

# Chapter 2

## International Study of Teacher Leadership: A Rationale and Theoretical Framework



Charles F. Webber , Joan M. Conway , and C. P. van der Vyver 

**Abstract** Previous studies and literature reviews provide a strong base for the International Study of Teacher Leadership (ISTL) ([www.mru.ca/istl](http://www.mru.ca/istl)) (for example, Bond, *The power of teacher leaders: Their roles, influence, and impact*. Kappa Delta Pi and Routledge, 2015; Frost, *International teacher leadership project: Phase 1*. University of Cambridge, 2011; Lambert, *Leadership capacity for lasting school improvement*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003; Nguyen, *Res Educ Adm* 58(1): 60–80, 2020; Wenner and Campbell, *Rev Educ Res* 87(1): 134–171, 2017; York-Barr and Duke, *What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship*. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(3), 255–316, 2004). This chapter begins with a description of the important connections among these seminal works to closely related concepts, such as formal and informal leadership, school culture, professional development, and school improvement.

The chapter continues with an exploration of the levels of comfort and discomfort that existing teacher leadership literature elicits among some members of the international educational community. There are disquieting questions emerging from beyond Western contexts, such as “Are we doing something wrong?” or “Are

---

This report is based on research done as part of the *International Study of Teacher Leadership* conducted in Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, Mexico, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Tanzania, and Turkey, and more latterly Morocco and Argentina. For more information, see the study website: [www.mru.ca/istl](http://www.mru.ca/istl)

---

C. F. Webber (✉)  
Department of Education, Mount Royal University, Calgary, AB, Canada  
e-mail: [cfwebber@mtroyal.ca](mailto:cfwebber@mtroyal.ca)

J. M. Conway  
University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, QLD, Australia  
e-mail: [joan.conway@usq.edu.au](mailto:joan.conway@usq.edu.au)

C. P. van der Vyver  
North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa  
e-mail: [Cp.VanDerVyver@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Cp.VanDerVyver@nwu.ac.za)

we trying to force frameworks onto our contexts?” or “Shouldn’t we resist forcing square pegs into round holes?” These uncomfortable questions led to the identification of important needs that are shared in this chapter.

This is followed by a description of the study origins and the formation of the research team. The research design for examining teacher leadership across cultures is offered. The design draws upon previous theoretical and empirical reports but also the mostly unanswered questions that emerge from non-Western contexts: How do school-based educators in my context conceptualize teacher leadership?; How do systems leaders in my context conceptualize teacher leadership?; What are the values, beliefs, and assumptions underpinning teacher leadership discourses where I work?; and How prepared are classroom teachers in our schools to serve as teacher leaders?

The overarching purpose of the ISTL research design and its guiding research question is offered, along with a summary of the multi-year, multi-stage study that is the foundation for this book.

**Keywords** Teacher leadership · School improvement · Informal leadership · Cross-cultural borrowing · International Contexts

## Why Study Teacher Leadership?

The concept of teacher leadership has been described in a variety of ways, almost all from Western perspectives. Comprehensive literature reviews by Wenner and Campbell (2017) and York-Barr and Duke (2004) highlighted the attributes of teacher leadership, such as collaboration, service to the school and larger community, and accountability for the achievement of the school vision and goals. More recently, Nguyen et al. (2020) underscored the importance of considering teacher leadership across cultures and contexts, as did Schott et al. (2020), a point corroborated by Hallinger’s (2018) description of the importance of context.

All the reviews emphasized the lack of clarity in how teacher leadership is defined. For instance, Grant (2019) acknowledged the scarcity of research about teacher leadership in Africa’s emerging democracies. In South Africa, the previous existence of the apartheid ideology inhibited the notion of teacher leadership due to its embracing of autocratic and hierarchical leadership in education and schools. After the abolishment of apartheid in 1994, educational leadership was decentralized and began to incorporate a focus on shared and distributed leadership. However, the practice of teacher leadership beyond the classroom is still limited (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011), probably because of the lack of a common understanding of teacher leadership. Grant (2019) suggested more research on teacher leadership to provide “robust conceptual tools and explanatory theories” (p. 50). Bush (2020)

observed that there is a dearth of leadership development opportunities generally throughout Africa and that teachers sometimes are mentored into formal leadership roles. However, he also noted that most aspiring school leaders are “left to fend for themselves” (p. 191).

In the North American context, Campbell et al. (2015) observed that teacher leadership is often used as a generic term. Also, Webber (2021) suggested that teacher leadership is a fluid concept with overlapping definitions and descriptions. In contrast, researchers in Latin America have described the almost total lack of any reference to teacher leadership and observed that mention of leadership in government and organizational documents is made in relation only to the role of school principals (Pineda-Baez et al., 2019). According to Fierro-Evans and Fortoul-Ollivier (2021), there is a similar lack of discourse related to teacher leadership in Mexico and non-Anglo-Saxon European countries such as Spain. Meanwhile, Pang and Miao (2017) acknowledged that most knowledge regarding the concept of teacher leadership comes from the west and the exploration thereof in Asia is largely unexplored. The role and contributions of teacher leaders in China are, however, acknowledged by referring to teacher leaders as “backbone teachers” (p. 96). Interview data with Shanghai principals revealed the role of teacher leaders in school reform (Pang & Mayo, 2017). Hallinger and Walker (2011) edited a special edition of *School Leadership and Management* that addressed the issue of “a pervasive feeling that policy-makers and practitioners continued to rely too heavily on both a knowledge base and training programs that were generated from other cultural contexts” (p. 300).

In Australia, standards at the lead teacher level (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2018) are clearly outlined with descriptors of attainment such as “lead colleagues” (p. 10), “lead initiatives” (p. 12), “lead processes” (p. 10), “initiate collaborative relationships” (p. 20), and “advocate, participate in, and lead strategies” (p. 21). Further, there is a plethora of programs offered by various jurisdictions in support of building leadership in Australian schools, but the question still exists as to whether teacher leadership in Australian schools is a reality other than as an ascribed formal role. Various publications have projected the concept of teacher leadership from perspectives of professional development/learning (Lovett et al., 2015) and school improvement processes (Conway, 2015; Conway & Andrews, 2016a).

The *International Study of Teacher Leadership* ([www.mru.ca/istl](http://www.mru.ca/istl)) is a response to the calls for additional cross-cultural studies of how teacher leadership is understood and manifested. This chapter begins with an exploration of current understandings of teacher leadership. Following that is an overview of how an international research team coalesced around a desire to study teacher leadership and then a description of the research plan that they developed collectively. The purpose of the study is to contribute to the wider understanding of teacher leadership and of how professional development and university programs might contribute to teacher leadership knowledge and skill development.

## Current Understandings

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) shared the view that teacher leaders have the capacity to serve as agents of change in school improvement initiatives. Sterrett's (2015) description of teacher leaders as providing initiative and direction for realizing school goals corroborates the view of teacher leaders as change agents. Teacher leaders provide direction within their classrooms but also throughout schools and the communities they serve (Dufour & Fullan, 2013). They influence school cultures (Lambert, 2003; Petersen, 2015), reflect on their professional practices (Dawson, 2014), and learn with colleagues (Harris, 2003). Such manifestations of teacher leadership emphasize that school leadership can be shared among all school staff and not restricted to those in formal leadership appointments (Angelle & DeHart, 2016). Terms such as teacher empowerment, distributed leadership, and parallel leadership (Crowther, 2002, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2020; Wenner & Campbell, 2017; York-Barr & Duke, 2004) are sometimes attributed to varying ways of incorporating teacher leadership. There is agreement that hierarchical leadership structures should be replaced or at least modified to recognize the skills and knowledge held by educators who exert influence through both formal leadership appointments and informal activities.

In addition, Nguyen et al. (2020) noted that, to be effective, teacher leadership should be based on high levels of collaboration and trust, and focus on improving teaching and learning. The Western literature related to teacher leadership also addresses concepts including formal and informal influence, school culture, professional development, and school improvement (see Webber, 2021), which form the basis of the following discussion.

### *Formal and Informal Leadership*

Integrating formal and informal leadership can have enhancing effects on the overall balance of staff/school leadership. Bezzina and Bufalino (2019) suggested that leadership and followership are forms of multi-directional professional interactions, and, in optimal environments, influence shifts among group members, making the differences between leaders and followers less acute. Fairman and Mackenzie (2015) stated that informal collaboration across professional roles has a stronger influence on teaching and learning than more direct facilitation by formal leaders.

There are numerous ways that teacher leaders influence without appointments to formal leadership roles. Zepeda et al. (2013) described how informal leaders influence by facilitating workshops in their schools, or by serving on curriculum design committees. They also may act as peer coaches, grade team leaders, or facilitators at parent and community meetings. Acquaro (2019) claimed that teacher leaders increase a school's capacity to address the complexity of twenty-first-century challenges and to advance student learning. Crowther (2002) offered the view that whole

school success involves formal and informal leaders engaging in shared professional development. Learning together allows teachers and principals to develop a common language, a shared vision, and a plan for achieving the vision (Berg, 2018). Zhang and Henderson (2018) noted that when principals collaborate with teachers, they facilitate higher levels of professionalism and improved student achievement. According to Zhang and Henderson, shared learning and collaboration requires formal leaders to have strong communication skills and confidence in teachers' decision-making capacities.

Development of informal leadership expertise is important early in teachers' careers. Zepeda et al. (2013), Murphy (2019), and Burns (2019), writing from American, Irish, and Canadian perspectives respectively, posited that initial teacher preparation can and should include opportunities for informal leadership development for pre-service teachers and their school hosts. Thomas and Brown (2019) concurred by stating that pre-service teachers should experience opportunities to develop their capacity to lead and influence others and decision-making processes.

### *School Culture*

School culture is "the way people live in school groups" (Webber, 1994, p. 152) and the culture of each school is unique due to the shared interactions that occur among students, teachers, principals, and parents (Roby, 2011). As a result, the role of teacher leaders is important because, as insiders, they understand the context of the school and are able to navigate the many facets of school culture. They are less likely to be perceived as supervisors by their peers and can engage in discourse about instructional leadership within a nonthreatening relationship (Mangin, 2005).

It is important that teacher leaders understand they operate within school cultures that typically support teacher autonomy and resist change (Mangin, 2005). Therefore, teacher leader efforts to act as instructional coaches and to maintain a focus on improving teaching and learning are key elements of a positive school culture in which student success is the foremost priority (Ezzani, 2020). Even positive school cultures in which instructional improvement is possible are environments where change can take years to achieve (Pankake & Abrego, 2017). Indeed, change may not be possible in some schools because of what Deal and Peterson (2016) referred to as "toxic cultures" (p. 182) within which influential informal leaders sabotage, repeat pessimistic stories, see themselves as martyrs, and neglect their core purpose of serving learners.

The positive influence of teacher leaders is more likely to occur in schools where principals facilitate their work (Mangin, 2005). Carpenter (2015) observed that positive relationships and a collaborative school culture must be predicated upon voluntary participation by teachers (see also Mangin, 2005) and an equal, reciprocal relationship between teachers and administrators. Such a culture fosters teacher perceptions that their knowledge and skills are valued and permits the establishment of

instructional improvement structures that are based on shared instructional goals (Ezzani, 2020).

Facilitating teacher leadership can be an effective change strategy that challenges teacher isolation and facilitates collaboration among teachers (Berg & Zoellick, 2018). Teacher leadership fosters the establishment of shared purpose and common values (Conway & Andrews, 2016b). It also supports ongoing school improvement that focuses on student achievement (Carpenter, 2015).

## *Professional Development*

The range of understandings of teacher leadership represented in the literature speaks to the complexity of the work (Taylor et al., 2019). For instance, school cultures can be difficult to understand and to change, professional learning is multidimensional, and collegiality can be fragile. Therefore, it is important that teachers with leadership potential have opportunities to learn how to influence in positive and productive ways. They can be more effective informal leaders if they understand how to support risk-taking by other teachers (Peine, 2008), to facilitate a common vision of teaching and learning excellence (Wilmore, 2007), and to facilitate active engagement and open communication among their peers (Zepeda, 2019). The greater the teacher leadership capacity in the school, the more likely it is that a strong cultural identity aligned with improving student achievement can be sustained (Hickey & Harris, 2018).

Zepeda (2019) described a wide range of teacher leader development strategies that can help formal and informal leaders assume responsibility and accountability for student learning (Peine, 2008). For instance, Zepeda (2019) offered a menu of teacher leader professional development such as shadowing other teacher leaders, participating in professional meetings and events, engaging in graduate study, and participating in online professional development groups. She highlighted how these types of professional learning activities can be long-term and job-embedded. Other examples include study groups, critical friend networks, and action research teams, all of which can clarify teacher leaders' thinking and allow them to share their knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, Zepeda drew upon her writing about peer coaching and the influential work of Joyce and Showers (2002) to emphasize the potential of the peer coaching cycle: study of theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching. Joyce and Showers highlighted the need for coaching if professional learning is to be implemented successfully in classroom practice. They also cautioned that peer coaching, and related models such as clinical supervision (Acheson, 1997), not be used for teacher evaluation. However, the clinical supervision model of pre-conference, observation, and post-conference is widely used as the structure of teacher evaluation in much of the Western world. The job-embedded professional learning strategies offered by Zepeda (2019) and Joyce and Showers (2002) assume that teacher leaders know their schools and can foster professional

development in more productive ways than can be achieved by outside experts or consultants (Hickey & Harris 2018; Margolis, 2012).

Others have offered practical guidance for teacher leaders in their facilitation of professional development. Peine (2008) described the use of professional growth plans by teachers that identify the focus for growth, establish learning goals and activities, and monitor progress. Professional growth plans for individual teacher learners parallel Wilmore's (2007) strategies for facilitating school-based professional development: establish goals, garner resources, choose a timeline, and evaluate success. Wilmore cautioned that facilitating personal and collective professional development is difficult and complex. It requires planning, resourcing, management, and reflection. Boylan (2018) noted that teacher leadership of professional development builds skills among teachers to mobilize and broker learning initiatives and to create professional learning networks. The result, according to Hickey and Harris (2018), can be a strong organizational culture that is aligned with the primary goal of improving student achievement. Teacher leader responsibility for professional development results in them assuming accountability for teacher learning (Peine, 2008).

### *School Improvement*

Definitions of school improvement are numerous, but they all describe efforts to improve learning, teaching, and student achievement (Harris, 2002). School improvement includes developing the abilities of school community members to plan, initiate, and manage change (Harris, 2002). The processes associated with school improvement are complicated and relate to changing school culture, and considering school needs holistically, while ensuring that teachers are central players and feel ownership for school improvement decisions (Brown & Poortman, 2018; Murphy, 2005).

School improvement is contextual and must be focused on teachers' professional practices (Murphy 2005; Taylor et al., 2011). It assumes shared leadership between formal school leaders and teacher leaders who collaborate to design their own solutions to the challenges that they face. They strive to participate in democratizing how decisions are made in their schools, so school improvement processes are relevant and sustainable (Brown & Poortman, 2018; Murphy, 2013).

Proponents of school improvement suggest that teacher leaders can and should be involved in engaging their peers and other school community members in planning improvement plans (Taylor et al., 2011). It is primarily by working with one another that school cultures can allow members to negotiate and accept differences (Murphy, 2013) as they engage in the ongoing and time-consuming process of school improvement.

Murphy (2005) shared his view that teachers and school improvement benefit from teacher leadership preparation that is based within the school and supported fully by formal school leaders. Taylor et al. (2011) stated that teacher leaders require

a strong set of interpersonal skills that help them to exercise “relational leadership” (p. 91) with and among their peers. Such social acumen can be acquired and nurtured through in-school learning networks (Brown & Poortman, 2018). Teacher leadership development in schools can heighten teacher leaders’ awareness of how resistance to school improvement initiatives is normal and that the tendency of schools to revert to previous practices should be expected (Murphy, 2013). Contextualized leadership development can mitigate the damage to school improvement plans when there is significant turnover in formal and informal school leaders.

Mangin (2005) cautioned that formal school leaders may be tempted to divert the focus of teacher leaders’ work to administrative roles and responsibilities rather than to direct it to school improvement processes. Murphy (2005) suggested that school improvement planners be aware of the possibility that some participants may focus on teacher leadership primarily as a tool for wresting administrative control from principals and for not attending explicitly to the personal and collective responsibility for change efforts.

## Teacher Leadership Uncertainty

The variety of conceptions of teacher leadership that occurs in the literature has led to some uncertainty among practitioners and policy makers about how to recognize teacher leadership or even to determine if it should be facilitated in their contexts. Furthermore, misunderstanding of teacher leadership in relation to formal leadership may obscure the value and utility of the concept as school staff members practice decision making in their schools.

The presence of teachers in their communities has historically been of interest in terms of their role firstly as the teacher, but frequently as the invited or even nominated leader of a specific task or position. Moreover, their position in the community was often perceived as one of higher knowledge with the ability and skills to be the referent to a range of issues or topics. For example, teachers in small rural communities in Canada and Australia were among the most educated people in their communities and, as such, exercised considerable formal and informal influence on local affairs. Schools served as community gathering places for students and teachers during the day and, at other times, as venues for meetings of municipal governments and social gatherings. In those contexts, teachers served as organizers, moderators, and hosts. Even in recent years, when teachers in rural districts of Australia successfully engage with community members, they may be accepted as influential members of their communities (Halsey & Drummond, 2014; Hazel & McCallum, 2016).

However, colonial influences also disrupted Indigenous educational practices and even community structures. That is, assimilation policies in both Australia and Canada resulted in residential or missionary schools that removed Indigenous children from their families and placed them under the influence of European teachers and principals. The legacy of assimilation policies influences how members of



Indigenous communities continue to perceive teachers from outside of their communities (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

Currently, teachers in nations such as Tanzania, in some instances, are held in high regard and, as they establish themselves in communities, may become regarded as elders and power brokers within their contexts. Nonetheless, some pre-service and practicing teachers in East Africa may hold a “deficit-based thinking” perspective (Kulkarni & Hanley-Maxwell, 2015, p. 78) about other members of their school communities. Meanwhile, in South Africa, the role of teachers and school leaders was shaped by both colonialism and apartheid systems of governance (Moloi & Bush, 2006). Since 1994 and the implementation of a democratic system of governance, educational policies have supported the role of teachers in a more distributed form of educational management.

In other non-Western nations, teachers may not be engaged in decision making within their schools and communities. For instance, Cisneros-Coheurnour (2021) described the continued dominance of hierarchical authority systems in Mexico that limit the influence of teachers in their school communities. Similarly, Pineda-Báez (2021) reported a hierarchical policy structure in Colombia and recommended the inclusion of teachers as co-constructors of educational policies with the intent of enhancing the role of teachers as leaders.

Understandings of teacher leadership are influenced by factors such as global migration, technology, and other disruptive influences. For instance, increasing urbanization during the twentieth century in many contexts has altered the immediacy of teacher influence in their communities. Impacts of teacher influence include acceptance of diversity, and cross-cultural literacy (Watson, 2011). Moreover, recent changes in the roles of teachers due to the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to result in emerging understandings of how teachers influence and lead within their school communities (Edwards et al., 2020).

## Influences on Teacher Leaders

The literature on leadership is replete with references to how the influence of educators is both enhanced and limited by the perceptions they have of themselves, and that others have of them. That is, how teachers are expected to think and act (Beijaard et al., 2004), their levels of professional autonomy, and professional identities shape how well they implement new curricula and respond to educational policy agendas (Karousiou et al., 2019). In turn, a teacher’s professional identity, although personal, is affected greatly by their organizational and cultural contexts (Beijaard et al., 2004). Teachers reinterpret their professional identity on an ongoing basis which “manifests itself in teachers’ job satisfaction, occupational commitment, self-efficacy and change in level of motivation” (Carinus et al., 2012, p. 116). Clearly, the leadership capacity of individual teachers is determined to a large extent by the safety and risk tolerance of their work environments and by their ability to self-reflect.

Issues of race, religion, and gender influence teachers' abilities to serve as teacher leaders. They can both support and limit teachers' abilities to reflect, feel empowered, and influence students and peers. Most teachers in North America continue to represent primarily "white, middle class, and Christian backgrounds" (Cutri, 2009, p. 57). In South Africa, after democracy was established in 1994, students moved to schools of their choice in search of quality education, creating a diversity in schools which was previously unknown to teachers and administrators. These changes brought about new and challenging demands on teachers (Vandeyar, 2010).

Another factor considered to be of influence is the socio-cultural demographics of teachers in other nations which undoubtedly will vary, but what is significant is the powerful influence of teachers' backgrounds and life experiences on their interactions with students, colleagues, and other school community members. For example, Benn (2002) reported the experiences of Muslim women who were studying to become teachers in the United Kingdom. The women reported feeling isolated, and faced religious prejudice, implicating their capacity to influence, reflect, and risk which are some of the important attributes of teacher leaders. Relatedly, Aujla-Bhullar (2018) shared how minority women teachers in Canada were able to establish high levels of trust with their students who also were visible minorities. The women described the power of critical reflection about "incidents of discrimination, marginalization and oppression... [to develop a] ...sense of self-worth" (Aujla-Bhullar, 2018, p. 75).

Additional salient influences on teacher leaders include their ages and career stages. Research from The Netherlands (Geeraerts et al., 2018) suggested that teachers may gravitate toward colleagues who are perceived to be similar in terms of age. Concurrently, the tendency for older workers to continue in the workforce can encourage generational stereotypes within multi-aged teacher teams. The stereotypes can be positive and counterproductive for both older and younger teachers but, either way, they can impact how teacher leadership is manifested. Geeraerts and her colleagues observed that most intergenerational learning among teachers was reciprocal and occurred in the context of daily practice and in the form of informal discussions. Younger teachers had a stronger influence on older peers in areas related to innovative teaching and the use of technology, while older workers had more of an impact on their younger colleagues in relation to classroom management, self-regulation, and community building.

Power and politics are factors in how teacher leadership is understood and enacted. Hossain and Hickey (2019) described the political opposition of teacher unions to the challenge of raising teacher standards and accountability. For instance, in South Africa, the Education Department effectively controls education in just a third of the provinces (Department of Basic Education, 2016). Where departmental authority and control is weak, teacher unions step in and influence various aspects, including the appointment of teachers (Mahlangu, 2019). Bruns et al. (2019) reported that teacher leaders in countries like Mexico, Chile, and Ecuador exercise influence in the context of highly politicized labor organizations and a history of union resistance to reforms. Vavrus (2009) described the social and political

challenges associated with implementing a constructivist approach to teaching in Tanzania without a corresponding decrease in teacher/student ratios and increase to the length of teacher education programs. To be influential, teacher leaders in conditions similar to those in Tanzania need to navigate a complex array of material conditions, local traditions, and “the cultural politics of teaching in Africa” (p. 310).

Additional dimensions to the context of teacher leadership can be the result of colonial legacies. For example, the language of instruction in schools and in teacher education institutions may restrict or enable access (Feldmann, 2016). Teaching in the local language(s) may increase access to citizens who speak the language(s), while restricting or allowing dominance of the language of instruction to that of the colonial power may exclude a large majority of the local population. In South Africa, English is the language of instruction in most schools. However, few learners and teachers use it as a home language. The status associated with using a particular language is one of the factors that is influential in choosing schools where English is the language of instruction as opposed to the home language (Mophosho et al., 2019). There is a corresponding impact on the capacity of women and men to become teachers and, if they do, on their influence and leadership in their schools and communities. Further, teacher leaders who seek to exercise influence in contexts where colonial epistemologies have weakened or replaced traditional epistemological paradigms (Nyamnjoh, 2012), may grapple with approaches to teaching and learning that are contested by local and regional community members.

Clearly, the professional activities of teacher leaders occur in complex sociocultural contexts. They require a host of attributes that are not addressed in detail in the current literature about teacher leadership. That is, to be influential, teacher leaders must demonstrate localized social and political acumen that informs what might be called bespoke educational policies and practices.

## Different Manifestations

Dimmock (2020) described the importance of creating cross-cultural valid knowledge that is relevant to the social and cultural settings where educational leaders practice. The challenges of generating culturally relevant knowledge about teacher leadership emerged early in discussions among the members of the *International Study of Teacher Leadership* project. It is noted that 18 members of the original research team represented ten countries – Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, Mexico, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Tanzania, and Turkey, and during the second year of the study, additional contributors, from Canada, China, Mexico, Morocco, South Africa, and Spain, joined as affiliated researchers.

Several important points emerged during the research team’s initial planning meetings. The researchers shared a longstanding interest in educational leadership teaching and research, and all were familiar with the term *teacher leadership*. However, they noted the differences in meaning that arise from working in contexts with different cultures, histories, and languages. The assumption of Western

researchers that the concept of teacher leadership was situated similarly in other cultures proved to be incorrect. It led research team members from non-Western countries to ask disquieting questions such as, “Are we doing something wrong?” and “Are we trying to force frameworks into our contexts?” and “Shouldn’t we resist forcing square pegs into round holes?”. Team members from Colombia, Spain, and Mexico noted the virtual absence in educational policy documents of the term teacher leadership or even of discernible evidence of distributed or shared leadership theory. Team representatives from Eastern countries noted that understandings of teacher leadership in their context were drawn from Western literature but had to be modified to fit. For example, they referred to formal and informal leader influence as powerful and non-powerful leadership, which raised significant questions about the nature of teacher leadership.

Additional differences in research team members’ understandings of teacher leadership arose. Our senses of how life in schools and educational institutions should be lived overlapped but nonetheless were different. Our definitions of power, authority, and respect had to be examined and re-examined as new information was shared. We had to explain implicit assumptions from each of our cultures about how schools should be governed and administered. We observed the differences in credibility and professional stature that are ascribed to teachers and principals in our settings. We described the opportunities and restrictions associated with teacher leaders’ gender. We reported the occurrence in schools of “crab-bucket cultures” (Duke, 1994, p. 269) that resist the efforts of any member, never mind a teacher leader, to alter normal practice. In a crab-bucket culture, individuals who seek to alter the status quo may be dragged down or disparaged. Nonetheless, we agreed with Fullan’s (1994) longstanding claim that “... individual teachers need to become aware that a large part of their role is to improve their profession” (p. 51).

## Various Applications

Although there is no common definition of teacher leadership in the literature, one commonality is that teacher leadership is about teachers influencing others (Schott et al., 2020). With the conceptual uncertainty about what teacher leadership is, it is reasonable to anticipate that there could be a range of understandings of the construct across different cultural contexts. Looking at the teaching standards in different countries, it is evident that the notion of teacher leadership is applied differently in each setting. In some cultures, there is an explicit reference to leadership competencies while in others only indirect references are made to attributes of teacher leadership. In many countries, there is a total absence of acknowledgment of teacher leadership to be found in teacher competencies and teaching standards.

However, various constituencies have been somewhat explicit about their understandings and expectations of teacher leadership. With regard to the application of teacher leadership, the United States acknowledges the value of teacher leaders. Teacher Leader Model Standards were developed by the Teacher Leadership

Exploratory Consortium (2011) which consists of members representing numerous institutions such as state departments of education, universities, colleges, teacher federations, and principal associations. These model standards explicitly spell out the domains, dimensions, and functions of teacher leadership in the United States, recognizing the formal as well as informal roles of teacher leaders. In South Africa, there is also an explicit acknowledgment of teacher leadership in official documentation. The Department of Education (2000) indicated that a teacher should be a “leader, administrator and manager” (p. 50). In this instance, the application of teacher leadership focuses on managing the classroom, teamwork, and reflection as well as participating in decision-making structures, which is indicative of teacher leadership within and beyond the classroom. Similarly, another policy document in South Africa, the Personnel Administrative Measures, outlines the duties and responsibilities of educators which include, “taking on a leadership role within the subject, learning area or phase as well as to contribut[ing] to the professional development of fellow teachers by sharing knowledge” and acting as a mentor (Department of Basic Education, 2016, p.18).

Similarly, the Australian professional standards for teachers also acknowledge the leadership role of teachers, by stating, “They may also take on roles that guide, advise or lead others” (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2018, p. 7). A more formal teacher leadership role is ascribed to lead teachers who lead inside and outside the school. Some of the roles of these teacher leaders include being innovative teaching practitioners, mentoring fellow teachers, promoting innovative thinking, inspiring colleagues, and leading processes to improve student performance (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2018). As in South Africa and Australia, Uganda also acknowledges the notion of teacher leadership by indicating that teachers should exhibit leadership skills, “such as presenting ideas, leading discussions and making decisions” (Education International, 2011, p. 135). Other competencies related to attributes of teacher leadership include collaboration and teamwork, within and outside the school as well as reflection.

The notion of teacher leadership is explicitly indicated in Nigerian professional standards for teachers (Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, 2010) where it is stated that “teachers give and receive coaching and mentoring from colleagues, creating an enabling environment for charismatic leadership” (p. 35). One of the sub-themes in this document is academic leadership. Teamwork and collaboration with colleagues to achieve professional goals are some of the other manifestations of teacher leadership within this document. Acting as change agents, teachers are expected to motivate and inspire learners, colleagues, and members of society around them. Elsewhere, in the Malaysian Teacher standards, one of the competencies for teachers is indicated as leadership (Education International, 2011), but the concept is not explained. In Slovenia, key teacher competencies are described as organization and leadership. Although these reflect some dimensions of teacher leadership, they are confined to the actions of the teacher within the classroom, such as classroom management, planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning processes. Cooperative partnerships with colleagues within and outside the school, which

relate to the attributes of teacher leadership, are also mentioned (Education International, 2011).

In many cultural contexts there is no explicit application of teacher leadership, but indirect indications of attributes related to teacher leadership are evident. In the United Kingdom, for example, there is no explicit application of teacher leadership in their Teacher's Standards (Department for Education, 2011). There is some language used that could refer indirectly to some of the competencies and attributes of teacher leaders, such as accountability for learning outcomes, reflection on teaching, and management of classes. In the Canadian context teacher leadership is not mentioned explicitly in, for instance, the teaching quality standard (Alberta Education, 2018a, b). However, the language of teacher leadership is observable in the expectation that teachers should collaborate with other teachers and stakeholders within and outside the school, be reflective about their practices, and exhibit effective classroom management. Furthermore, in the Netherlands, the Professions in Education Act, which addresses the competencies of teachers, does not include explicit references to teacher leadership. However, some of the competencies show similarities to the attributes of teacher leadership: critical reflection, classroom management, and collaboration with stakeholders (Education International, 2011). In Mali, competencies of teachers are restricted to the classroom in areas such as classroom management and management of lessons (Education International, 2011).

In some South American countries, there is a lack of teacher leadership language in teaching standards documentation. For instance, in Colombia, there exists a hierarchical policy structure that limits the emergence of teacher leadership (Pineda-Báez, 2021). In Chile, the competencies of teachers are confined to what is happening in the classroom with little or only indirect mention of teacher leadership (Education International, 2011; Hurtado, 2021). The Brazilian National curricular guidelines make implied references to teacher leadership, for instance, developing teamwork and participating in the management of institutions (Education International, 2011). In India, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education also does not clearly acknowledge teacher leadership as a competency for teachers (National Council for Teacher Education, 2009). The Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession in New Zealand also makes little direct or indirect reference to teacher leadership in their teaching standards (Education Council, 2017).

## The Study

The *International Study of Teacher Leadership* ([www.mru.ca/istl](http://www.mru.ca/istl)) is a collaborative initiative undertaken by a team of international researchers from North and South America, Australia, China, Europe, and Africa. The study emerged from discussions at a 2018 conference, hosted by Guangxi Normal University in Guilin, China, where some of the current team members met and expressed interest in exploring perspectives of teacher leadership within and across different cultural contexts. This spiked the formation of a collaborative research project.

## *The Research Team*

Conducting longitudinal research while maintaining research team productivity and stability can be complex. Important considerations include group dynamics, members' skills, representativeness, stability, ethical publication, and cultures, plus many other factors. Moghim (2014) used the metaphor of "extended family" (p. 116) to describe a research group and suggested strategies for facilitating creativity, social cohesion, and personal motivation. Moghim's suggestions focused on research groups interacting through face-to-face meetings, and included attention to group size, meeting foci and duration, levels of formality, and personal comfort. At many levels, the extended family metaphor fits well with the *International Study of Teacher Leadership* research team. Many of the team members had collaborated with one another in previous cross-cultural research and brought personal connections and shared histories to the current study. However, some team members did not have shared connections when they joined the group; they were invited because of the skills and knowledge they could add to the teacher leadership initiative.

Some *International Study of Teacher Leadership* team members have a long history of meeting on a quasi-regular basis at international conferences. In fact, professional meetings were settings where many team members met in reality. However, this research initiative has relied heavily on technology-mediated interactions such as email, plus video- and audio-conferencing software. Thus, among the essential pragmatic considerations for selecting research team members was access to the internet and the ability to use relevant software tools. In addition, the decision was made to restrict membership to academics with the capacity to communicate in English. Another essential determinant for inclusion in the research team was academic acumen, demonstrated by a recognized record of scholarship, a promising beginning to a career as a researcher, and/or a strong recommendation from a respected colleague. Other factors influenced how the team members were selected. Because of the international nature of the research, it was important to have representation of diversity in areas such as culture, gender, religion, and race. Similarly, it was decided that it was important to include team members at different career stages with a range of political and epistemological orientations.

Once the basic determinants for inclusion were identified, *personal factors* were used to consider potential team members. These included attributes needed for successful participation in a long-term international research and publication initiative, that is, appreciation of competing religious, political, and social values. Such attributes are part of what Banks (2006) called cosmopolitanism or the ability to view oneself as a "citizen of the world who will make decisions and take actions that promote democracy and social justice" (p. 209). A corollary description of cosmopolitanism offered by Ostby (2018) suggested that it is the ability to view nothing human as alien while concurrently avoiding the temptation to imagine that others should be like us. A high level of cultural literacy needed to be accompanied by a strong sense of professional purpose, plus a corresponding balance of a sense of agency and humility. In addition, potential team members were identified because

of their personal resiliency and dependability, both desirable characteristics for members of a research team about to undertake a multi-year initiative.

It also was decided that three more personal factors were important. They included the ability to communicate successfully with colleagues during difficult conversations related to data analyses and research findings, the capacity for problem solving while conducting the research in the field, and the ability to contribute to a positive team culture.

Another factor was also part of the process of selecting research team members. It is related to cosmopolitanism but somewhat different. Webber and Robertson (1998) described it as *boundary-breaking leadership*, the “capacity to move learning beyond the boundaries normally imposed by cultures, roles, institutions, economics, and national borders” (section 4). Boundary-breaking leaders (Robertson & Webber, 2002) possess the ability to successfully navigate organizational nuances, status and power differentials, and culturally specific notions of time and space. For the purposes of the *International Study of Teacher Leadership*, research team members needed to possess or be willing to learn the various understandings of research ethics across cultures. They needed to demonstrate the understanding of what Freire (1970) referred to as situationality, as it relates to the “temporal-spatial conditions” (p. 109) of individual teacher leaders. Boundary-breaking leadership encompasses the construct of situationality, and what others (Edwards & Usher, 2008; Gruenewald, 2003) have referred to as pedagogy of place and place-based education.

## ***The Research Design***

An initial literature review (Webber, 2018) captured published understandings of teacher leadership and provided the team with a framework for analysis comprised of eleven attributes – accountability, advocacy, cultural responsiveness, collaboration, openness to change, professionalism, reflection, risk-taking, shared vision, stability, teamwork – and five considerations – context, leadership capacity, group dynamics, evidence-base, and political beliefs. Discussions of the literature review led the research team to formulate the purpose of the study, which is, *to contribute to the wider understanding of teacher leadership and of how professional development and university programs might contribute to teacher leadership knowledge and skill development.*

Members of the research team formulated the primary research question: *How is teacher leadership conceptualized and enacted and what are the implications for educational stakeholders?* Secondary research questions followed: *How do school-based educators conceptualize teacher leadership?; How do systems leaders conceptualize teacher leadership?; What are the values, beliefs, and assumptions underpinning teacher leadership discourses?; and, How prepared are classroom teachers to serve as teacher leaders?*

The design of the study was collaboratively formed by the team with a focus on the primary research question. The overall research design utilized a mixed



methodological approach using a convergent design (Creswell & Plano-Clarke, 2011) which moves from the broad literature review, through five phases.

The first of the five phases was an overarching phenomenographic study. Phenomenography, a qualitative research approach, focused on capturing the differences and variations in how people experience a particular phenomenon (Larsson & Holmstrom, 2007; Marton & Booth, 1997). This phase was used to explore the ways that the research team members related to the phenomenon of interest, *teacher leadership*. The findings were synthesized into a phenomenographic outcome space to reveal the range of qualitatively different ways that teacher leadership was experienced by participants from different geographical contexts and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The intent of the phenomenographic component was to contribute to fuller, richer, more culturally inclusive, and more sophisticated understandings of teacher leadership (Arden & Okoko, 2021).

The second phase of the study included document analyses in each researcher's cultural setting, with a focus on publicly available materials such as government policies, standards documents, teacher education program descriptions, and union statements. Third, a range of educational stakeholders – teachers, principals, and school community members – participated in semi-structured interviews and completed questionnaires related to teacher leadership.

Case studies, the fourth phase of the study, were delayed due to the global pandemic that began in 2020. However, some research team members completed virtual case studies that included teaming with specific schools to interview school community members and to participate in online planning meetings that were conducted by teachers and administrators. In-person case studies resumed in the latter half of 2021.

The fifth phase of the *International Study of Teacher Leadership* consisted of oral histories conducted with samples of current and past classroom teachers who were selected because of the significance and magnitude of their influence in their communities.

In summary, the five phases of the study were designed to: (1) clarify the knowledge and perceptions that the research team brought to its collective work; (2) analyze educational organizations' public declarations relating to teacher leadership; (3) explore educators' personal understandings of teacher leadership; (4) understand the lived experience of teacher leaders in schools; and (5) add breadth and depth by gathering retrospective accounts of teacher leaders' experiences.

### ***Group Sustainability***

A final area of attention during the selection of research team members and the design of the study was *group sustainability*. It was understood at the outset that some attrition would occur as the study was designed and started. That is, it was anticipated that some individuals would find themselves over-committed or they might lose interest once the direction of the study of teacher leadership was determined. Others might find the challenges of working across many time zones,

requiring very early or late meetings, to be difficult because of other work and family commitments. In fact, three members withdrew from the study early in its implementation and it is possible that further attrition will occur because of job changes and family or health crises. However, a critical mass of research team members was assembled so that long-term sustainability can be achieved despite normal attrition.

Brower et al. (2020) suggested two sustainability tools, first a team charter which they say is “a document that clearly defines a team’s purpose, goals, strategies, and team members’ roles for holding each other accountable to mutual expectations” (p. 3). Most of the purposes of a team charter were addressed through the design of a study website ([www.mru.ca/istl](http://www.mru.ca/istl)), plus an online archive of meeting notes and study protocols, and regular updates sent by email. Brower et al. (2020) also encouraged the use of a “Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed (RACI) matrix to clearly define tasks and responsibilities, allowing teams to effectively track progress and hold members accountable” (p. 3). As the *International Study of Teacher Leadership* proceeded, a form of RACI matrix was shared regularly as a work plan that documented study components, identified who was responsible for progress, what was to be done and when, and tracked outcomes of progress.

Additional sustainability tools were employed. These included regular communication and enough synchronous online meets to maintain momentum and commitment. Participation in joint symposia at academic conferences focused research and report writing timelines. Social events during conferences built on longer-term personal connections and shared histories. Finally, the nature of longitudinal research meant that career milestones – such as promotions, achievement of tenure, administrative appointments, and major publications – were celebrated in email communications and in synchronous face-to-face and virtual meetings.

## Conclusion

Evidence in the literature clearly indicates the lack of clarity and the diversity of understanding teacher leadership, to which the *International Study of Teacher Leadership* aims to contribute in pursuit of a wider, and more culturally diverse understanding of the concept. A myriad of factors influencing an understanding of teacher leadership has been acknowledged and addressed throughout the chapters of this book as depicted by the researchers from different countries and cultural contexts highlighting their contextual influences impacting the understanding and manifestation of teacher leadership. The exploration of cross-cultural teacher leadership knowledge is a step forward in contributing to a global conceptualization of teacher leadership. The understanding and effect of formal, as well as informal dimensions of teacher leadership, within these cultural contexts may play a crucial role in the preparation of pre-service teachers fulfilling their future leadership roles. Further, contextualized leadership development opportunities for preservice and in-service teachers may be identified to contribute to teachers’ skills and knowledge, enhancing their capacity to influence and lead effectively, and with relevance in situ.

## References

- Acheson, K. A., & Gall, M. D. (1997). *Techniques in the clinical supervision of teachers: Preservice and inservice applications*. Longman.
- Acquaro, D. (2019). Preparing the next generation of educational leaders: Initiating a leadership discourse on initial teacher education. *International Studies in Education*, 47(2), 107–124.
- Alberta Education. (2018a). *Teaching quality standard*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/14d92858-fec0-449b-a9ad-52c05000b4de/resource/afc2aa25-ea83-4d23-a105-d1d45af9ffad/download/edc-teaching-quality-standard-english-2020.pdf>
- Alberta Education. (2018b). *Teaching quality standard*. Alberta Education.
- Angelle, P. S., & DeHart, C. A. (2016). Comparison and evaluation of four models of teacher leadership. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*, 1(1), 85–119.
- Arden, C., & Okoko, J. M. (2021). Exploring cross-cultural perspectives of teacher leadership among the members of an international research team: A phenomenographic study. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*, 6(1), 51–90.
- Aujla-Bhullar, S. (2018). A complicated passport: Racialized realities and lessons from visible minority women teachers. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21(1), 63–77.
- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2018). *Australian professional standards for teachers*. <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/standards>
- Banks, J. A. (2006). *Race, culture, and education*. Routledge.
- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20(2), 107–128.
- Benn, T. (2002). Muslim women talking: Experiences of their early teaching careers. In H. Jawad & T. Benn (Eds.), *Muslim women in the United Kingdom and beyond: Experiences and images* (pp. 131–150). Brill.
- Berg, J. L. (2018). *Leading in sync: Teacher leaders and principals working together for student learning*. ASCD.
- Berg, J. H., & Zoellick, B. (2018). Teacher leadership: Toward a new conceptual framework. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 4(1), 2–14. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPC-06-2018-0017>
- Bezzina, C., & Bufalino, G. (2019). Nurturing authentic leadership for teacher leaders: The challenges ahead. *Kappa Delta Pi*, 55(1), 18–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2019.1549434>
- Bond, N. (2015). Teacher leaders as professional developers. In N. Bond (Ed.), *The power of teacher leaders: Their roles, influence, and impact* (pp. 57–69). Kappa Delta Pi and Routledge.
- Boylan, M. (2018). Enabling adaptive system leadership: Teachers leading professional development. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 46(1), 86–106. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143216628531>
- Brower, H. H., Nicklas, B. J., Nader, M. A., Trost, L. M., & Miller, D. P. (2020). Creating effective academic research teams: Two tools borrowed from business practice. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, 5, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cts.2020.553>
- Brown, C., & Poortman, C. L. (2018). *Networks for learning: Effective collaboration for teacher, school and system improvement*. Routledge.
- Bruns, B., Macdonald, I. H., & Schneider, B. R. (2019). The politics of quality reforms and the challenges for SDFs in education. *World Development*, 118, 27–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2019.02.008>
- Burns, A. (2019). Non-traditional student teaching: Creating future leaders through disruption. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 47(2), 58–72.
- Bush, T. (2020). How does Africa compare to the rest of the world? In P. Moorosi & T. Bush (Eds.), *Preparation and development of school leaders in Africa* (pp. 179–196). Bloomsbury.
- Campbell, C., Lieberman, A., & Yashkina, A. (2015). Teachers leading educational improvements: Developing teachers' leadership, improving practices, and collaborating to share knowledge. *Leading and Managing*, 21(2), 90–105.

- Canrinus, E. T., Helms-Lorenz, M., Beijaard, D., Buitink, J., & Hofman, A. (2012). Self-efficacy, job satisfaction, motivation and commitment: Exploring the relationships between indicators of teachers' professional identity. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 27, 115–132. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-011-0069-2>
- Carpenter, D. (2015). School culture and leadership of professional learning communities. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 29(5), 682–694. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-04-2014-0046>
- Cisneros-Cohernour, E. J. (2021). The key role of administrators in supporting teacher leadership and professionalism in southern Mexico. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*, 6(1), 313–340.
- Conway, J. M. (2015). Sustainable leadership for sustainable school outcomes: Focusing on the capacity building of school leadership. *Leading and Managing*, 21(2), 29–45.
- Conway, J. M., & Andrews, D. (2016a). A school wide approach to leading pedagogical enhancement: An Australian perspective. *Journal of Educational Change*, 17(1), 115–139. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-015-9258-0>
- Conway, J. M., & Andrews, D. (2016b). Leading with moral purpose: Teacher leadership in action. In G. Johnson & N. Dempster (Eds.), *Leadership in diverse learning contexts: Studies in educational leadership* (Vol. 22, pp. 175–200). Springer. ISBN 978-3-319-28300-5.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Crowther, F. (2002). Big change question: Is the role of the principal in creating school improvement over-rated? *Journal of Educational Change*, 3, 167–173.
- Crowther, F. (2015). Teacher leaders and expert teachers – Equally important but not to be confused. *Australian Educational Leader*, 37(3), 6–7.
- Cutri, R. M. (2009). Race through religious eyes: Focusing teacher reflectivity on race, culture, and spiritual beliefs. *Religion and Education*, 36(1), 56–71.
- Dawson, M. (2014). Learning to lead through leading learning: Reducing career stagnation in experienced teachers. *Leading and Managing*, 20(2), 105–116.
- De Villiers, E., & Pretorius, S. G. (2011). Democracy in schools: Are educators ready for teacher leadership? *South African Journal of Education*, 31(4), 574–589. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v31n4a453>
- Deal, T., & Peterson, K. D. (2016). *Shaping school culture* (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Department for Education. (2011). *Teachers' standards: Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies*. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1007716/Teachers\\_\\_Standards\\_2021\\_update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007716/Teachers__Standards_2021_update.pdf)
- Department of Basic Education. (2016). *Report of the ministerial task team appointed by Minister Angie Motshekga to investigate allegations into the selling of posts of educators by members of teacher unions and departmental officials in provincial education departments: Final Report 18 May 2016*. Government Printers. <https://www.gov.za/documents/report-ministerial-task-team-appointed-minister-angie-motshekga-investigate-allegations>
- Department of Basic Education (South Africa). (2016, February 12). *Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act no 76 of 1998): Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (Notice 170)*. Government Gazette, 39684, p. 201. <https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/PAM%20.pdf?ver=2014-11-27-154348-000>
- Department of Education (South Africa). (2000, February 4). *National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act no 27 of 1996): Norms and Standards for Educators (Notice 82 of 2000)*. Government Gazette, 39827, p. 98. [https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document/201409/20844.pdf](https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/20844.pdf)
- Dimmock, C. (2020). Connecting research and knowledge on educational leadership in the West and Asia: Adopting a cross-cultural comparative perspective. *Comparative Education*, 56(2), 257–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2019.1703393>
- Dufour, R., & Fullan, M. (2013). *Cultures built to last: Systemic PLCs at work*. Solution Tree Press.

- Duke, D. L. (1994). Drift, detachment, and the need for teacher leadership. In D. R. Walling (Ed.), *Teachers as leaders: Perspectives on the professional development of teachers* (pp. 255–273). Phi Delta Kappa.
- Education Council. (2017). *Our code, our standards: Code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession*. Education Council. <https://teachingcouncil.nz/assets/Files/Code-and-Standards/Our-Code-Our-Standards-Nga-Tikanga-Matatika-Nga-Paerewa.pdf>
- Education International. (2011). *Quality educators: An international study of teacher competences and standards*. <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/265732/r-quality-educators-international-study-010511-en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- Edwards, R., & Usher, R. (2008). *Globalisation and pedagogy: Space, place and identity* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Edwards, D., Ryder, G., Azoulay, A., & Fore, H. (2020, October 5). *Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future (statement)*. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/teachers-leading-crisis-reimagining-future>
- Ezzani, M. D. (2020). Principal and teacher instructional leadership: A cultural shift. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(3), 576–585. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-02-2019-0071>
- Fairman, J. C., & Mackenzie, S. V. (2015). How teacher leaders influence others and understand their leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 18(1), 61–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2014.904002>
- Feldmann, H. (2016). The long shadows of Spanish and French colonial education. *Kyklos*, 69(1), 32–64.
- Fierro-Evans, C., & Fortoul-Ollivier, B. (2021). Reflexivity: An essential feature of teacher leadership in Mexico, Colombia, and Spain. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*, 6(1), 164–198.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum. <https://envs.ucsc.edu/internships/internship-readings/freire-pedagogy-of-the-oppressed.pdf>
- Frost, D. (2011). Supporting teacher leadership in 15 countries. In *International teacher leadership project: Phase I*. University of Cambridge. [https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/networks/llf/projects/teacherleadership/ITL%20project\\_Phase%201\\_A%20Report\\_Nov2011.pdf](https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/networks/llf/projects/teacherleadership/ITL%20project_Phase%201_A%20Report_Nov2011.pdf)
- Fullan, M. (1994). Teacher leadership: A failure to conceptualize. In D. R. Walling (Ed.), *Teachers as leaders: Perspectives on the professional development of teachers* (pp. 241–255). Phi Delta Kappa.
- Geeraerts, K., Tynjälä, P., & Heikkinen, H. L. T. (2018). Inter-generational learning of teachers: What and how do teachers learn from older and younger colleagues? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(4), 479–495.
- Grant, C. (2019). Excavating the South African teacher leadership archive: Surfacing the absences and re-imagining the future. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 47(1), 37–55. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143217717274>
- Gruenewald, D. A. (2003). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher*, 32(4), 3–12.
- Hallinger, P. (2018). Bringing context out of the shadows of leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 46(1), 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143216670652>
- Hallinger, P., & Walker, A. D. (2011). Editorial – School leadership in Asia Pacific: Identifying challenges and formulating a research agenda. *School Leadership and Management*, 21(4), 299–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2011.606988>
- Halsey, R. J., & Drummond, A. (2014). Reasons and motivations of school leaders who apply for rural, regional and remote locations in Australia. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 24(1), 69–77.
- Harris, A. (2002). *School improvement: What's in it for schools?* Routledge.
- Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership as distributed leadership: Heresy, fantasy or possibility. *School Leadership and Management*, 23(3), 313–324.

- Hazel, S., & McCallum, F. (2016). The experience is in the journey: An appreciative case study investigating early career teachers' employment in rural schools. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 26(2), 19–33.
- Hickey, W. D., & Harris, S. (2018). Improved professional development through teacher leadership. *The Rural Educator*, 26(2), 12–16.
- Hossain, N., & Hickey, S. (2019). The problem of education quality in developing countries. In S. Hickey & N. Hossain (Eds.), *The politics of education in developing countries: From schooling to learning* (pp. 1–21). Oxford University Press.
- Hurtado, M. E. (2021). September 01. University World News. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20210830082030299>
- Joyce, B. R., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Karousiou, C., Hajisoteriou, C., & Panayiotis, A. (2019). Teachers' professional identity in super-diverse school settings: Teachers as agents of intercultural education. *Teachers and Teaching*, 25, 240–258.
- Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2001). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders* (2nd ed.). Corwin Press.
- Kulkarni, S. S., & Hanley-Maxwell, C. (2015). Preservice teachers' student teaching experiences in East Africa. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 42(4), 59–81.
- Lambert, L. (2003). *Leadership capacity for lasting school improvement*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Larsson, J., & Holstrom, I. (2007). Phenomenographic or phenomenological analysis: Does it matter? Examples from a study on anesthesiologists' work. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 2(1), 55–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482620601068105>
- Lovett, S., Dempster, N., & Flückiger, B. (2015). Personal agency in leadership learning using an Australian heuristic. *Professional Development in Education*, 41(1), 127–143.
- Mahlangu, V. P. (2019). Education capture: The interference of teacher unions in the schooling system in South Africa. *Glocal education in practice: Teaching, researching and citizenship*, 17, 111–116.
- Mangin, M. M. (2005). Distributed leadership and the culture of schools: Teacher leaders' strategies for gaining access to classrooms. *Journal of School Leadership*, 15, 456–484.
- Margolis, J. (2012). Hybrid teacher leaders and the new professional development ecology. *Professional Development in Education*, 38(2), 291–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.657874>
- Marton, F., & Booth, S. (1997). *Learning and awareness*. Routledge.
- Moghim, N. (2014). Research group as extended family. In A. Williams, D. Jones, & J. Robertson (Eds.), *BITE: Recipes for remarkable research* (pp. 116–119). Sense.
- Moloi, K., & Bush, T. (2006). An overview of education management in South Africa. *Management in Education*, 20(5), 15–22.
- Mophosho, M., Khoza-Shangase, K., & Sebole, L. (2019). The reading comprehension of Grade 5 Setswana-speaking learners in rural schools in South Africa: Does home language matter? *Per Linguam*, 35(3), 59–73. <https://doi.org/10.5785/35-3-844>
- Murphy, J. F. (2005). *Connecting teacher leadership and school improvement*. Corwin Press.
- Murphy, J. F. (2013). *The architecture of school improvement: Lessons learned*. Sage.
- Murphy, G. (2019). Exploring principals' understandings and cultivation of leadership at all levels during initial teacher preparation school placement. *International Studies of Educational Administration*, 47(2), 88–106.
- National Council for Teacher Education. (2009). *National Curriculum Framework for teacher education towards preparing professional and humane teacher*. National Council for Teacher Education. Retrieved on Sept. 14, 2020 from [https://ncte.gov.in/Website/PDF/NCFTE\\_2009.pdf](https://ncte.gov.in/Website/PDF/NCFTE_2009.pdf)
- Nguyen, D., Harris, A., & Ng, D. (2020). A review of the empirical research on teacher leadership (2003–2017). *Research in Educational Administration*, 58(1), 60–80. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-02-2018-0023>

- Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2012). 'Potted plants in greenhouses': A critical reflection on the resilience of colonial education in Africa. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 47(2), 129–154.
- Ostby, M. (2018). Cosmopolitanism. *New Literary History*, 49(2), 261–266.
- Pang, N. S., & Miao, Z. (2017). The roles of teacher leadership in Shanghai education. In *BCES conference books* (Vol. 15). Bulgarian Comparative Education Society. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED574221.pdf>
- Pankake, A., & Abrego, J. (2017). *Lead with me: A principal's guide to teacher leadership*. Routledge.
- Peine, J. (2008). *Educator's professional growth plan: A process for developing staff and improving instruction* (2nd ed.). Corwin Press.
- Petersen, S. (2015). Re-imagining teacher leaders leading school improvement: The untapped potential. *Leading and Managing*, 21(2), 1–28.
- Pineda-Báez, C. (2021). Conceptualizations of teacher leadership in Colombia: Evidence from policies. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*, 6(1), 92–125.
- Pineda-Báez, C., Bernal-Luque, R., Estupiñan-Sandoval, L. Y., & Quiroga, C. (2019). Challenges facing novice principals: A study in Colombian schools using a socialisation perspective. *Issues in Educational Research*, 29(1), 205–222. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier29/pineda-baez.pdf>
- Robertson, J. M., & Webber, C. F. (2002). Boundary-breaking leadership: A must for tomorrow's learning communities. In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration* (pp. 519–556). Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Roby, D. E. (2011). Teacher leaders impacting school culture. *Education*, 131(4), 782–790.
- Schott, C., van Roekel, H., & Tummers, L. (2020). Teacher leadership: A systematic review, methodological quality assessment and conceptual framework. *Educational Research Review*. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100352>
- Sterrett, W. (2015). Maximizing teacher leadership. In N. Bond (Ed.), *The power of teacher leaders: Their roles, influence, and impact* (pp. 31–42). Kappa Delta Pi and Routledge.
- Taylor, M., Goeke, J., Klein, E., Onore, C., & Geist, K. (2011). Changing leadership: Teachers lead the way for schools that learn. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 920–929. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.03.003>
- Taylor, M., Klein, E. J., Munakata, M., Trabona, K., Rahman, Z., & McManus, J. (2019). Professional development for teacher leaders: Using activity theory to understand the complexities of sustainable change. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 22(2), 685–705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2018.1492023>
- Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium. (2011). *Teacher leader model standards*. Retrieved from [https://www.ets.org/s/education\\_topics/teaching\\_quality/pdf/teacher\\_leader\\_model\\_standards.pdf](https://www.ets.org/s/education_topics/teaching_quality/pdf/teacher_leader_model_standards.pdf)
- Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria. (2010). *Professional standards for Nigerian teachers*. <https://trcn.gov.ng/PUBLICATION/PSNT%202010.pdf>
- Thomas, C., & Brown, B. (2019). Developing pre-service teachers' leadership capacity through group work. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 47(2), 37–57.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2015). *The final report of the truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: Volume 5*. McGill-Queen's University Press. [http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Volume\\_5\\_Legacy\\_English\\_Web.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Volume_5_Legacy_English_Web.pdf)
- Vandeyar, S. (2010). Responses of south African teachers to the challenge of school integration. *South African Journal of Education*, 30, 343–359.
- Vavrus, F. (2009). The cultural politics of constructivist pedagogies: Teacher education reform in the United Republic of Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29, 303–311.
- Watson, D. (2011). "Urban, but not too urban": Unpacking teachers' desires to teach urban students. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(1), 23–34.
- Webber, C. F. (1994). School culture. In R. R. O'Reilly & S. Sikora (Eds.), *Becoming a Canadian teacher* (pp. 152–167). University of Calgary.

- Webber, C. F. (2018). A rationale and proposed design for researching teacher leadership. In *Paper presented to the international research conference hosted by the Faculty of Education at Guangxi Normal University in Guilin*.
- Webber, C. F. (2021). The need for cross-cultural exploration of teacher leadership. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*, 6(1), 17–49. <https://doi.org/10.30828/real/2021.1.2>
- Webber, C. F., & Robertson, J. (1998). Boundary breaking: An emergent model for leadership development. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 6(21) Retrieved November 15, 2004, from <http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/588/711>
- Wenner, J. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(1), 134–171. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316653478>
- Wilmore, E. L. (2007). *Teacher leadership: Improving teaching and learning from inside the classroom*. Sage.
- York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(3), 255–316.
- Zepeda, S. (2019). *Professional development: What works* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Zepeda, S., Mayers, S. S., & Benson, B. N. (2013). *The call to teacher leadership*. Routledge.
- Zhang, Y., & Henderson, D. (2018). Interactions between principals and teacher leaders in the context of Chinese curriculum reform: A micropolitical perspective. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 45, 603–624.

**Charles F. Webber** is a Professor in the Department of Education, Mount Royal University. He is a Teacher and Researcher who served the first half of his career as a classroom teacher and school principal in Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada. Following a move to higher education, he has held appointments as a Professor and Dean in Alberta and British Columbia, Canada. His teaching and research interests focus on teacher leadership, the principalship, student assessment, and higher education administration and leadership. He is Professor Emeritus with the University of Calgary in Canada and Buitengewone Professor with North-West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa.

**Joan M. Conway** is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Business, Education, Law and Arts, and Associate Director (Research) of the Leadership Research International (LRI) at the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ), Australia. She teaches and researches in the areas of educational leadership and professional learning with a strong focus on the benefits of collaboration and collective intelligence in professional learning communities. Joan is passionate about the development of teachers-as-leaders as a dynamic of building capacity for sustainable school improvement. She is a Project Coordinator for the school improvement project, IDEAS, in schools of several systems across Australia, and aspiring-leaders programs. Joan leads research initiatives for the ongoing development of the LRI.

**C. P. van der Vyver** is an Associate Professor at the School for Education Studies in the Faculty of Education Sciences at the North-West University's Potchefstroom campus in South Africa. He completed his undergraduate studies as well as his MEd at the University of the Free State and his PhD at the North-West University (NWU) in 2011. He was an educator in physical sciences for 15 years, of which he served 5 years on the school management team, before being appointed at the NWU in 2005. He currently lectures undergraduate and postgraduate students in educational research in the School of Professional Studies in Education at NWU. He also acts as external examiner and moderator for modules offered at other universities, nationally. His research focus is education management and leadership, and he has successfully supervised several masters and PhD students in this field and acts as external examiner for dissertations and theses in the field for other universities. He has published nationally and internationally in accredited academic publications and has also delivered papers at national and international conferences. He also acts as reviewer of academic articles for several scientific journals.