest, are cooperative, treat each other with respect, and do what it takes to get the job done (Daft, 2002). Currently, Scootney Springs has norms of operation written in the school improvement plan. To reestablish these norms, and begin the process of engraining them in the culture, the AR team and I will continually review the norms in place in our school now. The
AR team will also find opportunities to review belief statements, the vision statement, and other agreements made by staff.

As principal, I will be the catalyst for building a culture where leadership is expanded. As noted in Chapter two, based on a study of 124 recognized schools, Mark and Printy (2003) concluded, “When the principal elicits high levels of commitment from teachers and works interactively with teachers in a shared instructional leadership capacity, when schools have the benefits of integrated leadership, schools learn and perform at high levels” (p. 393). Therefore, as principal, I will elicit high levels of commitment by treating all staff members with respect, and by empowering them to make decisions regarding teaching and learning. I will also use visuals, rites and ceremonies to honor those who take on leadership roles in our school.

The vision statement for Scootney is: Building Bright Futures Together.” The school norms for Scootney Springs Elementary are as follows:

1) We may agree to disagree—disagreements will not be taken personally;
2) We make an effort to resolve conflict at the lowest level;
3) We will encourage each other to participate honestly in discussions;
4) We will include staff, parents and community members in decisions regarding teaching and learning;
5) Team decisions will be supported by each member of the group;
6) Decisions can be revisited anytime.

Providing Support for Teacher Leadership

Last, in order to expand teacher leadership, teachers need support in strengthening leadership skills as related to school improvement and team building. Maxwell (2007) maintained that individuals can learn how to be effective leaders. He asserted that although
some individuals are born with greater natural leadership abilities (traits) than others, “the ability to lead is a collection of skills, nearly all of which can be learned and improved” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 25). Maxwell (2007) also spoke of the importance of developing an inner circle of leaders – those who can have a positive impact on the organization. Collins (2001) asserted the importance of developing an inner circle of leaders. He maintained that if you have the right people in the right seats on the bus, “they will be self-motivated by the inner drive to produce the best results and to be part of creating something great” (Collins, 2001, p. 42). Finally, Hulpia et al. (2009) contended that leadership should not be the “sole domain of one person” but should be “distributed among….teacher leaders, principals and assistant principals” (p. 1030).

During the course of the school year, the AR team will make a concerted effort to share leadership opportunities, and develop an inner circle of leadership with their peers (Maxwell, 2007). Teachers, who are willing to step up to leadership roles, will be provided support and mentoring by AR team members. Additional support will be provided to teacher leaders through leadership trainings outside of the school– e.g. professional learning community workshops. The level of support will be based on the needs and characteristics of each teacher.

As principal, I will encourage teachers to further their education in leadership through literature, leadership in-services, college degrees, and on the job experiences. I will provide opportunities for the AR team to engage in professional conversations with their peers regarding efforts to improve teaching and learning, efforts to build leadership capacity, and efforts to create a culture of teacher leadership.

**Reflections**

Because of increased demands on our school to improve, I have been very interested in structuring new forms of school leadership that is distributed, and that focuses on social capital
from within. My efforts to motivate teachers to lead, to appeal to their moral imperative, to take
greater ownership in the mission of the school, and to better align their work with the
organization’s goals, has not always worked. Prior to, and throughout this study, I strongly
believed that the existing social capital at Scootney could be developed and our school
improvement efforts enhanced, if structures of shared and distributed leadership were in place.
My strong beliefs were supported by literature written by a number of prominent educational
also strongly believed that the democratic principles of participatory action research (PAR)
would align well with efforts to expand leadership at Scootney, because it allows all whom are
affected by the problem to create solutions to solve the problem (Stringer, 2007).

In Chapter one, I anticipated that after one school year of action research on distributed
leadership, a core of teachers would be willing to step up and lead at the building and/or district
level when opportunities arose. I also anticipated an improvement in the willingness of all staff
to promote active citizenship by sharing responsibility and accountability toward achieving
common goals of the school, without being directed by the principal to do so. Finally, I
anticipated an emergence of vertical and horizontal distributed leadership teams which would
enable us to make better decisions and garner increased commitments by all members to attain
the goals of the school.

I was pleasantly surprised by the positive changes that have occurred in our school since
the beginning of the 2010-11 school-year when the AR team initiated research on distributed
leadership. Although the changes cannot be directly attributed to the action research our team
undertook, an abundance of literature supports positive changes in schools that embrace
distributed models of leadership. The most significant changes that occurred at Scootney during
the 2010-11 school-year were school climate, school culture, and student performance on the Measures of Academic Achievement (MSP). In addition, I have changed as a building principal during the action research process. I believe the changes in me are positive, and will be beneficial to the school in its improvement efforts after I leave.

**School Climate**

The Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE, 2011) is an organization that performs external reviews of schools and districts to assist in improvement efforts. As part of the review, all staff members are given a survey measuring their attitudes, dispositions, and practices for the past two years at Scootney. The CEE Staff Survey v9.1 (2011) measures organizational effectiveness based on the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools (OSPI, 2011). Staff survey results for May, 2011 show positive changes in the climate at Scootney Springs compared to a previous survey conducted in December, 2009. For example, 61% of the staff believed that Scootney Springs had effective school leaders who were committed to “the core values of the school…and provide encouragement to achieve performance expertise” (CEE) in December, 2009, compared to 71% in May, 2011. In addition, 69% of the staff surveyed were “ready to benefit” from school improvement initiatives that “advance the mission, contribute to the positive development of their constituents, and the ultimate improvement of their community” (CEE, 2011) in December, 2009, compared to 77% in May, 2011. Finally, only 57% of the staff surveyed in December, 2009, believed that the staff at Scootney Springs, “fostered teamwork to create an environment that celebrates individual differences and contributions to organizational outcomes” (CEE), compared to 71% in May, 2011.

I cannot directly attribute the above positive changes in school climate to several members of our staff conducting an action research study on developing shared and distributed
leadership that spans teacher voice and participation. I can assert though, that much of the research in Chapter two supports positive changes in climate and staff morale when staff are given a voice in collective decision making (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson & Meyers, 2007). This freedom to make collective decisions has a positive effect on latency and commitment, which impacts team effectiveness (Scribner et al., 2007). The freedom for staff to make collective decisions in a school is critical in a distributed model of leadership (Spillane, et al., 2004). Research also supports positive changes in schools when administrators encourage teachers to perform a variety of leadership functions (Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999).

**School Culture**

Based on several studies on leadership, Mayrowetz (2008) described an effective model of distributed leadership. The model Mayrowetz prescribed, required a “re-culturing” of a school where teachers are involved in various roles of leadership that are centered on improvement efforts. Action research team members were systematically involved in research that impacted their work. These teachers demonstrated a moral imperative to change current leadership practices and structures at Scootney to enhance school improvement efforts. In an interview with Toni, she stated that the study changed her views on how best to lead her team. She stated, “We should be sharing through our expertise, knowledge and ideas…it shouldn’t be me doing everything.” She continued, “Leadership should be distributed throughout the school.” As noted in Chapter two, effective school research supports Toni’s view of the importance of sharing expertise, knowledge, ideas and leadership as related to school culture and improvement efforts (Camburn, et al. 2003; Cunningham & Cresso, 1993; Heller and Firestone, 1995; Hulpia, et al. 2009; Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003; Mayrowetz, 2008; Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006; Pounder, et al., 1995; Robinson & Timperley, 2007; Timperley, 2005; Scribner,
et al., 2007; Spillane, 2005; Wallach, et al. 2005). Since the study began in January, 2011, I have witnessed an expansion of leadership at Scootney, not only from within the AR team, but with other staff members. At the beginning of the 2011-12 school-year, I am seeing a willingness of more staff to take on leadership. For example, 3 of the action researchers from the 2010-11 school-year have taken on new leadership positions, thus allowing other teachers to take their places in leading their respective teams. One AR member will lead an after school club for students struggling in math. Two others have joined the school improvement team. In addition, our school improvement team has increased from 8 members to 10.

Table 6

*Scootney Springs Elementary Combined MSP/WASL Results, Grades 3-5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>AYP</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>55.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>121.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10 *</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>111.9</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>126.9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Prior to 2010, students took the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL).

**Student Performance**

The Measures of Academic Progress (MSP) results for Scootney Springs Elementary during 2010-11 school-year indicated adequate yearly progress (AYP). Our school has not made AYP since the 2005-06 school-year. Results showed significant growth in combined reading, math, and writing for grades 3, 4 and 5. Although I cannot attribute the boost in student performance to our AR team undertaking research on shared and distributed leadership, I can defer to effective school research that aligns with our AR team’s improvement efforts in
expanding leadership during the 2010-11 school year. Table 6 shows the 2010-11 MSP results compared to previous years.

**Recommendations for Principals**

**Adhere to the Principles of Action Research.**

Principals who take on action research with teams of teachers to improve their schools need to adhere to its democratic principles. As noted in Chapter one, Stringer’s (2007) action research framework was chosen because it provided the best opportunities for participants to socially construct meaning of what a distributed model of leadership is in our school, it provided teachers with a voice in decision making, it focused on collegiality, collaboration and shared agreement to accomplish organizational goals, and it engaged teachers in school research with me in a horizontal and democratic way. Because teachers were engaged and had a voice, I believe the research was meaningful to them; the teachers as co-researchers took ownership in the research. Finally, as we begin our new year at Scootney, I can see that the principles of action research, are slowly becoming the “way of doing things” at Scootney; a culture of interacting and working “with” the principal and others, instead of working “for” the principal.

**Know Your School Culture.**

Prior to beginning the action research, principals need to know whether teachers are ready to benefit from such research. They also need to know the level of trust among staff, the level of commitment to school improvement, the levels of collaboration, how teachers feel about the current leadership structures, how teachers deal with problem solving and decision making, their expectations regarding decision making, and their readiness to benefit from improvement efforts. In short, principals need to take into account the cultures of their schools to be successful in improvement efforts. According to Peterson and Deal (1998), “Culture is extremely powerful”
in schools (p. 28). They continue, “This ephemeral, taken-for-granted aspect of schools, too often over-looked or ignored, is actually one of the most significant features of any educational enterprise” (p. 28). Culture can be defined as a set of key values, assumptions, understandings, and norms shared by members of the school (Daft, 2002), the things that people agree are true and agree are right (Fullan, 2005), the structures and traditions of leadership, the way decisions are made, the levels of collegiality and collaboration among teachers, and the way of doing things.

Prior to our team’s research on distributed leadership, I believed that I could describe the culture at Scootney. This description came from my observations and from the December 2009 Educational Effectiveness Survey given to staff. Collaboration existed between teachers to varying degrees at each grade level. Teachers had a focus on improving teaching and learning. A majority of the teachers viewed grade chairs, and a select few others, as the ones who were responsible for leading, and doing the work of school improvement. In addition, a majority of school decisions filtered through me, or were made by me with little input. Finally, staff members appeared to care for one another, and were open and honest with each other.

Because I knew the school culture at Scootney, I was able to “prepare the ground” and “plant the seed” (Covey, 1992, p. 17) communicate my vision, and clarify my purpose for wanting to expand and frame teacher leadership differently, four months prior to our action research. I also had time to gage the interest and commitment of the grade chairs and others who would participate in the research. Because I knew the culture, I was prepared ahead of time for some the challenges the team and I would face during and after the research process.
Final Thoughts

As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, school leadership is an important factor in school effectiveness and school improvement (Hulpia, et al. 2009). In addition, the principal plays a pivotal role in how leadership is framed and established in a school. The purpose of this study was to co-engage staff in developing action plans to create an all-encompassing culture of shared and distributive leadership teams consisting of teacher leaders who work with the principal in achieving, managing, organizing and sustaining building-level instructional goals and practices in our school.

During action research, I took on the role of facilitator, resource person and consultant in collaboration with AR team members. Throughout the process, it was challenging for me not to impose my authority as a principal. Although I espoused shared decision making, it was hard for me not to make decisions for the team, not to dominate conversations, and to allow all voices to be heard. I stayed the course though. The literature on the benefits of the action research process was compelling. I was confident that if I fully invested in the action research process, it would benefit Scootney.

In May, 2011, I began seeing the positive changes in our school. It was then that I started to believe that my overarching goal to improve the school through participatory action research on distributed leadership was paying off. In August, 2011, our school was notified that we made adequate yearly progress. We were also notified of our significant gains on the MSP in reading, math and science.

As I start the 2011-12 school year, I am now convinced that my willingness, and the willingness of the AR team, to stay the course and commit to the action research process--allowing team members to have a democratic voice in defining and solving the problem--was
pivotal in the positive changes we witnessed during the 2010-11 school year. As principal, I now often take pause when decisions regarding teaching and learning come before me. I think of the commitment demonstrated by the AR team to stretch leadership, the democratic principles of PAR to promote teacher voice, and the positive changes in school culture and climate during the 2010-11 school-year when decisions needed to be made.

In conclusion, I am committed to the actions that were developed to distribute leadership. Throughout the school year, I will meet with the AR team to review progress and revise the action plans. I am excited about a new year, with new leaders, demonstrating a collective commitment to continuous improvement. Based on the MSP results of this past year, we are track to continue improving. As principal, I will continue to support a culture of shared and distributed leadership, where teacher leaders who work with me in achieving, managing, organizing and sustaining building-level instructional goals and practices in our school.
References


Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools (2011), OSPI Olympia WA


The Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE), Inc.. *Educational Effectiveness Survey (EES Staff Version v.9.1)*. May, 2011. Pg. 10-11


Appendix A

Materials for Faculty Committee

*IRB Certification of Exemption*

*Consent Form*
MEMORANDUM

TO: Michele Acker-Hocevar and Gary Street,

FROM: Patrick Conner, Office of Research Assurances (3005)

DATE: 8/9/2010

SUBJECT: Certification of Exemption, IRB Number 11439

Based on the Exemption Determination Application submitted for the study titled "Distributed Leadership: An Action Research Project," and assigned IRB # 11439, the WSU Office of Research Assurances has determined that the study satisfies the criteria for Exempt Research at 45 CFR 46.101(b)(1).

This study may be conducted according to the protocol described in the Application without further review by the IRB.

It is important to note that certification of exemption is NOT approval by the IRB. You may not include the statement that the WSU IRB has reviewed and approved the study for human subject participation. Remove all statements of IRB Approval and IRB contact information from study materials that will be disseminated to participants.

This certification is valid only for the study protocol as it was submitted to the ORA. Studies certified as Exempt are not subject to continuing review (this Certification does not expire). If any changes are made to the study protocol, you must submit the changes to the ORA for determination that the study remains Exempt before implementing the changes (The Request for Amendment form is available online at http://www.irb.wsu.edu/documents/forms/rtf/Amendment_Request.rtf).

Exempt certification does NOT relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to protection of human subjects participating in the study and adherence to ethical standards for research involving human participants.

In accordance with WSU Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM), this Certification of Exemption, a copy of the Exemption Determination Application identified by this certification and all materials related to data collection, analysis or reporting must be retained by the Principal Investigator for THREE (3) years following completion of the project (BPPM 90.01).
Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP).

Review Type: New
Review Category: Exempt
Date Received: 6/4/2010
Exemption Category: 45 CFR 46.101 (b) (1)
OGRD No.: N/A
Funding Agency: N/A

You have received this notification as you are referenced on a document within the MyResearch.wsu.edu system. You can change how you receive notifications by visiting https://MyResearch.wsu.edu/MyPreferences.aspx

Please Note: This notification will not show other recipients as their notification preferences require separate delivery.
Consent Form

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Education

Study Title: Distributed Leadership; An Action Research Study

Researchers:
Mr. Gary Street  gstreet@othello.wednet.edu  509-840-0529
Dr. Michele Acker-Hocevar  ackerhoc@tricity.wsu.edu  509-372-7251

Participation:
You are invited to take part in an action research study carried out by co-investigator, Mr. Gary Street, and principal investigator, Dr. Michele Acker-Hocevar. This form explains the research study and your part in it if you decide to join the study. Please read the form carefully, taking as much time as you need. Ask the researcher to explain anything you don’t understand. You can decide not to join the study. If you join the study, you can change your mind later or quit at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of services or benefits if you decide to not take part in the study or quit later. Your name will not be attached to the research.

This study has been approved for human subject participation by the Washington State University Institutional Review Board.

What is this study about?
This action research study is being done to co-engage staff members at Scootney Springs Elementary in defining distributed leadership, and then developing action plans to create an all-encompassing culture of distributive leadership teams who work with the principal in achieving, managing, organizing and sustaining building-level instructional goals and practices in their school.

You are being asked to be part of this study because you are a teacher leader at Scootney Springs Elementary. Teacher leaders are both self and other identified. Data collection will be through checklists, interviews, meeting minutes and observations. Data collection will be completed by teacher leaders and the principal. Taking part in this study will take about 1 hour every other week during the 2010-2011 school-year.

What will I be asked to do if I am in this study?
If you take part in the study, you will be asked to:

- Fill out an information sheet describing your professional background.
- Participate in three focus groups conducted by a person outside the school. Interview questions are designed to provide you with the opportunity to describe the nature of your job and your lived experiences regarding leadership. Your name will not be attached to your responses.
- Complete anonymous on-line surveys regarding your perceptions of school leadership.
• Document leadership functions you perform throughout the study.
• Co-engage in action research with your colleagues on the topic of distributed leadership.
• Participate in developing action plans to create distributed leadership teams.

**Are there any benefits to me if I am in this study?**
By taking part in this study, you will benefit by knowing that you have contributed to the development of teacher leadership at Scootney Springs Elementary School.

**Are there the risks to me if I am in this study?**
The potential risks from taking part in this study are thinking about experiences that you had in your team that may or may not have been pleasant. Otherwise, the risks are minimal to you and no greater than participation in other faculty processes.

**Will my information be kept private?**
The data for this study will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by federal and state law. No identifiable information will be used. All names of individuals, places, and schools will be coded to ensure confidentiality. No published results will identify you, and your name will not be associated with the findings. The only individuals who will have access to the data will be the principal researcher and the staff of the Institutional Review Board. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain confidential. Finally, the data will be stored digitally for 3 years after the completion of the study.

**Are there any costs or payments for being in this study?**
There will be no costs to you for taking part in this study and you will not receive money or any other form of compensation for taking part in this study.

**Who can I talk to if I have questions?**
If you have questions about this study or the information in this form, please contact the researchers (Mr. Gary Street, gstreet@othello.wednet.edu 509-840-0529; Dr. Michele Acker-Hocevar, ackerhoc@tricity.wsu.edu, 509-372-7251). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or would like to report a concern or complaint about this study, please contact the Washington State University Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-3668, or e-mail irb@wsu.edu, or regular mail at: Albrook 205, PO Box 643005, Pullman, WA 99164-3005.

**What are my rights as a research study volunteer?**
Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to be a part of this study. There will be no penalty to you if you choose not to take part. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

**What does my signature on this consent form mean?**
Your signature on this form means that:
• You understand the information given to you in this form.
• You have been able to ask the researcher questions and state any concerns.
• The researcher has responded to your questions and concerns.
• You believe you understand the research study and the potential benefits and risks that are involved.

Statement of Consent:
I give my voluntary consent to take part in this study. I will be given a copy of this consent document for my records.

__________________________________  _____________________
Signature of Participant               Date

__________________________________
Printed Name of Participant

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect. I certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she understands the purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and potential risks of participation. I also certify that he or she speaks the language used to explain this research, reads well enough to understand this form or, if not, this person is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her, and the participant does not have any problems that could make it hard to understand what it means to take part in this research.

__________________________________  _____________________
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

__________________________________
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent Role in the Research Study
Appendix B

Data

*On-line Survey*

*Leadership Function Checklist*
School Leadership Survey
Scootney Springs Elementary

1. What is it that you think leadership is?

2. Do you consider yourself a leader at Scootney Springs Elementary?
   - Yes
   - No

3. What leadership functions do you perform?
   - What leadership functions do you perform? None
   - Maintaining a Professional Learning Community that Focuses on Student Learning
   - Providing Staff Development
   - Engaging in Discussions to Address Problematic Instructional Practices
   - Selecting Curriculum
   - Aligning Resources and Pedagogy
   - Promoting Improvement Efforts
   - Providing Encouragement
   - Team Goal Setting

4. Have you been recognized by your peers, or the principal, for taking on leadership roles?
   - Have you been recognized by your peers, or the principal, for taking on leadership roles? Yes
   - No

5. Do you think that the leadership structures at Scootney allow for high levels of shared leadership?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Who is the primary person who makes decisions regarding who takes on, or doesn't take on, leadership roles at Scootney?
   - Principal
   - Teacher Leader
   - Dean of Students

7. Do you find that your colleagues willingly take on added responsibilities specific to their expertise, knowledge and skills?
   - Do you find that your colleagues willingly take on added responsibilities specific to their expertise, knowledge and skills? Yes
   - No

8. On a 4 point scale, indicate how much leadership teachers at Scootney demonstrate as a whole during a school-year.
   - Very Little
A Little
☐ Some
☐ A Lot

9. If given the opportunity, would you engage in additional leadership at Scootney?

☐ Yes
☐ No

10. Does the current formal leadership at Scootney allow for teachers to take on additional leadership roles if they choose to?

☐ Yes
☐ No
## Leadership Functions Checklist

**Scootney Springs Elementary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*Leadership Functions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Time - Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining a Professional Learning Community – Focus on Student Learning</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Staff Development</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Engaging in Discussions to Address Problematic Instructional Practices</td>
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<td>Selecting Curriculum</td>
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<td>Aligning Resources and Pedagogy</td>
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<td>Promoting Improvement Efforts</td>
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<td>Providing Encouragement</td>
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<td>Team Goal Setting</td>
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Appendix C

Study Protocol
### PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH – DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Research</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Positionality</th>
<th>Ethics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look - Leadership Functions</td>
<td>Phenomenological –</td>
<td>Gather information to build a picture to clarify the research problem – or phenomenon.</td>
<td>What are the leadership functions performed in our school and by whom?</td>
<td>Focus group interviews – Lived experiences regarding leadership.</td>
<td>Focus groups will be moderated by a person outside of the school.</td>
<td>Teachers will know the risks and benefits ahead of time.</td>
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<td>All interview documents will be secured.</td>
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<td>Confidentiality will be maintained.</td>
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<td>Leadership Process</td>
<td>Hermeneutical –</td>
<td>Read, discuss and make sense of leadership theories as related to DL</td>
<td>How does DL theory build on and extend past theories of leadership, and how is this theory unique?</td>
<td>Artifacts – Minutes Surveys – On line Observations Checklists Literature on DL and Leadership I will write about/reflect on what I am experiencing as co-researcher in this phase. I will be interviewed</td>
<td>Co-researcher</td>
<td>All documents will be secured.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>I will keep a narrative journal of all meetings, interactions, and thoughts regarding the research.</td>
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<td>by research team members regarding my perspectives of leadership.</td>
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<td><strong>Think</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Capital and DL as Unit of Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Focus group interviews – Lived experiences regarding leadership – This is done after they</td>
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<td>Day 02 Ogawa and Bussert – 00, Spillane, 01</td>
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<td>Artifacts – Minutes Surveys Observations Checklists Literature on DL and Leadership</td>
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<td><strong>Impact of DL</strong></td>
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<td>Maxey and Nygen 06, Mayrowetz 08, Spillane 01, Elmore 00, Gronn</td>
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<td>Co-Researcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal Frames the conditions</td>
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<td>All interview documents will be secured.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Interpretive & Constructivist – Interpret and construct meaning from the data by highlighting ideas, concepts, events, feelings, quotes, key words, and experiences that are common in meaning.
- What are the leadership functions performed in our school and by whom?
- Focus groups will be moderated by a person outside of the school.
- Co-Researcher
- All interview documents will be secured.
- Confidentiality will be maintained.
- I will keep a narrative journal of all meetings, interactions, and thoughts regarding the research.
- All documents will be secured.
## PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH – DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

| Act | Capacity Building | Constructivist | Develop action plans | What are the teacher and leader effects of engaging in moving toward a distributed leadership model at our school? | Focus group interviews – Lived experiences regarding leadership – This is done after they develop action plans. | Focus groups will be moderated by a person outside of the school. | Co-Researcher | I will write about/reflect on what I am experiencing as co-researcher in this phase. | I will be interviewed by research team members regarding my perspectives of leadership. | All interview documents will be secure. | I will keep a narrative journal of all meetings, interactions, and thoughts regarding the research. | All documents will be secured. | Confidentiality will be maintained in |
Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Questions
The purpose of this group interview is gather information regarding leadership at Scootney Springs Elementary School. I want to assure you that the information you share with me today will remain confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for the transcription. After the interview is transcribed, initial coding (highlighting and organizing data into categories by question) will be completed by the principal researcher. Final coding (developing common themes) will be completed by the research team during the “think” stage of the research. Do I have your permission to record this interview? This interview will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Interview Questions

1. Do you consider yourself a leader at Scootney? Why or why not? If you answered yes, what do you do as a teacher leader?

2. Do you see teacher leadership spread out across the school? Follow up: Why do you believe this?

3. What constrains or nurtures teacher leadership at Scootney? What constrains or nurtures distributed leadership? Follow up: Specifically who or what constrains or nurtures teacher leadership and DL at Scootney? What are the larger contextual issues that you face regarding teacher and DL? What structures are in place to allow for teacher and distributed leadership at Scootney?

4. Do you consider teacher leadership opportunities at Scootney more emergent (emergent based on one’s expertise), more fostered (fostered by the principal and/or other administrators), or both? Follow up: Why do you believe this? Provide examples.

5. Do school leaders help the larger school (other teachers) and community (parents – 80% Hispanic) become part of reform efforts at Scootney?

6. What can we learn from the actions we take as school leaders?

Thank you for your time and cooperation. As a reminder, this interview will remain confidential.
Appendix E

*End-of Study Focus Group Interview*
The purpose of this follow-up group interview is to gather information regarding the distributed leadership study you participated in at Scootney this school year. I want to assure you that the information you share with me today will remain confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for the transcription. Information from this interview will be used for the Report of the Study. Do I have your permission to record this interview? This interview will take about 45 minutes to complete.

**Interview Questions**

1. What do you think the purpose of this study was?
2. What does distributed leadership mean to you? What does the literature say about distributed leadership?
3. How do you see the school being different next year in regards to leadership? How do you think staff will feel about these changes?
4. After participating in this study, do you see yourself differently as a leader at Scootney? Why or why not? In what ways? Give examples.
5. Have you seen any differences in principal leadership throughout this study? How? Why do you think this? Give examples.
6. Do you believe you had a voice in this study? Do you feel like you helped shape the process of this study? (Participatory involvement? Adequate involvement? At what level?) Give examples.
7. Could the process have been improved? How?
8. What have we learned from this study?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add in regards to this study – e.g. your participation, the changes in your colleagues, the process?

Thank you for your time and cooperation. As a reminder, this interview will remain confidential.
Appendix F

Post Study Interview Questions

Principle Researcher
Post Study Interview Questions – Principle Researcher

1. Why did you choose distributed leadership for your study?

2. Talk about the three phases of your research – look –
   think – and act.

3. What do you think will be the outcomes from this
   research?

4. Have you seen a change in how research team members view themselves in regards to
   leadership?

5. Is there a change in school climate and culture?

6. Do you see yourself as a leader differently after conducting the study with your team?
   How have you changed?