Teacher Leadership: A Case Study in the Preparation of Future Teacher Leaders

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

TEACHER LEADERSHIP: A CASE STUDY IN THE PREPARATION OF FUTURE TEACHER LEADERS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
PROGRAM IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

BY

ABIGAIL J. HASEBROOCK

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ABSTRACT

Over the past century, Kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) schools evolved into hierarchical learning organizations that centralized formal power, decision-making, and leadership at the top in the hands of a few predominantly male administrators. The teaching force, by contrast, became majority female. While teacher education programs formalized, the accountability movement that swept across the U.S. schooling system during the 1980s led to narrowed teacher educator programs and licensure requirements. Consequently, traditional teacher education programs in four-year universities focused more on theory and pedagogy, but less on praxis and leadership in the name of producing highly qualified teachers.

Today, new pathways for teacher leadership are emerging in the form of advanced degrees, state endorsements, and National Board Certification for practicing teachers with a Master’s degree. However, teacher leadership is often misunderstood, as there is no single definition of the roles and responsibilities of a teacher leader. Teacher candidates express a desire to take on non-administrative leadership roles or hybrid teaching positions, but little is known about how K-12 teacher candidates in teacher education programs are explicitly exposed to leadership concepts or given opportunities to practice and evaluate their own leadership strategies. As such, professors’ conceptualization of teacher leadership may influence how teacher candidates perceive leaders and their own leadership potential. This dissertation investigated how one Midwestern university’s
teacher education program defined, targeted, and integrated teacher leadership in its program, and how teacher educators and teacher leaders understand and experience teacher leadership. Findings revealed that the inclusion of teacher leader skills and processes across the program developed candidate self-efficacy and primed them for future teacher leader roles.

*Key words:* Educational Hierarchy, Highly Qualified Teacher, Hybrid Teacher Leader, Intensification, Positional Authority, Praxis, Shared Leadership, Teacher Candidate, Teacher Education Program, Teacher Educator, Teacher Leader
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Need for Teacher Leadership

The perception of teacher quality has shifted over the past century as teacher education programs have become formalized, professionalized, and standardized (Apple, 1988; Boatright, 2002; Mehta, 2013). Teachers in the nineteenth century were mere high school graduates with little training (Schneider, 2016). Over time, states created normal schools to streamline teacher candidate criteria. These schools saw rapid change in the 20th century, from transformation to teachers’ colleges to incorporation in state universities. National policy also impacted the scope of teacher education programs, especially in the latter half of the 20th century, which ultimately led to a standardized course of teacher education requirements that matched the standards of state curriculum (Mehta, 2013; Sleeter & Stillman, 2013).

Historians contend that when the public school system was created in the late 1800s, teaching was intended to be women’s work, while educational administration was designed to be men’s work (Apple, 1988; Fraser, 2007; Tyack, 1974). Teaching has been and continues to be a female profession; both the number of women entering teaching and the proportion of female teachers has steadily increased since the 1980s (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). Females are also more likely than males to enroll in a four-year teacher education program at an institution of higher education. Today, 76% of
today’s teacher preparation program enrollees are white females (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

The concept of teacher leadership first emerged in the 1980s. Despite much confusion about defining teacher leadership in the literature, teacher leadership is central to student learning and academic achievement (Blair, 2016; Darder, 2012; Dewey, 2013; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Lambert, 2003; Thornton, 2016). In this study, I define a teacher leader as a licensed PK-12 teacher who leads change efforts within and beyond the classroom in a non-administrative position. Teacher leaders focus on school improvement efforts, such as curriculum design, assessment, instructional technology, and serve in coaching or mentoring positions in both formal and informal ways. Teacher leaders are individuals who can see systems at work, develop personal mastery as professionals and people, generate creative tension, build a shared vision, and use dialogue to build a capacity for team learning (Senge, 2006).

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders offer guidelines for how educational leaders promote the learning, achievement, development, and wellbeing of all students. The Standards “reflect interdependent domains, qualities and values of leadership work that research and practice suggest are integral to student success” (National Policy Board for Education Administration, 2015, p. 3). These standards have informed Teacher Leader endorsement learning outcomes (Illinois State Board of Education, 2015). While these leadership skills are aligned to graduate coursework, less is known about how these skills are introduced to teacher candidates (referred to throughout the dissertation as candidates) in four-year teacher education programs. There
is a significant gap in research concerning the perception of teacher leadership among candidates and teacher educators as well as an analysis of how teacher leadership is defined, integrated, and assessed in teacher education programs, specifically at the undergraduate level.

Despite rising popularity concerning teacher leadership, teacher education is under threat. Since the 1980s, alternative routes to certification emerged as attractive options for motivated or skilled professionals, which compete with teacher education programs. Student enrollment in PK-12 schools continues to rise while enrollment in teacher education programs plummets, creating a national teacher shortage (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Those who want to be educational leaders may be drawn to programs like Teach for America, which skirt years of pedagogy and practice in favor of energizing a high-achieving, select group of individuals to make immediate change in a high-needs PK-12 public school. Training matters because schools continue to be sites of struggle for teachers and leaders who are inadequately prepared (Andrews & Covell, 2006; Apple, 1988; Eacott, 2012; Scherff, 2007).

Today, universities are the primary producers of the teaching force (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). This study seeks to understand how one School of Education conceptualized teacher leadership in its program of study. Using a qualitative case study approach, I first completed document analysis of the teacher education program syllabi, website, and other materials, then I used codes and themes to construct an interview protocol for individual interviews with teacher educators. I triangulated findings from the first two phases to inform the interview protocol for a third phase of
data collection: two focus group interviews with candidates. I synthesized and triangulated data sources from multiple perspectives to understand how teacher leadership is integrated—explicitly or implicitly—in the course of study. I interpreted how teacher educators’ previous personal and professional experiences with PK-12 school leaders influenced how they viewed and prepared candidates to be leaders. Finally, I represented candidates’ views of how their teacher education program helped them develop teacher leader skills. The findings highlight how the university and program’s emphasis on social justice shaped candidates’ understanding of the role of the teacher as a change agent. The findings also reveal an explicit emphasis on teaching and pedagogy and implicit emphasis on teacher leadership. The results of this dissertation can be used to encourage ongoing dialogue about the emphases, skills, and learning outcomes that are needed in teacher education programs to empower the next generation of teacher leaders.

**Historical Overview of Teacher Education Programs**

Teacher education program requirements in the United States have not changed much over the past century (Boatright, 2002; Eacott, 2012; Heineke & Ryan, 2019). A *teacher education program* is one that prepares candidates with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community (Heineke & Ryan, 2019). The traditional teacher education program in four-year colleges and universities typically includes two types of coursework: general foundational education and subject matter. The topics covered in general education foundational coursework are often theoretically broad and cross-disciplinary, focusing on
human development, sociology, and philosophy, while subject-matter coursework includes several specialty courses within a single content area, such as mathematics or English Language Arts. These singular classes are professor-centric, with the syllabi and readings chosen by the instructor, and stand-alone, rather than aligned with a teaching experience in a PK-12 school (Heineke, 2019).

After completing their coursework, teachers have a brief opportunity for praxis when they complete fieldwork in a local PK-12 school. Originally coined by Freire (1970), praxis in PK-12 teacher education programs is thought of as practice coupled with reflection. Praxis is realized through a balanced combination in two areas: content area pedagogical training (or the art of teaching pertaining to a particular content area, such as math or English language arts), and fieldwork (a practicum placement in which a teacher candidate is assigned to a local community learning center or school to complete observation or co-teaching requirements). It is important to consider how much emphasis is placed on content area pedagogy and fieldwork, since candidates who complete lengthier programs with pedagogical training and fieldwork are more committed to teaching long term (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Yet, what is often missing from the conversation about praxis is teacher leadership skills and development.

Teachers who enter the field must be prepared with foundational knowledge through general education coursework and subject matter specialization (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Employers want a clear picture of a teacher candidate’s baseline competency, which limits the criteria used to identify skilled candidates and teacher leaders (Schneider, 2016). The goal is to produce a highly qualified teacher: one who has
completed subject matter coursework and passed state examinations for licensure (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). This often translates to minimally qualified, as most states require only a Bachelors degree and passing score on a licensure test (Helterbran, 2016). A highly qualified teacher has not necessarily participated in lengthy pre-service fieldwork nor been assessed on teacher leadership skills (Helterbran, 2016). However, this educational license does not necessarily lead to improved teacher capacity, nor does it ensure effective instruction in the classroom or leadership in schools (Boatright, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Most university teacher education programs still devote the bulk of coursework to theoretical study rather than practical application (Boatright, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Eacott, 2012; Schneider, 2016; Zeichner, 2010). Further, the pressures from accreditation agencies and state boards of education disincentivize changing the traditional linear model of teacher education (Mehta, 2013). This tension between theoretical study and pedagogical praxis leaves little opportunity for candidates to understand or evaluate teacher leadership.

Teacher education program types have expanded in number as new types of teacher certifications have become available. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2018) Title II Report, there are 2,141 teacher preparation program providers in the United States, offering 26,229 programs with an enrollment of 444,244 individuals. Teacher education programs range from a traditional, four-year college or university-sponsored program to a non-traditional alternative route to certification (ARC), such as a lateral teacher educator program, special teacher licensure program, Professional
Development School (PDS), or streamlined programs like Teach for America. Nearly 85% of candidates are enrolled in a traditional teacher preparation program at an institution of higher education, which requires education coursework, supervised clinical experience, and student teaching (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). In Illinois, the fourth largest teacher-producing state, there are 50 colleges or universities that offer a Bachelors degree in Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). However, states are providing more support for alternative certification programs to fill the national teacher shortage (Cochran-Smith et al., 2011). Today, nearly all states plus the District of Columbia report having some kind of alternative route for certifying teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2018; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). These alternative routes serve candidates who begin teaching while in the program and offer mentoring or induction support, rather than require a prescribed student teaching experience (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). While ARCs may solve a short-term problem with staffing, they do not guarantee a long career in the field of education (Payne, 2008). In an ever-shifting landscape, candidates now have more options to pursue licensure, but questions of program quality and sufficiency abound.

Critics question the efficacy of all teacher education programs, especially given high attrition, or the rate at which teachers leave their school, profession, or field altogether (Eacott, 2012; Larabee, 2008). While teacher education is often inclusive, supportive, and grants academic freedom to candidates, this training does not prepare first-year teachers for the isolation, bureaucracy, and professional, social, and emotional disavowal experienced in schools (Clark & Byrnes, 2011; Risser, 2013; Scherff, 2007).
Teacher dissatisfaction stems from low salary, status, autonomy, and limited decision-making (Angelle, 2016; Blair, 2016; Payne, 2008). As a result, teachers leave the field at astonishing rates: 7% of teachers leave the field annually, 16% of teachers exit their schools annually, and after five years, about 50% of traditionally certified teachers and 82% of Teach for America teachers have left the field entirely (Cochran-Smith et al., 2011; Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014; Ingersoll & Perda, 2012; Hsu, 2016). When a large percentage of teachers leave their schools or the field every year, this leads to decreased teacher quality, reduced effectiveness of instructional programs, and lowered student achievement (Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014). The decimation of the PK-12 teacher force also demoralizes school cultures and may reduce the pool of future teacher leaders (Mehta, 2013; Payne, 2008). Because of high attrition rates, novice teachers, or first-year teachers, comprise nearly 20% of the teacher workforce (Desimone et al., 2014). Novice teachers who are trained in-state have an 82% retention rate after five years, compared to those trained out of state who had a 56% retention rate (Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014). While this is promising, the gaps in these numbers must be mitigated to better prepare and disperse teachers to high-needs areas to participate in and lead school reform efforts.

A perennial issue in teacher education is the disconnect between education theory learned at a university and application at a PK-12 school site (Zeichner, 2010). Zeichner (2010) called for third spaces, which bring together practitioner and academic knowledge while rejecting academic knowledge as the authoritative source of teaching. This hybrid model has “a nonhierarchical interplay between academic, practitioner, and community experiences” (Zeichner, 2010, p. 89), which can include online, in person, and school-
based components. Other colleges have created lab schools where candidates practice instructional techniques under the supervision of a faculty member (Fraser, 2007). Future teachers will be expected to understand educational contexts and advocate for their students utilizing leadership strategies and skills that go beyond pedagogy and theory. As such, there is a need to examine the pedagogical and methodological foci in various teacher educator programs, as each prepares candidates for employment and future leadership in the field. Further, defining teacher leadership, roles, and requisite skills may reveal ways that both teacher education programs and PK-12 schools can support candidates who want to take on more responsibility and teacher leader roles.

There are specific challenges in locating a singular definition for teacher leadership. First, the teacher leader movement is relatively new. Born out of the reform movement of the 1980s, new teacher leader initiatives emerged to increase the status of teaching, retain quality educators, and validate teacher knowledge to encourage participation in decision making (Hart, 1995; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The concept of a teacher leader first emerged in the mid-1990s as school improvement efforts centered on collaboration between principals and teachers (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). The teacher leader role has evolved from manager to instructional leader to re-culture agent (Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan, 2000). Only recently have states created teacher leader endorsements, revealing that teacher leadership is localized and still emerging. A second challenge is that many teacher leaders do not hold the same titles across schools and teacher leader responsibilities can meet a variety of needs (Wenner & Campbell, 2017; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). A teacher leader can be a reading specialist, department chair,
teacher mentor, or technology coach in addition to being a classroom teacher. A third challenge is that leadership can be both formal and informal. Some positions are permanent and paid, while others are determined based on an emergent need in the school; as such, there are numerous and diverse opportunities for leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Yet, these many pathways can cause misunderstanding or confusion among teachers and administrators, which may prevent or discourage teachers from seeking leadership roles (Blair, 2016). Even though teacher leadership is popular in the body of research and educational jargon, there is now a reluctance to examine the term teacher leader because everyone believes they know what it means (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016). Between confusion about definitions and expectations of teacher leadership, there is still no single operational definition of teacher leadership.

Although there is no uniform definition of teacher leadership in schools, states have adopted teacher leader endorsements and certificates. States and schools view teacher leadership as both a mechanism for school reform and incentive for teacher retention (Helterbran, 2016; Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012; Steel & Craig, 2016; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). In 1993, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards began certifying teachers. Practicing teachers who complete an intensive portfolio and written assessment become a National-Board-Certified Teacher (NBCT) and may receive a stipend from their district (Hart, Sporte, Ponisciak, Stevens, & Cambrone, 2008). As of December 2019, there were 6,536 teachers in Illinois who achieved National Board Certification and another 1,455 candidates in progress (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2019), out of 128,000 full-time equivalent
teachers in the state (Illinois State Board of Education, 2018). This equates to less than one half of one percent of Illinois teachers who are National Board Certified. In Illinois, 50% of teachers with National Board Certification hold leadership positions in their schools, compared to 32% of teachers without this certification (Hart et al., 2008). This suggests a correlation between becoming a NBCT and obtaining a teacher leadership position.

In 2008, the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium began to examine research on the leadership role of teachers to stimulate dialogue, support leaders, and cultivate knowledge, skills, and dispositions in a collaborative environment (Tomal, Schilling, & White, 2014). The consortium published the *Teacher Leader Model Standards* (2010) for leaders in schools, districts, and the profession. The primary functions of teacher leaders include the following domains: (a) fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning, (b) accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning, (c) promoting professional learning for continuous improvement, (d) facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning, (e) promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement, (f) improving outreach and collaborating with families and community, and (g) advocating for student learning and the profession (Teacher Leader Exploratory Consortium, 2010). These focus areas have helped give rise to advanced degree in teacher leadership and state-specific teacher leader endorsements for practicing teachers.

According to the Education Commission of the States (2018), seventeen states have adopted teacher leader standards. Illinois has adopted its own teacher leader
standards and requires Teacher Leader Endorsement programs to align with the Teacher Leader Model Standards developed by the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium (Illinois State Board of Education, 2015). This endorsement is a pathway for in-service, full time teachers who desire more professional growth in order to sustain important aspects of school culture and student learning. Once a teacher has earned a Masters degree, they may complete additional coursework in areas such as instruction, coaching, mentoring, assessment, and leadership (Tomal, Schilling, & Wilhite, 2014). Teachers must then submit applications to the state and pay a fee for their endorsement. The individual must have both financial flexibility and time, which have been commodified and limited by the teacher’s full-time position. While it is encouraging that new pathways are available to practicing teachers with advanced degrees, these certifications are difficult to complete. Further, these avenues are not available to candidates, or those completing a four-year teacher education program.

Today's teachers often view teaching as a short-term endeavor and desire influence beyond the classroom (Reeves & Lowenhaupt, 2016). Even before officially entering the classroom, many candidates expect to take on leadership roles, especially hybrid positions that keep them partly in the classroom (Johnson & Donaldson, 2004; Holland et al., 2014; Margolis, 2012; Nolan & Palazzolo, 2011; Reeves & Lowenhaupt, 2016; Steel & Craig, 2016). Teachers want to take on these roles in order to improve instructional practices and aid student achievement because they care about students (Bond, 2011; Danielson, 2007; Lambert, 2003). However, it is largely unknown how candidates are prepared by their teacher education programs to take on teacher leadership
roles. Candidates need both leadership training and safe spaces to construct and develop their new professional identities as leaders (Hanuscin, Cheng, Rebello, Sinha, & Muslu, 2014). In traditional teacher education programs, praxis often focuses on mastering rote skills like designing a lesson plan, classroom management, and student engagement, rather than developing expertise over time through authentic performance (Heineke, 2019). Although candidates may observe PK-12 classroom teachers, attend department meetings, and learn about budgets, equity initiatives, or a school’s improvement plan, they may not be asked to observe or evaluate a teacher leader specifically. In turn, candidates may not be evaluated on their own leadership efficacy, especially in programs with limited fieldwork experiences.

Several individuals and institutions are responsible for developing teacher leaders: PK-12 teachers, school administrators, superintendents and district staff, and college and university teacher preparation programs (Ado, 2016; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016; TeKippe & Faga, 216; Troen & Boles, 1994). This preparation should include a realistic picture of PK-12 school operations, tensions, and power. Candidates must learn that teachers may place themselves at risk when they challenge the dominant school culture (Apple, 1988). Disruption of the status quo can have grave consequences for teachers, especially when power is centralized elsewhere in the educational hierarchy (Freire, 1970; Troen & Boles, 1994). Without a total commitment to teacher leadership in teacher education programs, it is unlikely that candidates will have the skills to effectively assume responsibilities beyond their classrooms. Change has occurred, though. In 2010, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Annual Report
recommended that teacher education programs change from traditionally delivered programs to a clinical approach in which more than 50 percent of the courses are not delivered face-to-face. Dedicating more time to fieldwork and school site placement provides candidates with opportunities for observation, reflection, and praxis in real PK-12 contexts.

Teacher education programs must be transformed in order for candidates to develop the skills to teach, guide, and lead learners while developing an identity as a leader (Futrell, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Some university programs are already doing this work by coordinating fieldwork and campus courses and including the perspectives of school and community partners (Heineke & Ryan, 2019). To create truly qualified educators, teacher education programs must include more reflection, inquiry, observation, and evaluation, which can aid candidates in understanding how to enact school reform and improve student outcomes (Heineke & Ryan, 2019; Nelson, 2004). Some scholars argue that undergraduate teacher education programs should strengthen their commitment to teaching leadership skills as a required component of teacher education (Ryan, 2009; Troen & Boles, 1994). Further, teacher education programs can foster the expectation that leadership is a teacher’s responsibility (Bond, 2011; Forster, 1997; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016). Unless more teacher education programs embrace this epistemological shift, candidates will be ill-prepared for long careers in PK-12 schools.

School Hierarchies and Centralization of Curricular Control

During the 20th century, PK-12 schools in the United States were structured using
a hierarchical model. At present, Principals, Presidents or Superintendents, and School Boards comprise the top of the educational hierarchy and make decisions that impact curriculum, such as programming and assessment culture. Typically, the principal provides leadership, direction, and management of the school, which includes budgeting, transportation, community involvement, discipline, and resource distribution (Tomal, Schilling, & Wilhite, 2014). Historically, leadership power has been granted to men who occupy the top management positions in every professional sphere (Apple, 1988). In the typical PK-12 organization, administrators are more often male while the majority of classroom teachers, especially at the elementary education level, are female (Apple, 1988; Blair, 2016; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014; Tyack, 1974).

As school enrollment increased in the 20th century, organizational shifts in power privileged those at the top and limited the power and voice of classroom educators (Blair, 2016; Mehta, 2013). Schools adopted the industrial model of Taylorism and recruited employees using different strategies. While “the recruitment and retention of capable males required a career ladder with opportunities for advancement and enhancement in status, pay, and authority” (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014, p. 15), no such advancement was presented to women because they were viewed as assembly-line workers (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986; Steel & Craig, 2016). With persistent gender divisions in power and decision-making, teaching became “women’s work” and teachers were deskilled due to a “long history of [attempts] to place managerial constraints on women’s labor in general and teaching in particular” (Apple, 1998, p. 10). Combined with a rising culture of accountability, teachers experienced intensification, or chronic
work overload and limited time to keep up with one’s field (Apple, 1988). Teachers were pressured to teach to standards and tests, rather than to innovate in the classroom (Apple, 1988; Barth, 2001). The consequences are profound. In the public eye, education is viewed as a semi-profession with female educators held in lower esteem and paid less than their male counterparts (Ingersoll et al., 2014; Mehta, 2013).

Today, educational leadership is rooted in *positional authority*, a means of power distribution where those who occupy a top management position based on title, credential, or endorsement are given decision-making authority that impacts a PK-12 organization (Northouse, 2004; Senge, 2006). This structure of top management influences the conception of who is and is not a leader (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016; Senge, 2006; Tomal, Schilling, & Wilhite, 2014). There are issues with leadership based on positional authority. Although offices like the School Board, Superintendent, President, Principal, and Dean require both licensure and advanced degrees, too often these individuals are the furthest removed from the classroom; yet, their decisions are likely to have significant effects on instructional practices and learning outcomes (Bottoms, 2001). The traditional hierarchy of PK-12 school leadership (see Figure 1.1) is an inefficient model for school improvement, which should be facilitated by the employees closest to students and academic content (Freire, 1970; Lambert, 1998). Top-down decision-making lessens the ability of teachers to solve their own problems and may encourage administrators to search for simple fixes instead of developing a deliberate vision (Senge, 2006). This is problematic because principals do not have expertise in all curricular and instructional best practices necessary to attain the academic
goals for which they are being held accountable (Bottoms, 2001). At times, top-down leadership is appropriate—especially when students are in danger or the existing capacity to improve is limited—but it has not produced sophisticated learning or optimized teacher leader potential (Copeland, 2003; Payne, 2008). These rigid, internal, vertical divisions of power are structures that teachers are both unaware of and held prisoner by (Apple, 1988; Senge, 2006).

Figure 1.1. Traditional Hierarchical Leadership Model in Secondary Schools

Leadership in PK-12 schools is based less on personal aptitude and vision and more on the position held. Higher positions grant more power. The traditional view of leadership carries three assumptions: the people are powerless, they lack personal vision and are unable to master change, and only great leaders can remedy persistent problems (Senge, 2006). This idea is deeply entrenched in the social and sexual divisions within a
school hierarchy (Apple, 1988). These gender disparities in decision-making reinforce positional authority, dominance, and subordination of teachers, who have little power or say in the daily decisions that govern their work (Apple, 1988; Blair, 2016). Further, these organizational structures impact school climate, or the character and quality of a school, which in turn affects teacher morale, efficacy, attrition, and student achievement (Holland, Eckert, & Allen, 2014).

When change is handed down from top management, teachers feel powerless, disinvest in their work, and contribute to a demoralized school culture (Payne, 2008; Thornton, 2016). Given the current national climate of teacher accountability, it is primarily women’s work that is controlled and rationalized (Apple, 1988). As such, teachers must find ways to prove their legitimacy. Between pursuing a Masters or teacher leader endorsement, teachers still link credentialing to teacher leadership. Teachers view title-holding as a way to move up the hierarchy and advance their careers (Reeves & Lowenhaupt, 2016). Although NBCTs have demonstrated leadership in their practices, the awarding of teacher leadership responsibilities based on a title reinforces positional authority in PK-12 schools and may inadvertently restrict other qualified or motivated teacher leaders.

The concept of leadership must be reframed to present teachers as designers and stewards who are responsible for the success of the organization (Senge, 2006). Candidates must be taught that they are participants in this system who are capable of experimentation, planning, and expanding their own perspectives (Heineke, 2019; Richardson, 2016). By focusing on guiding ideas, or tools to enact and focus energy,
candidates can reflect on how their vision and values are evident in the decisions they make each day (Senge, 2006). I argue that teacher leadership must be included in teacher education programs to empower candidates and reduce teacher attrition in the field.

**Statement of Purpose**

It has long been argued that teacher training is insufficient because its theory and pedagogy are divorced from real classroom settings and practical skills (Boatright, 2002; Clark & Byrnes, 2011; Cochran-Smith, et al., 2011; Cruz-Jansen & Taylor, 2004, Eacott, 2012; Eckert, 2013; Heineke & Ryan, 2019; Holland et al., 2014; Zeichner, 2010). Candidates learn when they are successful because their professor tells them, and they learn to please the instructor but may fail to take real action to improve student outcomes and reform the educational system (Senge, 2006). As a result, candidates may internalize and self-impose limits on their own leadership potential.

Teacher leadership requires a collective responsibility to achieve systemic change. It can both liberate women from oppression in the workplace and challenge patriarchal control of women’s work (Apple, 1988). Leadership training may also liberate candidates to become successful future teacher leaders (Freire, 1970). Although teacher leadership pathways exist, these degree programs and endorsements create barriers to entry and further impose restrictions on talented and motivated candidates. Leadership should not be reserved for teachers of a certain age or pedigree but integrated into teacher education programs to provide necessary skills and knowledge for navigating the PK-12 educational system and enacting change. Principals must help appoint and support teacher leaders and collaborate under a unified vision. School boards and districts must
value teacher leaders and compensate them fairly to avoid further exploitation of teacher labor.

The purpose of this study is to understand how one Midwestern university’s teacher education program conceptualizes teacher leadership and how teacher educators and candidates understand and view teacher leadership. I based my assumptions about teacher leadership on two theorists ideas: Apple’s (1988) teacher intensification and deskilling and Senge’s (2006) systems thinking theory. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

• In one teacher education program, how is teacher leadership defined, targeted, and integrated in candidates’ programs of study?

• In the context of their program, what do teacher educators think teacher leadership means?
  
  o How do teacher educators’ previous personal and professional experiences with influence how they see candidates as leaders?

• How do candidates view their teacher education program’s effort to help them develop teacher leader skills?

Rationale and Significance of Research

As a result of the current accountability movement, both licensing and evaluation of teachers changed (Tomal, Schilling, & Wilhite, 2014). Higher expectations for teacher performance are necessary, as research consensus highlights the importance of a child’s teacher and effective leadership in academic success (Darder, 2012; Dewey, 2013; Marzano, Pickering, & Polluck, 2001). However, schools and teacher education programs
must enhance the capacity of teacher leaders’ willpower to work for school and social change and ultimately societal transformation (Futrell, 2010; Neumann, Jones, & Webb, 2012; Nolan & Palazzolo, 2011; Phelps, 2008, Tomal, Schilling, & Wilhite, 2014; Senge, 2006). Teacher leadership is necessary to overcome the belief in one’s powerlessness or unworthiness in a massive, impersonal educational system (Senge, 2006). The real work of teacher leaders can begin when educators are convinced that the current organization of schools is neither equal nor just (Apple, 1988). This discussion and commitment to truth must grow out of the lived experiences of teachers as a collective effort to challenge the status quo (Freire, 1970; Senge, 2006). Once candidates see themselves as part of a strategic microcosm, they can begin to make a difference (Senge, 2006).

There is an urgent need to improve teacher education programs and include leadership training in teacher education curriculum (Eacott, 2012; Futrell, 2010; Holland et al., 2014; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Neumann et al., 2012). In order to enact effective school reform, collective and shared leadership must become the model in today’s schools. Shared leadership occurs when principals and administrators delegate instructional leadership tasks to teacher leaders, thus recognizing teacher expertise and freeing up their own time to address high-priority operational or financial issue (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016). However, teachers cannot simply be handed a list of tasks to do. They must learn how to identify a need, collaborate with colleagues, utilize collective wisdom, and advocate for meaningful change (Ado, 2016). Such skills must be taught, as this knowledge is not necessarily inherent.
Teacher leadership instruction is practical for a number of reasons: to prevent teacher attrition, to better bridge the gap between the culture of teacher education programs and full-time employment, and to give teachers a greater sense of agency over their classroom practices (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Darder, 2012; Eacott, 2012). Minimal research explores how candidates receive leadership training (Ado, 2016; Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016; TeKippe & Faga, 2016), and to my knowledge, no studies address how teacher educators’ perception of and experience with PK-12 school leaders impacts their approach to training future teacher leaders. This study will consider how one teacher education program defines teacher leadership, incorporates leadership skills and training in the course of study, and primes candidates to become future leaders. By considering the stated objectives and outcomes, I will determine how candidates and teacher educators understand and experience teacher leadership.

**Overview of Methodology**

This qualitative case study used document analysis, individual interviews, and two focus group interviews to make meaning of teacher leadership in one teacher education program (Merriam, 1998). The phenomenon was one mid-size Midwestern School of Education’s undergraduate teacher education program and four-year sequence of coursework and fieldwork. I collected data in three phases. First, I completed document analysis of syllabi, the School of Education program website, and other program documents to understand how leadership was codified. Document analysis provided an idea of how the program defined and incorporated leadership skills in its teacher education curriculum, as well as the relative proportional emphasis on pedagogy,
theory, and praxis. I used a deductive coding strategy to identify teacher leader traits in the program that aligned to traits in the research, then I applied an inductive coding strategy to identify beliefs about leadership that were implied in the program structure, sequences, and assignments. Next, I used these codes to refine and create open-ended questions for the interview protocol for Phase II: individual interviews with teacher educators in the program. In this phase, I clarified and deepened my understanding of teacher leadership by moving beyond written intent and looking at the implementation of teacher leadership in assessment and activities. I interviewed teacher educators one-on-one, then recorded, transcribed, and coded each transcript to make sense of what teacher educators thought teacher leadership meant. I identified new emergent codes for teacher leader traits, which I used to approach the Phase III: focus group interviews with candidates. Based on interest and availability, I held two focus group interviews with candidates, then transcribed and coded interviews to understand how candidates viewed the program’s effort to help them develop teacher leadership skills. Finally, I analyzed this data and used open coding to categorize and classify topics and themes about teacher leadership (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

This study considered how teacher educators’ experiences with PK-12 school leaders shaped their perception of candidates as future leaders. While it is known that a teacher’s positionality and values influences their instructional practices and worldview (Chang et al., 2016; Darder, 2012; Williams, Ritter, & Bullock, 2012), I considered how a teacher educator’s previous experiences with PK-12 school leadership impacted their conception of teacher leadership and how they perceived candidates as potential teacher
leaders. I also evaluated teacher educators’ professional training to understand how they were prepared to discuss and assess teacher leader skills in their courses.

Lastly, this study sought to problematize the notion of leadership. I considered the assumptions that candidates held regarding leadership skills and what teacher leadership entailed. The study examined how candidates felt that their teacher education program prepared them to be teacher leaders through its unique design and emphasis on social justice. Candidates shared their visions of their own futures in relation to their understanding of teacher leader roles and responsibilities. The implications of this study may help improve teacher education program coursework and praxis in the United States. If more teacher educators dialogue about teacher leadership, it may lead to teacher education program redesign with the potential to diversify the teacher workforce by attracting more candidates with leadership dispositions. Ultimately, my hope is to encourage teacher education programs to make urgent and necessary changes that include teacher leader training. These programmatic changes can empower aspirational teacher leaders and better prepare them before they arrive in a PK-12 school full-time. Finally, I want to recognize the labor of current teacher leaders to validate their work as a meaningful, impactful way to achieve school reform and call attention to the need for fair compensation for teacher leader work.

**Researcher Assumptions**

**Educational Background**

I did not learn about teacher leadership until several years into my career. Despite holding a Masters degree and having over a decade of classroom experience as a
secondary English Language Arts teacher, I had not formally encountered the idea of teacher leadership. In general, my own personal and professional experiences with teacher leadership were minimal. I completed a Masters of Arts in Teaching in 2009-2010, which required a mix of pedagogical and theoretical education courses. Some pedagogical courses included Secondary English Literature methods, Teaching English Language Learners, and Supporting Students with Special Needs, focused on the pragmatic skills of managing a classroom and serving diverse students. The theoretical underpinnings of my Masters training were focused on correcting teachers’ deficit thinking but absent of education theory such as critical race theory, feminist theory, systems thinking, or liberation theory. Professors provided case studies from our city: Boston, Massachusetts. This literature helped me understand the broader scope of challenges facing our students, but it did not provide any tangible skills or strategies for mitigating these systemic and societal issues. I could name the issues, but I did not know what to do to correct them.

In addition to significant theoretical gaps, the structure of my Masters program was positivist and sequential. After completing all of my coursework, which was in a traditional university classroom, I completed one pre-practicum placement in a suburban public high school, where I reported every Wednesday for ten weeks in the fall semester. I was a part of a cohort of eight candidates, supervised by one clinical supervisor. Our cohort discussions were primarily focused on lesson planning. We candidates were not invited to faculty meetings, planning periods, or other events outside of specific class period assignments. As a result, I had no frame of reference for what my cohort members
experienced, nor any sense of the successes and challenges of this particular school context. I was restricted to the classroom.

In the following semester, I completed a full practicum placement in a private, urban Catholic high school, meeting five days per week for 12 weeks. I shared an office with two other English Literature teachers at the school and was mentored by an exceptional and creative English teacher. I witnessed the most growth in my lesson planning, fostered by proximity to other teachers who shared resources, but I only possessed a loose understanding of how race, class, and poverty impacted my students’ performance. Regardless, I was passionate, dedicated, and acted like a full-time teacher, eager to insert myself into the life of this school. At my graduation ceremony, I received the Outstanding Teacher Award given to ten graduate students who exemplified exceptional teaching instruction and classroom management. I believed I was well-prepared to be a successful teacher and ready to lead initiatives to close the achievement gap. Yet, nowhere in my Masters training was I introduced to teacher leadership. The only knowledge I carried was how to design an English Language Arts lesson and unit plan.

Professional Background

It did not occur to me that teacher leadership training was missing from my preparation until I started mentoring other candidates. In only my second year of full-time teaching, I was asked to guide undergraduate and graduate candidates as they completed their own practicum placements in my school. I knew how to provide pedagogical feedback on best practices, suggest ways to scaffold and transition within a lesson, and
incorporate movement driven activities to engage students; however, I was not at all prepared to advise a candidate how to question the institutionalized assumptions in my school organization, counteract harmful environmental factors, or diagnose the power dynamics PK-12 education system as a whole. Admittedly, I did not see systems like tracking, suspensions, or teaching Eurocentric literary texts as oppressive because I had never been trained to do so. It was my Boston students who educated me on their reality as people of color attending schools where the curriculum did not represent or consider their lived experiences. I did not have the skills or experience to confront legacies of racism and oppression in PK-12 schools. The school did not survive these legacies either, and due to under-enrollment and financial challenges, it closed after serving the community for 118 years.

In August 2012, I relocated from Boston to Chicago, Illinois and began teaching secondary English in a new major city. A critical turning point in my professional development occurred when an administrator encouraged me to attend a professional development institute about school culture and structures. Afterwards, I was energized; I saw so many ways to implement change and even wrote about my newfound awakening: “We teachers have within our means the power to change current societal statistics and make a difference in one’s life. While we recognize that each educator is passionate and committed, we should also be cognizant of how the general structure of America's school system interferes with our work too” (personal notes, July 10, 2012). Still, I was not quite sure how I could personally change the daily routine or structures within my school. With the help of a few colleagues who also attended the conference, I authored an eight-page
proposal for our school administration on short-term and long-term systemic changes that would better serve our students. I identified conflicts with the bell schedule and school calendar that prevented faculty from collaborating and recommended that administrators gather teacher input when considering changes. I challenged a number of programs or practices that were not serving our students well. I had even proposed a Senior Intern program to match high-performing seniors with teachers, allowing these upperclassmen to assist in the classroom, act as mentors, and take on a leadership role among underclassmen. I knew that mentoring was a powerful catalyst for change among students, but I had not seen or known of a formal mentoring program among colleagues in the schools where I worked. I felt that my ideas in this proposal were sound, rooted in research, and made practical sense. Still, I knew that these sweeping changes would be a long shot because they would have to be carried out by an administrator, not me.

Programmatic decision-making was literally above my pay grade.

At this stage in my career, I knew that teacher voice mattered and that good administrative leaders should solicit it, but I didn’t yet know how to build a collective teacher capacity to enact change. I was still passing through the proper channels, without an understanding of the school management system or my own power within it, but I had a constant desire and drive to improve instruction, align curriculum, and incorporate technology. The same administrator asked me to lead a Professional Learning Community (PLC), or a group of educators that meets regularly to share expertise and improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students. This PLC would focus on technology training and integration in the years leading up to a Bring Your Own
Device (BYOD) student technology program. I was delighted to be recognized, but I had no real understanding of what a PLC was or how to lead one. This administrative team had decided to build in set times for PLC groups to meet periodically, but they had not provided context for the larger vision. I took the leadership role seriously, but I was sailing without a compass. There was a disconnect between my personal passion and ability to help colleagues adopt technology in the ways I envisioned. I approached our PLC meetings with collaboration in mind, but I was not prepared for the total resistance that I would be met with. It was strange to me that teachers—and even two vocal, stubborn administrators—wanted to be a part of the technology PLC but resisted our suggested approaches to using technology. I had not been trained in how to facilitate dialogue, challenge preconceived notions that prevent change from occurring, nor establish a direction for growth or a way to measure it. I also needed support, but I did not know how to ask my administrators for this guidance. I wanted so badly to transform our outdated practices and photocopy-approach to curriculum, but I was ill-equipped to lead a real transition. While our institution made some individual progress, very little systemic change occurred. I do not blame my administrators; I recognize that neither they nor I had the capacity or self-efficacy to enact the changes we wanted. I eventually sought a job at a different secondary school, hoping to capitalize on my classroom experience and find other opportunities to lead and be supported.

In the middle of this professional transition, I was first exposed to the concept of teacher leadership. In exchange for mentoring a teacher candidate, I was given the opportunity to take a three-credit summer graduate course at his university. Eager to
improve, I selected a course called “Creating and Sustaining Professional Learning Communities.” However, this leadership course was only available to students enrolled in the university’s Masters in Educational Administration program; so I, a classroom teacher, needed approval before I could enroll and take the course as a non-credit elective. In this course, I first learned about Systems Thinking (Senge, 1990) and PLCs, which were formally defined as a group of educators that meets regularly to share expertise and work collaboratively to improve academic performance of students (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Knowing these two concepts would have been incredibly useful during the previous school year. We studied the elements of school leadership, from establishing a shared mission, vision, values, and goals, to using loose leadership to encourage teachers to drive change (Senge, 2006). The content was brand new to me; I had experienced the challenges in hierarchical organization management and had recently led a PLC, but I did not know how to name these phenomena. This course helped me understand what drives change in PK-12 schools. I was inspired by a new approach to school leadership, but I still felt powerless since the coursework suggested that administrators must foster teacher leadership. I did not want to become an administrator, but I wanted to help lead change efforts.

In the Fall of 2015, I began teaching English at another Catholic secondary school in Chicago. I was a more seasoned educator with six years of full-time instruction under my belt. Transitioning to a new school involved a period of adjustment to both curriculum and culture. I was working with more veteran teachers who I admired and willingly collaborated with. But my experiences with leadership were even more
restricted and hierarchical; curriculum teams met by department in total isolation, with no PLCs or interdisciplinary work time. I was appointed to lead the 9th grade English level team, but the bell schedule did not allow us to share our ideas across levels or departments. There were many channels that information flowed through and too many committees to count. While I have been able to lead and facilitate micro change within my level and department, I struggle to find a way to make macro-level change to improve teaching and learning. I know that my voice is heard on English curricular and classroom matters and I have a reputation as a creative, persistent, student-centered teacher, but I do not know that my voice is solicited or even considered regarding whole school improvement. This is not the fault of any individual, but a perpetuation of a system that deskills and deprofessionalizes classroom teachers, centralizing power in the hands of a few and overlooking the wisdom of the collective faculty.

In the summer of 2016, I began my Ed.D. Curriculum and Instruction coursework at Loyola University Chicago. I was intrigued by an elective called “Instructional Leadership in Multicultural Schools”, but I had to obtain special permission to register for it. This course was only available to students in the Masters in School Administration program and otherwise unavailable to doctoral students specializing in curricular instructional design. Further, the coursework focused on how school leaders could create a more inclusive curriculum, but the only school leaders enrolled in the course were administrators studying to be principals or superintendents. This was perplexing to say the least. I kept wondering why, in nearly all cases of my own coursework and professional experience, teachers were not explicitly trained to be leaders. There was a
plethora of leadership courses for administrators but none for candidates or graduate
students in my Teaching and Learning program. It seemed to me that the leadership had
been tied to hierarchy and positional authority, making it out of reach for motivated
teachers like me.

Over the past five years, I established credibility as an effective classroom
teacher. I positioned myself on committees and in teacher leader roles as a way to
legitimate both my expertise and demonstrate personal efficacy. I joined two committees
that planned events and trainings to promote inclusive school values. My colleagues
elected me as a Teacher Association Representative to serve a three-year term as one of
the liaisons between the larger faculty and administrative team. I identified a need for
non-evaluative instructional coaching and proposed a new position for myself as an
Instructional Coach. Although I was given a one period course reduction in order to serve
as an Instructional Coach, I am currently teaching a full course load of four English
sections while balancing all of these commitments. These additional teacher leader roles
are things that I want to do, but they take a significant amount of time and energy. In the
Fall 2019 semester alone, I spent over 80 hours in these roles. None of this work is
compensated. I find myself in a strange predicament: having the desire and sense of
urgency to solve school problems, recognizing that serving in a teacher leader role is a
necessary tactic for professional advancement, but knowing that this work intensifies my
daily work load and I will not be compensated for it. Although I know that teacher
leadership favors the common good, I am troubled by the normalization of self-sacrifice
as an expectation of teacher leadership.
Now in my eleventh year of full-time teaching, I have learned a few lessons. Leadership is a partnership; it is not the vision of a single person acting alone, but the continued collaboration and commitment by stakeholders. I learned that change is slow. I also learned that leadership is more than just a good idea; it is a capacity to effectively communicate a vision, encourage ownership with stakeholders, and see a project through to completion. Finally, I learned that I am not alone. I work with a number of people who I consider leaders, whose experience has helped them envision new possibilities. We must be allies to one another. But many of us are stuck, subordinate to those with positional authority who are not proximate to the students that we advocate for.

Personal Significance

I set out to study teacher leadership because of my own personal and professional experiences. I want to understand how the confluence of teacher intensification (Apple, 1988) and the rigid hierarchical model of school management inhibit system thinking (Senge, 2006) and disempower teachers from the very acts of leadership they exhibit daily. Ultimately, I wanted to know how candidates today are exposed to leadership concepts and why I myself was not. I believe that teacher training is critical to educational reform. We cannot ask future teachers to lead if they do not believe they can be leaders. Further, we cannot expect teacher leaders to lead if their teacher educators do not view or train them to be future leaders. However, if teacher education programs can prepare candidates to be social justice advocates and change agents beyond the classroom, they may feel more empowered and equipped to improve student learning and
contribute to school reform (Blair, 2016). Teachers must fight to be seen, supported, heard, and empowered, but they need the skills to know how to do so.

**Researcher Positionality**

Being an educator is a fundamental part of my personal history and lived experience. I am the product of a line of educators. Both of my grandmothers and my mother taught in elementary schools before leaving the profession to start their families. I am the oldest child of eight, which caused me to self-impose standards of perfection. As a student, I was good at school; I understood how to succeed, I excelled, and I was publicly praised. I was a straight-A student in grammar school, High Honors student in high school, and earned a full athletic scholarship to play Division I volleyball at an east coast college. I have always loved school because I worked hard and was rewarded with incredible opportunities. I now understand that I was drawn to the field as a professional in part because I believed it was my vocation and life mission, but also because I had always performed well in this sphere.

My positionalities and identities cannot be ignored. As a cisgender, heterosexual white female who attended schools that validated my identities, I never felt displaced or unseen. As a professional, I am able to work in Catholic secondary schools because my identities do not conflict with the traditional teachings of the church. However, in a historically female profession, I have been hindered by my gender. I have listened to the testimonies of female colleagues who have been passed over, demoted, and chastised by men with less experience. I have witnessed male colleagues create new leadership positions for themselves despite having no training, credentials, or expertise. I have
worked alongside male teachers whose athletic coaching stipends were more than my annual salary. I am incensed by the negative connotations of teaching as a semi-profession that anyone can become a teacher, reducing our art to rote mechanizations of teaching via textbooks and standards (Mehta, 2013). I am disheartened by the constant refrain of disrespect for teachers who “only work for nine months out of the year” and “have summers off”, as I am frequently reminded. While I feel energized by PK-12 teachers strikes that are erupting across our country to demand living wages, smaller class sizes, and more student support, I see just how many politicians and members of the public misunderstand and devalue the work that we do.

I desperately want to be seen as a professional because I consider myself to be one. I am frustrated by the lack of opportunity for female educators to control their own destiny, advance their own careers, and be seen as credible leaders without being threatening. As a teacher with no desire to work in administration, I often feel stuck in my role as a classroom teacher. Like other teachers who strive to take on hybrid positions in both the classroom and other capacities (Margolis, 2012), I keep wondering about how hierarchical management and the deskilling of teachers has limited my own leadership potential (Apple, 1988). Who are America’s future school leaders, and who is left out of this conversation? This dissertation aims to critically examine teacher leadership training using the perspectives of two primary stakeholders: candidates and teacher educators.

**Key Terms and Definitions**

Deskilling: the result of managerial control of teaching; by standardizing and packaging curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation, states have restructured teachers role
teachers expected to teach to standards and tests, rather than inspire innovation and
creativity (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986; Apple, 1988)

Educational Hierarchy: a system of PK-12 school governance where power is
centralized in the hands of a few administrators or officers who are furthest removed
from students served

Highly Qualified Teacher: as defined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, an
educator who has completed subject-matter coursework and passed state examinations for
licensure; highly qualified teachers have not necessarily participated in lengthy fieldwork
nor received training as a teacher leader

Hybrid Teacher Leader: a PK-12 classroom instructor who serves in a part-time
instructional position and a part-time capacity training and supporting colleagues
(Margolis, 2012)

Intensification: the assignment of clerical labor to the practice of teaching; often
misrecognized as a symbol of professionalism, this includes record-keeping, standardized
testing, and strict accountability systems with excessive paperwork; the result is a chronic
work overload, decreased leisure time, and increased teacher isolation (Apple, 1988;
Apple, 1999)

Positional Authority: a means of power distribution where those who occupy a top
management position based on title, credential, or endorsement are given decision-
making power that impacts a PK-12 organization (Senge, 2006)

Praxis: PK-12 teaching practice coupled with reflection, achieved through content
area pedagogical training and fieldwork in a PK-12 school setting (Freire, 1970)
Teacher Candidate: in a traditional teacher education program, an individual completing four years of education coursework and fieldwork in a university setting who has not yet graduated and obtained full-time employment in a PK-12 organization.

Teacher Education Program: a traditional, four-year program in a university’s School of Education designed to prepare candidates for full-time employment in a public, charter, or private PK-12 school.

Teacher Educator: an instructor in a teacher education program; in higher education, this person may hold status as a full-time, associate, adjunct, or clinical professor.

Teacher Leader: a licensed PK-12 teacher who leads change efforts within and beyond the classroom in a non-administrative position. Teacher leaders focus on adult learning and school improvement via curriculum design, assessment, instructional technology, and teacher coaching or mentoring positions in formal or informal ways.

Organization of Dissertation

The first chapter of this dissertation proposal offers a general overview of challenges facing teacher education today. The historical overview provides an explanation for the rationale governing teacher education programs and a need for explicit teacher leadership training. The second chapter includes the theoretical and conceptual framework and reviews the literature on teacher leadership. The literature review presents my definition of a teacher, based on empirical research and theoretical understandings of teacher leadership traits and skills. Next, the literature review addresses current teacher education programs and the absence of teacher leader
coursework and candidates’ experiences. Finally, I consider self-studies on teacher educators’ experiences with teacher leadership and coursework. I will explain how my study contributes to the body of research on teacher leaders in undergraduate teacher education programs. The third chapter details the qualitative case study methodology and rationale. Here, I offer a description of the teacher education program in focus: Loyola University Chicago’s *Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities* (TLLSC). I provided context for the sample population of candidates and teacher educators in this study. The fourth chapter details the findings of my case study, organized in response to the three research questions. Finally, the fifth chapter will discuss the implications of the findings situated within my theoretical and conceptual frameworks. I conclude by presenting recommendations for the TLLSC program and teacher education programs at large.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, I share my theoretical framework and review the literature related to my study. First, I share the pertinent frameworks and ideas with which I approach my study, including theoretical and conceptual frameworks regarding teacher leadership and teacher leader traits. Then, I present information on related studies on (a) leadership training in teacher education program curricula, and (b) how teacher educators’ past personal and professional experiences in PK-12 schools inform their approach to teacher leadership instruction and perception of teacher leaders. Finally, I explain how this study adds to the literature on teacher leadership training in undergraduate teacher education programs.

Frameworks

I merge two larger theoretical frameworks to make sense of teacher education and teacher leadership in this study: Apple’s (1988, 1999) teacher intensification and deskilling and Senge’s (2006) systems thinking theory. The conceptual framework is born out of the body of research defining teacher leadership as both a process and behavior. I organize this section by first distilling the theoretical framework, then explaining how the conceptual framework informs my case study.
Theoretical Framework

American 21st century educational policy reforms are rooted in gender politics and serve as a historical reminder of how women have been treated as exploited laborers overrepresented in lower status jobs (Apple, 1988). Taylorism permeated 20th century industrial workplaces and soon seeped into educational organizations. Management consolidated power and planning but hired lower-paid employees to complete the work. In schools, administrative positions were offered to men as a form of upward mobility, while women were relegated to the classroom (Apple, 1999). As the accountability movement took hold in the 1980s, Apple (1988) argued that teacher work load increased due to external pressure from policymakers and legislators. A more subtle and sinister reason for rationalizing teaching is because “women’s work is considered somehow inferior or of less status simply because it is women who do it” (Apple, 1988, p. 57). The intensification of teachers’ work added more clerical and managerial tasks, like record-keeping and bureaucratic paperwork, under the false pretense of professionalism (Apple, 1988; Apple, 1999). Teachers had to execute more tasks with less time, which limited their ability to collaborate. As teachers struggled with chronic work overload, their leisure time lessened and they became more isolated. Apple (1988) stated

The continuing attempt by administrators and state bureaucrats to define the skills of teaching as a set of objectively determined competencies and to rationalize the job itself through such competencies and through the overly standardized textbook, standardized teacher and student testing, and the computer, documents exactly this continuing connection between skill and power (p. 187).
The integration of management with technical procedures *deskilled* teachers, separating them from their own fields and increasing reliance on outside experts and textbooks (Apple, 1988; Apple 1999). Instead of giving teachers the autonomy to design curriculum, the state and federal governments legislated teaching methods and competency testing. As employees lost control over their own labor, their skills atrophied, which made it easier for management to control their job (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986). With increasing reliance on standardized testing as a form of accountability, academic knowledge was controlled and decontextualized. Administrators pressured teachers to teach the content on the tests rather than include socially critical and creative activities (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986). Teachers became deskilled as “texts, tests, and outcomes [were] taken out of the hands of the people who must put them into practice” (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986, p. 179). Although teachers have attempted to regain control of their classroom content, they are often thwarted by rationalized procedures that order the larger school system, including pre-packaged curricula purchased by the school or district to meet statewide goals (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986).

Today, the predominantly female teaching force “must fight not only against the ideological construction of women’s work, but against the tendencies for the job to become something different and for its patterns of autonomy and control to change as well” (Apple, 1988, p. 58). Women, especially elementary school teachers, have to fight for both administrative and public recognition of their skills and worth (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986).
The result of the intensification and deskilling of teachers is that “education functions to roughly support or at least to not actively interrupt these larger social divisions” (Apple, 1999, p. 11). Teachers are further isolated within systems of hierarchical management. When power is rooted in hierarchical structures of positional authority, or top management, leadership in PK-12 schools is based less on personal aptitude and vision and more on the title held. The message is that only those at the top have the power to enact change, ergo all other employees are not leaders and have little power (Senge, 2006). Classroom teachers with aspirations for leadership have the dual task of helping principals and administrators surface assumptions and see the need for change in their school contexts while developing their own personal capacity for praxis and dialogue to enact that change (Senge, 2006).

Systems thinking requires a holistic view of an organization to understand how each part affects the whole (Senge, 2006). This includes four tools: (a) building shared vision by binding people together around a common identity and destiny; (b) shifting mental models of deeply engrained assumptions that influence how people understand the world and take action; (c) enhancing team learning, which involves dialoguing and thinking together to recognize patterns that undermine learning; and (d) developing personal mastery, or clarifying a vision of what matters most and developing skills to achieving results (Senge, 2006). Successful organizations connect all people and parts in a learning organization. However, non-systems thinking prevails in PK-12 schools. By using systems thinking to decentralizing leadership, organizations can enhance the capacity of all stakeholders to work towards common goals (Senge, 2006).
This study will consider how one teacher education program has responded to teacher intensification and deskilling and hierarchical management in PK-12 educational schools by specifically incorporating a leadership tenet. I use Apple’s (1988) theory of intensification and deskilling to explain the present state and status of teacher education, and I argue for the urgent need to reconceptualize teacher education programs to support teacher leader by using Senge’s (2006) theory of systems thinking. In this study, I analyze how teacher leadership training in one teacher education program may serve as an antidote for historical rationalization, intensification, and deskilling of teachers. Further, I will consider how teacher educators and candidates view the role of a teacher leader and necessary skills for future leadership. Preparing teacher leaders necessitates an examination of PK-12 school organizational structures, the role of the teacher, and how all educators think about school leadership. I will determine what teacher educators think teacher leadership means in the context of their program and probe to understand how past personal and professional experiences shape their understanding. Finally, I will explore how candidates perceive their program as it prepares them to be future teacher leaders within PK-12 systems.

**Conceptual Framework**

Today, the term teacher leader combines both process and behavior, but lacks a single, uniform definition in both the literature and practice. Leadership is a difficult concept to define, as leadership can refer to a process or the behaviors of a person (Angelle, 2016). As a process, leadership describes a type of social interaction in which one person has influence over another, often situated within individuals, groups, or
dispersed through organizational culture (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016; Northouse, 2004). Leadership can refer to a reciprocal learning process that leads to a shared understanding and democratic participation in school improvement (Lambert, 1998). Stone & Cuper (2006) contend that leadership does not require a position or title but rather an ability to collaborate in various ways. Leadership flourishes when relationships are built, barriers are broken, and individuals have agency and a sense of purpose (Lambert, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In terms of behavior, individuals with leadership traits shape the environment for innovation and change, embody values and aspirations, and serve as role models, but they may have different styles, qualities, and visions (Senge, 2006). They identify a problem and take action to address it (Helterbran, 2016). Those in positions of leadership build relationships and manage people, policy, culture, or teaching and learning, but not necessarily all of these at once (Angelle, 2016).

From 1980 to 2004, York-Barr and Duke (2004) completed a landmark review of empirical research on teacher leadership to determine what was known about teacher leadership. During this period, most research was small-scale and qualitative. The lack of quantitative and large-scale research suggested a challenge in defining a nebulous concept such as teacher leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). There was no uniform consensus on the definition of teacher leadership; however, York-Barr and Duke (2004) found that research on teacher leadership was not vested in a single individual at the top of the school hierarchy, but rather a social process available for any administrator or teacher regardless of their title. Although not a primary objective of the study, York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) review of empirical research on teacher leadership recognized
expanding visions of teacher leadership: (a) the benefits of employee participation, (b) expertise about teaching and learning, (c) acknowledgment, opportunities, and rewards for accomplished teachers, and (d) benefits to students.

Since the time of York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) study, new teacher mandates were put in place, state licensure requirements became stricter and streamlined, and federal education policy shifted. Teacher leadership became part of evaluative tools. The Danielson (2014) Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument, which has been adopted by many states, explains in Component 4d—Participating in the Professional Community—that a distinguished teacher will make a substantial contribution and assume a leadership role within at least one aspect of the school. Although there was an increased expectation of leadership in the framework, schools had quite a bit of latitude in determining what teacher leadership entailed.

Building upon York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) study, Wenner and Campbell (2017) evaluated 21st century empirical research on teacher leadership. Considerations included the culture of accountability and an explicit concern for social justice and equity in teacher leadership. According to a synthesis of over 70 empirical studies on teacher leadership, Wenner and Campbell (2017) determined that teacher leaders could be best defined as “teachers who maintain K–12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities, while also taking on leadership responsibilities outside of the classroom” (p. 140). This is similar to a hybrid teacher leader, or one who teaches PK-12 students and leads teachers in some capacity (Margolis, 2012). This definition recognizes that all candidates and full-time PK-12 teachers have the potential and capacity to be leaders, but it does not assume
that all teachers do or should lead outside of the classroom (Barth 2001; Bond, 2011; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Since 2004, teacher leadership research focused primarily on roles beyond the classroom and school supports that were required to empower teachers, such as principal support, school structure, and norms of leadership (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). However, much of the research on teacher leadership training was not theoretically grounded and very little focused on social justice and equity (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Thus, there is a need to research teacher leadership training to promote social justice and equity within PK-12 schools.

As explained in Chapter I, I define a teacher leader as a licensed PK-12 teacher who leads change efforts within and beyond the classroom in a non-administrative position. Rather than focus on management of the school, a teacher leader targets teaching and learning via school improvement efforts, such as curriculum design, assessment, instructional technology, advocacy, and teacher coaching or mentoring positions in formal or informal ways (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Teacher leaders see themselves as change agents with the skills to challenge the status quo and collaborate to build inclusive classrooms, statewide teacher educator networks, and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) (Blair, 2016). This study examined how one teacher education program prepared its candidates to be future teacher leaders and social justice advocates while considering the perception of teacher leaders held by candidates and their teacher educators.
Teacher Leader Traits

Teacher leaders are committed to high standards and improving student achievement (Tomal, Schilling, and Wilhite, 2014). Scholars have used various adjectives to describe effective teacher leaders: collegial, collaborative, and communicative (Andrews & Lewis, 2002); truthful and optimistic (Bond, 2011); respectful and good-humored (Danielson, 2007); confident (Helterbran, 2016); competent, credible, and approachable (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016); passionate, motivated, and collaborative problem solvers (Tomal, Schilling, & Wilhite, 2014). In short, teacher leaders are change agents.

Figure 2.1. Teacher Leader Traits
Teacher leaders model continuous learning and influence others by building and sustaining positive relationships (Lambert, 2003). They exhibit trust, determination, innovation, and perseverance when working toward school improvement (Guiney, 2001). They are eager to share their expertise and ideas out of good will and are not motivated by external factors like compensation (Tomal, Schilling, & Wilhite, 2014). In order for teacher leaders to affect others, they must be able to motivate, communicate, collaborate, evaluate, and manage change and resources to promote student learning (Angelle, 2016; Elmore, 2004; Senge, 2006; Spillane, 2006). Effective teacher leaders enlist colleagues to support their vision, establish goals, build consensus and confidence in others, and provide feedback (Bond, 2011; Danielson, 2007). Many of these traits are not innate but learned while in the field (TeKippe & Faga, 2016). For teacher education programs to prepare candidates to be leaders, they should focus on these traits and processes. States have shown increased interest in teacher leadership as a tool for school reform and teacher retention.

In particular, self-efficacy is one teacher leader trait that is predictive of teacher effectiveness and successful fieldwork experiences (Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, & Staiger, 2011; TeKippe & Faga, 2016). Self-efficacy refers to one’s belief in their value as an educator; high self-efficacy improves a teacher’s coping mechanisms, problem solving in unfamiliar situations, and persistence (Bandura, 1997). Since self-efficacy affects job performance and is typically lower in females (McCormick, Tanguma, & Lopez-Forment, 2002), it is important for supervisors and teacher educators to provide
candidates—the majority of whom are female—with fieldwork experiences and support as they develop their self-efficacy (Ado, 2016).

I used this conceptual framework of teacher leadership to analyze how teacher leadership was defined, targeted, and integrated in one teacher education program. I considered if the descriptions of teacher leadership in various program documents matched the process-based descriptions and traits of teacher leaders in the literature. I deductively coded and analyzed documents by looking for teacher leader skills such as collaboration, consensus building, and self-efficacy. I inductively coded individual interview transcripts to determine if teacher educators viewed teacher leadership as a process or person and the reasons for these beliefs. I examined two focus group interview transcripts to understand how candidates saw teacher leadership and if their perception aligned with the body of literature. Candidates shared their perception of their program’s effectiveness in developing their sense of self-efficacy and empowerment for future teacher leadership.

**Literature Review**

In this section, I review the related research on teacher leadership in teacher education programs in the United States. Studies used teacher leadership, leadership training, or teacher education program as key words. Resources included education databases, peer-reviewed studies, reference lists, journal articles, and recent education and leadership books. Studies on PK-12 candidates are included but not limited to either elementary or secondary education or content area specialization, such as Mathematics or English Language Arts. I organize the literature review into three overarching sections:
(a) teacher education program curriculum, (b) candidate perspectives and experiences, and (c) teacher educator perspectives and experiences. In each section, I review the related research and explain how my study fills a gap in the extant literature.

**Teacher Education Program Curriculum**

While a growing body of research has focused on teacher leaders in PK-12 schools, scholars have called for more research addressing teacher leadership training or instruction in teacher education programs (Ado, 2016; Blair, 2016; Eacott, 2012; Picower, 2016; Richardson, 2016; Xu & Patmore, 2012). Teacher leader programs, endorsements, and certifications are primarily available to practicing PK-12 teachers who have completed or are working toward a Masters degree (Xu & Patmor, 2012). These programs prepare teachers to examine organizational structures and barriers to change, revealing a shift in expectations for teacher leaders (Cambrone-McCabe & McCarthy, 2016). However, there is a need to understand how candidates in a traditional teacher education program are exposed to teacher leadership skills and processes before arriving in the field as novice teachers.

One way to prepare candidates to understand the influences on school culture and build confidence in their own efficacy is by including teacher leadership coursework and skills in teacher education programs (Ado, 2016; Andrews & Covell, 2006; Eacott, 2012; Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016; TeKippe & Faga, 2016). This is challenging given the emphasis on positional authority in PK-12 schools, but it is necessary in order to develop teacher candidate capacity and prevent motivated teacher leaders from leaving the classroom or field altogether (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016). Although state licensure
deems teachers highly qualified, isolated coursework and lack of leadership experience ensure that teachers will struggle once they do arrive in the field. Further, when teachers identify problematic issues, they may not be prepared to ask tough questions required for decision-making and may lack confidence in their ability to lead others (Barth, 2001; Bowman, 2004). Therefore, it is important for teacher education programs to introduce candidates to various teacher leadership skills and roles within the school, community, or areas of policy or public opinion (Snyder, 2015). Next, I discuss the consequences of insufficient teacher preparation and the reasons for including teacher leader coursework in teacher education programs.

**Insufficient Teacher Preparation**

Historically, teacher education programs prepared teachers to be followers, not leaders, since coursework emphasized supervision and control rather than innovation and empowerment (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Scholars have argued that the current framework for educator preparation is insufficient for two reasons: teachers are ill-prepared to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse student population they encounter in public PK-12 schools, and most teacher education programs still devote the bulk of coursework to theoretical study, rather than practical application and leadership (Boatright, 2002; Cruz-Jansen, 2004; Darder, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Eacott, 2013; Heineke & Ryan, 2019; Helterbran, 2016; Schneider, 2016; Xu & Patmore, 2012). School districts want teacher education programs to prepare candidates for their demographic needs and diverse populations (Ryan, 2009). This raises questions. Snyder (2015) wondered, “Who are the clients of a teacher education program: the candidates,
the districts that will hire them, or the students and families who will be in their care?” (p. 9). Many stakeholders must be considered when designing coursework and fieldwork in a teacher education program.

Scholars have identified teacher leadership as the missing piece in teacher education and a lever for school reform (Bond, 2011; Danielson, 2007; Forster, 1997; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Ryan, 2009; TeKippe & Faga, 2016; Troen & Boles, 1994). Bond (2001) recognized that novice teachers are expected to perform the same tasks as veteran teachers, so candidates need leadership training before the first day of their careers. Snyder (2015) remarked that “a teacher education program cannot expect graduates to accomplish what they have not been introduced to in their preparation” (p. 10). And yet, there is an enormous gap between calling for teacher leadership training and implementing it. Teacher education programs must support teacher leader development as an integral part of a teacher candidate’s identity (Forster, 1997). This can be challenging, though. Teacher education programs that lack self-analysis of teacher educators (Andrews & Covell, 2006) and modeling of teacher leader practices (Snyder, 2015) are unlikely to emphasize teacher leadership. Consequently, leadership voids occur in PK-12 schools when training is absent from teacher education programs (Andrews & Covell, 2006).

Although there is research on the impact of a graduate program on candidates’ frames of reference on leadership (Ross, Adams, Bondy et al., 2011), there is little research on the inclusion of teacher leadership courses or leadership skills in undergraduate teacher education programs (Ado, 2016; Eacott, 2012; Reid-Griffin &
Slaten, 2016; TeKippe & Faga, 2016). In a self-study, Nelson (2004) claimed that four factors were missing from her own teacher education training: understanding of the larger context of education, supervised pre-service training, reflective inquiry, and a larger view of the role of the teacher. Suggestions for changing the focus of teacher preparation programs include the following: combining a theory and methods class with fieldwork experience, requiring placement in a high-needs school, and completing a seminar to facilitate reflection throughout the placement experience (Nelson, 2004).

The teacher education program in my case study has taken deliberate steps to improve teacher efficacy by including many of the elements that Nelson (2004) recommended. Of particular emphasis is helping candidates understand the role of the teacher, which includes being a leader (Heineke & Ryan, 2019). My study considered how leadership skills were defined, applied, and assessed as candidates’ progress through their coursework and fieldwork.

**Teacher Leader Coursework and Praxis**

Teacher leader courses at the undergraduate and graduate level do exist and include the study of social, historical, and philosophical foundations of educational thought, curriculum studies, and leadership theory (Blair, 2016). The benefits of a teacher leader course cannot be overstated. Blair (2016) argues the following:

> If teachers can be prepared to enter schools and embrace new opportunities to lead and collaborate with individuals both within and beyond the classroom, the possibilities for increased student learning are endless, and the reform of schools will simultaneously include a much overdue reform of the teaching profession.
Including teacher leadership as an aspect of teacher education training will help candidates see their role in contributing to the overall functioning of the school as a learning community (Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016; Richardson, 2016). Ryan (2009) argued that teacher education programs “must make deliberate attempts to require the analysis of knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teacher leaders, and nurture these traits to ensure that change is embraced by new educators, leaders, and our profession” (p. 203). Cambrone-McCabe & McCarthy (2016) argue that these teacher leader skills include “participating in field-based inquiry focused on oppression and discrimination, analyzing empirical data regarding racism in schools, examining stereotypes related to oppression, facilitating the creation of a rigorous and inclusive curriculum, and developing socially just practices among all individuals within the school community” (p. 14). Candidates must be given opportunities to discuss and take action on an issue they care about, creating a sense of improved confidence, agency, and empowerment (Angelle, 2016; Turnbull, 2005). Researchers argue that a teacher leader disposition must be woven through all aspects of teacher education coursework and fieldwork (Bond, 2011; Phelps, 2008).

Before adopting a teacher leader orientation, candidates must first understand the meaning of teacher leadership (Phelps, 2008). Teacher education programs can help candidates build their self-awareness by observing and participating in leadership activities or performance tasks, such as small group discussion, advocating a position, or managing conflict (Ado, 2016; Heineke, 2019; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Turnbull,
PLCs improve teacher’s self-perception of professionalism and offer a forum for teacher leadership to develop (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016). Candidates can improve their pedagogical and leadership skills through collaboration (Bond, 2011; Forster, 1997). To be effective leaders, teachers must assess their readiness for teacher leadership in conversation, inquiry, reflection, or feedback cycles with peers, teachers, school administrators, or professors (Ado, 2016; Bond, 2011; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016; Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016).

Candidates must understand how to build trust among stakeholders (Xu & Patmore, 2012). This requires knowledge of others in the school community, including colleagues, parents, administrators, and community leaders as potential groups to collaborate with and lead (Bowman, 2004). Reflecting on past instructional experience, Turnbull (2005) argued that including a school management thread in teacher education programs would encourage teachers to do action research and practice teacher leadership in a PK-12 school setting. The benefits to candidates include gaining first-hand knowledge of organizational structures and practicing problem solving and consensus building, two skills necessary for teacher leadership (Turnball, 2005). By viewing teacher leadership as a process and schools as organizations, candidates can develop the skills necessary to facilitate action for school improvement (Forster, 1997). Only three studies have assessed these goals in teacher education programs (Ado, 2016; Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016; TeKippe & Faga, 2016). My study examines how the teacher education program’s documents codify the language of teacher leadership and identify which teacher leader skills are included and assessed.
Teacher Candidate Perspectives and Experiences

In recent years, scholars studied how the inclusion of teacher leadership assignments, coursework, and fieldwork experiences affected candidates’ knowledge of teacher leader skills and standards (Ado, 2016; Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016; TeKippe & Faga, 2016). Eacott (2012) evaluated a teacher leadership course in the fourth year of an undergraduate education programs in Australia. Findings reveal that candidates improved confidence by taking a stance and challenging the ideas of others (Eacott, 2012). While these findings are important, Australian and American educational contexts are different, so these findings cannot be assumed to be true in U.S. teacher education programs.

Reid-Griffin & Slaten (2016) studied 16 math and science candidates who completed one leadership assignment during their program of study. In one course, candidates built a Wikispace, or collection of websites that can be edited online, to exchange ideas between their instructors, partnership teachers, and peers. This virtual community allowed candidates to reflect on what they learned, take ownership of their work, and promote professional growth as aligned to Standard 1c of the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards (Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016). Candidates assumed a leadership role by presenting resources, sharing opinions, and facilitating dialogue about how each website link could be used in the curriculum. On a Likert scale perception survey, candidates self-reported high confidence in using the Wikispace tool to demonstrate the teacher leadership skills of collaborative planning and critical thinking (Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016). Although this single assignment provided an opportunity for candidates to enact teacher leadership skills according to the state’s teaching
standards, this study does not consider the training that candidates received prior to the
task or the continuation of teacher leadership in other courses or fieldwork.

In a study of 77 candidates at a four-year private university, Ado (2016) examined
how one undergraduate education seminar supported the development of teachers as
reflective practitioners, professionals, and leaders in the school community. Examining
data from a pre- and post-course questionnaire, document analysis, and focus group
interviews, Ado (2016) found that candidates articulated the importance of collaboration
to improve student learning and school improvement, participating in ongoing
professional learning, and planning instructional lessons for diverse learners. Candidates
also identified advocacy work as an integral part of teacher leadership, but recognized
that conflict with administration, peers, or community members might be difficult in
school improvement. Ultimately, candidates could demonstrate knowledge and skills
necessary for teacher leadership as defined by the national Teacher Leader Model
Standards. While this study showed how explicit teacher leadership coursework can shift
candidates’ perspectives, it did not consider teacher leadership experiences in the form of
fieldwork or PLCs.

TeKippe and Faga (2016) conducted a 14-week case study at a four-year private
university with 41 candidates who were completing their student-teaching placement in a
PK-12 setting. Using a combination of Likert-scale survey questions, clinical observation
reports, and informal interviews with teacher educators, the researchers located some
discrepancies between candidates’ self-perception of teacher leader readiness and formal
leadership training. Candidates and faculty observers noted increased self-efficacy, a
leadership trait that predicts teacher effectiveness, throughout the student-teaching experience. Surveys of candidates had a 78% response rate; in total, 87% of respondents reported feeling very prepared for leadership and that the program prepared them professionally. However, observers of the candidates reported a need for more leadership in the classroom, as only 5% of candidates had formal leadership training. The researchers concluded that leadership training in teacher education programs could facilitate success and reduce attrition. While this study included the perspective of clinical observers and teacher educators, the researchers did not probe to uncover how candidates defined teacher leadership or how teacher educators’ past experience with teacher leadership influenced their instruction and assessment of candidates.

My study bridged these gaps by considering how the integration of teacher leadership processes and traits in one teacher education program prepared candidates to be teacher leaders. Additionally, my study asked candidates to discuss their coursework readings, school site placements, and PLC experiences related to teacher leadership, adding a nuanced perspective to the body of literature. Similar to Ado (2016) and TeKippe & Faga’s (2016) studies, my study also examined a teacher education program at a four-year private university. With limited research on teacher leadership in teacher education programs already, there is a need for more studies at public universities.

Teacher Educator Perspectives and Experiences

To my knowledge, no research studies consider teacher educators’ perception of teacher leaders or how a teacher educator’s past professional experience influences their perception of teacher leaders, specifically. Several self-studies by teacher educators
acknowledged a deficit in training of beginning teacher educators (Berry, 2007; Bullock, 2009; Ritter, 2007). Forgasz (2017) surmised that “this lack of professional learning about how to teach about teaching can lead to the taken-for-granted assumption that it involves being a role model of exemplary practice and offering advice to students of teaching about how to teach based on their own years of experience” (p. 220). This could also be extended to a lack of training for teacher educators to introduce, instruct, and assess teacher leadership. Former PK-12 teachers enter their roles as teacher educators with strong identities as schoolteachers, and they view these identities as a form of credibility and authority in their eyes of pre-service and mentor teachers (Williams et al., 2012). In a review of self-studies of teacher educators’ own transitions from PK-12 schools to higher education, Williams et al. (2012) noted that those with more PK-12 teaching experience “felt little need to examine or challenge their existing beliefs and practices,” while those with less experience “tended to embrace traditional ideas and didactic teaching approaches” (p. 248). Without formal training and critical reflection, teacher educators may rely on assumptions of teacher leadership or experiences—positive or negative—to inform classroom discussions and assessments.

Another study on redesigning a teacher education program found that participation required personal and professional shifts in teacher identity. Chang et al. (2016) conducted a self-study on teacher educator identities while designing an iterative teacher education program that included leadership. Personal identities and values shaped the program design, born out of how each teacher educator saw themselves as teachers, advocates, and collaborators. The emphasis on collaboration in the program redesign
caused each teacher educator to become bound to the others as they disrupted traditional academic approaches and autonomous tendencies. Given the opportunity to collaborate and leverage individual talents, the teacher educators experienced agency and enthusiasm while strengthening their identities. One significant finding emerged: “Who we are as teacher educators, both individually as professionals and collaboratively as a teacher education program, depends upon the people involved, the current sociopolitical circumstances, and the overarching demands placed upon us at national, state, and university levels” (Chang et al., 2016, p. 165). Although this study did not explicitly discuss how teacher educators perceived and trained future teacher leaders, the point remains: past professional and personal experience informs how teacher educators approach their work. Teacher educators have a critical responsibility to foster an orientation towards teacher leadership, but they are not immune to the same isolation that PK-12 teachers experience. Without training or a firm understanding of teacher leadership in the curriculum, there is a risk that teacher educators may reinforce ideas of positional authority and teacher intensification.

My study adds the perspectives of teacher educators who have worked in PK-12 schools and transitioned to higher education. I considered how former PK-12 teachers experienced teacher leadership and how, if at all, their personal backgrounds influenced their perception of teacher leaders and understanding of teacher leadership in the program. My study asked what teacher educators’ thought teacher leadership meant and how their own experience as former PK-12 teachers shaped their instruction of candidates in their program.
Conclusions

Nearly all of the research on teacher leadership focuses on improving teacher leader capacity in PK-12 schools. This research must be extended to teacher education programs because teacher leadership can function as a tool for social change and societal transformation (Fichtman & Yendol-Hoppey, 2005; Futrell, 2010; Neumann, Jones, & Webb, 2012; Nolan & Palazzolo, 2011; Phelps, 2008). Further, there is little research focusing on how universities and teacher education programs can explicitly or implicitly prepare future teacher leaders through both coursework and fieldwork. This is a significant gap since teachers who complete lengthier teacher education programs with pedagogical training and fieldwork are more committed to staying in their schools and developing a long-term career in the classroom (Ingersoll et al., 2012; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Including teacher leadership in teacher education programs may alleviate attrition rates among high-demand teachers (TeKippe & Faga, 2016). A long-term commitment from teachers creates a teacher leader pipeline, which is essential for school improvement.

The Current Study

In this study, I considered how one teacher education program conceptualized teacher leadership training in its structure, coursework and fieldwork. I determined how teacher leadership was defined, which skills were taught and assessed, and how the program’s dispositions prepared candidates to understand their role in a PK-12 school. While scholars have called for teacher leadership coursework (Ado, 2016; Eacott, 2012; TeKippe & Faga, 2016; Turnbull, 2015), my case study focused on a teacher education
program that included leadership as a central tenet. This study also solicited the perspectives of two stakeholders: candidates and teacher educators. Previous studies focused on one population or the other, but not both in tandem on this subject. My study evaluated both program documentation and the personal testimonies of candidates and teacher educators to present a more complete picture of teacher leadership in the program.

Program faculty deliberately redesigned the program in my case study to include leadership as part of a field-based apprenticeship model. To best understand the presence of teacher leadership in the program, I first examined documents that defined leadership skills, processes, and expectations for candidates. These artifacts helped me understand how teacher leadership was conceptualized and integrated in the program. Next, I analyzed the perspectives of stakeholders in the program by conducting individual interviews with teacher educators and focus group interviews with candidates. I used my conceptual framework to make meaning of stakeholders’ perspectives of teacher leadership, who is a leader, teacher leader preparedness, and candidates’ own teacher leader readiness. In doing so, I presented findings that encompassed a holistic understanding of teacher leadership in this program. Drawing on Apple’s (1988) theory of intensification and deskilling and Senge’s (2006) historical analyses of the educational hierarchy and impediments to systems thinking, I interpreted my findings pertaining to the explicit and implicit emphases on teacher leadership and the role of the teacher. I then presented implications and recommendations for improving the teacher education program and teacher education curricula at large.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

States and schools have emphasized teacher leadership more in recent years. Teacher leader endorsements and certifications are available in the form of National Board Certification or state endorsements for those who complete Masters degree coursework. Many scholars have called for more leadership training in teacher education programs (Ado, 2016; Danielson, 2007; Eacott, 2012; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; TeKippe & Faga, 2016; Troen & Boles, 1994), but less is known about how leadership is integrated and perceived in a traditional teacher education program’s course of study. This study sought to understand how candidates and teacher educators experienced teacher leadership in one four-year teacher education program in Illinois.

I used a qualitative case study strategy to explore a single teacher education program in depth: Loyola University Chicago’s Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC) program. In this study, I considered both the program’s documents detailing teacher leadership and perceptions held by teacher educators and candidates. I analyzed various documents, including the program’s website, Student Handbook, and syllabi across all four years of the undergraduate program. Then, I evaluated how teacher educators and candidates understood teacher leadership in the context of their program via individual interviews and focus group
interviews. I probed teacher educators to discuss how previous experiences with teacher leadership may have informed their perception of teacher leaders and instructional approaches when working with candidates, as well as and how candidates perceived their program as it prepared them to be future leaders. I considered the following research questions and sub-questions:

- In one teacher education program, how is teacher leadership defined, targeted, and integrated in candidates’ programs of study?
- In the context of their program, what do teacher educators think teacher leadership means?
  - How do teacher educators’ previous personal and professional experiences influence how they see candidates as leaders?
- How do candidates view their teacher education program’s efforts to help them develop teacher leader skills?

The findings emphasize and amplify practices around teacher leadership training. The findings may help stakeholders at the university determine if teacher leadership has been implemented in the way it was originally envisioned. Faculty may continue positive and productive practices and strengthen opportunities for teacher leadership in coursework, fieldwork, and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Too, the results might help shift the focus in teacher education programs towards leadership pedagogy to empower the next generation of teacher leaders.
Research Design

This qualitative case study explored how teacher educators and candidates understood and perceived teacher leadership in their teacher education program (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research began in cultural anthropology and American sociology (Kirk & Miller, 1986), and has since been included in educational research (Gall & Borg, 1989). The purpose of conducting qualitative research is to use investigative processes to understand a particular social phenomenon shared by various participants (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The strengths of a qualitative case study strategy include using multiple sources of data to understand the meaning that individuals ascribe to a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The approach is flexible and uses inductive techniques to make sense of individual particulars, which quantitative methods cannot always depict. This qualitative case study helped me draw conclusions about the assumptions and theories guiding teacher leadership training in this teacher education program. It also revealed the connections and disconnections between program vision, teacher educator understanding, and candidate experiences with teacher leadership.

Case study research is a form of qualitative research in which a researcher understands a case by interpreting the data (Creswell, 2007). Yin (2002) defined a case study as “a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context” where the “boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context” (p. 13); in this view, a case study required that a researcher decide on a well-structured mixed methods design prior to data collection. On the
contrary, Stake (1995) argued that a case is an integrated system that “has a boundary and working parts” (p. 2) and should be viewed as an object; although research questions must be specified, the qualitative approach is more flexible and not decided prior to data collection. Merriam (1998) combined both approaches: the author also saw a case as “a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27), but viewed cases more broadly as a person, program, or policy. Merriam (1998) argued for a comprehensive literature review to construct a clear theoretical framework that will guide the qualitative inquiry. All three authors agreed that researchers must include data from multiple sources and perspectives (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2002). In my case study, I used Merriam’s (1998) perspective, which viewed a case study as particularistic, descriptive, holistic, and heuristic and understood by using multiple qualitative data collection methods and forms of validity. A case study was the preferred design to explore my research questions because the unit of analysis is a single teacher education program, the documents that describe and define its structure, and the experiences of teacher educators and candidates within the program.

In this study, the phenomenon included Loyola University Chicago’s TLLSC undergraduate teacher education program. I attempted to make meaning of participants’ shared phenomenological experience in three phases: document analysis, individual interviews with teacher educators, and focus group interviews with candidates (see Figure 3.1). In Phase I, I completed document analysis of the program’s description, course syllabi, and other materials to understand the broader conception of teacher leadership in the program and language used to describe it. Although document analysis required more
time during the data collection phase, it filled a critical role in the study, which aimed to understand how teacher leadership was defined in the program (Creswell, 2009).

Document analysis helped me construct the interview protocol for Phase II of data collection: individual interviews with teacher educators in the program. By speaking with teacher educators one-on-one, I deepened my understanding of findings in the document analysis phase and probed to learn more about teacher leadership that I may have missed in the first phase. I used the findings from phases one and two to construct the interview protocol for Phase III: focus group interviews with candidates. Interviews and focus groups met at a mutually convenient location on campus on separate dates. Interviews with teacher educators allowed participants to share their personal stories and perspective of the program without having to speak in front of colleagues or their superiors. In focus group interviews, candidates responded to open-ended questions and shared their views on this common phenomenon, or experience of being a candidate in the TLLSC program, without fear of how a teacher educator might respond (Creswell, 2009).

![Data Collection Phases](image)

**Figure 3.1. Data Collection Phases**

As the primary research instrument, I made sense of participants’ experiences by using several coding cycles with a combination of inductive and deductive coding, to be detailed later. I examined multiple realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and considered the
perspectives of two primary stakeholders: teacher educators and candidates. I wanted to know if teacher leadership was an explicit, practical component of the program, or whether the coursework and fieldwork experiences implicitly prepared teachers to be change agents once they arrived in the field full-time. I sought to understand if leadership was viewed as a process or person: the former being a series of actions and techniques employed by an individual, and the latter being the traits and qualities of an individual who is viewed as a leader. Too, I explored what good teaching practices entailed and how teacher leadership was incorporated in the program’s course of study.

**Context: Program Description**

Illinois is one of the top five teacher-producing states, with 4% of the nation’s traditional teacher education program completers (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). I chose to study one program in Chicago, Illinois: Loyola University Chicago’s *Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities* (TLLSC) teacher education program. Over the four-year undergraduate experience, learning takes place at field sites, which include PK-12 schools and community and cultural institutions. Loyola’s TLLSC program provides foundational curriculum for all students in the School of Education who can later specialize in one of ten degrees ranging from early childhood, elementary, middle, or secondary education to content area specialties as well as bilingual education and special education. Faculty designed the program to support the learning of all involved, including students, faculty, school partners, and community leaders. Using the principle of mutual benefit, those who were responsible for supporting candidates shaped the coursework and teaching experience (Ryan, 2019). The program title specifically
named *leading* as one of its areas of emphasis, which prompted me to consider how leadership was conceptualized and implemented in the program.

Between 2010-2012, teacher educators and school and community partners redesigned the program. The university implemented the field-based model with undergraduates in 2013 and has since graduated three cohorts of students who have completed all four years of the new program. The program explicitly emphasizes social justice, drawn from the mission of the university, which formed the guiding principles for the program. The Enduring Understandings (EUs), or end goals for candidates’ learning, were informed by a number of organizations: national professional associations, state professional teaching standards and content area standards, and faculty experiences as teachers, researchers, and teacher educators (Heineke, 2019; Ryan, 2019). School partners contributed to the field-based design and curriculum, using asset-based mapping to share their strengths as a field site. Teacher educators formed a steering committee to develop modules and form sequences of coursework that are equivalent to a twelve-week semester.

Candidates complete modules sequentially, building upon prior knowledge to deepen understanding of both teaching theory and pedagogy. Over four years, candidates complete three phases (titled *Exploration*, *Concentration*, and *Specialization*) that cover 8 sequences and 17 modules, plus participate in PLCs each semester with peers from different grade levels but the same content specialties. In total, candidates complete 1,100 hours at field sites. Formal field sites include PK-12 public and private schools. Informal field sites include cultural institutions, museums, aquariums, zoos, and libraries. Both
sites act as community partners in preparing new teachers during the first and second year of the program. Schools serve as the primary learning site in the third and fourth year of the program.

**Population and Sampling**

I was interested in both teacher educators’ and candidates’ perceptions of teacher leadership in the TLLSC program. In order to gather the most authentic data, I chose to conduct individual interviews with teacher educators and focus group interviews with candidates. I composed separate recruiting materials and consent forms for teacher educators and candidates, and my sampling methods for each population are explained below.

**Teacher Educators**

The TLLSC program has a number of assistant, associate, adjunct, and clinical professors. At the time of this writing, there were 13 females and 6 male assistant professor profiles on the School of Education website. All teacher educators who worked in the program and met the inclusion criteria were invited to participate to assess how the program’s vision of teacher leadership is transferred into their coursework expectations, practices, and assessments, provided that they met the inclusion criteria listed below.

I used purposive sampling in advance of data collection (Merriam, 1998) and identified teacher educators for individual interviews based on specific characteristics and the objective of the study (Roberts, 2010). After receiving permission from the School of Education program directors, I contacted the TLLSC program faculty using their publicly available university email addresses and sent them my recruiting script and consent form.
The consent form explained the value of the study, criteria for participation, risks, benefits, and timeline for completion. Incentives for participation were provided, including entry into a raffle for a $50 Amazon gift certificate upon completion of the interview. I asked interested participants to respond directly to me if they met the inclusion criteria: at least one year of employment in the School of Education’s TLLSC program and at least one year as a classroom teacher in a PK-12 school.

In total, five teacher educators responded and four were interviewed. One was not interviewed due to scheduling conflicts. Once I confirmed a date and time for an individual interview, I shared reflection questions to prompt participant’s thinking in advance of the interview (See Appendix A). Given that school leadership has historically been afforded to men (Apple, 1986; Apple, 1999), I knew that it would be statistically more likely for women to meet my inclusion criteria of having previous experience as a classroom teacher. I hoped to interview male teacher educators to learn about their experiences as former PK-12 teachers. It remains unclear if male teacher educators did not have previous experience in a PK-12 school, which meant they would not meet the inclusion criteria, or if other reasons prevented them from participating in my study. As a result, all teacher educator participants in my study were female. Marley was a clinical assistant professor, Payton was an associate professor, Reese was a clinical assistant professor, and Sawyer was an adjunct.
Candidates

In Phase III, I hosted two focus group interviews with 8 full-time candidates. As of September 2019, there were 272 full-time candidates enrolled in the program, with 238 women and 34 men (Loyola University Chicago Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2019). I asked the TLLSC undergraduate senior advisor to forward my recruiting script and consent form (See Appendix B) to candidates, who had not consented to direct recruitment and whose email addresses were not publicly available. The inclusion criteria stated that candidates must be full-time students in their sophomore, junior, or senior year and have completed at least one year of their required educational coursework. Students in their first year and first month of college were likely have little exposure to leadership experiences in the program. To prevent error or bias in the interview and focus group discussions, first-year students were excluded. I provided incentives for participation, including a meal and entry into a raffle to win a $50 Amazon gift certificate. I asked respondents to email me directly and indicate their current grade level for the purpose of selecting a diverse cross-section of candidates. I used a snowball sampling technique (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and encouraged participants to refer other candidates to the study using a snowball sampling technique.

Eleven candidates responded to the initial and secondary email recruiting attempts. I sent several individual follow-up emails and tried to gather as many candidate participants as possible, but I encountered several challenges: conflicts between my full-time daytime teaching schedule and candidates’ evening courses, slow response time from candidates, and difficulty in reserving a space on campus, since only employees and
extracurricular club leaders had access to the online campus reservation system. Another challenge in recruiting participants may have been related to the subject matter of this study. Candidates who indicated interest may have had a stronger interest in (or knowledge of) teacher leadership than those who did not. Thus, the research topic itself may have encouraged certain candidates to respond more than others, which may not reveal a truly representative sample of candidates’ perspectives on teacher leadership. I hoped to interview a diverse group of candidates to account for gender representation across the program. However, given that candidates enrolled in the program were predominantly female, true gender diversity could not be guaranteed using indirect email recruiting and snowball sampling techniques. Of the 11 candidates that responded, 8 participated in a focus group interview. All 8 candidate participants were female.

I held two different focus groups of 3 candidates and 5 candidates. In the first focus group interview, I spoke with 3 participants: Avery, a junior, and Blake and Charlie, both seniors. In the second focus group interview, I met with 5 participants: Dakota, Emery, and Jordan were sophomores, and Finley and Hayden were seniors.

**Rationale for Population**

My study aimed to capture different stakeholder perspectives, so it was necessary to interview teacher educators and candidates. The rationale for the population selection was two-fold. First, I wanted to consider how a teacher educator’s prior experiences teaching in PK-12 schools informed their current perception of teacher leadership. By interviewing teacher educators after completing document analysis, I used a form of cross-referencing to confirm validity, or measuring what the study intended to measure,
and reliability, or consistency in measuring teacher leadership training across courses and over time (Roberts, 2010). Second, candidates were able to recall learning experiences with teacher leadership. By reflecting on past and present fieldwork and coursework, candidates were reminded of previous experiences and supported, refuted, and qualified what their peers stated in ways that they might otherwise have omitted. Candidates also shared their perspective on their experiences thus far in the program, which allowed upperclassmen to recount their growth and new understanding over time. This illuminated whether the intent to include teacher leadership had been fully implemented as originally envisioned.

**Benefits and Ethical Considerations**

I saw many benefits to participating in this study. The benefits to teacher educators included an opportunity to reflect on previous personal experiences with teacher leadership as a foundation for how to train future teacher leaders. Some teacher educators identified gaps in their own knowledge or training and suggested proactive measures for individual and collegial professional growth. The benefits to candidates included the opportunity to explicitly discuss one of the three program tenets of the TLLSC program: leading. Candidates heard their peers’ perspectives on teacher leadership in the program. By citing personal experiences in the program, candidates reflected on experiences that shaped their own perception of teacher leadership. Candidates articulated their understanding of the role of the teacher as a leader and considered their own self-efficacy and preparedness, based on specific coursework
readings, school site placements, and PLCs. The societal benefits included an opportunity for more teacher educators and candidates to dialogue about teacher leadership.

The TLLSC program directors can use the results to determine if the intent of including teacher leadership in the program redesign has been fully actualized and implemented. Both teacher educators and candidates may share their experiences and desires, which can inform future dialogue about coursework and fieldwork in future program iterations. Since a growing body of literature has called for teacher leadership in teacher education programs (Bond, 2011; Danielson, 2007; Forster, 1997; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Ryan, 2009; TeKippe & Faga, 2016; Troen & Boles, 1994; Snyder, 2015), the results may encourage either a self-audit or replication in other teacher education programs. This may lead to teacher education program reconceptualization or redesign with the potential to diversify the teacher workforce by attracting, supporting, and retaining candidates with leadership dispositions.

This study was intrusive, given that teacher educators were employed by the university and asked to discuss the implementation of teacher leadership in the School of Education program in which they worked. As full-time students, candidates experienced both ease and discomfort in talking about their own program’s efforts to develop them as leaders. Participant responses were positive, negative, and neutral, but ran the risk of being interpreted as controversial, accusatory, or insubordinate. Too, there was additional risk when a participant revealed sensitive information about their employer, program, or colleagues. This was of concern when the teacher educator could be identified by their position or sequences taught or when candidates knew other participants by name or
sight. In order to safeguard participants’ rights, I articulated the research objectives verbally and in writing, obtained written permission from the participant to proceed with the study, and I was granted a research exemption from the university’s Institutional Review Board. I held individual interviews with teacher educators to mitigate the concerns that could arise when sharing opinions among colleagues or program leaders, and I asked candidates to respect the confidentiality of other participants in the focus group interviews. I informed participants of all data collection devices and activities as well as their rights to discontinue participation at any time.

As a researcher, I respected the rights, needs, and desires of my participants through various decisions. The biggest risk was low-inference indicators that became apparent during the interview and focus group transcription processes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Participants could be identified by race, years of experience, or content specialty, which could effectively out the participants and compromise confidentiality. To protect the identities of teacher educators employed by the university, I assigned a pseudonym to each participant and referred to them by this name in my writing. While I assured participants that their identities would be protected in my findings and conclusions, I could not assure confidentiality of all participants in the focus group interviews. Therefore, I asked each participant to agree to protect confidentiality of other participants in the focus group.

Another low-inference risk was that a participant may have a particular way of speaking or specific experience that others could identify. If a participant said something negative about the program and I quoted them verbatim, their language or speech pattern
could be recognized and potentially weaponized against them. Other identifying information emerged, like what sequences the teacher educators instructed or what modules or PLCs the candidates were enrolled in. I replaced identifying information with [phase name, i.e. Exploration, Concentration, Specialization] and omitted reference to any specific sequence or module. Since quotations were a source of data that revealed particular perspectives and opinions, I selected data that best represented the holistic perspective of teacher educators and candidates. I tried not to use the same participant’s ideas repeatedly, so I drew from a variety of perspectives.

**Data Collection**

**Phase I: Document Analysis**

The first phase of data collection addressed my first research question: In one teacher education program, how is teacher leadership defined, targeted, and integrated in candidates’ programs of study? I completed document analysis of the program description, dispositions, and course syllabi (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I examined all publicly available digital resources on the School of Education program website, including the TLLSC Student Handbook, course sequence map, Program Phases chart, TLLSC Comparison Chart, EUs, and Cornerstones of the four program principles. I retrieved one document, the Dispositions Rubrics (Ds) used by all teacher educators, from one of my Ed.D. professors. Each of the 8 sequences has a teacher educator as its leader. I examined the publicly available syllabi, which were posted on the School of Education website as of September 2019. I evaluated the syllabi of the sequence leaders, or teacher educators who coordinated one sequence in the TLLSC program. The names of
the sequence leads were provided by my dissertation chair, so I selected their syllabi as the standard document representative of that sequence. Although these teacher educators have different specializations, I chose to be consistent and evaluate the sequence leader’s syllabi rather than trace a particular major or content area. Of note is that sequence four is the beginning of the Concentration phase in the program. There is no sequence leader here because candidates enroll in courses specific to their content area or PK-12 concentration. So, I chose not to include any syllabi from sequence four and instead evaluated the seven common sequences that all candidates completed. This was a fairer representation of the average candidate’s coursework experience in the TLLSC program.

The advantages of using document analysis included locating a common language to describe the phenomenon in my case study: teacher leadership. Document analysis was accessible; materials were public domain and posted on the program’s website. Arguably, these program artifacts included thoughtful data (Creswell, 2009), since several individuals put time into creating these files that served as a foundation for the program. Document analysis also saved time in transcribing data since it was already written and could be easily printed, scanned, and uploaded. Some disadvantages in document analysis included limited access to some protected information, like specific assignment instructions and grading rubrics that were not included in the syllabi. Document analysis, on its own, was incomplete; in this case, the documents I choose to analyze were objective guidelines that listed EUs and dispositions but did not necessarily capture the perspective of teacher educators or candidates. After completing an initial round of
ductive and deductive coding of all documents, I then began a second phase of data collection: individual interviews with teacher educators.

**Phase II: Individual Interviews with Teacher Educators**

This series of individual interviews addressed my second research question and its sub-question: In the context of their program, what do teacher educators think teacher leadership means? How do teacher educators’ previous personal and professional experiences with PK-12 school leaders influence how they see candidates as leaders? I used Phase II of data collection to explain and interpret the data collected in Phase I. I referenced document analysis data when constructing the semi-structured interview questions for individual teacher educator interviews (See Appendix C), question probes, and follow-up questions to better understand participant perspectives and feelings (Creswell, 2009). The interview protocol was drawn from deductive and inductive codes produced in Phase I. The interview questions used open-ended responses, which invited creativity as respondents clarified their thoughts and shared feelings or attitudes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I field tested the open-ended interview protocol among critical friends who did not meet the inclusion criteria for my study. Critical friends included colleagues or other professionals who used provocative questioning and different lenses to critique my work (Roberts, 2010). They confirmed the following: understandable instructions, clear wording, length, and relevant questions (Roberts, 2010). Because these individuals did not meet the inclusion criteria, their responses were not included and did not influence the data collection. The cognitive testing allowed me to determine consistency and make
adjustments to the instrument. The field test results supported the validity and clarity of the instrument and data collection method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Questions for teacher educators addressed previous professional experience as teacher leaders in a PK-12 setting, as practitioners, and as current teacher educators. Some questions included the following: Who was an influential leader in your educational experience, and why? Have you served in a formal or informal teacher leader role in a PK-12 school? What should teacher leaders know how to do? What kinds of leadership experiences are required in your class module and why? I asked probing questions and follow-ups for clarity in order to capture a more complete picture of teacher educators’ experiences with teacher leadership (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Examples of probing directives included statements like (a) describe a specific initiative you led as a former PK-12 teacher or current professor and detail its success or failure, and (b) explain a specific assignment that requires teacher leadership in your course and detail your reasoning for it.

Teacher educators who were full, assistant, associate, clinical, and adjunct professors were invited to participate. I located potential participants by using publicly available email addresses listed on the School of Education website. I contacted these individuals via email and shared the recruiting script and consent form (See Appendix A) to prompt thinking. Those who were interested reached out to me directly and we scheduled a face-to-face interview. Once a teacher educator participant agreed to be interviewed, I sent a personalized follow-up reminder with additional details of the interview date, meeting location, and topic of discussion. I included some preliminary
reflection questions (See Appendix A) for teacher educators to think about before the interview. These reflection questions prompted teacher educators to identify previous experiences pertaining to teacher leadership that was relevant for the interview and study.

Participants gathered for a 60-minute (one hour) conversation. I recorded the interviews, then uploaded and transcribed each on Rev.com, a web-based transcription service that requires private, individual accounts. I coded each individual teacher educator interview using a qualitative computer software program called Nvivo. Follow-up interviews were not required for clarification. Although open-ended responses took more time to analyze, they led to unanticipated responses that were critical to understanding teacher leadership experiences (Creswell, 2009). This strategy was particularly advantageous to determine actualization of teacher leadership in the program. Teacher educators’ perspectives helped me determine if the original intention of including teacher leadership in the program’s coursework and fieldwork had been actualized and how teacher educators instructed and assess teacher leader skills or processes. I then used the data from Phase II to inform my approach to Phase III: focus group interviews with current candidates.

**Phase III: Focus Group Interview with Candidates**

This focus group interviews addressed my third research question: How do candidates view their teacher education program’s efforts to help them develop teacher leader skills? The focus group interview protocol and semi-structured interview questions pertained to the conceptualization of teacher leadership, coursework and instruction on teacher leader skills, and opportunities to practice teacher leadership (See Appendix D).
Questions were open-ended and field tested among critical friends who did not meet the inclusion criteria of the study. After confirming clarity and relevance, I finalized the interview protocol instrument.

I accounted for some flexibility in constructing my focus groups. The number of focus groups and size of each group depended on the number of respondents and mutual availability. From the pool of participants who indicated interest in participating in a focus group, I then organized two focus group interviews to understand the experiences and perspectives of candidates (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Heterogeneous focus groups by grade level or content specialty presented a more nuanced view of teacher leadership in the program as candidates experienced it differently depending on their major. Although they had a limited understanding of other’s experiences, especially if candidates had not completed the same sequences or been exposed to teacher leadership concepts in as much depth, I found that candidates built upon a shared experience within the program (Creswell, 2009). The sample size included 8 candidates, which allowed each person to share their experiences in controlled ways (Creswell, 2009). Since the majority of the university’s candidate population is female, this limited the gender diversity of participants.

Once participants agreed to be in the focus group, I sent a personalized follow-up reminder with additional details of the focus group session, meeting location, and topic of discussion. The focus groups convened at a mutually convenient date, time, and location on campus based on common availability. Participants gathered in person and shared a meal, then participated in a 60 minute (one hour) conversation to discuss their
experiences with teacher leadership. I asked candidates about their conception of leadership, experiences with leadership based on program coursework and fieldwork, and aspirations concerning leadership. Questions posed to the focus groups included the following: What are the traits of an effective teacher leader? Who do you consider a teacher leader in your current school and why? How would a classroom teacher lead and enact change and what barriers might they encounter? In what ways, if any, is teacher leadership discussed in your coursework? Where do you see yourself as a professional in 3-5 years? Probing directives were utilized to encourage participants to share more specific experiences. Such probing directives included statements like describe an example of poor teacher leadership in a PK-12 classroom or describe a time where you led a project or activity. Interviews were recorded, then uploaded and transcribed on my Rev.com account. I then uploaded the transcriptions to NVivo 12 software. Follow-up interviews were not required for clarification.

There were benefits to using focus group interviews in a qualitative study. Advantages included meeting face-to-face with participants and being able to audiotape then transcribe the conversation. Participants provided historical information that may not be captured in an objective document (Creswell, 2009). As a researcher, I controlled the line of questioning and steered the conversation so as to address my research questions. Some challenges loomed, though. Participants offered information that was filtered using their views, which contained bias (Creswell, 2009). A focus group meeting is not a natural field setting, and my presence furthered biased responses (Merriam & Tisdell,
Finally, not all participants were equally articulate or observant, so responses were be limited in perceptiveness (Creswell, 2009).

**Timeline for Data Collection**

Data collection began in June 2019 and was completed in October 2019. I completed Phase I of document analysis between June and September 2019. In August 2019, I sent an email to the prospective sample population of teacher educators to initiate Phase II, or individual interviews with teacher educators. In my initial recruiting script, I described the value of the study survey, the benefit to participants, and an inducement to indicate interest in completing an individual interview. One week later, I sent a reminder to solicit more teacher educator participants. Once I confirmed an interview date with each teacher educator, I forwarded reflection questions and assured respondents that their personal identity would not be released in the dissertation. I interviewed all teacher educators in mid-August. In late August, I initiated Phase III of my survey: focus group interviews with candidates. I requested that a TLLSC academic advisor forward my recruiting materials and consent form to candidates in their sophomore, junior, and senior year. One week later in early September, the same advisor sent a follow-up email to recruit more candidates. I notified respondents who indicated interest in participating in a focus group conversation by confirming a date in late-September 2019 or early-October 2019 for a one-hour conversation at a mutually convenient location on campus. Via email correspondence, I sent candidates a list of reflection questions to prompt thinking. At each focus group interview, I asked participants to protect the identity of other participants in the focus groups. Focus group interviews concluded in October 2019.
Data Analysis

In this study, I used Merriam and Tisdell’s (2016) inductive and deductive coding strategy to complete within-case analysis, treating the TLLSC program as a comprehensive case with its own contextual variables. I began with an expansive identification of any useful data.

In the first cycle, I applied a mix of inductive and deductive coding with different strategies: first by hand and then with software. I did not establish a theory a priori, but instead I collected multiple forms of data and compared, contrasted, catalogued, and classified it into categories or themes across all forms of data (Creswell, 2009). To code documents, many of which had tables, charts, graphics, and other visuals that were difficult to code on a computer, I used paper and a highlighting system. I created codes based on the teacher leader traits and processes in my conceptual framework. I assigned shorthand designation to various aspects of the data to easily retrieve specific pieces.

The first phase of my study was designed to answer my first research question. Phase I involved detailed reading and analysis of the TLLSC program documents. I used process coding (Saldana, 2016) to locate specific language that presented a definition for teacher leadership within the written program documents, namely the TLLSC Student Handbook, Program Phases Chart, Program Comparison Chart, EUs, and dispositions. Then, I used magnitude coding (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013) as a categorization technique to calculate the frequency of words and phrases in two documents: the dispositions and sequence syllabi. I tallied how many times teacher leader traits or processes were named in the dispositions to determine a few things: (a) if teacher
leadership was implicit or explicit, (b) if teacher leadership was conceptualized as a process or person, and (c) which teacher leader traits were most emphasized. I then examined the frequency of dispositions listed in the sequence syllabi to identify which were commonly and rarely targeted and assessed in coursework and fieldwork (Saldana, 2016). I considered that “educational systems are designed to produce, not distribute, particular kinds of knowledge that are needed by business and industry” (Apple, 1999, p. 95), so I examined the language, framing, and expectation for teacher leadership in the TLLSC program, recognizing that the end goal was to produce candidates who were ready for full-time employment in a PK-12 classroom. This first cycle of coding helped me construct the interview protocol for the second phase of data collection: individual interviews with teacher educators.

I used NVivo 12 software to store and code the interview transcripts with teacher educators and focus group interview transcripts with candidates. Then, I used in vivo coding, or literal, verbatim coding, to identify the themes and intended outcomes for teacher leadership in the program using the participants’ exact words (Saldana, 2016). I placed participant-inspired codes in quotation marks to distinguish them from researcher-inspired codes. In the second cycle of coding, I grouped in vivo codes into clusters to crystallize meaning (Saldana, 2016).

I grouped codes using axial coding then inductively created categories of data, or abstractions derived from the data that represent conceptual elements spanning many individual examples (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Categories were exhaustive, conceptually congruent, and mutually exclusive so that data fit into only one category but
all categories were on the same level of abstraction. Inductive codes captured themes and expectations for teacher leaders in the program. Data collection and analysis were concurrent as I made meaning of the data by consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what participants said (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I theorized my data and drew inferences about teacher leadership. My theoretical framework was a hybrid of two theorists’ work: Apple’s (1988, 1999) teacher intensification and deskilling of teacher’s work and Senge’s (2006) systems thinking theory. I interpreted data by considering how teaching had historically been intensified and how teachers functioned and viewed leadership within a hierarchical model. Using both theories in my theoretical framework, I interpreted the relative emphasis on teacher leadership in this teacher education program, as well as the explicit and implicit expectations for teacher leaders. I also utilized my conceptual framework to identify the specific teacher leader skills, traits, and processes that candidates experienced in their training.

**Phase I: Document Analysis Data**

I located and read a variety of public and non-public documents pertaining to this teacher education program. Documents refer to written, visual, digital, and physical materials that exist prior to the study and have a verifiable author, place, and date of writing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These documents included the sequence syllabi, Comparison Chart, Cornerstones, Student Handbook, and Dispositions Rubrics. I coded the frequency of the term *leadership* (noun) or *leading* (verb) as I expected to find some explicit mention of the word *leadership*, since it was in the program title itself. I
suspected that teacher leadership would be implied in program outcomes and assessments, but I was unsure about explicit instruction on teacher leadership skills throughout the program. After reading through all documents and deductively coding teacher leader traits, I categorized types of leadership activities or skills that candidates were assessed on. I predicted that there would be many process-based descriptions of teacher leadership, given that the program primarily occurred in the field and was action-oriented. I anticipated that this language would match the literature on teacher leadership, including terms or activities around collaboration, consensus building, and designing. From this data, I inductively coded common themes and created questions about the meaning of teacher leadership, which I posed in the individual interviews with teacher educators and focus group interviews with candidates.

Phase II: Teacher Educator Interview Data Analysis

Qualitative research relies on participants’ perspectives as they construct meaning of a situation—in this case, the experience of teaching in a teacher education program with an emphasis on teacher leadership. I transcribed the raw data from each teacher educators’ interview and made a list of all topics in the document. I clustered topics into categories and identified major categories, unique topics, and other topics related to teacher leadership processes and traits (Roberts, 2010). I abbreviated the topics as codes and recorded next to the appropriate section of each participant’s responses (Roberts, 2010). I assembled data from each category and analyzed to consider the perspectives of both teacher educators and candidates. I reviewed all interview transcripts a final time to ensure that patterns were consistent with the data. I suspected that there would be little
variance in teacher educator expectations of teacher leadership, given that the dispositions are codified and a required part of each sequence syllabus.

**Phase III: Candidate Focus Group Data Analysis**

I used a similar coding process to analyze candidates’ responses in the focus group interviews. I transcribed the raw data from the focus group interview and made a list of all topics in the document. I clustered topics into categories and identified major categories, unique topics, and other topics related to teacher leadership processes and traits (Roberts, 2010). I abbreviated the topics as codes and recorded codes next to the appropriate section of each participant’s responses (Roberts, 2010). I anticipated that there would be little variance in candidates’ understandings of formal, required experiences of teacher leadership, such as mandatory participation in a PLC. I also considered that there would be varied opportunities to enact teacher educator expectations in PK-12 school sites, which cannot always be predicted with certainty or consistency.

**Merging of Data**

I compared the document analysis data, individual interview codes, and focus group interview codes to arrive at a complete understanding of teacher leadership in the TLLSC program. Specifically, I compared stated program design and outcomes for teacher leadership against teacher educators’ and candidates’ perceptions of and experiences with teacher leadership. I analyzed document analysis codes against focus group codes to understand candidates’ experiences with teacher leadership in the program. I critiqued the historical and cultural underpinnings of teacher educators’ and
candidates’ view of teacher leadership, given the gendered composition of teaching (Apple, 1999). By merging data, I offered a complete picture of teacher leadership as participants experienced it in this teacher education program. I reported findings using rich, thick description so as to vividly characterize candidates’ experience with teacher leadership in the program against the teacher educators’ conception of leadership (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I considered how teacher educator and candidate perspectives aligned with Senge’s (2006) theory of systems thinking and to enhance teacher leader capacity.

Validity

I used methods triangulation to ensure rich, robust, and comprehensive data across multiple data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1999). Since a single method of data collection could not completely explain a phenomenon, triangulation facilitated deeper understanding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation of sources allowed me to compare the perspectives of participants with different viewpoints across individual interviews and heterogeneous focus groups and use multiple theories to interpret the data (Patton, 1999).

I used document analysis to examine the consistency of findings related to teacher leadership experiences as stated by teacher educators and candidates in focus group interviews (Patton, 1999). In the focus groups, I used member checks in the form of asking follow-up questions to address misunderstandings and probe for more details about participants’ experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Member checks occurred when I tested interpretations and conclusions with members of those groups from whom
the data were originally obtained (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Asking follow-up questions allowed participants to either correct errors, volunteer more information, or elaborate further on their initial responses or ideas shared by other participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checks have some significant drawbacks: (a) an assumption that there is a fixed truth of reality that can be confirmed by a respondent; (b) a likelihood of creating more confusion if participants change their mind or disagree with researcher’s interpretations; and (c) participants’ confirmation of storytelling or responses can be seen as being a good respondent (Angen, 2000; Morse, 1994; Sandelowski, 1993). Even so, member checks are a critical form of validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When I prompted participants with member checks, teacher educators provided deeper context for their life stories as former PK-12 teachers and current higher education faculty, and candidates offered more detail about their conversations with faculty, mentor teachers, and experiences at school sites. The data was rich, detailed, and complex, relying on vivid detail to portray an authentic lived experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In order to increase the validity of this study, I used thick description to establish context and explicitly describe the patterns of cultural and social relationships in this teacher education program (Holloway, 1997). Thick description increased dependability, or consistent findings that can be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Other researchers can evaluate the extent to which my descriptions and conclusions of this particular case are transferable or applicable to other teacher education programs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Limitations

The TLLSC teacher education program is unique with its sequenced coursework and intensive fieldwork. This program’s field-based design may provide more opportunity for leadership compared to a more traditional teacher education program that follows a linear model of coursework then fieldwork. However, the structure of the program may limit the generalizability of the study to other traditional teacher education programs.

The small sample size may also limit generalizability to other traditional teacher educator programs. Since participation in individual interviews and focus groups was voluntary, the number of responses and types of responses given did not provide a comprehensive or complete picture of the presence of teacher leadership in the program. Candidates who were upperclassmen struggled to recall specific experiences from prior academic years, and underclassmen did not have complete knowledge of teacher leadership in the program. Both the individual interviews and focus group interviews were limited to participant’s self-reported perceptions and experiences with teacher leaders. Participant’s emotional state may have impacted responses, given that individual interviews occurred prior to the start of the academic year and focus group interviews occurred near Midterm examinations and after the Fall Break. The lopsided gender representation among participants certainly does not account for the male, trans, or nonbinary perspective, but it does provide a more nuanced understanding of how women experience and understand teacher leadership. Nevertheless, my findings can offer
insights into the importance of teacher leadership and ways to integrate authentic learning experiences in other teacher education programs.

**Researcher Role and Positionality**

I acted as the primary data collection instrument when examining documents and interviewing participants (Creswell, 2009). By completing document analysis of the program’s description, syllabi, and other materials, I determined the program’s definition of teacher leadership and relative emphasis. Coupling this analysis with coding of teacher educators’ and candidates’ experiences with teacher leadership, I understood the relative emphasis on teacher leadership in this course of study.

Some challenges included interviewing professors at my own institution, some of whom had been my instructors in this Ed.D. program. I reduced and limited my own bias by creating questions that inquired into the participants’ experiences rather than evaluating the program. Although I am a student at Loyola University Chicago, I did not regularly interact with undergraduate students. I attended classes in the evenings at the downtown campus while undergraduates primarily met and studied during the daytime hours at the main campus location. It was challenging to solicit interest from candidates since I did not have a personal relationship with any.

As a PK-12 classroom teacher with eleven years of full-time professional experience, I had a clear idea of what I thought it meant to be a teacher leader and what I believed teachers needed to be successful leaders. I did not detect a major discrepancy between my own perception of teacher leadership and what the program designers had originally envisioned or determined to be a requirement for effective teacher leadership.
There was, however, a developmental gap in the capacities of a veteran teacher leader like myself and the 18-to-22-year-old candidates that I interviewed. Too, my own desire to be a teacher leader may have influenced the results I hope to find. As a person eager to tackle organizational challenges and envision a stronger, inclusive future for PK-12 schools, I have held teacher leadership roles for many years. As a PLC leader, instructional coach, English 9th grade level leader, committee member, and elected teacher association representative, I developed an understanding of PK-12 hierarchical contexts that enhanced my awareness of the challenges and barriers to teacher leadership actualization. This understanding assisted me as I made sense of teacher leadership in this case study because I had direct first-hand knowledge of the reality of PK-12 teacher leaders. I believe my personal experience may speak to candidates who have a desire to lead; however, my experience may not represent another faction of candidates who do not yet have the same desire or self-efficacy to envision themselves as future teacher leaders. Understandably, candidates and novice teachers may feel overwhelmed with the intense pressure felt during the first few years of teaching. It would be unfair to assume that all candidates should or do possess my teacher leader dispositions.

I began this study with the assumption that teacher leadership mattered and was important in this teacher education program. I also recognized the complexities in understanding teacher leadership, given that there was neither a unifying definition of teacher leadership in the literature nor consistent titles or expectations for teacher leaders in PK-12 schools in America. I held assumptions about teacher education programs and teacher leader development based on my own limited past experience that mirrored
institutionalized, subordinating views of teachers and women. So, although leading is in the title of the TLLSC program, I brought negative assumptions about the prevalence, emphasis, or quality of leadership skill training based on my own incomplete training and professional barriers. I made every effort to be objective and limit bias by adhering to an interview protocol that was drawn from the document analysis, not my own personal musings seeking confirmation. I used researcher reflexivity at each step of the process and returned to my positionality, values, and beliefs, realizing through writing how my experiences influenced my analysis of the data. Conducting this case study opened my eyes to different means and approaches to teacher leadership and renewed my sense of optimism in the next generation of teacher leaders.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Overview

In Loyola University Chicago’s (LUC) teacher education program, teacher leadership is rooted in the university’s mission to educate in service of social justice. The four-year program aims for candidates to adopt asset-based thinking, challenge the status quo, and promote equitable practices and solutions through action and involvement in PK-12 school communities. Overall, findings from this study indicate that the program’s enduring understandings and dispositions target teacher leader skills and processes, which reinforce the program’s definition of teacher leaders as change agents. Teacher educators believe that candidates must first establish sound pedagogy and inclusive instructional practices in their own classrooms before leading other adults, and the program prepares candidates for instructional roles. Although teacher educators expect candidates to enact teacher leader skills in the classroom, teacher educators believe that ascension to teacher leader roles is contingent on principal acknowledgement and encouragement. Because candidates already express desires for teacher leadership, they do not expect to remain in the classroom for their entire careers; however, candidates’ self-determination may be at odds with positional authority that dominates PK-12 school organization.
In this chapter, I present the findings and themes from each phase of the study. First, I explain how teacher leadership is defined in the program documents and integrated in syllabi, assignments, and professional learning communities both implicitly and explicitly. Next, I present teacher educators’ conception of teacher leadership, which is informed by their previous professional experience in PK-12 schools with encouraging principals. Finally, I include the themes from candidate focus groups, which reveal confidence and understanding of social justice and pedagogy but a desire for more explicit teacher leader preparation. The following sections offer descriptions of the research questions, participants, and findings for each phase of the study.

The research questions that guided this study included:

1) In one teacher education program, how is teacher leadership defined, targeted, and integrated in candidates’ programs of study?

2) In the context of their program, what do teacher educators think teacher leadership means?

   a. How do teacher educators’ previous personal and professional experiences with PK-12 school leaders influence how they see candidates as leaders?

3) How do teacher candidates view their teacher education program’s efforts to help them develop teacher leader skills?

**Program Conception of Teacher Leadership**

In this section, I share findings related to the first research question: In one teacher education program, how is teacher leadership defined, targeted, and integrated in candidates’ programs of study? Overall findings reveal that the university’s mission
statement guides the TLLSC program’s emphasis on service and social justice. In this university and program context, social justice is defined as “a vision of society that is equitable and [in which] all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure” (Bell, Adams & Griffin, 2013, p. 3 qtd in LUC, 2017, p. 3). The title of the TLLSC program’s Conceptual Framework, *Professionalism in Service of Social Justice*, stresses this vision. The framework language implies that teacher leadership happens through disruption of the status quo and solidarity with communities as candidates move from awareness to understanding to critique to action. In particular, this line from the Student Handbook captures the essence of the program: “We must work not for communities but to be of those communities, working alongside them, sharing their commitment and responsibility to address their needs, priorities, and goals from a social justice perspective” (LUC, 2017, p. 3). This situates candidates within communities and among their constituents, which include students, parents, colleagues, and communities. A combination of process, magnitude, inductive, and deductive codes revealed how the program defines, targets and integrates teacher leadership, which I detail in three subsections.

**Defining Teacher Leadership**

Document data, including the Student Handbook, Program Phases Chart, and Comparison Chart, merge to indicate the program’s conception that teacher leadership is a growth process emphasizing asset-based thinking in pursuit of equity. Although there is no single operational definition for teacher leadership in program documentation, teacher leadership traits and processes are abundant but not explicitly defined as such. As
detailed in the Program Phases Chart (see Figure 4.1), the TLLSC program merges teacher leadership skills and traits throughout its coursework and fieldwork so that candidates see that effective classroom instruction includes doing the work of teacher leaders. Themes from process coding reveal how the program’s organization and principles facilitate the transformation of teacher candidates into teacher leaders.

**Transformation**

The program is organized for candidates to experience a transformation as they build their capacity to serve as teacher leaders. This personal transformation occurs in three phrases in the TLLSC program: *Exploration, Concentration*, and *Specialization*. The program phases name teacher processes or actions that could be measured, reported, or reflected on by the candidate. Phase I, or *Exploration*, references two teacher leader processes: collaboration and supporting the development of students. Phase II, or *Concentration*, names using data to inform instruction and broadening the scope of teaching to include a global framework and engage students as two teacher leader processes. Phase III, or *Specialization*, is an immersive experience where candidates assume the role of a full-time teacher. All three phases include coursework sequences that consist of modules and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). In PLCs, candidates reflect on their own understanding of teaching, do the work of teacher leaders, and co-construct knowledge with other teachers and peers. Candidate fieldwork is informed by “collaborative, field-based research” and community partners who “collaborate in preparation of future teachers” (LUC, 2019, p. 3). Through praxis, or both practice and reflection, candidates transform across a four-year continuum and become change agents.
Figure 4.1. Program Phases Chart

In analyzing documents for this transformational continuum, process codes reveal that the Student Handbook includes the language of teacher leader traits. Transformation of candidates begins with the self and requires trust and understanding, as well as vulnerability, openness, tolerance, and acceptance (LUC, 2017, p. 2-3). Other teacher leader processes are named: reflection, collaboration, decision-making, questioning knowledge, valuing of learning, ethics, moral decision-making, and developing sound judgment (p. 3). One explicit end goal is “to promote equal representation where there is disproportionality, resilience where there is vulnerability or risk, access where there is isolation, and equality where there is none” (p. 3). These goals align with the work of
teacher leaders, and they are specific tenets of this program’s definition of teacher leadership.

As stated in the Student Handbook, candidates’ teacher leader roles and responsibilities are categorized in three ways: Professionalism, Communication, and Attendance (LUC, 2017). These categories encourage conscientiousness, integrity, and proactivity, which help a candidate establish rapport with administrators, colleagues, students, and their peers. Over time, candidates build stronger relationships by enacting teacher leader skills and engaging in teacher leader processes.

Teacher educators are conceived to be both instructors and mentors, which means that educators model a formal teacher leader role. As evidenced in the TLLSC Comparison Chart (see Figure 4.2), teacher educators should form relationships with schools and communities, doing the work of teacher leaders in constructing and sustaining the program itself. Thus, teacher leadership is defined through the intended expectations and experiences of both candidates and educators: teacher leaders are responsive, reflexive, and resilient.
**Figure 4.2. TLLSC Comparison Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>APPROACH</strong></th>
<th>University courses are followed by fragmented clinical experience.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAMEWORK</strong></td>
<td>A static model compartmentalizes coursework and clinical experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESEARCH TO PRACTICE</strong></td>
<td>Separating the roles of teacher and researcher reinforces the research-practice gap and school-university divide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STAKEHOLDERS</strong></td>
<td>Clinical supervisors form a link between university-based faculty and cooperating teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTNERS</strong></td>
<td>Teachers host candidates and follow university guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FACULTY ROLES</strong></td>
<td>Faculty teach university-based courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHER CANDIDATES</strong></td>
<td>Candidates accumulate knowledge in courses for later application in clinical settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEFINITION OF SUCCESS</strong></td>
<td>Teacher preparation is successful when graduates pass certification examinations and are retained in professional settings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **APPROACH** | Faculty and candidates are embedded in schools and communities and develop through growth-based apprenticeship. |
| **FRAMEWORK** | A reflexive model aimed at responsiveness to the needs of diverse children and families better reflects the complexity of teaching. |
| **RESEARCH TO PRACTICE** | Practice is informed by and contributes to collaborative, field-based research. |
| **STAKEHOLDERS** | University faculty form relationships with schools and community agencies to facilitate on-site work within neighborhoods. |
| **PARTNERS** | Partners join professional learning communities and collaborate in preparation of future teachers. |
| **FACULTY ROLES** | Faculty mentor candidates, facilitate clinical work, and coordinate professional learning communities. |
| **TEACHER CANDIDATES** | Candidates develop through guided reflective practice as professional educators and as leaders. |
| **DEFINITION OF SUCCESS** | Graduates enter the field with greater professional resiliency, having already made an impact on children, families, schools, and communities. |
**Asset-Based Thinking**

Faculty built the TLLSC program on four principles that cultivate asset-based thinking. By name, the Four Cornerstones (see Figure 4.3) themselves allude to teacher leader processes: (a) Partnerships with Schools and Communities; (b) Teacher Preparation for Diverse Classrooms; (c) Authentic Teaching Practices Increase over Four Years; (d) Participation in PLCs. Within these Cornerstone principles, the Handbook identifies other specific teacher leader processes to build shared knowledge and value stakeholder assets. Candidates work alongside expert teachers, engage with diverse populations, collaborate with teacher educators from the school, community, and university setting, and learn from one another in PLCs (LUC, 2017, p. 4). The program principles emphasize that teacher efficacy requires experience, and experience yields transformation.

![TLLSC Cornerstones](image)

*Figure 4.3. TLLSC Cornerstones*
The program utilizes transformative education as an impetus for positive social change and “prioritizes the notion of disruptive knowledge, a means or process of questioning knowledge and the valuing of learning more” (LUC, 2017, p. 3). Terms like service, responsibility, and questioning are hallmarks of this teacher education program, implying that teacher leaders are driven by a sense of vocation and service to others. This personal transformation is conceived to occur on a continuum, which is built across the program’s phases, sequences, and modules and into the Dispositions Rubrics.

**Conclusions on Defining Teacher Leadership**

Although there is single definition for teacher leadership in program documentation, teacher leadership is thought to be a growth process emphasizing asset-based thinking in pursuit of equity. Teacher leadership traits and processes are abundant, and the program commits to promoting social justice in education by utilizing transformative education. Although candidates are not yet teachers, teacher educators expect candidates to act like them. Through praxis, the program endeavors for candidates to change their understanding of themselves and their role as a teacher.

**Targeting Teacher Leadership**

Classroom teachers do not have the option of disengaging from the work of teacher leaders; they are one in the same. In this way, the program targets teacher leadership through taking action and getting involved in school communities. The Enduring Understandings and Dispositions Rubrics encompass the TLLSC Conceptual Framework and Cornerstones and align to each sequence and module in the program. Designed by faculty through the backward design process, the Enduring Understandings
list the knowledge and skills that effective educators possess. The Dispositions Rubrics present certain behaviors, attitudes, and perspectives as expectations of the program and the field of teaching. Teacher educators assess candidates on the dispositions identified in each module so as to provide feedback and encourage continued transformation. Themes from coding reveal that the program aims for candidates to evolve into teacher leaders through increased action and responsibility to school communities.

**Action**

In the TLLSC program, teacher leadership is action-oriented, and educators assess candidates on the actions they take in school communities. The Enduring Understandings (EUs; see Figure 4.4) list multiple actions that mirror teacher leader traits, processes, and verbiage from the research reviewed in Chapter 2. The language is action-based in that candidates must do or communicate something. Reflection couples with action so that candidates practice and internalize teacher leader processes symbiotically. As such, these action-based statements offer teacher leader goals for candidates. Effective teachers, by association, are thought to be teacher leaders, given the specific teacher leader processes that are named below.
### Enduring Understanding
Candidates will understand that effective educators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enduring Understanding</th>
<th>Teacher Leader Processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. reflect and carry out the School of Education’s mission of professionalism in service of social justice in the school and the community by promoting human rights, reducing inequalities, and increasing the empowerment of society’s most vulnerable groups. (Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS 1, 3, 9)</td>
<td>reflect; promoting human rights, reducing inequalities, increasing empowerment of society's most vulnerable groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. engage and promote reflection and collaboration among teachers, students, administrators, families and communities to improve achievement for all students. (IPTS 4, 8, 9)</td>
<td>promote reflection and collaboration; improve achievement for all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. use research and evidence-based practices to design instruction that includes the alignment of goals, objectives, assessments, and instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of students. (IPTS 3, 5, 7)</td>
<td>design instruction; alignment of goals, objectives, assessments, and instructional strategies; meet individual needs of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. use data to drive instruction and assess teaching and learning effectiveness. (IPTS 7)</td>
<td>Use data; assess teaching/learning effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. apply knowledge of policy and local, state, and national educational contexts to advocate with and for students and families. (IPTS 9)</td>
<td>apply knowledge of policy; advocate with and for students and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. apply deep understanding of both content and pedagogy to provide developmentally appropriate instruction to all students (IPTS 1, 2, 5)</td>
<td>apply deep understanding of content and pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. hold high expectations and build on the assets of diverse students (including, but not limited to race and ethnicity, culture, language, socioeconomic status, exceptionalities, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity). (IPTS 1, 3)</td>
<td>hold high expectations; build on assets of diverse students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. explicitly integrate the teaching of reading, writing, communication and technology across content areas. (IPTS 5, 6, 8)</td>
<td>integrate reading, writing, communication, and technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. create and support safe and healthy learning environments for all students. (IPTS 4)</td>
<td>support safe and healthy learning environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. utilize information from theories and related research-based practices when making decisions and taking action in their professional practice. (IPTS 2)</td>
<td>making decisions; taking action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. maintain and utilize global perspectives and international-mindedness when engaging in teaching, learning and leading, including the awareness and application of the social, cultural, inter-cultural and linguistic facets of student achievement. (IPTS 2)</td>
<td>utilize global perspectives and international-mindedness; leading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.4.** Teacher Leader Processes in Enduring Understandings

The EUs explicitly mention traits that are absent from the literature on teacher leadership reviewed in Chapter 2, including alignment, reliance on research, and
international-mindedness. EU1 lists processes like promoting human rights, reducing inequalities, and increasing the empowerment of society’s most vulnerable groups, and EU5 asks candidates to apply knowledge of policy. Here, teacher leader processes are linked to a few specific practices. These include letting research inform practices (EU3), caring for students by advocating and creating safe spaces (EU9), holding high expectations (EU7), and improving student success (EU2). The addition of maintaining and utilizing a global perspectives and international-mindedness (EU11) suggests that macro spheres inform local education; thus, candidates’ international-mindedness is tied to local teacher efficacy and action in pursuing social justice.

Educators use the Dispositions (D) Rubrics as a growth-based assessment. The rubrics identify candidates’ pedagogical and professional progress in three areas of growth: Professionalism, Inquiry, and Social Justice (LUC, 2017). Teacher educators use the same rubrics to evaluate candidates across all four years of the program. Each rubric has three levels: beginning, developing, and mastering. Faculty expect candidates to demonstrate competency in the Exploration phase, growth in development in the Concentration phase, and mastery in the Specialization phase (LUC, 2017). In their senior year of the program, candidates should enter the mastering level, as this is where candidates cement their teacher leader efficacy. On each level, educators assess candidates on a four-point scale: does not meet expectations, partially meets expectations, meets expectations, and exceeds expectations. In this way, continuous improvement is possible across the program.
The language of the Dispositions Rubrics conveys that teacher leadership requires a series of deliberate actions over time. These repeated actions prepare a candidate to be an effective instructor and do the work of a teacher leader. In fact, the phrase teacher leadership appears in D16, implying that teacher leadership processes are embedded in each disposition with teacher leadership as the specific end goal of at least one disposition.

Magnitude codes reveal the frequency of terminology in the Dispositions Rubrics (see Figure 4.5). The verb communicate appears 80 times across 17 rubrics. The prevalence of this verb in the assessment tool suggests that teacher leadership requires one to effectively articulate a position, problem, or solution. The term students appears more than double the number of times that the term teachers did. This implies that the dispositions are student-centered, which harkens back to how the TLLSC program defines teacher leadership: a growth process emphasizing asset-based thinking in pursuit of equity for all students. The program emphasizes clear communication, both in writing and orally, and student learning as integral to effective teacher leadership.
Figure 4.5. Dispositions Rubrics Magnitude Codes

Although the dispositions do not explicit identify the traits of teacher leaders, the rubric criteria name specific teacher leader processes. Candidates take action as part of their personal transformation, and they communicate their evolving worldview. Of the seventeen dispositions, ten focus on teacher leadership as a process, four focus on the teacher leader as a person, and three equally emphasize the process and person (see Figure 4.6). In all dispositions, candidates first change their mindset, then take action in pursuit of equity. As candidates move towards mastery, teacher leadership expectations increase.

Responsibility

The dispositions place a premium on action and the increased responsibility of the teacher. The program encourages teacher leader growth through involvement in
professional learning groups (D5), using data to drive decision making (D6), and challenging bias in order to promote student success (D7).

The dispositions identify several responsibilities of teacher leaders. The most critical are the adoption of an inclusive world view (D7) and problem-solving approach (D4). Other responsibilities include the following: addressing political challenges and promoting equity (D1), valuing student diversity and emphasizing strengths of diverse populations as an advocate (D3), and collaborating with others to integrate literacy instruction (D9). In three dispositions, candidate involvement requires both a transformational process and a leadership role. Teacher educators assess candidates’ communication of how biases impact students learning and development and how candidates serve as a role model for others (D8). Candidates design and implement instruction that involves students in setting expectations, and they encourage colleagues to communicate high expectations (D12). Candidates encourage students to display their creativity and model continuous learning themselves (D15). In these cases, the dispositions clarify the ways in which candidates adopt and implement asset-based thinking, transforming candidates’ understanding of the role of a teacher.

Four dispositions respond to hierarchical school organization and positional authority by empowering candidates to be the individual person responsible for change. The dispositions expect candidates to develop and implement school-wide policies that promote social justice and equity (D2), encourage colleagues to attend to their emotional and physical well-being (D10), develop credibility as teacher leaders by arriving promptly, dressed professionally, and communicating formally (D17), and identify future
leadership opportunities for themselves (D16). Candidates are meant to emerge as teacher leaders when they can advocate for students during grade-level team meetings or lead school-wide efforts to promote inclusion (D13) and positive school climate (D11). Educators use the dispositions to assess candidates in these teacher leader roles.

**Figure 4.6. Dispositions Rubrics Teacher Leader Emphases**

**Conclusions on Targeting Teacher Leadership**

While the EUs focus on students and families, the dispositions focus on individual self-care, school culture, and teacher leadership more directly. In this way, document data indicates that TLLSC program authors believe that care for students goes beyond the four walls of the classroom. Teacher educators assess candidates on their actions and fulfilled responsibilities schools and communities.
The EUs and dispositions target specific asset-based mindsets so that candidates take action and get involved in school communities. The dispositions target improvement between phases and years in the program. As candidates complete coursework and fieldwork in each sequence, they gradually take on more responsibility in their school sites. While all candidates do not progress at the same rate, teacher educators expect that candidates achieve mastery of each disposition upon completion of the program. This is part of the process that candidates go through as they gain a new understanding about the role of teachers and work of teaching, shift their own world views, and take action to improve student outcomes. Over time, candidates are meant to cultivate these world views and practices to become effective teacher leaders.

Teacher leadership processes are apparent in the dispositions. The Dispositions Rubrics also reflect research on teacher leadership as a process for improvement. Two dispositions explicitly recognize toxic school culture and the challenges that teachers face in such environment (D8, D14). One addresses self-care and personal-professional balance in order to best serve students (D10). The dispositions, in total, are about the actions and responsibilities of teacher leaders, not the traits they possess. Together, the EUs and dispositions help teachers see that teacher leadership requires transformation of self in service of the community.

**Integrating Teacher Leadership**

Teacher leadership is implicitly integrated in the program modules. Since the program was designed backward using the end goals for expert teaching to drive the planning of the program’s curriculum, the EUs and dispositions form the backbone of the
integrated coursework and fieldwork experiences. Teacher leadership skills and processes explicitly emerge in the sequence syllabi, English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement, reflective assessments, and PLCs. Magnitude codes indicate the frequency of dispositions across sequence syllabi, and inductive codes reveal how specific assignments and experiences develop candidates’ teacher leader skills. Together, these codes reveal the emphases and inclusion of specific teacher leader processes and roles in coursework and fieldwork.

**Sequence Syllabi**

Each disposition is included in the sequence syllabi, but four dispositions have greater frequency than others. Using magnitude codes, I tallied the frequency of dispositions across the program’s common seven sequences, or sequences that all candidates complete. The most common was D17—demonstrating professionalism—which appeared in all seven of the sequence leaders’ syllabi. Professionalism, as it is defined in this program, pertains to attendance, participation, and communication (LUC, 2017). Other dispositions that appear most frequently in syllabi include D4, D6, and D8, each appearing in a minimum of five sequence syllabi. The recurrence of these dispositions suggests that effective candidates use an asset-based lens to be fair and empathetic when working with students, and like teacher leaders, they make decisions using data and reflection.

The least frequent is D11, which appears in only one syllabus. D11 is about preventive practices that respond to complex environmental factors that influence student behavior. D11’s proactive nature stands in contrast to the mostly reactive nature of D8,
D6, and D4, which are favored in most syllabi. The frequency of D8, D6, and D4 emphasize reflection in relation to students and stakeholders, while D11 is born out of candidates’ understanding of these relationships. The program intends for candidates to reflect on the role of the teacher as a collaborator and an advocate, then take action in school communities. One disposition is not listed in any coursework syllabi and only one PLC module description: D10, which reads “maintaining one’s own intellectual, emotional, and physical well-being to effectively fulfill one’s professional responsibilities.” In total, there is a stronger emphasis on candidates’ service of others, which matches the TLLSC Conceptual Framework, than candidates’ care for themselves.

**Leadership Modules.** Certain modules within sequences emphasize teacher leadership more explicitly. In Sequence 3, the 210 module called *Educational Policy for Diverse Students* introduces students to education policy and asks them to craft solutions on how to improve achievement for diverse students in urban classrooms. In Sequence 5, the 320 module called *Using Classroom Data in a Collaborative Environment to Advance Student Achievement* challenges students to gather data, perform statistical calculations, and suggests instructional modifications for individual and class interventions. Since teacher leadership is in service of social justice, these modules support candidates as they analyze data to ensure equitable practices. Teacher leaders challenge the status quo, and these modules promote teacher leader processes specifically. In Sequence 6, candidate complete 350: *Teaching and Learning within a Global Framework* and cooperatively design and teach an interdisciplinary unit in an IB school context. In Sequence 8, candidates complete 15 hours of volunteer service in their
school site and join school programs and initiatives. These modules emphasize a solution-driven approach to teacher leadership that require candidates to take action, collaborate, and act as change agents in service of social justice.

**Endorsement.** When candidates prepare for an English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement, they experience teacher leader training for future advocacy. All candidates who complete TLLSC coursework are eligible for an ESL endorsement in the state of Illinois. Faculty list the Illinois Administrative Standards in applicable sequence syllabi, making clear that ESL endorsement is not an optional or a separate set of courses. Since D3 mentions valuing diversity and advocating for all students, particularly those from populations that are historically disenfranchised, underserved and/or overrepresented, it is imperative that candidates are prepared to lead and advocate for linguistically marginalized students.

**Reflective Assessments.** Reflection is a critical and pervasive component of the coursework experience where candidates articulate teacher leader dispositions and actions. Candidates complete regular journal entries and summative reflection papers on their changing understanding of the role of teachers in school and community. As candidates progress through sequences, the nature of the reflections evolves from writing about the impact of their own beliefs to defining their emerging beliefs to explaining how their new perspectives encourage them to take action. For example, in Sequence 1, candidates respond to this reflection question: What new insights and understandings are you gaining regarding the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and roles of teachers? In Sequence 8, candidates write about the following: What does it mean to be an educator in
service of social justice? At the conclusion of the program, candidates should communicate a new understanding about the role of teachers as change agents and social justice advocates. Candidates demonstrate reflexivity in all phases of the program, aiding in their transformation to become change agents and teacher leaders.

**Professional Learning Communities**

PLCs are one unique aspect of the coursework that presents an opportunity for candidates to exercise teacher leadership roles. The final three weeks of each semester, or the end of each sequence, are reserved for students to participate in heterogeneous PLCs with other students in their specialty area. In total, PLCs occupy 24 weeks of the four-year TLLSC coursework experience and account for 4 total credit hours. The Student Handbook defines PLCs in the following way:

Utilizing the apprenticeship model of learning communities, our PLCs bring together individuals at different developmental stages of their teacher education program; for example, seniors and juniors apprentice beginning candidates within the community. Within their PLCs, candidates are expected to: (a) share learning from various school-based experiences, (b) apply learning through completion of summative assessments, and (c) synthesize learning through reflection and discussion related to the program’s Enduring Understandings (EUs) and dispositions. Candidates come together to make meaning of the learning taking place in modules and sequences; the knowledge acquired through this collaboration is used to guide future problem solving in later school and community-based experiences (LUC, 2017).
PLCs end each sequence and can take various forms, typically meeting on three consecutive Monday afternoons. Teacher educators who supervise PLCs have flexibility in structuring the content and meetings. By creating space for upperclassmen and underclassmen of the same specialty to gather, the program encourages candidates to share their perspectives and mutually mentor one another through focused conversation. Candidates practice skills like facilitating dialogue, questioning practices, and positing solutions. The co-construction of knowledge is a teacher leader process and a specific measure to integrate teacher leader training in the program. The collaborative nature of PLCs is in line with teacher leader processes, presenting a simulated learning experience.

Conclusions on Integrating Teacher Leadership

The EUs and dispositions are listed in all sequence syllabi and identify specific teacher leader processes in each module. The program integrates teacher leadership training in four primary ways: leadership modules, ESL endorsement, reflective assessments, and PLCs. As candidates complete each module, they apply a more critical lens and take on additional teacher leader roles and responsibilities. The intended outcome of integrating teacher leadership in this way is for all candidates to develop teacher leader skills through coursework and PLC leadership, thus transforming into a teacher leader who is well-prepared to serve in a PK-12 school.

Conclusions on Program Conception of Teacher Leadership

The TLLSC program states that teacher leadership is a growth process rooted in changing one’s perspective, understanding the educational landscape, and taking action in the classroom and school community to best serve students. The program targets teacher
leader development using a reflective process in which candidates evaluate their own beliefs, then adopt and implement an asset-based approach to instruction in pursuit of equity and social justice. Not only does asset-based thinking appear in syllabi course descriptions, but educators assess candidates on how they view schools and communities with an asset-based lens. Candidates must locate strengths within students, families, schools, and communities to achieve true equity.

In this program, teacher leadership is a transformative process, not a person or role to fulfill. Each sequence is designed for candidates to take action and contribute towards a more equitable learning experience for their PK-12 students. Three modules explore teacher leadership more explicitly, especially in Sequences 3, 5, and 6 where candidates begin their Concentration phase. Through modules that prepares candidates for an ESL endorsement, PLCs, and reflective assessments, candidates articulate meta-awareness of their own decision-making and the results. These assessments function as a way to both support and transform candidates as they progress through the program phases. The program intent is for candidates to see themselves as teachers in service of social justice who work for a more equitable educational system.

**Teacher Educators’ Conception of Teacher Leadership**

In this section, I offer findings related to the second research question: In the context of their program, what do teacher educators think teacher leadership means? I also report findings related to this sub-question: How do teacher educators’ previous personal and professional experiences with PK-12 school leaders influence how they see candidates as leaders? Overall findings indicate that teacher educators tied classroom
efficacy to teacher leadership potential. All teacher educator participants had previous experiences in either formal teacher leader roles, such as a mentor or elected committee member, or informal teacher leader role, like a curricular program member. All touted positive experiences with school principals as a reason for their own empowerment. Because they established rapport as competent classroom teachers, their PK-12 principals gave them opportunities to lead beyond their own classroom. This leadership, however, was contingent on administrative approval and support, which reinforced positional authority and decision-making in PK-12 schools.

Themes drawn from in vivo and inductive coding revealed how teacher educators understood teacher leadership based on their previous professional experience. Teacher educators stated that teacher leadership was rooted in care and advocacy for students. To be effective advocates for students, they argued that teacher leaders must have knowledge of current research, policy, and practice, as well as the capacity to act on personal convictions. Since teacher educators believed that teachers must establish rapport and credibility before assuming a teacher leader role, they emphasized teaching and learning explicitly in their modules. I organize this section around how teacher educators understand teacher leadership, how they describe teacher leader traits and processes, and how they view candidates as teacher leaders.

**How Teacher Educators Understand Teacher Leadership**

In this section, I explain how teacher educators’ previous personal and professional experiences with PK-12 school leaders influenced their understanding of teacher leaders. Teacher educators recognized that teachers had the responsibility to
change school culture and best serve students whether in a formal or informal teacher leader roles. Professional experience had the strongest influence on teacher educators’ understanding of teacher leadership. When working in PK-12 schools, teacher educators witnessed positive school leadership and served as teacher leaders by various means: principal appointment, volunteering, joining committees, and mentoring candidates. Teacher educators served in formal and informal roles without fair or any compensation and linked teacher leader service to volunteerism. They also articulated that experience was not predictive of teacher leadership, but those with positional authority acted as gatekeepers who controlled, supported, and empowered teacher leaders.

**Principal Impact**

Participants self-reported that their positive experience with building principals led to teacher leader opportunities in PK-12 schools. As former teachers in a PK-12 school, these teacher educators learned about effective leadership by watching building principals lead their colleagues. For example, Reese, who is now a clinical assistant professor, recounted how a new principal held listening sessions with colleagues, disrupting the hierarchical power that had previously governed the school and district: “She was embracing more of distributed leadership model, she was contributing to a dialogue of teaching, and she was creating opportunities for people to become good teachers” (interview, August 15, 2019). Marley, now a clinical assistant professor, mentioned how two previous building principals “walked beside us” and would “do anything to help us succeed” (interview, August 12, 2019). Payton, a current associate professor, described a principal who offered freedom to the teachers, but with a caveat:
“We had to make the school look like it was turning around” (interview, August 13, 2019). Educators recounted how their previous principals appointed them to teacher leader roles or encouraged them to act as teacher leaders.

**Years of Experience**

All four teacher educators identified teacher leaders not by age or experience, but by skill, desire for leadership, and proven success in their own classrooms. Payton clarified, “I think experience makes some teachers better. And I think experience makes some teachers worse because they equate experience to skill and I don't think those are the same things at all” (interview, August 13, 2019). Sawyer, an adjunct professor, added, “There's people who've been in the classroom for twenty years, and I wouldn't say that they're the most strong [sic] leaders. It's really whether they want to be a leader; it's whether they are having success” (interview, August 15, 2019). These insights revealed the common conception that teacher leadership was not granted based on time, but first earned by proving competency in the classroom.

Two teacher educators viewed personal ambitiousness as a misplaced reason for pursuing leadership positions. Marley argued, “There are people who are meant to be teachers and then instructional leaders, and then there are other people who are really meant to be principal leaders” but added, “I think [some teachers] might have become principals too early [because] they weren't teachers for very long” (interview, August 12, 2019). Payton explained that in her previous experience, teachers who were chosen to be teacher leaders “were all very ambitious, explicitly ambitious. People knew they had other agendas. He wanted to start a school. She wanted to go get her Ph.D. You know?”
And if that wasn't there then you weren't identified [as a teacher leader]” (interview, August 13, 2019). Payton felt that students became experiments as teachers exercised their own ambitiousness, sacrificing care for students. Yet, Marley and Payton both acknowledged that their former colleagues linked positional authority with leadership, a tension born out of hierarchical school organization that I discussed in Chapter 1.

**Teacher Leader Roles**

Participants recognized that teacher leadership took various forms. While working in PK-12 schools, three of the four participants served in formal teacher leader roles, or roles with a specific title and authority over other teachers. Two had been appointed by the principal to lead a specific program related to literacy and improved student behavior and train other teachers. Another teacher educator was elected to a local school council and, in another role, served as a mentor to candidates completing their student-teaching. All four teacher educators also served in informal roles to improve student outcomes. For example, three mentioned how they facilitated conversations with grade-level colleagues to improve curricular alignment. Another coordinated guest speakers, community initiatives, and field trips.

Teacher educators felt that teacher leaders created a collegial, collaborative work environment. According to Marley, who served in both formal and informal teacher leader roles,

I think that there are so many different varieties of teacher leadership and some of them are extremely subtle…you're my next door neighbor teacher and I'm going to help you out as you're new [to the school], versus not subtle at all. I'm leading a
professional learning on PLCs this year, and so every Friday morning at eight o'clock, I'm up there leading the whole faculty [in a formal role] (interview, August 12, 2019).

All teacher educators seized opportunities to improve student learning, regardless of whether their role was formal or informal. These teacher educators felt that their rapport was why they were chosen or encouraged to pursue teacher leader roles.

Rapport. Each teacher educator cited their credibility and competency as a reason for their teacher leadership. Two were specifically chosen by the principal to lead a committee or new initiative based on their reputation as a successful, knowledgeable teacher. Two also mentioned favorable experiences born out of their own rapport with students and colleagues. Sawyer mentioned how her administrators “told me that they selected me just because I was able to manage the students in a very positive way, so they thought ‘she'd be good to plan a school-wide thing’” (interview, August 13, 2019). Marley explained how her colleagues watched “not just my work ethic but they watched me interact with the students and watched me interact with other teachers, and I think that I was careful and mostly positive in those ways” (interview, August 12, 2019). They had rapport with both students and colleagues, and as a result, were selected for these formal leadership positions.

Teacher Leader Challenges. Three teacher educators cited pushback from colleagues in their roles as teacher leaders. As young teachers, two encountered resistance from their colleagues. Payton remarked, “I did work with a good amount of teachers who were veteran teachers who hadn't changed up their content or teaching style
and they were very proud of that. They constantly gave me grief because that was not what I aspired to do” (interview, August 13, 2019). Sawyer recalled serving in a formal teacher leader role as a first-year classroom instructor: “Some teachers didn't look to me as a leader just because I was the youngest, fresh out of school in a lot of ways” (interview, August 15, 2019). Another discussed the obstacles in encouraging continuous improvement among grade level colleagues. Reese mentioned, “There was collaboration and...there were definitely challenging conversations because one of my colleagues at that time wasn't a fan of change, necessarily…You can't force change. I don't think you can force people to change their ways” (interview, August 15, 2019).

One teacher educator recounted a lack of administrative support when serving as a teacher leader. Although the building principal encouraged teachers to create new programs and organize field trips, Payton explained how the lack of support led to intensification:

We were all sort of working on adrenaline, and starting all these programs, not knowing if they were going to work or not...We were so burned out. We were encouraged to do more, and more, and more, and more. No one encouraged us to slow it down” (interview, August 13, 2019).

While only Payton cited a lack of administrative support, three teacher educators identified recalcitrance between colleagues as a common challenge for teacher leaders. These conflicts affected teacher educators regardless of their role as a formal or informal teacher leader and shaped their understanding of a teacher leader as one who was capable of handling these challenges.
Volunteerism

Teacher educators self-reported not being compensated fairly or at all for their work in teacher leader roles, but they chose to serve anyway. As Sawyer explained, “You're not getting paid more to be in those leadership roles, so it has to be something inherently within you. You need to really want to be in that position” (interview, August 15, 2019). Marley received a small stipend for organizing a standardized testing preparation program, but she used the funds to bring coffee for teachers who voluntarily attended the program training. Reese’s colleagues elected her to serve on a non-unionized advisory council that required evening meetings with school constituents—time that she was not paid for. As PK-12 teachers, teacher educators gave their time and talent freely because of a desire to improve student outcomes, not for personal financial reward. This idea of service connotes volunteerism, and as such, no expectation of remuneration for additional labor.

Teacher educators’ understanding of teacher leadership as volunteerism was also codified in the TLLSC program’s conceptual framework, EUs, and Dispositions Rubrics. Teacher educators’ professional experience as unpaid teacher leaders aligned with the required volunteerism in Sequence 8, where candidates complete 15 hours of service in their school site and reflect on what it means to be a teacher in service of social justice. Although service was drawn from the university’s mission of pursuing social justice, both the program and teacher educators linked teacher leadership with volunteerism.
Connections to TLLSC Program

Based on their previous professional experience, teacher educators viewed teacher leaders as change agents, which matched the program’s conception of teacher leadership, as evidenced in the Student Handbook. According to teacher leaders, classroom competency, not years of experience, was the indication of teacher leadership. Once a teacher established rapport among colleagues and administrators, principals appointed them to serve in formal or informal teacher leader roles. Teacher educators had a general resolve to serve students and experienced resistance from colleagues. The dispositions echoed these sentiments, particularly an investment in student learning (D13) and resiliency when confronted with challenges (D14). Because they associated teacher leadership with volunteerism, teacher educators did not expect compensation for teacher leader work.

Teacher Educators’ Description of Teacher Leader Traits

Inductive coding revealed that teacher educators described a teacher leader as someone who was caring, selfless, and collaborative. Teacher educators felt that teacher leaders put students’ and colleagues’ needs before their own. They described teacher leaders as guides who steered conversation rather than mandated a singular vision. Axial coding pointed to three processes that teacher educators felt teacher leaders enacted to improve student outcomes: influencing others, using data-driven practices, and disrupting the status quo. Findings indicated that these aforementioned traits and processes emerged from teacher educators’ previous personal experience as students and professional
experiences as PK-12 teacher leaders, as well as a belief in social justice informed by the university’s mission.

*Caring*

Teacher educators connected care with leadership. Three of the four teacher educators named a parent as an influential leader, and in two cases, their parent was also a teacher. Each teacher educators recalled positive experiences as PK-12 students. Payton cited her elementary school principal as an influential woman who was caring but firm. Two participants mentioned positive experiences with former professors and cooperating teachers who taught them about the role of the teacher. Reese described her learning experience in a postgraduate program as “revelatory and powerful” because her mentor teacher was “very experienced at articulating her teaching, and her ideas, and her advocacy for children and for what she was teaching and why” (interview, August 15, 2019). As an undergraduate student, Sawyer recalled how two previous professors shaped her understanding of the role of the teacher: “I wanted to go into teacher education [because of] them…Everything they did was to inspire us as future teachers to be the best teachers that we can be and to look out for the needs of our students” (interview, August 15, 2019). Each felt awed and supported by those they learned from.

*Selfless*

According to teacher educators, selflessness was both an expectation and condition for teacher leadership. This may have been influenced by the care they experienced from their parents as well as their previous experience in formal and informal teacher leader roles. Reese explained that an effective teacher leader was
“always thinking about the kids first” (interview, August 15, 2019). Two mentioned that they opened their classroom for lunch with students. Marley disclosed that she did not take a lunch period so she could answer her colleague’s questions as needed. Payton explained how she and her colleagues were “starting new programs, visiting the kids houses, staying after school, getting there before school…just kind of an entire consumption of all of our time without really any support” (interview, August 13, 2019). Teacher educators articulated that teacher leaders had both a desire to serve students and a willingness to dedicate more time and energy outside of classroom responsibilities.

**Collaborative**

Not only did teacher educators cite instances of collaboration in their previous work as teacher leaders, but they named collaboration as a trait that all teacher leaders should use to build consensus. Reese recognized a former PK-12 colleague who “was calm and thoughtful and caring, but also always kind of putting forth something important, something that was bigger than just our classroom, and asking for others to collaborate in that work, too” (interview, August 15, 2019). Teacher educators cited challenges with colleagues and tried different approaches to establish strong relationships. Each participant concluded that teacher leaders were not experts and should not pretend to be. Teacher leaders “should not come in, bull in a China shop, and tell people what to do” (Marley, interview, August 12, 2019). Rather than mandating a singular vision, teacher leaders respected the wisdom and experience of others and worked together to move forward. Collaboration was a central teacher leader
responsibility integrated throughout the TLLSC program design in the Student Handbook, Cornerstones, PLCs, EUs, and leadership modules in Sequences 3, 5, and 6.

**Influencing Others**

Teacher educators felt that effective teacher leaders solicited the perspectives of their colleagues to build consensus and promote change. Reese reflected on her own experience facilitating curricular alignment: “I think it's important to respect what different people bring to the table and think about different ways of influencing, right?” (interview, August 15, 2019). Teacher educators described a community-first approach that was both delicate and respectful of colleagues. Sawyer added

> All teachers come with their own philosophy, their own perspective, so [teacher leadership is] about trying to introduce a new instructional strategy, trying to introduce a new curriculum, but in a way that's not going to be threatening to the teacher or [imply that] what you've been doing your whole career is wrong” (interview, August 15, 2019).

Teacher educators felt that teacher leaders influenced others to achieve a desired end goal. Influence was rooted in a respect for differences in perspective, which required listening, another trait that all teacher educators mentioned.

**Using Data-Driven Practice.** Teacher educators described teacher leaders as grounded, using information rather than impulse to guide decision-making. Two cited data collection and analysis as a way to steer conversation, improve their own practice, and encourage school-wide growth. One recalled experience as a former elementary teacher who used data to improve behavioral outcomes. Marley told her students that
“data is information,” which included student reactions, body language, and quantitative numbers (interview, August 12, 2019). Data-driven practice was woven throughout the TLLSC program. Teacher educators assessed how candidates used data to make decisions (D6, EU4), and candidates completed the 320 module called Using Classroom Data in a Collaborative Environment to Advance Student Achievement. The explicit mention of data-driven practice in the dispositions and Sequence 5 module may have influenced the participants’ response.

Disrupting the Status Quo. Each participant explained that it was necessary to challenge existing practices in order to improve student outcomes and address inequity. All four teacher educator participants explained discomfort in their past experience as teacher leaders, but they felt that teacher leaders were willing to initiate and lead change. Payton added, “You have to be able to be unpopular, and that's tough” (interview, August 13, 2019). Teacher educators felt that teacher leaders were not deterred by conflict, but instead self-assured in their ability to handle these challenges and pursue social justice.

Social Justice. All four teacher educators stated that teacher leadership was a way to achieve social justice. The mission of the university heightened the focus on social justice in the TLLSC program, which influenced teacher educators’ perception of teacher leaders as a result. Specifically, the TLLSC program emphasized students first and celebrated student diversity in all forms. Reese summarized,

The dispositions have been created very deliberately to be a progression, and kind of a spiraling progression. But, I do think that a current runs through [the program]…I think advocacy for students is primary, especially because of the
social justice mission of the university and the school of education (interview, August 15, 2019).

To be effective advocates for students, teacher educators believed that teacher leaders had to have knowledge of current research, policy, and practice, as well as the capacity to act on personal convictions. By influencing others, using data-driven practice, and disrupting the status quo in pursuit of social justice, teacher leaders became change agents.

Connections to TLLSC Program

Teacher educators described similar teacher leader traits and processes and those listed in the TLLSC document descriptions. The Student Handbook’s Conceptual Framework and one the four Cornerstones, Partnerships with Schools and Communities, named collaboration as a key process in which candidates worked alongside mentor teachers and other stakeholders. A willingness to challenge the status quo was also evident in the TLLSC program’s coursework and dispositions (D2, D8). In modules 210 and 320, candidates crafted policy solutions and used data to propose interventions to improve student achievement. A desire for social justice motivated teacher educators to become advocates and in turn, influenced how they perceived teacher leaders as change agents.

How Teacher Educators See Candidates as Leaders

Teacher educators viewed candidates as novice instructors, and they explicitly emphasized teaching and learning with candidates. All four teacher educators explained that teacher leaders were effective classroom instructors first. Marley said,
I think that you need to know how to lead your class before you can lead other adults. So, when I think of a teacher leader, I think of someone who leads in a school setting with and for adults, for the benefit of adults and the students. And I think that the TLLSC folks are still learning how to lead just in their classrooms...But I don’t think the skills are necessarily different (interview, August 12, 2019).

Participants described candidates as young who needed to learn “basics” (Reese, interview, August 15, 2019) and “how to lead students before leading adults” (Marley, interview, August 12, 2019). There was an implied sense of inexperience, especially in the Exploration phase in which assessments focused on pedagogy and an asset-based mindset.

Higher Education Instruction

None of the four teacher educator participants had received instruction on how to introduce and assess teacher leadership in the TLLSC program. Three cited their instinct as the basis for their instruction, which meant doing what they thought was best for their candidates. Marley noted,

I think that [teacher leadership] is desired. I think that it is probably talked about [in our program]. I don't know that it shows up in course outcomes. So, that I don't think that, if it's not in the course outcome, it's likely not exclusively taught. I honestly think the reason for that is because there’s so much to learn about how to be a teacher that [the program is] focused on the teaching part, and not so much on the leadership part (interview, August 12, 2019).
Payton said she had little understanding of the coursework beyond her assigned sequence, leading to challenges in articulating to candidates the intended development across sequences. As an adjunct who taught different sequences, Sawyer explained that the “training in what [sequence] you're going to teach is done by the [sequence] lead. But really all that is, is sharing the curriculum of what they've been doing, what they've developed” (interview, August 15, 2019). Reese added, “I think talking about dispositions, both as a sequence and also in the whole faculty, that has been really instructive for understanding what is meant in the program by developing teacher leaders” but that there could be more conversation (interview, August 15, 2019). With limited instruction on teacher leadership, teacher educators’ experiences as former PK-12 teacher leaders shaped their understanding of candidates as novices who needed to master pedagogical skills and content specialization before taking on teacher leader roles. They believed that candidates would be ready for teacher leadership only after establishing rapport in the classroom.

**Candidate Instruction**

TLLSC faculty put candidates in the role of teacher leader in their modules and class activities, but they focused explicitly on teaching and learning. Marley felt that the sequences afforded instructional flexibility as far as “what skills and dispositions are needed in each course; there's at least a skeleton of those requirements and then the teacher educator can add as needed” (interview, August 12, 2019). Teacher educators explained how candidates taught each other using jigsaw activities and small group
discussions. They asked candidates to present findings to their peers and shared supplemental resources. Regarding assessing leadership, Sawyer stated,

All of the assignments, I feel, that are in the TLLSC program are very much so towards developing the students as educators, so I think that the leadership is embedded in [the modules], but there's nothing specific about make sure that you ensure that all of your candidates are leaders (interview, August 15, 2019).

Leadership opportunities became more apparent in later sequences. When candidates became upperclassmen, they had opportunities to lead PLCs. As Reese described,

I break them up [heterogeneously] deliberately to promote that kind of leadership and to help them see themselves with more expertise, and then help them kind of apprentice the younger students into the program and into being able to articulate their ideas (interview, August 15, 2019).

Teacher educators also acknowledged that even though they asked students to lead discussions, they did not present specific criteria or expectations for these leadership roles.

**Reflexive Assignments.** All teacher educators cited how reflection was integrated in written assessments across each sequence. A common theme referenced was clarity in communication, reflecting the language of the Dispositions Rubrics. Teacher educators described how candidates communicated their changing understandings of teachers and education across sequences. In Sequence 1, candidates completed a community asset-mapping project “where they would have to talk about the different resources that were available in a community to a specific school that they've been assigned” (Sawyer,
In Sequence 2, students delivered a monologue and “explore[d] how their social identities impacted their pedagogical philosophy” (Payton, interview, August 13, 2019). In Sequence 3, candidates researched the history of an educational policy and current implementation of the policy at the local, state, and national level. Reese clarified, “They are also asked to think about: what are the social justice components of that policy? Or relationship of social justice to that policy, and what's the teacher role?” (interview, August 15, 2019).

In Sequence 4, when candidates began their specialty concentration, the coursework diverged. In her Concentration sequence, Marley explained that “students watch me administer the assessment in class, then they practice administering it in the classroom” (interview, August 15, 2019). Candidates then composed a report on how they made this request, administered the assessment, and established rapport with their students. Later, in Sequences 5 through 8, candidates planned and taught lessons. Payton summarized the ultimate goal in practicing reflexivity in coursework: it was “the ability to participate and facilitate brave conversations around different social identities, appreciating students, community, cultural wealth, courage” (interview, August 15, 2019). Teacher educators stated that regular reflexivity improved candidate self-efficacy and aided their transformation into a proactive advocate.

Connections to TLLSC Program

Teacher educators believed that teacher leadership was enacted through sound pedagogy and culturally responsive instructional practices. Sawyer surmised, “More than anything, I think that a teacher leader needs to know that all students can succeed, all
students can grow, because if they believe that, they can teach those strategies to teachers to make that happen” (interview, August 15, 2019). The belief that all students can learn was integrated throughout the Conceptual Framework, EUs, and Dispositions Rubrics. The dispositions framed not only how candidates were to view their students, but the rubric levels—beginning, developing, and mastering—promoted candidate growth over the four-year program. Teacher educators prepared candidates to be effective classroom instructors whose daily work with diverse students encouraged them to challenge the status quo and improve educational outcomes. Through module assignments, PLCs, and reflection, teacher educators helped candidates solidify teaching practices and improve self-efficacy so that upon graduation, they would be prepared to lead their classrooms and later assume teacher leader roles.

**Conclusions on Teacher Educator Conception of Teacher Leadership**

Teacher educators saw candidates as potential teacher leaders who earned their teacher leader roles by first demonstrating classroom competency. Professionally, each teacher educator cited at least one positive experience with school leadership that enabled them to serve as a teacher leader in a PK-12 school. Teacher educators became teacher leaders with the permission of principals after establishing rapport with colleagues and students. The fact remained that those with positional authority in schools had power over the teacher educator participants in this study. This may explain, in part, why teacher educators viewed candidates as novices who needed to master classroom instruction and pedagogy before taking on a teacher leader role.
Teacher educators’ naming of teacher leader traits and processes both acknowledged positional authority and a teacher’s relation to it. These descriptions of teacher leadership did not disrupt or dismantle hierarchical school organization but identified ways that teacher educators worked collectively to best serve students. Teacher educators viewed the traits and skills of teacher leaders as synonymous with effective classroom teachers. According to teacher educators, what distinguished teacher leaders was an established rapport and willingness to volunteer additional time, which they primed candidates to do through reflexive assessments and PLCs.

**Candidates’ Perception of Their Teacher Education Program**

In this section, I present findings related to the third research question: How do teacher candidates view their teacher education program as it helps them develop teacher leader skills? Based on two focus group interviews with eight candidates in total, findings indicated that candidates had a strong understanding of the traits of teacher leaders, but they did not yet see themselves as teacher leaders. Candidates self-reported that personal transformations occurred throughout all phases of the program, especially when collaborating with mentor teachers and designing lesson plans. They cited coursework readings as responsible for shaping their world view, and they felt that school site placements were mostly beneficial because they observed teacher leaders in action. Candidates agreed that teacher leadership was an implicit part of each module, but they desired more explicit training and greater consistency across PLCs. Although candidates felt that the program prepared them to be effective classroom instructors, candidates believed that experiences outside the program better prepared them for leadership. I
Candidate Description of Teacher Leader Traits and Processes

All candidates described teacher leaders as empathetic and professional. Other traits included risk-taking, initiative, and responsibility. Candidates also explained what a teacher was not: authoritarian, isolated, silencing, denigrating, or mocking. Candidates argued that effective teacher leaders engage in advocacy through clear communication and international-mindedness. These findings mirrored the teacher leader traits named by teacher educators and in the dispositions and EUs.

Empathetic

Similar to teacher educators, candidates viewed empathy as a critical trait of teacher leaders, specifically empathy born out of care for students and a desire for students to succeed. According to two candidates, empathetic teacher leaders were open-minded and willing to listen. Emery, a sophomore, said that the teacher-student relationship “should be a person to person relationship, and teachers should be consistently learning from their students” (focus group, October 14, 2019). Candidates named other traits that empathetic teacher leaders modeled: strong communication, caring, problem-solving, and respectful.

Candidates acknowledged that teacher leaders encountered barriers when facing administration, procuring funding, or justifying the need for change. Finley, a senior, explained that intensification may cause teachers to harden: “Some teachers over time,
they lose [empathy] because they've just been in the system for so long that it's become more of a chore than something that they actually feel passionate about. So, they lose that empathy for their students” (focus group, October 14, 2019). However, candidates explained that teacher leaders were not deterred. Charlie, a senior, stated, “If you want to change, it's going to be hard to make a change, but you have to be willing to succeed and fail” (focus group, September 25, 2019). Candidates’ mention of personal responsibility suggested that teacher leadership was born out of empathy and required risk-taking. Teacher educators described teacher leaders as caring and willing to disrupt the status quo, which candidates echoed.

**Professional**

Professionalism was the most common trait that candidates discussed in relation to effective teacher leadership. Since professionalism was one disposition in the program (D17) and teacher educators assessed candidates on professionalism in every sequence, there was a clear emphasis on this trait as a marker of teacher leadership. Candidates described punctuality and appearance as two specific aspects of professionalism that they were graded on, but they felt that these two aspects were over-emphasized. Blake, a senior, remarked,

>Professionalism is so weird to me, because I know it’s rooted in whiteness—the way we measure being on time, what is an appropriate way to look or dress—so I always have issues with it. This is the way to [appear credible] and play the game. I’m trying to relay that to my students: however you show up in [school or a
workplace] isn't unprofessional, but to some people, it's going to look that way (focus group, September 25, 2019).

This candidate highlighted an apparent contradiction in the program’s dispositions: the classification of professionalism (D17) measured by, in her assessment, Eurocentric and heteronormative styles of dress that conflict with culturally responsive teaching practices and celebrations of diversity (D3). According to the Student Handbook, Professionalism helps a candidate establish rapport with administrators, which teacher educators stated was necessary for teacher leadership. The language from the Student Handbook reads,

Exercise good judgment in grooming and personal appearance. Dress in a professional manner, so as to be respected and taken seriously by students, parents, teachers, administrators and other professionals. Conform to the established dress code for the professional staff of the school/district/community organization in which you are placed (LUC, 2017, p. 8).

Although the phrasing encourages candidates to adhere to the established dress code of the organization in which they are placed, candidates’ own judgement about grooming and personal appearance could be in conflict with these policies. According to Blake, candidates—and by extension, candidates’ students—learned how to alter appearances in order to present as a professional and credible. Candidates considered other aspects of professionalism as important, but not as easily graded or noticed: preparation for class and teaching, collaboration, engagement with students, and communication with
administrators and stakeholders. To improve their teacher leader readiness, candidates desired comprehensive feedback on these aspects of professionalism as well.

**Professionalism of Teacher Educators.** Candidates expressed frustration with the professionalism of their professors. As listed in the Student Handbook, one of the responsibilities for teacher candidates was to model high-level communication skills. In the Dispositions Rubrics, Professionalism (D17) assessed candidates on replying to faculty communication within 48 hours. Avery, a junior, noted the irony of being assessed on professionalism but not being given the same courtesy in return:

> Your professor’s not always going to have the time to talk to you and tell you things. Sometimes there's another student who has a question and they take up all the time of the class, and you email your professor but you don't hear back for a few days. Or even text them, and sometimes they don't respond (focus group, October 14, 2019).

Candidates argued that there were not enough fieldwork supervisors to fairly assess their professionalism in the field, nodding to the intensification of teacher labor that even teacher educators are not immune to. To better develop teacher leader skills, candidates hoped to see these skills modeled by teacher educators and communicated by fieldwork supervisors though timely and consistent feedback.

**Advocacy**

Candidates explained that teacher leaders advocated for their students and themselves. Advocacy was rooted in clear communication; as Finley stated, “If you want to be a good leader, you need to be direct with what you're saying” (focus group, October
14, 2019). This statement matched the most frequently used term, *communicate*, in the Dispositions Rubrics. The program conceptualized teacher leaders as advocates and reinforced advocacy in four dispositions (D2, D3, D13, D15). The program embedded coursework within each sequence to lead to an ESL endorsement so candidates would be prepared for future advocacy. Candidates stated that advocates demonstrated awareness. Dakota, a sophomore, explained that teacher leaders must have “a certain amount of an awareness too of what's going on in the community, or just in general when it comes to educational policies or things that are happening worldwide or culturally, that would be relevant to student populations” adding, “I think that it's difficult to know how to lead if you don't know what's going on in your community, or who's being affected by certain events” (focus group, October 14, 2019). Candidates’ mention of global-mindedness aligned with EU11.

According to candidates, teacher leadership skills were interconnected. Teacher leaders used local and global-awareness to collaborate with colleagues, solicit the perspectives and needs of various stakeholders, and build consensus. Emery detailed how it was important to have “voices from the community, and from parents, and from students included [when] promoting this change, and using it almost as evidence and reasoning, but just being able to show that you are not the only one who wants this change” (focus group, October 14, 2019). This candidate echoed the dispositions, specifically language around soliciting stakeholder perspective (D4) in service of students and school communities, and teacher educators’ identification of building consensus as a teacher leader process.
Candidates’ Experiences with Teacher Leadership in the Program

Candidates concurred that teacher leadership was an implicit part of the TLLSC program coursework and desired outcome of fieldwork, which are interwoven throughout modules. Four of the participants did not know that “leading” was one of the three tenets in the program title. Reasons were that Loyola’s Registration and Records Department used a four-letter prefix to label modules “TLSC” and these modules fell under the Teaching and Learning program area in the School of Education. However, candidates understood that their program was designed to spur a personal transformation. Finley, a senior, summarized the scope of her transformation in the TLLSC program:

The first two sequences, there's a lot of theory…seeing the different assets [of students] that we can use [in our teaching]. Third year or fourth year is really just pushing you into that role [of the teacher], turning theory into practice so that you actually start to realize, I learned this in Sequence 1, Sequence 2, I can use it in this way in the classroom. Definitely teaching you how to observe people around you, how to observe your students, how to observe a teacher, and how to use that and plan that into your lessons (focus group, October 14, 2019).

Readings and Discussions

Candidates credited their module readings with introducing them to different schools of thought in education, from philosophy to policy to advocacy. They articulated that the meaning of a social justice education was codified through their readings and discussions. Two candidates cited how the mission of the university changed their worldview and encouraged them to become advocates for underserved students and
communities. They collectively felt that the most beneficial conversations were when their teacher educators related research to their previous personal experience in a PK-12 classroom. Two candidates also stated that the readings were “recycled” (Finley, focus group, October 14, 2019) across modules, suggesting that “a lot of professors don't communicate with each other” (Hayden, focus group, October 14, 2019). This matched the experience that two teacher educators cited in limited training and inter-sequence collaboration. Candidates felt that the repetitive nature of readings and videos detracted from other opportunities to deepen knowledge about pedagogy, practice, and leadership.

Candidates understood that their readings and discussions were practice for future teacher leadership, but they did not recognize if or how they were doing the work of teacher leaders. In the context of this program, Avery said, “You read stuff, and you reflect on what you read, but you're not really told ‘This is what a leader is’” (focus group, September 25, 2019). Candidates also acknowledged that certain assignments required them to assume the role of a change agent, but they did not associate this role with a teacher leader. When candidates began teaching in PK-12 schools in Sequence 4, they designed lessons and assessments for an assignment, asking for approval from their cooperating teacher before implementing. Candidates recognized that they were collaborating, but not that this was a teacher leader process. Overall, candidates felt that lesson planning assignments were helpful, but did not connect how this work was teacher leader practice.
**Fidelity**

Candidates described observing classmates cutting corners or getting around the hard work of teacher leadership. Although candidates presented lesson plans to sequence instructors, Charlie explained, “You can get around your interpretation of it, and your fidelity doesn't have to be great to get a good grade” (personal communication, September 25, 2019). Two candidates expressed a desire for more formal feedback on lesson implementation, which they believe was tied to their developing sense of efficacy.

**Professional Learning Communities**

Candidates had mixed reactions to the effectiveness of PLCs as it developed their teacher leader skills. As evidenced from the program documents, specifically the Student Handbook, PLCs were intended to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the candidates. In total, candidates reported that PLCs had various structures: teacher educators provided discussion questions, candidates watched documentaries or discussed current events, and in other cases, candidates determined the organization and structure of PLC meetings. Five candidates in their junior and senior year stated that the PLCs were a place where teacher leadership could potentially emerge with the right structure and support, but they needed explicit instruction and guidance when serving as teacher leaders in PLCs.

**Inconsistency.** All candidates cited a need for improved consistency in the PLC experience. One participant had a very positive experience in a PLC that simulated classroom activities. Others had less impactful experiences depending on the PLC facilitator. Blake explained that her sequence instructor allotted time to plan for PLCs
during the semester, but more often the PLC facilitator decided the plan of action at the first PLC meeting. Charlie offered, “I think there's a little bit of a lack of communication of what's required from a PLC professor: what they should be doing, what we should be learning, what it could look like” (focus group, September 25, 2019). Candidates explained that the PLC structure did not encourage mutual mentoring or dialogue in the ways that they hoped. Avery explained how it was possible for candidates to be in a PLC with students across grade levels but sit with their friends and avoid interacting with those they did not know. Conversely, candidates in disciplines with lower enrollment felt that PLCs became redundant. Charlie already knew the opinions and perspectives of the small number of peers in her discipline, and she said that she was not growing or being challenged to build consensus as a teacher leader would have to do.

**Intensification.** Candidates felt that the PLCs were a novel idea in theory, but the experience required more time and work at the end of a busy semester. Candidates were preparing for final exams at this time, but they were occasionally assigned more readings or assignments within PLCs. Blake surmised, “I think it's really great but also it's just a lot on top of what we have to do” (focus group, September 25, 2019). This sentiment revealed a frustration with intensification in the coursework. One disposition, D10, was intended to help candidates develop strategies to handle the demands of the teaching profession. D10 was listed in the Sequence 3 syllabus description of the PLC module. However, candidates described that more demands were placed on them in PLCs, rather than using PLCs as a space to discuss and implement a plan for more personal and
professional balance. Candidates felt that PLCs experiences could better support their teacher leader development.

Fieldwork

Candidates are placed in school sites throughout all eight sequences, and they cited a range of experiences. Five candidates named their cooperating teachers as effective teacher leaders and their school site placement as mostly beneficial. They expressed admiration at their cooperating teachers’ communication of high expectations, focus on student strengths, emphasis on growth mindset, and commitment to the school’s values. Jordan, a sophomore, concluded that “really good teachers have given the students agency and autonomy” (focus group, October 14, 2019). They each received support from cooperating teachers, which was critical in developing their own self efficacy. Charlie shared, “I think it’s important that we have the support of our other professionals…we are teachers but we’re also learners and we’re students ourselves. So we need support from other professionals so we can continue to learn and better our practices” (focus group, September 25, 2019).

Three candidates shared challenging experiences in the field. Finley, Hayden, and Jordan observed classroom teachers who shamed and silenced students. On days when a substitute teacher was present, they observed ineffective and unproductive teaching practices. This was a learning experience, as Jordan explained, “Even though we were observing within the classroom, we recognized that the classroom was in need of help in that structure” (focus group, October 14, 2019). Candidates formed their own
understanding of competent teaching by virtue of comparison and a firm understanding of social justice learned through readings and discussions.

Although candidates were placed in a school or community site in each sequence, three were hesitant to take initiative. In some cases, they did not know how to ask teachers for permission to instruct an assessment or intervene to correct student behavior. Candidates understood the expected outcomes of the program, but they desired more instruction on how to raise questions and ask for time. Dakota added, “It's kind of a power struggle [with my mentor teacher] just trying to figure out where should I step up, and where should I hang back” (focus group, October 14, 2019). Emery shared that although teacher educators told her what she would be prepared to do upon completion of the program that

sometimes they just stop [with the program outcomes], and then there's that stress and anxiety of, “Okay, I'm supposed to be able to [assess student learning] when I'm [student teaching], but do I have all the tools to do it? Or is it just that confidence that I have to find within myself to just go for it?” (focus group, October 14, 2019).

Blake expressed that cooperating teachers may not support their lesson plans or project proposals, which “stem[med] from us being in their classroom and it [was] their space” (focus group, October 14, 2019). Candidates understood that requesting instructional time, administering assessments, and working with students in small groups was part of their personal transformation. They wanted more guidance and support on how to navigate and respect a teacher’s instructional time while completing their own
assignment in someone else’s classroom. Although teacher educators modeled how to administer an assessment and assigned written reflections as opportunities for candidates to reflect on their experiences, candidates desired more guidance on conversations to have before administering an assessment, which they felt would improve their professionalism and self-efficacy.

**Candidates’ Self-Perception of Teacher Leader Preparedness**

All candidates felt that the TLLSC program prepared them to be effective classroom instructors. They stated that PLCs had potential to be more powerful and transformative with greater consistency. Six felt that extracurricular experiences outside the TLLSC program better prepared them for leadership, such as being camp counselors, daycare workers, and community organizer. Blake shared,

> I just think I came already with the tools, and I feel like I did not get any more tools since being in [the program]. But I think from Sequence 5 on, you get the confidence, what it feels like to be a teacher. But not necessarily explicitly like, “This is how you be a leader; this is how you lead” (focus group, October 14, 2019).

As confidence improved, so did teacher efficacy and capacity for teacher leadership. Candidates recognized that transformation and growth were occurring, but they did not recognize their improved self-efficacy as a teacher leader trait. Without an explicit discussion of teacher leadership, candidates believed that teacher leadership was something different than what they were learning. Because teacher leadership was not
discussed explicitly, candidates did not recognize how they were developing teacher leader traits and skills in the program.

All candidates articulated specific and nuanced understandings of equity and social justice issues in education. The coursework readings provided a foundation for difficult conversations and an ability to critique classroom practices in productive ways. Participants noticed a discrepancy in teacher educator experience based on the sequence. Avery added that novice teacher educators instruct sequences in the *Exploration* phase: “They're like, ‘This is my first time teaching,’ and it's like, ‘Okay, I need more help than that’” (focus group, September 25, 2019). However, in the *Concentration* and *Specialization* phases, candidates felt that teacher educators were content experts and they knew “who can really, really provide you with the support you need to execute an idea” (focus group, September 25, 2019). Candidates identified greater support in the latter phases as they developed expertise and teacher leader readiness.

**Candidate Aspirations**

Of the four senior participants, Blake and Charlie explicitly mentioned aspirations for formal teacher leadership. Neither saw themselves as teachers who would be in the classroom for a long time. They explained that they were “bored” and wanted to do more to impact the field of education (focus group, September 25, 2019). They described teaching as redundant and limiting and expressed a motivation and desire to do more. They mentioned hopes of becoming department chairs, grant writers, or attending law school to become education policy advocates. Blake explained, “I've been interested in teaching other teachers, civic engagement, and doing stuff. I definitely want to work with
youth for forever, because they're the best. But [my desire for teacher leadership] stems from, I just have a lot of things that I want to do” (focus group, September 25, 2019).

Although she did not articulate a specific career plan, Avery, a junior, surmised, “I feel like I could do much more outside of the classroom that could not just benefit the classroom” (focus group, September 25, 2019).

Finley and Hayden, who were in the second focus group with sophomores, did not express desires for formal teacher leader roles. This may have been that they were among underclassmen and had not yet considered their potential or desire to serve in roles beyond the classroom, whereas Blake and Charlie responded to each other’s aspirations. Instead, Finley and Hayden were committed to working in underserved communities, echoing the social justice mission of the program and insinuating future service in informal teacher leader roles. Dakota, Emery, and Jordan—all sophomores—desired to be effective classroom teachers. Jordan concluded, “I feel like whatever school I'm in, in three to five years, I'll be prepared for it” (focus group, October 14, 2019).

**Conclusions on Candidate Perception of Program Efficacy**

Candidates overwhelmingly felt prepared for effective classroom instruction and lesson planning. Their experiences emphasized social justice and advocacy that informed their understanding of the role of the teacher. However, six candidates desired more instruction on leadership, the third tenet of the TLLSC program. Charlie reflected,

I don't know if I've ever had explicit instruction on how teachers are leaders. I think implicitly we see role model teacher leaders, so that's how we learn. And I think it's also a little bit assumed that if you're a teacher, you are a leader. Because
you're the leader of the classroom. But then is that enough? And I don't think it is (interview, September 25, 2019).

Participants felt prepared for teaching from coursework readings, placement in school sites, and opportunities to practice designing and implementing lessons. Still, they desired more explicit instruction on teacher leadership skills and strategies to transform into the teacher leaders they hoped to become.

**Summary**

This three-phase study probes teacher leadership in the TLLSC teacher education program. Findings include definitions of teacher leadership in program documents, teacher educators’ understanding of teacher leadership based on past experiences and instruction in the TLLSC program, and candidates’ expressions of how the TLLSC program has prepared them to be teacher leaders.

Findings related to the first research question revealed that in the TLLSC program, teacher leadership is conceptualized as a process in which candidates cultivate an asset-based lens in order to work for social justice and equity in the classroom and community. The curriculum is structured to support candidates’ personal transformations, accounting for variance and growth from year to year. Candidates have opportunities to take action and reflect on their experiences in written assessments in each sequence. Despite the concerns that emerged from teacher educators and candidates, the sequence and PLC experiences are overwhelmingly seen as helpful in preparing candidates to become change agents as future teachers.
Concerning the second research question, findings indicated that previous professional experience influenced how teacher educators saw candidates as novice instructors. Teacher educator participants had positive experiences as former PK-12 teacher leaders and mostly positive relationships with their school administrators. Each stated that they put students first and pursued both formal and informal teacher leader opportunities to make an impact in their schools and communities. When appointed to formal teacher leader roles, teacher educators felt they had proven their competency as classroom teachers, which was why principals chose them to lead programs among colleagues. They were willing to serve as teacher leaders without fair or any compensation, devoting additional time and energy in the spirit of volunteerism. All teacher educator participants believed that aspirational teacher leaders first developed caring rapport with students and colleagues before assuming a teacher leader role that would require them to influence others, use data-driven practice, and disrupt the status quo. The support and acknowledgement from principals are key factors in sustaining teacher leadership.

Teacher educators believed that a passion for social justice was a singular and specific motive for teacher leaders. Teacher educators cited many traits of effective teacher leaders which they believed were evident in the sequence coursework. Good teaching practices included effective communication, proactive behaviors, a knowledge of policy, and commitment to advocate for all students while celebrating diversity. The TLLSC program emphasizes advocacy and knowledge of policy, reiterating a global-mindedness that teacher leaders must possess. Influenced by their own previous
experience as PK-12 teacher leaders, teacher educators explicitly emphasized teaching and learning and implicitly emphasized leading in their courses.

Findings pertaining to the third research question revealed that candidates viewed the TLLSC program as successful in helping them understand educational theories, pedagogy, and social justice. Candidates described teacher leaders as internationally-minded advocates who communicated clearly, mirroring the teacher leader traits named by teacher educators and those listed in the dispositions and EUs. They supported the idea of PLCs but cited inconsistency and intensified work load at the end of the semester, which detracted from their personal and professional balance. The program includes teacher leader processes through every module, but candidates did not see the processes as such because they were not explicitly labeled as teacher leadership. Although candidates felt that they learned leadership skills from extracurricular activities outside of the program, candidates did not recognize how their improved self-efficacy was transforming them into teacher leaders. The TLLSC program is an effective model for how to target and integrate teacher leadership in a teacher education program using a mission-centered approach to achieve social justice.
 CHAPTER V
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

In this chapter, I discuss how teacher leader skills in the TLLSC program align and add to the body of research on teacher leadership. First, I explain the significance of my study on how the TLLSC program targets and integrates teacher leader skills and transforms candidates into change agents and social justice advocates. Scholars have identified leadership as the missing link in teacher education (Bond, 2011; Danielson, 2007; Forster, 1997; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Ryan, 2009; TeKippe & Faga, 2016; Troen & Boles, 1994). My findings reveal the benefits of including teacher leadership alongside pedagogy and theory. I then offer implications tied to the conceptual framework (Apple, 1988; Apple, 1999; Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986; Senge, 2006), followed by recommendations for the TLLSC program, teacher leadership in teacher education programs, and reconceptualizing PK-12 school leadership. The results of this study can foster ongoing dialogue about teacher leader training in teacher education programs.

Significance of Study

Over the past fifty years, teacher leadership has appeared more frequently in research. However, there was no singular definition for teacher leadership nor a codified understanding of what teacher leaders did. In a landmark study on the existing body of
teacher leadership research, York-Barr and Duke (2004) found that teacher leadership was a social process available for any administrator or teacher regardless of their title. Wenner and Campbell (2017) determined that teacher leaders maintained PK–12 classroom-based teaching responsibilities and took on leadership responsibilities outside of the classroom. However, little of the research on teacher leadership little focused on social justice and equity (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). In this study, I similarly defined a teacher leader as a licensed PK-12 teacher who leads change efforts within and beyond the classroom in non-administrative positions. However, my study on the TLLSC program examined a program that deliberately and consciously included teacher leadership skills and processes to prepare candidates to achieve social justice. Findings from my study highlighted how the TLLSC program conceptualized teacher leadership as a transformational growth process based on the adoption of asset-based thinking in service of social justice.

Developing candidate capacity for teacher leadership could prevent future teacher leaders from leaving the classroom or field of education (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016). Historically, teacher education programs have emphasized supervision and control rather than innovation and empowerment, preparing teachers to be followers not leaders (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). As described in Chapter 2, there were only two studies on university teacher education programs that explicitly or implicitly prepared future teacher leaders through coursework or fieldwork (Ado, 2012; TeKippe & Faga, 2016). Ado’s (2016) study showed how candidates who completed one undergraduate education seminar candidates demonstrated knowledge and skills necessary for teacher leadership
as defined by the national Teacher Leader Model Standards, but the study did not consider teacher leadership experiences in the form of fieldwork or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Further, this study considered the perspective of candidates but not teacher educators. TeKippe and Faga’s (2016) study of candidates who completed their student-teaching in PK-12 schools found that a majority of participants felt that their program prepared them for teacher leadership; however, clinical observers of these candidates reported that only 5% of participants had completed formal teacher leader training. While this study included the perspective of teacher educators, it was in the context of fieldwork not coursework.

In the TLLSC program, candidates are placed in school sites throughout the program with teacher leader responsibilities increasing over time. As Apple (1999) contends, an effective teacher is one who first changes how they think about something. The TLLSC program uses a transformational continuum to assess candidate growth over the four-year program. Candidates reflect on their experiences and internalize teacher leader processes symbiotically, matching what scholars call for in teacher education (Ado, 2016; Bond, 2011; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016; Nelson, 2004; Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016). Candidates report that fusion of coursework and fieldwork changes their worldview and understanding of the role of the teacher as a social justice advocate. In school and community partnerships, candidates learn how to build trust and understanding, which are two traits of teacher leaders (Guiney, 2001; Nelson, 2004). Through reflection and action, candidates shatter mental models of ineffective teaching and learning (Senge, 2006). By shifting candidates’ mindsets into those of change agents,
the TLLSC program aligns with the teacher leadership goals defined in the literature (Ado, 2016; Angelle, 2016; Blair, 2016; Elmore, 2004; Senge, 2006; Spillane, 2006). The program responds to the historical deskillng of teachers (Apple, 1988; Apple, 1999; Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986) by preparing candidates to recognize inequity and advocate for an inclusive, ethical practices.

To my knowledge, no research studies consider teacher educators’ perception of teacher leaders. There are three self-studies by teacher educators on a deficit in training of former PK-12 teachers who transition to higher education (Berry, 2007; Bullock, 2009; Ritter, 2007), which inform the urgency of my study on teacher educators’ perception of teacher leadership. Teacher educators with more PK-12 teaching experience do not examine their existing beliefs and those with less experience embrace traditional ideas (Williams et al., 2012). Personal values shape instructional approaches and even teacher education program design (Chang et al., 2016). Without formal training, teacher educators may rely on assumptions of teacher leadership to inform their instruction and assessment of candidates. To my knowledge, there are also no studies on how a teacher educator’s past professional experience influences their perception of teacher leaders. My study explores teacher educators’ perception of teacher leadership based on their previous experience as PK-12 teachers and higher education faculty. In the context of the TLLSC program, teacher educators view candidates as novice instructors who must develop rapport and credibility in the classroom before leading adults, which is influenced by their own previous experience as PK-12 teachers and leaders. Too, findings explain how teacher educators prepare candidates for teacher leadership through readings and
discussions, reflexive assignments, and PLCs. In the following sub-section, I make sense of the findings by identifying how the program aligns with teacher leader skills and processes in the body of research. I also make sense of my findings within my theoretical framework.

**Evidence of Teacher Leader Skills and Processes**

Teacher leader skills and processes are explicit in the TLLSC program conceptual framework and design. The Four Cornerstones (see Figure 4.3) prepare candidates to be responsive and adaptive to the needs of diverse children and families (LUC, 2017, p. 4). As described in the Comparison Chart (see Figure 4.2), teacher educators act as mentors, assuming one of the most common forms of teacher leadership (Comparison Chart; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). The program’s outcome is to help candidates understand that their roles as teacher must extend beyond the classroom, thus doing the work of teacher leaders (Blair, 2016; Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

Collaboration, an explicit teacher leader process (Ado, 2016; Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Bond, 2011; Forster, 1997), is at the center of the TLLSC program’s coursework and fieldwork. Candidates have many opportunities for growth from year to year, but they must take action. Through PLCs, candidates contribute to the overall functioning of a school community (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016; Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016; Richardson, 2016; Snyder, 2015). Candidates’ growth is rooted in attitude and accountability, placing the onus for transformation on the candidates themselves.
The Enduring Understandings (EU) and dispositions (D) target candidates’ transformation by listing actions that teacher leaders take when pursuing equity. The EUs list multiple traits and processes that mirror teacher leader verbiage from the research: reflect (Nelson, 2004); use research and evidence-based practices to design instruction (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009); meet the individual needs of students (Boatright, 2002; Darder, 2012); use data to drive instruction (Cambrone-McCabe & McCarthy, 2016); advocate with and for students and families (Lambert, 2003); hold high expectations (Tomal, Schilling, and Wilhite, 2014); build on assets of diverse students (Darder, 2012; Ryan, 2019); support safe and healthy learning environments (Angelle, 2016); and utilize information from theories and related research-based practices (Cambrone-McCabe & McCarthy, 2016).

Most dispositions are an active process of shifting candidates’ self-awareness to encourage growth. In response to the deskilling of educators, or the effort to intensify teacher work load, separate them from their own fields, and thus promote reliance on outside experts and textbooks (Apple, 1988; Apple, 1999), the dispositions emphasize the role of the teacher as a change agent in the classroom and larger school with the intention of being an advocate for the community. This awakening and empowerment is a strategy for teachers to regain autonomy and resist managerial control (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986). The dispositions reject positional authority, or power determined by a position or title (Apple, 1988; Senge, 2006), to an extent by encouraging teacher candidates to get involved by supporting colleagues or programs already in place in their school site placements. Candidates advocate for the use of differentiated instruction to meet the
needs of each learner (D13), promote students’ unique learning interests (D15), and advocate for social justice (D2). In the program, candidates also complete coursework for an ESL endorsement that prepares them to advocate for populations who are underserved or overrepresented on a school-wide or community level. Since teacher leadership is correlated with credibility (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016), the EUs and dispositions act as a primer for teacher candidates in order to pursue future teacher leader roles.

As evidenced in the Comparison Chart, the TLLSC program’s definition of success is that “graduates enter the field with greater professional resiliency” (LUC, 2019), a key marker of teacher self-efficacy and leadership (TeKippe & Faga, 2016). Educators assess candidates as change agents who and adopt asset-based thinking in order to problematize and solve ineffective educational practices. Inherent in the TLLSC program is a suggestion that candidates have both the ability and responsibility to decentralize leadership that does not promote students’ best interest (Senge, 2006). Teacher candidates “develop through guided reflective practice” (LUC, 2019, p. 3), which is what researchers have called for in teacher education (Ado, 2016; Bond, 2011; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016; Nelson, 2004; Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016). Reflexive assignments reinforce asset-based thinking and teaching in service of social justice. Praxis yields candidate transformation. Candidates report improved confidence throughout the program, an important finding since self-efficacy is predictive of teacher effectiveness (Ado, 2016; Rockoff et. al, 2011; TeKippe & Faga, 2016).
Study Limitations

One limitation of the study was participant’s self-reporting. Although I provided reflection questions to prompt thinking before individual interviews and focus groups, participants used memory recall to form their answers. One participant prepared a typed response to these reflection questions, which was used as a reference. For future investigations, it may be helpful for participants to have program documentation from their sequences and experiences available during the interview.

A second limitation was the small number of participants. Four teacher educators met the inclusion criteria, and although they held various positions as associate, assistant, and adjunct professors, their perspectives may not be representative of other teacher educators. The absence of male, trans, and nonbinary participants omits a valuable perspective from this conversation. Studies that replicate this one should include as many diverse perspectives as possible, which can also serve as a form of member checking. Eight candidates participated, but their responses may have been influenced by other participants in their focus group. In future studies, researchers might consider homogeneous focus groups by grade level to triangulate candidate responses against others at the same educational level in the program. A longitudinal study may determine if candidates’ perspectives on their program’s efficacy in preparing them for teacher leadership changes as they progress through the program.

The final limitation of the study is the absence of observation. This study relies on program documentation and participants’ testimonies. Future researchers could observe class meetings, PLCs, sequence teacher meetings, or school and community site
placements to see teacher leadership in action. This would help researchers validate participant explanations of their experiences in the program.

**Implications**

Today, teacher leadership is both a response to and rejection of the accountability movement in PK-12 schools. In the 1980s as state and federal governments legislated teaching methods and competency testing, teachers lost the autonomy to design their own curriculum (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986). As teachers became deskillled, school management, or positional authorities, could better control employees (Apple, 1988). Apple (1999) explains that intensification and deskillling of teachers “functions to roughly support or at least to not actively interrupt” (p. 11) hierarchical gendered divisions of labor in schools, where men occupied administrative positions and women served in classrooms. When power is held by positional authorities, it implies that those without a title have little power to enact change (Senge, 2006).

Teacher leadership has become a pathway for caring, selfless teachers to influence others and spearhead school reform. Teacher leaders help institutions utilize systems thinking, taking a holistic view of a school to build a shared vision, shift mental models, enhance team learning, and develop personal mastery (Senge, 2006). Teacher leaders demonstrate classroom competency and use their rapport to influence others to disrupt the status quo. However, teacher leaders are not exempt from intensification, which adds more tasks, documentation, and time to a teacher’s daily work load (Apple, 1988, Apple, 1999). When teacher leadership is uncompensated, teacher leaders are exploited,
preventing a teacher leader’s upward mobility and, I argue, obfuscating the public’s perception of the teachers as professionals.

In ways, the TLLSC program responds to the deskilling of women’s work by preparing candidates to be change agents (Apple, 1988; Apple, 1999). Candidates communicate an understanding of the role of the teacher as a social justice advocate and develop mastery of teacher leader skills and processes throughout the four-year program. However, teacher educators and candidates express concerns about intensification (Apple, 1988; Apple, 1999), namely in response to the PLC experience. The findings of this study offer implications concerning the perception of teacher leadership held by the program authors and teacher educators. I organize this section by connecting my theoretical framework with two implications: (a) reconciling the pursuit of social justice with the needs of industry, and (b) the economic implications of associating teacher leadership with volunteerism.

**Social Justice and Industry**

Teacher education programs can nurture teacher leader traits to ensure that change is embraced by new educators, leaders, and our profession (Ryan, 2009). In the TLLSC program, teacher educators explicitly emphasize teaching and learning to prepare candidates to respond to the needs of industry: graduating teacher candidates to fill classroom teaching positions, wherever they may be. Apple (1999) explains,

The school’s need to legitimate ideologies of social justice (and to make its own operation legitimate to its clientele) may, hence, be objectively at odds with the equally (and given current economic conditions, now more) compelling pressure
on it to serve the changing needs of industry (p. 58).

While Apple (1999) frames teacher education programs as having to choose between social justice and classroom readiness, the TLLSC program aligns the university’s mission of social justice to its teacher education program, proving that the two are not mutually exclusive. Teacher education programs should view candidates as future teacher leaders who may not decentralize leadership (Senge, 2006) but who will be instrumental in achieving social justice in their schools. Teacher leaders should not need additional certifications or training to prove their leadership capacity. Rather, university teacher education programs can empower candidates by providing the skills and experiences necessary for teacher leadership.

Teacher educators’ beliefs that candidates must first be effective classroom teachers is sound, but because they view candidates as potential teacher leaders, there is less explicit emphasis on teacher leadership. As evidenced from the findings in this study, teacher educators view candidates as novices who need to learn to lead their classrooms before leading adults. Although they expect candidates to enact teacher leader skills, teacher educators describe teacher leadership as something separate from classroom leadership and effective teaching. This is due to their own previous experiences as PK-12 teacher leaders who demonstrated competency in the classroom before leading colleagues. Too, candidates articulate a clear and consistent emphasis on teaching and learning in service of social justice, which is codified through their readings, discussions, and assignments that required them to assume the role of a teacher leader. Candidates feel that teacher leadership is something separate from—and even sequential to—what they
are learning, evidenced by the fact that half of the participants did not know that leading was part of the program title. Although teacher leadership is implicit in the program design, modules, and assignments, this raises questions on whether candidates are truly prepared to be teacher leaders if they do not recognize that they are being prepared to do so.

The idea that teachers must first put in time in their classrooms can be a limiting agent. Teachers are already leaving the field within three to five years (Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014) and desire influence beyond the classroom (Reeves & Lowenhaupt, 2016). At this rate, they may never have the chance to become teacher leaders. Not everyone may be ready for a teacher leader role right away, but some are (Nolan & Palazzolo, 2011). For example, one teacher educator, Sawyer, was appointed to a formal teacher leader role during her first year of full-time teaching. While classroom competency is the reason teachers are hired (Ryan, 2009; Schneider, 2016; Snyder, 2015), candidates expect to take on leadership roles or hybrid roles that keep them partly in the classroom (Johnson & Donaldson, 2004; Holland et al., 2014; Margolis, 2012; Nolan & Palazzolo, 2011; Reeves & Lowenhaupt, 2016; Steel & Craig, 2016). Teacher attrition rates will continue to rise if teacher leader opportunities are based on an arbitrary assessment of classroom competency, favoritism, or years of experience. The TLLSC program is implicitly preparing candidates for teacher leadership, but schools must now prepare to receive and support these social justice advocates. If schools continue to operate bureaucratically and disenfranchise novice teachers, then teacher attrition rates will increase (Scherff, 2007).
Volunteerism

Based on the opinions of four teacher educators in the TLLSC program, teacher leadership is thought of as volunteerism and teacher leaders take on additional responsibility outside of the classroom. Certain dispositions (D4, D6, D8, D17) appear more frequently in the syllabi, emphasizing candidates’ service of others more than candidates’ care for themselves. Both the TLLSC program authors and teacher educators expected teacher leaders to volunteer. The university requires 15 hours of service, which candidates fulfill in Sequence 8. Since these service hours are completed during a candidate’s student teaching internship, I wonder about the underlying assumptions linking service and teaching. I question if the required, unpaid volunteerism contributes to teacher intensification (Apple, 1988; Apple 1999) or reinforces the public’s perception of teaching as a semi-profession (Mehta, 2013).

Servitude and Selflessness

Teacher educators state that teacher leaders must give their time and energy selflessly with no expectation of additional compensation. Candidates explain that teacher leaders take risks and remain empathetic, knowing that they will encounter barriers in their schools and the educational system. This emotional investment places students first, but it also reinforces an expectation of female servitude (Apple, 1988; Apple, 1999) and sacrifice, given that a majority of the TLLSC candidates and teaching force at large are women. Associating selflessness with teacher leadership can be problematic for women. It suggests women have a desire to serve as a leader, but they must be willing to forego compensation or promotion, which sustains and exacerbates a
gendered, vertical division of power in education based on exploitation of female labor (Apple, 1988; Mehta, 2013).

Teacher educators agree that teacher leadership is not determined by the number of years in a classroom but by a vision and desire for positive student achievement. However, they recognize that teachers pursue credentials or advanced degrees to become leaders, linking positional authority to leadership. For teachers who desire greater influence without pursuing an administrative license, teacher leadership is an attractive option. Yet, when teachers assume a teacher leader role without compensation, they are being exploited. A lack of remuneration does little to re-professionalize the field.

**Exploited Leadership**

Teacher educators acknowledged that principal appointment was a key factor in supporting and sustaining teacher leadership, potentially perpetuating the hierarchical organizational models of schools relying on positional authority. However, teacher leaders may find themselves in a predicament when pursuing leadership opportunities. Most teacher leader roles are about influence, not power. Taking on additional, unpaid leadership roles can lead to emotional taxation and burnout.

Here, I coin the term of *exploited leadership*, or when those with positional authority construct opportunities for teacher leadership that demand additional resources, time, or energy without fair and appropriate compensation. In this way, those with positional authority exploit teacher leader labor for the benefit of the institution (Apple, 1988). While there are residual benefits for teacher leaders who promote and achieve positive outcomes, the ultimate decision-making power remains with positional
Although teacher leaders may serve in formal teacher leader roles, they do not advance in the same way that those with an administrative title do. Teacher leaders sacrifice financial compensation in service of the school, falling into an economic trap that limits upward mobility, intensifies teacher work, and may lead to increased attrition (Apple, 1988; Apple 1999), as Payton, a teacher educator, noted in her past PK-12 teaching experience. While teacher leadership is necessary for school reform, it is mostly women who serve in these roles. Apple (1988) highlighted how women have historically been treated as exploited laborers overrepresented in lower status jobs. Teacher leadership offers the illusion of higher status, but without compensation, the patterns of control remain in the hands of positional authorities. As such, teacher leadership can become another tool for intensification. I question how teacher education programs and teacher educators inadvertently promote and encourage this exploitation by associating teacher leadership with volunteerism.

In the context of this study, exploited leadership is born out of the feminization of leadership with a particular focus on female PK-12 teachers. Future studies can examine exploited leadership using Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989), which recognizes how women experience oppression in varying configurations and degrees. Although Crenshaw’s (1989, 1991) Intersectionality Theory focuses primarily on race and gender in black women’s experiences, researchers can build and expand upon this definition to consider how interconnected forms of oppression, such as race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, or religion, impact teacher leaders.
Recommendations

Teacher leadership is a tool for social change and societal transformation (Fichtman & Yendol-Hoppey, 2005; Futrell, 2010; Neumann, Jones, & Webb, 2012; Nolan & Palazzolo, 2011; Phelps, 2008). Including teacher leadership in teacher education programs may alleviate attrition rates (TeKippe & Faga, 2016) and create a teacher leader pipeline, which is essential for school improvement. I organize this section based on two recommendations: (a) revising TLLSC program documentation to emphasize teacher leader skills with both teacher educators and candidates, and (b) improving teacher education program curricula in the United States.

Revising TLLSC Program Documentation

Although both teacher educators and candidates see the TLLSC sequences and PLC experiences as overwhelmingly helpful in preparing candidates to become change agents as future teachers, both groups of participants identify the potential for more explicit presence of teacher leadership across and within modules. Teacher educators feel that there could be more communication and collaboration among faculty about the conception, presence, and assessment of teacher leader skills. Candidates understand that as teachers, they will be change agents in the classroom. They associate advocacy with teacher leadership and center students in conversation and lesson planning. Participants feel prepared for teaching from coursework readings, school site placement, and lesson design. Yet, candidates do not recognize how the program implicitly prepares them to be future teacher leaders.
The TLLSC program should present a definition of teacher leadership in its program documentation. This would crystallize what teacher leadership looks like both in and out of the PK-12 classroom, considering the context of the program. There is an opportunity to emphasize teacher leadership by reexamining professionalism, revising the language and frequency of dispositions, including field-based observations of teacher leader work, and elevating mentoring as a form of teacher leadership. The following recommendations are meant to amplify the presence of teacher leadership in existing structures, rather than add or subtract from the program.

**Reexamining Professionalism**

One recommendation is to expand D17 to include other aspects of professionalism. In every sequence, teacher educators assess candidates on professionalism (D17) in regard to promptness, dress, and etiquette. Candidates also wanted feedback on preparation for class and teaching, collaboration, engagement with students, and communication with administrators and stakeholders. By adding these professional behaviors to the Dispositions Rubrics or to D17 specifically, teacher educators may de-stress appearance and grooming, which receives outsized emphasis in the opinions of candidates.

A second recommendation is for program faculty to examine the connotation of the term *professionalism*. They can determine if this standard of professionalism is consistent across all Loyola University Chicago programs of study and if the university has a specific professional standard in mind for its students. Faculty can reflect on how personal experience informs how they think teachers should communicate or dress.
Writing and conversing about previous experiences may help surface assumptions about professionalism and lead to an expansion of professionalism beyond promptness, dress, and etiquette. Program site coordinators can research and determine what is considered professional in the private, charter, or public schools where TLLSC students are placed.

Another recommendation is to clarify language in the Roles and Responsibilities section of the Student Handbook concerning personal appearance and author a culturally inclusive dress policy. For example, Under Professionalism in the Student Handbook, one bullet point states that candidates should exercise good judgment in grooming and personal appearance (LUC, 2017). Candidates’ good judgment about personal grooming may vary by culture, ethnicity, region, or the daily temperature. As senior candidate Blake noted, candidates learn to associate Eurocentric and heteronormative dress with credibility, and she explained that candidates may lose respect if their appearance or personal expression are not considered professional by others. These professional standards conflict with the program’s celebration of diversity and warrant reconsideration. Faculty and site placement coordinators can collaborate with school leaders and mentor teachers to establish expectations for candidates’ appearances, rather than let candidates negotiate or respond to potentially harmful, culturally insensitive policies that conflict with the program’s celebration of diversity.

**Examining Frequency of Dispositions**

Sequence leads should reexamine the frequency distribution of dispositions to ensure that all are covered more consistently. In total, 15 of the 17 dispositions appear in at least two of eight sequence syllabi. As previously noted, four dispositions appear more
frequently than others. One way to include dispositions more evenly is for program faculty to critique existing assignments and determine if other dispositions align with the objective of the task. A second way would be for sequence leaders to modify module objectives and assignments to align with additional dispositions. Program faculty should also consider why two dispositions (D10, D11) are infrequently listed in the syllabi, as my recommendations detail in the next section.

**Uncommon Dispositions**

In light of research on teacher intensification (Apple, 1988; Apple, 1999), program faculty should rectify the absence of D10 by including it in all sequence descriptions of PLCs. D10 is about maintaining one’s own intellectual, emotional, and physical well-being to effectively fulfill professional responsibilities. Ironically, the one disposition that may have been written in response to the intensification of teacher labor is absent from all modules. D10 appears in the Sequence 3 description of PLCs, but candidates argued that PLCs required additional work that resulted in intensification. The omission of D10 may reinforce the chronic work overload and exasperation that contributes to teacher burn out in the first place (Apple, 1988; Apple, 1999; Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986). Program faculty can create and share resources to fulfill D10’s intent. As part of their PLC work, candidates could research and host events like wellness workshops or meditation exercises. PLC Facilitators might organize interdisciplinary PLC meetings for candidates to share strategies with those outside of their specialization. Finally, sequence leads should strive to include D10 in reflexive assignments to provide an additional opportunity for candidates’ personal growth.
In regard to D11, program faculty can strengthen the language or examine ways to include it more frequently. D11, which appears only once in the sequence syllabi, describes “implementing proactive and preventive practices that represents an understanding that student behavior is shaped by complex environmental factors.” First, program faculty should determine if this disposition is repetitive of others or could be subsumed under another disposition. Next, program faculty can include D11 by noticing where D4, D6, and D8 appear in the sequence syllabi. Since these dispositions are reactive and reflective, program faculty could simply substitute D11 and modify assignments to be more proactive in nature. This may promote and encourage candidates to practice teacher leadership skills born out of their understanding of factors that contribute to social inequity. In this way, candidates may have more opportunities for praxis rooted in social justice.

Field-Based Observations of Teacher Leader Work

The TLLSC program can enhance teacher leadership through observation of teacher leader work. Candidates already observe mentor teachers, but they can be directed to observe specific teacher leader practices. Sequence leads can develop a classroom observation protocol based on traits and processes from the body of literature on teacher leadership. First, this tool would explicitly name the actions of teacher leaders, such as commitment to high standards, collaboration, and consensus-building. While candidates observe mentor teachers in their classrooms, they might take note and reflect on these practices as evidence of teacher leadership. This may help candidates realize that teacher leadership is not necessarily separate from effective teaching practices. When
candidates reach their student-teaching placement, they should observe teacher leader practices outside of the classroom in department meetings, curricular team discussions, extracurricular events, and school board meetings, if applicable. Here, candidates might observe other teacher leader processes, such as advocacy, collegiality, and self-efficacy, that may not be as apparent in the context of a classroom. By naming the specific skills and processes of teacher leaders and encouraging candidates to identify them in practice, this exercise can assist candidates in seeing how they are being primed for future teacher leadership.

*Professional Learning Communities*

One solution to clarify expectations for PLCs is for sequence teachers to envision and co-create a description of PLCs as an open-ended forum where teacher leadership can emerge. Besides a description in the Student Handbook, there is no documentation about the purpose of PLCs in TLLSC sequence syllabi. While all PLCs meet for six hours per semester, the format is meant to be flexible to allow space and time to meet accreditation requirements or for student-driven learning. Candidates explain just how diverse the PLC experience can be with experiences ranging from day-long field trips to student-led facilitations to watching documentaries. Including a specific description of PLCs as a forum for teacher leadership can better solidify the role of PLCs as a vehicle for teacher leader praxis.

TLLSC teacher educators should collaborate to develop common resources for teacher leader praxis in PLCs. Program-wide documents, like PLC facilitation guidelines, could be co-constructed and included in each sequence syllabi for consistency.
Candidates must understand techniques and strategies for PLC goal-setting, collaboration, and dialogue. PLC rubrics can provide a common language for how to introduce and assess teacher leader growth over four years. Perhaps a PLC Handbook could make the expectations for facilitation and participation clear, with an emphasis on the necessary teacher leadership skills for self-efficacy and resiliency.

Since PLCs are heterogeneous and not connected to a specific sequence, there cannot be a prescribed curriculum or ties to sequence objectives. If the objective is to develop content-area experts with a focus on leadership, then teacher educators must consider what learning experiences best yield this outcome. Given that candidates felt PLCs intensified their work load, teacher educators might reconsider how teacher leadership is best learned, understood, and internalized.

**Elevating Mentoring**

In the TLLSC program, both teacher educators and candidates desired explicit instruction on teacher leader skills. Teacher educators must have a clearer understanding how to identify and emphasize teacher leadership in their sequences. Candidates may come to see themselves as teacher leaders by understanding what formal and informal teacher leader roles include. For both groups of participants, mentoring is an opportunity to discuss and actualize teacher leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Through practice or conversation, educators can serve as mentors and model it as a form of teacher leadership.

Mentoring is one way that the TLLSC program re-envisioned its approach to teacher education (see Figure 4.2). However, it is not clear how consistently mentoring
takes place in the program. The sequence course syllabi do mention that educators act as mentors when building relationships with schools and communities, but it is not clear how mentoring is built in to candidates’ coursework or fieldwork. Besides drawing from their own previous experience, teacher educators are not prepped on how to introduce candidates to teacher leadership, a concern echoed by all four teacher educators in their individual interviews. In the Dispositions Rubrics, D14 indicates that teacher candidates should consult colleagues when needed, but it is not clear how teacher candidates are taught to do this, what improvement in this area looks like over time, and if this is a form of mentorship. Mentoring is implied in the PLC experience, as upperclassmen may facilitate these meetings, but it could be more clearly codified.

First, TLLSC leadership can develop common language and expectations for teacher educators to mentor candidates. Although teacher educators form relationships with schools and communities, their role as a mentor can extend to candidates as well. Second, the sequence leads could create a rubric based on EUs and dispositions specifically for PLCs that could more explicitly highlight teacher leader traits and processes. This would also ensure more consistent expectations and experiences and make clear how upperclassmen mentors facilitate conversations and dispense advice to underclassmen in the program.

A final thought is that the dispositions should make explicit mention of mentoring or seeking out a mentor. Mentoring is one of the most common teacher leader roles in the literature (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009), and this is something that teacher candidates can both practice and learn from. While one may assume that the cooperating teachers in
PK-12 school sites are acting as mentors, this is not necessarily a given or guarantee.
Perhaps teacher educators could include reflections on mentoring experiences as part of their module assignments.

**Improving Teacher Education Curricula**

Teacher education programs should include teacher leader skills and processes to prime candidates for future teacher leader roles. If teacher leadership skills are absent from teacher education programs, there will be an inevitable teacher leader void in PK-12 schools (Andrews & Covell, 2006). Teacher leadership must be woven through all aspects of teacher education coursework and fieldwork (Bond, 2011; Phelps, 2008) to integrate teaching, learning, and leading in balanced and intentional ways. Teacher leaders may not make decisions about school funding or policy, but they have the opportunity to influence it. Teacher education programs should incorporate simulations and strategies so candidates practice the skills to facilitate and respond to these situations.

The success of the TLLSC program in priming its candidates for future teacher leadership can offer a model for other teacher education programs that desire greater emphasis on teacher leadership. A critical examination of teacher leadership can reframe teacher educators’ mindsets and reform Schools of Education writ large.

**Teacher Educators as Instruments of Change**

Teacher educators should examine the research on teacher leadership training, then dialogue about the goals and outcomes of their own teacher education program. Several researchers argue that teacher education programs should be re-conceptualized so that leadership training becomes a part of the curriculum of teacher education (Ado,
2016; Andrews & Covell, 2006; Danielson, 2007; Futrell, 2010; Holland, Eckert, & Allen, 2014; Neumann, Jones, & Webb, 2012; Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016; TeKippe & Faga, 2016). Other researchers now argue that leadership coursework should become a norm, rather than an exception (Eacott, 2012; Nolan & Palazzolo, 2011; Reeves & Lowenhaupt, 2016). Teacher educators should examine this research, which may foster dialogue about the goals and outcomes of their own teacher education program. By explicitly emphasizing leadership preparation in their studies, teacher educators can aid in the transformation of schools and student learning (Ross, Adams, & Bondy, et al., 2011).

Teacher educators should study leadership in their own teacher education programs because teacher leadership can function as a tool for social change and societal transformation (Fichtman & Yendol-Hoppey, 2005; Futrell, 2010; Neumann, Jones, & Webb, 2012; Nolan & Palazzolo, 2011; Phelps, 2008). Nearly all of the research on teacher leadership focuses on improving teacher leader capacity in PK-12 schools, but scholars are calling for more research on teacher leadership in teacher education programs (Ado, 2016; Blair, 2016; Eacott, 2012; Picower, 2016; Richardson, 2016; Xu & Patmore, 2012). My study can be replicated in other teacher education programs to identify how, if at all, teacher leadership is conceptualized and how the coursework and fieldwork prepare candidates. Findings may reveal areas for improvement, which can prompt collaboration. With more research on the inclusion of teacher leadership in teacher education programs in the U.S., there will be a more robust picture of practical ways that teacher education programs improve candidates’ self-efficacy and preparedness for teacher leadership.
Teacher educators must reframe their thinking about PK-12 school organization and power. Teacher educators should self-analyze (Andrews & Covell, 2006) and model teacher leader practices (Snyder, 2015) in order to emphasize teacher leadership. Teacher educators can use Senge’s (2006) systems thinking to develop a shared vision of teacher leadership in their programs. Over time, the term *teacher leader* may someday become redundant, as a teacher and leader will be synonymous (Holland et al., 2014).

**Including Leadership in All Education Programs**

There must be a reconceptualization of leadership in School of Education programs. Both school administration and teacher education programs must recognize the difference between a school administrator and a school leader (Cambrone-McCabe & McCarthy, 2016) and remove barriers for those who want to lead. Teacher education programs have critical responsibilities in training teacher candidates: to prepare them for heightening bureaucracy and to equip them for resisting control (Apple, 1988). Including teacher leadership in teacher education programs may alleviate attrition rates among high-demand teachers (TeKippe & Faga, 2016). A long-term commitment from teachers creates a teacher leader pipeline, which is essential for school improvement. Although teacher leadership will vary depending on one’s role in the school, leadership theory and systems thinking help schools function better (Senge, 2006).

Teacher education programs must acknowledge candidates’ aspirations for teacher leadership and help candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes about teacher leadership, with the end goal of graduating teachers who will become leaders (Ado, 2016; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2016). In order to become leaders, candidates must
understand how change occurs in schools, including the external and internal realities of PK-12 organizations (Richardson, 2016). All candidates have the potential and capacity to be leaders, but this does not necessarily mean that all teachers do or should lead outside of the classroom (Barth 2001; Bond, 2011; Margolis, 2012; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Infusing coursework and fieldwork with teacher leader skills and processes can help candidates internalize the skills and dispositions to work for social justice (Cambrone-McCabe & McCarthy, 2016). Teacher education programs should lay a foundation for this shift of mind to ensure that teacher candidates have an understanding of educational structures before working in them (Ado, 2016).

Teacher education programs must include praxis to prepare teacher candidates to be actively involved in the success of the school (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001) and develop analytical skills, knowledge, and world views that promote social justice. Some teacher education programs, such as the TLLSC program, embrace a hybrid model, situating learning and leading in the field instead of university classroom (Heineke & Ryan, 2019). Coupled with ongoing reflection on the role of teacher leaders, these approaches may better prepare teacher candidates to see themselves as future teacher leaders (Ado, 2016). Instead of administering examinations, teacher education programs might offer performance tasks to encourage teacher candidates to work with students, mediate policy, or design interventions (Heineke, 2019). Providing teacher candidates, in particular math and science teachers, with informal practice may increase confidence and motivation before placement in the field (Hsu, 2016). In doing so, teacher candidates can
recognize their own leadership potential and develop confidence and skills to be effective teacher leaders (Helterbran, 2016).

Instead of creating more organizational barriers or certifications that slow progress and reinforce positional authority, Schools of Education should create collaborative opportunities for those studying in administrative and instructional programs to advance equity and social justice initiatives. I propose that any person enrolled in a School of Education, regardless of specialization, should have an opportunity to take a leadership course. Scholars note that absence of leadership courses and skills in undergraduate teacher education programs (Ado, 2016; Eacott, 2012; Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016; TeKippe & Faga, 2016). At present, teacher leader endorsements and certifications are primarily available to practicing PK-12 teachers who have completed or are working toward a Masters degree (Xu & Patmor, 2012). As described in Chapter 1, these additional courses are cost- and time-prohibitive for PK-12 teachers. Broadening leadership coursework opportunities may attract thought leaders, school administrators, and motivated educators to work together. When candidates are given opportunities to discuss and take action on an issue they care about, the result is improved confidence, agency, and empowerment (Angelle, 2016; Turnball, 2005).

There is no harm in preparing candidates or classroom teachers for leadership. Teacher leaders do not want to be administrators, but they do want schools and students to succeed. In fact, systems thinking (Senge, 2006) should be used to evaluate the link between teacher education programs and PK-12 school improvement. It would be smart investment for Schools of Education to help build a teacher leader pipeline, reducing
attrition and the financial burden on school districts. If teacher education programs truly care about social justice, they must also consider the economic implications of siloing teacher leadership through additional credentialing. Until this occurs, teacher leadership will not be a priority in teacher education programs.

*Third Spaces*

Teacher educators and candidates must consider how to dimensionalize the teacher education program experience by utilizing online forums and social media. Scholars are calling for a fourth wave of teacher leadership, one that moves beyond managerial roles, instructional coaching, and reculturing agents (Silva et al., 2000) to policy drivers at the federal, state, and local level (Holland et al., 2014). This fourth wave of teacher leadership will require creativity and restructuring of teacher education programs to include *third spaces* (Zeichner, 2010) that fuse practitioner and academic knowledge but reject academia as the sole authority on teaching. In the 21st century, virtual networks have gained traction. Mentoring and dialogue can occur online via videoconferencing (Holland et al., 2014) or Wikispaces (Reid-Griffin & Slaten, 2016) in conjunction with teacher education program work. Building virtual learning networks on free social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Slack have infinite possibilities. Utilizing technology can amplify positive practices, empower thought leaders, and encourage personal mastery, one of Senge’s (2006) tenets of systems thinking.

Utilizing technology can help candidates dialogue with those outside their program and school sites to better understand the complexities of PK-12 schools and
systems. Too, digital dialogue can prepare candidates to teach in various contexts; since candidates trained out of state have a 56% retention rate after five years (Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014), teacher education programs can acknowledge this reality and deliberately encourage online learning and mentoring with educators in different cities and contexts. Faculty and mentors can connect candidates across schools to build a stronger district. This also has the potential to reduce outsourcing of expertise and thus reprofessionalize the field. With more strategic inclusion of third spaces via technology, faculty can collaborate and revolutionize teacher education programs. These changes have the potential to transform the profession as a whole, making teachers proactive, trusted agents in education reform.

**Summary and Final Words**

In this study, I consider how Loyola University Chicago’s *Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities* teacher education program reconceptualized school leadership by incorporating teacher leadership skills and praxis in its program. I discuss the presence of teacher leadership skills and assessments in the sequences and modules, as well as how the program’s dispositions prepare candidates to understand their role in a school. When defining a teacher leader, teacher educators draw on their own personal experience, professional experience as PK-12 teacher leaders, and the university’s mission (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Teacher educators view candidates as novice instructors and emphasize teaching and learning explicitly. They feel that candidates must demonstrate classroom competency before assuming a teacher leader role, which is often appointed or supported by the school principal.
What is ultimately clear is that teacher education programs matter, and teacher leadership can be fostered through mentoring in formal, informal, and mutual ways. Many states have already adopted the Teacher Leader Model Standards, and other states are expected to follow suit (Education Commission of the States, 2018), which signals increasing attention and desirability towards teacher leaders. In order to reprofessionalize the field of education, teacher leadership must become more than volunteer work. When expertise is valued and compensated, school administrators show trust in their teachers which improves morale (Payne, 2008). Rather than searching for solutions outside of the building, investing in competent classroom teachers presents pathways for upward mobility and reprofessionalizes the field (Mehta, 2013). Knowing that candidates have aspirations for both formal and informal teacher leadership, teacher education programs must evolve to support and elevate teacher leadership. The TLLSC program offers a model for how teacher education programs can fuse social justice and industry to prepare candidates to be change agents and collaborative leaders.

Teacher leaders face many tensions in their roles. Teacher leaders are individuals who demonstrate personal mastery and generate creative tension (Senge, 2006). Yet, it is a risk for teacher leaders to challenge the dominant school culture (Apple, 1988). Too, teachers are often the furthest away from power holders, but they must help administrators see the need for change in their school contexts while developing their own personal capacity for praxis and dialogue to enact that change (Senge, 2006). Rather than work in isolation, teachers and administrators can work together to share expertise and restructure the educational hierarchy through shared leadership (Freire, 1970;
Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Tomal, Schilling, & Wilhite, 2014; Senge, 2006). In this way, I envision new possibilities for teacher leaders. Teacher leaders can enact localized school reform and influence education outside of the individual school. Teacher leaders should serve on school boards, not just school committees. Teacher leaders can help craft grade level, school, and district curricula and reject a prepackaged curricula in the form of tests and textbooks (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986). Teacher leadership may even be a springboard for political office to influence 21st century education.

I believe the field of education is experiencing a sea change in a number of ways. I am heartened to see how teacher leadership is included in the TLLSC program. When interviewing candidates, I was impressed at their self- and social-awareness, something that took me years to develop as a professional. Their passion was palpable, and I felt hopeful for the future schools that would be lucky to hire them. It is my hope that other teacher education programs will critically reflect on their outcomes and take steps to integrate leadership skills. I want to see more Schools of Education consciously prepare their candidates to be teacher leaders.

Leadership courses should be available to any student with the desire to lead. These opportunities need not be housed in the School of Education. Universities should utilize interdisciplinary learning; wouldn’t it be inspiring to have students studying business, medicine, social work, and education in the same room to discuss leadership and innovation? Third spaces (Zeichner, 2010) can support personal mastery and continuous learning (Senge, 2006) by utilizing technology for mentoring and dialoguing.
I wonder how my leadership capacity and self-efficacy would have been different as a novice teacher if I had been exposed to leadership theory or training in my Masters program. Although I did not study Education as an undergraduate, I believe that I feel so strongly about teacher leadership now because I was denied the skills to enact it earlier in my career. I feel this is a miscarriage of justice with students as collateral. I believe teacher leadership is necessary for traditional teacher education programs to remain competitive in a market-driven economy that looks for quick fixes for teacher attrition through alternate routes to certification. If we believe that education is worthy of investment, then we must invest in the people who sustain our institutions. However, we cannot stop there. We must begin to put pressure on PK-12 systems to evolve in conjunction with teacher education programs.

Without pay, support, and time, teacher leadership is just another tool for intensification. Compensation is a small way to begin to reprofessionalize education. I hope that PK-12 schools and systems compensate teachers not just with a living wage but for their intensified work load as teacher leaders. In the past two years, teacher leaders have staged radical action on issues of pay and resources. Across the United States, teacher unions demonstrate civil disobedience by picketing, walking out, and rallying for greater investment in PK-12 students and schools. In my own city just a few months ago, Chicago Public School teachers went on strike for a historic eleven days, the longest strike in over thirty years, to demand more investment in school supports for students. It is teachers—those closest to students—who are advocating for more equitable, socially just investments in education. The public is witnessing an awakening, and teachers are
leading it. Now is the time for teacher education programs to join in the fight and prepare the next generation of teacher leaders to lead with social justice principles and student-centered advocacy.
APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORMS FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS
Recruiting Script for Teacher Educators: Initial Email

Dear School of Education TLLSC Faculty,

My name is Abigail Hasebroock and I’m a doctoral candidate in Loyola University Chicago’s Ed.D. Program in Curriculum and Instruction. Under the direction of Dr. Amy Engebretson (Heineke), I am conducting my dissertation on teacher leadership in the Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC) program.

I am emailing you to solicit your interest in participating in a one-hour individual interview. The purpose of my study is to understand how teacher leadership is defined, targeted, and included in the TLLSC program. Too, the case study will consider what TLLSC teacher educators think teacher leadership means and how past personal or professional experience informs one’s perception of teacher leadership.

Participation is completely voluntary and open to any professor who has at least one year of experience teaching in a K-12 school setting and one year of experience teaching undergraduates in the TLLSC program. Please be assured that your identities will be protected in my writing.

If you are interested and meet the inclusion criteria, please reply directly to me (ahasebroock@luc.edu) and identify how many years of experience you have in both K-12 schools and the TLLSC program. A mutually convenient date for the interview will be established later. Upon completion of the interview, participants will be entered into a raffle to win a $50 Amazon gift card.

Thanks for your consideration!

Abigail Hasebroock  
Ed.D. Candidate  
Ahasebroock@luc.edu  
Study Title: Teacher Leadership in One Teacher Education Program
Consent to Participate in Research: Teacher Educators

Project Title: Teacher Leadership in a Teacher Education Program
Researcher: Abigail J. Hasebroock
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Amy Engebretson

Introduction

You are being asked to take part in a research study on teacher leadership being conducted by Abigail Hasebroock for a dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Amy Engebretson in the Department of Education at Loyola University of Chicago.

You are being asked to participate because you are a teacher educator in the Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC) teacher education program. The inclusion criteria for teacher educators is at least one year of previous teaching experience in a K-12 school and one year of instructional experience in the TLLSC program. The reasons for these criteria are two-fold. As an instructor in the TLLSC program, you have both experience and perspective on the coursework sequencing, content, and assessment, which I hope to learn more about through this study. As a former K-12 classroom teacher, you also have personal and professional experiences with teacher leadership that distinguishes you in a particular sub-group of professors in higher education.

There may be between 3-10 teacher educators individually interviewed for this study. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand how the TLLSC program defines, targets, and integrates teacher leadership in its program of study. Too, this study seeks to understand what teacher educators think teacher leadership means, in the context of the TLLSC program. In this study, I define a teacher leader as a licensed K-12 teacher who leads change efforts within and beyond the classroom in a non-administrative position.

Procedures

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to:

- Meet with the researcher at a mutually-convenient location on Loyola University Chicago’s campus
- Participate in a one-on-one interview lasting approximately 60 minutes
- Respond to open-ended, semi-structured interview questions about your understanding of teacher leadership
  - For example: What should teacher leaders know how to do?
• Share your personal and professional experiences with teacher leadership in K-12 schools
  o For example: Who was an influential leader in your educational experience, whether personal or professional, and why?
• Discuss the TLLSC course(s) you teach and the teacher leadership assignments and assessments within each
• Consent to having the interview be audio-recorded for the purposes of transcription
• Clarify ideas in a follow-up individual interview (in person or via Zoom), if necessary

Risks/Benefits

The benefits to teacher educators include an opportunity to reflect on one of the three tenets of the TLLSC program: leading. Teacher educators can reflect on previous personal experiences with teacher leaders as a foundation for how to train future teacher leaders. Teacher educators may be able to identify gaps in their own knowledge or training and discuss proactive measures for individual and collegial professional growth.

There are minimal risks associated with this study. This study will be intrusive, given that teacher educators are employed by the university and may be asked to discuss the implementation of teacher leadership in the program in which they work. Participant responses could be positive, negative, or neutral, but run the risk of being interpreted as controversial, accusatory, or insubordinate. Too, there is additional risk when sensitive information is revealed about one’s employer, program, or colleagues. This is of concern since other participants who read the findings of this study could identify the teacher educator’s position. Confidentiality will be maintained through various safeguards, which are detailed in the section titled “Confidentiality” below.

The societal benefits include an opportunity for more teacher educators to dialogue about teacher leadership. The TLLSC program directors can use the results to determine if the intent of including teacher leadership in the program redesign has been fully actualized and implemented. Teacher educators may share their experiences and desires, which can inform future dialogue about coursework and fieldwork in future program iterations. Since a growing body of literature is calling for teacher leadership in teacher education programs, the results may encourage either a self-audit or replication in other teacher education programs. This may lead to teacher education program redesign with the potential to diversify the teacher workforce by attracting candidates with leadership dispositions.

Compensation

Upon completing the interview, participants will be entered into a raffle to win a $50 Amazon gift card.

There are no costs to the participant for participating in this study.
Confidentiality
- All interviews will be one-on-one to mitigate concerns about sharing criticism or personal experience.
- All interviews will be audio-recorded for the purposes of transcription. Transcribed documents will be stored in a password-protected Google Drive folder that only the researcher can access.
- Names and personal information will be kept confidential.
  - To protect the identities of teacher educators employed by the university, participants will not choose a gendered pseudonym in their individual interview, but will introduce themselves as Teacher Educator #1, Teacher Educator #2, and so on.
- Other identifying information may emerge, like what classes the teacher educator instructs or their position as a sequence leader. Should there be identifying information pertaining to the teacher’s role or sequence taught, I will replace it with [phase name], a more general and nondescript way of referring to a segment of the TLLSC program.
- Since quotations are a source of data that represent perspectives and opinions, I will select data that best represents the holistic perspective of teacher educators and teacher candidates. Certain responses may include patterns of speech, idioms, or slang that are unique or otherwise identifying. In these cases, I will not quote a participant’s ideas verbatim. I will try not to use the same participant’s ideas repeatedly, so I will draw from a variety of perspectives.
- Upon completion of my dissertation, all audio-recordings, transcriptions, and coding documents will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate will have no effect on your employment status or position at the university.

Contacts and Questions
If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Abigail Hasebroock at ahasebroock@luc.edu or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Amy Engebretson, at aheineke@luc.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent
Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

__________________________________________  ________________________
Participant’s Signature                        Date

____________________________________________  ________________________
Researcher’s Signature                         Date
Reflection Questions for Teacher Educator Participants in Advance of Interview

1) Who was an influential leader in your educational experience, whether personal or professional, and why?

2) Reflect on any teacher leader roles you held while employed in a K-12 school. What did you do, who did you work with, and how did this experience go?

3) In general, what should teacher leaders know how to do? What are the traits of effective teacher leaders?

4) In the courses you teach, how do teacher candidates demonstrate teacher leadership? How are they assessed? Why do you assign this?

5) In the context of this program, what does teacher leadership mean? Why do you think this?
APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORMS FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES
Recruiting Script for Teacher Candidates: Initial Email

Dear School of Education TLLSC Students,

My name is Abigail Hasebroock and I’m a doctoral candidate in Loyola University Chicago’s Ed.D. Program in Curriculum and Instruction. I am conducting my dissertation on teacher leadership in the Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC) program.

I am emailing you to solicit your interest in participating in a one-hour focus group interview. The purpose of my case study is to understand how teacher candidates feel that their program coursework and fieldwork prepares them to be teacher leaders.

Participation is completely voluntary and open to students in their sophomore, junior, or senior year of the program. Please be assured that your identities will be protected in my writing.

If you are interested, please contact me directly (ahasebroock@luc.edu) and identify your class year (sophomore, junior, or senior). A mutually convenient date for the focus group meeting will be established later. Participants will be given a complimentary dinner and entered into a raffle to win a $50 Amazon gift card.

Thanks for your consideration!

Abigail Hasebroock
Ed.D. Candidate
Ahasebroock@luc.edu
Study Title: Teacher Leadership in One Teacher Education Program
Consent to Participate in Research: Teacher Candidates

Project Title: Teacher Leadership in a Teacher Education Program
Researcher: Abigail J. Hasebroock
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Amy Engebretson

Introduction

You are being asked to take part in a research study on teacher leadership conducted by Abigail Hasebroock for a dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Amy Engebretson in the Department of Education at Loyola University of Chicago.

You are being asked to participate because you are a teacher candidate enrolled in the Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC) teacher education program. As a teacher candidate in this program, you have both experience and perspective on the presence of teacher leadership in coursework and fieldwork, which I hope to learn more about in this study. The inclusion criteria for teacher candidates include successful completion of your freshman year in the program and current full-time enrollment status. Students enrolled in sequences 3-8 are eligible to participate.

Approximately 8-12 teacher candidates will be interviewed in this study. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding to participate.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is understand how the TLLSC program defines, targets, and integrates teacher leadership in its program of study. Too, this study aims to understand how teacher candidates view their teacher education program’s effort to help them develop teacher leader skills. In this study, I define a teacher leader as a licensed K-12 teacher who leads change efforts within and beyond the classroom in a non-administrative position.

Procedures

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to:

• Meet with the researcher at a mutually-convenient location on Loyola University Chicago’s campus
• Participate in a focus group interview with other teacher candidates lasting approximately 60 minutes
• Respond to open-ended, semi-structured interview questions about your understanding of teacher leadership
  ○ For example: What are the traits of an effective teacher leader?
• Discuss your coursework and fieldwork experiences pertaining to teacher leadership activities
  o For example: Describe a time where you led a project or activity in your program or school.
• Consent to having the interview be audio-recorded for the purposes of transcription
• Clarify ideas in a follow-up individual interview (in person or via Zoom), if necessary

Risks/Benefits

The benefits of participation for teacher candidates include the opportunity to explicitly discuss one of the three tenets of the TLLSC program: leading. Teacher candidates will hear their peers’ perspectives on teacher leadership in the program. By citing coursework and fieldwork experiences, teacher candidates can reflect on experiences that have shaped their own perception of teacher leadership. Teacher candidates can articulate their understanding of the role of the teacher as a leader and consider their own self-efficacy and preparedness, based on experiences included in the program.

This study will be intrusive, given that teacher candidates are students at the university and may be asked to discuss the effectiveness of teacher leadership training in their own program. Participant responses could be positive, negative, or neutral, but run the risk of being interpreted as controversial, accusatory, or insubordinate. Too, there is additional risk when sensitive information is revealed about one’s program, peers, or instructors. This is of concern in a study where other participants at the focus group interview know the teacher candidate by name or sight. While participants’ identities will be protected in my findings and conclusions, I cannot assure confidentiality between participants in the focus group interviews. Therefore, participants will be asked to protect confidentiality of other participants in the focus group. I will maintain confidentiality in my findings by using various safeguards, which are detailed in the section titled “Confidentiality” below.

The societal benefits include an opportunity for more teacher candidates to dialogue and share perceptions of teacher leadership. The TLLSC program instructors and directors can use the results of this focus group interview to determine if the intent of including teacher leadership in the program redesign has been implemented in a way that teacher candidates view as effective. Teacher candidates may share their experiences and desires, which can inform future dialogue about coursework and fieldwork in future program iterations. Since a growing body of literature is calling for teacher leadership in teacher education programs, the results may encourage either a self-audit or replication in other teacher education programs. This may lead to teacher education program redesign with the potential to diversify the teacher workforce by attracting candidates with leadership dispositions.
Compensation

As an incentive for participating in the focus group interview, participants will be provided with a meal prior to the meeting. Upon completing the interview, participants will be entered into a raffle to win a $50 Amazon gift card.

There are no costs to the participant for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

- The focus group interview will be audio-recorded for the purposes of transcription. Transcribed documents will be stored in a password-protected Google Drive folder that only the researcher can access.
- Names and personal information will be kept confidential.
  - To protect the identities of teacher candidates enrolled in the TLLSC program, participants will not choose a gendered pseudonym in their individual interview, but will introduce themselves as Teacher Candidate #1, Teacher Candidate #2, and so on.
- Other identifying information may emerge, like what sequences or modules the teacher candidate is currently completing, their age or year in school, and the names of their instructors. Should there be identifying information pertaining to the candidate’s coursework, I will replace it with [phase name], a more general and nondescript way of referring to a segment of the TLLSC program.
- Since quotations are a source of data that represent perspectives and opinions, I will select data that best represents the holistic perspective of teacher educators and teacher candidates. Certain responses may include patterns of speech, idioms, or slang that are unique or otherwise identifying. In these cases, I will not quote a participant’s ideas verbatim. I will try not to use the same participant’s ideas repeatedly, so I will draw from a variety of perspectives.
- Upon completion of my dissertation, all audio-recordings, transcriptions, and coding documents will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate will have no effect on your employment status or position at the university.

Contacts and Questions

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Abigail Hasebroock at ahasebroock@luc.edu or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Amy Engebretson, at aheineke@luc.edu.
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent
Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Participant’s Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________

Researcher’s Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________
Reflection Questions for Teacher Candidate Participants

in Advance of Focus Group Interview

1) What are the traits of an effective teacher leader?

2) Who do you consider a teacher leader in your previous or current school or community site and why?

3) How would a classroom teacher lead and enact change, and what barriers might they encounter?
   a. Have you led any projects or activities? If so, what did you do, whom did you work with, and how did this experience go?

4) In what ways is teacher leadership included in your coursework or fieldwork?
Interview Protocol: Teacher Educators

Instructions: Thank you for coming to today’s interview. I’m a doctoral candidate in Loyola University Chicago’s Ed.D. Curriculum and Instruction program and a high school English teacher in my 11th year of full-time teaching. I’m interested in teacher leadership, or how educators lead change efforts within and beyond the classroom in non-administrative positions. This purpose of my dissertation case study is to examine teacher leadership in the TLLSC program. The purpose of this interview is to understand what teacher educators think teacher leadership means. I also want to understand how your past personal and professional experiences in K-12 schools inform your approach to teacher leadership.

Please know that I will not release any identifying information in the analysis or findings of my dissertation. I respect your ideas and time, and I will make every effort to ensure confidentiality. The format for today’s interview will consist of open-ended series of questions. I may ask follow-up questions for clarification and elaboration. Should you choose, you may discontinue at any time.

As I am taking notes, I would like to record our conversation in order to refer back to your exact words as I analyze the data. Your identity will be kept confidential and anything shared by you that is used for data in the study will be connected to your pseudonym number (example: Teacher Educator #1). All my notes and this recording will be destroyed upon completion of my dissertation study. Do I have your permission to record this interview? (Pause for verbal confirmation from participant)
Before we begin, I will assign you a number and ask you to verbally introduce yourself using the following naming convention: “Teacher Educator #___.” This will be used in place of you choosing a pseudonym that could indicate the race, ethnicity, or gender of participants. This is a measure to protect your identities. Please introduce yourselves loudly and clearly with the title and number given to you.

**Teacher Educator Focus Group Interview Protocol**

1) Who was an influential leader in your educational experience, whether personal or professional, and why?

2) Have you served in a formal or informal teacher leader role in a K-12 school? If so, describe the teacher leader role and your responsibilities.
   a. Probing Directive: Describe a specific initiative you led as a former K-12 teacher or current professor and detail its success or failure.

3) What should teacher leaders know how to do?
   a. Probing Directive: What are the traits of teacher leaders?

4) What kinds of leadership experiences are required in your class module and why?
   a. Probing Directive: Explain a specific assignment that requires teacher leadership in your course and detail your reasoning for it.

5) Discuss the type of training or direction you received to introduce and assess teacher leadership in your students.
   a. Probing Directive: As you transitioned into your role as a classroom teacher to a teacher educator, did you participate in any mentoring or dialogue with your colleagues about teacher leadership?

6) In the context of this program, what does teacher leadership mean? Why do you think this?

**Thank You:** Thank you so much for your time and responses today. Should there be a need for a follow-up interview, I will contact you personally via email.
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES
Focus Group Interview Protocol: Teacher Candidates

Instructions: Thank you all for coming to today’s focus group interview. I’m a doctoral candidate in Loyola University Chicago’s Ed.D. Curriculum and Instruction program and a high school English teacher in my 11th year of full-time teaching. I’m interested in teacher leadership, or how educators lead change efforts within and beyond the classroom in non-administrative positions. This purpose of my case study is to examine teacher leadership in the TLLSC program. This purpose of this interview is to understand how teacher candidates feel that their program prepares them for teacher leadership. I will ask questions about both your coursework and fieldwork experiences in this program. You may discuss any relevant experience from any point in the program.

Please know that I will not release any identifying information in the analysis or findings of my dissertation. I respect your ideas and time, and I will make every effort to ensure confidentiality. However, as you look around this room, you might see some familiar faces. Please respect the confidentiality of the participant’s identities and opinions shared here today. The format for today’s interview will consist of open-ended series of questions. Please listen politely and speak when you are comfortable. You will not be expected to answer every question, so please do not feel compelled to do so. You are welcome to respond to or elaborate on others’ ideas in the form of a dialogue. Should you choose, you may discontinue at any time.

As I am taking notes, I would like to record our conversation in order to refer back to your exact words as I analyze the data. Your identity will be kept confidential and anything shared by you that is used for data in the study will be connected to a
pseudonym. All my notes and this recording will be destroyed upon completion of my dissertation study. Do I have your permission to record this focus group interview?

(Pause for verbal confirmation from all participants)

Before we begin, I will assign you a number. When we begin, please go around the circle and introduce yourself using the following naming convention: “Teacher Candidate #1, “Teacher Candidate #2,” and so on. This will be used in place of you choosing a pseudonym that could indicate your race, ethnicity, or gender. This is a measure to protect your identities. Please introduce yourselves loudly and clearly with the title and number given to you.

**Teacher Candidate Focus Group Interview Protocol**

1. What are the traits of an effective teacher leader?
   a. Probing Directive: Describe an example of poor leadership in a K-12 classroom.

2. Who do you consider a teacher leader in your previous or current school or community site and why?

3. How would a classroom teacher lead and enact change, and what barriers might they encounter?
   a. Probing Directive: Describe a time where you led a project or activity in your program or school.
   b. Probing Directive: What skills did you use to facilitate?

4. In what ways, if any, is teacher leadership included in your coursework or fieldwork?

5. Which aspects of the TLLSC program have best prepared you to lead?

6. Where do you see yourself as a professional in 3-5 years?

**Thank You:** Thank you so much for your time and responses today. Should there be a need for a follow-up interview, I will contact you personally via email.
REFERENCE LIST


Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist


Education Commission of the States. (2018). *Teacher leadership and licensure*


Rockoff, J., Jacob, B., Kane, T., & Staiger, D. (2011). Can you recognize an effective


VITA

Abigail J. Hasebroock was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska. She attended kindergarten through eighth grade at St. Margaret Mary School and attended high school at Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart. After high school, Abigail received a full athletic scholarship to play Division I women’s volleyball at Boston College. As an undergrad, she majored in English and minored in Faith, Peace, and Justice, composing her senior thesis on race and cultural capital.

Upon graduating from college, Abigail completed a one-year teaching fellowship at Newton Country Day School of the Sacred Heart in Newton, Massachusetts. She realized that teaching and coaching were her passions, so she returned to Boston College and completed a Masters of Arts in Teaching in Secondary English with an English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement. She received her initial teaching license in Massachusetts and taught for two years at Trinity Catholic High School in Newton, Massachusetts (now St. Joseph Preparatory High School in Brighton, Massachusetts). There, she taught 9th grade World Literature, 10th grade American Literature, and 12th grade Advanced Placement Literature and coached the varsity volleyball team.

In 2012, Abigail moved to Chicago, Illinois and taught at Mount Carmel High School. She received her professional teaching license in Illinois and taught 9th grade Literature, 10th grade American Literature, and 11th grade Advanced Placement Language and Composition. She was also named the head volleyball coach and successfully
coached the varsity team to two consecutive Regional Championships. In 2015, Abigail transitioned to St. Ignatius College Prep and continued to teach while assuming more teacher leader roles. She instructed 9th grade World Literature, 11th grade British Literature, 12th grade Creative Writing, and co-constructed a new 12th grade English elective called Senior Seminar. As a 9th Grade English Team Leader, Teacher Association Elected Representative, Summer Teaching Internship Program Coordinator, and Instructional Coach, Abigail realized that she desired to work with teachers and elevate exceptional teaching practices. While teaching full-time and completing her Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction at Loyola University Chicago, Abigail was inducted into Alpha Sigma Nu, the international Jesuit Honor Society, receiving one of the highest honors bestowed by the university.

Abigail currently lives in Chicago, Illinois in close proximity to her siblings, niece, and nephew. She remains a loyal Nebraska Cornhusker football fan and hopes that this is the year. She enjoys travelling, reading nonfiction, writing about education, going to the theatre, and doing yoga in her spare time.
DISSEYRATI[ON APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation submitted by Abigail J. Hasebroock has been read and approved by the following committee:

Amy J. Heineke, Ph.D., Director
Associate Professor and Program Co-Chair of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Loyola University Chicago

Aimee L. Ellis, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Teaching and Learning
Loyola University Chicago

Charles Tocci, Ed.D.
Associate Professor, Teaching and Learning
Loyola University Chicago

The final copy has been examined by the director of the Dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the Dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The Dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

____________________________  ______________________
Date  Director Signature