Perspectives on Teacher Leadership: Implications for Practice and Teacher Leadership Development

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Teacher leaders are valuable members of the school community. However, there is little existing research that explores how teacher leaders shape and enact their roles. In this article we explore how teacher leaders come to understand their role, as well as how principals and other school colleagues interact with teacher leaders and the ways in which those interactions support teacher leader role development. These findings have significant implications in helping us understand how to help teacher leaders develop in their role and the ways in which leaders can foster teacher leadership growth.

Keywords: teacher leadership, leadership development

Teachers who assume leadership roles within their school serve as key levers in the implementation of effective school improvement processes and in the establishment of a healthy school culture that put student learning and development first (Scribner, Hager, & Warne, 2002; Smylie & Eckert, 2017). Whether supported by formal school leadership or not, literature underscores the principal-teacher nexus that fosters teacher leadership in ways that positively influence school functioning and by extension students' experiences in those environments (e.g., Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Ado (2016) argued that teacher leaders can fuel professional learning amongst colleagues that fosters "continued [professional] growth and ongoing [teacher] learning in schools and can help colleagues improve their teaching practice" (Ado, 2016, p. 3). However, while the importance of teacher leadership is not in doubt, we know less about 1) how teachers enact these roles or 2) how principals and other colleagues interact with teacher leaders to shape those roles and influence their potential impact. As such, this study explores teachers' and administrators' perspectives on the teacher leader role by asking the questions 1) how and in what ways do these actors understand the role of teacher leader and 2) what factors influence how and to what extent those roles are enacted in practice? We first provide brief overviews of how we have conceived the teacher leader role and the factors that influence those roles.

Teacher Leadership as a Role

While not a new concept, teacher leadership as a phenomenon has been considered along traditional lines (Brosky, 2011). York-Barr and Duke (2004) traced the development of conceptions of teacher leadership according to three waves. In the first wave, teacher leaders were considered those who served in formal roles, such as a department head, with a well-defined organizational mandate to increase the efficiency of school operations. Smylie and Denny (1990) observed that teachers in this first wave had "historically assumed certain formal leadership roles in schools and school districts," and that their leadership was viewed as a useful strategy to increase teacher efficacy and student achievement (Smylie & Denny, 1990, p. 237)—in other words, teacher leaders acted as an extension of formal leadership.

The second wave considered teacher leaders to include those appointed to roles that leveraged their instructional expertise to influence teaching and learning in the school context. For example, these roles included curriculum leaders, coaches, mentors, and specialists (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Finally, the third and current wave encompasses the first two waves, as well as the teacher leader's critical role in school culture where teachers are leaders both in and out of the classroom (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Cheng and Szeto (2016) contributed to our notions of teacher leadership in the third wave by expanding teacher leadership to comprise roles through which teacher leaders influence not only organizational initiatives but also other teachers' educational practices through less formal and planned interactions.

Factors Affecting Teacher Leaders

Teacher leadership, understood as a process through which teachers influence others in productive ways (Cheng & Szeto, 2016), occurs through interrelationships between school professionals that focus on issues related to school improvement generally and teacher practices more specifically (Brosky, 2011). Four organizational and contextual factors—school culture,

school structure, school leadership, and school-wide colleagues—have been found to limit or enhance the potential for teacher leaders to positively influence school environments.

Much has been written about how school cultures are shaped. State and district contexts, as well as teachers, administrators, and students play roles in determining school norms, beliefs, and practices. Here, however, we concern ourselves with how school contexts (i.e., cultures) shape teacher leadership. To that end, Swidler (1998) argued that just as individuals can shape organizational cultures, individuals' norms, beliefs, and values can be shaped by external forces at the macro-institutional, organizational, and dyadic/group levels of interaction. Schools are complex organizations situated within the broader institution can shape how teacher leaders engage in their work. For example, rules in the form of policies and procedures at the organizational and institutional levels can shape teacher leaders' perceptions of opportunities and constraints (Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2010). Other institutional and organizational rules related to recruitment and selection, professional development, high stakes testing, and teacher evaluation, to name just a few, can all influence how teacher leaders envision and enact their positions. Yet, culture as a limiting factor is not preordained. School cultures—norms, beliefs, and values, can also maximize the positive impact of teacher leaders where those cultures encourage the devolution of leadership, promote collaboration, and reward teamwork (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011).

School Structure

Beyond culture, organizational structures and routines influence teacher leadership (Smylie & Denny, 1990; Muijs & Harris, 2007). For example, schools that develop certain types of structures such as professional learning communities create opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership with or without formal leadership roles or titles (Scribner, Hager, & Warne, 2002). Further, schools with more organic collaborative structures, flatter interpretations of organizational hierarchies also tend to create more opportunities through which teacher leadership can thrive (Beachum & Denith, 2004). Ado (2016) found that putting in place structures that support "collaboration, teacher-driven, contextualized professional development, and reflective practice" are critical pieces to teacher leader development within a building" (p. 5). The structure of a school (time, recognition, authority, and support) can influence teachers becoming teacher leaders and carrying out their role. However, most schools are not structured to promote teacher leadership. In fact, most schools follow traditional hierarchical structures that limit teacher leader opportunities (Scribner, Hager, & Warne, 2002). In many instances, rather, teacher leadership is curtailed and cordoned off into certain areas acceptable to school leaders who operate within the traditional and hierarchical school structures (Silva et al, 2000; Struyve et al., 2014).

School Leaders and Shared Leadership

School administrator support for teacher leaders is vital to ensuring that these teachers can carry out their leadership roles (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). However, teacher leaders may find themselves in situations in which basic understanding of the role, or even trust between formal leaders and teacher leaders, are limited. This limit stems from

factors such as formal leaders' visions regarding teacher roles and institutional pressures such as achievement targets that make devolution of power to teachers an undue risk (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992, p. 153). Therefore, the ways in which administrators shape this relationship and the conditions to support teacher leaders within their school can enable or hinder teacher leaders (Ado, 2016; Higgins & Bonne, 2011; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Silva et al., 2000). Thus, one necessary condition for teacher leadership within the institution and organization is shared leadership. Shared leadership by its nature requires formal leaders to relinquish some level of leadership control (Barth, 2001). Principals who hold tight to their power and status in the hierarchy, rather than embracing shared leadership, often become obstacles to it (Harris, 2005; Klein et al., 2018).

Teachers who exercise leadership are influenced at the dyadic and group level in multiple ways (Swidler, 1998). On one hand, these teacher leaders are often perceived as credible experts by their colleagues due to teacher leaders' expertise in the areas of teaching and learning and their understanding of classroom demands (Carver, 2016; Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2018). Further, their acceptance as teacher leaders by their colleagues can solidify the teacher leader's identity as a leader (Struyve et al., 2014; Campbell et al, 2019).

On the other hand, teacher leaders may also encounter resistance from their peers (Carver, 2016). Tensions can arise when some teachers are given special roles and responsibilities, particularly when those roles and responsibilities exercise power over other teachers (Cheung, et. al, 2018). This "first among equals" ethos can act as a demotivator for teachers considering teacher leader roles due to strong norms of equality within teacher ranks (Carver, 2016; Cheung et al., 2018; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2011; Mevawalla & Hadley, 2012).

Methodology

A phenomenological perspective helps to understand how participants make sense of and interact with phenomena of interest in a study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Laverty, 2003). As such, phenomenology guides how we implemented this study to better understand how teachers and administrators understand and experience teacher leadership (van Manen, 2014). We chose to study this phenomenon within one district, Bayside School District (a pseudonym). Bayside is a midsize urban school district in a mid-Atlantic state. Collectively, the 33 schools in the district serve approximately 20,000 students and employ approximately 1,500 teachers. Because we focused on teacher leadership at the elementary level our recruitment involved sending an email to all district elementary teachers and principals and assistant principals (approximately 400 employees). We identified 20 participants for the study (11 teacher leaders and 9 administrators). We selected these participants in a manner to ensure we represented teacher leaders and administrators from the same schools. Our participant selection created eight teacher leaders and administrator groups. We interviewed participants using semi-structured interviews and follow-up interviews as needed. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

In phenomenology, the researcher must allow the data to emerge by capturing "rich descriptions of phenomena and their settings" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 104, as cited in Groenewald, 2004). Thus, data analysis began during the first round of interviews and followed the hermeneutic cycle of reading, reflective writing, and interpreting (Kafle, 2011). Throughout data analysis, we recorded coding choices, reflections, and memos as an integral part of analysis,

and to compare analysis as we checked each other's interpretations to strengthen trustworthiness. As coding and categorizing developed, additional reflections were developed.

Findings

Through our research we identified two major categories. The first centers around the effects of the hierarchical school design on perceptions and possibilities of teacher leadership. And the second broadly addresses the impact of school culture and, especially, the nature of human relationships on teacher leadership.

Structural Effects of Hierarchy

Most US public schools are built on hierarchical personnel structures. Principals hold positional power and, as such, can influence decisions and processes in a way other personnel may not be able to do so. We found that the degree to which administrators adhered to a hierarchical structure influenced teachers' self-perception as leaders and affected their ability to exercise leadership in their roles.

Vertical Versus Flat Hierarchy: Principals' Perceptions Matter

When school hierarchy operated more vertically, we found that teachers' perspectives on their leadership was diminished. In short, vertical hierarchy led to teacher leaders generally experiencing their roles as implementers of someone else's (i.e., administrators) vision, goals, and directives. For example, one teacher leader shared that in her hierarchically-led school she carried out decisions that were already made. Another teacher leader from the same school described how even when she disagreed with administrator decisions, she felt she had no choice but to go along, "I was in that situation of wanting to say no, but of course it's not expected for you to say no; if you are asked to do something like this in our field, you know, it's never good to say no." Interestingly, the principal's perception of this school reinforced these comments when they stated, "…if I need them to do something, they've never said no."

Teachers in hierarchical leadership situations sensed pressure to conform to the requests from "higher ups" because they believed that they might not receive future opportunities if they did not comply. They saw administrators as "authority figures." Furthermore, teachers in these environments perceived their leadership opportunities as originating externally from school administrators. In other words, these teachers generally carried out the visions and goals of others but were less inclined to develop those ideas themselves.

We describe the nature of teacher leadership in these hierarchical schools as delegated leadership. That is, teacher leaders' leadership acts were guided by directives related to how to employ and enact the goals of others, rather than allowing them to determine, develop, and employ themselves. For example, one administrator, noted that at her school, leadership was often "granted and not sought out." Furthermore, teachers in these environments discussed how the leadership roles and responsibilities that administrators delegated went to only a select few teachers. Teachers in these situations expressed frustration because they believed that numerous other teachers were capable of the same responsibilities.

Teachers in schools whose principals lead in ways that suggested a flatter hierarchical perspective, described administrators who shared leadership with teachers and provided opportunities for teacher leaders to grow in their roles. For example, one of these principals explained how she recognized early in her administrative career that when administrators consistently select the same group of teacher leaders to carry out tasks the other teacher leaders and teachers identified as being in the "out group." She made it a point to consistently "look for ways to build leadership" in various areas, so it was not always the same group of teachers being given these opportunities.

Additionally, schools that had a flatter organizational structure showed evidence of high levels of collaboration between the administrator and teacher leaders. At these schools, teacher leaders seemed more comfortable seeking out opportunities and approaching administrators. Another administrator described how she recognized teacher leaders as those "who wanted to be there to help others as opposed to leading for themselves." Another teacher leader stated that "When my administrator notices a [teacher's] strength in an area she encourages [that teacher] to present ideas to staff. She also encourages teachers to take on additional leadership roles to help them to grow." Teachers at another school whose principal shared the "flat hierarchy' philosophy expressed similar sentiments about their administrators and how they encouraged and helped teachers grow as leaders and pushed them out of their "comfort zones."

Regardless of the leadership architecture—hierarchical or flat—teacher leaders clung to the idea that the power resides at the top of the hierarchy with the administrator. Of course, this makes sense for many reasons, particularly that administrators are charged with responsibilities that teachers are not. However, teachers' perceptions of themselves as pseudo-leaders creates a challenge for administrators who want teachers to exercise leadership. For example, administrators in our study who sought to share leadership described the challenge of changing teacher mindsets that leadership equated to bureaucratic authority assigned only to formal school leaders. One of these principals stated, "I'm not making them do stuff because I'm their boss, but because they're needed, and they're trusted and they're capable." However, the organizational hierarchy was evident in the teacher leaders' responses, such as saying the administrator is "still the boss" and feeling they had to "report to the right people."

Teacher leaders also expressed uncertainty with their role and where exactly they fell within the hierarchy of school leadership. One teacher stated, "I feel like there's this line of authority [that teachers should not cross]. But I don't know where it is." Another mentioned that the roles and responsibilities meted out to teacher leaders are not always clear and she feels "lost at times." This role uncertainty extended to how their role may change or fluctuate depending upon which administrator they interacted with, leaving teacher leaders unsure of what is expected of their role and how much they can do. Finally, within their role there was uncertainty as to how to interact with other colleagues. A third teacher stated, "I have uncertainty with this [aspect], just speaking to other colleagues on the same level as me from a different role, which is hard to do. And it's hard to break that barrier." This ambivalence toward leadership among teachers leads us to our next section on perceptions of authority and power.

Authority and Power: An Inherent Tension

Administrators suggested that teacher leaders were not always comfortable with some

of the leadership responsibilities they were offered because, as one principal stated, “there are also times when they don't feel comfortable...primarily because they're an equal with their peers.” She observed that this dynamic can be differ among teams and:

> they don't want to buck the system...they don't want to upset their colleagues. And so, they sometimes just go along with whatever's being said or done because they don't want to be the ones having to step into that role.

The interviews with teacher leaders revealed how much their role is influenced by the hierarchical nature of the school. In some cases where administrators had not empowered their teacher leaders, pushback and tension occurred between teacher leaders who did not have formal authority and teachers who viewed themselves on the same level. As one teacher leader stated,

> I think it is that lack of power because it's like, what makes anybody listen to me? And that was one of the things that bothered me those years that I was team lead, and I got all the pushback. So, I'm like, why would they listen to me? I am younger than them and I have less experience than three of them, you know? And so, it is what I can offer that builds their trust? Um, cause this is really hard to do without that power.

Another teacher leader described the challenges with teachers resisting what she tried to deliver. She stated:

> I've had challenges where with teachers something that came down and I have to share with the team ‘this is what we're going to do.’ And you do get resistance from the team. Usually for me, I just kind of let it go and share what I have to share, what we're going to do and kind of keep it positive instead of going back and forth. Because for me at the end of the day, we are all adults and professionals and I'm not making anyone do anything. This is what is expected of us to do.

The teacher leaders were rarely certain about where they fell within a leadership hierarchy. Another teacher leader stated, “I think a hindrance is the fear of having to address people who are on the same level ... as you in a different manner.” She shared that teachers and teacher leaders are viewed as colleagues and it can be difficult to provide feedback to someone that may be older and more experienced in terms of years of service. She continued;

> It's hard to walk in their room and be confident in saying, because you don't, I guess you don't hold the power that an administrator holds more like from colleague to colleague. People are afraid to give others on the same level feedback because they're afraid that people are going to look at them and say, well, why do you get to tell me what to do? You're no different than I am.

Ultimately, the teacher leader participants did not view themselves as a “step higher” than their colleagues. These teacher leaders largely understood that they would never have formal authority, nor did they seek it. However, the tension for teacher leaders working in schools guided by a flatter hierarchical perspective was more of a problem than for teachers in schools who were simply carrying out delegated tasks. Thus, the challenge of sharing leadership in meaningful ways was palpable in schools where principals attempted to truly share leadership.

The Human Element: Culture and Relationships

Both administrators and teachers described how culture and interactions between and

among these actors shaped the roles of teacher leaders. Administrator participants discussed the building culture as having an impact on the way teacher leaders engaged in their roles and how they grew into those roles. One principal discussed the critical importance of the administrative team establishing "an atmosphere where potential teacher leaders would feel comfortable with assuming responsibilities that would allow them to flourish." In other cases, administrators had to build the culture into one that supported teacher leadership. Another principal shared that developing a positive culture conducive to cultivating teacher leadership was "a significant area of need for her school when she began as principal." By consistently sharing leadership opportunities and supporting these teachers she argued that her school had developed a culture of collaboration among teacher leaders, grade level teams, and the school's leadership team.

Consistent support of teacher leaders was another important factor. A third principal stated that "people being happy with where they work and [feeling] fulfilled leads them to doing more outside of the classroom." An assistant principal described how it was important to build a culture in which the administrator is there "to support, to guide and help create an environment for [teacher leaders] to be successful." She discussed, from her viewpoint as an assistant principal, how her "principal creates a culture that [she] believe[s] encourages leadership…[they] have a very open-door policy, which teachers use often."

The teacher leaders also discussed how culture impacts their role and growth as teacher leaders. It was important for the teacher leaders to feel supported in a culture that empowered the teacher leader role. One teacher participant, for example, discussed how the culture of a school can either make you want to be a leader or not, "There are some times with the culture of the school that you don't want to be a leader." Furthermore, teacher leaders emphasized the need for collaborative cultures that support the teacher-leader role. Another teacher leader described what collaboration looks like when she works with other teachers, "We all work together with the mindset of doing whatever it takes to help our students succeed...it has always been a building where collaboration is strongly pushed."

Several teachers, however, suggested that even in their schools where leadership is shared with teachers that the collaboration needed for teacher leadership to root is often spread unevenly across their schools. One teacher described this phenomenon as "pockets of collaboration." They shared that even where teacher leaders work well with others that other teachers and teams continue to work in isolation. They noted that the most dynamic and successful teacher leadership experiences are those where they are working collaboratively with others. But, here again, we noted a tension between teacher leadership and dynamic team collaborations and the potential for creating insider and marginalized groups. In this vein, a teacher leader discussed how the culture of collaboration needed to improve at her school because the teams were "very cliquey."

Administrator-Teacher Leaders Relationships

The administrator participants all noted the challenge inherent in working with teacher leaders versus teachers who did not take on leadership responsibilities. From their perspective they experienced a tension like that of teachers described above. Several reasons for this tension were described by administrators in our study. For example, some administrators noted that the more frequent interactions they had with teacher leaders could inadvertently create a sense of

favoritism toward them. One principal put it this way, “there's a higher volume of interactions...with the people that are the leaders versus the others.” Another indicated that these interactions often allowed for a chance for deeper conversations on important educational issues and more detailed explanation to the teacher leaders. He discussed how he would “go a little bit deeper for those teacher leaders because [he] would discuss the different variables related to the decisions that are going to be made.”

Administrators also described how they tended to support teacher leaders in different ways because, for one, they often were the principal’s first points of contact on school issues. Several principals discussed that they try to “consciously invest” in their teacher leaders and “push them to do things.” One principal noted how she engages teacher leaders:

> On an individual level, building a relationship with them will encourage [trust]. When you get to know people, you discover more of what makes them tick and [that] can provide you with a greater insight into what their strengths are and what they are interested in doing.

The administrators also discussed how the relationship with the teacher leaders is different because of the nature of “confidential conversations” they have with them. The described having conversations with different and deeper levels of information than are had with other teachers, and thus further fostering a higher trust in their relationships.

Teacher leaders were also asked to describe their relationship with their administrators. In most cases, the relationships were described as positive and supportive. Most of the teacher leaders felt supported by their administrators and felt they could approach them with questions and concerns more easily than when they were a teacher. For instance, a teacher leader stated:

> I feel like I can go back and ask more questions than I could when I was not a teacher leader, or it was kind of like a cut and dry, like, you know, like a hierarchy. Um, and I wouldn't say, I feel like I'm equal with the administrators, but I feel like there's a lot more of conversation that could flow back and forth in that role.

Another teacher leader described her relationship with her administrator as a positive one in which she felt treated like an equal and that her ideas really mattered. She stated, “I feel like it's a very healthy, productive relationship. It's friendly. It has healthy boundaries and is very equal even though I respect that she's the ultimate decision maker. The relationship feels very equal.”

Teacher Leader-Teacher Interactions

In this final section we explore teacher leaders’ and administrators’ perspectives on the nature of teacher leader relationships with their colleagues. Teacher leaders in our study believed that they were expected to work with their colleagues to support school improvement and success efforts.

Teacher Leaders as Respected Colleagues and Role Models

In most of the schools, administrators discussed how the teacher leaders were respected and looked up to as role models. Ultimately, administrators believed they chose effective teachers who “had something to share,” which is why they were chosen for leadership roles in the first place. For example, one principal believed it was important as an administrator to put

someone in a leadership position that had credibility and served as a role model and in this way avoid potential pushback from colleagues. She stated:

> If you have a teacher that's struggling, and you try and put them in a leadership position...it kind of puts you in a tough position. Because if they're not really that strong of a teacher and people look at them, like, "I know that they're not very good." They're not really a model that someone would look up to.

Another administrator also said her administrative team keeps in mind how their teacher leaders are perceived by their colleagues when assigning leadership responsibilities. She stated, "They have to be respected and be able to communicate reasonably ... those are important factors." In those schools with a mostly positive perception and response to teacher leadership, the administrators discussed how teachers look to the teacher leaders for answers and said they are respected for their "competence and confidence." The teacher leaders at these schools tended to focus on school-wide issues, which in turn earned the teacher leaders respect from other teachers. One principal put it this way, "The other teachers then realize that what was being rolled out was not just 'another thing' but was connected to the work that was happening at the school level."

Most of the participants believed their colleagues respected them as teacher leaders. They attributed this respect to the relationships they had built among administrators and teachers. One teacher leader discussed how her relationships with administrators had empowered her as a leader among her colleagues. She stated, "my principal has made it really clear what is our lane. Because she has empowered us as teacher leaders, there's less conflict when we're operating in our leadership role." Another teacher spoke to the relationships she had developed among her grade level team and throughout the building, through which she sensed a level of respect and trust from her colleagues. And another teacher leader mentioned how her colleagues listen to her ideas and seek her out for advice. Finally, one teacher leader spoke to how her colleagues helped her develop into her role:

> I started teaching for the district with two really strong individuals on my grade level...that helped me because they were good teacher leaders. So that showed me that there was an opportunity to be a teacher leader within the building and within the district.

Competition and Jealousy

However, our data did surface tensions between colleagues. The schools that indicated a negative response to teacher leadership or the teacher leadership role attributed negative responses to jealousy and a sense of competition. One administrator discussed how other teachers do not really like the teacher leaders and she believed it was due to jealousy. She mentioned that the teacher leaders "get a lot of pushback from teachers who want to be in the forefront, and they want to lead." She went on to say that "when you have a teacher leader, they think that that person's going to rise above them. And so, the competition is real." Another administrator noted both positive and negative responses to teacher leaders and she also believed that the negative responses and pushback stemmed from "jealousy...because they would like to be the one with the information to be able to hear." In addition, several of the administrators noted that asking the same people to carry out leadership tasks or asking someone newer to the building resulted in other teachers becoming frustrated because they feel

like they should take on those roles or responsibilities because they have been there the longest.

Several of the teacher leaders also discussed an occasional negative response to their role, which they attributed to jealousy or a sense of competition. One participant mentioned that teacher leaders often take on more than one role or responsibility and this can cause colleagues to view them as a "teacher's pet," but believed that "this is mainly because they are not looking at it through the leadership lens." Another teacher leader noted, "I'm sure that for some of my leadership roles, maybe they're like, 'Why am I not getting that chance?'...There's always going to be a few teachers that don't see you as a teacher leader." While another observed, "It just seems like some people take things personally. And I don't know, like some of it is probably jealousy—maybe they don't know why I have a leg to stand on. And so, there's no respect there."

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to understand from the perspective of teacher leaders and administrators how teacher leaders experience their roles. We found 2 major elements affecting teacher leader work: hierarchy and human factors (culture and relationships). Leveraging our teacher leadership lens, we can take away several important insights.

Figure 1

Organizational Influences on Teacher Leader Roles

The organizational hierarchy present at the various elementary schools leaves the power at the top with the administrator. At all the elementary schools in the study, the administrator was the one who appointed the teacher leaders to formal positions, such as members of the leadership team, grade level chairs, instructional leaders, and teacher mentors. Likewise, the administrator was the one who tasked the selected teacher leaders with additional responsibilities, such as leading school professional development sessions. Therefore, the teacher leader participants had to broker their own influence by relying on their expertise and relationships to both attain the role and to be effective in it.

However, for teacher leaders to be as impactful as possible it appears that administrators must be willing to share leadership and build a culture and structure that supports collaboration and allows teacher leader-teacher relationships to form. In addition, the culture and structure that administrators established needs to be one that supports teacher leadership, provides opportunities, and empowers teacher leaders. For those administrators who held on tight to their authority, the culture and structures failed to foster collaboration or teacher relationships

between teacher leaders and teachers. These contexts, in turn, created tension and pushback, leaving teacher leaders to be less influential.

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