Abstract

THOMPSON, ASHLIE LEAH. How Teachers Become Leaders in a Fellowship Program: A Normative Discourse Perspective. (under the direction of Ruie Jane Pritchard)

Traditionally, teachers have been at the bottom of the hierarchy of power that exists in education, leading teachers to define themselves as “just teachers” (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001) not leaders. The current movement to professionalize teaching recognizes the classroom teacher as an untapped leadership resource for improving student achievement. This research analyzes the impact of a Fellowship Program for Curriculum and Leadership Development on its participants using the lenses of normative discourse and the culture of power that exist in education. Specifically, this study explored the extent to which participants were taught to “perform whiteness” (Warren, 2003) in order to gain power and a voice as teacher leaders. In order to examine the Fellows’ experiences, narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Mishler, 1986) was used to gather the stories of four Fellows. Both narrative analysis (Hatch, 2002; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber, 1998; Riessman, 1993) and poetic analysis (Gee, 1999) were employed to “restory” the participants’ stories (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Then, the Fellows’ stories were analyzed to examine how their fellowship experiences affected their self-identification as teacher leaders and, furthermore, to explore the extent to which normative discourse and the culture of power shaped the Fellows’ experiences.
How Teachers Become Leaders in a Fellowship Program: 
A Normative Discourse Perspective

by
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APPROVED BY:

______________________________  ________________________________
Chair of Advisory Committee
Dedication

This work, first and foremost, is for my grandparents, T.D. and Loretta Campbell, without whom I would never have believed that I could achieve more than a high school education. It is because of their love and support; because of them always asking, “how is school going”; because of their words of encouragement; and most importantly because of their belief in my talents and abilities that I was able to believe in myself enough to pursue and complete my doctoral work.

I also wish to thank my parents, Steve Thompson and Charlotte Trusty, who also provided support and encouragement. Unfortunately, my father passed away during the completion of this work and was never able to see the final product. I am grateful to him for the gift of inspiration. As he struggled with cancer, he never complained; he was a model of strength and determination. Memories of his strength and courage were my muse during the long days that I sat before the computer.

My greatest debt of gratitude is to my committee members: Dr. Ruie J Pritchard (chair), Dr. Colleen Wiessner, Dr. Carol Pope, and Dr. Hiller Spires. I especially wish to thank Dr. Pritchard who devoted many hours to editing my drafts, listening to my woes, and motivating me to keep working. A special thanks also to Dr. Wiessner who graciously agreed to join my committee and serve as the methodologist late in the process. I thank her for sacrificing time in her busy schedule and for sharing her wisdom about narrative inquiry.

Lastly, I would not have finished had it not been for the overwhelming love and support of my partner and soul mate. I am grateful for our long walks that allowed for my long-winded reflections at the end of each night of that dreadfully long summer.
Without your insight and wisdom along with your encouragement, I am certain that I would not have been able to continue heading back to the computer as each new day dawned. You have been and always will be an answered prayer.

I recognize that there are many others who have participated in my journey toward completing this work. I am grateful to Dr. Anna Wilson for showing me the beauty of narrative. I am also indebted to Deborah Mangum for being an amazing mentor and a true representation of a leader. I am appreciative of many friends and colleagues who provided support and encouragement as well.

Completing this work is a significant moment in my life’s journey. Ultimately, I am grateful to all of the individuals in my life who have, at some point, been a part of that journey. You all have contributed to this moment for me, and I am forever grateful.
Biography

I was born on September 29, 1974 in Greer, South Carolina. I was nine years old before I was twice blessed with identical twin brothers, Brad and Brent. Thus, I was an only child and also the only grandchild in the family for nine years. I lived in small town, Lyman, in South Carolina where both my maternal and paternal grandparents lived ten minutes away. I was surrounded by family. I have fond memories of being spoiled and the center of my families’ attention.

All of that changed when I was thirteen and my parents announced that my father had accepted a promotion and we would be moving to Kernersville, North Carolina. There I faced a strange new place without the comfort of my family in South Carolina. I attended high school in Kernersville and was fortunate to receive encouragement to attend college, encouragement that I had not received in South Carolina.

I attended Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina from 1992 to 1996 where I earned a Bachelors degree in English and Secondary English Education. Following my graduation, I earned a position teaching high school English at Fuquay-Varina High School in Wake County, North Carolina.

While teaching at Fuquay-Varina High School, my thirst for knowledge remained, and I immediately began a Masters degree in English at North Carolina State University. I attended classes while teaching full time, and I completed a Masters degree in December 2000.

In order to earn an Advanced Teaching License along with my Masters degree, I was required to take several education courses at North Carolina State. The courses were
challenging and highly relevant to my teaching practice, inspiring me to continue my education upon completion of my Masters degree.

I began the doctoral program in curriculum and instruction at North Carolina State University in January 2001. While pursuing my Ph.D., I had the opportunity to join the founding staff at Middle Creek High School in Wake County where I presently teach eleventh grade English.

While serving on the staff at Middle Creek High School, I have had the opportunity to serve as a member of the leadership team and as the ILT/ Mentor coordinator. These leadership experiences coupled with my experiences in the fellowship program that is the center of my dissertation research fueled my interest in teacher leadership.
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The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

--Robert Frost

Introduction: Looking Down the Road

Teachers assume multiple roles within their schools and communities. They may serve not only as teachers in the classroom but also as coaches, department chairs, club sponsors, mentors, to name a few of the many responsibilities teachers take outside of their classrooms. Yet, few teachers consider themselves “leaders” because in education the leaders are generally considered the administrators, board members, and legislators who make the decisions that to a large degree dictate the actions of classroom teachers. Currently, a movement seeking to professionalize teaching and foster teacher leadership recognizes that the classroom teacher is an untapped leadership resource that could be
utilized to improve student achievement. While teachers face numerous obstacles to being leaders, perhaps the most difficult obstacles are the resistance of teachers to recognize their potential to be leaders and the lack of opportunity to exercise that leadership.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of a fellowship program on Fellows using the lenses of normative discourse and the culture of power that exist in education. I examined the experiences the Fellows had during their time in the fellowship program, including the development of their curriculum products, their training to become teacher leaders, and the multitude of opportunities they were afforded to serve as voices for classroom teachers and educational leaders in the state. The Fellows had varying but powerful experiences. In order to examine their experiences, I used narrative inquiry to gather the stories of four Fellows. Then, using both narrative and poetic analysis, I analyzed the Fellows’ stories to examine how their fellowship experience affected their self-identification as teacher leaders and, furthermore, to explore the roles of normative discourse and the culture of power in developing teacher leaders. Specifically, this study explored the extent to which normative discourse and the culture of power shaped the Fellow’s experiences. Guiding questions for my research that stemmed from the lenses were:

- How has the fellowship experience impacted the Fellows’ understanding of being teacher leaders and their own self-identification as teacher leaders?
- What is the role of normative discourse in informing and training teacher leaders?
How are the Fellows socialized to “perform” normative discourse and operate in the culture of power?
Chapter One

“The path was grassy and wanted wear”

In 1996, a report from the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, *What matters most: Teaching for America’s future*, indicated that educational reform begins and ends with the classroom teacher, and furthermore, a quality teacher is directly linked to student achievement. At a time when our nation is facing an overwhelming shortage in quality teachers and in light of *No Child Left Behind* legislation that requires children to have qualified teachers, it is imperative that educators at all levels empower teachers to be leaders. Because teachers interact with learners on a daily basis they have a keen understanding of student needs. Thus, teachers must function as catalysts for change that needs to happen to improve student achievement. The educational community has an obligation to foster teacher leadership and to provide professional opportunities to develop teachers’ leadership skills. Peterson and Barnes (1996) argue that quality professional development should innately foster teacher leadership. In addition, the National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century reported that teachers are potential change agents who must develop their leadership skills by participating in sustained, high-quality professional development. One purpose of this study is to examine how the fellowship works to prepare teachers to be leaders.

While the trend in professional development is beginning to shift, traditionally, much of the professional development for teachers occurs as one-day workshops that employ the banking model of education, pouring knowledge into teachers who return to their classrooms and promptly file away the handouts never to be used (Freire, 1970). The fellowship program in this study is a two-year model for professional development
that fosters teacher leadership by supporting Fellows to develop curriculum projects and by providing opportunities for classroom teachers to have a voice regarding educational issues, one heard by those in educational, business, and political arenas.

The fellowship program welcomed a fourth class of Fellows in 2004 while graduating its second class of 2002. The Fellows partner with faculty from three local universities. The Fellow and the university mentor form a team to explore new discoveries in science and to produce curriculum projects to be disseminated for teachers through the websites of the state department of education and one of the universities. Additionally, the Fellows participate in formal dialogues with local and state politicians and community business leaders.

In the site for this study, decisions regarding educational issues are made at the state level by an elected legislature that is informed by the state department of education and the state board of education composed of community members. Often, the state legislators have no experience in education other than attending public schools as students. Thus, an elected body, which has limited knowledge about education, makes decisions about what happens in schools. Because of the fellowship program, I had the opportunity to participate in a fireside chat with a state legislator who shared with us that as classroom teachers we have an obligation to contact our local legislators to speak with them about educational issues. She shared that the majority of the legislators have backgrounds in law and business and their only knowledge of public education comes from either their own or their children’s experiences in public schools. The legislators are mainly informed by those who work for the state department of education, which is led by an elected superintendent. Those employed at the state department of education
do tend to have prior classroom teaching experience and, therefore, are likely to be qualified to inform the legislators. While the state board of education is composed of people with a mixture of backgrounds, they are primarily business leaders. Those at the state level, including the superintendent, the board, and workers at the department of education, are informed by the county administrators and school boards who make decisions at the local level.

The local school boards are elected and, similar to the state board of education, are composed of people with a variety of backgrounds. The county level administrators often have spent time in the classroom. Given this hierarchy of power, often teachers feel distanced from the decisions made that ultimately dictate their actions and responsibilities in the classroom. The fellowship program provides training for teachers to develop leadership skills and creates opportunities for classroom teachers to inform politicians, education leaders, and business leaders regarding issues that are important to classroom teachers. Teachers are empowered to speak directly to those who make decisions for education. The formal dialogues, along with support to present at state and national professional conferences, provide the Fellows with opportunities to assume leadership roles.

After completing the program, Fellows remain connected to the program by facilitating professional development for current Fellows and by mentoring the new class of Fellows. Additionally, graduated Fellows currently work in collaboration with the program director to develop the fellowship program academy, which will provide graduated Fellows with the opportunity to facilitate professional development for teachers across the state.
The fellowship program is administered by a major institute for science, engineering, and technology at a state university whose goal is to garner support from partners who share its vision to elevate the teaching profession, advance teacher leadership, and bring current scientific discoveries and technology to the K-12 classroom. The program is supported by grants from foundations, government organizations, corporations and individual partners. As such, a central piece of the program is assessing its effectiveness and impact in a variety of identified areas. The 2003-2004 assessment plan addresses four major areas of the program: 1) the usefulness of the summer internship program on the development of the Fellows’ skills; 2) the impact of the program on leadership ability, on pedagogy and content knowledge, on helping fellows to forge and maintain relationships with the community; 3) the effects of the university mentor; 4) and the student attitudes toward science and inquiry-focused instruction.

While these objectives are certainly valuable in assessing the program, as a Fellow, I am aware that the experience of being a Fellow is powerful for reasons beyond the assessment plans. The assessment is, unfortunately, constrained by stakeholders who value quantitative data more than qualitative data. Yet, it is the data gathered through qualitative research that reach the heart of the impact of the fellowship program on the lives and careers of the Fellows. Thus, in this study I considered how the Fellows’ experience, as a result of the fellowship program’s model for professional development, impacts the way Fellows perceive themselves and how it empowers them to function as teacher leaders.

As a Fellow, I was educated on the culture of power that exists in education. We were taught about the hierarchy of decision-makers and how to operate in settings with
those individuals. The program taught me “the rules” so that I would be equipped to participate in the “game” of those in power. Therefore, beyond examining the impact of the program on the individual, the purpose of this study was to use the normative discourse as a lens to examine how the Fellows are trained to be leaders and how, as a result of the training, they utilize their voices. This study examined the impact of the program on Fellows both as individuals and professionals as they moved through the program, and it looked at the role of the normative discourse and the culture of power in relation to the Fellows’ experiences. The lens of the normative discourse and culture of power allowed me to understand whether or not the fellowship program is a teacher leadership program that teaches Fellows to “perform whiteness” (Warren, 2003) in order to gain power and voice in education. In examining that impact, I intended to capture the voices and emotions that resonate in conversations with Fellows about how the fellowship influenced their lives, and, also to reflect the power of the fellowship program to foster connections that enable teachers’ voices to be heard where they typically are not. I also hoped to understand whether normative discourse shaped these powerful experiences.

In current research, white privilege is considered a social construct. In the early 1990s, scholars published a small body of work that deemed White Americans responsible for deconstructing white privilege. Peggy McIntosh (1988) and James Scheurich (1993) are noted for laying much of the groundwork for current research on white privilege. Research indicates that because white privilege is a social construct, not only must whites deconstruct the privilege but reconstruct race as something that
does not privilege whites (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1998). In recent years, research has turned to examine “whiteness.” The research that guided my study stems from the work of John T. Warren (2003) in which he uses Judith Butler’s theory that individuals “perform gender” to posit his own theory that individuals also “perform whiteness”. He asserts that performing whiteness can be done by anyone, regardless of skin color. Furthermore, performing whiteness is necessary in order to be successful in a society that privileges whiteness.

Much research and work on teacher leadership was done in the early nineties as a response to *A nation at risk* (National Commission, 1983). While work has continued in the area of teacher leadership, there is a dearth of current theory on teacher leadership particularly as it relates to professional development programs that effectively foster teacher leadership. What does currently exist is research that attempts to define the term *teacher leader*. Roland Barth (2001) and Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) define what it means for teachers to be leaders in their school environments. Numerous professional development models exist for training teachers to be leaders. Less research has been done in the area of obstacles to teacher leadership, while most of that research points at the teachers themselves as the major obstacle along with resistance from administrators who have traditionally served as the leaders. Research is also limited regarding what role the teacher leader plays outside of the school environment. Additionally, there is little research on how the teacher leader self-identifies as a leader and how that identity influences teachers both personally and professionally.
Currently, there is a gap exists in the research that examines the intersection of teacher leadership and the normative discourse of the culture of power. My intention was for this research to fill that gap.
Chapter Two

Literature Review: The road lay “in leaves no step had trodden black”

Teacher Leadership

Recently, I had the opportunity to participate in a dialogue about teacher leadership. The participants were invited to attend the dialogue because of their position in one of three programs that promote teacher leadership in a large urban school district. The facilitators asked these essential questions: 1) What do we know about teachers leaders, and what do we still need to learn? and 2) What can we do to support one another in our efforts to develop as teacher leaders? The dialogue revealed that there are many ideas for defining teacher leader. Teachers, by virtue of their role, are leaders of students, and they demonstrate this in the classroom, on the athletic field, and in school clubs. Teachers demonstrate leadership within the school environment by serving as department chairs and mentors. They serve on leadership teams and school improvement committees. Teachers are credentialed as leaders if they hold advanced graduate licenses or if they have National Board Certification\(^7\). Furthermore, to enhance their leadership roles, teachers are able to leave the confines of their school community to participate in professional development programs such as the National Writing Project\(^8\) or the fellowship program in this study. They present at state and national conferences, serve in local unions and professional organizations, and in many cases, work at the local and state levels to develop curriculum. By no means is this an exhaustive list of the how teachers serve as leaders; however, it serves to show the possibilities that may earn one the role of teacher leader.
As mentioned, much research and work on teacher leadership was done in the early nineties as a response to the *A nation at risk* (1983) and a report (1986) from the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy that promoted fostering teacher leadership in order to support the educational reforms taking place. Research on teacher leadership currently is situated primarily in defining teacher leadership, in creating models to develop teacher leaders, and, in fewer instances, in understanding the obstacles to teacher leadership, delineating how to support teacher leaders, identifying the stakeholders, and assessing the impact of teacher leaders on student achievement and the educational community. For the purposes of this study, I will begin by briefly touching on how the current research defines teacher leadership, focus the majority of the discussion on the models for developing teacher leaders where the bulk of the research lies, and close by citing research that addresses obstacles and support in relation to teacher leadership, stakeholders, and the impact of teacher leadership on student achievement.

**What is a teacher leader?**

In teacher education programs, pre-service teachers are traditionally not trained in leadership skills. They do not take a class in Teacher Leadership; therefore, for many teachers, seeing themselves as leaders is far-fetched. I was at a round-table discussion with Gayle Moller who told the story of how she titled her book, *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders* (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). She shared that she was driving through Florida with a teacher whom she was interviewing for her research. On the drive they had a conversation about being a leader. Moller inquired whether the teacher considered herself a leader, to which the teacher replied,
“I’m not a leader, I’m just a teacher.” So many teachers see themselves as “just teachers.”

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) argue that every school has a “sleeping giant of teacher leadership”, and “by helping teachers believe they are leaders, by offering opportunities to develop their leadership skills, and by creating school cultures that honor their leadership, we can awaken this sleeping giant of teacher leadership” (pp. 2-3). Their metaphor aptly articulates the potential that teachers have to be leaders, and yet for a variety of reasons most teachers do not currently maximize this potential. Katzenmeyer and Moller synthesize their research on teacher leadership to define teacher leaders as “teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice” (p. 5). Given their definition, Katzenmeyer and Moller posit that teacher leaders have a responsibility both inside and outside the classroom to influence colleagues and others in the educational setting to improve their environment.

Roland Barth (2001) offers a laundry list of duties that characterizes a teacher as a teacher leader including such duties as choosing textbooks, setting the standard for student behavior, evaluating teacher performance, and selecting new teachers and administrators. Barth seeks to go beyond these roles to assert: “All teachers can lead” (p. 444). He argues that students, the school, teachers, and principals all benefit when teachers lead. Granted, his position is ambiguous in that he does not declare a definition for a teacher leader, yet Barth does offer roles that a teacher may assume, and as a result of performing such roles, a teacher is deemed a leader. Like Barth, Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) also suggest roles that define a teacher leader including: “lead teacher, master
teacher, department head, union representative, member of school’s governance council, mentor, district-level decision making participant, stimulating professional growth of colleagues, and advocating for teachers’ work” (2000, p. 416). Unfortunately, defining what the term *teacher leader* means by providing a list of roles a teacher may assume falls short of defining what it means to be a teacher leader. Being a teacher leader goes beyond a role or title. Teachers do leadership work with students in their classrooms, as coaches, but they may also serve in unique roles that require them to lead in other capacities.

Linda Lambert’s (1995) theory of leadership is based on constructivism; she suggests leadership is a “a concept transcending individuals, roles, and behaviors” (Lambert, 1995, p. 29). Unlike Barth (2001) and Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), Lambert does not limit her definition of teacher leader to a laundry list of roles. And while some may argue that the leaders in an educational community are the administrators, Lambert asserts that all participants in the educational community have the potential to be leaders. She also argues that just as students make meaning when learning new knowledge, so do adult learners. This position leads Lambert to define leadership as “the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose of schooling” (p.32). Lambert theorizes that because leadership is a reciprocal process between the participants, it is not necessary to wear a certain leadership title to be deemed a leader. Rather, all participants in the community have the ability to take on leadership responsibilities. Leadership “permeates a healthy school culture and is undertaken by whoever sees a need or an opportunity”(p.33).
The meaning of teacher leader varies in current research; however, the common characteristics in the definitions are that a teacher leader performs actions within the school community that are seen by other community members as leading, and these actions foster either growth or change within that community. The dilemma that arises as a result of examining how researchers are defining teacher leadership is that many teachers are not trained to be leaders; therefore, they are reluctant, for a variety of reasons, to become leaders. Fortunately, current researchers (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; Ovando, 1996; Silva et al., 2000) recognize the lack of professional development for teachers to develop leadership skills and are working to develop frameworks for training teacher leaders (Crowther et al., 2002; Feiler, Heritage, & Gallimore, 2000; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Through examining research and reflecting on personal experience, I have concluded that being a teacher leader means one must take on a role in the education community that causes others to see an individual as a respectable, credible source of knowledge and support, thus others will be comfortable not only following that individual but supporting him or her in the community. Deconstructing this definition reveals numerous areas of ambiguity, including what role in education one must take, what earns one credibility, what knowledge is valuable, and how a leader is supportive of others. Additionally, other questions which surface include: How does one become a teacher leader? Can we train teachers to be leaders? If so, how do we train teachers to be leaders? What are the obstacles to teacher leadership, and how can they be overcome? And, ultimately, what is the impact on education of fostering teacher leadership?
Training Teachers to be Leaders

Traditionally, teachers have not been trained to be leaders most likely because those in the educational community have considered the teacher’s job is to teach, not lead. Much of the research currently being done in the area of teacher leadership examines how teacher leaders can be developed. Few, but an increasing number, of pre-service programs at the university level, train teachers in leadership skills (Clemson-Ingram & Fessler, 1997; Forster, 1997). Thus, beginning teachers in the classroom are ill-equipped to take on the challenges of leadership leaving those roles to more experienced teachers. However, veteran teachers mostly have only experience to prepare them for leadership roles, which alone is not enough to develop competent teacher leaders. Consequently, there is a justifiable need for researchers to develop frameworks for developing teachers as leaders.

Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999) provide a framework for understanding what it may look like for a teacher to be a leader within the school community. They developed a transformational leadership model to understand the types of actions by teachers that indicate they are leaders in their schools, communities, and state. Transformational leadership is structured along eight dimensions: “building school vision; establishing school goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; modeling best practices and important organizational values; demonstrating high performance expectations; creating a productive school culture; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions” (1999, p. 118). Their model for leadership promotes the school as a community in which all stakeholders share in “distributed leadership”.
In *The constructivist leader* (1995), Lambert details her theory on defining leadership in constructivist terms by using “images” from a master’s level university course for school administrators at California State University at Hayward, which used a constructivist approach to leadership. She suggests four images, the first of which is collaboration and community building. Students in the course develop a sense of community by working together in their learning throughout the semester. A second image is portfolios, which students design and compile to “portray their sense of themselves as leaders” (1995, p. 173). The third image is exit interviews during which the students must “synthesize their beliefs, values, and knowledge into a unified portrait of themselves as leaders” (p. 174). The fourth image is stories and metaphor. Students develop their own stories about their experiences both in and out of the class as they take on leadership roles. Lambert does not offer a prescriptive model for developing the constructionist leader; rather, she offers these “images” and discusses other programs, both university and non-university, that portray the tenets of constructivist leadership. Lambert expands on her theories about constructivist leadership in *Building leadership capacity* (1998), in which she develops a model for building in a school what she calls “leadership capacity” (Lambert, 1998, p.4). Lambert’s model (1998) for building leadership capacity is a reciprocal, four- step process that includes: 1) surface, clarify, and define community values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and exceptions; 2) inquire into practice; 3) construct meaning and knowledge; and 4) frame action and develop implementation plans.

Katzenmeyer and Moller’s (2001) work offers ideas about garnering support for teacher leadership given the numerous obstacles to its success, and they provide a
framework for developing teacher leaders. Their model for leadership development proposes that before teachers can be leaders, they must first know themselves. Therefore, the first step toward becoming a leader is to address the question, “Who am I?” (p. 48) where the teachers examine how their values and beliefs inform their professional performance. The second piece of the model is for teachers to examine, “Where am I?” (p. 48). Teachers research information about their schools and their communities to understand their role in the larger context. And lastly, teachers ask, “How do I lead others?” (p. 53). As a final piece of understanding themselves and their space in the educational community, they learn the skills needed to be a leader. After completing these three pieces, teachers are prepared to move to the final question: “What can I do?” (p. 53). Teachers must take on leadership roles that are needed in their learning community. While Katzenmeyer and Moller do not call this model a constructivist-based model, it is similar to Lambert’s ideas about teacher leadership development. Both Lambert’s and Katzenmeyer’s and Moller’s models promote reflexive learning and meaning making on the teacher’s part in order to develop as a leader.

While some frameworks are generalized to develop leadership skills, others are designed to prepare teachers for specific leadership roles. One of the roles that teachers most frequently associate with leadership is serving as a mentor to beginning teachers. Mentoring became a key component in the reform of teaching in the 1980s. Since then, mentor training programs and mentor/mentee programs have gradually developed throughout the country. A mentor serves as a coach and a positive role model for novice teachers, and guides them to reach their full potential. Mentors provide opportunities, and act as caregivers who offers nurturing and support. The mentor’s role is not to
evaluate a new teacher. Mentors are selected based on a genuine desire to help a new teacher and are trained and offered incentives for their role. Ultimately, the desire is for the mentor to improve the teaching performance of new teachers, increase retention rates of new teachers, ensure their positive personal and professional development, and make an impact on the direction of the teaching profession. In their work, *Mentoring and supervision for teacher development*, Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall (1998) provide a framework for training teachers, and, more specifically, training teachers to be mentors to other teachers. Their framework promotes the teacher as a leader of new teachers based on the assertion that practicing teachers can most effectively support beginning teachers.

A role similar to that of a mentor is one practiced by teachers in public schools in Boston. Guiney (2001), examining the role of external coaches, found they serve as “change coaches” who work to advise administrators on school reform and “content coaches” who offer support to classroom teachers by entering their classrooms to provide coaching. They also conduct professional development workshops for teachers that is sustained, focused, and high quality. Rather than “teaching” teachers, the coach’s job is to “work with teachers, helping them to imagine and create another reality, helping them to engage in regular, reflective discussions about instruction” (p. 741). The coaches are hired as a result of the superintendent’s goal to improve student performance in urban Boston schools. The coaches not only work as leaders but also foster leadership in other teachers. The model was developed originally for the “change coach’s” role and the “content coaches” role to be phased out after two years, and while the “change coaches” no longer function, interestingly, the “content coaches” have proven to be too beneficial to phase out as planned.
One of the common themes in the models for training teachers is that the professional development must be sustained over a period of time rather than offered as one-day workshops. Research has shown that these short-term workshops do not lead to improved teaching because teachers do not engage the knowledge to be gained (Fullan, M.C., 1991; Howey, K.R., 1985; Joyce & Showers, 1980; Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall, 1998). When they are subjected to direct instruction in quick workshops, they do not use the knowledge. Therefore, professional development opportunities like the mentor training suggested by Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall (1998) and the training by “change coaches” (Guiney, 2001) were designed to be sustained over a period of time.

The research on frameworks for developing teacher leaders is useful to those who want to empower teachers to be leaders. Teachers need training in order to develop leadership skills especially since such training is not typically a part of pre-service programs. When teachers enter the profession, they choose the extent to which they want to serve as leaders in their school communities. Arguably, however, if they had leadership training, teachers would be more likely to take on leadership positions and be successful because they would be more confident.

**Obstacles and Support**

As with any reform, in order to make progress and create change, it is important to understand the obstacles and how to support individuals to overcome them. Many of the researchers concerned about developing teacher leaders address potential obstacles. Barth (2001) acknowledges the obstacles to teacher leadership, including the fact that teachers tend to have too many responsibilities and/or duties, so they do not have time to take on leadership roles, teachers feel the standardized tests looming, and teachers see
colleagues as potential obstacles. The idea that teachers can lead is one that is threatening to other teachers who may only recognize the traditional leadership model of principal as leader. If teachers undermine each other as they work to have a voice in the community, they prohibit the community from reaching its potential (Katzenmeyer & Moller 2000; Lambert 1995). In addition, the principal can also be a barrier to teacher leadership, according to Barth (2001). He acknowledges that many principals feel threatened when “sharing” leadership with teachers. Teacher leadership is possible in a school community that promotes democratic ideals so that every community member has a voice. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2000) also speak specifically about the role of superintendents and district staff who can control policy by advocating for teacher leadership opportunities.

Given the numerous obstacles to fostering teacher leadership and empowering teachers to be leaders, it is necessary to consider how teacher leadership can be supported. Barth (2001) sees it as the principal’s role to empower teachers within the school, to include them when addressing issues, to protect teacher leaders, to recognize the work of teacher leaders, and to share responsibility for failure. Ultimately, it is the principal at every school who sets the tone of leadership for that school. If a principal is one who micro-manages and relies very little on teacher opinion, then a school will not have strong teacher leaders. On the other hand, if a school has a principal who empowers teachers to take on leadership roles that he or she has created, then a school is likely to have strong teacher leaders who feel supported and necessary. Lambert (1998) suggests that much of the responsibility is on the principal to restructure the school to foster leadership capacity because the principal has the ability to redirect power that has
traditionally resided only in the principal’s role. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) also address the role of the principal and other administrators to be supportive and empower teachers to be leaders. In addition to the principal, it is also important that other teachers foster an environment that is supportive and nurturing. Teachers far out-number the administration. If teachers are not supportive of the notion of teacher leadership and undermine those who try to lead, then the responsibility to lead will fall back on the administration. Ultimately, teachers must recognize that much of the onus for teacher leadership is on them.

Stakeholders in Teacher Leadership

A vital aspect of any reform movement is acknowledging the stakeholders and aligning their goals. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) offer practical actions to foster teacher leadership that can be taken by stakeholders including teachers, principals, superintendents and district-level administrators, as well as college and university professors. Fostering teacher leadership begins at the university level with programs that train teachers in leadership skills and teach teachers how they can serve as leaders. Additionally, programs that train administrators must include how to foster teacher leadership. If training begins at the university, then it will filter into the schools. Given that filtering takes time, it is also important to train veteran educators, both administrators and teachers, who are currently in schools.

Impact on Student Achievement

Ultimately, teacher leadership will only be necessary if it has a positive impact on education, and, more specifically, on student achievement. Currently, there is little evidence in research that supports the claim that teacher leadership impacts student
achievement (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Lambert’s (1998) position is that if all community members participate in a shared leadership model, then student achievement will improve. Given that teachers are present in the classroom everyday working with students, it is only logical that teachers have a voice in making the decisions about what occurs in that classroom. Traditionally, administrators or legislators have made decisions with limited consideration of the teacher’s position. However, if we are to improve student achievement, consulting teachers is vital. Andrews and Crowther (2002) intend for the results of their study to serve as a catalyst for school reform. Their intent is to show that teacher leadership, more specifically parallel leadership, affects school growth in three primary areas: “school wide professional learning, school wide pedagogy, and school wide culture building” (p. 156). They propose that in order for teacher leadership to progress, more research needs to be done on how it influences the school environment and student achievement.

Not all research points toward teacher leadership benefiting student achievement. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) conducted a replication study from their previously implemented theoretical framework using the same data collection instruments and data analysis procedures. Their study examines whether teacher or principal leadership has the greatest impact on student engagement. Interestingly, their replication led them to conclude that the principal has a more significant effect on student achievement than the teacher leader. They conclude by suggesting that the meaning of leadership is tenuous. Based on their research “grafting leadership onto the concept of teaching actually devalues the status of teaching in the long run” (p. 430). Thus, they make the case that teaching is an honorable profession that should not necessitate that one be a leader. They
say, “it seems likely that this marriage of concepts will do a disservice to the concept of leadership” because, essentially, not everyone can lead— otherwise “if everyone is a leader the concept loses all value as a legitimate distinction among social and organizational practices” (p. 430).

While the teacher leadership movement is in its infancy stages with most of the research currently focused on developing teacher leadership and overcoming the obstacles to empower teacher leaders, it is important to consider how being a leader impacts the teacher not only professionally but also personally. Research does not clarify how the role of teacher leader affects the individual teacher. While it is important to consider what it means to be a teacher leader and the obstacles teachers face, it is also important to understand the process by which a teacher becomes a leader, the opportunities that allow that to happen, and the impact that role has on the individual.

**National Programs that Promote Teacher Leadership**

In order to synthesize the research on teacher leadership, I would like to situate the research in a discussion of two national programs that seek to develop teacher leaders and provide opportunities for them to demonstrate their leadership. The programs are the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards process and the National Writing Project. In examining these programs, I will highlight how they seek to foster teacher leadership and how the programs affect their participants.

**National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.**

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was born out of a need that was outlined in a report by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, *A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century.* (1986) The report detailed
the need for a professional certification process for teachers that would enable them to demonstrate their excellence in the teaching profession. The board was formed in 1987, with the mission to

advance the quality of teaching and learning by: maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do; providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards; and advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified teachers. (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2003).

In addition to the mission, the NBPTS includes a standard by which all teachers should be certified that it was developed “by teachers, with teachers, and for teachers” (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2003).

Teachers who choose to apply for National Board Certification must complete a rigorous set of assessments that include constructing a portfolio that represents an analysis of their practice and sitting for a series of written exams on their content area and pedagogy. The portfolios are assessed by a group composed primarily of teachers and/or former teachers who have been trained to assess the products. The National Board seeks to certify those teacher who reflect five core propositions:

- teachers are committed to students and their learning; teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and
teachers are members of learning communities” (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2003).

If a teacher passes the series of assessments, then he or she is National Board Certified (NBC). This recognition, in recent years, has become desirable not only for the honor of the prestigious professional title but also because many states are providing financial bonuses to teachers with the certification.

I will look at this program in the context of whether it is a teacher leadership program. While none of the literature I found on the NBPTS website uses the word leadership when discussing the program, many of the aspects of the program can be read to infer that the program develops teacher leaders. The mission statement says in its third tenet that the NBPTS supports “advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of NBC teachers.” To “capitalize on expertise”, in my estimation, catapults the NBC teacher into a leadership role. Many NBC teachers whom I know assume leadership roles in their schools in a variety of ways. The honor brings a set of expectations from other teachers who consider this person to be an expert teacher; therefore, a NBC teacher is one who is well-respected and looked to for advice by other teachers. The NBC teachers become role models for all teachers who have an interest in what the “expert” is doing. NBC teachers often form support groups in their schools, counties, and areas for other teachers who are applying for National Boards. Many also work in formal settings as trainers for those applying for National Boards. The NBC teacher is also looked to when making curriculum decisions in the school, when making decisions about the
school improvement plan, to mention only a few ways a NBC teacher takes on leadership roles.

The NBPTS is clear that the board is composed of classroom teachers. Classroom teachers were instrumental in developing the standards for assessing the teachers; classroom teachers assess products; classroom teachers join a speaker’s bureau. In other words, classroom teachers play a role in every aspect of the NBPTS program. These facts provide credibility and validity for the program and suggest that the program fosters opportunities for teachers to be leaders in the program. Those teachers who become NBC have opportunities to assume leadership responsibilities in the program by joining the board, working as assessors, or serving as trainers.

Currently, on the website, the NBPTS boasts,

“The advent of the NBCT is already resulting in positive changes in their classrooms, in their school districts, and in the larger education community. The recognition, visibility, new roles and growth of the numbers of NBCT are affecting not only their classrooms, but also the culture of schools where they work. (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2003)

Again, this language resists using the word leadership; however, new roles and affecting the culture of schools both demonstrate what it means to be a teacher leader.

The NBPTS program is not a leadership program in the sense that it specifically trains teachers to be leaders. Rather, it is a program that has established a set of standards by which teachers can be considered “experts” in the teaching profession. Interestingly, the program was born out of the standards movement of the 1980s that also brought the
onslaught of high stakes testing that we are currently enduring. However, in looking at
the NBPTS standards for measuring a quality teacher, it is clear that traditional teaching
to the test for rote memory recall is not expert teaching. Rather, the program supports a
more constructivist approach to learning that is student-centered. NBC teachers must
teach with the multiple intelligences in mind; they must meet the learners where they are;
they must create relevance for the students; they must use authentic assessments.

The NBPTS program advocates practice that is current with education research.
If teachers meet the criteria and pass the assessments, they are National Board Certified.
Part of the expectation in the Five Core Propositions is that these teachers are already
leaders in their school communities. By virtue of the NBC title, the teachers are
recognized as experts and thus are more capable of assuming leadership roles. The
NBPTS expects that these teachers will continue to work in their school communities to
foster growth and change. I am not suggesting that the certification alone earns these
teachers leadership roles. Frank Serafini points out,

as individual teachers work through the certification process and begin to
reflect on and critique their practice from different perspectives, they
become more capable of making appropriate decisions for the students in
their classrooms. In this way, the NBPTS has the potential to affect
teaching, staff development, and teacher education programs in positive
ways” (2000, p.325).

Thus, the NBPTS process that measures effective teaching does prepare teachers to be
leaders. The process does not teach leadership skills directly; however, it does give
teachers the professional qualifications to step into leadership roles.
The National Writing Project

The National Writing Project (NWP) is a federally funded professional development program for teachers, developed in 1974 in an effort to foster quality writing by America’s students. The NWP offers a professional development model for teachers seeking to develop their teacher leadership skills by providing opportunities for them to share effective writing practices and learn to become better writers themselves. In turn, NWP teachers are expected to share their expertise by teaching other teachers how to teach writing. The model was constructed on the assumption that “teachers are the key to education reform, teachers make the best teachers of other teachers, and teachers benefit from studying and conducting research” (National Writing Project, 1995-2004).

Teachers join the NWP by invitation from site directors. Currently, 185 sites across the United States are located on university campuses. Invited teachers attend an intensive summer institute during which they “demonstrate their most effective practices, study research, and improve their knowledge of writing by writing themselves” (National Writing Project, 1995-2004). In addition, a significant expectation of the program is that after successful completion of the program, the participants become “teacher consultants” who take on leadership roles in their schools and communities.

The National Writing Project is grounded in the philosophy that teachers are the best teachers of other teachers. Rather than sending teachers to one-day workshops where they are force-fed facts, the NWP supports the writing process, learning through writing, reflection, and growth in a community environment. It is the type of environment in which research has shown people learn because the knowledge has
relevance and use. Furthermore, the NWP model has demonstrated the importance of teachers leaving the isolation of their classrooms to get together and simply talk, to share their ideas. Smith describes the NWP as a “breeding ground for teacher researchers, published writers, in-service leaders, keynote speakers, extraordinary classroom practitioners—each of them reinforced by others in the community” (Smith, 1996, p.689). This model strikes amazing resemblance to constructivist leadership (Lambert 1995, 1998) in that it embraces the importance of teachers working in a community in order to construct meaning. The NWP program is constructivist in nature in that each site has its own unique community each summer that determines what it means to teach writing and how to teach other teachers how to teach writing.

The NBPTS and NWP as teacher leadership development programs share some characteristics. As discussed earlier, the NBPTS does not explicitly state that it is concerned with teacher leadership; nevertheless, based on the rhetoric on their website, I believe that it is possible to conclude that the NBPTS does promote a form of teacher leadership. Furthermore, those teachers who complete the NBPTS process often take a variety of leadership roles in their schools and communities as a result of the National Board Certification. It is important to recognize that these teachers often take on leadership roles because of the authority that is attached to the NBC title. The same authority is addressed in relation to the National Writing Project in a study by Diane R. Wood and Ann Lieberman (2000). They suggest that to “authorize” is to “lend approval, justify, sanction, or imbue with authority. In other words, authorization bestows credibility” (p. 269). Those teachers who complete NWP training, and I argue the NBPTS as well, gain credibility that enables them to be recognized by their school communities
as leaders. Furthermore, as Wood and Lieberman (2000) argue, “This nomenclature is a way of reminding teachers they have the capacity to play a public role in serving the profession”(269). The teachers who are involved in the NWP and NBPTS no longer risk being the teacher that Katzenmeyer and Moller (2000) refer to as the “sleeping giant” because these two programs wake up the proverbial “giants” and empower them to impact their school communities.

A central contrast between the NBPTS and the NWP lies in the nature of the purposes of the programs. Wood and Lieberman (2000) point out in their study that “not every teacher in the NWP is a paragon of virtue or even of practice. It is perfectly possible to argue that participation in the NWP does not absolutely ensure high quality teaching”(2000, p. 259). The NWP applications call for classroom expertise in that each participant shares an effective lesson that has a theoretical or research basis. Thus, the NWP describes itself as a program for the “best teachers”, not a program that “certifies” graduates or earns graduates monetary benefits. Similarly, the primary purpose of the NBPTS is to ensure that those teachers who earn NBC are worthy according to the standards established for being an “expert” teacher, which includes demonstrating leadership. While numerous critics of the NBPTS process argue that the process is too rigid, unfair, does not accurately measure good teaching, the established goal of the program is to recognize and reward the experts. And in fact, it is the understanding that the NBC teacher is an expert that gives him or her the authority to take on leadership roles.
Fellowship Program for Promoting Curriculum and Teacher Leadership.

After describing two national programs for teacher leadership development, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the National Writing Project, examining how each seeks to develop teacher leadership, and drawing some comparisons and contrasts between the two programs, I would like to move on to situate the Fellowship Program for Curriculum and Leadership Development, which in this study will be referred to as the *fellowship program*, within the context of the research on teacher leadership development and these two national programs.

I am a graduate of the 2002 class of the fellowship program. So often in life, I have found that when something sounds too good to be true, it usually is. The fellowship program is one of those programs that may sound too good to be true, especially when one considers the perks and hefty stipend that accompany the fellowship. However, after my two years with the program, I eagerly praise the program and all it has done for me. From the first day that I began the first of two five-week summer sessions, I recognized that the program was different from anything I had experienced because we were treated as professionals, and we were appreciated for being teachers. Beyond the fact that being a part of a prestigious program made me feel like a valued part of the teaching profession, the program did much to empower me to become a teacher leader.

During the five-week summer sessions, the program director schedules a wide array of professional development sessions to prepare us for our role both as Fellows and teacher leaders. The program, as mentioned, has two major components: teachers develop a curriculum product to be housed on the department of public instruction and the university’s websites, and teachers attend numerous functions to utilize their
leadership skills. The summer sessions I attended were on a variety of topics. I learned about innovative curriculum models and how to use website-building software in order to work on my curriculum product. I also participated in workshops on current research in education on motivating students and brain research. In addition, I attended workshops on developing leadership skills including Covey training and Toastmaster sessions that prepared us for public speaking.

At this point, I will draw some comparisons and contrasts between the fellowship program and the NBPTS and NWP. Both the NBPTS and NWP are programs grounded in teachers being leaders in the curriculum context. Those who complete both programs are considered experts in their respective subject areas and grade levels. The fellowship program does not promote the Fellows as experts in their subject areas. Rather, the program supports fellows in developing curriculum products in their subject areas to help other classroom teachers by publishing teachers’ work. While NWP participants also create products, these products are a reflection of their expertise in their respective subject areas. Fellows are considered “highly qualified teachers” in a broad sense because of all the program helps us achieve; however, they are not experts in the narrow sense of being experts in our subject area. The fellowship program is like the NWP in that both promote intensive summer sessions. However, the range of topics addressed by the fellowship program vary from curriculum to leadership, while the NWP has a primary focus on writing and preparing the participants to be leaders by teaching writing to other teachers. Nevertheless, despite differences in program thrusts, I think the fundamental concepts behind the NWP and the fellowship program are very similar. Both programs value teachers and seek to empower teachers to take leadership roles because they see
teachers as an untapped resource. Both programs seek to provide opportunities for teachers to demonstrate their skills to other teachers. The NWP provides opportunities by preparing teachers to train other teachers each summer and sponsoring other types of workshops. Likewise, the fellowship program supports Fellows who present at national, state, and local conferences. Prior to the fellowship program, I had never presented at a conference. After my first summer with the program, I presented at various state conferences and a national conference. Additionally, I presented at workshops in conjunction with the state department of education. All of these opportunities resulted from my experience and sense of empowerment derived from the fellowship program.

I discussed earlier the work of Wood and Lieberman (2000) who spoke about the “authority” derived from the NWP, and I made a connection between NWP and NBPTS asserting that the same authority derives from being an NBC teacher. I further that comparison to assert that the fellowship program also brings the sense of authority that Wood and Lieberman (2000) discuss. While the Fellows are not recognized nationally, we have become increasingly recognized statewide as the program continues to grow. Fellows who work at schools are recognized for being Fellows, and the leadership opportunities that arise from being NBC also arise for the Fellows.

Another comparison between NWP and the fellowship is the relationship each program fosters with the university system. The NWP is hosted on university campuses and sponsored by faculty from the university in conjunction with public school teacher consultants. Likewise, the fellowship program has a strong connection with area universities because university faculty members are the mentors throughout the program. As the fellowship program looks to expand the program to other areas the state, choosing
locations is dependent upon having two or three colleges or universities in the area who are willing to support the program. The relationship between the university and public schools via the fellowship program is a vital relationship because it is in the universities where cutting edge scientific advances are being made and the mentors are able to work with classroom teachers to filter that technology and science to the public schools.

Yet another similarity between the NWP and the fellowship program is the sense of community that each program fosters among its participants. They establish a strong sense of community in the summer sessions because of the use of constructivist-based learning and because the participants feel they are working together to learn and create knowledge. That powerful experience leads to many of the participants staying in touch and remaining involved in the two programs long after their summer ends. The Fellows spend a great deal of time working together, collaborating, and, as a result, develop a sense of family. They all maintain contact with each other and have a strong network of colleagues to rely on for help. These two programs are grounded in an understanding that when people form relationships with one another, learn together, grow together, they are more likely to maintain those relationships and do amazing work in their communities. The fellowship program is also in the process of planning a fellowship program academy, which functions much like the NBPTS speaker’s bureau and the opportunities for NWP participants to serve as teacher consultants (TCs). The fellowship program academy will provide graduated fellows the opportunity to conduct professional development sessions for teachers across the state. It is important that all three programs have built into the program models an opportunity for the graduated participants to assume leadership roles crucial to enabling teachers to lead and promote change.
A final similarity between the fellowship program and NWP is each program’s effort to provide opportunities for those who have completed the programs to have voices in politics. The NWP organizes yearly visits to legislators and provides orientations where NWP teachers assemble in Washington, DC and spend two days in appointments with their state legislators. Additionally, the NWP has publications and sessions dealing with how to negotiate with district leaders. There is also a yearly letter-writing campaign where teachers write their legislators. Like the NWP, one aspect of the fellowship program is that Fellows have opportunities to participate in dialogue with politicians and business leaders. The fellowship program is a strong advocate of teachers being leaders not only in their classrooms, at conferences, and in their communities, but also being leaders in an arena where teacher’s voices are rarely heard—the political arena. The fellowship program recognizes that education is political. And so often teachers are recipients of top-down decisions. While the NWP provides its teacher with opportunities to have voices in politics, the program’s does not provide ongoing training for participants to be leaders in business or political affairs.

While there are many similarities among the NWP, the fellowship program, and the NBPTS, the NBPTS program differs from NWP and the fellowship program in that it does not overtly promote leadership and provide opportunities for teacher’s voices to be heard by legislators, school board members, and superintendents who make crucial education decisions. The fellowship program is funded primarily by private business with some public grant funds. I believe it is private funding that allows the program to delve into the political arena more deeply than NWP and NBPTS. While the NWP does participate in politics in terms of advocating for federal support, the thrust of the program
is not preparing participants to be teacher leaders in the political arena as it is in the fellowship program. As part of the fellowship program, Fellows are expected to attend fireside chats with state and local politicians, state school board of education leaders, and leaders at the university level. And while I cannot say that any concrete results have come from these chats, the Fellows enter the chats with an agenda, and the director coaches Fellows on the agenda prior to each chat by providing topics to raise. Fellows have pushed for maintaining funding for mentors and incentives to recruit and retain teachers, for example.

While I do believe that teachers leading in curriculum reform and development is crucial because we need to foster teacher autonomy in the classroom, I also believe that the most impressive and necessary piece of the fellowship program is providing teachers the opportunity to have a voice in politics where major decisions about education are made. The fact that Fellows are able to sit down at a table with these leaders to discuss important educational issues is empowering.

Since the 1980s, the push to recognize the “untapped resource”, the classroom teacher, and utilize and empower classroom teachers as leaders is an important shift in improving education. Based on my research, it is evident that we are still working to understand what a teacher leader does, how to train teacher leaders, and how to provide opportunities for teachers to lead. However, in examining programs like the National Writing Project, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the fellowship program, it is evident that providing teachers training and opportunity can result in long-term benefit for education. The key element true of all of these programs is the “authority” (Wood and Lieberman 2000) that each fosters in its participants.
Authority coupled with the opportunity for leadership beyond the time the participant is in the program is in line with research that shows that professional development needs to be sustained. Furthermore, if teachers are to lead, they must have the opportunity to lead—these programs provide that opportunity.

**White Privilege**

One of the dominant lenses that guided this study is normative discourse, or white privilege, as it relates to teacher leadership. In the early 1990s, scholars began concentrating on the role of White Americans in addressing issues of race. James Joseph Scheurich (1993) wrote one of the most cited works in research on white privilege in which he proposes that it is necessary for White academicians to begin a dialogue about racism in the academy. Since Scheurich’s work, scholars have begun to consider white privilege as a social construct that must be dismantled by Whites in order to rid society of white privilege. John T. Warren’s work (2003) on “performing whiteness” posits that in order for individuals to succeed, they must perform whiteness, defined as the behaviors and beliefs of a white, middle-class, heterosexual male. White privilege and, more specifically, Warren’s work informed how I examined teacher leadership and the fellowship program.

Scheurich (1993) discusses several key ideas that inform the direction of subsequent research. Scheurich first deconstructs how Whites and Blacks define racism differently; Whites define racism individually while Blacks define racism collectively. Scheurich states,

> when people of color assert that the academy is racist, individual whites in the academy, who do not see themselves as racist, are offended or think
the judgment does not apply to them. People of color see this unwillingness of Whites to acknowledge their racism as one way that the White academics protect their position of privilege” (p. 6).

Scheurich’s argument is powerful, too, because it highlights the idea that Whites are able to consider themselves individually, while Blacks are viewed as a group. He says, “People of color, through their socially positioned experience, know that they are a racialized group rather than simply separate individuals” (p. 7). So, Whites can rely on the benefits of individualism and “pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps” because in our society “Whites do not experience [them]selves as defined by [their] skin color” (p. 6).

On the other hand, Blacks are seen as part of a racialized group defined by their skin color; therefore, they are not seen as individuals, thus are at a disadvantage as they work for success. He argues that individualism only functions to mask the inequitable distribution of resources. Furthermore, Scheurich argues that resources are funneled into the White middle class allowing a “historical dominance” to form that has lead to the “ways of the dominant group becom[ing] universalized as measures of merit, hiring criteria, grading standards, predictors of success, correct grammar, appropriate behavior, and so forth, all of which are said to be distributed as differences in individual effort, ability, or intelligence” (p. 7). Therefore, when the ways of the dominant group are universalized, Scheurich points out that the people of color have no choice but to assimilate in order to succeed. Racism and white privilege are perpetuated because Whites fail to recognize that racism occurs beyond their individual acts. Racism is systemic and woven into the fabric of society thereby requiring more overt acts on the
part of Whites to undo the inequitable distribution of resources. Scheurich argues that all Whites must take responsibility for understanding how “being White affects our thinking, our behaviors, our attitudes, and our decisions from the micro, personal level to the macro, social level” (p. 9). Essentially, Whites must be the ones to undo what they have done. Whites created a system of privilege, and therefore, they must step forward to dismantle that system.

**Whiteness**

Much of the current research on white privilege centers on defining whiteness and understanding the social construction of whiteness in an effort to then redefine whiteness in such a way that it does not rely on the Other (e.g., people of color) and it dismantles white privilege. Scheurich (1993) is often cited in discussions on whiteness because his work was part of a small group of scholarly work in the early 1990s that looked at the White American’s responsibility for racism and the need for whites to develop the discourse that Scheurich advocates. Scholars argue that whiteness is a social construct; therefore, "we must devote special attention to the differing ways individuals from diverse social backgrounds construct knowledge and meaning making" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998). Because it is viewed as a social construct, it can be dismantled and reconstructed to be something that does not privilege Whites over people of color, which has been the reality since the nineteenth century when people first began to view the white race as representing order and reason while people of color were deemed irrational and chaotic (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998). McLaren (2000) argues that “the logics of empire are still with us, bound to the fabric of our daily being-in-the-world, woven into our posture toward others, connected to the muscles of our eyes, dipped in the chemical
relations that excite and calm us, structured into the language of our perceptions” (p.142). It is such a part of white identity that Whites must work to dismantle the “logic” of whiteness.

When examining whiteness as a social construction, many scholars have examined how Whites maintain privilege in the social hierarchy. A summary follows of some of the leading ideas regarding Whites and maintaining privilege. Schuerich (1993) espouses one of the most discussed ideas for Whites maintaining power in his discussion about individualism and how it leads to an inequitable distribution of resources and opportunity. Frances Rains (1998) also suggests that “when racism is constructed as individualistic, it is much easier to think that it has no relationship to the vast majority of Whites, inside or outside of the academy...such a construction of racism as overt, individualistic behavior provides a cloak of immunity from scrutiny” (p. 81). Thus, when Whites are accused of being racists, individually each can deny the accusation, the discussion about racism is squelched before it begins, and white privilege is maintained. Much current work on the “myth of the meritocracy” illustrates that is dependent on individualism. Many people insist that if a person works hard then he/she will succeed, never considering the “invisible knapsack of privilege” (McIntosh, 1988). Or, as Michelle Fine (1997) posits, “What if by keeping our eyes on those who gather disadvantage, we have not noticed white folks, varied by class and gender, nevertheless stuffing their academic and social pickup trucks with goodies otherwise not readily available to people of color?” (p.57) Because Whites do not recognize that they have these “goodies,” they do not consider that their success hinges on a set of benefits afforded to them merely by the color of their skin. Therefore, the individualism and
meritocracy to which they contend everyone has access is really based on a set of privileges afforded to them because of their skin color. They do not recognize that people of color do not have the same “knapsack” of “goodies.” Therefore, white privilege is maintained.

Another common view held by many Whites is that they see Blacks as “equals” and that “people of all colors are the same;” therefore, there is no need for things like affirmative action, which only discriminates against Whites. Unfortunately, what individuals are not able to see is that “embracing a color-blind society permits white people to construct ideologies that help them to avoid the issue of racial inequality while simultaneously benefiting from it” (McLaren, 2000, p. 145). Much of the current research (Marshall, 2002; McIntosh, 1988; Scheurich, 1993) addresses how those Whites who claim that “they do not see color” think that they are supporting people of color, when, in fact, they only further oppress them and maintain white privilege by refusing to acknowledge the benefits of being White as well as the disadvantages of being a person of color. Any effort to equalize Whites and Blacks only serves to ignore the benefits of white skin color.

The notion of invisibility and how it contributes to maintaining white privilege is one discussed in much of the research and theory. John T. Warren suggests, "The ability to be both everything and nothing, always present and always absent, grants whiteness extraordinary cultural power, which helps to structure how we see and understand categories of color" (p. 46). If Whites are not forced to confront the fact that White is the norm against which “others” are viewed, then they are able to maintain privilege.
However, merely recognizing that white racism exists is not enough; the subsequent actions are important. If Whites do recognize that white racism exists, they often convey feelings of guilt about being part of a race that oppresses people of color. While the guilt may be sincere, when Whites display guilt, the emphasis is transferred from the issue of racism to the White, guilty individual who can espouse guilt but never really “does” anything. Rains (1998) argues, “Guilt feelings, become a stabilizer of the status quo and a deterrent to accountability” (p. 91).

By not recognizing the privilege of being White, the invisibility of white privilege is maintained. It is a complex, paradoxical concept. Whites have privilege because they have traditionally had power. Power and privilege have a symbiotic relationship that is difficult to discuss apart from one another. Whites refuse to recognize that they have privilege and power when challenged about the benefit of being White because recognizing privilege is threatening to the maintenance of the privilege. Therefore, Whites can espouse guilt, they can claim equality among the various races, they can suggest that Whites are scientifically superior, they can deny privilege--all actions that ultimately maintain the privilege and render people of color as the “other.” It is for all of these reasons, and more, that scholars have recognized in order to challenge white privilege, Whites must be the ones to dismantle it.

Whiteness as a Social Construction

As mentioned in the beginning, the dominant framework that guides scholarship on whiteness and white privilege is social constructionist. One of the most recently published works on whiteness by John T. Warren (2003) makes the case for “performativity of race” based on Judith Butler’s theories regarding performing gender.
Warren differentiates between the “material body of whiteness” on which many researchers base their work and the “rhetorical body of whiteness,” which does not necessitate that one be physically white in order to espouse the beliefs, values, and practices that are a part of whiteness. Warren uses the distinction between these two ways of viewing whiteness to theorize a third way of viewing whiteness—as a “constitutive body of whiteness.” He suggests that “a more constitutive approach to whiteness allows one to see how both the rhetorical and the material dimensions of raced bodies can combine to generate powerful readings of the body” (p.25). He further suggests that performance is the lens by which the constitutive body should be viewed because whiteness is an act that can be performed by anyone regardless of skin color, and if whiteness is performed, then it is possible to transform the way in which it is performed.

One of the questions that looms in the research on white privilege is that scholars never defined the term *whiteness*. In my mind, white privilege and whiteness are not only about skin color but also about gender, sexuality, and social status as well. Nelson M. Rodriguez (1998) affirms my assumption by suggesting that, “whiteness operates to maintain the power of a specific race, class, gender, and sexual orientation grid. Thus, not only does one have to be White to be considered authentically American, but one also must be male and heterosexual” (p.47). It is this recognition that further complicates white privilege because one can argue, and some scholars do, that skin color alone may afford privilege, but if a white male is homosexual, then privilege can be denied once his sexuality is revealed. So while, for example, a white gay male may walk down the street without women clutching their purses in fear of him as a potential thief because he is not
a person of color, the minute he speaks, his speech or gesticulations may reveal his sexuality and cause homophobic people to avoid him.

Reconstructing Whiteness and Responsibility

If we consider that whiteness constitutes power and privilege, which work symbiotically to maintain the current social hierarchy, and that whiteness and white privilege are social constructs, then much of the scholarship leads us to see the necessity of a new white identity and the responsibility of Whites to form that identity. Scheurich (1993) insisted that Whites in the academy have an obligation to begin a discourse about white racism. Current research has progressed beyond that dialogue to suggest that Whites need to construct new identities. McLaren (2000) argues, "Whites need to ask themselves to what extent their identity is a function of their whiteness in the process of their ongoing daily lives and what choices they might make to escape whiteness" (p. 154). As discussed earlier, Whites usually do not see themselves as raced individuals. If two students, one Black and one White, get into a fight, when the event is retold by a White person, the individual will likely say, “A kid got into a fight with a black kid.” The White person typically will not name the race of other Whites because he does not see Whites as raced individuals; he only sees people of color as raced. Linda C. Powell (1997) provides the apt metaphor of a knot made with strands of black and white, and both white and black strands must loosen to untighten the knot. She says, "this loosening will inevitably involve pain and learning for Whites as they explore their privilege, incompetence, and profound interrelatedness with people of color; they will need to explore their own discourse of deficit" (p.10).
The Role of Educators in Reconstructing Whiteness

Because of the need for Whites to do racial identity work to reconstruct white identity in such a way that it does not depend upon privilege and power at the expense of people of color, scholarship addresses the role of educators in teaching students how to examine their identities and reconstruct them. Many scholars agree that this work must first begin with the teachers. McLaren (2000) argues that the role of critical educators is to “denaturalize whiteness by breaking its codes and the social relations and privileging hierarchies that give such codes normative power” (p. 155). Kincheloe & Steinberg (1999) suggest that we must create a "critical pedagogy of whiteness” that demonstrates "the necessity of creating a positive, proud, attractive, antiracist white identity that is empowered to travel in and out of various racial/ethnic circles with confidence and empathy"(p. 12). While many teachers feel they are doing their part to recognize people of color by sharing works by African American authors or sampling food from other cultures, they are not challenging the fact that the curriculum is centered on White Americans. (Sleeter & Grant, 1999) Kincheloe & Steinberg (1999) argue, “When multicultural education addresses only the Other and the Other's cultural difference, Whites do not have to examine their own ethnicity and the way it shapes their social outlook and identity” (p. 26). Whites keep other cultures as the Other and therefore at a safe distance, while they do not challenge the White norm established in society. Ironically, white teachers have been taught that they are doing a good thing by making students aware of other cultures; however, simply teaching awareness is not enough to challenge white power and privilege. Colleen Titone (1998) suggests, “White teachers who have the professional look but not the identity development of antiracist teachers
cannot accomplish the difficult adaptive work required to move us ahead into the new century" (p. 160). She argues that the White teacher must become an “ally” who is a “positive, White, antiracist role model for students” (Titone, 1998).

Whiteness, White Privilege, and Teacher Leadership

In thinking about how white privilege influences the selection, ideas, and development of leadership, I would first like to narrow “leadership” to consider how white privilege informs teacher leadership. Few, if any, studies address the intersection of white privilege and teacher leadership. Therefore, based on my research in both areas, I would like to synthesize the research in the two areas and develop my own understanding of how the two are related. In his work on performativity and race John T. Warren suggests, “those who fall outside of the culture of power must learn and participate in the rules of the powerful, for it is the powerful who have made the rules, as well as the game, in the first place” (p. 41). In education, the power resides in a number of places; however, largely it lies with the government participants who determine funding, education laws, curriculum, standards etc. with the state and local school boards, with the superintendent and district- level officials, with the on-site administrators, and, lastly, with the teachers. Because power is dispersed, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly who falls outside of the culture of power. For the sake of this discussion, I will argue that for the most part, teachers fall outside the culture of power. I will use myself as an example. Before my experiences in the fellowship program, I had limited knowledge about the hierarchy of power in education. I knew that the school boards controlled jobs, curriculum, etc. I knew that the state controlled curriculum and that the legislature controlled my pay. These things were important to me and bore directly on my daily role
as a teacher. The fellowship program educated me on the culture of power that broadly exists in education. We were taught who makes the decisions; we learned from politicians, lobbyists, school board members, the superintendent, and others about how power is situated and how power operates in education. I had to learn the “rules of the powerful” in order to “play their game.”

I recognize that Warren was speaking about the white culture as the culture of power; however, as Rodriguez (1998) points out, whiteness is about being a white, heterosexual male. And one can perform whiteness, according to Warren (2003), regardless of race. So, one question that I pursued in this study is: To what extent do fellows perform whiteness, or the normative discourse, in order to join the culture of power in education?

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I provided context for this study by discussing current research on teacher leadership and white privilege. I also discussed the fellowship program as it relates to two other national programs. Research on teacher leadership and white privilege is still developing, and there is a dearth of research on the intersection of teacher leadership and white privilege making the road for this study one “with leaves no step had trodden black.” In the next chapter I will discuss the methodology for conducting the study.
Chapter Three

Methodology: Mapping the Road

In order to examine the impact of the fellowship program on Fellows’ understanding of being a teacher leader, I conducted a narrative inquiry. From an epistemological standpoint, narrative inquiry implies that people make sense of their life experiences using story. Narrative inquiry has roots in psychology research (Josselson, 1996; Lieblack, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilter, 1998; Riessman, 1993). However, in recent years, narrative inquiry has proven to be helpful in understanding teachers and teacher education (Bell, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Narrative inquiry calls on the researcher to inquire about people’s storied lives, and to respect and understand both how and why they constructed their stories as they did. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up peoples’ lives, both individual and social. Simply stated…narrative inquiry is stories lived and told (p. 20).

Narrative inquiry is an empowering method of research for the participant who is more than a quantifiable piece of data. The participants are enabled to speak for
themselves, telling their stories as they wish, and the researcher’s role as a collaborator is to honor that story (Atkinson, 1998).

By its nature, narrative inquiry fosters a unique relationship between the researcher and participants. Therefore, ethical issues are at the forefront for the researcher throughout the research process (Atkinson, 1998; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Josselson, 1996; Mishler, 1986).

Rationale: “They Only Want to See the Numbers?”

I was at a workshop in the mountains of North Carolina with other Fellows and our program director. We were working in partnership with a group from the state department of education to run a workshop for teachers on the topic of teacher leadership. The director and I were discussing the fellowship program and its future given the fact that the program relies predominantly on funding from a large science and technology institute to run successfully. In order for the board, which makes decisions about continuing to fund the program, to continue support for the Fellows program, the director must provide quantitative data to show that the program is “successful.” For the board members to consider the data credible, data must be quantifiable data. According to the director, the board wants to see numbers that indicate how students’ test scores are improving as a result of the Fellows’ teaching; they want to see quantitative data from the Fellows on how the program is impacting their teaching and leadership; essentially, they want to see a report that shows whether the numbers are “good” so that they can decide whether or not to continue funding. She went on to share that the program had contracted with a quantitative researcher to gather data and write reports for the board. I was dismayed, because as a Fellow, I recognized that the data they were gathering to garner
support grossly neglected some of the most powerful aspects of the fellowship program: the effects of the program on the leadership qualities of teachers. Despite my dismay, I was not shocked that the board of directors wanted to see numbers in order to measure the success of the program. For many, especially those in business, numbers dictate decisions. Rather than resign myself to the fact that the only evaluation of the fellowship program would be in the form of quantitative data, I began to consider what type of research would allow others to understand the impact of the fellowship program—more specifically, the impact that could not be reduced to numbers. Naturally, the alternative was a qualitative study, but beyond determining that qualitative research was appropriate, I further narrowed my methodology to narrative inquiry.

As a Fellow myself, I interact with the Fellows at events, workshops, and meetings. We share stories with each other about our fellowship experiences. Most recently, I heard a story from one Fellow about his trip to the Yucatan to bird watch. He came back and contacted the marketing teacher at his school whose students plan to market some of the products from that region so that the village can improve its revenue. Each Fellow has an individual story about the fellowship experience, and it is those stories that can be woven to tell a larger story about the impact of the fellowship program on the collective lives and careers of the Fellows.

Narrative inquiry is a methodology that affords the qualitative researcher the opportunity to research according to the way people live. As individuals live their lives, they construct stories of their lived experiences. Every moment constructs the story, and those moments are the individual’s to reconstruct based on his or her personal understanding of the events. Thus, by its nature narrative is constructed from two
perspectives at once—“the ‘then’ perspective and the ‘now’ perspective” (Conle, 2001, p. 28). In those experiences may take much for granted, and individuals may fail to realize the potential significance of their stories and experiences. Narrative inquiry enables the researcher to “figure out the taken-for-grantedness” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

Teachers, in particular, have been found to use story to define their practice (Witherell & Noddings, 1991). While I am not studying the Fellows in the context of the classroom, the Fellows are teachers, and a precedent is set for employing narrative inquiry in educational research. Furthermore, it is appropriate to use narrative inquiry to study the Fellows’ experiences because human beings, by nature, think about experiences narratively (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As stated, narrative inquiry enables the researcher to “figure out the taken-for-grantedness”. When people tell stories about their life experiences, they discover deeper meaning because of the reflective process that is inherent in storytelling (Atkinson, 1998). Teachers in particular have a set of personal practice knowledge, or tacit knowing, which means “we know more than we can tell” (Polyani, 1966, p.4). Knowing relates to knowing both practical and theoretical knowledge (Polyani, 1966). Therefore, teachers may not be able to articulate their practice explicitly. The practical teaching knowledge is tacitly held (Elbaz, 1983). Furthermore, Wiessner (2001) contends that, “Knowledge that is difficult to express explicitly often becomes clear implicitly through story” (p. 69). Thus, when the researcher is involved in this process of narrative inquiry, the participants and the researcher work together to reconstruct the story to make meaning and knowing explicit and discover what has been implicit all along.
Because the purpose of narrative is to hear the voices of the participants, narrative inquiry is empowering for the participants (Atkinson, 1998; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). While traditional surveys require the researcher to have a protocol of questions that elicit specific responses, narrative interviewing requires researchers to use their central research questions to guide open-ended interviews with participants (Holstein and Gubrium, 2003). Thus, researchers may have only a few guiding questions for the interview that are intended to prompt responses in the form of story. The interview process in narrative inquiry is empowering for the participants because their voices dominate the interview. Their stories become texts that participants can review; thus, participants share in the construction and reconstruction of the research text, enabling their voices to be heard throughout the research process, not just during the interviews. Ultimately, the story is comprised of the participants’ voices, not the researcher’s voice (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Mishler, 1986).

Lastly, I must confess that when I first began to study narrative, I was skeptical about its effectiveness as a research method. I thought compiling people’s stories lacked complexity and depth. However, as I began to read more about narrative and read examples of narrative inquiry, I came to see the power of narrative to maintain the humanity of the participants. The participants are not data points whose quotes are taken out of context; the participants are co-creators of the research text. The researcher is essentially a medium or vessel through which their stories are told. Certainly, the subjectivities of both the researcher and participant are present; however, they are acknowledged in the story as well (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Furthermore, narrative inquiry is the vehicle by which researchers can hear and seek to understand participants’
experiences, and the end product will be one that allows them to tell the research story in such a way that the participants’ voices are heard, yet also in a way that maintains open-endedness (Conle 2000) enabling the audience to interpret impact. Beyond these reasons, I came to see, quite simply, that people’s stories are amazing and powerful, and leave much room for readers to add their subjective interpretations as they read making the research texts living, breathing works.

Research Design: The Map

Sensitivity to the participants’ roles in the research process is an essential component of narrative inquiry. I viewed the participants as co-constructors throughout the research process and respected them as the primary providers of the story. Furthermore, I was cognizant that I was restorying peoples’ lives and therefore took care throughout that process (Josselson, 1996).

Part of this sensitivity was remaining aware that the nature of narrative inquiry fosters close relationship between the researcher and the participants. Therefore, it was important to negotiate entry and exit procedures with the participants from the beginning of the study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I also continued to negotiate my role throughout the research process, always being clear with the participants what the purpose of the study was as it evolved (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

For this narrative inquiry, negotiation took place with four fellows who were at different stages in their Fellowship experiences. I conducted a series of three interviews with each fellow in addition to the initial screening interview conducted with each participant. In addition to the interviews, I used email-based interviews, reflection, journaling, “storying” and “restorying” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Because the
purpose of my research was to understand the impact of the fellowship on the fellows, it was necessary to negotiate that the interviews would address before, during, and after the fellowship as topics. In constructing narratives, “there is a reflexive relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story, and reliving a life story” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Storying involves the researcher and participants discussing the process and products of interviews, while restorying is stories told in response to the initial storying (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The researcher and participants work together throughout the research process reflecting on the stories being told to interpret their meaning. Thus, my work with each participant in the context of those general topics was negotiated and re-negotiated throughout the time period that we met for our conversations.

My data collection spanned five months. At the end of this period, I coded the transcriptions from the interviews. At the same time, I conducted member checks by sending the Fellows copies of their own transcripts to read and offer comment on. After coding and gathering responses, I looked for the emerging themes through the stories of all of the participants and wrote the findings in the form of a story using three threads that represent the primary themes that emerged. I also wrote descriptions of the Fellows using a blend of prose and poetry (Gee, 1999). I sent the findings and the descriptive stories to the Fellows for their response.

Ethical issues are at the forefront throughout a narrative study, and they shift and change as the researcher and participants move through the study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Negotiation of entry and exit is one ethical concern; however, there are other concerns as well. First of all, the stories ultimately belong to the participants (Atkinson,
However, there is also an obligation on the researcher’s part to balance the participants’ voices with the researcher’s stories when forming the research texts from the field texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A second concern is anonymity; the participants in this research study chose to remain anonymous. A third concern is regarding whether the stories told are true. It is impossible to determine whether any story is true because it is always shaped by an individual’s subjectivities. A final ethical issue requires that the researcher be careful as “the critic” not to portray a “negative, monitoring sense” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The purpose of narrative is not for the researcher to criticize the stories of the participants but to recognize that these stories are situated in a particular context and are ever-evolving.

Narrative inquiry has grown in recent years to become a more common mode of research in education thanks largely to the work of Clandinin and Connelly. However, it continues to be an evolving form of research that is generating many questions. My research study, therefore, reflects the flexible nature of narrative research to allow for innovation and experimentation while being aware of its potential pitfalls.

Study Population: Meet the Other Travelers

At the time when I began my study, 42 fellows comprised the program, 20 had graduated from the program and 22 were currently active fellows. In my study, I intended to include one fellow from each class because I felt that each class had a unique experience in the program. The first class of 2001 is recognized for its pioneering work for the program. The original eight Fellows built a strong foundation for the fledgling program. The 2002 class shares a similar sentiment, as they were the class who continued to establish the foundation for the program. The 2003 class of Fellows offered
the perspective of coming into the program when it was beginning to establish a reputation for being a teacher leadership program in the state. I initially wanted to also include a member from the 2004 class, but the 2004 fellows were not far enough along in the program to have the experiences that my study was addressing. Therefore, I did not include a 2004 fellow and chose to have two participants from the same class.

The Fellows represent a variety of grade levels and subject areas; therefore, I selected participants who represented both high school and middle school Fellows and Fellows from a variety of subject areas. I chose participants who were demographically parallel to the overall demographic make up of the fellowship program at the time the study began. At the time, forty percent of the Fellows were men, and fourteen percent of the Fellows were people of color.

In order to narrow the number of participants from 42 to four fellows, I conducted screening interviews. I sent an email to all 42 fellows briefly detailing my research and inviting them to participate. Twenty-five fellows emailed that they would be willing to join the study; however, five of those replied with tentative agreements. I chose not to include those five in the screening process because I had 20 others who were willing to participate. I used the criteria discussed above to narrow the 10 fellows to a group of 10 fellows for screening interviews. Each screening interview lasted from one hour to one-and-a-half-hours. The screening interviews were intended to provide an overview of each person’s teaching history and philosophy and their experiences in the program. A copy of the screening interview guide is included. (See Appendix A) I also asked about their understanding of teacher leadership. In narrowing the group of 10 fellows to four, I considered the aforementioned criteria. However, I also considered how the participants
responded to open-ended questions. The nature of narrative inquiry involves interviewing using broad, open-ended questions rather than specific questions. The participants need to feel some level of comfort and be reflective thinkers.

Several participants for the screening interviews had difficulty with the broad topics. I found myself asking numerous questions to prompt their responses. I chose to not invite two people because of this issue. On the contrary, one fellow tended to talk at length but often not on the subject at hand. This, too, concerned me, and I chose not to invite her to participate. I chose to not invite a fourth person because she is a close friend. In my research journal, after interviewing her, I noted, “I get the impression she feels like I know the answers to the questions already, so why does she need to answer them.” The fifth person I chose not to invite because he had an unusual set of circumstances as a thirty-year veteran teacher who had retired in another state to come teach in the South. I did not think his background was typical of fellowship participants. The sixth person was a white male whom I decided to invite to join the study as an alternate. In the end, it was not necessary to include him.

I chose to invite Jennifer, an African-American female math teacher with seventeen years of teaching experience, to join the study; however initially I was concerned about doing so. I noted in my journal that I felt she was “reluctant to open up.” However, my hope was that the relationship building inherent in narrative inquiry would foster trust resulting in her being more forthcoming as the study progressed. I chose to invite Hannah, a White American female middle school science teacher to join as well. Again, she was someone I felt I would have to work with to foster a trusting relationship. However, she offered an interesting perspective not only as a middle school
teacher but also as a teacher who had only seven years teaching experience. The last two invitations went to Jane, a White American female high school art teacher with thirty years of teaching experience, and Keith, a White American male high school science teacher with twenty-seven years of teaching experience. Jane and Keith were highly reflective thinkers and articulate speakers who offered the study a significant amount of experiences and perspectives both in life and in their careers.

Typically, in research, the identity of the participants remains anonymous. In narrative research, however, anonymity is negotiated throughout the research process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The institutional review board requires anonymity; however, I did offer the participants the option of having me using their real names or pseudonyms. In narrative inquiry, because the nature of narrative is empowering for the participants, I wanted them to have the opportunity to have that ownership of this decision. All of them chose to use pseudonyms; however, interestingly, during the research process all of them shared with other Fellows that they were participating in the research study. In the context of my study, I honored their request for anonymity and provided pseudonyms. I also provided pseudonyms for people connected with them, as revealing those names might compromise anonymity.

Each participant signed an informed consent form indicating willingness to participate and permission for me to use all data in the study. A sample informed consent form is included in Appendix B.
Data Collection: Gathering the Stories

Method 1: In-depth Interviews.

In this study, I examined the impact of the fellowship on Fellows’ understanding of being a teacher leader and their self-identification as a teacher leader. In order to do so, I interviewed each Fellow three times during a five-month period in addition to the screening interviews. I used semi-structured interview guides for all three interviews. However, I also based each subsequent interview on the preceding one using not only the planned questions but also questions that arose from the “storying” and “restorying” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) process. Narrative inquiry recognizes the storying and restorying that occurs throughout the research process; therefore, interview guides are fluid and change for each participant as his or her story develops. As stated, there were certain core questions, but, based on each person’s story, other questions developed for each subsequent interview in addition to the core questions.

In order to develop the three in-depth interview guides for the study, I relied on the responses from participants during the screening interviews. The responses gave me a general idea of topics to include on the three in-depth interview guides; however, the nature of the study was also a guide. Because I was seeking to examine the impact of the program, it was logical that I inquire about perspectives before, during, and after the program.

The first interview inquired about the participants’ experiences in education prior to beginning the fellowship program. Prior to beginning the first interview, I listened to the tape from the screening interview of the topics that corresponded with the first
interview guide. I began by asking each participant to address those questions first. This process of storying and restorying fosters the relationship between the researcher and participant and also serves to make them partners in the research process. After addressing the questions from the previous interview, I inquired about their philosophies of teaching and interacting with students, defining moments in their teaching careers, and how they perceived themselves as teachers and teacher leaders prior to the fellowship program. This first interview was a life history interview; however, rather than allowing for a general response, it was focused on the participants’ experiences in education. Life stories often reveal more than just events but values and beliefs as well; therefore, the first interview provided insights not only into what happened in the participants’ lives, but also who they were as individuals prior to the fellowship program (Atkinson, 1998). These interviews lasted from one and a half to two hours each. The guide for interview one is included. (See Appendix C)

Interviewing in the context of narrative inquiry differs from interviewing in other methods of qualitative research. The question is not necessarily intended to be a stimulus but “part of a circular process through which its meaning and that of its answer are created in discourse between interviewer and respondent as they try to make continuing sense of what they are saying to each other” (Mishler, 1986, p. 53-4). Thus, it is important that the interviewer creates a level of comfort and fosters trust in the relationship and not dominate the interview. The dominant voice in the narrative interview should be the participant; furthermore, the responses, ideally, are in story form. It is important for the interviewer to recognize when stories are being told and to encourage those stories primarily by being quiet and not redirecting the participant.
(Mishler, 1986). The interviewer must allow the participant to tell a story even when it is seemingly irrelevant (Mishler, 1986). In narrative inquiry, the interview is a place where knowledge is not found but constructed (Holstein and Gubrium, 2003). Therefore, during the interview process, it is impossible for the participant to say that something is irrelevant. The metaphor appropriate to describe narrative interviewing is “the traveler” (Kvale, 1996). The narrative interviewer is a traveler who is on a journey that requires exploration; the experiences of the traveler and his or her participants result in a story.

While I had a general idea of the second interview guide prior to the study, the interview guides proved to be fluid documents because I relied on the previous interview to inform the questions for the subsequent interview. This is a key piece of the restorying process that occurs throughout the research study as the researcher and participant are reflecting on what stories have been told during interviews and restorying those stories to get to a deeper meaning (Atkinson, 1998). After addressing the questions that were connected with the previous interview, I began the semi-structured questions for interview guide two. (See Appendix D) The focus of the second interviews was the participants’ experiences during the fellowship program. I asked the participants to talk about their experiences in both aspects of the program, curriculum development and teacher leadership. I also asked them to speak about their developing understanding of being a teacher leader and the experiences that contributed to that understanding. While, as discussed, the goal of narrative interview is to present open-ended questions that allow for the participants to share stories, I found in the screening and first interviews that in doing so, gaps in understanding formed. Therefore, for the second interview, I noted several specific concrete questions that I wanted to make sure the participants addressed,
including the fireside chats, a definition of leadership, and how they felt about interacting with business people and politicians. I did not feel as though I was asking leading questions in doing this because all of the fellows brought up these topics within the context of their stories. Rather, I used those moments when they brought them up to interject specific questions to clarify their stories for me. The second interviews lasted from one and a half to two hours.

The last round of interviews took place at least six weeks after the second interview because of the email-based interviews that took place in between the second and third in-depth interviews. Therefore, I had the email interviews to inform my questions for the third, and last, face-to-face interview. The final interview was about the participants’ experiences after the fellowship program. Technically, Keith and Jane had not graduated prior to their final interviews with me; however, they had completed their second summer of professional development and were only weeks away from graduation. The last interview guide addressed questions regarding how the participants defined teacher leader after the program, how they saw themselves as teachers and leaders, and how the program influenced their future. As is the case with narrative, new questions arose also that were addressed in the final interview. It was Keith who led me to ask a question about what is so unique about the fellowship program. He also led me to ask a question based on my research from my literature review about whether or not being a teacher leader is important.

In our second interview, Keith was impassioned about the program. After I had ended the interview and we were preparing to leave, he was talking about how the fellowship program gives fellows a “shiny button” that says teacher leader. I asked him,
what is it about this program that does that? That question became one that I asked all of the other participants. It was Keith’s passion in his answer that prompted me to recall the study by Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) that suggested that teachers perhaps should not be leaders. From that conversation, I posed the question to all participants regarding whether it is important for teachers to be leaders. The responses to these questions helped me better understand the impact of the program on the fellows as teacher leaders and also how they see themselves as teacher leaders. Finally, I took the opportunity in the last interview to ask the participants about how working with me in the study. Hannah shared with me how she made the decision to address issues with her administration because of our interviews. I wondered if the same were true for other participants. The third in-depth interviews lasted from one hour to one and a half hours. The interview guide is included as Appendix E.

In summary, I interviewed each of the participants four times, including the screening interviews. The shortest interviews were approximately one hour in length, the longest interview lasted over two hours. I conducted a total of 16 face-to-face interviews, not including the six screening interviews to determine participants in the study, for a total of approximately twenty-five hours of tape. All of the interviews were tape recorded and video recorded. Video is particularly helpful in narrative because it serves as a back up to the audiotape; however, it is also helpful in providing rich description of the participants. I also relied on informal conversations with participants as data sources as well (Abma, 1999). I was careful to journal immediately after these conversations.
Method 2: Email Interview.

While interviews can be the sole form of data for a narrative inquiry, it is helpful to triangulate the data sources in order to access different perspectives of the participants (Hatch, 2002). Therefore, after the second interview, I asked my participants to complete a structured, formal interview via email. This, however, was not a standardized interview in which all participants had the same questions (Hatch, 2002). The interview questions differed slightly for each participant based on his or her individual story. I used the email interviews to ask questions based on the previous face-to-face interviews, and to ask questions from the previous interview that I did not have time to ask. For all of the participants, I used the email interviews to ask questions about the participants’ life stories, particularly questions about how they viewed the world based on their respective race and gender.

I chose to use the email format for one interview because often people who are reluctant to answer questions face-to-face find comfort in being able to respond in an alternate form. After finishing the interviews and reflecting on using the email interviews, I would not recommend using the email interviews. The participants found them to be an inconvenience. Furthermore, because I waited until after the first two face-to-face interviews, I had already developed an effective rapport with each of them; therefore, they were comfortable opening up to me face-to-face. I could have used the email interviews after the first interviews as a means of extending the life history interview and asking them to elaborate or provide more details on their lives. Perhaps this would be a more effective placement of the email interview. While the data gained from the email interview were helpful, email was inconvenient for the participants; they
did not feel they needed the extra time to reflect on the questions and could have answered them face-to-face.

**Method 3: Research Journal.**

My research journal became a good friend throughout the research process. Research journals are a key part of good practice for a qualitative researcher (Hatch, 2002). I kept my journal digitally. I used my research journal to record my thoughts and events as I moved through the study. I recorded my thoughts as I selected participants in the screening interview process. After each screening interview, I journaled about the interview based on my criteria for selecting four participants. I also recorded my thoughts and insights after each of the interviews with my participants. I relied heavily on my journal to determine questions for each interview guide, and I used it to explore ideas and how they connected through the stories of all of the participants. I divided my research journal into three primary sections: actions, reflections, and flashes of brilliance.

The action section of the journal detailed the logistics of all of my interviews. I recorded the date, time, and place of every interview. I documented all casual conversations and email exchanges between me and the participants. To avoid forgetting important pieces of information, this section of my journal was very helpful. This section can be compared to the research log that Hatch (2002) speaks about using in his research. The reflection section is where I record my frustrations, excitement, and general emotion about what was going on throughout the research process. I used it to generate my ideas regarding questions to ask the participants as we moved through the interview process. I also used it later as I began coding and analyzing to generate questions for myself and to
ask questions of the data. The last section, flashes of brilliance, which where I recorded big ideas. This section allowed me to explore the common threads in all of the stories, to sketch out a general outline for my research text, and to record key points that I needed to include in the research text. My research journal has been an invaluable resource in helping me recall why I made particular decisions throughout the research process and in helping me restory the story in my research text.

In hindsight, it might have been helpful to have the participants keep journals as well (Hatch, 2002). There were several occasions when the participants called me on the phone or emailed me additional comments after we had completed an interview. They found themselves reflecting on the interviews, and wanting to add or change their answers. Asking them to keep journals might have captured more of their reflections between interviews.

**Analyzing the Data: Constructing/Reconstructing the Story**

Miles and Huberman (1994) define analysis as three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction occurs throughout the life of a research study (Miles and Huberman, 1994). For this study, data reduction began when I chose the guiding questions for my research on the fellowship program. I chose to examine a particular fellowship program to understand how the Fellows self identify as teacher leaders; within the context of that program, I chose four fellows from a group of forty-two; and I chose to utilize the lenses of the normative discourse and culture of power to examine how Fellows become teacher leaders. All of these decisions reduced the focus; additionally, using ATLAS/ti further reduced the data. ATLAS/ti is a software program used to organize and analyze data efficiently. Data
displays condense and organize data in order to highlight the connections in the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). ATLAS/ti provided a tool for creating network views that allowed me to make sense of the data through visual display. Conclusion drawing/verification is a process that runs concurrently with data reduction and display throughout the research process.

Within the context of Miles and Huberman’s system for data analysis, I relied on Hatch’s (2002) assertion that data analysis involves asking questions of the data. Therefore, throughout the analysis process, I found myself asking the data: What is the story? I used inductive data analysis (Hatch, 2002) to discover patterns of meaning in the data so that I could make general statements about the impact of the fellowship program. Using inductive analysis to find patterns allowed me to address the question: what is the story? (Hatch, 2002; Mishler, 1986) Thus, constant interplay occurred throughout my analysis process between searching for the story and searching for the patterns. Additionally, in order to write the descriptions of each participant, I utilized Gee’s (1999) poetic analysis which I will describe later.

Finding the Stories: Data Reduction, Data Display, Conclusion/Verification.

I based my narrative analysis on the work of Riessman (1993), Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998) and Hatch (2002). My interviews were transcribed by an independent transcriber. The transcriber emailed me the transcriptions digitally, and I imported them into the ATLAS/ti program where I first read the transcripts.

After reading the transcripts to gain a sense of the stories that were being told, I began coding the transcripts. To begin the coding process, I used my research questions and my interview questions to form a start list of codes (Miles and Huberman, 1994)
The start list of codes is included. (See Appendix F) The start list is a set of descriptive codes that provides a means of organizing the data into types of information, including data about personal teaching careers, philosophies, teacher leader definitions and fellowship experiences. The start list of codes was grossly inadequate for coding all of the data; therefore, as I read the transcripts, I also added codes using open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In my research journal, I documented each additional code and a rational for adding the code. As I progressed in the process of coding, I also added interpretive codes to the start list to further my analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). I read the transcripts from all screening interviews first, then read the first round of interviews before the second round, and continued until I finished the last round of interviews. Initially, I planned to read the transcripts according to participant; however, I quickly changed course because it was too difficult to keep up with the flow of the questions. I found it more practical to be entrenched in each round of interviews so I could better make connections among the stories. I read each interview transcript twice to insure that I read the data with sufficient depth. The second reading allowed me to use the entire list of codes including both the start list and those added. The second reading using the entire list resulted in richly coded transcripts.

After coding all of the transcripts, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest using pattern codes, which lead to the emerging themes, further reducing the amount of data. Initially I tried to use existing codes as pattern codes, the idea being that certain existing codes seemed like broad umbrellas for smaller codes. I constructed a network view that placed the “Community of Practice” code at the center, and I imported 10 other related codes into the network view. I proceeded to establish relationships between the related
codes and community of practice. This method of analysis proved highly ineffective. I reached a conclusion that this strategy for analysis did not reduce the data enough to be useful. Furthermore, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that after creating a display, it is necessary to go back to the data to apply the display to see if it fits. I found that the display did not make sense when I looked at the data. Therefore, I had to reconsider how to approach the analysis.

Throughout my analysis, I was seeking to find connections among the stories and common themes emerging (Hatch, 2002). In addition to looking for emerging themes, I also relied on Atkinson’s (1998) guidelines for looking for meaning in the data, applying theories to determine their “fit” with the data, looking at the data as a whole and in coded parts, and ultimately moving back and forth between the coded data and the theories to determine the theory that best fit the data. Rather than begin or end with a particular theory, Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) state that narrative inquiry integrates theory throughout the data analysis process. Narrative inquiry is not a methodology that abandons theory, rather the concern in narrative is that the reader be allowed to find his or her own meaning from a narrative study (Clandinin & Connelly 2000). Therefore, the inquirer may employ theory to guide the research and analysis process, but as the data are collected, the relevant theories may change. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, “In our work, we keep in the foreground of our writing a narrative view of experience, with the participants’ and researchers’ narratives of experience situated and lived out on storied landscapes as our theoretical methodological frame” (p. 128). Thus, as the researcher transitions from field text to research text, it is possible to be pulled to theories about ethnography, phenomenology, or others, and it is important to stay focused on the story.
The end result of narrative is not necessarily a new theory; rather, the researcher situates the findings within the context of theory and research and contributes to the existing literature. While I was looking within the framework of my literature review at teacher leader researcher and the research on my lens of normative discourse and culture of power, I found other themes emerge that led me to theories outside my review of literature.

After the first attempt at data display was found not to be helpful, I went back to the broad code for community of practice, which included seventy-eight quotes. This code was too large to manage; therefore, I read the quotes and looked for common themes. This method of analysis proved more effective. As I read each quote, I positioned it on the network view adjacent to another quote until I had read and positioned all of the quotes. Memos created in ATLAS/ti throughout this process served as reminders for my decisions. I then created new open codes for each group of quotes on the network view. This method of analysis proved effective because it reduced the data to six codes that stemmed from the main theme, or pattern code, community of practice. The network view created is included. (See Appendix G) In order to determine whether this method of analysis was successful, I piloted the data display by writing the story of the network view. The story title came from the words of one of the participants: “It’s fellowship; it’s collegiality; it’s community” connected with the title of the pattern code. Then, I used the six thematic codes from the network view to section the story.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) posit that in narrative inquiry, using the field texts to create research texts brings about a number of questions. When beginning traditional studies, the researcher may be certain of the desired end product. In narrative, however,
the end product is uncertain. As the researcher forms researcher texts, she must rely on the data collected in the field to consider the relationship among inquirer and participant, the inquirer and participants’ subjectivities, time, space, and context— all of which contribute to and inform the interpretation. The inquirer must consider what experience should be conveyed through the research text as well as how the experience should be positioned socially and theoretically. The answer to these questions determines the conversations the research text will be a part of. Current research is also addressing the type of text to compose, whether it is a written text in the form of traditional papers, or nontraditional forms including poetry, script, performance, or photograph collection. The form may incorporate a story with rich description and plot and blend those elements with argument. The important aspect of determining the kind of text is to consider what medium will best represent the story.

Deciding what form the research text would take and then writing that story demanded that I continue asking the data constantly: What is the story? (Hatch, 2002) I also relied on Riessman’s (1993) assertion that it is important not simply to retell the story as stated by the participants. Rather, it is the narrative researcher’s obligation to “start from the inside, from the meanings encoded in the form of the talk, and expand outward, identifying, for example, underlying propositions that make the talk sensible, including what is taken for granted by speaker and listener. The strategy privileges the teller’s experience, but interpretation cannot be avoided” (p. 61). When asking the data what the story is, the response is the researcher’s own story that is grounded in interpretation of the participants’ stories. However, it is important to balance this restorying that includes the participants’ voices and the researcher’s voice and looking for
the “taken-for-grantedness” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) with an understanding that the stories ultimately belong to the participants, and therefore, the researcher has an obligation to honor the fact that the researcher is restorying peoples’ lived experiences (Atkinson, 1998; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Josselson, 1996). The story that resulted from this data display was a story that met these expectations; therefore, I used this method in creating data displays for two other pattern codes, or emerging themes.

In forming the stories for the findings section, I intended to keep the participants’ voices dominant because I felt each had his or her own unique voice. I wanted to reconstruct the stories in such a way that the reader could hear those unique voices. Also, because narrative inquiry is empowering for the participants’, I wanted to facilitate that empowerment through the writing style in the stories I created. Therefore, in writing the findings for Chapter Four, I found the standard format for indenting quotes of more than five lines to be too distracting for the reader. The indents set their voices apart from the main text, and I wanted their voices to be the main text. Therefore, I chose not to follow standard formatting techniques and set all quotes regardless of length on the left margin. The other chapters reflect the standard formatting for quotes more than five lines because those chapters reflect a blend of the participants’ and the researcher’s voices.

ATLAS/ti was helpful as an analysis tool because it allows the researcher to see clearly the dominant codes. I did not enter the research study intending to look for the theme of community; however, it became apparent through coding that community was a significant idea. Likewise, I found in the data a group of codes that led to the theme transformative learning, and this theme was not part of my initial research questions either. Nevertheless, it became clear in the coding that the participants had experienced
personal change, and they had learned new ways of understanding being a teacher leader. These codes formed the network view for my second theme, transformative learning. I applied the same method of analysis for this network view because of my success writing the story for community of practice. The network view for transformative learning is included. (See Appendix H) I replicated the analysis for the final data display to create a network view for the third theme, empowerment. The network view for empowerment is included. (See Appendix I)

After I created the stories for each of the network views, I began to create a network view for writing the descriptive pieces on each participant. I relied on three codes for writing this section: teaching history details, philosophy, and self-definition. I created a network view that allowed me to group these codes by participant name, making access to the quotes easier. I also selected particular sections of their narratives about their life histories that were most poignant and that they were most passionate about to apply Gee’s (1999) poetic analysis. Gee’s analysis affords the researcher the opportunity to portray the text in a uniquely powerful, engaging way so that the audience feels the emotions of the participants’ voices. Furthermore, it provides the opportunity to honor the participants’ life histories by restorying them to maintain the integrity of their stories from the interviews as well as their voices.

Poetic analysis (Gee, 1999) is a method for analyzing stories or text that allows the researcher to make meaning of the participants’ stories. Gee (1999) divides poetic analysis into four key tools of inquiry: lines, macro-lines, stanzas, and macrostructure. Macro-lines are defined as a “syntactic tying together of two or more lines into something akin to a sentence” (Gee, 1999, p. 114) but it is not a grammatically sound sentence.
Macrostructure is the entire story being told. I chose not to use macrostructure because I did not feel presenting the entire story in poetry was practical for description purposes. I was incorporating many stories into one collective life story. The way in which an analyst breaks up the text within the context of these units represents the analyst’s hypothesis about the meaning in the text (Gee, 1999). In order to make decisions about where to break the lines and stanzas, the researcher relies on tone, syntax, and other discourse features in the participant’s language. Therefore, I listened for long and short pauses, emphasis on certain words through tone, and syntax to make decisions about how to structure the poems created for the participants descriptions.

It was not practical to use poetic analysis for their entire descriptions; therefore, I chose to use prose as a means of restorying and to blend the prose with poetry to highlight particular aspects of their stories. I only chose to utilize the poetry and prose blend in the life story section rather than throughout all stories because I intended to concentrate the impact of the poetry where it could be most profound on the reader. Thus, I made the decision both for aesthetic reasons and because I wanted to portray in text the emotions of the participants’ retellings of their life stories. The nature of poetry with line breaks and emphasis on particular words lends itself to achieving the engaging, powerful, and realistic mood I wanted to create for the audience. In order to choose sections for poetic analysis, I first read the output from the network view created for this section. I looked for passages with emotion attached on the part of the participant. I then relied on the videotaped interviews to make the final selection and complete the poetic analysis.
After writing the stories for the findings chapter and the descriptions of each participant, I did a member check. I asked participants to read their respective descriptions and the stories for findings and give me feedback regarding suggestions and changes. I specifically asked them whether or not they agreed with my restorying, whether they wanted me to add or take out any parts, and whether they wanted to suggest any other changes. I incorporated feedback from the participants resulting in another restorying of the story, which is a key part of narrative inquiry. Member checking is important because it affirms the accuracy of analysis and the product that resulted, the story (Wiessner, 2001). Incorporating participants’ feedback is also a part of narrative inquiry that makes the methodology empowering for the participants because they are able to benefit from the relationship inherent in the process.

In order to write the analysis of the findings, I relied on the literature on teacher leadership, transformative learning, community of practice, and white privilege and established a dialogue between the stories and the theories. Throughout the analysis process, I took steps to verify or validate my analysis. Atkinson (1998) argues that reliability and validity are not “appropriate valuative standards” (p. 59) for narrative research. Rather, Atkinson suggests the standards should: be trustworthy rather than true; have internal consistency, which means what is said is not contradictory; have external consistency, which means what is said does not contradict what is known outside the context of the study; have corroboration by the participants; and be persuasive, or compelling to others.

As discussed earlier, I conducted member checks throughout the research process by providing participants with copies of the interview transcripts and the stories and
descriptions. The inclusion of the participants as co-researchers and co-constructors of the stories is a part of narrative inquiry that fosters trustworthiness. Mishler (1990) suggests that trustworthiness, not truth, is more appropriate for inquiry-guided research. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also address the question of fact or fiction regarding stories and suggest that it is important to ask the questions, not necessarily find the answers. Conle (2001) agrees that challenging the narrative inquirer on truth and more specifically “the capacity to truthfully represent the state of [the inquirer’s] own mind, feelings, and motives about the social appropriateness of the narrative and the norms expressed through it; and about the comprehensibility or well formedness of the narrative [the inquirer] constructs” (p.24) is important. Conle uses this assertion to suggest that because narrative truth can be challenged it is a rational form of communicative action as defined by Habermas, one in which we seek to understand not persuade.

Mishler also (1990) suggests the use of exemplars, based on the work of Kuhn (1970) to establish trustworthiness. Mishler proposes that novice narrative researchers serve in apprentice-type roles to master narrative researchers in order to learn the craft of narrative inquiry. For the purpose of this study, I largely relied on the research methods of Clandinin, Connelly, and Wiessner as exemplars. The apprentice relationship requires the novice to study examples of the exemplar’s work. I relied on the works of my exemplars and modeled my data collection and analysis on the research design methods of Clandinin and Connelly (2000); Wiessner (2001); Riessman (1993), and Lieblach, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) as provided in their research studies. My intent was to bolster my own study’s trustworthiness by modeling the study after the work of those in the field who are considered experts.
As mentioned, qualitative research, and in particular, narrative research are often criticized for lacking validity. Merriam (2002) suggests eight strategies for promoting validity and reliability in narrative research: triangulation, member checks, peer review/examination, researcher’s position or reflexivity, adequate engagement in data collection, maximum variation, audit trail, and rich, thick descriptions. In this research study, I employed five of the eight strategies. I triangulated the data by using interviews, email interviews, and a research journal. I used member checks because narrative demands that the participants be co-constructors of meaning. I kept a research journal that included a section on critical, personal reflection. I documented in the research journal “a record of the methods, procedures, and decision points in carrying out the study” (p. 31). Lastly, I provided thick, rich description throughout the stories to contextualize the story for the audience.

In addition to validity issues, ethical concerns were also at the forefront throughout the research study. I was careful to maintain the anonymity of the participants throughout the study. We negotiated at the beginning of the study to complete three in-depth interviews in addition to the screening interview that was down to narrow the participants’ list, and while I might have added more interviews, I was respectful of their busy schedules and maximized the time they had initially agreed to. Gathering data for narrative inquiry requires the researcher to become a part of the environment, or field, of the participants. Often the narrative researcher becomes intimately connected with the participants and, therefore, strong emotional ties develop between the researcher and the participants. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) warn against the researcher becoming too emotionally attached so as to prohibit the distance needed to
form and analyze field texts. This was relevant for me because I was a Fellow myself, and therefore, had an established relationship with the participants prior to the research study. Therefore, I was careful to set appropriate boundaries in order not to compromise the outcome of the study.

In restorying their stories, I worked to maintain the integrity of their stories always keeping in mind that the stories belong to the participants who are co-constructors of the research story. I honored their feedback on the descriptions and findings and restoried the research text according to their suggestions. I was also careful not to become the critic but to be “wakeful” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) of the fact that these stories are situated in the context of time, place, social-personal experiences that color the stories they tell. Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Hatch (2002), and Miles and Huberman (1994) were the primary models for my ethical practices.

Limitations of the Study: “And sorry I could not travel both”

I limited this study to examining the impact of the fellowship program on the Fellows as teacher leaders and their self-identification as teacher leaders. However, the participants had experiences outside of the program, some of which were a result of participation in the program and some not, which influenced the fellows in becoming teacher leaders. Also, I focused only on the teacher leadership aspect of the program and not the curriculum development component. While the two are linked in the context of the program, I chose to focus only on teacher leadership. Further research might allow me to investigate how the curriculum development piece fits with teacher leadership. Additionally, further research would allow me to look at other experiences outside of the program that influence the Fellows in becoming teacher leaders. Specifically, the
majority of literature on teacher leadership focuses on teacher leadership within the school environment, and I did not incorporate data from the participants at their respective schools because I focused the study on teacher leadership in the context of the fellowship program.

Narrative inquiry is risky because of its ambiguous nature. Traditional methods of research begin with a hypothesis or a problem and seek closure with an answer. Narrative inquiry begins with an essential research question or two and allows those questions to guide the study. (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber 1998). Unlike traditional methodologies, narrative inquiry is more about the search than the answer. (Clandinin & Connelly 2000) Conle (2000) considers, “Narrative inquiry differs from more traditional uses of narrative in education, that is, from didactic and strategic uses of narrative. The major difference is related to its open-ended, experiential and quest-like qualities” (p. 50). Therefore, because it is “quest-like” and “experiential” the ambiguity should be embraced rather than feared because it is the ambiguity that is explored as a part of narrative inquiry.

The ambiguity makes narrative challenging for fledgling narrative researchers. However, the overriding purpose of performing narrative inquiry requires the researcher to consider how people describe their lives. The researcher must understand that the participant’s description is one that is socially constructed and situated within time, space, and social and personal context. (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) Therefore, it is not possible to replicate the findings in a narrative inquiry with another study because the findings are situated within a specific context related only to one particular study. Also, it is not possible to replicate because of changing human nature.
Clandinin and Connelly (2000) posit that in narrative, the researcher is often uncertain about the meaning of a particular event. Narrative requires the inquirer to address the subjectivities of the participants as well as the subjectivities of the inquirer. It is important for the researcher to guard against bias by using member checks, notebooks, memos, etc. Additionally, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that inquiries are defined by three-dimensional space: temporal, personal-social, and place. Therefore, it is not possible as with more traditional methodologies to view data outside this three-dimensional space. Participants tell their stories in the three dimensional space, and those stories are taken as truth by the researcher. However, whether the stories are really true is unknown by the researcher. Memory is not entirely reliable; therefore, the researcher must work with the story provided as the only truth that can be obtained. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber (1998) contend that because the life stories of participants are subjective, they are the participant’s truth regardless of the accuracy of the event as a historical event. Furthermore, they suggest it is the space between the participant’s truth and the historical truth that “may provide researchers with a key to discovering identity and understanding it--both in its real or historical core, and as a narrative construction” (p. 8). Therefore, the narrative inquirer must work with the story that is told and understand the context for that story. Furthermore, had the interviews been done at any other moment, perhaps the stories would have changed. Every moment we live colors our memories and reflections. Narrative inquiry acknowledges the fluidity and change inherent in memory.

The study is also limited because I chose to focus the research on four fellows and spent a limited amount of time with each one. Consequently, there were times in the
research process that I would have expanded my inquiries if not for the narrow focus of my research study.

Lastly, as a Fellow and a teacher myself, I am certain that I brought certain biases to the research study. I initially became interested in doing the study because I recognized through my own experiences how empowering the fellowship program was in developing my teacher leadership abilities and causing me to self-identify as a teacher leader. I worked to keep my bias in check as not to taint the responses of the participants. However, I am sure that my bias informed my questions and responses during the interview process. My participation in the program did allow me to fill in gaps in the story not possible for a researcher who had not been a Fellow. The research text, I am certain, is one that is colored by my participation as a Fellow; however, I contend that only brings strength to the text. I did not seek to avoid portraying the program in a certain light, as my goal was not to examine or evaluate the program but to study the fellows’ experiences.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discussed the research methodology for narrative inquiry. Four participants and I participated in a narrative inquiry study to examine the impact of the fellowship program on the Fellows and how they self-identify as teacher leaders. I explained the rationale for using narrative inquiry as well as the methods of data collection including interviewing and personal journaling. I also discussed the method of analysis used to reach my conclusions. Lastly, I shared the limitations of the study. In chapter four, I present the findings of my research including descriptions of the participants and the story that emerged from their stories.
Chapter Four

Part I: Meet The Other Travelers

One of the essential pieces of narrative inquiry is building relationships between the researcher and each of the participants. Therefore, as we began our travels together, I took the time to get to know the Fellows and asked them many questions about their personal histories, their teaching histories, and their philosophies about teaching. In order to create a picture of each of the Fellows’ physical descriptions, I relied on the video-tape from the interviews. I then relied on the personal and teaching histories and philosophies to construct their stories, and I also utilized Gee’s (1999) poetic analysis for sections of their personal histories to create an image of the Fellows for the reader. The poetic analysis, in particular, allowed me to highlight particular pieces of the Fellows’ stories that were especially powerful and representative of who they are. The poetic analysis allowed me to replay the tapes of our conversations and listen to the cadence of their voices and try to capture the emotions through their pauses and their emphasis. I tried to capture that through the lines of their respective poems. The prose provided a more practical way of painting a clear image, while the poems reflect the power of the Fellows’ voices.

Keith

I first knew Keith as a fellow colleague because I spent the first six years of my teaching career at the high school where he continues to teach. I knew him as a kind man who cared deeply about the environment as evidenced by the fact the he nurtured our school’s courtyard area with beautiful flower gardens and birdhouses. He was well-respected by the students and fellow colleagues and was chosen Teacher of the Year.
during my time there. After six years, I transferred to another high school and lost contact with Keith. One year later, I learned that he had been chosen as a fellow and he would be joining the third class in the fellowship program. Keith and I reconnected as I was in the group of upperclassmen who served to initiate the new class of Fellows into the program.

Keith has a reputation, unbeknownst to him, for being a storyteller. Although he is shy and lacks confidence about his reputation, others perceive him as an entertainer, but not the flashy type of entertainer who overpowers the audience. Keith is a gentle soul who speaks with a melodic voice. I told Keith that I enjoyed my time with him because I could sit and listen to him for hours. He calms my soul with the sound of his voice and the genuineness and kindness that he emits; it is unparalleled by anyone else I know.

Keith is in his mid-fifties, average height for a man and at a healthy weight since he decided to join the gym workout routinely. His attire is consistent with his love of the environment, as I have always seen him in belted khaki pants, flannel shirts, and hiking boots as if he is ready to go hiking at a moment’s notice. Gold-rimmed, square glasses frame his face, and he is balding on top.

I met with Keith on four occasions, each time in his classroom at the school where he teaches. I lugged my equipment, camera, tripod, and bag up the flight of stairs to his classroom. He has an outdoor entrance to his room because it faces the courtyard below. His classroom had not changed in the years since I left the school. It is packed with aquariums on the black-topped counters and on stands. His students’ desks, the old black-topped kind that are heavy as lead are centered in the room with two chairs each. He has posters covering the walls and cabinet doors. And most notably to me, I would
always position myself in the room to look out his window to the bird feeders. He had
several of them at the windows frequented by a variety of birds. His classroom is a
reflection of him and his love for the environment. He does his best to bring the outdoors
inside that classroom.

In my early interviews, I wanted to establish a level of comfort with the Fellows;
therefore, I spent some time asking them questions about their personal histories,
teaching histories and philosophies on teaching.

Keith defines himself as a White American with a French, Irish, Swiss, and
English heritage. He was raised in the deep South as a member of the Lutheran church.
He was taught from an early age that education was the path to a successful life, and he
was the first in his family to go to college. The men in his family were all hardworking
farmers from the South and mid-West, and he assumes his “farming genes” and love of
nature came from his family. It is this history that Keith says fosters his passion for the
earth. Keith describes himself as hard-working, patient, and slow to anger.

I’m a very patient person.
A caring person.
An understanding person.
And I do have limits.
But my limits
sometimes
are wider than
other people's.
Because I know that life is
kinda like that.
Sometimes I know that
my class isn't the
most important thing
in the world.

But I think to me
Teaching is
the profession that
never stops.
I used to use the term that
Teaching was a
24-hour job.
Because I don't think if you're a
true
teacher,
that you mind being one
and
wherever I go,
I don't play a role.
That's
who I am.

Keith has taught for twenty-seven years; however, he spent some time working in
business early in his life. He had dreamed of being a teacher since he was in the ninth
grade. He was always working with children through church at a young age and he was a
pied pier for children, cats, and dogs. It was all very natural to him. He was inspired in
ninth grade by his Biology teacher so much that he models his dress after him today and
he tries to maintain the same sense of enthusiasm that was so influential. He left high
school and attended college in Georgia where he earned his teaching degree, and he got
his first job teaching middle school in Georgia.

It was a living.
An average living.
And my first paycheck from the school system was
$325 clear.
And I owed $328 a month in bills.
That was just-- almost devastating.
I went into my little study area
--sitting down --
and just cried.
'Cause I had spent four years in college.
And now I couldn't pay my bills.
And I was married.
And I thought, oh, my God.
What have I done?
He and his wife, Irene, looked for other job opportunities, and they were led back to North Carolina where he could make more money. He found a job teaching eighth grade earth science. He said, “I sort of began to plan my path out at Sanford Junior High School because while I was there we did environmental things. We had an Earth Day, and we actually saved a creek. My students got a chance to come to Raleigh to see the Lieutenant Governor at his office. So my future was sort of sealed at that point. Because I just felt like getting kids outside and involved was an important concept to teach.”

Two years later, he and his wife headed to a different part of the state for a new job teaching middle school. It was during the time of desegregation when he worked to bring peace between the white and black students. Teaching was going well for him despite these difficulties, but his wife had their second child and she wanted to stay home with the children. This was impossible for them on a teacher’s salary, and he was forced to look for jobs in business. He found a job managing a grocery store and made good money. He was miserable. And his wife knew it.

I asked Keith about the defining moments in his teaching career, and he immediately replied with a story about his wife.

The very first thing that just pops in my mind was when my wife told me that she would go back to work so I could teach. Because if you backed up just a little bit, I had given up teaching, something I always wanted to do in order to provide a living for my family. And she wasn't working, she wanted to stay at home. So I made that sacrifice. And I was willing to do it, but I was not a happy camper. I mean,
I really didn’t like it
I just wasn't connected.
And she --
she recognized that.
And she came and she said,
'You know, Keith,' she said,
'I know you're not happy.
And I know what you need to do. And so
I will support you and go back to work.'
That was --to me
that was one of the
most loving things
a person could really do.
Somebody said, 'You're a teacher.'
And I said, 'Yeah, you know,
I teach because my wife lets me.'
And that's really the truth.
If it were not for her dedication to work, and to sacrifice,
I couldn't do it.
My commitment to my family would just…
I couldn't do this.
I'd have to
give it up.

Keith and his wife packed their things and headed to Florida where he taught in a residential treatment facility for emotionally disturbed children. He earned a master’s degree in special education while there, and he taught there for five years. After growing weary from working with a difficult population, he began a search for another job and found his first job teaching high school environmental science. It was during this time that Keith cemented his philosophy in education.

He values immersing kids in the subject they are learning. He strives to activate all of their senses. And through his teaching, he wants to help “young people grow up to be democratic citizens that have a real positive environmental ethic. So that they would look at the earth in a different way and be in harmony with the earth.” Keith also feels it is important to be in tune with his colleagues. While working at the residential school in
Florida, he recognized how invaluable the support of other teachers is. Therefore, he includes in his philosophy “an awareness of what some other teachers around me might be feeling so that I can go support them.”

Despite how much Keith loved his job in Florida, he and his family had to return to North Carolina. His job search led him to the high school were he still teaches today. After many years in education, Keith acknowledges that he has grown in his practice as a teacher. He came to his current high school as a special education teacher where there were no courses in environmental program, and he wrote the curriculum for the class so that he could be an environmental science teacher.

Keith entered the fellowship program because he was inspired by a fellow colleague who raved about the experience. He was also was interested in developing a curriculum project with birds, a project he came to title *Birds in the Schoolyard*. I asked Keith to participate in the screening interview and later invited him to be one of the fellows for the in-depth study. He kindly accepted, despite his busy schedule, because he felt that it was important to help me in my work; after all, I was a Fellow who needed help and we all try to help each other. And so, Keith joined me in my journey.

**Jennifer**

The butterfly lady. I have never seen Jennifer without a butterfly ornamenting her outfit. She wears butterfly pins in her hair, butterfly broaches on her lapel, butterfly earrings, butterfly rings, and butterflies on her clothing. She carries butterfly stickers to give others. Her students covet her butterfly stickers.

I first met Jennifer when I joined the fellowship program as a member of the second class. Jennifer was a member of the first class of eight Fellows. They were a tightly knit group because they had worked so closely together during their first year.
However, they were eager to be joined by twelve new fellows and to work with those fellows to continue to build the program.

Jennifer has a reputation for being gregarious, outgoing, friendly, and funny. I have never seen her meet a stranger; she will talk to anyone. Despite her reputation, I always found Jennifer to be somewhat distant and difficult to get to know personally. This concerned me initially as I debated which Fellows to invite to participate in the study. However, because of the nature of narrative research, I felt that June would be comfortable opening up to me in our conversations.

Jennifer has skin the color of Hershey’s cocoa and black curly hair that she typically wears pinned up-- with butterflies. She has a flair for color; whenever I see her she is adorned with brightly colored clothes, and she jokes about wearing size 10 ½ wide shoes and how hard it is to find a new pair. Jennifer is a big woman who commands attention from any audience. And she has a predilection for bursting into song—anywhere. One of my fondest memories of Jennifer is when she sang the First Lady of the state one of the math songs she uses to teach students. She will sing to anyone, anytime, with a beautiful soprano voice.

I always met with Jennifer in her second floor high school classroom at one of the city schools. We would meet in the late afternoon after we were both done teaching for the day. Jennifer’s classroom is a reflection of her personality—paper butterflies formed with pipe cleaners hang from the ceiling tiles. They were hung by the committee who surprised her this year when, after multiple nominations, she won Teacher of the Year for her school.
Jennifer defines herself as an African-American female. She said, “I have pride in being African; I have pride in being an American, and I have pride in being a Woman. I want all aspects of who I am to work together to benefit all of humanity. ‘I'm Black and I'm Proud.’ ‘To be an American is to be free.’ ‘I am woman; hear me roar.’” She is a third generation teacher. Her grandmother taught kindergarten, and her mother was an English teacher.

Jennifer began her college career in her hometown in western North Carolina where she attended community college for two years. She transferred to the state university after two years as a junior because it was the next logical step after earning two degrees at the community college. She attended a four-year college as a math major. As she neared graduation, she asked herself, “‘What am I gonna’ do with [my math degree]?’” One of my professors said, ‘You might as well teach. You help everybody under the sun.’” She agreed and stayed in school two years longer to earn a degree in education. She has taught for eighteen years.

Jennifer has taught for her entire career in the same county. She spent six and a half years at a high school in a more rural section of the county before moving to her current school located in the city. She left her first school because she said she “needed a change.” She considers herself a “worker bee” and others come to her with they need ideas and “weird things.” She joked about teachers coming to her for playing cards and dice, and she had them to give. She is a “linear thinker” not a global thinker. She said, “global people drive me crazy.”

Jennifer’s philosophy of education is grounded in her passion for math.

To make a difference.
To do it by getting people
to see that
math is truly everywhere.
’Cause that’s the way I look at it.
I mean, you can give me any topic,
give me five minutes,
I'll turn it into a math problem.
And I mean,
it doesn't have to be to that extreme.
But I want them to have an appreciation for math.
And see what it can do for them, and how it can help them out.
Far as my philosophy
When you say teach the whole person
I truly believe that.
You do more than just teach your subject area.
You talk about life.
You talk about people.
I mean, if you have the connection like I do with math, then you use that as your bridge.
This is math.
It's universal, along with music.
I want you to see it's universal.
That's my big platform.
Not just that it connects, but that it's anywhere and everywhere.
It's not just, I- have- to- do- math- third- period.
You do math all your life.
Jennifer is a determined individual. She said, “Go ahead and tell me I can’t do something. I’m gonna prove you wrong. [laughs]”. It is this drive that inspires her to be a regular presenter on the mathematics convention circuit. It is this attitude with which she approached the fellowship program. She was motivated to apply for the program because she is always seeking opportunities for new experiences, and she needs to be constantly challenged. She had an idea to involve the business community in a project for her Algebra II students to design restaurants, and she thought the fellowship program could provide her with resources.

I asked Jennifer to be a part of my screening interviews after she was one of the first Fellows to reply to my request for participation. I chose to invite her to be one of the fellows in the study, and she accepted to join me in my journey.

Hannah

Hannah and I were both members of the second class of fellows. We entered the program together, both uncertain of what we had gotten ourselves into. Hannah tended to keep to herself. She was quiet, shy; she hardly ever spoke. She conversed mostly with a friend who was a member of the first class of Fellows. We did not have much reason to interact during the first weeks in the program, but as time passed, we took advantage of opportunities to talk and find common ground.

Hannah has a reputation for being reserved and quiet. She is known for her work with the national space organization because she has been invigorated by her work with that organization, and she is always eager to share with others about her project. Hannah is in her late twenties. She stands about five foot seven, has straight brown hair and brown eyes. She self-identifies as a White American. We met for our conversations at
her home in a rural, but growing, section of the county. Seated in a traditionally
decorated dining room, we both seemed out of place wearing our casual clothes, Hannah
usually in sweatpants or jeans and a T-shirt. It is rare to see Hannah dressed in “dressy”
clothes.

Hannah was concerned about working with me because she revealed initially that
she is “more of a right-brain person” because of her science brain and she does not
usually reflect well. However, with more questions than I used for the other fellows in
the study she was able to reflect well. During our conversations, Hannah spoke at length
about the source of her shyness. When entering the program, she struggled with the
expectation to interact with others, and she attributes that struggle to low-self esteem.

See
I don't know.
I've been to a counselor to talk about
this.
I don't know
what has happened to make me –
I really believe that you're born with possibly
That personality.
Maybe you're
missing some chemicals
to whatever says you're a good –
great person
or whatever.
Because I've always had--
My family has always boosted
my self esteem.
My teachers,
except for one or two,
have always boosted
my self esteem. And
I've always needed boosting.
I've never, ever –
even now
Even now,
in all that I've accomplished,
I still need boosting.
Like things that I know I should get automatically because it should be a no-brainer. To me, I'm scared to death of it. If I were to go for national boards I'd be scared to death. I really think that's just part of who I am.

Because my parents have always backed me 110%. And it's very difficult. Mom and I talk about it all the time. It's very difficult for her because She thinks she failed me somewhere. And I have to remind her that it's me. It's something – something was wrong with me when I was born. [laughs] You know what I mean. That's who I am. But from my point of view, it is something wrong with me because I'm on antidepressants because that leads me into depression. And I'm on more antidepressants than I've ever been in my entire life. And here I'm at the top of my game. So. [laughs]

Hannah began her teaching career seven years ago at a small private Christian school. She taught there for one year and was not happy with the type of student who attended the school, and she left to teach at a public school. She is certified K-6, which
allows her to teach elementary school or sixth grade at the middle school level. She took a job at one of the magnet middle schools in the county teaching sixth grade science. She has written two courses, Biology I and II, which are science electives at the middle school level.

Hannah was motivated to become a teacher largely because of the many bad teachers and bad experiences she had in school, and she said she did it because she “wasn’t good at anything.” She said that in order to go into other careers, she thought she had to be really smart, and she said, “I never was really smart.” She chose to go into elementary education because she felt that she did not have to be as smart to teach elementary school. Because of her own background of not feeling smart, she enjoys working with kids who need her.

I really enjoy working with the kids that need me. Because I was one of those needy kids. I’ve been teaching them life lessons. And…pretty much it’s a neat atmosphere. And I share stories – with the kids. And if I make a mistake, I apologize. And if I make it in front of them, I apologize in front of them. But I’m just honest with the kids because I want them to understand that adults are honest. And you can talk to them.
For Hannah, teaching is not about filling students full of information; in fact, she said she does not even teach using the textbook. She prefers using as many lab-based, hands-on activities as possible, and if she does use the textbook, the students read aloud in class and she helps them understand the information. She does not see any reason to try to “trip them up.” She does not try to fail them. She does not use grades to leverage their participation; if she could, she would not use grades at all.

Hannah shared that she would not be returning to her school next year. She had been debating the decision throughout the time span of our conversations, and in our last conversation she revealed that she and her husband were planning to start a family. She felt led to begin working with other teachers on innovative teaching ideas rather than with students because she can have a greater impact on students through helping the teachers.

Hannah entered the fellowship program because she was encouraged by a fellow colleague who was a member of the first class of Fellows. She was excited about developing her curriculum project, Destination: Mars. Despite her feelings that she was not a reflective person, Hannah agreed to join my journey to study the fellowship program.

Jane

Jane was a member of the third class of Fellows whom I immediately connected with. We were fellow INTJ’s, I was working on a Ph.D., and it was her dream to earn one although she felt at this point in her life, she never would. I recognized immediately that Jane was brilliant. She is a high school art teacher, who has taught for thirty years.

Jane has a reputation for giving fabulous, creative gifts. She never attends an event without a gift for the guest. She is also known for her insightful and appropriate
remarks. She has boundless energy and works hard to provide amazing projects for her art students.

Jane is not the stereotypical art teacher. In fact, she insists that she actively resist being the typical Birkenstock-wearing hippie art teacher in a prairie skirt. Jane is always dressed to the nines. She stands about five foot two, petite, fit, with short brownish blonde hair that she keeps styled impeccably. She dresses in suits most of the time. In fact I joked with her when I met her in her classroom for our conversation on a teacher workday when she was dressed in a skirt and blouse while I was in jeans, Birkenstocks, and a t-shirt. She said she never knew whom she was going to meet, and she always wanted to be prepared to make a good first impression.

Jane grew up in the Middle East in Saudi Arabia. She attended a private school in Switzerland where she had outstanding teachers. However, the culture in Saudi Arabia and the role of women played a large role in determining Jane’s path in life.

And then
from the fourth grade on
my grandmother kept
hammering
in my head
Financially independent--
Financially independent.
And looking at
the women in Saudi Arabia, and
the fact that many of them were
riding in the back of a truck
with sheep, and they
didn't own their property, and
they had no rights.
I caught this idea that,
how can I be
financially independent
if I'm staying at home
cooking and
cleaning and
raising the kids? That was sort of a second subliminal message that was coming through. And then the third thing was, I didn't want to be a secretary. And I didn't want to be a nurse. Those were the role models presented to me by the time I was 14 years old. Because I led a very isolated existence living in the middle of a sand dune with a fence around you, producing oil. So.

The good news was from this experience I came away with Incredible appreciation for language, culture, history, other people. But as far as my place as a woman, and whether I wanted to be married, and just what I wanted to do with all of my boundless energy, I had not reconciled working full-time and being the perfectionist I am, and raising a family and doing a great job of that. And making money and being financially independent. I could not reconcile those two views. I didn't think you could do it all. So-- I chose to work.

Jane finished school in Switzerland and moved to the United States at eighteen.

She attended a small liberal arts school with an emphasis on teaching only to realize that it offered experiences that paled in comparison to the education that she had received at
the private school. She was accustomed to going to the Louvre to study art, not studying it from books in a lecture hall. After finishing college, Jane found her first teaching job in the Adirondacks. She lived in an old mining town and bought an old one-room schoolhouse there. She remodeled it setting up a duplex allowing her to rent one side to pay the mortgage. She provided art lessons to students on the weekends because there was nothing else for them to do. She became a role model for those students, and many of them went on to have careers in art. She lived frugally on a meager salary.

I made an impact
on these kids
even though I was in Nowheresville.
And the community
really responded in the sense that
when I had problems that I couldn't take care of –
you know,
needed my septic tank dug up
in the middle of the winter. Or needed –
you know,
my plumbing, whatever.
People would respond.
And it was a barter system.
In that sense that was really
one of my favorite teaching experiences.
My salary was
$5,200 a year.
I chopped my wood
so I didn't have a heating bill.
And I still managed to save
$3,000 a year.
I don't know how I did it.
But I think I had
the same pair of jeans
and the same pair of shoes,
and the same two flannel shirts
that I wore for nine months,
and my long underwear.
Because it was so cold up there.
It was –
when I think back on it,
it was a great way to enter teaching. Because it was – it was really about teaching for teaching's sake.

Jane taught in the small mining town for four years until she saw that she was not going to change the culture of the town and she could perhaps have a larger impact elsewhere. Moreover, the local steel business was declining, and she recognized that the town would be in dire straits in the near future. She applied to design school and was accepted to work as a teacher educator while attending graduate school. She lived in a co-op and worked as a research assistant. Toward the end of her time in graduate school, she received news that her father was retiring in Saudi Arabia and her family sent her a plane ticket to come visit.

While back in Saudi Arabia, chance and circumstance led her to meet the head recruiter for the American school in Saudi Arabia. They spoke about the possibility of her teaching there after finishing her Master’s degree; however, she was uncertain at the time. Several months later she went for the interview and was offered the job. She headed to Saudi Arabia to teach just as her family was packing their things to head back to the United States. She taught junior high art. She had a substantial budget and plenty of time for creating her own art. She worked with colleagues to produce art shows of student work. After three years, she met her future husband, the land mines were starting to wash up on the beaches, and the Iran-Iraq oil feud was worsening. She married, and she and her husband moved back to the United States to North Carolina.

Jane initially worked in retail because, without any connections, it was difficult finding a job teaching art. After a year or so, she was ready to return to teaching, and she
found a job at one of the magnet high schools where she taught for seven years. She later transferred to her current school where she has taught since.

Jane likes personal freedom, innovation, being able to write grants to fund her students’ art projects. She is a team player. For her, teaching is about creativity blended with practicality.

And I guess the best thing I can say about teaching is, it's kind of like Mr. Holland's Opus.
I've spent a lot of my life thinking that I wanted to create something.
And I wanted to – be in a business, creating something, doing something that was really monumental.
And my artistic creations are my students. And it's my 30th year.

Jane was eager to join me on my journey because, as I mentioned, she had always wanted to earn a Ph.D. She joked that she would earn one vicariously through me, and she did her part by agreeing to join me on the journey and add her voice to the story.

Part II: What We Discovered on the Road

“It's a fellowship; it's collegiality; it's a community.”

The fellowship program is designed to provide participants with opportunities and support for developing curriculum projects and becoming teacher leaders. The participants all spoke of how teachers are isolated from their colleagues with little time for interaction. Recognizing this, the program provides Fellows with opportunities to network with one another and with those who can help them achieve the program goals.
The program also provides each Fellow with a mentor from one of three local universities. The mentor is a partner for the Fellow as he or she moves through the program. Through the networking and the relationship and the mentor, the participants shared how they formed collaborative groups that combat the isolation they feel as they enter the program. Throughout, the participants receive support and encouragement from their collaborators and other Fellows.

“We live in our igloo of the teaching world.”

Isolation. Disconnect. Existing in a “box.” These words connote how teachers often feel about their profession and their work as teachers. Two levels of isolation surfaced in the participants’ stories. They shared sentiments about not feeling connected with other teachers in their day-to-day practice. Additionally, the participants expressed that there was disconnect between those in education and those outside education.

Jane, who is highly driven and defines herself as an INTJ (Introvert, Intuitive, Thinking, Judgmental), said, “I don't go to lunch. I just eat in my room. I mean-- I have 31 minutes for lunch. You know - go to the bathroom, answer the phone. Maybe send a kid to check my mailbox. Go to the microwave. Two minutes. Start. Get the spoon out. Wash it. Eat. Wash the spoon. Put it back. You know. Look in the mirror. Get the spaghetti sauce off my chin. And set up for the next class.” In her rush to be prepared for her students, she sacrifices time spent interacting with other colleagues. Hannah also recognized the negative impact of isolation on the teachers at her school. She shared that she “does not even know the new people,” which prompted her to suggest a team-building opportunity for the staff. She said, “They [administrators] sent out a survey. And I've written in detail what I think would be a good idea, like a ropes course for the
staff. Because there are 90 of us. So, I don't see people that I'm friends with, I hardly ever see them. And I don't even know the new people this year. And I usually do. But a ropes course would get us to work together and gel together. And you're going to have an easier time making decisions. I mean, they're going to want to listen to us. Because it's not just one person telling you, 'I don't think what you're doing is right.' It's a group saying, 'Well, I think this way would be better.'” Hannah recognized that a “gelled” staff would be a more efficient staff for the students. Unfortunately, she shared later that the ropes course idea was not one her administration supported; nor did they support an alternate team-building activity.

Keith expressed a sense of isolation that stemmed from his initial experience in the fellowship program. He had difficulty connecting with his mentor, a reputable and busy professor from a local university. He said, “I know about having to have partners and do the stuff, be involved with this, and so forth. But personally, that part of it was a little disappointing. Because what it meant – of course, what it made me do – and maybe this is a real growth thing for me from [the program] – what it made me do is go out and find my own group of people that would teach me.” Jennifer spoke of the disconnect that she feels from those outside of the education community. She said, “And I’ve seen that reaction, also from some of the business alliances, when we interact with them at different socials or different events. They’re talking like, ‘Oh, I hadn’t thought about it that way.’ Because they live in their igloo of the business world. We live in our igloo of the teaching world. We need more opportunities where we mesh and overlap.” While each participant experienced the isolation and disconnect in different contexts, they all
lamented that they were not better connected with others whether it was in their own schools or in the community.

“You gotta work this network.”

Because teachers are isolated, as the participants affirmed, many seek opportunities to make connections and establish relationships with colleagues. Having the opportunity to meet other teachers and people who have a stake in the educational community was important to the participants for a variety of reasons. Some of the participants spoke specifically about their networking opportunities as a result of the fellowship program. Jennifer, a member of the 2001 founding class for the fellowship who has been teaching for eighteen years shared, “How much did I accomplish in four years versus the 14? There was no one that I came in contact with to this degree during those 14 years that I have in these four. So, I mean, 14 years, four years. Let's think about that. Hm. We've done a lot of hobnobbing here in four years, 14. Hm. I think that [the fellowship program] was the reason that it happens. And this is a good thing. And I look for more to come as well. So, even though I've graduated out of the program, I'm still part of the program. And that's why I still – you'll see me pop up every now and then at a meeting if I can fit it into my schedule. Because I want the other people to see just because your two years end, that doesn't mean your learning – that doesn't mean your association or connection with everybody else ends. So, the only way to make that happen is if somebody from the beginning continues to pop up.” Her experiences within the context of the fellowship program led to numerous opportunities to network with other Fellows who teach a variety of subject areas, at a variety of levels, at different schools throughout the five counties that the state the program currently serves.
Moreover, she finds value in maintaining contact with the program to network with other classes of fellows. She spoke of a time when the network she built during the fellowship program benefited a fellow colleague’s friend. She said, “And that's another thing with the networking, the teacher across the hallway has a neighbor who decides to go back to school. That neighbor told my teacher across the hallway; that teacher across the hallway told me because they said we know you have teacher connections at other schools. She's trying to get a job at another school. Who can she contact? Did you hear all those—the neighbor talking to this one and all it was—was we knew you had teacher contacts at other schools—okay—contacts in other places—people come and ask your opinion—you all of a sudden—hey, I know something.” Not only does Jennifer use the network for her own benefit, but also she is able to utilize the network for the benefit of others.

Like Jennifer, Jane expressed that “it's the networking and it's the relationships that makes [the fellowship program] so unique.” She said, “in this past couple of months I really haven't seen—everybody's just pretty busy and we haven't had so many meetings and things and I feel like we're already dispersing to the winds. But we've gone out to lunch on a couple of times, and I think we all just respect each other and that's nice because I can email somebody and say ‘Well what do you think about this’ and I think that's sort of reinforced this collegiality.” While certainly Jane acknowledges that the relationships do fluctuate in terms of face-to-face contact, she takes advantage of the network of colleagues in place and is able to reach out to others when needed. In the context of Jane’s discussion about networking and relationships being a valuable aspect of the fellowship program, she defined networking in terms of engaging in dialogue with those outside of the program, like the business leaders and politicians she encountered.
She said, “[The director] was talking about when we are meeting and greeting people and when we are introduced to people, or we have the opportunity to meet business leaders. You don't want to stand and fumble around. You want to be able to elicit what it is you need, or how they could help you. It was just getting us to understand – the handshake. And introducing yourself. And networking. Because teachers don't network. I mean, when do you have time to network? You know. Who am I going to network with on my hall? You know. But in the business world, it's like a shark frenzy. People are always – their little antennas are always up about networking, and who's so-and-so, and projects are going on.” For Jane, who has a business background, networking in the context of the fellowship program was vital but also a skill that teachers do not tend to have because they are not required to “network” as Jane defines the term.

Keith’s experiences with networking stemmed from necessity because he was initially not able to establish a relationship with his mentor. He expressed that he had to essentially “find his own group of people.” And rather than see that as a negative of the fellowship program, he said, “that would be a real positive thing about [the fellowship program], is giving you the opportunity to grow by allowing you to do that. Instead of sort of handing them to you, you gotta’ work this network. And I ended up with a really great network of people.” “This network” is the fellowship program as a whole, and as a result of being part of the program, Keith was able to form his own network of support for his project.

“No man or woman is an island.”

When Fellows are accepted into the fellowship program, they are assigned a mentor from one of three local universities. While Keith’s relationship with his mentor
was not what he had hoped for and he resorted to forming his own network of support, two of the participants, Hannah and Jane, both shared how powerful their experiences were with their mentors. Hannah’s mentor, Dr. Jennings, was affiliated with a large land-grant university in the state. She shared that she knew he would be a good mentor from the beginning because of his generosity. She said, “That $2,000 that they get each year. He put that in a separate account, or I could use to buy textbooks or books. I could use it to buy a globe. I bought lots of Mars books with it. He did not take that money and use it for himself. He did not take that as payment to be my mentor. He took that and put it in an account for me to use. Because he enjoyed doing it, and he didn't need the money. I thought he was crazy, but...[laughs] professors get paid a little more, I guess. But it was extremely generous. And that's when I knew that I definitely had the best mentor. Because when we'd sit in those meetings, I just didn't see the rapport with the other fellows and their mentors as I did with him. But it's been wonderful. Now we've become friends.” Beyond his generosity, Dr. Jennings also provided both Hannah and her students with numerous opportunities. She shared a story about opportunities he has provided for her students. She said, “Dr. Jennings has brought in Russian scientists who worked on Sputnik into my class to talk to my kids. We've had a couple of guys from [a national space exploration program] come in several times to work with the kids. I've had kids from Dr. Jennings’ class come beg me to come over. And they would come over just because they wanted to hang out with the kids.” Dr. Jennings also provided opportunities for Hannah to become a workshop coordinator. She said, “Three years ago they had a workshop – National Institute of Aerospace puts on a workshop for [state] teachers. They spend a week – half a week at [the local land grant university], half a
week at [the agriculture and technology university]. And then a full week at [a national space exploration program]. At [an Air Force base]. Well, the first year I went as a participant. And last year I went as a coordinator. And again, this year I'll go as a coordinator. And I gave presentations last year on the Tumbleweed Project, and I'll give them again this year. So [Dr. Jennings] is constantly pushing me a step further. And he's not – even though we "finished" [the fellowship program], I'll never be finished. Even when I'm done teaching, I will still look for opportunities to speak.” Hannah’s relationship with her mentor has become a friendship that she can rely on in the future and not only within the context of the fellowship program. The relationship provides her with opportunities that impact her own professional career as well as her students’ learning experiences.

Jane shared a similar experience with her two mentors, who were from a neighboring university. She acknowledged that, “[The fellowship program] has been one of the greatest impacts on not only my professional development but the end result of my students, and that is because it has been a sustained collaboration of my mentors who have been this kind of little—I mean you go in there and you teach and you start out with this kind of ball of energy and then after the first day a chunk goes away and by Friday another chunk goes away and at least for the first you know at this point the first year and a half you know this infusion of interest in someone that wanted to sit down and talk to you about what you were doing in your classroom or an idea—really have that discussion. Or, I would get an email from Amy—you know I saw this article—or she would send me something—a package to me—that had a book in it that I had mentioned in a conversation. I mean someone's actually listening to my conversation and mailing
me a book that I could use in my classroom, or an article, web addresses or a person's name, for almost a year at least once or twice a month, I'd get these little packages with things in them. I mean, how nice is that, and I've never had that before and I just really appreciated it. I mean I really enjoyed—Amy—what she does—she writes all the interdisciplinary content for the [traveling science bus] you know and that's one of the reasons they took me on was to help develop things.”

For Jane, her mentors were there as moral support as she moved through the fellowship program and worked to complete her project. She said, “I feel lucky with my mentors. I think that it was perfect who I was paired with. I think mentoring is very good though—I think that having positive mentors around you that emulate those qualities like [the program director] does, and I think to a certain extent we miss out as educators because we're kind of assigned these mentors but in business people that are really successful—if you talk to them early on—they have mentors. They either seek them out within the business or other people adopt them or they find them and that is how they rise and are groomed for the next position—it's not something that happens on its own—you know no woman or man is an island—it is all about people and relationships with people.” While Hannah benefited from her relationship with Dr. Jennings because of both the support and opportunities he provided, Jane acknowledges that her relationship with her two mentors was grounded in the need to have people to collaborate with—as she says, people to actually listen to her as she worked on her project.

The mentor relationship is a formal structure in the program that supports the Fellows as they work on their projects. The mentor/mentee relationships take different forms based on the individuals. However, the participants revealed that the relationships
are a means for collaboration and support that result from participating in the program. That collaboration and support also manifest in other forms.

“All of these people came into play as a resource person for me.”

The participants shared their feelings about being isolated and disconnected from others in their teaching roles. Networking is a way for them to combat that isolation whether the networking occurs within or outside of the context of the fellowship program. Within the context of the fellowship program, the mentor plays a significant role in order to providing opportunities and serving as support. While networking and the mentors are significant in terms of bringing the participants out of isolation, it is evident from their stories that they also value collaboration outside of the program context. Jane differentiated between networking and collaboration by defining networking as a means of making connections and meeting people to establish contacts. However, collaboration is often a result of networking, as those relationships that begin as only contacts are cemented into a more formal, helping relationship.

Keith spoke about “working the network” to form relationships with people who could help him with his project. Keith’s story about his project reveals the value he places on collaborating with other colleagues and with those in the community. He said, “I thought it would be real important as far as developing ethics, that we would make it an interdisciplinary course or project. And so I sought out other teachers here at school, like English, vocational, math, the marketing people. And tried to develop…curricula or objectives and activities that were cross-curricular. And I thought – because environmental education and environmental science are interconnected. Let’s connect all these places together. And so that was a thrust that I wanted to do, is have these
experiences to be interdisciplinary. So – you know, what we did was…in English we talked about transcendentalism. And connected that with bird studies. And so…
it was a good connection. Because what we were doing, they had learned – in
the English class they had learned about transcendentalism. And so [the students] came
over to my class and taught my students through our points and projects about what
Thoreau and Emerson talked about, and others, too. And, so, then our part was to take
them outside so that they could experience some of nature, of what these people were
talking about. So, my students at that point had learned birding skills. And we set up
what we call the *trail of beauty*, which is a walk along several hundred yards where you
stop periodically and you have a quotation from somebody, and you reflect on that. So,
what we did, incorporated that from the transcendentalists as a part to stop and reflect on.
And at the same place there would be a bird that they would have to observe, somewhere
within 360 degrees. And so my student was teaching [the English students] how to use
binoculars and how to use the field guides. And how to find these birds. Of course the
bird was a bird that I had put out there. So that it wouldn't fly away, you know. So.
Blackbirds, we call them. So, it was those kind of activities. I try to draw people
together to do that. So…we brought in other classes like the marketing class. They have
an objective about ecotourism. Fits in with us because of our birding skills. And, so,
they designed brochures about different counties where you could go and see birds in
different counties. And why – and where you could stay. The hotels and motels you
could stay in. And how you would get there. And where you could eat. Stuff like that.
And then, of course, our part was to teach them about birds and where they could find
these birds. They were teaching us about the hotels and restaurants, and how to get there.
And then we were talking about how you would do the birdwatching. So, I wanted it to be like that."

Beyond collaborating with other colleagues in English and marketing, Keith also sought to collaborate with others in the community regarding aspects of his project. He shared, “Another big part of the project was to develop partnerships. And that's one of the strengths of my project. Was that I didn't have a ready-made partner. I had to go find my partners. I had a professor at a local private university. He was my mentor. He set up the trip. [Keith took a trip to the Yucatan as part of his fellowship experience.] And he gave me books to read and stuff like that. And I really appreciate that part, but…as far as the nuts and bolts of my project, I had to go – I found people to help me along. So. I spent a lot of time that first year seeking out people. Found [a professor] at [a major state university in the south] who does a lot of bluebird research. And – you know, I found a…different people at [a local land grant university]. And then of course at [a local private university]. And then there was [a private northern university]. And then I found some people at [a large, Midwestern public university] that worked with bird cavity nesters. And…then there were people in Alabama with the Hummers Group. And so…all of these people sort of came into play as a resource person for me to use and gave me ideas of how to translate that stuff into activities for the kids. And so…so – you know, and then, of course, I found the museum contact. And he was my really local contact. And he kept me focused. But I then went to the community and found people that could help from the community. Like the bluebird people and like the Audubon Society. And got them to volunteer to come in, with skills that I didn't have, so that I could get my kids to learn or even learn myself. And so those organizations were very,
very beneficial. Because they supplied a lot of the technical aspects of how to pick binoculars and how to watch for birds. And they came over and they spent weeks – four weeks, I think, the Audubon Society did. They would come to two classes that were first period and fourth period. And they were dedicated enough to come first period, two of them. And then they would come back in the afternoon, two of them. And they did that twice a week, for four weeks. And that was really a key part of the appreciation part. The awareness and appreciation part was with those volunteers. I was really hesitant at the beginning. I didn't know exactly how that would work. But I was willing to try it. Because – kids and birds…birding is for old people. And there were going to be old people. People who were late fifties, early sixties. You know, they had retired. But…and you don't know how the chemistry's going to work. But when I brought them together…it was just phenomenal chemistry. It really turned the kids on to birding a lot. Because of the Audubon members' enthusiasm and their knowledge, and… You know, they just got out there and hooked them. That was something I thought was really important or that I would recommend if somebody else was going to do this, is to make those contacts with local clubs. And they're all over. And…so anyway, it's a really great resource. And one that I tapped into.”

While Keith relied heavily on collaboration with a large group of people in order to complete his project, other participants spoke about the importance of collaboration in other contexts. Jennifer spoke about the importance of collaboration within the context of the school and classroom environment. She said that the aspect of teaching she most enjoys is “interacting with the students. Interacting with the faculty. Sharing ideas with both the students and the faculty. So, sometimes I talk about an activity that I'm doing,
and all of a sudden, somebody else will talk about an activity they're doing. We'll figure out – you know, we can tweak each other's, and all of a sudden, they'll be better. I like that type of collaboration.” Jennifer spoke specifically about seeking this type of collaboration in order to combat feelings of isolation. She actively works to collaborate with colleagues. Her fellowship project was a reflection of this desire as she established a collaborative relationship with a local restaurant and other members of the community in order to have her math students design restaurants.

Hannah also shared about the importance of talking with others within the context of the department where she teaches. As science department chair, she feels that it is important to meet monthly to maintain contact and share concerns and curriculum among, other things. She said that at the meetings, “We talk. Whether we have anything to talk about…every month we meet anyway, just to talk with each other, because we never see each other. So we'll talk then about different issues. And that'll – you know, they'll sit there for a half an hour, an hour, past the time that I say, 'That's all I got.' And they'll just talk. And it's not like we're bashing what's going on. We're talking – we're trying to figure out what maybe might they [administration] be thinking. How could we approach this? You know. What can we do in our classroom that might be a little different than what they're promoting in the administration? Also, I'm friends with 90% of the staff. So we'll go out on Friday and we'll talk.” For Hannah, open communication amongst the group and collaboration in order to determine “how to approach this” is important because otherwise they “never see each other.” Interestingly, the networking and collaboration on the part of the participants extended to their students and benefited
them as well. Beyond collaboration regarding approaches to issues, the group serves as a means of support for one another.

“You had your own pep squad.”

Ultimately, networking and collaboration are vital for the participants because they both combat the isolation and provide the participants with much needed support. All of the participants spoke about the need for support from their peers both in the context of the fellowship program and in the context of their own practice. Providing support to other teachers was not new to Keith. He said, “Another piece of this [fellowship program] to me…is recognizing – is recognizing that other teachers need support. And help. And I think that's something that I've learned from Florida, when I had to have other adults support me. And here there've been teachers who have…you could tell they were really down. And I would just sit down and talk to them. And they really appreciated the fact that I took time to meet with them.” Keith offered numerous stories regarding the importance of offering support to other teachers—a need he first recognized during his time working with troubled youth in an alternative school. He shared a story about the teachers working together and supporting one another as they shared difficult experiences with students including incidents where several of them would have to physically restrain students. It was in that environment that Keith first recognized the need to support fellow teachers, and evidently this carried throughout Keith’s career in teaching.

Jennifer embraces the support that she received from participating in the fellowship program. She said, “It's like, hey, everybody's cheerin' for me. But it wasn't just National Boards. It was anything that anybody in the organization did, everybody
was right there for you. You knew you had your own pep squad without even seeking it. And that's really cool. Because teachers – it's not that we're glory seekers. But we live in an isolated world where we don't always get all the pats on the back that, really, teachers go on, if people really realized it.” For Jennifer, the other fellows were people she could rely on for encouragement. And, in turn, she expressed that she seeks to do the same for them. She said, “Because that was another thing that I felt strongly about. How can I…call myself a fellow the first year, and still be active if I'm not active? You gotta’ show your face other than just once a year at the celebration dinner. You gotta’ do stuff with the other people. And it's like, pass on what you learned. Help them out. So. That's why I try and still stay active.” Although Jennifer graduated as a member of the first class, Fellows are always welcomed back for any event. Jennifer shared that she feels obligated to go back to provide support and encouragement and to serve as a role model for other Fellows.

“A Common Bond.”

The participants shared stories of combating isolation through their efforts both within the program and outside of the program. However, their stories about experiences networking, collaborating, and supporting one another stem from Jennifer’s observation that “we always felt a common bond. And I like that part. Camaraderie.” Jane shared a similar observation. She described the fellowship program by saying, “It's a fellowship—it's collegiality—it's a community—it's a sense of belonging with like kindred spirits and it is affirming that teaching is a profession—versus a job because if you look amongst the ranks, there's so many that are—you know and there's like that in every field—I mean you have bankers that are—there's the tellers and the 9 to 5 and the
what- are- you- wearing and when- are- you- going- to- lunch and then you have people that run the bank and are marketing and, you know, trying to do the 401K –I mean it's in every organization—but I like to surround myself with kindred spirits—and I think for every two minutes of negative programming it takes you an hour to deprogram the negative program. So, I, you know, when you walk down the hall or are going through whatever I am very selective about who I sort of let come in—I mean I'll talk to anybody, but as far as who I choose to let in for a long time—if I know that someone is kind of a whine and fuss person—you know I've got enough of those in my students already and—I don't let them in.”

Together, Jane and Jennifer identified the program as a “bonding” of “kindred spirits” who form a “community” as they work network, collaborate, and support one another both in their fellowships and in their teaching lives. The community is a place of nurturing-- a positive place apart from “negative programming” that can taint teachers’ perspective.

“It was extremely important and life-changing to be a Fellow.”

“Life-changing” was the adjective all of the participants used to describe their fellowship program experience. However, the change was unique for each of them in regards to how each changed. Some spoke of significant changes in their dispositions, while others spoke of changes in how they view the world and in their goals and ambitions for the future.

“I don't look at myself in the same way.”

Much of Hannah’s story was about the change in her disposition as a result of her fellowship program experience. One of her first statements was, “[The fellowship
program] has not just changed me professionally, it's changed me personally. And my mom told me – every year she tells me – you've grown up. Before [the fellowship program], she never told me that. [laughs] But. I was always the youngest. And I just never enjoyed school. I hated it. And I knew what I wanted, to be a teacher. But as far as being a student, I hated it. And so. [The fellowship program] has helped me grow personally as well as professionally.” Prior to her experiences in the program Hannah shared that she had little confidence. She said, “I was scared to death. I was a follower. Because I'd been that all my life, and I never thought I could be a leader.” As a result of her experiences in the fellowship program, Hannah said that she had a significant shift in her confidence. And, she also said she became bolder. She talked at length about her new-found confidence and boldness and how they enabled her to speak to her school’s administrators. Prior to the fellowship program, she never approached the administration with concerns because she lacked confidence. But, she said, “[the fellowship program] has taught me how to approach the principal. You know…do it delicately. And not just say, 'I don't like this.' You know, which is what my idea of a leader was before…you don't like it, but why? Or, what's your suggestion to make it different? I never approach them with something I don't like without a suggestion to fix it. Because that's what they're going to ask me anyway. Well, how could you do it better? And it's not necessarily doing it better. It's…you know, what could I do. What would I suggest? So. And again, that comes from listening…you know, when they talk about the announcements. Having too many announcements. How else could we do it?”

Not only did Hannah gain confidence and boldness but also she spoke about how she has matured as a result of her experiences in the program. She said, “As I have
shared with so many people, the [fellowship] program has changed me forever. I don't look at myself the same way. I always used to worry about pleasing people ALL the time; now I try to do the right thing even if it makes people upset. I am comfortable in conversations with adults now, where before I would hide in a corner and hope no one saw me. I have matured (my mom will even tell you that). I've always had a lot of potential inside me, but I've never had the faith in myself to fully realize that potential. With each success, I find myself reaching deeper into myself to see what else I am capable of doing.” Hannah shared a story about a conference in Portugal where she presented to some of the world’s top scientists. At the conference, she not only presented but also took questions from the scientists afterwards. She said, “So [laughs] you're in a room with 50 world-renowned scientists. And here I am presenting for the first time. Fortunately it was only for, like, seven minutes. But still, that's the big thing to get up. And I had sat there listening to them ask questions to the scientists. And I'm thinking, if they ask me any questions I'm in big trouble. [laughs] Because they were all scientists that are educated in the same field. And so when somebody disagrees with somebody else, they're quick to say what they feel about that. So I'm scared to death. I'm kind of the person that when I'm thrown into it, I can do it. But, as far as speaking, that definitely was a progression. I did not start out ready to speak in front of adults. Because I'm a kid. I talk like a kid. I mean, I don't have the vocabulary of an adult.” It was this experience that she attributes with beginning her journey toward “coming out of the corner.”

Like Hannah’s story, Jennifer also spoke about the disposition change that occurred as a result of her fellowship program experiences. She said, “I see myself as a stronger person because I push myself to strive for more of what is available for me to
try. I like reaching and accomplishing goals, and even when I do not have total success. I am still a better person for trying. In the words of Barry Manilow, ‘I learned more from failure, than I learned from success. I learned from no thank you, so much more than from yes. I learned to be willing to lead with my chin. And if I were willing to lose, I could win.’” Jennifer also said, “I have a stronger attitude and ambition to try new things. Instead of thinking, I could do that, I now think why not give it a try and hope for the best.” She said it’s something that increased over time in being part of the program.

Jennifer has a reputation for being gregarious and outgoing. However, she insisted that prior to the fellowship program experience, “I would never talk to the chancellor.” Jennifer told story about being at a fellowship program event that was attended by the chancellor of a large, land-grant university. Rather than shying away from the chancellor, as she insists she would have prior to the fellowship program experience, she was able to converse with the chancellor and make such an impression that he gave her his chancellor’s pin from the lapel of his suit.

Jennifer also shared a story about attending a professional development session for science teachers in the state that was to be facilitated by the state department of education. The plans were not going well, which resulted in the Fellows taking a larger part in the facilitation. Jennifer said, “What would've happened if we hadn't been there. What impact would [the participants] have left with? And that makes me think, also, when you don't come forward sometimes, who is it that you're really hurting? So. Because of [the fellowship program], I was in the right place at the right time to help someone. And in the process, also help myself to also become more spontaneous when I need to. I've always been spontaneous when it comes to math ideas. Give me five
minutes and you need an idea, I'll dream up something. It may be good; it may be bad. But now I'm not just dreaming up math ideas. It's like, what's my educational idea, philosophy, or whatever to connect to whoever is my audience. So, in that aspect I've grown. I'm ready to talk about anything and everything. I have a more global professional feel that's not just isolated into math. So that's a benefit. I'm a more well-rounded person. I'm a lifelong learner.”

Keith also spoke often about how the fellowship program was life changing for him. He shared that he did not feel in control of his life prior to the fellowship program and allowed old fears, like a fear of flying, to limit his opportunities. Keith attributes his perspective on life and his new confidence largely to an opportunity that was provided him through the fellowship program. As a result of working with his mentor from a local private university, Keith had the opportunity to spend two weeks in the Yucatan. He said “That was an extremely life-changing activity for me, and [the fellowship program] is responsible for that. But it made me look at the way that I live. Look at the way other people live. And look at what's important in life. And how can I translate that into something meaningful in my own life. And so spending those couple weeks there, doing things like walking for 14 hours in the rain forest. Being pursued by wild animals, which we were at one point. Wild peccaries. Almost stepping – I mean, literally almost stepping on an extremely poisonous snake. Knowing that you're probably 50 miles away from the nearest town. No telephones, no TV. Nothing. Living in a tent. You know, and walking all day. Eating your lunch on your lap. Being thrown into a culture where you didn't speak the language, and you rely on a couple of people to interpret for you and help you along. These experiences taught me to depend on other people, which is an
important thing. It taught me a great appreciation for what's happening in the world. Because I saw a country and a state that has devastated its natural resources. And now the people are begging for help to get their natural resources back up, and to use those in a sustainable way. These people in little villages. They live in these little huts that people live in with sticks for walls. So I saw that kind of stuff. And I saw the way those people live. I climbed to the top of a Mayan pyramid. And looked out at six billion acres of continuous green canopy forest. Stood where the Mayan priests stood high above their world, sensing how they talked to their gods. And just – you know, just some incredible kinds of experiences like that. And [the fellowship program] did that for me. You know, it's a real life-changing experience. Because…I came back thinking that I need a closer relationship to the planet. Not just to talk about pollution, but to talk about how the planet affects me. You know, how the balance works. So that I can live on this planet. And to try to help kids make that connection back to nature. Get them out of the TV, and get them out of the couches. Make them begin to think about their relationship. So – you know, that trip was an extremely important trip for me. In the way that I look at the earth and life.”

“I've had a paradigm shift in terms of how I view the world.”

For Jane, the personal change did not manifest in disposition, rather it was connected to her worldview. Jane, who has taught for thirty years, found the program to be energizing for her at a point in her career when other teachers are tempted not to challenge themselves with new experiences. She said, “I'm at the point now where I'm
coming down. My energy level is not what it used to be. And I'm sort of looking back. But the [fellowship program] is a thread now in me, with thinking about the environment and stewardship on the earth. So it's changed me. And it's allowed me to interact on that professional level that I was exposed to in high school. And I need that every once in a while, to keep me enthralled about what I'm doing. Because the regular sort of level is just really boring to me.”

Jane, an art teacher, also talked about how the fellowship experience has had impact on her understanding of science. She said, “I've learned more about science. And I see the connections everywhere. And now when I look at National Geographic – I used to only look at the art history, really. And now I'm looking more at the rivers or the ecology or – I'm seeing things as a blend. Which I think is kind of interesting. So I feel like I've had a paradigm shift in terms of how I view the world.”

Jane also spoke of a second paradigm shift connected to her assumptions about scientists. She said, “And that probably did more to impact me about my – you know, I'm thinking of Son of Flubber. Fred MacMurray. You know, the movie they made about this…kind of eccentric scientist, Fred MacMurray, who invents this rubbery substance. So this is a great paradigm shift, to see – you know, someone my age and younger running around in their sneakers and blue jeans. And I'm thinking they're an intern. And then they are the person that's giving us the lecture. And they are second in command of the space station, the international space station. And know every nut and bolt. And all the programming. And he has an hour free to spend with us. I'm thinking, I hope I can get more of this stuff in my brain so I can prepare our students for the 21st century. Because, if I just had this paradigm shift from Flubber – you know…”
While Keith did speak about personal change in relation to his disposition, he also told a story about the impact of the fellowship program on his teaching. He said, “I've really changed the way that I teach…When you teach environmental science the chapters go by and go by, and they talk about air pollution and water pollution, and overpopulation. It's just a whole series of really terrible problems. But when you grow up in the environmental movement you just accept those as things that we're working on. And we're going to solve them one day, but we're going to work on them. One day I'm stewing at my class. I'm just excited. I'm looking at these kids. And two years ago when I was looking at kids, and I'm saying, 'What's the matter with y'all? Why won't you get excited about this? These are real issues!' One of my students said, 'Well, Mr. Dudleck, what's the use?' And I thought about that for my students. And I said, 'You know, that is so true.' You can become so overwhelmed. And if you have missed what's really important here, you can become so overwhelmed that you can say, 'Oh, what's the use?'

So I said to myself, 'Well, what is it that makes me get excited about this?' I said, 'Because I know what it's supposed to be like. And I know what it's like to be on the water, or what it's like to be out there in the woods. I know that. But these kids don't.' And so I just redoubled my efforts to make every opportunity to spend more time out there in the field. To do activities that make them observe nature. We keep a journal in the class. Never, ever kept a journal in class, but the whole idea of that journal is to make them go out and look at something and write it. Or draw it. You can look at something, but you have to look at it really closely to draw it. I make them keep a journal. Want them to be involved. And do these projects like they have to sit in their back yard and observe for a week. Just sometime during the next week, sit in the back yard, do nothing
else but observe. And write about it, draw about it. You know, so it's those kinds of things that I'm trying to make my kids...love what they're doing-- to take care of it. And know that it's beautiful and know to appreciate it. If they do that, then they'll come back and say, 'Well, you know, I want to take care of the earth. I want to stop pollution.' And it won't be such a big problem to them. You know, it won't be over. It won't be over…”

“And you want to do other things that keep you motivated.”

As a result of her experiences in the fellowship program, Hannah has been inspired to leave the program to take a position in which she can interact more with teachers. She said, “I really want to start working with teachers. Whether it's to bring—it doesn't matter what science subject it is. But I want to show teachers how to get out of the textbook, and give the kids the experience.” She acknowledged that prior to the program she would never have been interested in a job interacting with adults. She said, “That's how far [the fellowship program] has brought me from being a follower, and only knowing my little four walls in a classroom. And I was scared to death of speaking in front of the boss. And I never would do it before. But now I've gotten used to it. And now I want to do it. I want to work with teachers. Because now, first of all, I know I have a lot to offer. Before, I didn't feel that way. And I probably didn't have a lot to offer at that point. But [the fellowship program] has taught me how to be a leader. And how to have the confidence to know that I know what I'm talking about. As opposed to, well, ‘I think a lot of people think this way.’ [Now] I know people think this way because I've met with the legislature. I've met with other leaders in the state.”

Jennifer shared the impact that the confidence and strength that she derived from the fellowship program had on her personal goals. She said, “I think part of [the
fellowship program experience] helped when I was trying to adopt because it gave me enough gumption to go for that other extra that had always been in my mindset. I said if I'm not married at 25 then I'm going to adopt. I was well over 25 when I at least attempted it and it didn't work out but I'm better about it now. And there was a reason, I'm hoping I know the reason—but I still wish her well wherever she is. But, it has made me stronger that at least I tried—I may try again—I don't know yet.”

In addition to a personal goal, Jennifer also shared that she was inspired to fulfill a professional goal of running for office in her state’s mathematics organization for teachers. She said, “[the fellowship program] has helped me to stretch out and try other things that I might've thought about, or said, 'Oh, that would be nice if I could do that.' … And I can now officially say that I am the vice president of the eastern region of the [state’s mathematics organization].”

Keith, too, was inspired by the fellowship experience to change the course of his future path in terms of his profession. He shared that he may pursue a doctorate’s degree. He said, “…for the sake of learning. I don't know – at my age I don't know how much of an impact after three or four years that I would make with a doctorate and…but for my own education and my own journey, I'm thinking that that's a good thing to do. So – you know, I see that kind of as a natural outgrowth of the – the courage…that the [fellowship program] – the ability to step out there- has provided…I really do think that the legacy is that it changes your life to the point that you really are a fellow. And you want to do other things that keep you motivated. You know, when you've taught for 27 years, sometimes teachers will get to the point where – you know, I'm just going to teach the same thing I taught last year. And I'm just making my time until I get to the point where
I can retire. And I'm not like that and don't want to be like that. I want the challenge. I want the learning. And I want the respect.”

The fellowship program was a life changing experience for all of the participants both personally and professionally. In concluding how the program has influenced the Fellows in their dispositions, their worldviews, and their future goals and ambitions, Keith’s words resonate loudly. Keith talked about his efforts to share with other educators about the fellowship program and his experiences. He insisted that the program has had such an impact on him personally; “I brought something to the teachers in [his school] last week. And I told them that it was extremely important and life-changing to be a fellow. So I don't know what else to say other than…those are just examples of how [the fellowship program] has affected my life. And it's hard to really say. But, I just have a totally different outlook on teaching, children, and my place on this planet, than I did prior to being a Fellow.”

“I will not be satisfied in any other position than as a teacher leader”

One of the major components of the fellowship program is teacher leadership. Leadership ability and experience are key components of the selection criteria, and the program seeks to strengthen the Fellows’ leadership skills after they are chosen for the program. This section of the findings will detail what the participants’ perceptions of being a teacher leader were prior to the program, their definitions of leadership in general, how they define teacher leadership, the impact that teacher leaders have on other educators and non-educators, and lastly what the participants’ perceptions of being a teacher leader were after their fellowship program experiences.
“I had that over my stuffed animals.”

None of the participants defined themselves as leaders prior to their fellowship experiences. Jane did not see herself as a teacher leader prior to the fellowship program despite her role as a mentor to other teachers and her role as department chair. Hannah said that she did not perceive herself as a leader, either. She said, “I'd never been a leader. Except with kids. In high school I wasn't a leader. Elementary, I probably was. In college, I was lost. My studies were fine. But I was living with people from New York City. You know, from a school where I graduated with 17 people. [laughs] So that was very difficult. So I wasn't a leader there. I was scared to death. So I really had a low self esteem. I've never felt like a leader…I only had negative ideas of what a teacher leader was or that a leader was a title someone was given. Before the program, I never saw myself as a leader. I always thought it would be nice to be asked my opinion and be in a position where my opinions were valued.” When questioned about whether she considered her interactions with students as being a leader, Hannah said she did not see teaching as leading. She compared teaching her students to teaching her stuffed animals when she was young and dreaming of becoming a teacher. When she was a child, she shared that she would line up her stuffed animals to teach them lessons. This was her start as a teacher. She said her leadership of the students in the context of teaching was something that she “had over [her] stuffed animals.” It’s not that her students are stuffed animals, of course, but the stuffed animals and students are similar in that her leadership skills are not as challenged when interacting with students because they are less knowledgeable and more dependent on her as a teacher.
Jennifer also said that she did not see herself as a teacher leader despite the fact that she was a popular presenter at math conferences. She defined herself as “a teacher that does workshops.” Keith had a number of roles that may cause others to see him as a leader, yet he also did not define himself as a leader. He said, “Before the program, I did not consider myself a leader even though I was a principal designee at one school and led an interdisciplinary program at a high school called Project Creek, which involved the community and government agencies. Even when I was SIP Chair at our school I did not think of myself as a leader.”

“Once you get too cocky, you're not an effective leader-- You're Hitler.”

In discussions about leadership, some of the participants differentiated between leadership and teacher leadership. Often, when thinking of leadership, they acknowledged that they were thinking of specific administrators for whom they had worked.

Hannah used a laundry list of adjectives to define leadership. She said that a leader is “bold, confident, humble, sensitive, willing to listen.” She said humbleness was important because “if you're cocky, you're not listening. You must be willing to sit there and know that other people have good ideas. Not just you. Open-minded is another…word I would use for… But yeah, once you get too cocky, you're not an effective leader. You're Hitler. I mean, you're going to be… somebody that just wants to take control for the sake of taking control.” Hannah generated her list based on her perspective of an administrator at her school who has been a mentor and role model to her.
Jane defined a leader as someone who is “visionary -- has a vision of what is possible; Staying Power /Creativity – One who can stay the course for the duration to accomplish the vision and view the obstacles as part of the journey; Ethical- One who has integrity and is fair-minded with regards to those that are part of the team.” She also expressed that for her personally, she prefers a leader who provides encouragement and support.

Jennifer defined leader using an acrostic. She said, “Leader. Okay. L. Leader. You have to do whatever it is that you're talking about or doing. E. You have to be enthusiastic and energetic. A. Academically involved in whatever you're doing. Because you don't want somebody talking about something they don't know anything about. D. Determined. That you want to make a difference. Able to develop a plan and also help to see it through. Another E Efficient. But you can't be willy-nilly and get nothing done. You've got to have a plan of some type. Even if it's a horrible plan. You still must have a plan. R. Reliable and responsible. People have to know they can come to you and count on you.”

“We're people who know what's happening in classrooms.”

All of the participants shared their perspectives on the definition of a teacher leader. Also, they spoke specifically about the actions and attitudes of a teacher leader. However, when responding to my questions, it was often difficult to differentiate their views on teacher leader prior to the participation in the program, during, and after the program.

Jennifer provided an interesting analogy for thinking about teacher leaders. She said, “cheese—in making cheese you get your little milk and your curds and you churn,
and then it separates out into different levels and you do different things with it—some people are going to be happy and content at that certain level—some people no matter what will never be content—they've got to rise to the next level for them to feel happy—successful and to do something. Most people see the next level as the teacher leader, and those who really get into it will do even more to make themselves personally and mentally happy.”

Jennifer was adamant that one of the most important parts of being a teacher leader was being a teacher. She said, “I think that's something that's invaluable. Is the fact that [the fellowship program] is something we do while we're still in the classroom. Because we can go do these presentations. And we can go do all these things. But we're heard, I think, in large part, because we are still in the classroom. And that's why a lot of times, I do believe I'm popular on the math convention circuit. Because I do stuff for the state department of education. And sometimes I contract out with them. But I didn't quit teaching to go only work with them. So being a teacher leader is about reaching outside your comfort zone.” Jennifer differentiated between being a teacher leader outside of the classroom and inside the classroom. She said, “A leader is a teacher. Because you're used to taking charge. And making sure something happens. Command the troops.”

Hannah’s perception of a teacher leader stemmed from difficulties she was experiencing with her administration. She said, “I've talked with [my administrator] many times about things that as a teacher I would do different. And I've pretty much had my finger on what goes on at school, the teachers. And it's like they don't want to listen to me. So I've tried that approach. And so now I just feel like I need to leave because I
have to change. I have to do something to change, if I'm not happy where I am. I can't just sit there and complain about it. That's not being a good leader.”

Keith defined teacher leader more in terms of actions of a teacher leader. He said, “If we ever expect to be in control of this profession, we've got to make those sacrifices today, and take every opportunity that we can with the administration, or people give us an opportunity to – to be leaders, we've got to take those. At whatever cost, we've got to take them and succeed at it, so that we can take… And we're – you know, we're the practitioners. We're people who know what's happening in classrooms. We should be the ones to make the decisions. Not the ones on the receiving end of whatever legislatures or other people ill-informed want to give us, or tell us what to do. But the only way that'll happen is if we take it in small steps, like we've been taking now. You know, and like at our school here. And over the last – you know, I guess – well, we started the ABC's. That became a step in the right direction. But now with the teacher leadership we've got to the point where our teacher leaders were in control of the supply button. You know, that's part of the budget. We were in control of that. We made a decision as a group how to spend the money, and it works.”

Jane defined being a teacher leader as being a role model. She said that she is a “role model for the arts”, and she accomplishes that in large part by earning grants. She said she had earned grants ranging from $800 to $5000. Earning grants is being a teacher leader to her “because I'm introducing myself on paper. And then these people decide to give me the grant. Okay, and then I have to document it. And then I go present it at the PTSA meeting. Well, that's all about teacher leadership. Nobody else is doing that.”
Jennifer felt the fellowship program offered her the opportunity to reach outside of her comfort zone and in so doing expand her comfort zone. She defines her “comfort zone” as those people with whom she feels comfortable interacting with. She said, “You don't go back to where you used to be.” She has reached out to other teachers and increased her circle of influence. She completed her application for National Board Certification just prior to participating in the fellowship program. She then learned after her first summer in the program that she had earned her national board certification. As a result she said, “The next year it's like, people are starting to come to me to ask me questions. Like, 'You got national board. Can you give me some hints or some pointers?'

It's like, 'You got into the [fellowship program]. They looked at both of them and it's like, 'She's more than just a teacher. She's like a teacher who does something else.' Well, I had been doing something else, but now all of a sudden you got something else to go along with your name. People pay more attention…When people describe me, it's like, this is Jennifer. She's really active. If you need something, go see her. She's also a fellow.' I mean, they know I've done something else, even though they may not know what it is…”

Hannah had a mixed view of how other teachers view teacher leaders. On the one hand she said, “It's become extremely important for me to be a teacher leader. Because even though I'm not able to really make headway with the administration, I have opened the eyes of the staff. And eventually they're going to get braver, and they're going to speak up. And eventually they're going to– the principals are going to have to listen.” She also felt that she had had a positive impact on some of her fellow teachers. She said,
“Because I've been talking with people, there are probably 15 to 20 people that put in a
transfer for this year. And...we just really discussed the issues. I haven't said, "I don't
like this." You know? "You need to get out, too." I'm not trying to push them or
anything. It's just opening their eyes. They're seeing – yeah, you know, this doesn't
make sense. Where before, they'll just do whatever the principal says. And just go back
to their own classroom. And it won't – it doesn't affect them. They don't see it. But what
they don't see is that it greatly affects the kids as a whole.”

However, she also talked about how other teachers perceive her as having
“administration wrapped around your little finger.” She said that they were jealous of her,
and feel that she doesn’t understand the teachers’ perspective because of her close
relationship with administration. She said, “I can't tell you how many times this one lady
says, 'Well, do you get double planning twice?' And I get it once. Why on earth would I
get it twice, and everybody else gets it once? I mean, they just – this – it's one particular
person I'm thinking of in this particular case. But. You know, some people make those
comments. And it's like, I'm not any more special than you. I just have gotten noticed
more. But I also – I do promote myself as far as administration. I know I have a good
lesson. I get them up into the classroom. Because then they don't come when I'm having
a bad lesson. And I try to tell the other teachers this. Take pictures of your good lessons.
And I keep trying to get them to do that. And I think they're understanding that they're
going to get some of the things that I'm getting. You know, they're going to get
recognition. And probably at that point they'll realize, oh. Well, she wasn't really
wrapped around their fingers.”
“I know which side to wear my name tag on.”

As a means of fostering teacher leadership, one component of the fellowship program is to provide Fellows with opportunities to interact with local and state level politicians and business leaders. The participants shared stories about their experiences meeting with non-educators who have a stake in education in the state.

Jennifer told a story about an experience she had meeting the chancellor of the local land grant university. He was attending a holiday social organized by the fellowship to be attended by local politicians and business leaders and potential funding sources. She said, “I don't know why I went to that Christmas dinner, but I did go to the Christmas dinner. And all of a sudden I'm talking to the interim chancellor. And then he gives me his pin. And I'm thinking, 'Why'd that man give me his pin?' But I took the time to talk to him. I didn't put him on a pedestal. I didn't push him off to side. 'Well, he's Mr. [Chancellor].' I treated him just like everybody else. I told bad jokes. I told good jokes. It didn't matter. And that's the way I look at people. My mother told me a long time ago, 'You get into your pants the same way I do. One leg at a time.' So I don't care who you are. [laughs] I told the kids today when we did the first lady’s tune, I said, 'I went to the Governor's mansion. And I taught the First Lady our math song.' They said, 'No, you didn't.' I said, 'Oh, yes, I did. And I gave her a copy of it.' And she looked at me just like you did. But she enjoyed the song because she wrote me a letter back thanking me. I said, 'How many of you got a letter from a First Lady, whatever, thanking you and it wasn't a form letter?' Hello. That woman's going to know [I] was in your house, singing up a storm. I like that idea. Who knows what – she may have an opportunity to come along. And she may think, 'That crazy math teacher. She might be
good for that committee.’ I like that. And if it never happens, I did what was right at the moment. I have a good conscience. So. Okay.”

Jane also shared stories about what she learned regarding meeting non-educators. She said, “I think [the program director’s] very clear. Folks, we've got some important people here. You need to acknowledge them. You know, they're the ones that are – I mean, they're footing the bill here. And…you know, you need to get out, introduce yourself. You need to promote the [fellowship program]. They may or may not really understand how it is…and how they're going to know is through your experiences as a teacher, communicating something exciting that's happening in your classroom. I mean, that was the theme.”

Hannah shared how much she learned about interacting with those outside of education. Jokingly, she said, “I know which side to wear my name tag on.” The program director, she noted, is chided because one of her first lessons to new fellows is to wear their name- tag on the right side just below the shoulder so that it is in direct line for people to see as you shake their hand. She also added that she has “learned that it's really important to dress appropriately. I think it's really important to not interrupt them.” Professional dress she viewed as essential because the business leader or politician would not “take us seriously” if they were not dressed professionally. The program director provided much of the instruction for the fellows by giving them “pointers on things” and going over “understood rules” like taking turns in discussions and not dominating the conversation.

She differentiated between being a leader in the classroom and being a leader in a professional meeting by saying, “we’re in charge of a classroom, and we’re not in charge
of a meeting.” She said, “You can't talk down in these meetings. You know, you really have to – and I can interrupt my kids. You know, sometimes they're telling me a story I don't care to hear. You know, because it has nothing to do with science. But I don't have a problem interrupting. I see the kids interrupting all the time. As teachers you get ten minutes to talk to each other, so you're interrupting each other all the time. So, it really is – for me it's very difficult to just shut up and listen. Especially when I think I can get the point across better. Which is usually rare. But [laughs] on those instances where I think I could do that, it's very hard for me to just sit there and see if they can work out what the person is trying to say.”

Hannah also told a story about the program director working with her to prepare for a meeting with the Board of Directors for the fellowship program. She advised her not to talk about political hot button issues. She taught her to redirect the topic as a question to the other person. Or, if possible, the program director taught her to “make sure you understand where they're coming from first. Before you say whatever you're going to say. Because that's where you end up with a foot in your mouth.” Hannah said, “She's [the program director] always guided me that way. I don't know if she guides other people. But, she knows she has to [laughs] guide me. Because I don't necessarily think I'd bring it up. But, I wouldn't have known how to deal with it if somebody brought it up to me. And with her thinking, well, you just need to say, 'What do you think of it?' To me that's, oh, yeah, that makes sense. But I would have never thought of that on my own. But that's part of what I'm nervous about, not knowing how to react. But [the program director] does give us tips. You know, stuff to talk about. And…you know, shaking hands and saying their name at the beginning, at the end. She does help us there.
But I think for her it comes so naturally. That I don't think they understood that some of
us really need to be baby-stepped through that process. And then I did talk to her about it
one time. And she would give me some questions like – and then the next time I'd be
ready to ask those questions, I'd forget them. [laughs] So. But you know, I knew the
issues not to talk about. Not to talk about politics as far as parties. Not to talk about
religion. You know, I mean, we were told stuff like that.”

“…I came to believe that I was a teacher leader”

After two years in the fellowship program, the Fellows have completed their
curriculum projects and they graduate from the program. However, the leaders of the
program are adamant that alumni continue to participate in events and meetings as they
choose. The participants talked about how their understanding of teacher leadership
changed as a result of participating in the program.

Keith spoke often about the impact of the program on understanding of what it
means to be a teacher leader. He said, “I think [the fellowship program] helped me to
identify leadership characteristics, put them into practice and then constantly reinforce
me through giving me opportunities to meet with a community of other teacher leaders,
and professional development with other government and business leaders. Because of
the summer workshops and fireside chats, I came to believe that I was a teacher leader.
Believing gave me the confidence to step up to the table with my ideas and opinions.
Teachers who are in the trenches know what works in the classroom. We have to take on
the extra duty now to take leader roles so that in the future other teachers may be able
to use part of their scheduled day to mentor others, create curricula and plan
across disciplines. There are many leadership opportunities, some long-term and
others short-term, during the school in many school areas.” In reflecting on his future plans, Keith said, “Well, I think one thing is that I will not be satisfied in any other position than as a teacher leader. The [fellowship program] has given me opportunity to sort of step into that role. And I think that I can make a difference in education by continuing that. So I don't think that when [the fellowship program] is over in May, that I'm going to say, 'Okay. I'm stepping back to where I was before, when it's all over.' It's not anywhere like that. From an education point of view it has – it has whet my appetite to learn, again, about a topic, and that's ornithology and birds, and that it's inspired me to continue to learn, which I think for all teachers, I think the important thing is to continue to be excited about learning and what you learn. You know, I was getting into a rut. Somewhat of a rut, before. But this has – you know, given me some clear perspectives. And I think another thing that it's helped me do is to understand that we need to develop creativity in our kids, and we need to allow their imaginations to flourish so that we can – we can create adults that are going to have the ability to imagine and create so they can solve problems.”

Jennifer spoke about the numerous opportunities that the fellowship program offers the Fellows. As a result of taking advantage of multiple opportunities, she found that the eagerness for opportunity to be a leader transferred into other areas of her professional life. She noted one significant moment that led her to that realization. She said, “a lot of times our celebrations are not celebrations per se—we are networking—chit chatting—talking—making sure we talk to that person—this person. If you've been paired up with this one to give them a gift—make sure you give them more than a gift…like I always have [the namesake and primary funding source for the program]. I
don't why. [The program director] always puts me with her but okay—she's got a great sense of humor. I'm cool with that. Maybe that's why, but I mean I'm thinking you could pick somebody like, [another fellow], to go with the big hob nob people who have money but yet you keep picking me—okay—so it gets you out of that role and gives you a sense of well why not me? It doesn't have to be the other person always—or they can do it and I'll just kind of follow along.”

Her spirit of “why not me?” transferred to a later opportunity after finishing the fellowship program. Jennifer ran for office in her state’s mathematics organization. She said, I wouldn't have gone for that. I would have said, 'You know, somebody else can take care of it.' Why not? Why can't it be me that helps to make changes in my own curriculum?’ And that's part of what I picked up from [the fellowship program]. Why not? Why does it have to placed on someone else's shoulders? Why not me? I do the stuff. I live the stuff. Why not? And I think that's part of what all of us have picked up. And [the program director] has implanted that seed of, why not? You were worthy enough to have won this award. You are worthy enough to do something else. So. Go for it.”

Hannah shared that one of the ways that she learned to be a teacher leader during the program was by watching other fellows and how they “quietly lead.” Also, “just listening in the fireside chats. Things that they say, and the questions that [the school superintendent] asks. Or the questions that the chancellor asked. Those help me understand what a teacher leader is supposed to be looking for, what they're supposed to be like. Because a teacher leader should be able to answer the questions. They should at least be able to understand the questions being asked. And they should, about their
school, be able to answer them. Because if they can't answer the questions, the basic questions about their school, then how can they lead something that they don't understand themselves?"

Hannah also shared how teacher leadership developed in the fellowship program has enabled her to be a leader in her own school. She said, “After being in [the fellowship program] for three years, I've come to realize that there is a lot of responsibility with having your opinions valued. I've worked hard on not letting my emotions rule my spoken opinions. I've tried to look at all the angles and when my paradigm has needed a shift, I've tried not to oppose the shift. One of the things that has been very difficult is not being able to just complain about something I don't like. Now, I have to act. Other teachers look to see how I will react to certain situations. Being a teacher leader is to be an agent of change. They're someone who keeps an open mind and listens to what all sides have to say and then instead of always trying to insert her opinions, they try to get all sides to come to a consensus and try to work things out. A teacher leader is also someone that trains other teachers on how to become teacher leaders themselves. For example, one thing that I have done these last few years as Science Department Chair is make sure that we meet once a month whether I have any information to share with them or not. We talk about what is needed to improve the science department here at [my school]. We talk about problems that we're having in our classrooms, which allows others to share their experiences and offer their advice, thus allowing them to become a teacher leader. My goal would be that when I left, the other teachers that I have mentored would continue on and increase their leadership role. I
want my shoes to be filled. I want the teachers to realize the importance of continuously discussing situations and looking for ways to make the school better.”

Like Hannah and Keith, Jane also commented that “I've always felt like [the fellowship program] has defined teacher leader in a different way. Before that I was always an art teacher who was trying to advocate for my cause.” She shared a story about how the fellowship program has molded her into a teacher leader and how that influences her daily behavior at her school. She said, “I am more responsible for maintaining a certain standard of excellence with regard to representing the [fellowship program]. I'm an ambassador for their goals when I am in a group setting now at school, I am thinking teacher-leader before I speak—so, in a way, I'm very careful about what I say and I'm much less casual in these settings than I used to be. In a way, I'm on guard as I do not feel as relaxed as I used to be.” She attributes the attitude to maturation. She said, “I think anybody that moves from teacher to assistant principal to principal or any sort of administrative job, there's a certain point where you cross a certain line where you're in a position of power or authority or a position of credibility—and I do think it changes—I mean, I think there's a context of what that line is between sort of your personal life and your professional life. For me, what it reminds me of is when I was at a [design school], and I went there on a scholarship and I was the assistant director for the Education School for Art Educators. I came into this position and I was introduced as this leader and I eventually was going to have to evaluate and establish licensure criteria for these art educators and I had to go and watch them in the classroom and sit down with them and meet with them and, so, from the beginning, I knew at some point I was going to have to say yes—they get to graduate—or no they don't—so, in that sense, it was the
same idea that we would go out to dinner or whatever but there was always this kind of line—the same line you have with your student in terms of how close—or how personal you're going to let people be. And I feel like now I just want to stay positive and try to be part of not just complain and whine and fuss—whereas maybe 10 years ago I would have just gone to lunch with some people and said, ‘Would you blah-blah-blah-blah”? I'm just a little more careful about judging leadership because I understand the responsibility that it entails and it's not easy to be a leader. So, before you go and criticize—you know maybe you need to walk in another person's shoes. So, I guess I mean it from that sense—I see it from both sides more than I used to, and we have very few—I mean—who would want to be a principal? I do not.”

All of the participants shared stories about entering the program as teachers, yet they all left the program as teacher leaders and with a new understanding of being a teacher leader. The program fosters teacher leadership and provides numerous opportunities for teachers to be leaders outside of their school environment. Hannah identified that one of the key parts of the program as “collaboration.” She said, “After [the fellowship program] one [purpose of interacting with politicians and business leaders], I have to say, is for collaboration. One is because being part of a teacher leader is getting involved in the politics because unfortunately, politics run our school. So that has to happen. And, which I still hate to hear, [the program director] says that we are the leading teachers in [the state]. If they're not going to listen to us, they're not going to listen to anybody. So, I feel it's kind of our duty to talk to them. But for me it's also good to hear what they have to say because I'll get really angry about something that happened. And here, come to find out, it's way at the government level. It has nothing to do with
my school, my county, anything like that. So I think it's collaboration. I think it's
informative—on both sides.” Collaboration and networking between educators and non-
educators who all have a stake in educating students is an important thread that runs
through the findings regarding the participants stories about how they perceive
themselves as “agents of change.”

**Sitting “eyeball to eyeball”**

The participants spoke at length about their experiences in the fellowship program
in regards to being teacher leaders. The program provides numerous opportunities for the
Fellows to exercise their teacher leadership skills in meetings and events with local and
state level politicians and business leaders. The participants spoke about assumptions
that non-educators have about teachers and the lack of power teachers have. Further,
they spoke about interactions with non-educators and the “voice” and power gained from
experiences in the fellowship program.

**“Children are not lawnmowers.”**

Some of the participants were especially bothered by stereotypes and perceptions
of teachers. Jennifer, in particular, talked about being frustrated with people who assume
that teachers have easy schedules because their day ends at 3:00 and they get summers
off. She also talked about how everyone feels they are experts about the classroom. She
talked about how “Everybody knows what we do because ‘they've been there’
syndrome.” She said, “That's the way I look at it. It's like, ‘well, I know what you're
about. I had teachers.’ No, you don't. Because you have never been on the other side of
the podium. It's a whole other ball game when you are the one in charge of taking care of
everything. Making lesson plans, make- up tests, making sure everything gets arranged
and copied on time. And meetings and implement the new standards and everything. Students just had to do what they were told. But yet if I'm a police officer, not everyone knows what a police officer does. Everybody has a stigma that they have to overcome. It's like firemen. Okay. So what, you hold the hose up. Can you put the water on what's flaming? Okay. I have a feeling there's more involved than just standing there with the hose and the water. But yet they don't see our profession in the same way because they've seen so much of it, because they had a teacher every year. And some years they had more than one. So, I mean, it's – you just have to – again, more people in society need to look beyond what they think they know. But a lot of people aren't willing to.”

In addition to people believing they know how teachers should teach, Jennifer also felt that “[society] sees us as the service or the servants” and therefore, “we are supposed to accommodate everyone.” Therefore, in her opinion, the fellowship program was an opportunity to help non-educators see educators in a different way than as obedient “servants.” She said the fellowship program actively strives to show others that “teachers are on the move” so that they can “gain more respect within the media.”

Keith discussed perceptions of educators, and more specifically, the education process and the differences between educating children and running businesses. He said, “Educators want accountability and reproducibility also. I don’t think that we view the time frame the same. We have learned that students have different learning styles and rates. We have learned that school is a place to nurture the human spirit as well as preparing a knowledge base for each student. We also recognize that true learning cannot always be measured by a content-based [standardized test]. But corporations are driving politics to prepare students for the workplace by placing these measurement devices on
students and teachers as ways to ensure accountability and reproducibility. Children are not lawnmowers. You can be successful (making money) at producing the same lawnmower over and over using manufacturing processes and tried marketing principles. In teaching, you cannot produce the same child over and over. Every child needs something unique to help it be successful but not an assembly line. This is where the art and science of teaching comes into play. Teachers are not technicians; we are professionals using a variety of tools to build a unique one-of-a-kind product. Corporations are looking at the bottom-line in four weeks or the year, at most. The politician is looking ahead to the end of the session. A true statesman or enlightened business leader will understand the education world.”

“We're the practitioners.”

The participants felt that it was necessary for teachers to be leaders because of public misconceptions about education and educators and other reasons they identified. As evidenced in the findings section on teacher leadership, this was not an attitude any of the participants had prior to the fellowship program experience. These were attitudes that developed as a result of their training to be teacher leaders and their experiences during the opportunities provided to them by the fellowship program.

The participants shared that as educators they do not feel valued. The fellowship program, through the opportunities to become teacher leaders, provided a way for the participants to feel valued. Jennifer said, “You hear about all these different opportunities for big corporations and companies. But – you know, education, teachers, were – you know, sometimes the forgotten souls. Hello! We were remembered.
Somebody went out and did something. I want to see what's going on. Make an impact.
Like, we touch lives all the time. We're here, and we can touch more people.”

Not only do they not feel valued but also Hannah, in particular, shared her frustration with not having more control over her curriculum and assessment because of standardized testing. She said, “We'd be so much better teachers if we didn't have to have end-of-grade tests. Because we're spending a month and a half reviewing. In middle school we all review. Last month – from April to the test, I do review. Now, connected to science for some of it. But for most of it, I do math. And if I don't review, then they don't get review, because the math teacher is still finishing new curriculum. It's ridiculous. We're creating robots.”

Beyond the lack of control over curriculum and not feeling valued as reasons why the participants felt teachers must be leaders, both Keith and Jennifer identified another essential part of why teachers need to lead. Keith said, “We're the practitioners. We're people that know what's happening in classrooms. We should be the ones to make the decisions. Not the ones on the receiving end of whatever legislatures or other people ill-informed want to give us, or tell us that we have to do.” Jennifer held a similar perspective about why teachers should lead other educators; she said, “And that's the same thing with us when we go talk to the other people. We know what we're talking about because we're right there in the trenches.” While Jennifer shared that she has taken jobs with the state department of education, these jobs have not taken her out of the classroom. She remains “in the trenches” while taking advantage of other opportunities.

Not only did they participants discuss why teachers must be leaders, they also shared ideas on the method for developing more teacher leaders. All of them discussed
how important it is for teacher leaders to be role models for other teachers in hopes that some of those teachers will want to assume a leadership role. However, Keith provided detail about how teachers should assume leadership. He said, “The only way that'll happen is if we take it in small steps, like we've been taking now…I think [teacher leadership] is the most powerful thing that we have going for us. I mean, I really believe in that. If we can – you know, reset our own course. If we can't set our own course, if we're willing to take it in bits and pieces. We're not going to get it all at one time. But you don't give all that responsibility to children. You give them a little bit at a time until they're grown-ups. And it's kind of like what we've been. We've been taking…and doing well with it. So now we're at a point where we should be able to take more responsibility. And I think we were encouraged by past activities, to stand up when [the new principal] came here. We stood up and said, 'Look. We are part of the operation of this school. We help make decisions. And we want to continue to help make decisions with the principal.' And you know, ten years ago that probably wouldn't have happened. We wouldn't have had the courage to say those kinds of things. And you know, when I look at my own personal growth…I have much more confidence today than I did two years ago as far as teacher leadership goes. You know, I speak the issues more. I don't know what it is. If it's [the initials of the fellowship program] that's branded on me…”

He also addressed the concerns of non-educators about education. He said, “I think the words are accountability, reproducibility, and communications. Accountability is what these kinds of leaders understand. They know the bottom-line and want numbers to show the results. They are interested in the product and the data that can point the way to profits and dollars. They are numbers driven. As teacher leaders, we must understand
that in order to talk with these people we have to talk their language—data. This is why we have so many tests that generate scores. The more numbers, the more data, and, in their minds, the more accountability from teachers and students, the more success. These leaders also want to see the product reproduced. The primary thing is that as teacher leaders, we must develop our curricula with accountability and reproducibility to reach these people, but then we must take the initiatives to teach the politicians and business leaders about creativity and imagination as important lessons to be given to our students. As a part of this education we have to sell our programs or communicate our successes and problems to the above people. Communicating with these leaders in their offices at the business or the legislature or by inviting them to your school and into your classroom to experience first hand the nature of your day, your product, which is the children’s learning and the physical conditions that you and your students work in, will bring dividends to your program.”

“You don't just want to go stand with your friends and eat your french fries.”

The participants spent a significant amount of time during the fellowship meeting with local and state level politicians and business leaders. They shared insights about the learning curve they experienced when they first entered the fellowship program and began meeting with these leaders who were non-educators. And they spoke about their experiences at specific events and meetings. Jennifer’s words characterize the participants’ feelings about their participation in fireside chats, meetings with politicians and business leaders, and socials. Jennifer said, “In the words of my mother, ‘Everyone gets into their britches the same way, one leg at a time.’ Often people outside the ‘educational’ field are considered to be ‘above and beyond’ the reach of educators. With
the [fellowship] program business leaders, politicians, and educators share ideas and make decisions together instead of it always being the top down approach.”

While the participants were excited to have the opportunity to reach out to non-educators who make decisions about education, they all acknowledged that there was a learning curve. Jane said, “I learned how important it is to do your homework prior to the meeting. I also have learned that I need to know what I want to accomplish or learn from the meeting before I go. (How do I want to best make use of this encounter …?).” Jennifer said the main thing she had to learn about interacting with the business leaders and politicians was “tact.” She said, “Tact, I have to work on. Because I tend to be a little too straightforward and truthful with people.” Hannah said, “I must say that this is my weakest area. I'm definitely careful about what I say to them. I always think about what I say before opening my mouth. I have to be able to back up what I say, in case they ask me to explain what I mean. I have to be clear and stick to the point I'm trying to make as to not waste their time or confuse them. I also want my opinions to be respected and that won't happen if I act offensive or defensive. There definitely is some manipulation happening when I talk to them because I've learned in life that if you offend someone at the beginning, they won't hear anything that you say from there on out.”

In addition to sharing their learning regarding how to interact with the business leaders and politicians, they also spoke about how the business and political worlds compare to the world of education, and therefore, how their behavior changes in each world. Jane said, “I do not act the same in the educational world when I am teaching a student …I am not thinking …What can this person do for me?….or who do they know that I can meet? etc…… I do in some cases think, who are his or her parents? and how
can I best encourage this student to learn? I am not thinking about time in the same way as perhaps I will spend five to ten minutes with a student if that is what it takes to help the learning transpire. In business and or in politics, I am very aware of the person's status, and what is important to them. I am also aware of time and that I need to be appreciative of the time they are taking. Often if you do not make your point in the first minute or so you will have lost their ear and they have moved on to the next person ..as they DO know why they are there and what they want to accomplish. This is definitely an art that all teachers need to work on so that they can be more effective with business leaders and politicians. I do not feel this is negative ..it is how the world works.” She also added that “In the business world, everything is about time and money—everything is about the bottom line and about making things happen and it's about action—not talk—and in education, I see our world as being very much about talk and process because learning is a process. And so I think that may attribute to why our languages are so different because I think that's what we're talking about is the language that occurs in both places and I think that you know in education we're so process- oriented that to function like a business in the classroom—or even in the setting—I don't know—I think—what they're trying to move towards in the leadership—in the higher levels of leadership in education is more of a business model—but I don't—I'm not too sure it's going to be too effective.”

Hannah also spoke about how her behavior changed between the two worlds. Hannah said, “Well, first of all, you have two totally different audiences. In one world, you are dealing with adults, and in the other world you're mostly dealing with kids. The
second thing that is totally different is your role. In the business realm, you have the inferior role and in the educational realm, you have the superior role. The third difference is knowledge and therefore comfort level. Obviously, we understand the expectations in the educational world versus the business world. For me, I do treat them differently because they are different. I wouldn't want them to be the same. I already feel that there is too much politics in education.”

Like Jane, Hannah also spoke about how the languages were different in each world. She said, “As far as acting the same in both worlds, I definitely wear a different hat in the two worlds, but I won't and have not compromised my morals or ideals in either world. The presentation is definitely different, as I think it needs to be because your audience is different but the content is the same. It's the same way with teaching. I'm not going to have visual learners listen to an audiotape and hope that they get the concept, because I know that they don't learn that way. It's the same way with the business world. I'm going to try to talk in a ‘language’ that they understand and can relate to not one that only educators understand. I guess another example would be [a national space organization]. They have more acronyms than any company/business I know. When there, I need to learn their ‘language’ so that I can communicate with them just as they need to be willing to teach me their ‘language.’"

All of the participants talked about their experiences at the three major social events during the year. One is in May for graduation, one is in July at the end of the summer activities, and a third is a holiday social in December. Jennifer characterized these as “truly the power lunch to a new level.” They are events attended by numerous
politicians and business leaders. The purpose, according to Jennifer, is to “work the room, have a good time. But you make sure you talk to anybody and everybody to let them know who you are.”

Jane said, “It's not just that you're going to the Christmas party. You're not really just going to a party. Don't think of it as a party. It's an opportunity to meet business leaders in the community. Presidents of the university. I mean, you don't know who you're going to meet. And, so, you don't just want to go and stand with your friends, and eat your french fries. You want to get out there and shake hands. And, so, I brought the calendars at the Christmas party. And I brought my little books. I had, like, this little bag on me that had stars and moons, you know. Little stars – you know, little crinkly star things that I could hand out to people. You know, those little gold things that have stars on them. And I had them on this little thing on the calendar. So it was trying to tie my theme in, but giving something. Saying thank you. And…and that's kind of – I was kind of practicing those things. I was very conscious when I went – you know, what you wore. But it wasn't just a Christmas party. Whereas at school, if we have a faculty get-together, we all go to some community place or restaurant or whatever. I mean, it's a party.”

The fellows are coached in how to interact at the social events. The events serve essentially as practice for how they have been trained to be leaders. Jane talked about the coaching process. She said, “I think [the program director’s] very clear. Folks, we've got some important people here. You need to acknowledge them. You know, they're the ones that are footing the bill here. And…you know, you need to get out, introduce yourself. You need to promote the [fellowship program]. They may or may not really
understand how it is and how they're going to know is through your experiences as a teacher communicating something exciting that's happening in your classroom. I mean, that was the theme. And that was really driven home in a number of conferences. She kind of briefed us before whatever.” Jane said that Fellows were asked to arrive ahead of time for social events, like graduation, so that the director could brief them on the agenda for the event. The preparations made it clear that the graduation, and other events like it, were public relations events.

Ultimately, the socials and fireside chats are a means to allow the Fellows to network with stakeholders in education for the state and educate them on what teachers do and what matters to teachers. Jennifer said, “People outside of the educational arena are hearing what we have to say. They want to know more about what we do, what we say, how we think. It's not just a matter of us—a lot of people in the non-educational sector look at teachers as wanting a handout—it's like teachers come and tell me it's like they want something. They want a clipboard or a pad of paper; they want the kids coming to a field trip. And here we present them with-- this is what I can show you—present to you, and it's like it blows them away …‘I'm not looking for a handout—I'm not looking for what you can get from me—what is it that I can do for you or with you to make it a better situation.’ And because we're will to work together and not that handout situation, I think that makes us stronger, and that makes more of the organizations want to come on board. So it's a win-win. The program helps us create a win-win situation for those who help and those who are being helped.”
“It's about having the voice, and people are listening.”

The participants embrace opportunities like the social events and fireside chats because they come to recognize that non-educators do value their perspectives. Also, in the context of their own schools, the teacher leadership training and the opportunities to attend such social events and meetings allow the fellows to transfer their knowledge and confidence to actions in their own schools.

As mentioned, Hannah spent a significant amount of time talking about her relationship with her administration. For her it was an issue at the forefront of her work as a teacher leader. She told stories about decisions her administration would make that affected teachers, and yet they would not seek teacher input or buy-in prior to making the decisions. As Hannah developed as a teacher leader, she said she gained the confidence to approach administration on issues. She said she finally gained the ability after “realizing I have the responsibility to do it. The fact that I owe it to my school and to the teachers there that don't have the voice, or won't use their voice. I have a responsibility to stand up for them. Especially since they've been coming to me.”

Hannah also benefited from the fireside chats. She said they “made me feel important…made me feel like I had a say.” She spoke specifically about her attendance at chats with the First Lady of the state. She said, “I love her. Love her to death. And I think she's really got a heart for education. She's not just one of those governor's wives that will say whatever for her – when she's in front of you. I really think she is trying to make a difference. And I talked to [the program director], and she says that she actually does go and make some changes, based on what she listens to, or what we say. So, that's
been really neat. But I just feel like I'm being heard. And again, those fireside chats lets me see what [other fellows] are all thinking about.”

Jennifer said, “It's not just we're going out and being teacher leaders. It's about having the voice, and people are listening. And when you listen, you can make things happen. But the change takes time. I'm not saying we were the catalyst with the governor’s survey. But I know at the same time that we started talking to him, all of a sudden, his teacher survey on conditions and how you felt came out. So, that may have influenced or at least impacted him that – you know, teachers have a point of view. This is their life. Let's see what they got to say. And I've seen that reaction, also, from some of the business alliances, when we interact with them at different socials or different events. They're talking like, 'Oh, I hadn't thought about it that way.' Because they live in their igloo of the business world. We live in our igloo of the teaching world. We need more opportunities where we mesh and overlap.”

“This is what we need.”

So many of the stories the participants shared and that have been highlighted throughout the findings have reflected a sense of empowerment that the participants derived from their experiences. Prior to her experiences in the fellowship program, in Hannah’s interactions with administration, she said she would do whatever administration asked. She said, “I didn't think I could question. And I certainly wasn't smart enough to ask any – or question anybody. Who am I to…I got two years, I got three years of school, or teaching.” This sentiment of acquiescence was one shared by the other participants in their stories.
Yet after participating in the fellowship program, learning to become teacher leaders, and having opportunities to exercise their leadership, the participants profess to be empowered teacher leaders who speak confidently for the teaching profession. Keith’s words capture the perspectives of the participants when he makes reference to a T-shirt with the slogan “Teaching makes all other professions possible.” He said, “And I really believe it. But our country doesn't honor that. But it's going to take people like teacher leaders from [the fellowship program] and others to show this country that teachers are extremely important. And that we are smart. You know? And a lot of times I get really frustrated sometimes when you read something that – well, if we'd only improve the salaries, we could get better teachers. Well, you know what? I am a great teacher. And I have suffered through 27 years without having any money. So, now change the way you say that a little bit. You know? But, so, we need to be there to help effect that change. And it's the experiences we've got here in [the fellowship program] that will give us the footing to do that. To give us the confidence to sit eye to eye with [the local federal congressman] and say, 'You know, this is what education is about.' Not to cower because he's some congressman and he's bigger than I am. But to be able to sit there and talk to him eyeball to eyeball, and say, 'This is what we need.' This is what we need. You know, so I don't – those are the great things about [the fellowship program]. I have left the isolation of my classroom and entered the wider world of leadership to enhance the learning environment for my students so that they may achieve at their greatest potential. I don't think you can shed that because it becomes in here, in your heart. You know, and that's life changing.”
Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I shared the findings from the research study including descriptions of each of the participants that were constructed by blending prose and poetry. Additionally, I shared three stories: a story about community, a story about change, and a story about empowerment. These stories represent a restorying of the many stories from the participants. In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings within the frameworks of community of practice, transformative learning, teacher leadership, and white privilege.
Chapter Five

Discussion: Analyzing Stories of our Travels

A powerful aspect of narrative inquiry is that the researcher has the liberty to question throughout the research process and the process of forming research texts. (Clandinin and Connelly, 1999) As I determined my findings, I constantly asked the data: What is the story? And as I moved to the discussion section, I struggled with how to begin and returned to the question: What is the story?

The fellowship experience is different for each of the participants, as is evidenced in the findings. However, there were three common threads that emerged: community of practice, transformative learning in relation to teacher leadership, and empowerment.

“How can we work together?”: Community of Practice

I did not set out in my research to analyze or evaluate the fellowship program. Rather, my intent was to examine the impact that the program has on individual Fellows both personally and professionally. Therefore, one of the guiding questions as I began my research was: How has the fellowship experience influenced the Fellows’ understanding of being a teacher leader and their own self-identification as teacher leaders? And while my research findings certainly do address that question, before I discuss teacher leadership my findings demand that I begin my story at another place.

From Spaces of Isolation to the Fellowship.

The Fellows’ stories are not uncommon. They are the stories of so many teachers who are not afforded the space or the opportunity to make connections, collaborate, and grow in their practice. The participants spoke of the tentativeness with which they entered the fellowship program. For all of them, there was a strong sense of uncertainty
and not knowing what was expected of them. That uncertainty was coupled with the fact that the Fellows entered the fellowship program from spaces of isolation where they experienced a strong disconnect from resources of time, money, awareness, and public esteem. Jane spoke of the daily routine that did not allow her time for lunch outside of her classroom. Hannah lamented the isolation she felt from her peers, as she advocated for a ropes course for the staff as a means of promoting unity amongst the staff. However, her idea was rejected by administration. Jennifer’s disconnect was from those outside of the education community who were resistant to connect with schools. Keith shared stories of his efforts to connect with other teachers, and said that he learned early on in his career working at an alternative school with troubled youth that it was important to work closely with other teachers. He did not share stories of isolation like the others; rather, he felt adrift when he was assigned a mentor in the fellowship program with whom it was initially difficult to connect. The Fellows do not like distance between themselves and others. They all seek connection and collaboration with others.

A study by Stein, Smith, and Silver (1999) suggests that one of the new paradigms of professional development promotes “collegiality among teachers to counter the isolation typical of teaching.” Therefore, those who facilitate professional development are working with groups rather than individuals, forcing them to set new goals for community building. While this may be a goal for professional development designers, and it is certainly a piece of the fellowship program, connecting with other teachers was not the primary motivation for any of the Fellows to apply for the fellowship program. In my first round of interviews, I asked the Fellows why they wanted to apply for the fellowship program. Keith became interested in the program
because another teacher at his school was a first year fellow. She had spoken at a faculty meeting about her experiences and how the program provided amazing opportunities. Keith first became interested then, but he was involved in too many other things at the time to apply. As other obligations were met, Keith applied for the program. He was intrigued by his colleague’s experiences, and he wanted to create his own curriculum project called *Birds in the Schoolyard*. So, for Keith, joining the fellowship was mostly about finding resources for his project.

Hannah’s story is similar to Keith’s in that Hannah also knew a colleague who was a first year Fellow. She had his support in applying for the program. She was motivated to apply because she was also interested in the curriculum development aspect of the program, and she acknowledged that she had no leadership abilities going into the program. She said, “I knew I was going in with nothing as far as the leadership goes…Because I didn't know what a leader was.”

Jennifer was a member of the first class of the fellowship program. She is a highly motivated individual who is always seeking new opportunities to grow. She, too, applied to the program largely because of a curriculum idea. She wanted her math students to design restaurants, and her project required her to connect with businesses in the community to prepare the students to develop their own restaurants. Jennifer was also interested in learning new technology and staying current with education trends. She said, “It was an opportunity to take an idea that I had, and make it come to life in the classroom. And they were going to help me do it. So, I was hoping to see how to do it, and what do I have at my disposal that you can provide and that I can provide. How can we work together?”
Jane was motivated to apply to the program by a number of factors. There were several other Fellows at her school. She also worked closely with a science teacher in her school who died unexpectedly right after she had been accepted into the program. And she wanted to continue what she felt was important work, which was to bring visual design and science together. She also said she had been awarded other major fellowships in the past and “really liked the intellectual stimulation that it brought back to the classroom. That was just kind of supercharged and was kind of an exciting time to teach.” Therefore, she hoped that the fellowship program would provide her with that stimulation and energy.

Despite the fact that all of the Fellows shared that they do not like the isolation they feel in the classroom, none of them said they wanted to join the fellowship program for the expressed purpose of connecting with other teachers. They joined because other Fellows who were their colleagues encouraged them, they needed a challenge, and they wanted to create innovative projects for their students. However, what all of them found in joining the program was balm to soothe their sense of isolation. The Fellows found in the fellowship program opportunities to connect with others on a variety of levels, and what they describe as being one of the most unique aspects of the fellowship program can be defined as a community of practice.

Forming a Community of Practice.

The term community of practice is associated predominantly with sociology. However, a similar term is used in education-- professional learning community (Hord 1997). For the purposes of my discussion, I would like to situate the fellows’ stories in the context of the work of Etienne Wenger (1998) who developed a framework grounded
in social theory to propose that community is one of the key components of learning. He suggests that “learning that is most personally transformative turns out to be the learning that involves membership in these communities of practice”(1998). There are four components in Wenger’s community of practice model: community, practice, identity, and meaning. For the purposes of this discussion, I will narrow the focus to two components of his model: community and practice. Wenger ascribes three dimensions of relation by which practice and community are connected: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and shared repertoire. Wenger says, “Practice does not exist in the abstract. It exists because people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another.” Wenger’s ideas parallel Lambert (1995), whose ideas are grounded in education. Lambert posits that members of an educational community construct meaning in order to provide an education for students.

All of the people working together in a community of practice share a common set of goals, ideas, and visions. Mutual engagement, by nature, creates relationships and “connects participants in ways that can become deeper than more abstract similarities of personal features or social categories (p.76).” The second dimension is joint enterprise, which is the result of a collective process by the members of the community to negotiate how conditions, resources, and demands shape the practice. In other words, people become mutually engaged and the result of their engagement is collaboration in a joint enterprise. In order to accomplish the joint enterprise, the community develops the third dimension—a shared repertoire. The share repertoire includes “routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the
community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice (p.83).”

Based on Wenger’s dimensions of connection between community and practice, I asked the question of the fellows’ stories: How is the fellowship program a community of practice?

**Dimension One: Mutual Engagement.**

In terms of mutual engagement, when the Fellows are selected for the fellowship program they are elevated within the educational community because they are promoted as the voice for all teachers in the state. In this way, the Fellows themselves form the core, if you will, of the community because they are at the heart of the program. The Fellows form close relationships with one another. Jane discussed how she enjoyed the program because she felt that she was part of a group of “kindred spirits.” Jennifer spoke about the “common bond” the fellows shared. Keith talked about being “branded with a K[the initial for the program name].” However, the relationships are not only formed by the Fellows themselves but also extend to the network, mentors and collaborators.

One of the main goals of the facilitators for the fellowship program is to provide Fellows with opportunities and resources to complete their curriculum projects and to become teacher leaders. This is the “joint enterprise” (Wenger 1998) that the Fellows undertake by joining the program. Therefore, the Fellows have the opportunity to network not only with one another but also non-educators in the business community and political figures who have a stake in education issues. The Fellows shared that networking was one of the aspects of the program that makes it unique. Networking
allows the Fellows to make connections, exchange business cards, shake hands, and chat with people who may be able to help them.

Jennifer, a member of the first class, said that she met more people in her four years as a fellow than she met in the prior fourteen years that she had been in education. Jennifer considers herself a Fellow for four years because she counts her two required years and the two subsequent years during which she has continued her involvement. Despite the fact that she completed her required two years, she continues to attend events because she wants to maintain the network she has built and continue to build it as well. Jane was familiar with networking because she had a business background, and she likened the business world of networking with a “shark frenzy” of people who are always concerned about who can do what for them. However, she acknowledged that teachers do not network in that way, and she, along the other fellows, had to learn to network in the fellowship program. Keith was initially troubled because he could not connect with his mentor, which prompted him not to complain but to seek his own support network. He viewed the absent mentor as a catalyst for a growing opportunity for himself. Hannah admitted that networking is not something she enjoys doing. She is reluctant to network at events; however, she was put in positions where she had to network with others and recognized that they were growing experiences for her. Hannah most appreciated the relationship that she developed with her mentor who provided her with much support and opportunity.

Collaboration with other fellows and with a mentor was also important for the Fellows. This confirms the findings of a study by Stein, Smith, and Silver (1999) where they examine the implementation of a professional development opportunity in two
different schools. Their context was school-based unlike the fellowship program, which forms the community outside the context of a specific school. Their study led them to conclude, “Teachers cannot be expected to be knowledgeable about all aspects of school reform, subject-matter standards, or professional practice. Thus, collaboration with knowledgeable sources outside a teacher’s immediate circle is crucial” (p. 240). Their suggestion is to use university-based educators as a primary source for collaboration. The fellowship program utilizes university-based mentors as collaborators for the curriculum projects. As compared to networking, collaboration for the Fellows is about forming relationships with others and working together within the context of those relationships to achieve common goals. Hannah and Jane, in particular, spoke at length about their positive experiences with their mentors who provided them with support and guidance in completing their curriculum projects. Because the mentors are university-based professors, they have access to resources that classroom teachers do not. They provide the Fellows with access to these university resources. Keith, who had difficulty reaching his mentor initially, formed his own group of collaborators from area museums and bird organizations. He did eventually connect with his mentor who arranged for his trip to the Yucatan. Jennifer also formed her own group of collaborators through local businesses to provide her students with the opportunity to develop their restaurants.

The networking, mentor relationships, and collaboration all proved to be significant for the fellows as they participated in the fellowship program. These relationships provided support for them as they completed their work. Jane and Jennifer spoke about the “kindred spirits” who come together to form a “common bond” in the context of the program. We know from other researchers that isolation has the potential
to diminish teachers’ growth and professionalism (Talbert and McLauglin, 1994).

Therefore, it is important to resist isolation. This “common bond” serves to combat the isolation and disconnect that Fellows felt prior to their experiences in the program. Their experiences in these relationships reflect the fellows’ longing to work with others and escape isolation. For them the fellowship program served as a community of practice outside of their schools where they found “kindred spirits” with whom they felt a “common bond.”

It is important to note that it is the mutual engagement amongst the fellows and other collaborators that is vital. Wenger is adamant that being a member of the group alone does not form a community of practice. Fellows do not simply gain acceptance and thereby become a member of the community of practice. A community of practice is one in which the members are mutually engaged in a joint enterprise; they are actively working to establish and achieve goals. The community is constantly being molded and shaped as new classes of fellows are added. The structure of the fellowship program fosters this opportunity. Keith articulated what it is like to join the program and work with the “upperclassmen.” Keith said,

That first summer I was sort of – I guess withdrawn. Or I was a little intimidated. Or I was just kind of like…I didn't really come out. So to speak. And I was just kind of like sitting back and listening. And watching and learning. And…you know. Well, other people communicate a whole lot better than I do. So I just wanted to sort of like…go through these things, go back to school and work on this project, and get it done. You know, the thing – I learned a lot that summer, from
the interactions with other people and the computer skills and with
different workshops. And so, that was – that was kind of a building block.

New fellows join an already existing community of practice that was formed by the
preceding two classes. Joining the program does set them apart as a group of teachers
with a shared vision, but as they work together in the context of the program, they form a
renegotiated community of practice. The fellowship program is structured in such a way
that as a new class comes in they are partnered with the fellowship class entering their
second year, who have already spent one year with the previous graduating group.

Therefore, a group of “upperclassmen” mentor the “underclassmen.” Each group gels to
form their own new version, if you will, of the community of practice. Joining the
community of practice provides the opportunity for mutual engagement that, in turn,
fosters a new group identity and a newly negotiated community of practice. Thus, the
community of practice is ever-evolving and being renegotiated.

**Dimension Two: Joint Enterprise.**

The second dimension of Wenger’s connection between community and practice
is joint enterprise (1998). The director of the program and those who make decisions
regarding what professional development opportunities to provide make their decisions
primarily based on the needs of the Fellows. In that respect, those in leadership or
facilitator positions take into account the reflections and needs of the Fellows to tailor
professional development opportunities that will help the Fellows complete their projects
and become teacher leaders.
Jennifer, who was a member of the first class, shared that input from the Fellows on professional development needs was sought from the beginning of the program. She said, for example, there was some instruction on technology;

There was more technology the second year. Because that was one of the things that we had requested. And so [the program director] arranged it with different things. She had tried to arrange some the first year. But different reasons, they either canceled, backed out, or had conflicts or whatever. And that was another nice thing. Whatever we came up with, she would do her best to try and make sure it was done. Because that summer, if it couldn't be worked out then, it was offered during the year if we had the time; or the next summer. I mean, she was very open to ideas and stuff. So, I mean, it's like, you really had a voice. You knew whatever you said, somebody was going to listen. That doesn't always happen in the education profession.

Also, part of the joint enterprise in the fellowship program is setting an agenda for persons to bring to the fireside chats and social events. All of the participants spoke about the importance of these events not only in regards to developing their leadership but also as an opportunity for the fellows to engage in the same enterprise and be a voice for teachers in the state. Keith said the fireside chats were important because the Fellows were able to

…talk to people in positions of authority and positions of leadership in government and business. And hear what they're saying. And have an opportunity to share with them what it's like to be in education. And that dialogue – you know, the opportunity to have dialogue with all these different faces of
people, can only be a good thing. Because when you're talking to each other, then you're going to be able to reach some consensus or some middle ground. And it's going to be good – a compromise of some sort.

Part of the joint enterprise of this community of practice is to meet with non-educators who have a stake in education and educate them on issues that matter to classroom teachers. In order for the fellows to be adept at the joint enterprise, they develop Wenger’s third dimension—a shared repertoire (1998).

**Dimension Three: Shared Repertoire.**

The Fellows all shared that they were ill-prepared to be teacher leaders as they entered the program. A major component of the fellowship program is preparing them to be teacher leaders and to interact with others as teacher leaders to create a shared repertoire for the Fellows as they approach any events that are a part of fulfilling their joint enterprise. The Fellows spoke about the learning curve they experienced as they were expected to interact as teacher leaders with business people and politicians. They acknowledged that interacting in that environment was very different from the education world. Jane and Keith were somewhat more prepared because they had previously worked in business; however, for both of them, it was early in their lives. Also, in terms of achieving the program goals, it was important for all of the Fellows to share a common vision. Hannah joked that one of the things she learned was to wear her name-tag on the right side. However, her joke illustrates the level of detail given to how the Fellows interacted with this unfamiliar environment. Hannah also talked about dressing appropriately, listening, not talking out of turn and interrupting. Jennifer spoke about
learning tact. Essentially, all Fellows had to incorporate into their repertoire a code of behavior that was unfamiliar to them in an education setting.

Beyond behavior, Hannah spoke about writing an action plan as she entered the program. Her action plan included attending specific professional development opportunities and becoming a presenter at conferences. The Fellows themselves incorporated conference presentations as part of their joint enterprise. Many felt uncomfortable presenting, as Hannah shared. She had never presented at a conference prior to joining the fellowship program. However, learning to speak well publicly is part of the shared repertoire for the fellowship program. Hannah learned through opportunities provided in the program, and made her first formal presentation at conference to a group of scientists in Portugal. Jane also spoke about the number of presentations she had done as a result of being in the fellowship program. She said, “I did four presentations last summer, two this fall—you know, who knows where that'll end. I feel like I never stop, and I've not coasted on what I’ve invented—I'm still inventing new things.”

The fellowship program provides Fellows with other skills and tools. The Fellows spoke about opportunities to learn the latest technology in terms of both software and scientific advances in the labs of their university-based mentors.

Stein, Smith, and Silver’s (1999) study of the professional development program in the school context concluded that “to build a community it is vital to have an ‘articulated vision’ and a ‘common set of activities as the glue that holds the community together’” (p.240). Their conclusions parallel Wenger’s dimensions of the relationship between community and practice. The fellowship program is a community of practice as
defined by Wenger’s three dimensions. The Fellows are mutually engaged not only with one another but also with a larger community that includes mentors and the administrators for the program, and they all work together for the purpose of promoting science education and teacher leadership in the state. This joint enterprise is made possible because of the shared repertoire that the Fellows develop as a result of participating the program. According to the Fellows, their shared repertoire included decorum at meetings and social events, instruction on the program’s agenda, presentation skills, proper dress, and even where to wear their nametags, in addition to other skills related to their curriculum projects such as being adept with the latest technology and science instruction methods. While all of the Fellows do not have the same experiences in the program, there is commonality among the experiences that lead to a shared set of skills and also a shared sense of “fellowship; collegiality; community.”

That the Fellows form a community of practice was an unexpected finding. However, it was also a critical piece in understanding the impact that the program has on Fellows as they develop as teacher leaders and how they self-identify as teacher leaders. It was not until the end of my time with the Fellows that Keith led me to a critical question for the last series of interviews. He was speaking fervently about the impact of the program. And to his response, I replied with the question, “What is it that is so unique about the program that it has this impact on the Fellows?” It was this question that helped solidify responses to the importance of the “common bond” of the “fellowship; the collegiality, the community”. My journey did not lead me to this until the last round of interviews, and yet in my mind it was the starting point for the Fellows’ story and the program’s impact. The community was a place of kindred spirits who
shared a common bond that enabled them--because they were in a safe place to learn and become what they had never seen themselves--to become teacher leaders. The fellowship program is designed to expect and support Fellows to develop as teacher leaders, although none of them identified themselves as teacher leaders coming into the program.

**Leaving the Herd: Transformative Learning**

In Lambert’s (1998) model for developing teacher leadership, the first step is to develop a community identity. The Fellows’ story reflects that in the fellowship program it was essential to begin with negotiating the community as well. While Lambert does not define community in terms of *community of practice*, as discussed in the previous section, the Fellows’ negotiated community is a community of practice. With a supportive community of practice, the Fellows left their isolated spaces and built safe places in which to network, collaborate, and grow into teacher leaders. So, as I continue sharing my journey with the other travelers, I am led now to more pointedly address the question regarding the impact of the program on the Fellows’ understanding of being a teacher leader and how they self-identify as teacher leaders.

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) contend that even teachers who fill roles that would earn them status as teacher leaders do not, in fact, self-identify as teacher leaders. Their contention held true for the Fellows in this study. Prior to the fellowship program, Keith was the chair of his school’s improvement plan; Jennifer presented at numerous conferences across the state; Jane was chair of her school’s art department; Hannah was chair of her school’s science department, yet none of them said, “I am a teacher leader.”
Just as Wenger (1998) argued that forming a group does not make a community of practice, being accepted into the fellowship program does not make a Fellow a teacher leader. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) contend that “teacher leaders are part of a community of learners and leaders” and that “teacher leadership develops naturally among professionals who learn, share, and address problems together.” Jane said that one of the aspects of the program she likes most is that it is a collaborative effort sustained over a two-year period. Research shows that sustained, quality professional development is important for promoting change and growth for the educator. (Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall, 1998) The Fellows’ experiences in the fellowship program reveal that becoming a teacher leader is a transformative process. Mezirow (1991) is well-known in adult education for his work on transformative learning theory. In order for learning to be transformative, it involves

an enhanced level of awareness of the context on one’s beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises, an assessment of alternative perspectives, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one or to make a synthesis of old and new, an ability to take an action based on the new perspective, and a desire to fit the new perspective into the broader context of one’s life. (p. 161).

Based on my journey with the fellows, I have surmised that the Fellows have experienced transformative learning in regards to teacher leadership, and this transformation has occurred both personally and professionally.
Shifting Meaning Perspectives in Personal Lives.

Based on their stories, I determined that their transformation first began with the Fellows’ dispositions, or psychological perspective (Mezirow, 1991). Mezirow (1991) defines the psychological perspective as one of the three parts of the meaning perspective, a “habitual set of expectations that constitutes an orienting frame of reference that we use in projecting our symbolic models and that serve as a (usually tacit) belief system for interpreting and evaluating the meaning of experience” (p. 42). The psychological perspective, specifically, refers to one’s self-concept. The Fellows’ stories reveal that their psychological perspectives transformed during their experiences in the fellowship program.

I asked the Fellows to think back to their lives prior to joining the fellowship program and describe themselves. Hannah defined herself as a “big picture” person who was not very reflective because of her “science brain.” She felt that she did not speak like an adult because she had a limited vocabulary. She joked that friends would chastise her for using the wrong “big words” at times. She also was adamant that she had low self-esteem; she was a “scaredy cat.” Using Mezirow’s theory, Hannah’s “orienting frame” colors her interactions with others. During the last series of interviews, I asked the Fellows how they perceived themselves after participating in the fellowship program. Hannah defined herself as “bold,” “confident,” and “mature.” She expressed a desire to work with other teachers as a teacher educator, when before the program she said she was afraid to stand up and talk to a group of her peers in her science department meeting. She said the fellowship program has “made me challenge myself and accomplish things that I never expected me – little ol’ me – to be able to do. And through that I really feel like I
could do just about anything.” Hannah redefined herself as a result of her fellowship program experiences. She went into the program a “scaredy cat” and left the program “feeling like [she] could do just about anything.” Mezirow insists that for a transformation to occur, one must act differently than before. Hannah’s plan to leave the classroom and become a teacher educator is evidence of her psychological transformation.

The other Fellows’ transformations were not as radical as Hannah’s, perhaps because the other three Fellows were at least fifteen or more years older with at least ten years of teaching experience. Nevertheless, Keith and Jennifer, in particular, did share stories of psychological change. Prior to the program, Keith defined himself as “hardworking, patient, and slow to anger.” He valued relationships, but he considered action more important than talk. Keith shared his story about his time in the Yucatan, which was an experience that significantly influenced Keith’s psychological transformation. Keith said, “I was not in charge of my life before [the fellowship program]. I had not challenged myself in a long time.” As a result of his fellowship experience, Keith did challenge himself to overcome a fear of flying to make his trip to the Yucatan. He said that he “had not really taken the time to see and hear my own set of personal truths.” He used his time in the Yucatan atop the mountains climbed by Mayan priests to reflect on and reassess his place in the world. As a result, he said he is “more interconnected with people, his work and the earth.” He was allowing his age to control his life, and consequently, during the program he joined a gym and began a workout routine. And, he can fly without fear now, which enables him to travel places he could never go. As a result of his new perspective and sense of self, like Hannah, Keith has
reassessed his ambitions. He shared that he may move forward to earn a Ph.D. now that he has graduated from the fellowship program. He has a new thirst for learning that he must continue to quench.

Jennifer shared a story similar to Keith’s. She described herself as a “linear thinker” who was a good “worker bee” prior to the fellowship program. She is “straightforward, energetic, hyper, creative, and dedicated.” She said that her work prior the fellowship program was more “me-centered.” She did things for herself and her students but she never reached out to others. But the fellowship program gave her the confidence to reach outside of her realm and try new things. Her professional confidence also transferred to her personal life. She shared that her experiences in the fellowship program “helped when I was trying to adopt because it gave me enough gumption to go for that other extra that had always been in my mindset.” She had made it a goal to adopt a child if she was not married at twenty-five. She was well-over twenty-five and had not reached her goal. The confidence that she gained from her fellowship program experience gave her the courage to try for her goal.

Of the four fellows, Jane is the one who did not have a psychological change as defined by Mezirow. However, she was very clear that her worldview had changed as a result of her experiences in the fellowship program. Prior to the fellowship program, Jane defined herself as an INTJ (Intuitive, Introverted, Thinking, and Judgmental according to the Meyers-Brigg Indicator). She said she was “goal-oriented, innovative, and liked her personal freedom.” Jane’s experiences in the fellowship program caused her to shift her worldview. She said, “[The fellowship program] had a huge impact on me…I didn't think I could reach higher because I've been doing this a long time but we
have found another level, and I feel like I sustained it.” She also said that her professional development experience with the national space organization “shifted my thinking in a positive way—permanently—I just don't view it the same way anymore.” For Jane, who went into the program to escape some of the ennui of the day-to-day rituals, the program provided a stimulating challenge in the last years of her teaching career. Jane’s fellowship program experiences did not necessarily result in a psychological change, but rather her sociolinguistic perspective changed (Mezirow 1991) in regards to her philosophy or worldview.

It is difficult to argue at what point the psychological or meaning perspective changed. The Fellows enter the program and are immediately expected to attend events. They learn in the context of doing for the most part as they watch the “upperclassmen” take the lead in discussions and interactions. Soon, they have professional development interspersed among their events that helps them to gain an understanding of the code of behavior. Thus, based on the fellows’ stories, the impact of the program on their understanding of what it means to be a teacher leader and how they self-identify are ever-evolving throughout their time in the program, and their meaning perspectives transform at various points during that process.

**Shifting Meaning Perspectives of Being a Teacher Leader.**

As I mentioned previously, none of the Fellows defined themselves as teacher leaders prior to entering the program. We have seen how they defined themselves personally both before and after the program. As I continue sharing the story of my journey with the Fellows, I will discuss how they understand what it means to be a
teacher leader and how they self identify as a teacher leader after their experiences in the fellowship program.

In the first series of interviews, I asked the Fellows how they thought about being a teacher leader. I asked them to think back to their perceptions of teacher leaders prior to the program and whether they saw themselves as teacher leaders prior to entering the program. Jennifer defined a teacher leader as one who “rises to the next level” above other teachers but she said for her the term was new and she only began to use it after joining the program. Hannah replied to that question by talking about dominant teachers in her school who were bad role models because they say things inappropriately at faculty meetings. She had no interest in being a teacher leader because she viewed them as obnoxious and ineffective. Keith said that he had not thought about being a teacher leader prior to the program but the program made him begin to think about it. Jane defined a teacher leader as a “role model” for other teachers, yet she did not consider herself to be a teacher leader. It is difficult to conclude that the fellows’ definitions of being a teacher leader changed during their time in the program because they did not really use the term teacher leader prior the fellowship program experience. Rather, the fellows entered the program with a lack of awareness that teachers are leaders, and their experiences in the program led them to an awareness that some teachers are indeed leaders and, furthermore, they themselves learned to act accordingly.

Because none of the Fellows self-identified as teacher leaders prior to joining the fellowship program, I asked them to talk with me about their definition of leadership in general, not specifically teacher leadership, prior to the program. My goal was to gain an understanding of how they thought about leadership prior to the program. Hannah
defined a leader as, “humble, bold, open-minded, and a good listener.” Jane said a leader is “visionary, creative, and ethical.” Jennifer said a leader is “energetic, academic, determined, efficient, and reliable.” Keith said a leader is “fair and decisive.”

Interestingly, when I asked how they determined the characteristics of a good leader, the fellows said they used education administrators as their frame of reference. For some, the administrators were especially good administrators who were role models; however, Hannah, in particular, built part of her list from her perceptions of a bad administrator. None of the Fellows said that his or her list was formed from thinking about teachers as leaders. The fact that the Fellows derived their definition of a leader from their perceptions of administrators bolsters Katzenmeyer and Moller’s (2001) position that teachers do not self-identify as leaders; rather they adopt the traditional understanding that leaders are administrators.

After gaining a clear understanding that prior to the program the Fellows’ defined leadership in terms of their perceptions of administrators, and they did not associate teacher with leader much less see themselves as teacher leaders, I wanted to explore their experiences in the fellowship program and how those experiences influenced their development as teacher leaders and their self-perception as teacher leaders. Cranton and King (2003) suggest that transformative learning requires on-going self-reflection whereby old views “no longer fit—they are too narrow, too limiting, and do not explain a new experience” (p. 32). Furthermore, they suggest that as social creatures, we seek opportunities to process our reflections with others. The fellowship program enables this reflection to occur, and based on the Fellows’ experiences, this reflection is part of the shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) that the Fellows use in their community of practice. An
important question to examine is whether or not the fellows’ stories reflect that they recognized that their old views did not “fit” with their new experiences as Fellows.

All of the Fellows spoke about the trepidation with which they entered the program, uncertain of the expectations. Hannah and Jennifer had no background outside of education, while early in their lives Jane and Keith had worked in business. All of the Fellows felt high expectations as they entered the program. Keith said he had decided to lie low during the first year and watch the veteran Fellows. He felt “intimidated” and did not think he could express himself as clearly as others. Hannah spoke about writing her action plan and having no idea what to plan to do. She had never presented at a conference before and was terrified of public speaking. She was reluctant at social events to begin conversations with people, largely because she lacked the confidence to know what to say. Jennifer was in a unique position as a member of the first class because her class set the tone for the program. She spoke about how close the first class of eight fellows was. She shared that she was shy initially when interacting with non-educators, and also shared that she had to learn tact. Jane entered the program and immediately recognized that the graduation ceremony was more than a graduation; it was a public relations event. She was struck by the fact that Fellows were briefed forty-five minutes prior to an event on who would be attending, what our agenda was, and who should be sure to speak to whom.

So, the Fellows who had never self-identified as teacher leaders and who defined leadership in terms of administrators enter the fellowship program and are expected to interact with non-educators from business and politics who have a stake in education. They are expected to write curriculum projects that will be posted on the state department
of education’s website. Furthermore, when they enter the program, they are told that they are the voice for teachers in the state. Their perceptions of themselves as “just teachers” were too narrow to fit with the new experiences afforded by the fellowship program; therefore, their perceptions of themselves and their understanding of being a teacher leader had to change—and my research evidence indicates that they did.

Forming New Identities as Teacher Leaders.

Cranton and King (2003) speak about transformative learning in relation to individuation and authenticity. They narrow the definition of individuation to “focus on the way in which we come to have a sense of self that differentiates us from others” (p.33). They define authenticity as “the expression of the genuine self in the community” (p.33). They intertwine these three ideas, transformation, individuation, and authenticity, to suggest that they are the ingredients for a “spiraling journey” for educators. In order for teachers to question the norms, in the case of the Fellows, to question whether a teacher is indeed a leader because the norm suggests that teachers are not leaders, then they must be able to see themselves as “differentiated from the collective.” Thus, the fellowship program provides the Fellows with the opportunity to be set apart from other teachers, their new individuation is to develop as teacher leaders who are set apart from other teachers, and, consequently, to express their authenticity. They are given the space within the program as a community of practice to explore what being a teacher leader means for the Fellows and how they will act in relation to that meaning. Cranton and King state,

in differentiating ourselves from others, we see where our values are different from and the same as others. Transformative learning leads to further separate
ourselves from the community whose values we no longer share…[and] also leads back to authenticity as we express our views in the community. Being authentic leads to further transformation and individuation. We no longer run with the herd; we make choices based on who we are. (p. 33)

Cranton and King’s analysis of transformative learning raises several questions about the Fellows’ experiences. First, how did the Fellows see their newly developing values in relation to others’ values? When the Fellows joined the fellowship program, they spoke about the impact that joining had on their colleagues, especially their colleagues who do not associate teacher with leader. Hannah, in particular, spoke about how other teachers were jealous of her and she was concerned that she would be seen as “wrapped around the finger” of her administration. She shared that other teachers felt that Hannah was favored by administration, and one teacher even asked her if she received an extra planning period. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2000) said that the norm is not for teachers to be leaders but for administrators to lead and teachers to teach. Therefore, many teachers shy away from positions where they may be “singled out of the group.” The other Fellows did not experience the negativity that Hannah did at her school. Rather, they shared that other teachers looked to them as role models. Jennifer said that other teachers knew she was a Fellow, and they did not necessarily understand what that meant, but they knew it was important. They also knew that she had a strong network built that they could utilize through her.

Wood and Libermann (2000) talk about “authority” that comes with earning National Boards certification. In the literature review, I argued that the same authority is attached to the Fellows when they join the fellowship program. The authority comes not
only in the form of the title for the Fellows but also from their actions as teacher leaders. Despite some of the negativity from some of the staff at her school, Hannah did share that she has “opened the eyes” of some of her colleagues regarding administrative actions. Keith said that after being a Fellow and understanding what being a teacher leader means that he “will not be satisfied in another position than as a teacher leader.” Fellows joined the program, a community of practice, that enabled them to form new understandings of being a teacher leader, and when they compare that image of teacher leader to what the common image is in education, they do not like what they see, and they do not want to go back to where they were before. Thus, as Cranton suggests through transformative learning the Fellows have chosen to separate themselves from a larger educational community that does not embrace their understanding that teachers are leaders.

The next question that stems from Cranton’s argument regarding the occurrence of transformative learning, individuation, and authenticity is-- Do Fellows no longer “run with the herd” that says teachers are not leaders? The Fellows’ stories overwhelmingly reveal that they do not continue to run with the herd. As a result of their fellowship experiences, they all embrace the role of teacher leader and act according to their understanding of that role both within the fellowship’s community of practice and in their own individual schools.

In the literature review, I posited that the common characteristics of the many definitions of teacher leader in the research can be blended to form one definition: “a teacher leader performs actions within the school community that are seen by other community members as leading, and these actions foster either growth or change in that community.” Keith said, “[the fellowship program] really made me sort of begin to think
about teacher leadership and the impact that a teacher can have on his students, on other faculty members, and all people in the community.” He shared that the program enabled him to understand what it means to be a leader and to put that into practice. Keith grew to see a teacher leader as one who is in the classroom, the “trenches”, who also mentors others, designs curriculum, plans interdisciplinary lessons, helps makes budgetary decisions in the schools, and works outside the school to promote education in the larger community. Keith’s definition aligns with my definition in that he recognizes the teacher leader needs to take on roles in the school community, and he specifically says he thinks about the “impact” teacher leaders have. Keith’s circle of influence, however, goes beyond the school to the “larger community” because of his work in the fellowship program that allows him to interact with business leaders and politicians. Furthermore, Keith’s definition mentions making budgetary decisions, which aligns with Leithwood and Jantzi’s (1999) ideas about distributed leadership.

As a result of her experiences in the program, Jennifer developed what she calls the “why not me?” mentality. Prior to the fellowship program, she would not try to take advantage of opportunities because “somebody else could take care of it.” But, with her new perspective, she sought opportunities and as a result was elected to office in her state’s mathematics organization. Jennifer’s definition of teacher leader also led her to expand her circle of influence to promote change outside of her school by serving as an officer in the mathematics organization.

Hannah shared that her experiences led her to be the voice to administration for teachers in her school. She spoke at length about how she never challenged administration prior to the fellowship, but as a result of her experiences she came to
realize that it is her responsibility to speak up. She learned that she needed to approach administration with solutions not complaints, and she came to understand that emotions could not rule her opinions. Hannah’s definition also parallels Leithwood and Jantzi’s (1999) distributed leadership as she came to see a teacher leader’s role to serve as an advocate for all teachers with administration. Hannah’s work with her administrators reflects a view evident in the professional literature that administrators are one of the significant barriers to teacher leadership (Barth, 2001; Lambert, 1995; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2000).

Jane stated that she now “thinks teacher leader before she speaks.” She, too, recognizes the responsibility that comes with being a leader, and she acts to maintain a certain “standard of excellence” because she sees herself as an “ambassador” for the fellowship program’s goals. Jane’s definition addresses the role that a teacher leader plays in order to viewed by others as a teacher leader.

The Fellows in this study have not continued to run with the herd after their fellowship program experiences. They enter the program and are met with instruction on public speaking, interacting with business people and politicians, forming relationships with the upperclassmen who serve as their role models. In the context of the program, the Fellows transform from teachers who did not see themselves as teacher leaders to teachers who are leaders and cannot imagine going back to their old modes of behavior and perspective. As a result of their experiences, the Fellows are empowered to become teacher leaders, and they are very clear in their self-identification as teacher leaders.

Cranton (1996) argues that by definition transformative learning is concerned with social change. At this point, the Fellows’ stories lead me to explore the remaining
two research questions posed at the beginning of this study: (1) What is the role of normative discourse in informing and training teacher leaders? (2) How are the Fellows socialized to “perform” normative discourse and operate in the culture of power? Next, I will define how the Fellows’ development as teacher leaders is situated within the context of the culture of power in education.

“A ‘Shining’ Example for Others to See and Follow”: Empowerment in the Culture of Power

As I listened to the Fellows’ stories about their experiences in the program and how they developed self confidence and reconstructed their professional identities to self-identify as teacher leaders, I became interested in understanding what behaviors they had to perform in order to function as teacher leaders and be respected by their various audiences.

There are many definitions of teacher leader in the current research, and many ideas regarding the role of a teacher leader. The fellowship program in this study is unique because it promotes teachers as leaders beyond the context of each Fellow’s school community. The Fellows are expected to be teacher leaders who interact with people at the top of the educational hierarchy of power. They are promoted by the fellowship program as the voice of teachers in the state. However, by the nature of the fellowship program as a community of practice, the specific vision, goals, and actions are ever-evolving as new classes of Fellows join and graduating classes leave the program. I will explore how the Fellows in this study understood their roles as teacher leaders during their time in the program. More specifically, for the purposes of my study, I will narrow my focus to understand the role of normative discourse in informing and training the
Fellows to be teacher leaders within the context of the fellowship program. In the context of my study, I define normative discourse as a discourse of whiteness, which is used in order to operate within the culture of power in education. I will examine only how the discourse of whiteness operates within the context program to understand what role normative discourse has in the transformation of the Fellows as teacher leaders.

**Fellows’ Lack of Power**

Lisa Delipt (1988) discusses the culture of power within the context of the classroom. However, I would like to generalize her definition to include not only the classroom but also the educational community. She suggests that there are five aspects of power:

- issues of power are enacted in classrooms; there are codes or rules for participating in power: that is there is a ‘culture of power’; the rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power; if you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier; those with power are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence. (p.282)

Power in education has traditionally been structured using the top-down approach. Power resides first at the federal level followed by legislators, policy makers, and state-level school boards and officials, county-level school boards and administrators, then school-level administrators, and, finally, at the bottom—teachers. The Fellows in this study spoke about the lack of power they felt prior to the fellowship program. Hannah
expressed the sentiments of so many teachers as she lamented the state end-of-course test that “creates robots” out of our students and teachers. Jennifer shared a story about an administrator who changed a student’s grade behind her back, and another story about parents and students who complained because she was using poetry in math class and she had to cancel the project. Keith spoke of wanting to take his students on a field trip for environmental science and the battle he had with administration to have it approved.

Decision-making power in education does not reside with the classroom teacher. Teachers are marginalized to the point that they have limited autonomy regarding decisions that have an impact on their classrooms and their school communities. The Fellows lived in this marginalized space until they joined the fellowship program, which provided them with the normative discourse or, “rules or codes”, for participating in the culture of power.

Learning a Discourse of Whiteness.

The Fellows’ stories lead me to ask: What was the normative discourse that they learned? The normative discourse was a discourse of whiteness as defined by John T. Warren (2003). Warren’s concept of “performing whiteness” posits that in order for individuals to succeed, they must perform whiteness, defined as the behaviors of white, middle-class, heterosexual males. Only one of the Fellows, Keith, met Warren’s literal definition of whiteness; however, according to Warren, in order to participate in the culture of power, all people must “perform” whiteness because following the rules of whiteness enable one to acquire power.

I asked the Fellows about learning to interact with business leaders and politicians and how those interactions compared to interactions within the educational community. I
was first surprised to learn that all of them expressed that they had to learn how to act; therefore, it was apparent that they were not acting in a way that they had in the past. Jane spoke about how she learned to make sure she had “done her homework” prior to entering a fireside chat. The program director always emailed the Fellows prior to a chat or event to provide a biography on the guest and potential suggested topics for the discussion. Jennifer talked about always being the person chosen to meet with the primary donor for the program at social events. She was instructed to greet her at the door. Jennifer felt like she was chosen because she has a good sense of humor. Hannah recalled a meeting that she attended with the board of trustees for the program. Ahead of time, the program director coached her to avoid discussing political hot-button issues such as controversial federal legislation. The director taught Hannah to redirect the question with a question to the person who asked rather than say something that was politically incorrect. Interestingly, Jennifer said she had to learn tact because she tended to be too straightforward and direct with people, which can be offensive. Hannah jokingly replied that she learned “which side to wear her name tag on.” Fellows were required to always wear a nametag on the upper right shoulder making it easier to see the name. Jane recalled being reminded to shake hands with as many people as possible and to develop sound bites on her project that could be shared. Hannah also spoke about the need to learn the “language” of business people and politicians because it differed from the language she was accustomed to using in education. She was always careful to speak clearly and concisely so as not to confuse the audience. Hannah also talked about learning to dress appropriately and not go to events in casual clothes but in business attire. Keith shared how corporations and business were concerned with accountability
and “the bottom line,” which he said is an ineffective way of thinking about teaching children. Nevertheless, he recognized that information for business people and politicians alike was about results; therefore, he had to show results in his conversations with them. Hannah, in particular, spoke about how the other fellows used the words voice and agent of change to describe the Fellows and their actions. Hannah learned to use those words. Interestingly, in the course of my time with the Fellows, I heard all of them use voice to describe their power as teacher leaders representing other teachers.

Jane’s comment summarizes the sentiments of all of the Fellows. She said,

When I am teaching a student, I am not thinking, “What can this person do for me, or who do they know that I can meet etc.? I do in some cases think, “who are his or her parents and how can I best encourage this student to learn?” I am not thinking about time in the same way as perhaps I will spend five to ten minutes with a student if that is what it takes to help the learning transpire. In business and or in politics, I am very aware of the person's status, and what is important to them. I am also aware of time and that I need to be appreciative of the time they are taking. Often if you do not make your point in the first minute or so you will have lost their ear and they have moved on to the next person, as they do know why they are there and what they want to accomplish. This is definitely an art that all teachers need to work on so that they can be more effective with business leaders and politicians. I do not feel this is negative. It is how the world works.

The Fellows learned everything from what to wear, where to place their nametags, how to interact with a handshake and concise information, what language to use, what to
say to be convincing, and what not say to avoid being offensive. And because the Fellows learned these skills within the context of their community of practice where they developed a shared repertoire by watching other Fellows and learning from the same professional development opportunities, there was a normative discourse, or “codes and rules” they followed in order to be effective teacher leaders. This normative discourse was not one defined by the African-American culture or Hispanic culture; it was a discourse of whiteness because White Americans traditionally hold power, and therefore, according to Delpit (1998), White Americans establish the rules of the culture of power. Thus, regardless of the fact that two of the Fellows were White American women, and one was an African American woman, they all performed the same within the culture of power in education. And because they performed according to the rules of the culture of power, just as Delpit suggests, they acquired power more easily for themselves. They were empowered as teacher leaders. Had the Fellows not learned these rules, would they have left the program feeling empowered as teacher leaders? That is a question for another study; however, it is possible to speculate, based on the outcome of their performance, that if they were offensive or shabbily dressed, the fellowship program name alone would not have been enough to empower them.

Is the fellowship program training Fellows to be teacher leaders, or is the fellowship program training Fellows to “perform whiteness” (Warren, 2003)? In the context of the fellowship program and the Fellows’ stories, the fellowship program is doing both. The Fellows entered the program without the knowledge to be teacher leaders and with no self-identification as teacher leaders. When they left the program, their stories reveal that they learned how to act as teacher leaders. However, examining
those same events that they called “learning to act as teacher leaders” reveals that simultaneously they were also learning to “perform whiteness.” (Warren 2003) In my literature review, I discussed whiteness and white privilege as social constructs that educators have an obligation to dismantle and reconstruct. My journey with these Fellows did not carry me into a place to be able to examine this aspect of the literature on whiteness and white privilege. I am left in my journey asking: Was learning to participate in the normative discourse a bad thing for the Fellows to learn? This question parallels asking whether people of color should learn to perform whiteness in order to acquire power. In the culture of power that exists in education these Fellows, as teachers, are the marginalized group. They were taught in the context of the fellowship program to learn the rules of the powerful in order to step out of their marginalized spaces and have a voice since the program promotes the Fellows as the voice for teachers in their state.

Empowered Teacher Leaders.

In the last series of interviews, I asked the Fellows about how they had come to view their role as teacher leaders and why being a teacher leader matters. Keith shared with me one of the most moving moments in my journey with the Fellows. He said that the fellowship program “gives you a shiny button that says teacher leader.” And he talked about the negative perceptions of teachers and how they need to change. He was empowered as a result of his fellowship experiences. He said, “We need to be there to help effect that change. And it's the experiences we've got here in [the fellowship program] that will give us the footing to do that. To give us the confidence to sit eye to eye with Congressman Parker and say, 'You know, this is what education is about.' Not to cower because he's some congressman and he's bigger than I am. But to be able to sit
there and talk to him eyeball to eyeball, and say, 'This is what we need.' This is what we
need. I don't think you can shed that because it becomes in here, in your heart. You
know, and that's life changing.” Hannah, who transformed from the “scaredy cat” with
no self-esteem to being confident and more mature, said that she must be a leader because
“I owe it to my school and to the teachers there that don't have the voice, or won't use
their voice. I have a responsibility to stand up for them.” Jane said, “I feel I walk taller
and that I am proud of the legacy of my role as a teacher.” Jennifer felt that she could be
“'bolder’ and take a chance with [her] opinion and actions. Strive for the next level, so
that [she is] a "shining" example for others to see and follow.”

Ultimately, teachers need to be leaders, and they need to be empowered to
infiltrate the hierarchy of power that exists in education. I find it difficult to conclude
that the fellowship is doing a bad thing by teaching teachers the normative discourse to
operate in the culture of power in education. Rather, the fellowship program, in my
mind, is doing something quite radical. It is not only empowering teachers to be leaders
in their classrooms and schools but also in the hierarchy of power in education. There is
a dearth of research on teacher leaders acting as leaders outside of the school
environment. The fellowship program and this study on empowering teachers to be a
voice in the upper tiers of the hierarchy can begin to fill that gap in the research. The
nature of narrative research does not enable me to generalize and say that the Fellows’
stories are true for all of the other Fellows in the program. Nor does my study promote
the fellowship program model as the ideal one to implement to train teacher leaders. The
purpose of my study was to tell the Fellows’ stories of their time in the fellowship
program and to examine the impact of the program on them in their journeys to become
teacher leaders. The normative discourse lens allowed me to begin a dialogue for thinking about how we train teacher to be leaders.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I used literature on community of practice, transformative learning, teacher leadership, and white privilege to frame my discussion of the research findings. The findings show that the participants participated in negotiating a community of practice that allowed them to grow and experience transformative learning. Consequently, the participants were empowered as teacher leaders. The lens of white privilege allowed close examination of the participants’ empowerment. In the next chapter, I will discuss the implications and possibilities for further study, and I will reflect on the research study in the conclusion.
Chapter Six

“Somewhere ages and ages hence…”

Implications: Why Our Journey Matters

A primary motivation for conducting this research study was my disappointment with the current quantitative evaluation methods that the facilitators of the fellowship program were using. While I did not intend to evaluate the program, I did want to structure a study that would examine the effects of the program on Fellows. Quantitative data are valuable; however, qualitative data also contribute to understanding a program’s worth and effectiveness. My intent was to conduct a qualitative study that would offer insights on the impact of the program on Fellows.

Two key findings of this research study, community of practice and transformative learning, should be especially valuable to the stakeholders in the fellowship program, including those who fund and facilitate the program. The fellowship program is touted as a “program” when, in fact, my research indicates that the Fellows form their own community of practice. Communities of practice take different forms; however, researcher Etienne Wenger (1998) defines them as places in which people are “mutually engaged” in “joint enterprises” using a “shared repertoire” of skills, methods, and tools. The limitations of my study prohibit generalizations regarding whether all Fellows feel that they are participating in a community. Community is not a word that is currently used by program facilitators to describe the program. However, the participants in this research study shared stories about networking, mentoring relationships, support, and working to be voices for teachers across the state, all of which led to me discuss the
Fellows’ experiences in the context of community of practice theory. Using this information, program facilitators could restructure the program using the three key aspects of Wenger’s (1998) community of practice, and they could adapt the language of a community of practice.

A second finding was that the participants in this research study experienced transformative learning (Cranton, 1996; Mezirow, 1991). The four of them entered into the program not identifying themselves as teacher leaders and all shared that they left the program with a new-found confidence in themselves as teacher leaders. As a result of this shift in their psychological perspective (Mezirow, 1991), they proceeded to change their actions. As teacher leaders empowered by their experiences in the fellowship program, they returned to their schools and applied their new understandings of being teacher leaders. In their schools they “ceased to run with the herd” (Cranton and King, 2003) a key aspect of transformative learning. Given the findings on transformative learning, the facilitators of the fellowship program could reassess the professional development opportunities offered to the fellows. Autonomy is a key component of transformative learning (Cranton 1996). The program facilitators do not have to require every Fellow to participate in every professional development offering, as is currently the practice. Transformative learning promotes autonomy for the learner in recognizing what he or she needs to learn. Therefore, the program could provide a wide variety of opportunities from which Fellows could select according to their individual needs. Furthermore, the facilitators could ask that Fellows entering the program complete a learning inventory as a starting point for their work in the program. The inventory would have Fellows reflect on their past learning experiences and identify gaps in their learning
so that they may set goals for their program experiences. Also, providing incoming Fellows with a sense of what classes of Fellows have done in the past and where they might focus the community of practice in the future would help new Fellows refocus the goals of program. The facilitators are not without a voice within a community of practice; they have a voice along with the participants (Wenger, 1998). When new Fellows complete the learning inventory and gain a sense of the direction for the community, then the program facilitators and Fellows could work together in generating professional development opportunities. This is one possibility of how the research findings could be used. My point is to suggest that the fellowship program needs to purposively foster a community of practice and transformative learning in the program; the methods for doing so could be decided by the Fellows and fellowship facilitators.

Recognizing that the program has the potential to foster a community of practice in which transformative learning occurs could allow the facilitators of the program to reassess and clarify the vision of the program. The program currently seeks to expand the model to six major economic development regions in the state. As they expand, it is crucial that the vision for the program be clear and flexible.

While this research study speaks to the facilitators of the fellowship program I studied, it also speaks to people who facilitate professional development opportunities for teachers. Because of the limitations of the study, it is not possible to generalize the findings to other programs. However, in planning professional development opportunities, the findings of this research study might lead developers of professional development opportunities for teachers to ask several questions. First of all, based on the community of practice findings, they might ask whether the structures for fostering a
community of practice are useful to enhance the program’s impact on teacher leaders. The normative discourse piece might allow them to examine the content of the professional development opportunity and determine the biases and subjectivities present in the content.

This research study also contributes to the body of literature on teacher leadership and social justice. There is a dearth of research that examines the intersection of teacher leadership and social justice. The findings of my research study question whether teacher leaders are truly empowered in the fellowship program because they are essentially being trained to perform the normative discourse rather than develop a unique voice or stance. Current research on teacher leadership promotes teacher leaders who “lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved practice” (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001, p.5). The question I ask of this definition is: What is the scope of the community? The teacher leader literature largely limits the scope of teacher leadership to the context of a teacher leader’s school or school community; however, recent research is expanding teacher leader roles to include evaluating educational initiatives and facilitating professional learning communities (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). This research study examines a program that expands teacher leadership to the political arena, and the findings indicate that the participants’ voices were valued and they were empowered by participating in this arena. Therefore, based on the findings, this question can be asked regarding the scope of teacher leaders’ actions: Should teacher leaders limit their leadership to the school and school community, or should they expand their reach to lead at a political level and in other high levels in the hierarchy of power in education?
The findings of my research study also contribute to the literature on social justice issues in education and on how training teachers to be leaders requires them to be trained in the normative discourse. John T. Warren (2003) proposes that because race is constructed in society to privilege Whiteness, then all people who seek to be leaders—regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic class, or sexuality—must perform Whiteness. He situates his argument in the context of the classroom; however, this argument can also be transferred to the professional development of teachers as they work to become leaders in the culture of power in education. The findings in this research study suggest that the participants were trained to behave according to the normative discourse so that they could “perform” leadership in the culture of power. This finding suggests that we need to examine the hierarchy of power in education, and it also suggests that we need to question how teachers are trained to be leaders and how teachers will be leaders. In other words, what are appropriate roles for teacher leaders in the hierarchy of power? Should they be trained to participate in the normative discourse, or should they be trained to challenge that discourse? Much of the social justice literature focuses on the student-teacher relationship. However, the findings in my research study indicate that as we begin to examine the relationship between teachers and those who make decisions at the top of the hierarchy, some of the same power issues apply. How are teachers marginalized in the culture of power? How can they challenge the normative discourse and the culture of power to gain a position of power themselves? How can teachers begin to be an integral part of setting the agenda for education?

In regards to examining the intersection of teacher leadership and social justice, this research study raises more questions than it answers. However, it is important to
explore these issues as we continue to promote teacher leadership. Teacher leadership is still in the stages of being defined by researchers and those in the school context as well. This research study conveys a definition of teacher leadership that encourages the teachers to be leaders outside of their schools and school communities. It also raises questions regarding how teachers are trained to be leaders to participate in the culture of power. My hope is that the findings in this study and the questions raised will contribute to the dialogue on teacher leadership, social justice, and the intersection of the two.

Beyond contributing to the facilitators of the fellowship program, facilitators of professional development for teachers, and the literature on teacher leadership and social justice, this study also speaks to teachers and teacher leaders. The stories of the Fellows in this research study may resonate with many teachers, those who are not leaders, those who are working to be, and those who are teacher leaders. The findings may also raise questions for them in their journeys as teacher leaders regarding what being a teacher leader means. They might also ask how they can be teacher leaders both in their communities and beyond and why it is important for teachers to become leaders.

Further Study: New Diverging Roads from the Road Taken

As mentioned in the implication of this research study, I found myself with more questions than answers as my journey with the participants concluded. Narrative inquirers acknowledge, however, that any narrative study is situated in the three-dimensional context of time, space, and personal/social balance (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Therefore, the research text produced is a product of that three-dimensional context. One of the struggles for narrative inquirers is saying the experience is “finished” because the lives of the participants and the research are continuing.
Nevertheless, I did have to bring this research study to a conclusion and here at the conclusion, I find numerous questions with which I could continue my journey.

As mentioned previously, I entered the study seeking to understand how the participants’ understanding of being teacher leaders and their self-identification as teacher leaders were influenced by the fellowship program. I also utilized the normative discourse lens to ask questions about the participants’ experiences. What I found in asking those questions was that the Fellows formed a community of practice in which they experienced transformative learning. These were unexpected findings; therefore, I would be interested to explore the fellowship program in the specific context of these findings. How and to what extent does the fellowship program foster a community of practice? How does the program facilitate transformative learning? This study would require a closer analysis of the program component in addition to the experiences of the Fellows. It could entail comparing elements of various professional development programs on the extent to which they promote a community of practice and transformative learning. I would want to interview the facilitators of the program regarding their vision of the program and decisions about what professional development opportunities are offered. I would also want to see documents that detail all of the professional development opportunities provided to gain an understanding of what had been offered to the participants and then use that analysis to form surveys for Fellows who had participated in the opportunities. Another approach that may be interesting for studying these questions is a longitudinal study following one class of Fellows through the program, beginning with interviews before they enter the program, observations and interviews throughout on the various opportunities they have, and then post-graduation
interviews. This methodology may account for how the community of practice is shaped during that time and also allow for conclusions on transformative learning based on an entire class of fellows.

Furthermore, in regards to transformative learning, my findings largely concentrate on how the actions of the participants changed after their participation in the fellowship program; although I did briefly mention how some spoke of a change in their psychological perspectives (Mezirow, 1991). I would be interested to conduct a study that focused solely on transformative learning and, more specifically, the psychological changes in the participants. I would situate that research in the context of psychology research on identity and self-efficacy and how these change for adults. Caine and Caine (2000) suggest that empowerment for teachers leads to a greater sense of self efficacy. An interesting question would be: How do Fellows’ identities change as a result of their fellowship experiences? Also, how does their self-efficacy change? Furthermore, based on these questions, how does a change in the Fellows’ identities and self-efficacy impact their ability to be teacher leaders and perceive themselves as teacher leaders? Finally, how do others in the educational community regard teachers trained to be leaders? Do they perceive their colleagues as transformed?

In listening to the stories of the Fellows in this study, it became evident that as a result of their work on curriculum projects as fellows, their students were afforded amazing opportunities. Jane’s art students were exposed to science as a result of her work with the national space organization and a group promoting the centennial anniversary of flight. Hannah’s middle school science students had the opportunity to talk with astronauts, students from the local university, and others as a result of her
project being affiliated with the national space organization. Keith’s students worked with people associated with local birding organizations as well as national universities to complete their project on “Birds in the Schoolyard.” Jennifer’s students made connections with a local business owner and several students earned jobs at the business as a result of her project. All of these experiences for the students raise questions regarding the impact of the Fellows networking on their students. According to York-Barr and Duke (2004) there is a lack of research on the impact of teacher leadership on student achievement. An interesting study would be to follow the curriculum projects of several Fellows as they develop the project and implement it in their respective classrooms, then to interview and survey the students regarding the experiences to understand what effects the teacher networking has on them as learners.

In regards to the social justice issue and the Fellows being taught to perform the normative discourse, it might be interesting to use Gee’s (1999) discourse analysis to closely examine the language of Fellows after participating in the program to determine whether or not their rhetoric changes. This would require a longitudinal study of perhaps one class of fellows. I would interview them prior to entering the program regarding questions on teacher leadership, follow their development throughout the program with interviews and observations, and then do post-graduation interviews to examine the potential change in their discourse in regards to teacher leadership. These interview transcripts would be analyzed for linguistic features as well as content.

Lastly, I am curious about what will happen with the Fellows in this research study. Will they continue to grow and perform as teacher leaders with the same enthusiasm that they expressed in the context of this study? Will they continue to
consider being a teacher leader important? Or, will they become frustrated with a culture of power that resists teacher leaders and resign themselves to being teacher leaders only in their school communities or perhaps not at all? Answering these questions would require a longitudinal study to examine where these participants are in their work as teacher leaders in at least three years. I would be interested in revisiting them at that point to see where they are in relation to where they thought they would be at the time of their participation in this study. The results may shed light on the culture of power, the consequences of teachers working as leaders, and the long-term impact of the Fellows’ experiences in the program on the Fellows.

Conclusion: Reflections on the Road Taken

In reflecting on my travels with the Fellows who participated in this study, I find myself concluding the journey with more questions than answers. In my reflections on how the story came together, I found myself reflecting the seemingly positive findings that the participants found in their fellowship experiences a community of practice. They also experienced transformative learning, which is an empowering process associated with social change (Cranton, 1996). Juxtaposed with these findings was the evidence that in order to become teacher leaders, the participants spoke about learning to be teacher leaders. This learning clearly reflected that they were learning the normative discourse; they were learning the “hidden rules” (Delpit, 1998). At this point, I was torn between seeing teacher leadership as something positive and necessary in education and the work that the fellowship program is doing to foster teacher leaders as positive and necessary, and seeing that the fellowship program must acquiesce to the normative
discourse. I then began to think about the impact that tension has on the fellows as teacher leaders.

In my reflection, I was led to think about W.E.B. DuBois’s (1903) idea of “double consciousness.” He said

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”

As I thought about DuBois’ idea, I began to parallel his experiences as an African-American in a society dominated by White Americans with the Fellows’ experiences in the fellowship program. Their experiences lead them to join a group of their peers to co-construct a community of practice. The experiences were empowering for them because embedded in that community of practice is the expectation that they develop the ability to interact on professional business and political levels that they are not accustomed to in education. They are able to meet with influential decision makers in education and have their voices heard. This experience is transformative for them. But, is it possible that the experience of the Fellows parallels DuBois’s “double consciousness” in the sense that they begin to see themselves as leaders trained to participate in the culture of power but also continue to see themselves as teachers in the educational setting where they must adhere to the rules set for them? What is the impact on the teacher of trying to be both? Just as some African Americans assimilate to the dominant White American culture in
order to gain power, these teachers assimilate to the normative discourse outside of their teacher roles in order to participate in the culture of power and have a voice in education. The irony is that transformative learning is directly linked to social change (Cranton, 1996). Transformative learning is empowering, yet is it truly empowering to compromise one’s authentic voice while being taught to acquiesce to a normative discourse in order to “play by the rules” of those in power?

It’s not until teachers are able to set the agenda for discussions, make decisions, not be ruled from the top, that the culture of power will be reconstructed. Perhaps that is the road the Fellows in this study are on in their journeys. Perhaps they will journey to change the landscape of the culture of power in education. As I mentioned earlier, it would be interesting to see where these empowered teachers are two to three years from now in their work as teacher leaders to see if they continue promoting change as teacher leaders or whether the culture of power eventually silences them.
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National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at risk: The Imperative for


End Notes

1 The Fellowship Program for Curriculum and Leadership Development is a two-year model for professional development that fosters teacher leadership by supporting Fellows to develop curriculum projects and to provide opportunities for classroom teachers to have a voice regarding educational issues that is heard by those in both the business sector and the political arena.

2 The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future’s report What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future stressed that recruiting, preparing, and supporting excellent teachers in all of America’s schools are the key to student achievement. The Commission provided a systematic plan that established standards for both educators and students.

3 The NCLB (No Child Left Behind) Act of 2001 is a federally mandated education reform intended to improve student achievement and change the culture of America’s schools. The law constitutes an overhaul of federal efforts to support K-12 education. It is built on four key ideas: accountability for results; an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research; expanded parental options; and expanded local control and flexibility.

4 The National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century is a comprehensive plan to ensure that every American student receives excellent instruction in science and math instruction in order to maintain the United States’ position in the competitive global economy. The report emphasizes the importance of good teaching and targets science and math teachers.

5 The “banking model of education” is a term coined by Paulo Freire. He posited that this type of education made the student the depository and the teacher the depositor. The teacher’s role is to make deposits to be withdrawn when needed. The problem, according to Freire, is that the students do not learn critical thinking skills needed to problem solve and function in a democratic society.

6 The Academy has been proposed by the Director of the Fellows Program, as a means for the graduated Fellows to continue to serve as teacher leaders in the state of North Carolina. The Academy is still in planning stages; however, when it comes to fruition, the goal is for graduated Fellows to conduct professional development opportunities for teachers in the state.

7 National Board Certification is awarded by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) for teachers who demonstrate their excellence in the teaching profession. In order to earn certification, teachers must successfully complete a rigorous set of assessments that include constructing a portfolio that represents an analysis of their practice and sitting for a series of written exams on their content area and pedagogy.

8 The National Writing Project is a federally funded professional development program for teachers, developed in 1974 in an effort to foster quality writing by America’s students. The NWP offers professional development for teachers seeking to develop their teacher leadership skills by providing opportunities for them to share effective writing practices and learn to become better writers themselves. In turn, NWP teachers are expected to share their expertise by teaching other teachers how to teach writing.

9 The term “fireside chat” was coined by the WWII generation who listened to F.D. Roosevelt on the radio in the evenings to hear updates and encouragement about the war. In the fellowship program, the term is used to denote meetings attended by an invited business leader or politician and Fellows. The meetings foster a comfortable atmosphere in which all parties exchange ideas in open dialogue.
An action plan, or white paper, is defined in the fellowship program as a plan Fellows develop as they enter the program to guide their work throughout the program. These plans are revised throughout the fellowship experience, and the program facilitators use them as evaluative tools for the program.
Definitions of Key Terms

Community of Practice—Community of Practice is a sociological term used to describe a group of individuals who share common visions, ideas, and goals. Etienne Wenger (1998) developed a framework grounded in social theory that suggests that community is one of the key components of learning. More specifically, he suggests that learning that is situated in a community has a greater potential to be transformative for the learner.

Culture of Power—Lisa Delpit (1988) defines five aspects of power. She suggests that issues of power are “enacted in classrooms” and there are “codes or rules for participating in power” (p. 282). The rules are constructed by the dominant culture, and those who do not have power must learn the “rules”. She further argues that those who lack power are most aware of its existence, while those with power are reluctant to acknowledge their power. In this study, the culture of power is generalized to include the educational system not just the classroom.

Descriptive Codes—Descriptive codes involve little interpretation of data. They involve “attributing a class of phenomena to a segment of text” (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Hidden Rules—Lisa Delpit (1988) defines “hidden rules” as the rules or codes one must know and follow in order to have power.

Interpretive Codes—Interpretive codes are used as the researcher becomes more knowledgeable about the data and, therefore, is able to make interpretations about the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Narrative Inquiry—Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research methodology that relies on participants’ stories as data. The methodology asks that participants and the researcher/s work as co-constructors of new stories as they move through the research process together.

Network View—A network view is a graphic image that can be created using ATLAST/ti software. The feature allows the researcher to import data from coded transcripts and organize it graphically to determine relationships and connections.

Normative Discourse—The normative discourse in the context of this study is a discourse of whiteness. White, male, upper-class, heterosexuals define whiteness.

Pattern Codes—Pattern Codes are inferential and explanatory. They are used later in the course of data collection as patterns, or themes, in the data become clearer (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
Performing Whiteness—Warren (2003) argues that in order to participate in the culture of power, one must perform whiteness, defined as white, male, upper-class heterosexual.

Restorying—Storying involves the researcher and participants discussing the process and products of interviews, while restorying is stories told in response to the initial storying (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The researcher and participants work together throughout the research process reflecting on the stories being told to interpret their meaning and restory the original stories.

Tacit Knowledge—Polyani (1966) theorized that human beings “know more than they can tell” (p.4). Thus, tacit knowledge is knowledge that is known implicitly.

Transformative Learning—Transformative Learning, as defined by Mezirow (1991), occurs when an individual reaches a higher awareness of his or her beliefs, critiques the previous assumptions, assesses alternative views, makes a decision to dismiss the old views in favor of a new one, and changes his or her actions in the future by incorporating the new beliefs into his or her life.

White Privilege—White Privilege is defined as a social construct whereby White Americans are able to maintain power and privilege in society. White privilege is maintained because White Americans do not see themselves as raced individuals, and they do not recognize the privilege deriving from race, thus perpetuating the privilege.
APPENDIX
Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Screening Interview for 10 Fellows
Purpose: Determine a purposeful sample of 4 Fellows

- Tell me about your career in teaching.
- How do you think about BEING A “teacher leader”?
- Share reflections on your fellowship program experience. Was it a positive experience for you? Why/ why not?
- To what extent has the fellowship experience had a lasting impact on you and/or your career?
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

**Title:** Examining Normative Discourse and the Culture of Power in a Teacher Leadership Program

**Researcher:** Ashlie L Thompson

**Purpose:** I would like to request your participation in a research study for my dissertation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the Fellows Program on Fellows’ perceptions of both becoming and being teacher leaders.

**Information:** If you should decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in a one-hour screening interview. If you should decide to continue participating in the study past the screening interview, you will be asked to participate in three face-to-face interviews for approximately 60-90 minutes each. Additionally, you will be asked to complete one on-line interview via email.

**Risks:** With your permission, face-to-face interviews will be both audio and video taped. Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. No names of persons, schools, or the program will be used. If such names are mentioned in the tapes, they will not appear in any of the written transcripts or reports.

**Benefits:** Participating in the study will benefit the participants who desire a way to reflect on their experience in the program and express and share their experiences and reflections with other teachers/educators. The program will benefit form the study because they will be able to use the results in their program assessment. The study will also benefit the teaching profession, and more specifically, professional development programs for teachers by revealing the impact of the such teacher leadership programs on its Fellows. Additionally, the study will contribute to the dialogue in education on teacher leadership development.

**Confidentiality:** The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only if you give special permission in writing to do so. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study, unless you provide written consent.

**Compensation:** No participants will receive payment for participating in the study.

**Contact:** If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher:
If you feel that you have not been treated according to the description on this form, or that your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project you may contact Dr. Matt Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 8101, NCSU, Raleigh, NC 27695-7906 or by phone at 919-513-1834.

**Participation:** Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

**Consent:** I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s signature______________________________ Date:________________

Please PRINT name: ________________________________

Researcher’s Signature:_____________________________ Date:________________
Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Interview for 4 Fellows
Method: Series of 3 interviews for each Fellow approximately 60-90 minutes each

Interview One: Experience in education prior to Fellows Program

- The researcher/interviewer will review the first interview information on career in teaching and ask questions that branch from that information. Questions will inquire about philosophy of teaching, philosophy on interacting with students, memorable and/or defining moments in career
- Prior to the fellowship program, describe yourself as a teacher.
- Reflect on your work prior to the fellowship program, did you see yourself as a teacher leader then? Talk about positions you held that you feel may have led you to being a teacher leader, or explain why you did not see yourself as a leader at that time.
- Discuss your reasons/ motivations for applying to the Fellows Program.
Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Interview for 4 Fellows
Method: Series of 3 interviews for each Fellow approximately 60-90 minutes each

Interview Two Face-to face questions: Experiences while participating in the fellowship program

- The researcher/interviewer will begin by reviewing responses to question three from the screening interview and clarifying responses to that question in addition to questions from reviewing parts from Interview One
- There are two parts to the Program, curriculum development and teacher leadership. Talk about your experiences in the program in relation to each of those areas.
- Tell me about the professional development opportunities you participated in during the Program.
- Discuss the extent to which the professional development opportunities challenged you as a teacher and an individual.
- Discuss the extent to which the program shifted your understanding of what it means to be a “teacher leader.”
- Share some examples of opportunities you were afforded because you were a Fellow. What was the impact of these opportunities on you as a teacher leader?
Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Interview for 5 Fellows
Method: Series of 3 interviews for each Fellow approximately 60-90 minutes each

Interview Three: Experiences after graduating from the Fellows Program

- The researcher/interviewer will begin by reviewing responses to question four from the screening interview and clarifying responses to that question in addition to reviewing responses from Interview 2 and the email interview.
- As a result of the program, how do you now think about what it means to be a “teacher leader”? Discuss “teacher leader” roles you have assumed as a result of your Fellows experience.
- To what extent did your fellowship experience impact you as an individual? Discuss the impact of the Fellows Program on you as an individual.
- How has the Fellows Program affected your philosophy of education? Did it alter your philosophy of education?
- Talk about the degree to which the fellowship program experiences may or may not have challenged your values and/or beliefs about being a leader in education.
- Discuss the extent to which the fellowship program experience did or did not empower you as a teacher and leader.
Appendix F

Start list of codes

Code:

Teaching
--Motivation for teaching
--Experiences with students
--philosophy
--curriculum
--methodology
Teacher leader
--definition
--roles
--purpose

Fellowship program
--impact on teaching
--impact on students/ learning
--impact on personal identity
--professional development opportunities
--opportunities
Appendix G
Community of Practice Network View
Appendix H
Transformative Learning Network View

[Diagram of network view showing relationships between various concepts such as Personal Change, Teacher Leader Definition and Actions, Teacher Leadership in the Future, Teacher Leader Perception Before Kenan, Teacher Leader Perception After Kenan, Teacher Leaders Interacting with Non-educators, Why Not Me, Becoming a Teacher Leader, and Kenan Experience Impact on Knowledge.]
Appendix I
Empowerment Network View

[Diagram showing various nodes and connections labeled with times and topics such as Assumptions about Teachers, How and Why Teachers Need to Lead, Lack of Control, Meeting With Politicians and BL, Voice, Empowerment 2, and related topics and times.]