Strengthening Leadership for Standards-Based Education:
A New Typology and Survey Tool to Identify Teacher Leaders
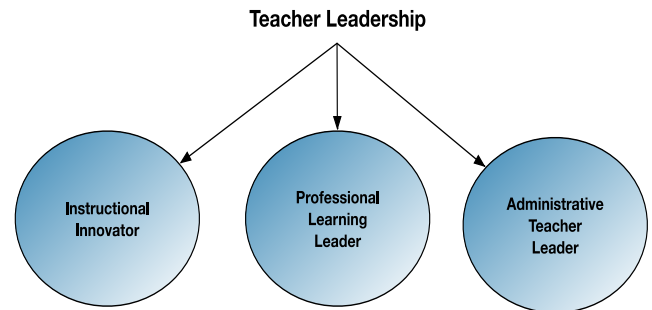
Summary

As school systems seek new and better ways to solve the complex challenges of improving learning outcomes for all students, there is growing recognition of the important role of teacher leadership. Research indicates that involving teachers in a wide variety of leadership roles can have benefits from strengthening instructional practice to increasing retention. Schools and districts across the country are therefore making efforts to increase leadership opportunities and expand the definition of leadership beyond administrative roles. **Yet there are few tools available to help identify teacher leadership strengths and interests in order to direct them to the most appropriate leadership roles.** In fact, there is not even a clear consensus in the field on how best to describe and organize the different types of leadership roles that teachers hold. **This report addresses this gap by presenting a typology to distinguish teacher leadership roles and a practical survey tool that teachers and administrators can use to better match individual teachers to leadership opportunities**.

Typology of Teacher Leadership

Instructional Innovator: The Instructional Innovator type is usually a teacher who has significant years of experience and is considered an expert in his or her subject area. They are interested in developing the field by opening up their classroom for observation and mentoring other teachers. Instructional Innovators' primary targets of influence are students and immediate colleagues. However, their influence often extends beyond the classroom as **they offer their classroom practices as a centerpiece for instructional learning, reflection, and improvement by the entire community.**

Professional Learning Leader: The Professional Learning Leader is a skilled communicator and trainer who leads professional development activities. Their leadership may be focused on their peers within their school site (e.g., running staff department meetings), or extend to their districts (e.g., offering district-wide professional development), or beyond (e.g., presenting workshops at national conferences). Their targets of influence are their colleagues, both local and more distant. **They are adept at understanding the needs of adult learners, facilitating shared understanding, and implementation of instructional reform.**

Teacher Leadership

Instructional Innovator

Professional Learning Leader

Administrative Teacher Leader

Professional Learning Leader: "*They [teachers] don't like to be told what to do. And so I've always felt that the best leadership style is to sit and listen to people in a group…that they [teachers] come up with the ideas, and that they take ownership of it.*" (Lance)

Administrative Teacher Leader: "*I have the credential I need. But I've done a lot of research, just because I'm interested in this and I want to be able to help people on my site.*" (Lauren)

Administrative Teacher Leader: The Administrative Teacher Leader acts as an agent of change by serving in roles outside of the classroom and influencing site and district policies and reform initiatives. They may serve on school or district planning committees, present at community meetings or testify at school board hearings. **These roles enable them to bring the experiences and voices of classroom teachers to systems-level decisions.**

Table 1. Summary of three types of teacher leadership

Teacher Leadership Type	Characteristics	Leadership Work and Means of Influence	Targets of Influence
Instructional Innovator	• Extensive classroom experience • Strong content and pedagogical knowledge • Interest in direct work in the classroom and with students	• Classroom-based modeling of reform practices • Mentoring novice teachers in their instructional practices • Facilitating student-centered learning • Contributing to curriculum development	• Students • More immediate colleagues (e.g., teachers and administrators within their school site)
Professional Learning Leader	• Relational and facilitation skills • Understand needs of adult learners • Assume responsibility for group as well as individual learning • Can include more novice teachers	• Facilitating professional learning groups (e.g., lesson study) • Planning and delivering professional development • Translating theories and standards into classroom applications • Building networks for professional learning	• Immediate and more distant colleagues (e.g., teachers from other school sites or districts) • School or district networks of professional learning
Administrative Teacher Leader	• Holds a 'systems perspective'; understands organizational factors that influence teaching and learning • Interested in educational reform and policy decisions	• Providing classroom teachers' perspective in leadership meetings • Being involved in educational policy decision-making • Building networks among internal and external (e.g., university partners) stakeholders	• Administrators at the site and district levels • Key external partners (e.g., county office of education) • Organizational capacity and culture of school or district

Teacher Leadership Survey

In order to create **a practical tool that could be used to connect teachers with appropriate leadership opportunities**, we adapted the *Readiness for Teacher Leadership Survey* by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009). The Survey consists of 25 items that examine teacher attitudes, values, and beliefs related to the characteristics of teacher leadership identified in the literature. For our study, we adapted the survey items slightly to target science education (e.g., "focus on student learning" changed to "focus on student learning in science"). **Teachers can take the survey to find out the type of leadership to which they are most suited.**

Implications for Policy and Practice

This paper has several recommendations to advance the efficacy of teacher leadership in schools and districts.

- **Consider a wider pool of teachers to select candidates for leadership roles:** The typology and survey look across a wide range of factors and may be able to identify leadership potential in ways that would not happen through more traditional means. For instance, more novice teachers may be well positioned to serve as leaders of professional learning, in collaboration with others who have complimentary experience and expertise.

- **Develop a broader range of leadership opportunities:** Many teachers are not interested in taking on administrative leadership positions, but still may be interested in applying their leadership capabilities in other ways beyond their regular teaching responsibilities. The findings from this study suggest how those other leadership positions could be designed.

- **Formalize teacher leadership roles:** When leadership responsibilities are not formalized, there can be a host of challenges and barriers that prevent teachers from leading effectively. For instance, when teacher leaders do not have formally recognized roles, they frequently use their planning time to complete clerical duties related to their leadership (Patterson & Marshall, 2014). Particularly in science education, leadership from teachers at all levels of the education system is critical, as principals and other administrative leaders may not have expertise in science or may be attending to policy initiatives and accountability measures in language arts and mathematics (Spillane et al., 2001).

Next Steps and Opportunities for Further Research

There is a pressing need to combat teacher attrition and to increase the appeal for new teachers to enter. More varied and available leadership opportunities can help address this challenge by providing teachers with constructive feedback on their practice, opportunities to think creatively and collaborate with colleagues, and incentives grow as professionals, all of which can contribute to higher job satisfaction and retention. Thus, there are compelling uses for analytical tools that can be easily deployed by district and school leaders to develop teacher leaders.

Going forward, research is needed to further test the typology developed here and to examine its applicability in broader settings beyond science instruction and middle school. Beyond that, deeper questions could be pursued, such as how variations in teacher leadership characteristics and roles may influence desired outcomes for educational system improvement and ultimately for student learning. We welcome feedback from educational leaders who use the survey and typology across a variety of settings.

Table 2. Teacher Leadership Readiness Survey adapted from Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009)
To determine teachers' leadership proclivity, calculate the average rating for each area.

	Please rate the following items on according to the following scale: 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree, 5 strongly agree.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
General Teacher Leadership	1. My work as a teacher leader is both meaningful and important.	1	2	3	4	5
	7. It is important to me to have the respect of the administrators and other teachers in my district.	1	2	3	4	5
	13. I can continue to serve as a science classroom teacher and become a teacher leader in my school and/or district.	1	2	3	4	5
	16. My work contributes to the overall success of our school and district science program.	1	2	3	4	5
	25. I want to work in an environment where I am recognized and valued as a professional.	1	2	3	4	5
Instructional Innovator	3. Teachers should be recognized for trying new teaching strategies whether they succeed or fail.	1	2	3	4	5
	4. Teachers should decide on the best methods of instruction for meeting educational goals set by policy-making groups (e.g., district boards and state departments).	1	2	3	4	5
	5. I am willing to observe and provide feedback to other science teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
	8. I would be willing to help a colleague who is having difficulty with his/her teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
	10. I would give my time to help new science teachers in my school or district.	1	2	3	4	5
	17. Mentoring new teachers is part of my responsibility as a professional teacher	1	2	3	4	5
	22. I have knowledge and skills that can help students be successful in science.	1	2	3	4	5
	24. I am very effective in working with almost all of my science students.	1	2	3	4	5
Professional Learning Leader	2. Individual teachers should be able to influence how other teachers think about, plan for, and conduct their work with students.	1	2	3	4	5
	6. I would like to spend time discussing my values and beliefs about science teaching with other teachers and colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
	9. I can see the points of view of my colleagues, students, and students' parents.	1	2	3	4	5
	12. Teachers working collaboratively should be able to influence practice in their schools and districts.	1	2	3	4	5
	14. Cooperating with my colleagues is more important than competing with them.	1	2	3	4	5
	15. I would give my time to help plan professional development activities at my school and/or district.	1	2	3	4	5
	20. I value the time spent working with my colleagues on science curriculum and instructional matters.	1	2	3	4	5
	21. I am very effective in working with almost all of my colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
	23. I recognize and value points of view that are different from mine.	1	2	3	4	5
Administrative Teacher Leader	11. I facilitate the work of students in my science classroom and of colleagues in meetings at my school and district.	1	2	3	4	5
	18. Science teachers and university faculty can mutually benefit from working together.	1	2	3	4	5
	19. I would be willing to give my time to participate in making decisions about such things as instructional materials, allocation of resources, student assignments, and/or organizations of the school day	1	2	3	4	5

Note: Item numbers correspond to the order of items on the original *Readiness for Teacher Leadership* survey (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009)

Development of the Typology

This study began with the following research question: **Who are the critical leaders and what are their roles in scaling and sustaining professional learning communities, particularly for middle school science?** To start, the Science Partnership research team examined the existing literature on teacher leadership. A variety of teacher leader characteristics, approaches, and outcomes emerged from this research, ranging from formal to informal, instructional to administrative (Patterson & Marshall, 2014; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Seeking a more comprehensive way to identify teacher leadership roles and investigate their relationship to improving science teaching and learning in middle school, we designed a two-part study combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. In the first part of the study, we conducted case studies of teacher leaders to develop a new, more complete typology of teacher leadership roles and responsibilities. In the second part, we adapted an existing survey tool to test the new typology, and validated the survey by administering it to 178 middle school science teachers from the eight urban school districts in 2013-15. The survey participants were all teachers known to have served in distinct leadership roles, such as modeling NGSS lessons, facilitating lesson study teams, or working with administrators to develop district action plans for science. A statistical analysis of the larger survey data produced results that supported the four-factor typology.

A full description of the study methodology can be found in the paper *The diverse forms of teacher leadership: A typology and survey tool for middle school science* (Bae et al., 2016).

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