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ABSTRACT
          Three issues guided the study reported here: (1) conditions
within the educational context that act as sources of support or barriers to
teacher leaders; (2) conditions outside the educational context that act as
sources of support or barriers to teacher leaders; and (3) the internal
intellectual and psycho-social factors that motivate or impede teacher
leaders. A three-stage case study methodology was used with nine
peer-nominated teacher leaders in three elementary schools. Recursive data
analysis and modification of the categorization of supports and barriers
allowed tailoring of interview protocols at each stage. Based on three rounds
of interviews and analyses, a matrix was developed categorizing key sources
of support and barriers to teacher leadership. Regarding support in the
educational context, a key source was a strong network of colleagues and
administrator support. Barriers in this context included time and lack of
support from teachers and administrators. Outside the educational context,
support came mainly from family and friends. The most significant barriers
were family and other commitments that compete with leadership roles, and
personal health problems. Internal factors were pivotal, either supporting or
hindering leadership. Intrapersonal sources of support came from within the
teachers themselves but barriers are also internal. Six tables are appended.
(Contains 75 references.) (JLS)

Supports and Barriers to Teacher Leadership:

Reports of Teacher Leaders

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## Supports and Barriers to Teacher Leadership:
## Reports of Teacher Leaders

Today's schools are undergoing massive changes. Recent education reform recommendations support decentralized decision-making, broadening power, authority, and accountability bases in schools and altering customary roles of teachers and administrators (Elmore & Fuhrman, 1994). Teachers' roles are changing as decision-making increasingly occurs at school sites. In many schools, teachers are assuming new leadership functions distinctly different from traditional, management-oriented teacher leadership roles (Livingston, 1992; Wasley, 1991). Authors of national, education reform reports (for example, Carnegie, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986) have endorsed changes in teachers' roles. Schools have been advised to broaden the definition of teaching, allowing teachers to remain professionally and personally satisfied over the entire course of their careers (Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Livingston, 1992; Maeroff, 1988; McLaughlin & Yee, 1988). Along with these changes, teacher leadership has become of increasing interest to researchers.

Existing research on teacher leadership consists primarily of descriptive studies depicting roles of teacher leaders, behaviors effective in working with peers, and challenges and impediments confronting teacher leaders (Fay, 1991; Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1988; Wasley, 1991). Several conceptualizations of personality, skill, and contextual clusters predictive of teachers' leadership success have been proposed (Fullan, 1994; Yarger and Lee, 1994). Recommendations for school personnel wishing to foster teacher leadership exist (Blase & Blase, 1994; Kowalski, 1995; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Troen & Boles, 1994). One factor seldom found in studies on teacher leadership is the influence, either positively or negatively, of individuals' families, friends, or life situations. Internal, intellectual and psycho-social influences are also seldom mentioned. One exception is Yarger and Lee (1994). In the following sections, I briefly discuss sources of support and barriers to teacher leadership described in existing literature. For the purposes of categorization, I have identified three arenas: (a) conditions within the educational setting; (b) conditions outside the educational setting; and (c) internal intellectual and psycho-social factors.

Conditions within the educational context supporting teacher leadership are described in much of the literature on teacher leadership. Key factors supporting teacher leadership include: (a) a climate or culture supporting teacher empowerment (Bennis, 1989; Garmston, 1988; Leithwood, 1992; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995); (b) principal support through words and actions (Barth, 1988a; Conley, Schmidle, & Shedd, 1988; Hanson, Thompson, & Zinn, 1993; Lieberman, 1988b; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Whitaker, 1992); (c) mutual support among teachers (Bolman & Deal, 1994; Bredeson, 1995; Wasley, 1991); (d) existence of a support network of "critical friends" (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Lieberman, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1995); and national recommendations for the professionalization of teaching (Carnegie, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986). On the other hand, a number of factors within the educational context have been identified as impeding teacher leadership. Key barriers within the educational context include: (a) lack of clear role

definition for teacher leaders (Bondy, 1995; Fessler & Ungaretti, 1994; Little, 1988; Livingston, 1992; Wasley, 1991); (b) tense relationships with fellow teachers (Little, 1990; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Troen & Boles, 1994; Wasley, 1991); (c) unfamiliar and often strained relationships with administrators (Lieberman, 1988b; Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992; Troen & Boles, 1994; Weiss, Cambone, & Wyeth, 1992); (d) poor modeling of leadership skills by principals (Blase & Blase, 1994; Goodlad, 1984); (e) lack of resources, including money, time, leadership skill training (Hargreaves, 1994; Little, 1992; Pellicer & Anderson, 12995; Wasley, 1991); (f) too rapid a transition to teacher leadership (Leithwood, 1992; Little, 1988); (g) a loss of focus on student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Wasley, 1991); (h) the bureaucratic and conservative nature of schools (Astuto & Clark, 1992; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Fullan, 1995; Kowalski, 1995; Troen & Boles, 1994); and (i) resistance by teachers' unions (Conley & Robles, 1995; Kowalski, 1995; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995).

As mentioned previously, little has been written about influences on teacher leadership stemming from factors outside the educational context. However, Green (1994), Greer (1994), and Kowalski (1995) described negative public perceptions of schools and educators, including the notion that teachers are not professionals and that teaching is a low-status profession. Public expectations of school efficiency impede teacher leadership, since shared decision making models, where teacher leaders are likely to have active roles, are not cheap (Kowalski, 1995). Finally, Kowalski (1995) noted that teacher leadership runs counter to the public's expectations of teachers' roles.

Internal intellectual and psycho-social factors can both support and impede teacher leadership. These factors have been described to a limited degree. Teacher leadership satisfies individuals' needs for involvement, professional growth and renewal, collegiality, and self-confidence (Bennis, 1989; Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Glickman, 1989; Lieberman, 1988a; Wasley, 1991). On the other hand, teachers may be reluctant to engage in leadership, because they feel they lack expertise (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995). Often, teachers may be reluctant to upset the norm of egality which exists in schools (Glickman, 1985; Lieberman 1988b). They do not wish to endanger relationships with peers (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Wasley, 1991). Finally, some teachers simply do not want the stress that comes with leadership roles (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1988).

While existing literature provides information about some of the conditions within the educational context that support or impede teacher leadership, it offers far more limited discussion of internal, intellectual and psycho-social factors and is nearly silent regarding conditions outside the educational context supporting or impeding teacher leadership. The purpose of this study, therefore, was develop a theoretical framework describing and categorizing key external and internal factors supporting and impeding teacher leadership. I began by categorizing sources of support and barriers within three distinct arenas: (a) conditions within the educational context; (b) conditions outside the educational context; and (c) internal motivations. I used this

categorization as basis for development of a theoretical framework. Three questions guided the study and led to formulation of the categorization and the theoretical framework describing sources of support and barriers to teacher leadership:

1) What conditions within the educational context act as sources of support or barriers to teacher leaders?

2) What conditions outside the educational context act as sources of support or barriers to teacher leaders?

3) What internal intellectual and psycho-social factors motivate or impede teacher leaders?

In the remainder of this paper, I discuss the methodology, subjects, findings, conclusions, limitations, and implications for further research and for practice.

## Methodology

I utilized a three-stage case study methodology, with nine peer-nominated teacher leaders in three elementary schools as primary data sources. The multi-stage design for data collection and analysis permitted modification, enhancement, and expansion of a categorization of supports and barriers to teacher leadersip at three distinct points during the data collection process (Yin, 1991). Recursive data analysis and modification of the categorization allowed tailoring of interview protocols at each stage in order to seek confirmatory or disconfirmatory data and strengthen the findings. In this section, I describe the methodology in slightly more detail. For more information, I refer the reader to Zinn (1997).

### Development of an *A Priori* Categorization

Prior to data collection, I developed an *a priori* categorization of supports and barriers to teacher leadership that was based on existing research on teacher leadership. This categorization consisted of a six-celled matrix listing supports and barriers within three arenas: (a) conditions within the educational context; (b) conditions outside the educational context; and (c) internal, intellectual and psycho-social factors. I used this matrix as a starting point from which to expand my understanding of factors influencing teacher leadership.

### Selection of Participants

Each teacher and the principal at potential sites nominated three teachers in their schools whom they felt best exhibited a given set of teacher leader characteristics (Table 1). After weighting the ranked nominations, I selected for participation three teacher leaders in each school with the highest weighted scores. One teacher leader at each site was interviewed in the first round of data collection, and the two remaining teacher leaders at each site were interviewed in the second round of data collection. All participants engaged in a focus group interview in the final round of data collection.

Insert Table 1 about here

## Data Collection and Analysis

The design for data collection and analysis was based on Yin's (1991) recommendations for multi-stage, case study design. Data collection and analysis took place in three distinct rounds. First round data collection and analyses were based on individual interviews with a single teacher leaders from each school. Second round data collection and analyses were based on single, individual interviews with the remaining two teacher leaders from each school. Final round data collection and analyses were based on a focus group interview with all nine participants. In the following section, I describe each of the three phases of the study in greater depth.

In the first round of data collection and analysis, one teacher leader from each school took part in a series of three open-ended, conversational, individual interviews (Seidman, 1991). I analyzed interview data in two ways. First, I developed and annotated personal narratives (Mishler, 1995; Polkinghorne, 1995). In these, I condensed each participant's interview transcripts to tell her story in chronological order, emphasizing supports and barriers to her own leadership. Alongside the personal narratives, I added annotations highlighting key points and connecting selected text with statements by other Round One participants or concepts in the literature. In the second form of analysis, I labeled transcripts with codes indicative of various supports and barriers described by participants, clustered related codes and labeled clusters with descriptors, and placed code clusters with descriptors into separate, blank, six-celled matrices for each participant. Next, I combined the three matrices into one. Using my analyses, I developed a cross-case analysis grounded in the data for Round One (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990; Yin, 1991). Although I had planned to use first round findings to enhance the *a priori* categorization, in practice, I discovered I needed to work the other way around. I used the *a priori* matrix to enhance a categorization grounded in the Round One data.

In the second round of data collection and analysis, the six remaining participants took part in single, individual interviews. I utilized a semi-structured interview protocol, developed at the conclusion of Round One and designed to permit enrichment of data within each cell of the draft conceptualization. For the Round Two interviews, I used two forms of data analysis. First, I coded individual transcripts, clustered codes, and added cluster descriptors. With codes and descriptors placed in individual blank matrices, I developed individual case reports. Second, I developed a cross-case analysis for Round Two, in which I compared and contrasted responses of second round interviewees with each other, with those of the three Round One respondents, and with existing literature on teacher leadership. To develop the cross-case analysis, I collected provisional cluster descriptors for all six cases in yet another blank matrix and grouped descriptors by category, provisionally labeling each set of grouped descriptors. This process yielded a categorization grounded in the issues raised by the secondary respondents. Melded into the matrix developed at the conclusion of Round One, the result was an enhanced conceptualization based on findings from two phases of data collection and analysis, as well as existing literature.

The final round of data collection consisted of a single focus group interview held with all nine teacher leaders. The interview guide, based on Krueger's (1991) design and developed at the conclusion of Round Two, had two main purposes: (a) to test accuracy of my constructions to this point, and (b) to hear from the group implications and findings their experiences might have for teacher leadership. Data were analyzed by cross-checking participants' comments in each portion of the interview with the draft categorization. This focus group interview permitted additional revisions and refinements to the categorization. In addition, it informed subsequent discussion of implications.

Internal and external consistency were enhanced through use of multiple data sources; categories derived both deductively and inductively; and participant checks of data, personal narratives, and individual case reports. By grounding the study in a categorization based on existing research and by using three, separate rounds of data collection and analysis, I was able to test and retest my evolving understanding of sources of support and barriers to teacher leadership.

<center>Subjects</center>

Participants taught in elementary schools in separate school districts. Of the nine participants, only three were classroom teachers. The remaining six, while serving in a variety of capacities, shared three significant characteristics. Their regular job responsibilities: (a) did not tie them to a single classroom; (b) allowed relative flexibility and discretion in the way in which their time was used; and (c) demanded considerable contact with their peers and their principals. In order to form a basis for understanding the perspectives of the participants, I briefly acquaint the reader with the three participants from each school. For a more detailed description of participants and their educational contexts, I refer readers to Zinn (1997).

Lea, Maya, and Sonny taught at Marshall Elementary, a dark and overcrowded school located in a small, relatively rural, community with a diverse population comprised mostly of farmers and residents who commuted to work in a large city nearby. Over half the students at Marshall are migrant or are students for whom English is a second language, and the high risk nature of the school population has had significant impact on school goals. Lea, the school's Title I teacher and the Round One participant from Marshall Elementary, had taught at Marshall for all but three of her twenty-five years teaching. Maya, an Hispanic woman and one of two Round Two respondents from Marshall, was a second grade teacher. For her entire, twenty-one year career, she had taught primary grades at Marshall. The other second round participant, Sonny, an Hispanic and the only male in the study, worked as a school counselor in two schools and as the district's Title I parent liaison. He, also, had spent most of his career in the same district. With thirty-one years in teaching, he was one of the two most experienced participants.

Mary Ellen, Jo, and Anne were teachers at Thayer Elementary, located in a large metropolitan area and the most urban of the three sites. Thayer served some of the most disadvantaged students in the district and struggled with a high student turnover rate. Mary Ellen, a Title I teacher and a first round interviewee, had

<center>5</center>

significant leadership experience outside her school district, with much of work in policy-setting at both state and national levels. Jo and Anne were interviewed in the second round of data collection. Like Mary Ellen, Jo had a long history of leadership involvement both within this district and in her former district in another state. She had multiple roles at Thayer as: classroom support teacher, mentoring and coaching colleagues; instructional resource teacher, providing materials and co-teaching units with classroom teachers; and gifted and talented teacher. She had considerable experience within her district as a consultant and staff developer and, at the time of the study, was deeply involved in the district's mentoring program for beginning teachers. Anne, a woman of Japanese descent, was her school's only kindergarten teacher. Her story was heavily influenced by her cultural background.

The last three participants, Madison, Ashley, and Fran, worked at Ransom Elementary, a bright, clean, recently remodeled school, located in a small city, in which the primary employers were two large computer firms, the city, small industries, and a meat processing plant. Ransom Elementary is located in a primarily low-income neighborhood with a significant number of single parent families, families in turmoil, and families with limited English proficiency. Staff at Ransom must deal with a constantly changing student population, resulting, in large part, from family instability. All teacher leaders selected for participation had worked at Ransom for five or fewer years, although all were extremely experienced teachers. Madison, the first round participant from Ransom, was one of two study participants working in more than one school as part of her regular job responsibilities. She was one of four district literacy consultants in the mornings and a school-based literacy teacher during her afternoons. Ashley and Fran were involved in the Round Two interviews. Ashley, whose Quaker background has had significant impact on her leadership style, was a fifth grade classroom teacher. As a classroom teacher, she has felt compelled to restrict her leadership roles to those which did not demand significant blocks of time away from her classroom. Fran was a resource teacher who was teaching reading to at-risk students in Ransom Elementary's literacy lab. Although it was her nature to get involved, she was cautious about over-committing to leadership roles.

Despite many commonalities, each participant's story was unique. By relating their experiences and discussing their perceptions, each teacher leader's observations enhanced the resulting findings. In the next section, I report the major findings as they contributed to the development of the categorization of key sources of support and barriers to teacher leadership.

<div align="center">Findings</div>

Based on three rounds of interviews and analyses, I developed a matrix categorizing key sources of support and barriers to teacher leadership. This six-celled matrix delineated major sources of support and barriers within three arenas: (a) conditions within the educational context; (b) conditions outside the educational context; and (c) internal factors (Table 2). I discuss contents of each cell in the following sections.

<div align="center">6</div>

Conditions Within the Educational Context

Many conditions within the educational context support or impede teacher leadership. Participants described these extensively. Interestingly, and not uncommonly, factors serving as sources of support at one time or in one setting could be barriers at other times or in other settings. For example, one principal might provide strong support and modeling of shared leadership, while another blocks all attempts at leadership among teachers. In the following sections, I describe sources of support and barriers to leadership arising from within the educational context.

Sources of support within the educational context. Support for teacher leadership comes from a number of different sources within the educational context. All teacher leaders spoke of having strong, dependable support networks, supportive principals or other administrators, and opportunities for leadership and training. They described support they receive from staff members, in general. In addition, they told of how they have created flexibility in their work days to allow for leadership responsibilities and how, in six cases, the nature of their jobs demanded leadership functions. Finally, they perceived their efforts as making a difference and felt their opinions were heard by administrators and school board members. I describe sources of support in greater detail.

A key source of support for teacher leadership mentioned by participants is a strong network of colleagues. This network of "critical friends" (Lieberman, 1995) provides a safe, trustworthy forum for working through difficult problems. Participants relied on different sets of colleagues for different problems or concerns. Madison's support network consisted of the other literacy coordinators in her district, all of whom consulted in schools to implement a reading program for at-risk first graders. She speaks of the confidentiality and mutual support which exists in this forum, commenting, "It is truly wonderful. It is the safest place I can talk. We are really a sounding board for each other." Jo describes the role her own network of critical friends plays, remarking, "We can share, and we have great confidence in each other. You don't have to worry your words are being spread all over town." Colleagues give constructive feedback. Sonny considers some of the central office personnel in student services to be among his network of "critical friends." As he says, "When I have something I am unsure about, I am able to just bounce ideas off them."

Administrators are a crucial source of support for these teacher leaders. In many cases, administrators are members of teacher leaders' close support network. Administrators who support these leaders are, most often, principals, but other administrators have provided noteworthy support or encouragement, as well. Mary Ellen discusses her feelings when a district administrator once introduced her in front of a large group consisting of school employees and community members:

The assistant superintendent mentioned I was there representing teachers and I had done this and that. "But," she said, "maybe the thing you would like to know most of all is, this is one of the best teachers we have in this school district." And that can keep you going for a year.

Not only do administrators provide verbal encouragement, they often demonstrate support by removing other barriers to the teacher's leadership. Sometimes, they provide information. Fran is impressed by the depth of current knowledge of her principal. Principals also locate needed resources. Fran remarks on her principal's resourcefulness:

> That's another leadership style of hers which I find very intriguing. She probably has a very strict budget, but she also moves money around, interestingly enough. She is not really threatened by bureaucratic rules... If she can make it work, she doesn't care where it comes from. She's not hung up on every little issue.

Principals and other administrators publicized opportunities and encouraged teachers to take advantage of them. Lea was introduced to Glasser's Quality Schools movement, when a former superintendent selected her as one of three employees to attend a week-long seminar with Dr. Glasser. She remembers her feelings when this administrator chose her to go:

> I'm not really sure how I got to be one of those sent. I felt very honored... I think he knew that the three of us who went would probably take the ball and carry it, and our enthusiasm would be catching.

In several instances, administrators have pushed teachers into new roles. For Lea, Sonny, and Madison, it took forceful encouragement from their principals to move out of comfortable, static roles into new and unfamiliar ones. Sonny says his principal "helped me to identify that I was holding back. I would not lead groups. It would scare me to death to go in front of a whole group of teachers. I could hardly talk." That principal was instrumental in helping Sonny gradually work into new roles, to the point that he now facilitates the work of groups of adults on a regular basis.

Administrators also model facilitative leadership skills. Fran describes the effect her principal's modeling has had on her:

> Just following that sort of role modeling or that sort of leadership style, it's not quite as threatening to take a risk. She encourages people around her to take risks, and yet she knows exactly what she is doing. She is experienced enough and secure enough in herself that she can do those sort of things. And that spills over onto the people she works with.

Teacher leadership changes working relationships with administrators. Madison feels comfortable dealing with principals, saying "It's nice to now just call, and I can get right through. As a classroom teacher, you just don't feel people know who you are."

Participants view leadership opportunities as available to them in both their schools and their districts. Mary Ellen has had opportunities at state and national levels, as well. A number of interviewees say leadership opportunities seem to arise serendipitously. However, in reality, these teachers have significant amounts of leadership experience, strong track records as effective leaders, and solid networks of contacts. For them, one role leads to another. Anne's comments show this:

To me, a lot of the opportunities have come up serendipitously. Just people you know who ask you to do things. I'm not one for raising my hand and volunteering. I think a lot of things have come from... when your name gets around, and people know who you are. And one thing leads to another.

In a number of cases, new opportunities seem to come along just as they finish with existing responsibilities. For example, at one time, Mary Ellen's term on the National Education Association board of directors concluded just as an opening appeared on the accreditation board of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. As Lea describes it, "It just seems I am at the right place at the right time."

They also report training opportunities and leadership modeling are accessible. All have received training in leadership skills, such as presentation or facilitation skills. However, training availability does not create leaders, in itself. The reality is these teachers are always on the lookout for ways to enhance their leadership skills, so they, unlike some others, take advantage of training opportunities. In most cases, these teacher leaders have also learned from mentors. Jo remembers the mentoring she received from a district director of elementary education. She says, "With someone like that mentoring you and teaching you, it's bound to make a tremendous impact on your life."

These teacher leaders rely on a core network of "critical friends," but they also feel supported by their fellow teachers, in general. They feel appreciated for their work. Typically, other teachers are willing to help when participants request assistance. Generally, they sense mutual respect and interdependence among the staff team. Maya considers mutually supportive relationships a strong source of support for her leadership. She says, "I don't ever see myself as just working alone. I see myself as working on a team. I see an independent role, but also it's within the setting of an interdependent group."

Involvement in leadership places demands on teachers above and beyond their regular classroom responsibilities. For the most part, these teachers have found ways of making the use of their time more flexible. Three participants are classroom teachers. Maya and Anne have found creative ways to allow themselves the flexibility they need to engage in leadership roles. Maya enjoys mentoring student teachers, in part, because having a second adult in the room gives her additional, discretionary time. Anne has the assistance of a paraprofessional who helps with teaching. This gives Anne time to take on additional leadership roles. The remaining six participants have jobs which, by their very nature, offer flexibility.

Finally, these teachers feel they are heard. They feel their work counts, and they feel appreciated for their work at the district or building level. Ashley and Fran comment they appreciate it when their principal asks for and listens to their opinions. In Anne's case, she feels her voice gets heard, especially at the district level, because she is an Oriental woman, and others perceive her as representing a minority view.

Barriers within the educational context. Barriers to teacher leadership from within the educational context are considerable and sometimes seem overwhelming. Participants agree time looms as the greatest barrier to teacher leadership. However, they also perceive lack of support from teachers and administrators.

Other barriers described are ill-defined or overly broad leadership roles and the physical layout of the building. I describe each of these barriers in somewhat greater detail in the following paragraphs.

Time is the greatest barrier to these teachers' leadership. The barrier of time has multiple facets. There is simply too much to do and too little time in which to do it. Sonny's story will be familiar to anyone who tries to work with other teachers.

> Last Thursday, we were going to start a study group, and seven people signed up. Okay. Four of the seven are on the Building Advisory Council, so they couldn't come. And then, one of them was sick. Something else happened, and another one couldn't come. I ended up without anybody for that particular day. It's just things that happen. So that makes it hard.

Frequently, multiple competing goals interfere with successful completion of a few key ones. The overall structure of schools impedes leadership, because it reinforces teachers' isolation. Classroom responsibilities limit available time for leadership endeavors. Participants feel desperately the need for time to work collegially, during the school day and during the school year. Mary Ellen describes some of her concerns, saying, "We don't have the time during the day to be collegial or reflective. If time were available, I could provide mentoring for some of the young professionals in the building." As she says, teachers in most other countries do not have as much student contact time as teachers in the United States. Mary Ellen continues, "The rest of the time, they prepare intellectually around the topics and coach other teachers. All of the things we say we value, but our actions don't correspond. I thing leaders would emerge from that kind of environment."

Teacher leaders also perceive lack of support or involvement by other some of their colleagues. Participants feel a number of teachers resent them, their success, and their visibility. Lea's close working relationship with her former and current principals is resented by some of her colleagues. Mary Ellen senses jealousy because of the flexibility of her Title I job. She states, "Resentment... would come around the fact that my job, in itself, provides more flexibility than most jobs here in the building. And they don't like it, because they don't have that." However, relationships are important to these teacher leaders, who feel tense relationships with their peers sometimes makes them think about relinquishing certain leadership roles. Maya describes resentment of colleagues, as a result of her close working relationship with her principal. She states, "Sometimes, you're seen as a person who has the ear of the principal... a teacher's pet kind of thing. And I think that plays a role in the perceptions of colleagues in the building." The high standards these teacher leaders hold for themselves and others exacts a toll, also. Mary Ellen explains, "When you have a high work standard, there are elements of jealousy that come in, because you get rewarded for what you've done and other people are envious of that."

Participants also see other teachers as being unwilling to take on leadership responsibilities. Jo, Mary Ellen, Fran, and Maya express concern that not enough teachers are interested in taking on leadership roles. They worry what will happen as today's teacher leaders retire. Fran wonders if perhaps present teacher

leaders' willingness to lead enables others to disengage themselves from active involvement in leadership roles.

Although all feel strong support from their current principals, a number of participants have experienced barriers to leadership from former administrators. In some cases, administrators may have felt threatened by teachers in leadership roles. Fran worked for one principal who reprimanded her for not having him give his approval to special education staffing agendas. She felt discouraged and angry, because developing agendas was something she had done independently, with the support of her previous principal. Once, an administrator actively impeded Mary Ellen's leadership, by spreading false rumors about her. Other barriers erected by administrators include lack of access to information or resources. Mary Ellen has experienced instances when access to decision-making has been blocked by an administrator.

> I've been in situations where the appointed leadership... cannot deal with teachers being leaders. They grew up thinking that they were going to become boss, and their vision of boss was not to have anyone challenge their authority, or have more information that they had, or be the person who brought forth ideas that interfered with their ability to get credit from their own superiors.

Sometimes, barriers erected by administrators have led participants to withdraw from leadership temporarily. As a result of bad experiences, participants have learned what they do not want to do as leaders, themselves. Sometimes, passive barriers exist, because administrators simply do nothing to support teacher leadership. In general, Mary Ellen does not see building level administrators fostering new leadership. As she says, "Principals may be overwhelmed. Or, perhaps, being able to foster leadership just wasn't part of the skill package when they were hired."

In certain cases, the nature of the leadership role serves as a barrier to teacher leadership. Poorly defined or overly broad roles limit the potential for success. As a literacy consultant in a school-university partnership, Madison began without a formal job description. As time went on, ever-increasing responsibilities led to stress and exhaustion. In one case, even the physical layout of the school is a barrier to leadership. Because of physical problems, Jo has difficulty getting around the five buildings that comprise Thayer Elementary.

Conditions Outside the Educational Context

Participants did not speak of as wide a variety of conditions outside the educational context as they did conditions within the educational context. However, factors they did mention were of critical importance. This was particularly true in terms of barriers to leadership stemming from sources outside the educational context.

Sources of support outside the educational context. The single most critical source of support for teacher leadership from outside the educational context was encouragement of family and friends. Several participants commented on encouragement received from their parents. Often, spouses and children have

demonstrated support by taking on extra responsibilities, allowing participants freedom to keep demanding hours at work. Several participants recognized support from extended family or friends, as well.

Also mentioned briefly were support from media reports and support from parents of students. Ashley says her local newspaper influences community members' attitudes toward education. She appreciates it when the media recognize teachers' efforts to improve education for the community's students. Anne has similar feelings when parents of her students express appreciation for her work. When this happens, she feels encouraged to continue her efforts.

Barriers outside the educational context. Barriers from outside the educational context have significant impact on these teacher leaders. Barriers stem from several sources. The two most commonly mentioned barriers from conditions outside the educational context are: family and other commitments which compete with leadership roles and personal health problems. In three cases, participants' culture or religion do not value or encourage leadership roles. Several other barriers were also mentioned. I discuss these barriers in the following segments.

In all cases, teacher leaders note the difficult balance they must maintain between their commitments to work and their responsibilities to family. The needs of their families at any given time dictate the amount of physical and emotional energy they have available for leadership activities at work. At one time or another, every one has reduced work commitments to meet commitments in their private lives. For instance, recently, Sonny was forced to move both parents into a nursing facility. He needed to reallocate his time so he could maximize his time with them and tend to their needs. Initially, Madison refused to apply for a position in the school-university partnership, because, at the time, she was a single parent and her daughter was in elementary school. Mary Ellen, speaking about her daughter's teenage years, declares, "I would have dropped the leadership activities in a heartbeat, if any of those things had not been working out."

Personal health issues are a very real impediment to leadership. With all participants in their forties or over, this is not surprising. Among the group, several have experienced serious health problems. As Fran says, a life-threatening illness forced her to reprioritize her life very quickly. Others experience chronic pain and find the physical demands of leadership taxing. With bad hips and knees, Jo has difficulty getting around the school at times:

> In the nature of our job, you are going around a lot. And it causes fatigue, which probably makes you less wise and less sensitive and all of those kinds of things. I have to learn to deal with the pain better than I am.

In three cases, cultural or religious values do not promote leadership behavior. Ashley comes from a Quaker background, Anne is an Oriental woman, and Maya is an Hispanic woman. As Ashley says, her religious background does not encourage leadership roles. Instead, her models have been for quiet, team

membership. Anne's former husband never supported her working. Becoming a leader was even more threatening than taking a job, because of the way in which she was raised:

> In the home I was raised in, women do not take leadership roles, and they don't have strong opinions... I never considered I didn't fit that mold. I had a really hard time having an opinion or standing up and leading things. I was very willing to help and support. And be a good little worker bee... Being Japanese, in general, and being female, specifically, really did push me down. I never questioned it.

Though they are generally encouraging, Maya's parents warn her about spending too much energy on work outside the home. Their expectation is that she should be available to care for her children, her home, and her husband.

Participants describe several additional barriers from outside the educational context. One is the media. In Ashley's view, negative media reports about schools are far more common than positive ones. She gets discouraged when teachers' good work gets ignored, even in local newspaper reports. A second barrier relates to stereotypical perceptions of educators and schools by family and community members. At times, when working with non-educators, Mary Ellen has experienced bias about being female and being an educator. A final barrier was mentioned by Mary Ellen, who sits on a number of committees with non-educators. She has been disappointed at the limited number of positive leadership role models among non-educators.

Internal Factors

Internal, psychological factors play pivotal roles in teacher leadership. On one hand, intrapersonal factors provide a teacher with the beliefs, value system, desire to learn and change, and confidence to support leadership. On the other hand, they can interfere with leadership when a teacher feels insecure, discouraged, frustrated, and unwilling to take necessary risks. As can external conditions within and outside the educational context, internal factors have powerful influence on a teacher's decision whether or not to lead.

Intrapersonal sources of support. Some of the strongest support for these teachers' leadership comes from within themselves. These teacher leaders hold strong personal convictions and values, enjoy challenges and change, and relish involvement in issues with potentially broad impact. A very important characteristic is their self-motivation. Generally, they are self-confident, feel appreciated, and like being treated as professionals. I discuss each of these factors in the following sections.

These teacher leaders are individuals with strong belief and value systems, which permit them to stop at nothing less than excellence. Fran says, "I have a very strong work ethic, and I am proud of the work I do. I'm conscientious. If I say I am going to commit to something, I do." Jo refers to her belief system in a spiritual sense:

> I have a belief. You could call it my church belief if you want. I think we are all given talents, and it's a sin not to use your talents. I think I've tried to live my life that way. It's a different way of looking at doing good, sharing your talents.

These individuals are dedicated teachers, committed to helping make schools better places for students and teachers. They believe that through their efforts, they can make a difference. Madison says, "I guess there is this part of me that says maybe I can make a difference for children or for teachers in how they view what they're doing." Mary Ellen expresses this belief when she says, "If I do this small thing, that helps. Maybe if I do a bigger thing, that helps more." Contributing gives Sonny a feeling of personal power. He describes this in the following excerpt: "As long as you know you are making a difference, you are not just existing, as I call it."

These teacher leaders are learners and risk-takers. Mary Ellen says "unbridled curiosity" is a hallmark of those who get actively involved. Lea's statement represents a commonly held view among these teacher leaders.

> I have an insatiable love for learning. If I am going to try something, I really want to put a lot of effort into it. I just don't do it half way. I want to do the best I can... As teachers, I think we each have a responsibility to do that to ourselves. I don't think we need that from someone else, necessarily. I think you have to push yourself, to stretch yourself.

Participants enjoy new challenges, and change does not threaten them. Madison laughingly states she has a "seven-year itch," which she says probably occurs every four years or so. Several of them were late coming to this realization. In fact, some of them look back on their former selves and see stagnation and burnout. Maya tells the story of her rejuvenation through leadership:

> I remember a time (when) I was really questioning whether or not I was in the right profession. I look back and there were times when I would feel depressed... two weeks before school started in the fall. I'd think, "I don't want to go back to school. I don't know if I'm in the right profession." And then, when all of those things started happening together, school was starting to become fun and exciting all over again. And I couldn't wait to go back to school.

When new opportunities come along, these teacher leaders sense whether or not the time is right for them to get involved. Sometimes, conditions in their personal and professional lives are such that they feel able to contribute their time and energy. However, a key requirement seems to be a sense of connection with the task, the group, or even a particular set of ideas. Lea's statement mirrors those of others:

> I can't really project what I will be doing down the road. Things just kind of... crop up. Things that interest me... Then, if I really get hooked on it, I learn a lot about it. Then I get involved.

These teacher leaders want involvement in issues with potential for broad impact. Lea like working on school or district issues, because, as she says, when focused only on the classroom, you tend to "be closed into your own little world and your own little problems." Madison feels she grows professionally when engages in leadership activities, stating, "Because you're exposed to so many other people's ideas, you... grow in ways not possible when you stay in one building, one classroom, one grade level." These teacher leaders find it fascinating to participate in planning and decision-making for the school, district, and wider.

Most admit they really like to be in "on the ground floor," because they get to learn what is going on for themselves, rather than being told second-hand. Ashley states her preference for broad-based issues:

> I like to know what is going on. I don't like to sit around and wait. Curiosity, I think, is a lot of it. A willingness to be involved is another part of it. It's exciting to me. I wouldn't want full responsibility. I wouldn't want to be an administrator, but I do enjoy being closer to where things are happening, rather than just waiting to find out what's next.

In fact, many of these teacher leaders admit they prefer leading to following, at least when it comes to issues dear to them.

They find much of their motivation for leadership comes from within. Because they seldom receive accolades from others, intrinsic rewards must carry them through difficult periods. Mary Ellen's comments typify those of other participants:

> I guess the most consistent support you have to have is from yourself. Somewhere it's internal. I don't know how to describe that. But there is just a real internal thing that you talk yourself through, that all of these pieces fit together for you. And it is worth it. And the potential outcome is worth it. The stress is worth it. It all makes sense to you in terms of your value system. I don't want to equate it with religion. But it is kind of like that, in that you have to have a belief that what you are doing is right. Even though the tangible results might not be there for you in this life.

They know they have expertise to share. They feel increasing self-confidence as one consequence of their past successes. Madison expresses this growth as follows:

> It's been a real positive to know I can get up in front of a group of people and talk. And, at this point, it doesn't matter what the make-up of the audience is. I have matured an awfully lot, so that's been great.

Participants like feeling appreciated for their efforts, and, when it occurs, they view themselves as professionals. Lea gives one example:

> When the school board takes what you have said in a recommendation and says, "Yes, that make sense to us.... Go with it," I think they're putting their trust in us as teachers and as people who know what the district is about.

Intrapersonal barriers to leadership. Unfortunately, intrapersonal barriers to leadership also exist. As Maya points out, she is her own worst enemy when it comes to getting involved. All have experienced internal struggles. At times, some have felt uncomfortable with leadership, in general, or one leadership role, in particular. They experience discouragement and frustration. They feel stress. Other internal barriers were mentioned, as well. These include: the feeling that they are unqualified to lead, desire to maintain the *status quo*, or even a desire to move on to new challenges.

One of the internal barriers to leadership for these teacher leaders is discomfort with leadership roles. Sometimes, they are uncomfortable with being the "boss." At other times, they do not step forward or speak their minds, because they are worried about stepping on other teachers' toes. In several cases, this reluctance comes from early training and modeling not to lead. This occurred in both Anne's and Ashley's cases, in particular. Although Anne feels stronger than she used to be, she says she still tends to "retreat." As she

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describes it, "I won't stand and fight to the death for anything. So some of that old personality is still there. The old fear. And maybe lack of confidence." Jo deals with sensitivity to criticism. Sonny tells of the barriers to leadership caused by his shyness:

> I have always been extremely shy, not wanting to be in the limelight. So any way I could avoid it, I would. To be in front of an adult group, I'd have to prepare, take notes, practice. Just to talk in front of the school board for three minutes, I could spend two weeks getting ready for it. It would take so much time, because I was so concerned and worried and scared.

At times, they experience discouragement and frustration. They often sense they are alone out in front. They perceive lack of support from others. They feel their work is not valued. Jo expresses her sense of sadness, disappointment, and frustration, as a result of ongoing tensions with colleagues and changes in district priorities. She senses her defeatism may have to do with her age or her career stage. As she notes, she is beginning to lose her enthusiasm for being a "pioneer." At times, discouragement threatens to outweigh sources of support perceived by these teacher leaders.

Combined with feelings of discouragement are exhaustion and stress. When Madison began working as a consulting teacher in different elementary schools, she did not know how to set boundaries for herself. Because the district gave little direction, her stress level skyrocketed. Although she has improved in her ability to say no, often she feels overworked. Several describe generalized burnout that has occurred at one time or another during the course of their careers. When Maya realized how much she was dreading the start of each school year, she actually began researching other career possibilities. For years, Sonny experienced little enthusiasm for work and simply met minimal requirements of his job.

Participants described several additional impediments, as well. At times, some participants felt they lacked expertise. For a long time, Sonny did not think he had the qualifications to facilitate study and work groups or present to groups. Some, like Madison and Lea, were once reluctant to let go of comfortable routines. In a different vein, Madison described her need to be continually learning. When a role gets too comfortable, she wants to move on to new challenges.

<div align="center">Conclusions and Discussion</div>

These case studies permitted categorization of key factors supporting and impeding teacher leadership and led to several conclusions based on these findings. I propose that supports and barriers to teacher leadership fall into the following four broad domains encompassing the major supports and barriers to teacher leadership: (a) people and interpersonal relationships; (b) institutional structures; (c) personal considerations and commitments; and (d) intellectual and psycho-social characteristics. These domains represent four themes describing the factors reported by these nine teacher leaders as supporting or impeding their leadership. I describe these as part of my discussion of the first conclusion. Concurrently, I reached four additional conclusions based on my increased understanding of key influences on teacher leadership. I came to understand that teacher leadership is a practical endeavor; therefore, language and descriptors in the

categorization and the theoretical framework ought to reflect those used by these teacher leaders. For this reason, I grounded the language of both the categorization and the theoretical framework in the experiences of the participants and supported it with the language of existing theory, rather than the other way around. Also, supports and constraints perceived by these teacher leaders arise from all aspects of their lives, not simply from their professional lives. While the significance of personal contextual factors and internal intellectual and psycho-social characteristics has been largely ignored by earlier researchers, I saw these factors as important because of their importance to these participants. Therefore, I ensured that the theoretical framework reflected both teacher leaders' professional contexts and their non-school contexts and internal, intellectual and psycho-social factors, as well. In addition, individual factors can be both sources of support and barriers to teacher leadership. Frequently, a single factor which served as a support for teacher leadership in one situation existed as a barrier to leadership in another situation. Finally, teacher leaders have difficulty maintaining sufficient support to their leadership to offset barriers, and the balance between the various supports and constraints to teacher leadership shifts constantly. Combined supports must remain more influential than combined barriers, if teacher leaders are to continue in leadership. In the following sub-sections, I describe the four domains and the themes they represent and discuss the four additional conclusions.

Four Domains Representing Overarching Themes

In this section, I describe four domains I came to see as weaving throughout these teacher leaders' stories. Each domain encompasses both sources of support and barriers perceived by these teacher leaders and represents a key theme that weaved through participants' reports. The four domains and the themes they represent are as follows: (a) people and interpersonal relationships--people and interpersonal relationships are key influences on teacher leadership, both in terms of supporting that leadership and in terms of impeding it; (b) institutional structures--institutional factors within these teacher leaders' professional contexts affect leadership endeavors in both positive and negative ways; (c) personal considerations and commitments--leadership is but one part of teacher leaders' lives; and (d) intellectual and psycho-social characteristics--internal personality traits have powerful impact on teachers' interest and ability to engage in leadership endeavors. In the next sub-sections, I describe the messages for teacher leadership within each domain.

People and Interpersonal Relationships. This domain reminds us teacher leaders do not work in a vacuum. This domain represents a major theme underlying these teacher leaders' stories: interpersonal relationships are powerful influences, both positively and negatively, on teacher leadership. These teacher leaders confirmed the importance of interpersonal relationships by telling of many ways that people in both their work and personal environments affect their leadership. Attitudes and behaviors of others strongly influence teacher leadership, both positively or negatively. The success or failure of teacher leadership efforts depends in large part on the effectiveness of personal support systems, mutual respect and interdependency,

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team work, mentoring, and modeling. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) noted interpersonal relationships are key determinants of the success or failure of teacher leadership efforts. Donaldson and Marnik (1995) considered the impact of interpersonal relationships and incorporated them as one of the three major goal areas for participants in their Maine Academy for School Leaders. While a strong support network of "critical friends," such as that described by Lieberman (1995), may be the backbone, mutually supportive working relationships with a broad base of colleagues are valuable in strengthening teacher leadership. Mutual interdependency, valued by participants, is based on truly collegial, rather than contrived or mandated, relationships (Hargreaves, 1994). Supportive interpersonal relationships also can include teacher leader-administrator relationships. These teacher leaders described even stronger links between themselves and administrators, especially their principals, than do Blase and Blase (1994), for example. These teacher leaders reported collegial relationships with administrators often existed even at times when participants were not acting in leadership capacities. Mentoring and leadership models from peers or administration supported these teacher leaders, also.

On the other hand, people and interpersonal relationships can also impede teacher leadership. Schools continue to be bastions of egality. Teacher resentment and passive or active resistance to leadership from colleagues occurs when there is a perceived notion that one teacher has more influence or visibility than the norm. These teacher leaders were concerned about teacher resentment. At times, their choices about leadership reflected their desire to maintain harmonious relationships with other teachers. Relationships with administrators were just as important as those with fellow teachers, and tense relationships with principals or other administrators impeded teacher leadership. Finally, even family members sometimes blocked teacher leadership through passive or active non-support. Other researchers have noted the influence of people and interpersonal relations on teacher leadership. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) wrote: "Maintaining effective relationships with colleagues can be more formidable than working with administrators. The egalitarian nature of teaching does not encourage a teacher to step out and take leadership roles" (p. 60). Teacher leadership effectively disrupts the *status quo* by inaugurating "status differences, based on knowledge, skill, and initiative into a profession that has made no provisions for them" (Troen & Boles, 1994, p. 277). Principals, who were unaccustomed to sharing leadership or lacking in facilitative leadership skills themselves, became threatened by these teacher leaders, a factor noted also by Blase and Blase (1994) and Troen and Boles (1994). In Table 3, I present some of the main sources of support and barriers which fall within the domain of people and interpersonal relationships. I took the factors listed in this table, as well as those listed in the three subsequent tables, directly from the categorization completed earlier.

Insert Table 3 about here

The message within the first domain, people and interpersonal relationships, is that other people's attitudes and actions influence teacher leadership in ways that either enhance leadership or diminish it.

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Teacher leaders and people in their environments must recognize the impact of interpersonal relationship and, if they wish to enhance teacher leadership, act in ways that consistently support that leadership.

Institutional Structures. The domain of institutional structures represents a second major theme relating to teacher leadership, reminding us formal and informal structures within the educational context can enhance and support teacher leadership or diminish and restrict teacher leadership. Institutional structures supportive of these teachers' leadership included, for example: opportunities for real leadership roles; training for carrying out those roles; a climate of collaboration and collegiality; and adequate resources to carry out leadership roles. These teacher leaders told of institutional structures such as job flexibility and opportunities to lead which were natural parts of their normal job responsibilities. In these teacher leaders' experience, structures were in place which allowed for, and even promoted, their professional growth. Both informal professional growth opportunities, resulting from work with informal networks, and formal ones were available on an ongoing basis. Recent literature substantiates the pivotal role played by supportive institutional structures. For example, Newmann (1993) found two underlying themes in schools where teacher empowerment and school restructuring were in progress: changes in the "professional lives of teachers" and changes in the "governance and management of schools" (p. 4). Both represent instances where institutional structures can affect teacher leadership.

In many cases, sources of support described by these teacher leaders were offset by formal and informal institutional structures impeding leadership, including two critical barriers: lack of time and isolating, restrictive, or stagnant institutional structures. Many of these teacher leaders told stories of written or unwritten institutional structures impeding their leadership either at present or in the past. One obvious form of institutional structures that restricts teacher leadership is the inflexibility of classroom teaching. As classroom teaching is presently conceived, a teacher has minimal opportunity to interact with colleagues, even on a superficial basis. Some of these teacher leaders had experienced negative consequences when their leadership roles lacked clear role descriptions and guidelines. Restrictive institutional structures were described by Hargreaves (1994), Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996), Louis (1992), and Wasley (1992), for example. Another institutional structure, frequently unwritten, which persists is that teachers will be the recipients of top-down mandates and will have little input into those mandates (Troen & Boles, 1994). Ill-defined and overly broad definitions of leadership roles hamper teacher teachers from reaching their full potential (Wasley, 1991). Still other researchers, such as Yarger and Lee (1994), warned of the need to avoid managerial or quasi-administrative roles for teacher leaders. In Table 4, I display some of the key factors pertaining to institutional structures supporting or impeding teacher leadership. Again, I drew these factors from my final categorization.

Insert Table 4 about here

The message from the second domain, institutional structures, is that many written and unwritten structures within educational organization work for or against teacher leadership. These structures, which can include unwritten institutional norms and expectations as well as formal and informal policies and procedures, have considerable impact on teacher leadership. If educators wish to support teacher leadership, they must minimize structural barriers within the educational context and maximize existing structural factors that support teacher leadership.

Personal Considerations and Commitments. The theme represented by this domain is that leadership is just one part of teacher leaders' lives. One's family and other personal issues play pivotal roles in teacher leadership. These teacher leaders remind us of the need to recognize external contexts and conditions which influence all teachers, whether or not they are in leadership roles. These teacher leaders garnered support for their leadership endeavors from the important people in their personal lives. Families, especially, provide support in tangible ways. On the other hand, participants told of stressors in personal lives that have demanded their full attention and, consequently, required decreased engagement in leadership for a time. Once teachers' colleagues understand conditions within a teacher leader's personal contexts that are affecting work-related responsibilities, they can become more accepting of differing levels of commitment to work above and beyond minimum requirements of their jobs. Although intuitively it makes sense that conditions in one's personal life might affect a teacher's ability to engage in leadership, current literature on teacher leadership tends to ignore this critical factor. The influence of personal context becomes clear, however, when one refers to literature on adult development and learning (Gilligan, 1982; Levine, 1989; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) and teacher career stages (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). Again, I include a table highlighting some of the key influences on teacher leadership from this domain--personal considerations and commitments (Table 5).

Insert Table 5 about here

The message for teacher leadership from the third domain is that teachers are human beings who exist within a complex network of supporting and constraining factors both in their professional and in their personal lives. Educators who wish to support teacher leadership must recognize that sometimes either anticipated or unforeseen circumstances arise in teacher leaders' personal lives which necessitate reductions in time or energy spent on professional endeavors. If supported through difficult times, these professionals will be likely to return to leadership when they are able.

Intellectual and Psycho-social Characteristics. The fourth domain, intellectual and psycho-social characteristics, represents the final theme: individuals' intellectual and psycho-social characteristics are powerful influences on their willingness and ability to engage in leadership functions. These teacher leaders possess special qualities which make leadership a natural outlet. Key intellectual and psycho-social characteristics supporting their leadership include individuals' underlying belief and value systems, drive for

excellence, and insatiable curiosity and need to know. In their model of teacher leadership, Yarger and Lee (1994) identified similar characteristics, including: willingness to take risks; willingness to be responsible for one's own actions; cognitive and affective flexibility; persistence and patience; an orientation toward working with adults; and a commitment to continuing professional growth. Supporting characteristics reported by these teacher leaders are offset by psycho-social characteristics which make leadership difficult or unrewarding, including: reticence, lack of self-confidence, stress, and burnout. Finding sufficient sources of support to outweigh these negative internal influences on leadership is a constant balancing act, at best. Fortunately, as these participants demonstrate, when external barriers seem greatest, their internal strengths come to the forefront. In Table 6, I include examples of supporting and impeding factors within the domain of intellectual and psycho-social characteristics.

<div align="center">Insert Table 6 about here</div>

The message from the fourth domain is that teacher leaders have substantial intellectual and psycho-social strengths which they bring to their leadership roles. On the other hand, they are human, and they also struggle with intrapersonal forces impeding their leadership. Increased self-understanding and interpersonal sensitivity, awareness, and support can help teacher leaders work through self-doubts and enhance self-assurance and feelings of efficacy, which will, in turn, enhance leadership.

These four domains and the themes they represent include both factors which support teacher leadership and factors which impede teacher leadership. Some of these factors are simple, visible, and easy to change. Others are complex, difficult to identify, and highly resistant to change. How educators choose to address those that are both easy to change and those that are difficult to change will have significant impact on teacher leadership. The remaining four conclusions are more general, relating in broad ways both to the theory and the practice of teacher leadership. Rather than sequencing them in order of importance, I have arranged them so that each new conclusion flows naturally from those discussed before.

Grounding Findings in Participants' Narratives

The stories these teacher leaders told were down-to-earth and personal. The stories themselves reflected these teacher leaders' practical orientation, so vocabulary used to tell their stories reflected this focus. For example, these teacher leaders spoke of actions taken by their colleagues to support them. They told of support received from family and friends. They described feelings of efficacy and increasing self-confidence which have come about as a result of involvement in leadership. As barriers to their leadership, for example, they described resentment of their efforts by colleagues and of obstructions set in place by some administrators. They also spoke of their feelings of responsibility to their families or of their own reluctance to alter comfortable routines as barriers to their leadership. They did not mention, as do other researchers for example, factors such as support for teacher leadership as a result of "national recommendations for professionalization of teaching" (Berry, 1995; Blase & Blase, 1994; Carnegie, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986;

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Maeroff, 1994). Nor did they discuss, as barriers, factors like "pressure from teachers' unions to maintain the *status quo*," which is mentioned in existing research (Conley & Robles, 1995; Kowalski, 1994).

I elected to ground the language of the categorization and my proposed theoretical framework primarily in the language of participants, and the descriptors I included in the final framework do not include some of the broad ideas I had included in the *a priori* categorization of supports and barriers. I consciously attempted to portray a picture of supports and barriers to teacher leadership that would be realistic in the eyes of practitioners. I did not want to clutter that picture with factors that, although they may well be true, had no meaning for participants in this study.

I also grounded my work in the language of participants, because participants' stories elevated in importance both factors outside the educational context and internal, intellectual and psycho-social factors. If I had incorporated all of the broad education-related factors that I had in the original version, the categorization and, ultimately, the theoretical framework would have overemphasized supports and barriers within that arena. Recognition of the importance of factors outside the educational context and internal factors leads to the next major conclusion, which I discuss in the following section.

Significance of Personal Contexts and Internal Factors

Although participants mentioned many factors within the educational context that supported or impeded their leadership, they also related many stories describing influences from outside the educational context and intellectual and psycho-social influences on their leadership. As mentioned previously, because factors within these arenas were important to participants, I felt they were important to include in the final categorization and framework. Especially in the case of barriers to leadership, participants in this study repeatedly emphasized factors unrelated to their professional contexts which influenced decisions about how to expend their energies in their professional roles. For example, when family pressures or personal problems, such as ill health, built up, they reprioritized use of their time. Repeatedly, these teacher leaders stressed that the emotional and physical health of their families has and will continue to take precedence over their taking on or continuing in leadership roles. For this reason, I chose to include strong references to personal contextual factors within both the categorization and the framework. While other researchers (for example, Bredeson, 1995; Fay, 1991; Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1988; Little, 1992; Wasley, 1991) have uncovered supporting and constraining factors within teacher leaders' professional contexts, they have not looked at factors outside teacher leaders' educational contexts. However, as noted earlier, factors from adults' personal contexts have been identified by researchers in the field of adult development and learning as influencing adult learning and development (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Merriam, 1993; Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Levine, 1989; Loughlin & Mott, 1992).

Internal, intellectual and psycho-social factors were also clearly evident throughout interviews with these teacher leaders. Participants reaped enjoyment and personal satisfaction from their leadership efforts, but

their underlying belief systems and internal reward systems were equally important. As Mary Ellen described this, in the final analysis, she was her own greatest source of support. However, as described previously, they struggled constantly to overcome obstacles within themselves. Internal, intellectual and psycho-social factors have been described only to a limited degree in existing research (for example, Bennis, 1989; Cooper, 1993; Duke, 1994; Glickman, 1989; Goodwin, 1987; Lieberman, 1988a; Porter, 1986; Wasley, 1991), although, as mentioned previously, one relatively comprehensive description was proposed by Yarger and Lee (1994).

Factors within the educational context were important to these teacher leaders. However, factors outside the educational context and internal, intellectual and pyscho-social factors contribute by providing a more complete and realistic picture of the complex network of supports and barriers perceived by these participants. Interestingly, I observed many similarities between factors that support and those that impede teacher leadership. This observation led to the next conclusion.

Mirroring of Supports and Barriers

Remarkable similarities exist between descriptors of supports and descriptors of barriers. In fact, as I continued to refine the categorization, I began to notice a kind of "mirroring" from the support side of the matrix to the barrier side. I noticed certain factors supportive to one person or in one situation sometimes were reported as barriers in other situations or by other participants. For example, as mentioned earlier, time appeared as both a factor that bolstered teacher leadership, as well as one which impeded leadership. For those teacher leaders who had time for leadership functions built into their work days or who had some level of flexibility in their job descriptions, time to engage in leadership responsibilities was seen as sustaining their leadership. On the other hand, these teacher leaders seldom had sufficient time to completed allotted tasks, they did not have autonomy or flexibility in the use of their time, or they did not have time available when other teachers were also available. To give another example, families both supported and impeded these teachers' leadership. For instance, Maya's parents supported her leadership work at the same time as they reminded her of her primary responsibility to her husband and children. To give an example within the arena of "internal factors," increased self-confidence as a result of successful leadership experiences encouraged these teacher leaders to expand their horizons in terms of leadership, but a number of them continue to struggle with self-esteem and self-confidence issues to the present. These are but a few of the many instances when factors appeared as both sources of support for and as barriers to teacher leadership. Other researchers studying teacher leadership have noticed this apparent contradiction (for example, Lieberman, 1988b; Wasley, 1991). Wasley (1991) described this paradox clearly:

> Constraining factors hampered (teacher leaders') ability to improve instruction and to meet the goals of the leadership positions. Supporting factors enabled them to engage in collaborative relationships and to recognize the gains they did make. Ironically, in almost all cases, those conditions that provided support also were constraints. The provision of time and the lack of it is a case in point. Teacher leaders were given time to work with their colleagues - a tremendous support - but also agreed that the time allocated

was inadequate... Collaboration provides another example. The teacher leaders loved the opportunity to collaborate with others, and yet felt lonely as their roles separated them from their colleagues. (p. 136-137)

Factors that support or constrain teacher leadership are prevalent in all aspects of teacher leaders' lives, and supporting factors are often mirrored in the list of constraining factors. It makes sense that teacher leaders would elect to engage in leadership functions only when sources of support outweigh barriers. Consideration of the relative strengths of supports and barriers led me to a final conclusion, which I discuss in the following section.

Counterbalancing Obstacles to Teacher Leadership

The final conclusion has to do with the combined forces supporting and impeding teacher leadership. Teacher leaders in this study help us understand the realities of teacher leadership. One critical reality is that the balance between factors supporting teacher leadership and those impeding that leadership is fragile. Teachers' willingness to engage in leadership rests on having sufficient support to offset constraints. Teacher leadership is not simply a matter of desiring leadership responsibilities and having them occur. Far too many institutional and other barriers exist. Neither does teacher leadership result simply from a district's mandates or a building administrator's expressions of support. Institutional support for teacher leadership cannot offset the many unwritten, unspoken barriers which exist in educational contexts, not to mention personal contexts or internal, intellectual or psycho-social factors. Even if teachers are strongly motivated and institutional supports are in place, teacher leaders may not succeed. Conditions entirely unrelated to the educational context and beyond the individual's or organization's control can interfere, suddenly and without warning. Other researchers, such as Wasley (1991), described the balance which must occur between factors which support and those which impede teacher leadership. Unfortunately, adjusting factors to maintain sufficient support to encourage teacher leadership is not always within the teacher leader's purview.

This delicate balance is probably best described by McCluskey's power-load-margin formula (as described in Main, 1979). In McCluskey's model, power "consists of the 'resources' that a person can command in coping with load. Power consists of two sets of 'interacting variables': (a) 'external' resources such as physical health, social contacts, economic wealth, etc., and (b) 'internal' acquired skills and life experiences such as resiliency, coping skills, etc." (Main, 1979). Load, on the other hand represents the "'demands' made on a person by self and society.... [and] consists of two groups of 'interacting' variables: (a) 'external'--the tasks involved in the usual requirements of living, [such as] family, work, [and] civic responsibilities... and (b) 'internal'--the life expectancies set by the individual himself, [such as] self-tolerance, goals, ideals, [and] values" (p. 22). Margin has to do with the balance of power and load. If a person's power sufficiently exceeds his or her load, then, as McCluskey saw it, that adult had: (a) necessary reserves of power to learn; and (b) sufficient reserves to meet unanticipated crises. As Main (1979) described

the concept, if load exceeds power, a crisis can be expected. If load and power are approximately of equal strength, the individual will be "hanging in there--barely." If, however, power sufficiently exceeds load, the individual will have "space within which to maneuver."

McCluskey's notion of power, load, and margin, although originally used to describe adults' capacity for learning, has direct implications for teacher leadership. When these teacher leaders experienced combinations of factors supporting teacher leadership outweighing barriers, they were encouraged to engage in leadership functions. They were motivated, enthusiastic, and confident of their personal efficacy. However, when combined barriers outweighed supports, teachers were likely decline to take on leadership roles or withdraw from leadership activities in progress. These teacher leaders became discouraged, overwhelmed, and doubtful of their ability to lead effectively.

If individual factors acting as supports or barriers were easy to identify, offsetting barriers with sufficient supports would be considerably easier than it is. However, in reality, both supports and barriers change constantly, many are intangible, and most are difficult or impossible to measure accurately. Also, individual teacher leaders are likely to vary in their sensitivity to a given support or barrier, so they would react differently to those factors. Because managing supporting and constraining factors is like "hitting a moving target," probably the best educators can do is maximize supportive factors and minimize impediments and then hope they have made enough of a difference to support teacher leadership overall.

<div align="center">Limitations of the Study</div>

This study has several limitations affect the credibility of the research. These limitations relate to: (a) trustworthiness of interview data; (b) the relatively small sample size and restricted nature of the population studied; and (c) generalizability of qualitative research. As I discuss each in turn, I report on ways in which I attempted to minimize each limitation's potentially negative effect on the credibility of the research.

The first possible limitation to the credibility of this study has to do with the nature of interview data. Three major problems with these interview data exist. First, bias exists on the part of participants and the researcher. I based my analyses on interviews, and statements by interviewees are colored by their biases. My subsequent analyses of interview data compounded the problem, by adding a second layer of bias. I attempted to minimize distortions by offering participants the opportunity to read and react to key segments of analysis relating to their own interviews. The second problem with interview data has to do with the retrospective nature of these interviews. Data informing this study were based in large part on participants' recollection of past events, but memories of earlier events and motivations are always distorted by the passage of time. To counteract this problem, I asked participants to review and correct their own interview transcripts, and I interviewed each participant at least twice. A final potential difficulty with interview data relates to the truthfulness of participant responses. Analyses of data were based on that which participants said was true. I attempted no investigation of the truth value of participants' narratives. However, by interviewing nine

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teacher leaders, each more than once, I feel I would have been able to pick up on any obvious aberrations in their stories.

A second limitation of the study is the relatively small sample size and restricted nature of the population studied. I made no attempt to ensure diversity among study participants, selected participants based on peer nomination. However, I selected potential school sites only after they had been recommended by two or more central office administrators polled independent of one another, and I selected participants based solely on weighted nominations of their colleagues. Thus, I did not contrive to alter the sample as it was presented to me. Possible problems with the sample, such as inclusion of only highly experienced teacher leaders, inclusion of only one male in the study group, or concentrating solely on elementary school teachers, are a direct and natural result of narrowing the focus of the study and conducting an interview-based, qualitative study around these nine teacher leaders.

A final limitation of the study relates to qualitative research in general. Because findings of qualitative research are not typically generalizable to a larger population, one cannot assume findings from this research may be transferrable to a larger population. I took a number of steps to counteract this limitation. First, I made an effort to include teacher leaders from three separate school districts. Second, I used a multiple-stage, case-study design building in both literal and theoretical replication to increase the level of credibility of findings (Yin, 1991). Third, I undertook multiple forms of data analyses to increase the study's credibility (Mishler, 1995). For example, I analyzed data in two ways--narrative analysis and analyses of narratives (Polkinghorne, 1995). In conclusion, while I recognize limitations of this study, I took active steps to counteract those limitations, thereby strengthening the credibility of the research.

Implications for Research

In this study, I synthesized analyses of interview data and existing research into a categorization and theoretical framework describing key factors supporting and impeding teacher leadership. Further research needs to be conducted in order to: (a) test the generalizability to broader or larger populations of teacher leaders; and (b) assess the validity of the theoretical framework and other conclusions.

Researchers need to test the generalizability of these findings by including different populations of teacher leaders and by enlarging the population studied . First, the categorization, theoretical framework, and remaining conclusions must be tested with different populations of teacher leaders to further refine this organizing scheme for describing supports and barriers to teacher leadership. Teacher leaders at different levels, such as middle or junior high school and high school levels, or those with less experience may offer different perspectives. Subsequent research also needs to include perspectives of more males. Finally, more diverse populations may yield different results. Next, the categorization, the framework, and other conclusions need to be tested with larger populations of teacher leaders. Quantitative studies should be useful in extending this research using larger samples.

Content validity of the categorization and major conclusions should be tested through further research. First, testing of the categorization needs to occur. Individual descriptors may require revision based on findings from research on other populations. Once the categorization has been tested for completeness and accuracy, research can take place relating to content validity of the proposed theoretical framework. Such may prove valuable to determine if, in fact, these domains encompass all key supports and barriers to teacher leadership. The other major conclusions may be tested, as well. By conducting additional research with different populations and different research methodologies and by testing the content validity of findings and conclusions, further research could enhance and extend this study. The study has implications for practice, as well. I discuss these in the following section.

<center>Implications for Practice</center>

This study has several implications for teacher leadership in schools. First, information from this study might help formal leaders foster potential teacher leaders. School principals and other administrators are overburdened, partly as a result of shrinking financial and human resources and partly because of demands placed on them from their superiors. Many current teacher leaders are nearing retirement age. Therefore, we must encourage the development of a new generation of teacher leaders. Formal leaders can better nurture teacher leadership through deeper understanding of motivations and support systems of existing teacher leaders, as well as recognition of barriers which they face. Second, at a time when attracting and retaining quality teachers is difficult, this study may provide formal leaders with suggestions for attractive roles for teachers which allow teachers greater autonomy and influence. If formal leaders were to understand more about factors that influence teacher leadership, they would be in better positions to: (a) provide appropriate vehicles for teacher leadership; (b) avoid placing teachers in leadership roles that are likely to meet substantial resistance; and (c) creatively alter existing institutional structures (such as use of time) to allow teachers wishing to remain in classroom positions to engage more readily in leadership functions. Third, these findings serve to remind educators of the importance of recognizing and honoring competing commitments which force teachers to lessen their commitment to school-wide or district-wide improvement efforts. By offering teachers diverse options which allow for varying levels of commitment to school-wide or district-wide initiatives, formal leaders can demonstrate that, not only do they value teachers' expertise, but they understand that each individual teacher has many competing priorities in his or her life.

Fourth, and finally, educators could use either the categorization or the theoretical framework of four domains as tools for organizing self-studies prior to effecting changes. In order to maximize success of teacher leaders in their own schools, staffs could: (a) provide for interpersonal support systems; (b) identify and adjust contextual supports and barriers; (c) recognize and validate personal contextual factors; and (d) nurture personal intellectual and psycho-social factors that provide support and recognize internal factors

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making a teacher disinclined toward leadership. Practitioners might wish to ask questions allowing them to compare their present realities to their desired futures. Using a framework, such as the one I have just presented, they might then take action with the express purpose of enhancing supports to teacher leadership and reducing, as much as possible, existing barriers to that leadership.

## Closing Observations

In this study, I explored perceptions of nine elementary school teacher leaders as to supports and barriers to their leadership. Based on my data and supported by existing research, I developed a theoretical framework represented by four domains encompassing both sources of support and barriers to teacher leadership. The four overarching domains and their related themes are as follows: (a) people and interpersonal relationships--people and interpersonal relationships are key influences on teacher leadership, both in terms of supporting that leadership and in terms of impeding it; (b) institutional structures--institutional factors within these teacher leaders' professional contexts affect leadership endeavors in both positive and negative ways; (c) personal considerations and commitments--leadership is but one part of teacher leaders' lives; and (d) intellectual and psycho-social characteristics--internal personality traits have powerful impact on teachers' interest and ability to engage in leadership endeavors. I suggested four additional conclusions which relate both to the categorization used to develop the framework and the framework, itself. First, teacher leadership is a practical endeavor, so language used in the theoretical framework should reflect language used by teacher leaders. Second, supports and constraints perceived by these teacher leaders arise from all facets of their lives, so the theoretical framework needs to reflect supports and barriers from all three arenas: conditions within the educational context; conditions outside the educational context; and internal, intellectual and psycho-social factors. Third, individual factors can be both sources of support and barriers in different situations, at different times, or for different individuals. Finally, maintaining sufficient supports to offset barriers is essential.

Barth (1988b) believed schools should be places where there are many leaders. He compared schools to flocks of geese in V-formation. In schools, as with geese, group members need to rotate leadership, so that no one person bears the brunt of leadership. Sirotnik (1995) added a cynical note to this image. In Sirotnik's version, the lead goose "has smashed against the spire of a tall building... The caption reads: 'The hazards of leadership.'" (p. 239) I would contribute yet another image. In my visualization, I propose including a number of geese in the flock who are aiming slingshots at the lead goose. Also, I would envision the lead goose's family crying out for help from below. This is the downside of teacher leadership.

However, it would be unfair to conclude on such a negative note. These teacher leaders have in common strength of values and desire to impact students' education in positive ways. Overall, the teacher leaders in this study relish their involvement in leadership. They revel in leadership's challenges. They actively seek opportunities for professional growth which come with leadership. In general, they perceive support from

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fellow teachers and administrators, as well as from family and friends. Although these teacher leaders all have experienced times in their careers when barriers seemed overwhelming, during these periods, they have relied on the strength of their belief systems, their desire for excellence, and sense of obligation to contribute to sustain them. Aside from internal factors supporting them through adverse circumstances, they have received substantial support from other people, especially close networks of "critical friends" and principals or other administrators with whom they worked. In addition, they have received support from institutional structures promoting teacher leadership, including leadership opportunities, training programs, and flexible scheduling. These teacher leaders have been successful in counterbalancing the barriers to leadership with factors supporting teacher leadership.

This study brings to light some of the day-to-day realities of teacher leadership. By highlighting conditions enhancing and obstructing teacher leadership, I hope to support teacher leadership. I hope these teacher leaders' voices will encourage school personnel to recognize and enhance supportive conditions, while they work to diminish obstructing ones. Administrators, especially, have powerful roles to play in the future of teacher leadership. Teacher leadership has tremendous potential to change the look of schools. All educators can contribute to realizing this potential. They can begin by increasing their understanding of factors which support or impede leadership in practicing teacher leaders. Researchers and practitioners still have much to learn about teacher leadership. More research must be conducted to understand the interplay of factors that support or impede teacher leadership. Although understanding of factors affecting teacher leadership is growing, in practice, educators have much to learn about providing support for teachers engaging in leadership functions.

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Table 1

**Characteristics of Teacher Leaders Nominated for the Study**

| Teacher leaders in this study have the following characteristics: | Teacher leaders in this study do not necessarily have the following characteristics: |
| --- | --- |
| • Maintain some level of teaching responsibility | • Do not necessarily have formal titles or roles as teacher leaders |
| • Participate actively in school-wide or district decision-making on a regular basis | • Do not necessarily chair or facilitate committees |
| • Are held in high regard by their peers | • Do not necessarily get paid extra for extra work |
| • Engender a high level of trust | |
| • Are teachers to whom others go for advice, information, or assistance | |

Table 2

<u>Categorization of Supports and Barriers to Teacher Leadership</u>

| | Sources of Support For Leadership | Barriers To Leadership |
|---|---|---|
| **Conditions Within the Educational Context** | **Personal network providing collegial support**<br>• Strong, knowledgeable support and encouragement from trusted colleagues<br>• Opportunities to formulate ideas or practice in a safe environment<br>• Core group serving as 'critical friends' | **Insufficient time during school day and year**<br>• Too much to do in available time<br>• Lack of time to work collegially<br>• Institutional structure promotes isolation<br>• Classroom responsibilities limit available time<br>• Lack of focus on manageable number of goals |
| | **Support of and modeling by administrators**<br>• Encouragement sometimes strongly given<br>• Shared leadership behaviors modeled by supervisors<br>• Current information and resources from knowledgeable, well-informed administrators | **Lack of support and involvement of other teachers**<br>• Expressed or passive resentment of teacher leadership from colleagues<br>• Interpersonal relationships strained by leadership role<br>• Lack of interest by other teachers in taking leadership responsibilities |
| | **Leadership opportunities increasingly available with successful experience**<br>• Expanding network of contacts brings new opportunities<br>• Opportunities available at the right time professionally<br>• Successful leadership endeavors lead to new opportunities | **Inconsistent administrative support or modeling for teacher leaders**<br>• Poor leadership modeling<br>• Barriers constructed by administration (e.g. permission, access to opportunities)<br>• Lack of access to information (e.g. research, leadership development opportunities) or resources (e.g. time, training, budget)<br>• Insufficient private or public appreciation shown for efforts |
| | **Training of leadership skills available**<br>• Opportunities for both content and leadership skills development provided<br>• Informal or formal mentoring in leadership development given<br>• Leadership modeling of other teachers | **Ill-defined and overly broad leadership roles**<br>• Leadership roles unclear to administrators, other teachers, or teacher leader<br>• Roles lack reasonable limits in terms of available time, resources, or authority |

*(table continues)*

Table 2 (continued)

| | Sources of Support<br>For Leadership | Barriers<br>To Leadership |
|---|---|---|
| **Conditions Within the Educational Context** *(Continued)* | **Mutual support and respect by teachers for leadership efforts**<br>• Appreciation expressed by peers for leadership efforts<br>• Teachers willing to help when asked<br>• Interdependency among staff members<br><br>**Needed flexibility found**<br>• Regular job responsibilities permit flexible use of time<br>• Creative methods achieve necessary flexibility<br><br>**Nature of job requires leadership behaviors**<br>• Regular contact with other teachers at school and district level as a job requirement<br>• Leadership functions a normal part of job requirements<br><br>**Opinions and recommendations accepted by formal leadership**<br>• Sense of efficacy; feeling one's work makes a difference<br>• Perception that one's opinion is heard and valued<br>• Perception that one's views represent those of an ethnic minority | **Physical barriers**<br>• Building layout which makes role difficult to fulfill |
| **Conditions Outside the Educational Context** | **Encouragement of family and friends**<br>• Support for level of commitment<br>• Family members take on extra responsibilities allowing time for leadership responsibilities<br><br>**Media reporting supports schools and teachers**<br>• Positive reports of school improvement efforts | **Family and other responsibilities competing with leadership roles**<br>• Insufficient emotional and physical energy to expend in both arenas<br>• Life stage issues require refocusing of priorities<br><br>**Personal health problems**<br>• Physical demands of leadership taxing<br>• Shift in priorities as a result of life-threatening illness |

*(table continues)*

Table2 *(continued)*

| | Sources of Support For Leadership | Barriers To Leadership |
|---|---|---|
| **Conditions Outside the Educational Context** *(Continued)* | **Appreciation shown by parents of students**<br>• Parents state their thanks for leadership efforts or the results of those efforts | **Cultural or religious values which discourage leadership endeavors**<br>• Cultural expectations of acceptable roles do not include leadership<br>• Religious tenets devalue leadership behavior<br><br>**Media reporting maligns the work of schools and teachers**<br>• Negative presentations of schools in local and national media<br><br>**Stereotypical and negative perceptions of educators and women by family members and others**<br>• View that women should not take leadership roles<br>• Negative stereotypes of teachers<br><br>**Lack of leadership role models among contacts outside of education**<br>• Poor role models among non-educators |
| **Internal Factors** | **Strong personal beliefs and values**<br>• Values demand excellence<br>• Strong commitment to education<br>• Sense of obligation to make a difference<br>• Belief one must share one's talents<br>• Sense of connection with a set of ideas spurs involvement<br><br>**Enjoyment of new challenges and change**<br>• Relishes taking risks<br>• Unthreatened by change<br>• Sense when the time is right both personally and professionally<br><br>**Enjoyment of innovative or "big picture" issues**<br>• Desire to be involved in decisions beyond one's own classroom or job<br>• Need to be in "on the ground floor" with innovations<br>• Enjoys leading rather than always following | **Discomfort with leadership roles**<br>• Dislike of being the "boss"<br>• Unwillingness to "step on others' toes"<br>• Early training and modeling to avoid leadership<br>• Personality makes leadership stressful<br><br>**Feelings of discouragement and frustration**<br>• Result of lack of support from colleagues, administrators, community members, or family<br>• Perception that one's work is not valued by others<br><br>**Stress and overwork making one reluctant to take on more**<br>• Exhaustion as a result of trying to do more than one is able physically or emotionally<br>• Sense of exhaustion as a result of continually being a "pioneer"<br>• Burnout with profession in general |

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Table 2 *(continued)*

| | Sources of Support For Leadership | Barriers To Leadership |
|---|---|---|
| **Internal Factors** *(Continued)* | **Intrinsically rewarded**<br>• Self-evaluates leadership efforts<br>• Reinforcement is internal, even when external impediments seem overwhelming | **Perception of insufficient expertise for leadership role**<br>• Perception of insufficient technical or content expertise<br>• Belief that one lacks adequate leadership skills (e.g. communication, group facilitation, or presentation skills)<br>• Low self-esteem; lack of confidence |
| | **Validation and self-confidence**<br>• Likes the sense of being treated professionally<br>• Feels appreciated by others<br>• Feels increased self-confidence as a result of leadership activities | **Reluctance to alter the *status quo***<br>• Unwillingness to let go of known routines<br>• Fear of the unknown |
| | | **Stagnation in a given leadership role resulting in less interest in that role**<br>• Need for change and continual challenge<br>• Lack of challenge leads to desire to change |

Table 3

**People and Interpersonal Relationships**

| Supporting Factors | Impeding Factors |
| --- | --- |
| Personal support systems ("critical friends") | Resentment or tense relationships with other teachers |
| Positive working relationship with principal and/or other administrators | Lack of involvement or interest in leadership on the part of other teachers |
| Mentoring or modeling by respected colleagues | Passive or active opposition by administrators |
| Mutual respect and interdependency of the staff | Family commitments |
| Encouragement of and support by family and friends | Spoken or unspoken disapproval by family or community members |
| | Sterotypical or negative perceptions of teachers or women by family or friends |

Table 4

**Institutional Structures**

| Supporting Factors | Impeding Factors |
| --- | --- |
| Opportunities for authentic leadership roles and responsibilities | Insufficient time during the school day or year for collegial work |
| Ongoing opportunities for formal and informal leadership training | Lack of access to information or resources |
| Climate of collaboration and collegiality | Rigid definition of teachers' roles |
| Provision of necessary resources (i.e. time, information, financing) | Overly broad or ill-defined teacher leadership roles and responsibilities |
| | Physical barriers |

Table 5

**Personal Considerations and Commitments**

| Supporting Factors | Impeding Factors |
|---|---|
| Support and encouragement of family members | Family or other responsibilities which compete with leadership roles (i.e. crises, child rearing, single parenthood, aging or infirm parents, illness of one or more family members) |
| Support and encouragement of friends | Personal health issues or concerns |
| | Lack of family support for leadership efforts |
| | Cultural or religious values which discourage leadership |

Table 6

**Intellectual and Psycho-social Characteristics**

| Supporting Factors | Impeding Factors |
|---|---|
| Strong personal beliefs and values which demand excellence | Discomfort with leadership roles in general, or one role in particular |
| Sense of obligation to get involved | Feelings of discouragement or frustration |
| Perception that one can make a difference in the lives of student and educators | Feelings of exhaustion or burnout |
| Sense of connection with a set of ideas | Perception that one has insufficient expertise |
| Enjoyment of challenges and change; curiosity | Reluctance to let go of comfortable routines |
| Enjoyment of innovative or "big picture" issues | |
| Intrinsically rewarded | |
| Self-confidence which has developed over time and with leadership experience | |

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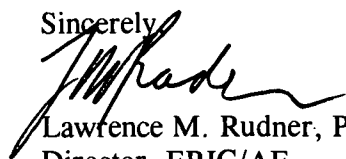
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