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The Dual Role of a Teacher and Teacher Leader: An Auto-Educational Criticism Examination

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Abstract

The world of teaching has long been explored: from works focused on different contents to different grade bands to different techniques and methods to best practices, the literature is dense with materials on the world of teaching. Where this literature has just begun to shed light however is the world teacher leadership. As an educator in a dual role since 2014, that of a teacher and a teacher leader, I have beared witness to what current research has only recently begun to unearth.

It is here that I situate myself, as the researcher of teacher leadership and the subject of said research. Through the methodology of auto-educational criticism, I have analyzed a journal of the trials and tribulations of the work of a dual role teacher as well. Using my expertise in the world of teacher leadership, I wasable to critique these entries and shed light on an area of education that still remains in the shadows.

In doing so, I was able to uncover the development of the role identities of a teacher and a teacher leader. This was procured through a rigorous evaluation of lived experiences of myself as a teacher and teacher leader, as well as the beliefs and efficacies espoused in these roles. This then allowed me to ascertain the dispositions evident in all identities. Additionally, I was able to outline the aims created for myself and the teachers I lead. Following this, an examination of the implications for the identities of the teacher leader as well as the implications for the world of teaching itself are explored.

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Joseph Bolz

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Advisor: Dr. Bruce Uhrmacher

Abstract

The world of teaching has long been explored: from works focused on different contents to different grade bands to different techniques and methods to best practices, the literature is dense with materials on the world of teaching. Where this literature has just begun to shed light however is the world teacher leadership. As an educator in a dual role since 2014, that of a teacher and a teacher leader, I have beared witness to what current research has only recently begun to unearth.

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Prologue

As the students enter my classroom, I have prepared for the day by laying out strips of paper at each group as well as tape and scissors. I inform them we are going to work on building our skills of investigations and making predictions. All the while, we will maintain a focus on how we use our tools strategically to understand mathematics and ultimately make predictions. The students are first asked to take one strip and draw a line down the middle of the strip length-wise. They then take that strip of paper and make it into a ring using the tape. Once that ring is constructed, they will predict what will happen as they cut the ring in half along the line they drew. Then they cut and analyze their predictions.

The students are not surprised to see that when they cut the ring along the dotted line, they now have two rings. They wonder what the point of this activity is with quiet mumbling between them.

The students are then asked to repeat the same process, only this time, they are to twist the paper before taping it, forming a Mobius Strip as seen below. A Mobius Strip has this wonderful illusion that if you trace your finger along the strip it will never have to leave the paper for the finger to traverse both the inner and outer parts of the loop. Theorists have argued about what this shape means for mathematics. Regardless, it gives the students exposure to something that makes them see the world in a different way.
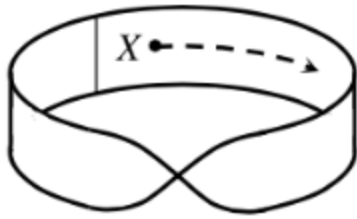
Figure 1: Mobius Strip from Dietiker et al (2017)

This time, as they are asked to make predictions of what the cut will do, they have a myriad of responses. As we cut the Mobius Strip in half, the look of wonder on their faces as they see what appears is enough to show me that they are beginning to understand the beauty and logic of mathematics. The awe and wonder, the realization that when the mobius strip was cut down, seemingly in half, it actually became a much larger mobius strip, all of this is apparent in their words and whispers.

The play with the new mobius strip, albeit a little more twisted than the original, examining its properties and sharing the conclusions with the class. The lesson proceeds until the bell.

Like the Mobius strip, I have just begun my day with a lesson on the "outside of the strip". I have lived in the realm of the teacher. As the bell has rung, I have transitioned to the "inside of the strip" into my role as a teacher leader where I enter the classroom of another teacher to observe and then, later that day, coach them in order to encourage their own professional growth in areas that they see as most crucial. My role – provide guidance to meet those goals.

To view these two pieces of my educational career as separate and distinct is to view this job like the first ring the students cut out, where both sides never overlap, where cutting it in half led to two distinct rings of equal shape and size.. However, that simply is not the case – the world I live in, the two roles I serve, constantly overlap and intertwine, much like that Mobius Strip.

Parker Palmer (2016) observed this connection, between one's identity and the Mobius strip. He noted how what is inside of us forms, or deforms, how we see what is outside of us. Likewise, what is outside of us can form and deform how we see ourselves.

It is in this intricate overlapping of the identities of the teacher and the teacher leader that I serve, identities that seemingly live in this Mobius Strip, that I begin my journey.

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction and Rationale

I am a teacher. I am a teacher of Mathematics. I am a high school math teacher, a department chair, an instructional lead, a Teacher Leader Cohort Leader, a member of the district assessment team, the lead evaluator for a majority of our department, the lead of several projects including increasing the number of underrepresented populations in high school honors classes, and a sponsor for both the Gay Straight Alliance and the Math Club. And I'm a husband and a father of three. And I am writing my dissertation as a PhD student.

While my plate may seem full, and it is, I have found ways to maintain the balance. And it starts with the heart of who I am. A teacher. An educator.

The world knows, or thinks it knows, the realities of a teacher – even a math teacher such as myself. Myriad journals and articles have been published on this lived reality. Drake and Sherin (2006) discussed the lived realities of two urban mathematics educators in the midst of curriculum reform. Drake (2006) details how the teacher's life stories affected the curriculum they were teaching. De Freitas (2008) connects the math teachers' identities to their efficacy in teaching in diverse populations. To enumerate all the articles written on the lived experiences of math teachers would extend this

dissertation well beyond its breath, but I will leave this endeavor with much assurance to the reader that it is well researched.

Where my road diverges from what we know about teaching mathematics, is in being a leader of teachers in mathematics. My road through education has been a windy one. I began my teaching at a suburban high school (with a highly urban population) outside of Chicago. I taught there for 8 years and learned much of what it means to be a math teacher during that time. While there, I accomplished two other feats – I received my Masters in Educational Leadership and I completed the application for my National Board Certification. At the end of the 8th year of my teaching, my wife and I decided to move to Colorado.

Once we settled into our new surroundings, I quickly took up a teaching job at a high school that I thought closely resembled the high school I had been teaching at – in a suburb but close enough to Denver to have urban influences, relatively large in size, and a myriad of offerings for the students. However, I was quickly made aware that teacher leadership in Colorado was far different than what I experienced in Illinois. In Illinois, the department chairs had a meaningful position – one that coached teachers, developed curriculum, evaluated their department members, and had the respect of their department members earned from their expertise within the curriculum. That was not the case though at the school I began at (nor was the case at any other school in Colorado I have been, until I worked to change that).

From there, I moved to a charter school where I slowly earned some leadership responsibilities – being a part of the hiring committee, helping to restructure the

curriculum in our department, and working to help the school transition to a schedule of all block periods. As it was a charter school though, there was only so much leadership I could take on, and when asked if there were more possibilities for me to continue to grow as a leader, I was told there was not anything beyond what I had been doing.

So I moved once more, to my current location, an urban high school in Denver, Colorado, Alexander Hamilton High School (AHHS).. I did not know what to expect in my first year at this school in the way of teacher leadership and leadership development. I was mostly worried about adapting to a new environment, particularly since the leadership in the mathematics department when I arrived was all but non-existent. Things took a sudden shift though when in our first six weeks, the administration announced they would be holding a Reduction in Building (RIB) process, where one of the teachers in our department would be let go. While it wasn't necessarily a "last in, first out" policy, and I was one of four new teachers in the department that year, I was worried for my job security. However, in the end, the teacher that the administration and Personnel Committee decided to let go was the current Department Chair. Soon after this process, I was called into the Principal's office where I met with several administrators who asked that I pursue taking over as the Department Chair as well as work with the district leadership team, where teacher leaders from across district would meet to work on developing their leadership capacity in working with teachers of mathematics.

This left me with a world of work ahead of me. Coming into the RIB process, it was highly uncertain who would let go, not because all were so good, but because many teachers had their share of flaws, and those of us who did not exhibit those flaws yet were

the teachers newer to the department. Suffice it to say, there was a lot of work to do for me as a department chair. Accordingly, these meetings that I attended as a school leader were incredibly important for me.

It was at these meetings that I heard about an opportunity that would put real teacher leadership within the schools. The district was helping to sponsor grants that would allow a set number of teachers to work in a dual role – teaching half of the day and then coaching and evaluating other teachers the other half of the day. After talking with my administration, I made it a goal to get this grant approved for our school in my second year at AHHS –and I did just that. Since that second year, I have worked in this dual role – teaching mathematics and leading my department as not only the department chair but the Senior Team Lead for the math department (the title for teachers in a position like mine).

This is the expanse that I find myself positioned in – one at the crossroads of many identities – that I wish to reveal to the world. The roles that I have cobbled together began as a secondary mathematics teacher, then evolved into a higher-level secondary mathematics teacher, then into a higher-level secondary mathematics teacher in an urban setting, and finally into a dual role teacher – teacher leader and evaluator as well as a higher-level secondary mathematics teacher in an urban setting. This world, the world of teacher leadership particularly situated in a dual role (a teacher and teacher leader) is a world far less explored in the current research than the told story of the math teacher. This is not to deny the other identities I embody – a father, a husband, a male, white, a middle-aged man, Christian, raised in a family with little wealth and much need, and the

list goes on. Rather, this is to bring to light all that can be garnered from the two identities coexisting; a teacher and a teacher leader.

It is important to note that there are many terms for roles such as this dual role described above – hybrid roles, teacher leader roles, teacher coaches, and evaluators to name a few. As this research progresses, depending on the research being cited, any number of these terms may be used. However, for simplicity sake, I will refer to this position as either a dual role or as a teacher leader. As varied the terms are, the roles differ greatly too. The role I currently fill involves coaching teachers, evaluating (scoring) teachers on our rubric, leading and/or observing Professional Learning Communities for the common math courses, leading one Professional Development session a month for the whole staff, being the resident expert on all things data and data analysis, and attending to any other responsibility placed upon my by the administrators, teachers, or circumstances of the building.

Significance of the Problem

Research is abundant on the shortcomings of the urban educational systems. We know that:

> "...nowhere are the social implications of increasing numbers of disadvantaged families living in urban areas more evident than in the large, urban school districts where the toxic conditions of academic underachievement, student and teacher alienation, and high drop-out rates exist" (Bloom & Owens, 2011, p. 210).

While the rationale behind this deficit still remains in debate, there are many that position the causes. For example, Dell'Angelo (2014) states "Race and class often marginalized students in impoverished urban neighborhoods, a reality that is evident in consistently low student achievement in many of the schools in these neighborhoods'' (p. 245).

It is no surprise then that schools are under tremendous pressures to improve

student learning of mathematics (Cobb & Jackson, 2011). Bloom and Owens (2011)

found that urban schools that are successful tend to have principals who see themselves in

control of hiring and firing decisions for their staff as well as a positive outlook on how

they can mold the curriculum of the school. Brown et al. (2004) detail the differing

expectations that teachers face in high-performing suburban schools versus

low-performing urban schools such as how the suburban school teachers knew they were

teaching to the standards but were not made to specifically call them out whereas the in

the low-performing schools, teachers felt the curriculum that they had to present made

teachers call out the standards constantly. While many factors may lead to this low

performance, what it comes back to is how the teachers and administration perceive their

role and their students that indicate the potential for success.

Current research on mathematics education in an urban setting however has not

situated the teachers in the best light – be it because of the power that the teachers have

been denied or because urban schools struggle to find quality educators. For example,

according to Gottfried and Johnson (2014), urban mathematics teachers would "use

whole-class instructional techniques (e.g., lectures, class reading, and completing

worksheets) in which students are passive learners" (p. 774) which merely perpetuated

what Haberman (1991/2010) characterizes as a "pedagogy of poverty," diminishing

opportunities for complex thinking. Battey (2013) explains this pedagogy in terms of how

the:

> "...mathematics teachers of lower SES children (as in urban settings) were more
> likely to disconnect taught procedures from students' thinking, teach fragmented

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or unexplained procedures, teach mathematics vocabulary out of context, assess students based on following steps rather than student thinking or even correct/incorrect answers, and use less resources such as manipulatives even when available" (p. 128)

In a study by McKinney and Frazier (2008), they found that, when surveyed, principals cited observing most teachers imploring behaviorist approaches such as drill, practice, and lecture which leaves many students left behind, particularly when instruction focuses on an abstract algorithm.

Additionally, urban schools tend to find themselves with less resources than their suburban counterparts. Thus, as Gottfried and Johnson (2014) state, when "they (urban schools) have fewer resources and more obstacles than their nonurban school counterparts, and yet compounding these issues, they are in desperate need of improving student achievement" (p. 774), teachers will inevitably struggle. With these perceived struggles that exist within the urban school environment for mathematics educators, particularly in high poverty, urban districts, "teacher attrition is more frequent" (McKinney & Frazier 2008, p. 204) as compared with schools in rural and suburban districts. Teachers are not remaining in urban districts, whether they are asked to leave or are teachers who are effective and feel the undo pressures associated with teaching in an urban setting. In fact, research has shown that not only do urban districts have a difficult time retaining teachers, particularly in mathematics, but they lose teachers to smaller and less diverse schools (Gimbert, Cristol, & Sene 2006, McKinney & Frazier 2008). When mathematics teachers leave, as Jackson and Wilson (2012) go on to explain, this is particularly more troublesome and thus schools end up hiring teachers who are less capable and cannot provide students access to higher level mathematics.

While we as educators may not be able to change all of what society brings into schools, we can respond to what we see before us. We can work together and learn together as a community to overcome the heavy burden on urban educators. One outlet that is currently used to help teachers navigate the difficulties of the urban schools is professional development. Yet large-scale improvement efforts in mathematics have rarely produced a lasting change in teachers' instructional practices (Cobb & Jackson, 2011, Elmore, 2004; Gamoran et al., 2003; McLaughlin and Talbert, 2006). What is needed is to shift our current understanding of how teachers improve – i.e. our traditional professional development - and one way to do that is through teacher leaders who serve as coaches for their peers.

> "The coaching model has the potential to address (the problems with traditional professional development) because it takes place in teachers' classrooms during their contracted work day, and the nature of the discussions between coaches and teachers is directly related to teaching practice." (Chval, et al., 2010, p. 192).

As such, teacher leaders can provide the necessary contextualized learning needed for teachers to become more effective (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2010).

As Ann Lieberman (1995) writes:

> "...what everyone appears to want for students – a wide array of learning experiences that engage students in experiencing, creating, and solving real problems, using their own experiences and working with others – is for some reason denied to teachers when they are learners."

Accordingly, if the work that teacher leaders are doing in their respective urban settings can impact the other mathematics educators in their settings by reaching them in engaging ways, not only can we begin to address the lack of opportunity that students in an urban setting currently are exposed to but also the needs of the teachers on an

individual level. In order to understand how this can happen, the need exists to delve into the world of the teacher leader and the formation of teacher leaders and their identities.

To begin to conceptualize the identities of a dual role teacher leader in an urban setting, I will be examining my own practice through a rigorous evaluation of self-journaling as described in Chapter Three.

Theoretical Framework

The work of a dual role teacher such as myself is not confined to a single moment or event, a single space in time, a single person. Instead, it is a manifestation of what that teacher experiences and learns that in turn informs the identity that the teacher leader adopts. Thus, when examining my own work as a teacher leader, I will need to do so through a situative perspective on constructing my identity as a teacher and a teacher leader.

The framework of situative learning suggests that learning is social. Situative theories posit that my "participation in socially organized activities as well as [my] use of knowledge as a part of [my] participation in social practices" (Knapp, 2017) are all working to shape my knowledge and understanding of my role and its implications, or, more aptly, my identity as a teacher and a teacher leader. In the case of this researcher, that is quickly evident that my participation in these socially constructed activities are where my learning happens, particularly as I interact with teachers I lead, teachers I do not lead, other teacher leaders in my building (in different departments), the leaders that I have nurtured in my department, the leaders I interact with outside of the building, the students, and the community.

This learning is not only situated in my school setting though, it extends to my personal history, my identity. More so, situative learning points to the notion that this field that I reside in, one of two intertwined roles, is not one that is (or can be) explicitly taught. However, research is needed as I am not now nor will I be the only teacher in such a role. In fact, part of my outside responsibilities for the past few years have included mentoring those new to this role, so this knowledge that I am producing is imperative for those that are to follow.

This approach of situative learning allows me to consider artifacts, activities, and organizational influences as mediators of my identity (Gallucci et al, 2010). More importantly, these social learnings occur in situations that are typical of the my role within Alexander Hamilton High School and allows me to focus on the work that I participate in on a daily basis as a leading source of the formation of my identity as a teacher and teacher leader.

Another framework to consider is the theory around identity and how identity is formed. Goffman (1959) situates the identity of an individual in terms of the roles that the individual must take on. As these roles are taken up, much like an actor, the individual assumes a new role, or identity. Just like an actor, the individual caters to their audience and reacts and responds to their audience. As teacher leader, the audience is constantly shifting, but as mentioned prior, all integral in those social circumstances that allow for situative learning to occur. Furthermore, a focus on identity allows for the researcher to talk "about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities" (Wenger, 1998, p. 5).

As I focus on identity, I have chosen to see the two roles, the role of the teacher and the role of the teacher leader as dialogic in that what I do in that one role informs the other. The reason for this dialogic nature will be explored further as evidenced in the researcher, in chapters four and five. Furthermore, there are many other identities that shape how these two identities are lived by myself. For example, my role as a father constantly impacts my role as a teacher and a teacher leader in how I view and interact with my students. In turn, my role as a teacher and teacher leader impacts my role as a father. When working with my own children as a father, I may step back into my teacher role to ask my own personal children to repeat the instructions I gave them or when I may step into my teacher leader role as I collaborate with them in solving a personal problem. However, for the purposes of this document, I will only evaluate how the two identities – teacher and teacher leader – are intertwined and how one informs the other. That said, there are moments outside the school, outside of assuming the role of teacher or teacher leader, that influence my identity as a teacher or teacher leader and accordingly has been addressed in the body of this work.

This use of an identity as a lens to understand teacher leaders was addressed by Chval et al. (2010) as they state, "one's identity is shaped by his or her lived and negotiated experience within a particular culture" (p. 193). The culture here is the culture established within the school, the district, and the community around teacher leadership. They go on to point out that identity is a "valuable lens for examining the roles that mathematics coaches play in the school environment" (p. 194). To that end, the ongoing formation of my identity is pivotal to understanding the lived experiences of a teacher

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leader, particularly a secondary mathematics teacher in an urban setting. Therefore, I will focus on two interwoven aspects that formulate his identity: (1) my experiences as a teacher and a leader of my peers and (2) my aims for myself and those that I lead.

It is also important to note that, as Goffman (1959) points out, "the expressive component of social life has been treated as a source of impressions given to or taken by others" (p. 248). To this end, as a researcher, I will often rely on my expressive outlets to make meaning of my lived experiences. This means that, as will be detailed in the methodology section of Chapter Three, the way I express my understanding of the interactions that form my identity may not always appear in an atypical format, rather that the expression that the interactions lead me to produce are natural artifacts of those lived experiences.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

After a brief examination of the literature around mathematics and urban education as well as the need for teacher leadership, I will discuss the problem statement I am seeking to address through this dissertation as well as the research questions and my hypotheses.

Relevant Literature

As mentioned prior, little research exists on teachers in dual leadership roles in secondary mathematics who occupy an urban setting (and teach higher-level coursework). Coupled aspects of the problem as a whole have been compiled for research, for example the experiences of secondary mathematics teachers in an urban

setting, and will be addressed in Chapter 2. However, research most relevant to this topic lives in a few places.

The difficulty arises in that there is little research on the existing teacher leader (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, Mangin and Stoelinga, 2010, Cobb & Jackson, 2011). The research of Mangin and Stoelinga (2010) looked specifically at the hole in this literature and surmised their findings of current teacher leader literature which they point to existing solely in the forms of "practitioner-based literature and scholarly review" (p. 51). More so, as Cobb and Jackson (2011) point out, most of the research that does exist on educational improvement does not focus on how to improve instruction but instead "operationalizes it in terms of increasing student test scores irrespective of the quality of the test" (p. 8).

One of the few pieces of research that exists on this topic comes from Chval et al. (2010) where they examine the transition of 14 elementary educators into the role of a mathematics coach for their district, however, all 14 were new to the position so the research focused on the transition and the change in identity and efficacy as opposed to the experiences of a veteran leader.

Problem Statement

While current research does its best to consolidate the problems of urban mathematics education, this leads to a misunderstanding of the realities that exist in current urban schools. Because of this, the current approach of trying to fix mathematics education in an urban school by trying to fix the teacher, is misguided. In order for research to move forward in a direction that truly aims to address the needs of urban

schools and students, then the voice of teachers, the teacher leaders, must be heard and not merely distilled to the average findings.

Additionally, research points to teacher leadership as being a tool that can work to address the needs of the schools. Yet here is where the research diverges. To start with, there is limited research on the true potential of teacher leadership. "The complexity of teacher leadership should be acknowledged and further unraveled, using studies that help us obtain a deepened understanding of the phenomenon of teacher leadership from an insider's perspective" (Struyve et al., 2014, p. 207). The dilemma arises in that teacher leadership is not an action as simple as stamping a teacher as a leader. In fact, Knapp (2017) points out that "schools and districts traditionally underprepared teacher leaders and their colleagues for changes that intended to improve a school's performance, but will likely provoke resistance" (p. 252). With little research on the experiences of teacher leaders, and most being set up for failure, we see a need for literature around teacher leadership from the perspective of someone entrenched in the system but also having lived it for several years.

Thus, the aim of this dissertation is to bring to light the realities of a secondary mathematics educator with experience working in a dual role of teacher and teacher leader in diverse urban settings in order to understand the current realities of urban education and the efforts being made to right the wrongs that the research so glaringly points to.

Research Question and Hypothesis

 Considering the problem that is guiding the research of this dissertation, the questions that the author will seek to answer are as follows.

1. What are the lived experiences of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?

The actual realities of teachers in dual roles such as those framed in the question above is limited. As Struyve, Meredith, and Gielin (2014) state:

> "The [teacher leadership] literature leans towards advocacy rather than empirical investigations and offers a rosy view of the implementation of teacher leadership without paying attention to how teacher leaders experience taking on leadership duties and, more specifically, what the consequences are for their social-professional relations and professional self-understanding" (p. 226)

This first question addresses this missing piece of the literature, namely what is it that teacher leaders experience in their dual roles.

2. What are the beliefs and efficacies of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?

The beliefs of a teacher strongly influences what they do in the classroom. According to Quigley (2021), these beliefs shape a mathematics teacher's choice of materials, activities, and learning experiences - these beliefs include how to effectively teach mathematics and how students learn. Efficacy is just as important in understanding a teacher and their beliefs. Harris and Muijs (2005) point out that "teachers' belief in their self-efficacy - that is, the extent to which they feel they are effective teachers - has been

shown to influence subsequent teaching practices and pedagogical approaches" (p. 72).

That said, a teacher is more likely to extend their practices and try different approaches to

teaching and learning if they have higher self-efficacy. The roles and experiences of a

teacher leader are similar when it comes to efficacies and beliefs. Not to mention, these

are paramount qualities necessary to understand the identity of a teacher (Korthagen,

2017).

3. How do these experiences influence the identity and dispositions of an individual

   such as this in a dual role of teacher and teacher leader?

While the literature around the formation of teacher identity and how educational changes

influence teacher identity exist, what is missing is the experiences of those teachers

leading the change and how it impacts their own personal identities (Lukacs, 2015). Yet

we know that identity formation "…is both a product of lived experiences and reflexive

practice related to the experiences" (Allen, 2016, p. 72). Thus, by reflecting on my lived

experiences, the researcher will be able to develop how these experiences influence the

formation of my identity. What is important to also pull out is the dispositions that are

evident in the experiences and beliefs exhibited in my work. These dispositions are

tendencies that exist in all identities, all roles, served by myself as a dual role educator.

While they go beyond identity, not rooted to one role, they inform and shape each

identity lived by a teacher leader.

4. How does such an individual develop his/her aims for himself and his peers?

5. What challenges and opportunities present themselves to enhance or take away

   from such aims?

While research exists to codify the types of leadership and how it is enacted in schools, what is missing is how those decisions on where, who, how and why to lead are made. More importantly, what influences the success or failure of those decisions both for the teacher being coached and the teacher leader, the success and failure of their aims, is also absent from the research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

To begin to understand the complexity of the world of a teacher leader in an urban setting, that setting will first be examined. We will then look at secondary mathematics in this urban setting. In doing so, we will examine the teachers and their conditions, the schools and resources, the students and their self-perceptions, the influence of research and universities, and the influence of the dominant culture. Once we have an understanding of the urban setting, we will examine professional development, including what is being done and the effectiveness of professional development led by school administrators.

Then we will turn to the literature of teacher leaders, examining the need for teacher leaders, teacher leadership in mathematics education, and what supports and hinders the teacher leader. Finally, we will examine identity, including models and elements thereof, as well as dispositions.

Secondary Mathematics and Urban Education

As a current teacher in an urban district within the state of Colorado, I can pull from my own experiences to enumerate the stories that the diverse student body have, and continue to, live. I can tell the story of a young Latina student who was removed from all the advanced classes after failing one class due to missing a test due to an

excused absence which resulted in her withdrawing socially and emotionally from schooling. I can tell the story of a young Black male, a special education student, who sought to solve an issue he had with a teacher in an appropriate manner yet was punished for bringing this problem forward. I can tell the story of a newcomer who was informed that he needed to complete a higher level of mathematics but lacked the capacity to effectively communicate this until the last three months of school which then forced him to take two high level classes in a matter of that last three months. I can tell these stories from my perspective, the perspective of the educator, and how these stories have affected the ability for each of these students to learn mathematics at this urban school. However, these are my stories. The realities, the lived experiences of the students, are what create the learnings that occur within this, and other, urban settings, specifically in mathematics.

Borrowing from the work of *Second Handbook of Research on Mathematics Teaching and Learning* (Lester, 2007), Hiebert and Grouws identify two "patterns" (p. 378) that connect mathematics teaching and learning, one of which is the "Opportunity to learn". Heibert and Grouws looked to the National Research Council (2001) to define this notion, and it is that definition that I will apply to this paper, that of "circumstances that allow students to engage in and spend time on academic tasks…" (p. 333).

While Hiebert and Grouws (2007) concede that the opportunity to learn is not fully constructed by the teacher, that in fact it is influenced by other factors like the schools and the students (factors that will be addressed in later works), they do point out that teaching is the most influential aspect of opportunity to learn. As they point out:

> But teaching, as we have defined it, plays a major role in shaping students'
> learning opportunities. The emphasis teachers place on different learning goals

and different topics, the expectations for learning that they set, the time they allocate for particular topics, the kinds of questions they ask and responses they accept, the nature of the discussions they lead – all are part of teaching and all influence the opportunities students have to learn. (p. 379)

These types of behaviors, as will be explored through research, have become typified for urban mathematics classrooms.

To fully appreciate the points that are being addressed here, one must consider learning as a social experience. As Verelas, Martin, and Kane (2012) define that social experience, they include elements of "sociocultural and sociopolitical experience... [which is] the intertwining of constructing knowledge with others and constructing the self as a learner while participating and socializing in discipline-related practices" (p. 324). Thus, as we examine students in an urban system, it is not enough to merely examine the students, but also the social and cultural influences that shape their development, their "opportunity to learn".

It is this notion, that of an "opportunity to learn" that I will focus this literature review upon, specifically examining students and the social constructs that surround them in an urban setting, looking through the lens of the teachers, the schools and their resources, the students and the self-perceptions that they create, the research that currently informs mathematics education, and the influence of the dominant culture upon mathematics education.

Teachers

The first exposure that students have to their "opportunity to learn" in mathematics comes from the teacher they are placed with. Looking back to the NRC (2001) definition, teachers are the ones who manage the students, seek to engage them,

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create tasks (or don't create tasks), and allot time for such tasks. Thus, in order to understand the opportunities that urban students have to learn, the teacher must be examined. This is not to say that all research that follows is indicative of every urban math educator, rather the trends that the research has begun to denote. The fact remains that most urban mathematics educators have not yet adopted the following philosophical motivation, as laid forth by Gutierrez (2013) when she states, "If you're really serious about teaching, you have to tie your fate to the fate of your students" (p. 31). It is often equated that this notion, a notion of caring, particularly for the students, is a weak character trait. Yet in urban education, it takes the strong to care, the strong to truly tie their fate to their students in such a sympathetic way.

In order to examine urban mathematics educators, we will outline how the conditions of the urban system affect the teacher, the characteristics that these teachers bring forth, and the interactions they have with a diverse, urban population.

Teacher Conditions in an Urban System

As an educator in an urban system, I can personally attest to the amount of prescribed curriculum that we are asked to use – from a delineated scope and sequence of most of the courses to tests for each unit that have been created and are monitored by the district itself. While this may not be a phenomena unique to urban education, it is one that is becoming more pervasive. Not surprising, this over-involvement by the district can take a toll on the urban educator. In their study on high-poverty, urban mathematics teachers, McKinney and Frazier (2008) found that "teachers do not have academic freedom to add personal creativity; that is, they may be mandated by the district or school

administration to adhere strictly to the curriculum guide" (p. 208). When forced to follow

a script, teachers can lose sight of what they know to be "good" teaching in order to meet

the needs of the district. Furthermore, in many of these cases, teacher evaluations are tied

directly to the teacher following the preset script and so when teachers are faced with the

dilemma of using what they know to be good instructional practices versus using what

the district mandates, teachers fall to following that script.

There is a reason, though, that urban school systems rely on heavily prescribed

curriculum. Research has shown that teachers in urban schools are more likely to be

underprepared and have limited access to material resources (Clewell, 1995). The move

then to prescribe curriculum to mathematics teachers in an urban district becomes one

strategy for the district to overcome ineffective teachers. Yet, we know this is not fully

working, and we can see that when we look at the attrition rates in urban schools. In high

poverty, urban districts, "teacher attrition is more frequent" (McKinney & Frazier , 2008,

p. 204) as compared with schools in rural and suburban schools. Teachers are not

remaining in urban districts – whether it's teachers who are not effective, even with a

prescribed curriculum, and are ultimately asked to leave or teachers who are effective and

feel the undo pressures associated with a prescribed curriculum. In fact, research has

shown that not only do urban districts have a difficult time retaining teachers, particularly

in mathematics, but they lose teachers to smaller and less diverse schools (Gimbert,

Cristol, & Sene, 2006, McKinney & Frazier , 2008).

Where this leaves the schools in an urban setting then is lost in this constant cycle

of hiring and firing. This cycle in and of itself becomes tedious, time consuming, and

costly. "The cost of early departure effectively drains schools' financial and human resources" (Gimbert, Cristol, & Sene, 2006, p. 247), resources that these schools cannot afford to lose.

Characteristics of Urban Mathematics Teachers

One issue with teachers of mathematics, not only those in urban settings, is that, according to Martin (2007), our current notion of highly qualified teachers, a notion that examines only content knowledge, is problematic. What this leaves out is the piece of this profession that revolves around the teaching, particularly the students and the impact the teaching is having on the students. Teaching in an urban setting begins to present its own unique sets of challenges that teachers are forced to face. For example, according to Gottfried and Johnson (2014):

> To deal with large classes and little equipment, many urban teachers use whole-class instructional techniques (e.g., lectures, class reading, and completing worksheets) in which students are passive learners. This highly prevalent type of instruction in urban schools was characterized by Haberman (1991) as a "pedagogy of poverty," in which there are few opportunities for developing higher–order thinking skills. (p. 774)

For students in a classroom where the 'pedagogy of poverty' is a norm, their opportunity to learn is diminished. Yet teachers falling back to behaviorist approaches to teaching has become commonplace when faced with so many challenges that arise due to the urban setting. As Haberman (2010) notes in his re-working of his article on the 'pedagogy of poverty', urban teachers often follow a model in which curriculum and instruction are based on what students do not know and often emphasize rote skills. Flores (2007) even "calls attention to the fact that African American and Latino students are less likely than White students to have teachers who emphasize high quality mathematics instruction, and

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appropriate use of resources (p. 32) including computers and simulations. It is not a matter alone of the resources that are being used in urban systems, but the teachers who hold those resources as well.

One cycle that teachers can fall into is that of vying for discipline and control. Many teachers fall into the trap that good teaching starts with good discipline, when, in fact, as Haberman (2010) states that good discipline happens as a result of good teaching. As mentioned before, this ineffectual teaching can and does often lead to attrition. Those that are leading the school can and do recognize this poor teaching occurring in their math classrooms. In a study by McKinney and Frazier (2008), they found that, when surveyed:

> Principals most frequently cited drill and practice [as the method of instruction utilized by their mathematics teachers]; approximately 78 percent reported daily computational drills as the key methodology teachers used. Although some students have met mathematical success with this traditional pedagogical approach, many students have been left behind when instruction is oriented around abstract algorithms and procedures. (p. 202)

Again, these methods diminish the opportunity for students in an urban setting to learn. As Hiebert and Grouws (2007) describe it, this opportunity to learn comes in two patterns – teaching for skill efficiency and teaching for conceptual understanding. Unfortunately, as Hiebert and Grouws (2007) conclude, there has been no study to date that leads teachers to understand which method is learned best under what circumstances of teaching.

Urban Teachers and the Urban Students

Much has been said about urban schools and their teachers, but we must discuss what it means to be an urban school to understand the realities of an urban teacher and

their students. Shevalier and McKenzie (2012) discuss the diversity of an urban school including both cultural and linguistic diversity. Rogers-Ard et al (2012) point out the economic disparities that often plague urban schools. They continue to point to another short-coming of urban schools: even though urban schools are funded by urban taxpayers, the majority of teachers are White and coming from outside of the urban area, in fact, most people of color working in urban schools do so in low-paid positions that are not educationally relevant. Peng (1992) lists problems such as "poverty, unstable families, and other social disturbances" as realities of urban schools and students.

As we start to examine teachers in an urban setting, we must keep in mind that the urban students themselves pose dilemmas for poorly prepared teachers to overcome. As stated by Martin (2007), "…teachers with high levels of (mathematics) content knowledge, in the absence of concerns for equity or the social realities of students, are likely to struggle" (p. 18). For those who have been in the classroom a long time, particularly in classrooms that are highly diverse, this statement seems obvious. However, new teachers entering the field, especially from privileged backgrounds, have a hard time discerning what the realities are for students who do not like the teacher. More often than not, teachers end up creating realities for the urban student that simply are not true, and, because of these realities, we see, as Kitchen, Cabral Roy, Lee, & Secada (2009) state, that "although high expectations are necessary for effective teaching, they are far from the norm—especially with racial/ethnic minorities and low socio-economic status (SES) students" (p. 57). Haberman (2010) alludes to this phenomenon occurring and appearing as though when teaching is reduced to these rote tendencies it is by the

choice of the teacher when in all actuality it is at the hand of the students that the urban

math classroom becomes this vestige of low-expectations and low-demand.

One area that teachers often struggle to recognize, let alone relate to, is that of

students from lower socio-economic statuses. The fallback for these teachers is to teach

that aforementioned "pedagogy of poverty". Battey (2013) explains this pedagogy in

terms of how the:

> "...mathematics teachers of lower SES children were more likely to disconnect
> taught procedures from students' thinking, teach fragmented or unexplained
> procedures, teach mathematics vocabulary out of context, assess students based
> on following steps rather than student thinking or even correct/incorrect answers,
> and use less resources such as manipulatives even when available" (p. 128)

When this work is examined in the context of providing an opportunity to learn, it fits

neither the structures outlined to produce skill efficiency, such as teacher demonstrated

explanations and utilizing smooth transitions to the practice, nor the structures to produce

conceptual understanding, such as students working to make connections and allowing

students to struggle appropriately with math facts (Hiebert and Grouws, 2007).

Not only does the socio-economic status of a student present struggles for the

teacher, so does the diversity of the student body often found within an urban setting.

Often this diversity leads to the teacher making assumptions of deficit in the students

rather than looking to their strengths and teaching to those, a notion of filling up a hole as

opposed to building upon a foundation (Flores, 2007, Haberman, 2010). For example,

teachers, especially from different backgrounds, struggle when dealing with Black

students. As Martin (2007) explains, teachers of black students tend to fall into two

camps, those of the "missionary" who seek to save black students from themselves, their

families, and their cultures, and those who are cannibals who focus exclusively on the

mathematics content with little to no recognition of the students and their social realities.

The issues surrounding these two perceptions of students, particularly Black students, is

that it limits the teachers perceptions of these students and their capabilities. Thus, in his

research, Martin (2007) outlines practices utilized by effective teachers of Black children:

> …Highly qualified teachers for African American children [increase achievement by] (a) developing deep understanding of the social realities experienced by these students, (b) taking seriously one's role in helping to shape the racial, academic, and mathematics identities of African American learners, (c) conceptualizing mathematics not just as a school subject but as a means to empower African American students to address their social realities, and (d) becoming agents of change who challenge research and policy perspectives that construct African American children as less than ideal learners and in need of being saved or rescued from their blackness.(p. 25)

This takes neither of those perspectives that teachers are missionaries or cannibals, rather

they serve to guide the students towards empowerment through mathematics. A teacher

empowering their students will help these students (Martin points to Black students

particularly, but I would propose that this is effective for any urban student) to understand

their role in their community and begin to learn how mathematics can move them to

become citizens of math (Ari, 2020) who are equipped to address the inequities of their

world.

This type of work needed within urban settings is consistent with what Gutstein

(2003) outlines as social justice. He defines social justice in mathematics as having the

following principles: "students themselves are ultimately part of the solution to

injustices" (p. 39), "students need [to develop] a sense of agency, that is a belief in

themselves as people who can make a difference in the world" (p. 40), and "helping

students develop positive social and cultural identities by validating their language and culture" (p. 40). This process is one that is definitely lacking in urban schools, especially given all that has been said about the attitudes and perceptions dominant in urban education, particularly in the teachers.

While we can place this blame, blame for this lack of preparation and understanding of a culturally relevant pedagogy in mathematics, upon the teachers, there are others here who are equally at fault. In fact, according to Jackson and Wilson (2012)

> …Teachers reported little to no professional development or other school-based support focused on supporting African American students in mathematics. At best, teachers reported engaging in "book studies" with their colleagues focused on changing perceptions of African American students or content-free professional development in culturally relevant pedagogy; although the book studies and professional development sessions were well intentioned, teachers reported they were no better able to support their African American students in mathematics instruction. (p. 355)

If teachers are not receiving the necessary professional development nor have the tools when they enter into the urban setting, we cannot expect to see a change. Without these changes, the urban student's opportunity to learn is going to be limited to the teaching that is embraced by the culture of the teacher (or the culture that had the most profound impact on that teacher) and therefore will become less meaningful to the students that are doing the learning. It is not until urban educators begin to see their students for how they truly are, a diverse and eclectic group of students seeking to advocate for positive change, that these students will be given an adequate opportunity to learn.

School and Resources

One reason there exists a need to examine the opportunity to learn for students is that opportunity to learn leads to learning which leads to academic achievement. In an

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age of high-stakes testing though, academic achievement seems to be the one thing that schools are constantly striving for. However, the playing field, that of schools in urban, rural, suburban, and every part of the United States, is not equal. As Gottfried and Johnson (2014) state, "they (urban schools) have fewer resources and more obstacles than their nonurban school counterparts, and yet compounding these issues, they are in desperate need of improving student achievement" (p. 774). These resources are material items, as mentioned earlier, that include resources to be utilized by the teacher, but they also include the finances that schools are able to spend on their necessities. As it has been made clear, one area that urban schools need is that of teachers.

As it stands right now, many schools in urban school districts are restricted in their ability to hire due to finances. As Linda Darling-Hammond (2006) states:

> "...in addition to unequal funding and salary schedules that hamper poor urban and rural districts, many districts that hire underprepared teachers have cumbersome and dysfunctional hiring systems or prioritize the hiring of unqualified teachers because such teachers cost less than qualified teachers" (p. 311)

As Jackson and Wilson (2012) go on to explain, this is particularly troublesome in mathematics and thus they end up hiring teachers who are less capable and cannot provide students access to higher level mathematics. Thus, as the resources in urban schools diminish so does the students' access to an opportunity to learn and academic achievement.

There are those that have argued that resources do not make academic achievement. Yet recent research has shown that inequities in student-level performance can themselves be direct indicators of unequal access to education rather than simply

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viewed as symptoms (Gottfried & Johnson, p. 775, 2014). Unfortunately, this becomes cyclical for these urban schools. The students fail to perform because of the inequities they endure within the urban settings, thus students and parents from affluent families choose to move to neighborhoods where they can receive a quality education. These affluent families move away from urban districts. As Flores (2007) points out, "Schools in districts with a large number of well-to-do people have more funds per student than school districts with a large number of people in poverty" (p. 35). This cycle then continues, the less funding schools receive, the less access to resources, the less of an opportunity to learn that students have, the lower the student achievement, and the less that students from affluent families that bring resources are likely to attend.

Student and Self-Perception

Throughout their education within an urban setting, urban students begin to establish perceptions of themselves that in turn influence their own opportunity to learn. In their study, Varelas, Martin, and Kane (2012) "showed that the ways the children felt positioned by their peers and teacher influenced the ways they perceived themselves, and the kinds of social spaces the children encountered in school served to help or hinder positive self-perceptions and performances" (p. 329). The notion that both self-perceptions and performances are so intertwined furthers the notion that the student's opportunity to learn is in part created by the student. While these perceptions are created by what the students are faced with and what they perceive, it is ultimately the students that chose to enact these perceptions.

In his work, Haberman (2010) gives the following description of the challenges faced by teachers in an urban setting, but, also ultimately paints a vivid description of what urban students' perceptions of themselves does to their opportunity to learn:

> Indeed, any teacher who believes that he or she can take on an urban teaching assignment and ignore the pedagogy of poverty will be quickly crushed by the students themselves. Examples abound of inexperienced teachers who seek to involve students in genuine learning activities and are met with apathy or bedlam, while older hands who announce "Take out your dictionaries and start to copy the words that begin with *h*," are regarded with compliance or silence. (p. 83)

It is not that these students do not want to experience new and innovative ways to learn, it is merely that they have been so ingrained with teaching that happens in one capacity, one that's founded on the behaviorist, skills-based approach, that they cannot acclimate themselves to such a different or unique style but also do not see themselves as deserving a quality education.

One of the roles of an urban educator needs to be to raise the student's self-perception. This is not merely accomplished with praise and stickers, rather is built up as "culturally relevant teachers deliberately structure classroom relationships to support students to be academically successful, develop cultural competence, and develop critical consciousness" (Jackson & Wilson, 2012, p. 374). When teachers begin utilizing meaningful tasks for their students to engage in, especially tasks that include cultural relevance, then students begin to see themselves in the material and begin to build towards that more positive self-perception. In fact, it is through tasks and assessments that teachers maintain the greatest ability to shape a student's self-perception. As Varelas, Martin, and Kane (2012) found, "…instructional (and assessment) practices (need to) focus on both learners' developing understanding of concepts, processes, skills, and

practices of a domain, and their developing sense of who they are and who they are becoming" (p. 336).

Understanding that the tasks that a teacher provides for their student has the power to not only assess their ability but to begin to define that student is critical. More so, given the critical nature of these tasks, these assessments, it is also important that teachers begin to look for more meaningful ways to assess the mathematics being learned. While most teachers utilize traditional testing measures, there does exist "a small percentage of teachers are infusing new types of assessment into their mathematics instructional programs" (McKinney & Frazier, 2008, p. 207). These include student reflections, interviews and conferences, writing, authentic assessments, portfolios, and student self-assessments.

Research, Researchers, and Teacher Educators

While what happens in institutions of higher learning does not directly affect what happens in urban settings, the research and its connection to the schools and teachers, and the preparation of future teachers does have a profound impact on what happens in an urban setting and ultimately a student's opportunity to learn mathematics. Research itself is biased. As Martin (2013) states:

> Most of the researchers are white or can be identified or self-identify as white. They've been trained by other white researchers. To… ignore those patterns of socialization, those patterns of the production of researchers, it shouldn't surprise us that race and racism are not addressed in research. (p. 26)

A great professor once said that new researchers need to learn to build relationships with other researchers, both in person and in their works, and then to build upon these works. However, as great a notion this is, this is counter to the notions of whiteness that is

prevalent in education – both in research and in schooling. The white male culture tends to be more individualistic, working alone, and competing with the rest (Tharp et al, 2000). Thus, the world of research exists as such.

It is not just the world of research that suffers because of these notions of whiteness embedded in the field, but also the research that is being conducted. As Gutierrez (2013) points out:

> A lot of people are still struggling with their own relationship to racism. For many white researchers, there's still a lot of potential guilt that's felt. There's confusion about *Where do I fit?* and *What role am I supposed to play in this?* … There are a lot of researchers who see themselves as advocates for students who have been racialized in kind of subordinating ways and who are looking for a way to construct a research agenda that supportive of those students, but these researchers don't always have either mentorship or experiences that allow them to reflect on their own role in this… (Researchers) can't just be operating in mathematics education. (p. 25)

White researchers in mathematics education may end up finding themselves situated in experiences where they want to support the research agenda for diverse students, yet they simply lack the capacity. Because of this, issues of diversity in mathematics education are often left to be researched by those who have a connection to these racialized communities. Unfortunately, that means that less research than what is needed is actually occurring.

Not only though is the research not occurring when and where it needs to be, the research that does occur has also taken up unnecessary comparisons. For example, "the strategy of researching differences has necessarily led to conclusions suggesting that the needs of African American students are contingent on the needs and status of white students." (Martin, 2007, p. 24). This goes back to the notion before that certain

researchers feel ill-equipped to research issues of diversity and, when they do, they sometimes end up creating more racial barriers than eliminating such barriers. So research in issues of diversity, issues that are integral in urban mathematics education, is needed, and fortunately, as of recently, has become more and more prominent in the literature.

Not only is the research insufficient, but higher education has played a huge role in shaping the educators that eventually work in urban systems, all of which contribute to that opportunity to learn. As mentioned prior, there are many teachers who enter the field of teaching mathematics that are lacking in knowledge of content, knowledge of students, or both. These teachers tend to end up in urban systems because of the lack of resources these systems possess to hire and maintain quality teachers. What happens then is that urban systems are left with teachers that are not necessarily qualified. Martin (2013) takes a strong stand against those teachers who are not prepared to teach as he states:

> … it's important, given our role as teacher educators, also to be willing to play gatekeeper. There are some people who we shouldn't be letting into our programs or out of our programs. And I think we need to take these roles very seriously. (p. 29)

Unfortunately, and contrary to the shift that Martin is proposing, education for educators has become less involved and more rapid. Due to the constant competition of teacher education programs, each one promising faster and cheaper results, the quality of teacher education is diminishing. As Linda Darling-Hammond (2006) states:

> "...it is tragic that individuals who are likely to be seduced into teaching through pathways that minimize their access to knowledge are those who teach high-need students in low-income urban and rural schools where the most sophisticated understanding of teaching is needed" (p. 301)

It has been mentioned several times already that urban systems are not getting the high quality teachers that they need, but this is not just a cause of the teacher and the systems but also the higher education system that is preparing these educators. It is ultimately then based on the preparation that these teachers have had that creates students opportunity to learn.

Influence of Dominant Culture

Finally, one area that often gets overlooked in its effect on a student's opportunity to learn in an urban setting is the influence of the dominant culture. In the last section, we mention how the white male culture has shaped the area of research. Teaching and education are also impacted by a prevalent dominant culture. In fact, according to Flores (2007) "while about 88% of teachers are White, more than one-third of the students in the U.S. are ethnically and culturally diverse" (p. 33) and that number of ethnically and culturally diverse is far higher in urban settings. Teaching has become influenced by the White culture as the members of the teaching field are predominantly White. As such, it is hard to escape the notions of white privilege in and amongst educators.

The notion of white privilege is due to the fact that whiteness has become the valued norm in the United States (Parsons, 2001). Those that fit into the role then benefit from the privileges of being a part of this valued group. This does not change within the walls of a school. White privilege exists in many forms including white teachers empathizing more with white students, white teachers holding other cultures accountable for the white culture's norms (and thus those students that are white are emulated), and lessons are taught from and to a white perspective. More so though, students who are not

White feel compelled to take on characteristics of the White culture in order to gain acceptance. As Matias and Allen (2013) state, "underneath all protestations about the reality of white privilege, there are the original selves that gave up their independence in order to get the conditional love of the white community, a "love" that remains only if they fall in line with white racial talk and maintain the facade of racial superiority and separateness" (p. 299). Within an urban system, that means that those that can assimilate to the White culture feel a sense of belonging which, as mentioned prior raises their self-perception and thus opportunity to learn, and those that cannot or do not assimilate are then forced to miss out on that opportunity to learn.

Apart from notions of White privilege, the dominant White culture in education does shape a student's opportunity to learn in other ways. If there does exist a dominant culture, then there exists cultures who feel oppressed. This feeling of oppression can lead some students to act out. As Matias and Allen describe:

> Individuals of oppressor groups make these moves [such as males exhibiting tantrums when their patriarchal identities are challenged] compulsively to squelch the shameful dissonance between their idealized beliefs and the knowledge of their actual actions. On the surface, many may attribute these behaviors to fear, hatred, greed, and apathy and not pay much attention at all to the underlying motivational role of the repressed desire for love. (p. 292)

As the oppressed groups act out against the dominant outsiders, they do so seeking this notion of love and belonging from their peers and teachers. When this is not met, their actions can escalate into behavioral issues which, at their root, are linked to views of the dominant culture. As students act out, they then begin to miss out on their opportunity to learn based on their actions and the repercussions from their actions.

The dominant culture does not only affect students' opportunity from within the system, but also from without. As a society, there are certain common perceptions, and, perhaps misconceptions about a student's race and their mathematical ability. As Battey (2013b) states:

> In mathematics education, there are common perceptions (symbolic racism) about who is biologically better mathematically—namely, Whites and Asians. These perceptions are then made real (material racism) by how African Americans are treated in mathematics classrooms, the forms of instruction available, and what courses (AP or not) schools provide, which in turn lead to different testing outcomes (gaps). By giving African Americans impoverished forms of instruction through tracking and reduced funding through property taxes, material racism concretizes racist ideologies. (p. 388)

Because of the symbolic racism that society perpetuates due to the dominant culture, the cultures who fall prey to this racism are then punished in their opportunities to learn. This quote does wonders to explicate this point.

Professional Development

Given the gap in the opportunities for students to learn mathematics, particularly in urban high schools and the math classroom, a need arises for the teachers to be able to learn and grow as professionals in order to support students. Typically this learning has been done through the instructional leader or the principal providing staff development in a manner that excludes any personal attention, rather aims to meet the needs of the entire staff which usually falls short (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008). Professional development is defined as "all learning opportunities that enable teachers to adapt to changes in the education system and increase their effectiveness" (Karacabey, 2020, p. 56). The role of professional development is pivotal in schools as it is "acknowledged across the world to be a central component in maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning

in schools" (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2005, p. 57). Most importantly,"high-quality professional development training positively influences student achievement in general" (Gupta & Lee, 2020, p. 417).

Professional development, or PD, is used to lead reform in schools, reform rooted in improving classroom instruction. Spillane et al (2009) defines professional development as "the theory of action (that states) through learning, teachers and school leaders acquire new knowledge and skills that enable them to practice in new, hopefully improved, ways that in turn contribute to student learning" (407). How this occurs vary greatly from a large meeting where teachers face the "sit and get" approach of listening to a speaker, to one-on-one professional development that may happen through observation, co-planning, etc. Unfortunately, many dub professional development to be of the "make-and-take" variety that do little in the way of leading to useful and inspiring substantive changes in the participants (Felton & Page, 2014). As important as PD is, when it comes to professional development specifically for math teachers, the choices are little to none for many teachers (Lotter et al, 2020).

Much has been written on what leads to effective professional development. In order for professional development to be effective, Campbell and Malkus (2011) delineate three essential elements: learners have prior knowledge that is accessed during instruction, the learners that apply what they learn actually understand what they are learning, and learners are given a chance to reflect and monitor their learning as well as what they don't understand and what questions they have. Professional development, at its core, should "require most teachers to move far beyond what they themselves

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experienced as students and thus learn in ways that are more powerful than simply reading and talking about new pedagogical ideas" (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 319). Darling-Hammond goes on to explain that this learning needs to happen through theoretical imagining and unguided experience. Professional development is pivotal in the field of education where the landscape is constantly changing and evolving (Karacabey, 2020).

Successful professional developments are built upon the ideals that the foster deep collaboration, form partnerships (both in and out of schools), generate teacher and pupil leadership, provide opportunities for teacher enquiry and action research, give teachers time to talk about teaching and learning, grounded in the work of the teacher and the school, are sustained and supportive, and generate collective capability (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2005, Darling-Hammond, 1997). When professional development is most effective, it "...contains three main components: a focus on instructional matters, collaborative interaction that is sustained over time, and a school embedded context" (Hawley & Valli, 1999). Gabriel (2005) goes on to further emphasize that professional learning is successful when teachers collaborate instead of listen, imploring instructional activities that prove successful in the classroom to build up educators like problem-based learning and exit slips. Darling Hammond details how professional development that is successful is centered around the critical activities of teaching and learning, grows from investigations of practice, and is built on professional discourse (1997). In her work with the professional development of ten elementary teachers, Armour-Thomas (2008) found success with professional learning when the "teachers are provided with opportunities for

professional development that have a strong focus on content, active participatory learning with peers, and a supportive context at the district and schools in which they work".

Professional development is most successful when teachers are the center of the professional development. Darling-Hammond recounts the story of Gheens Academy, a school that exhibited successful initiatives and where professional development for teachers meant that the teachers decided "... what they would undertake and how they would undertake it, rather than being told what to do" (1997, p. 100). Professional development ultimately should impact a teacher's instruction. That said, one of the most effective ways that a leader can do this is through formative observations, proactive visits founded on the principle that continuous improvement is necessary for teacher growth (Range et al, 2013).

As mentioned prior, PD for math teachers is hard to find. Heck et al (2019) make mention that this is becoming more and more available in recent year due to expanding technology and the capacities to have professional development in a digital world. We know that, particularly when it comes to mathematics in urban classrooms, professional development is pivotal, so opportunities for urban educators need to increase. Now especially, we see the need for teachers to adapt to the ever changing learning environment.s One such area, for example, is technology that is available for the classroom. As Heck et al (2019) point out, this leads the way to opportunities for teacher learning. According to Young et al (2019):

> One explanation for the lack of results on student achievement is that teachers
> need suitable training to effectively teach with technology. Proper training

requires administrative support for the integration of technology in the classroom. Fortunately, educational policy and funding have made it tremendously advantageous for administrators to support technology integration. However, due to budgetary constraints and more pressing issues surrounding urban education many teachers in urban schools receive substantially fewer hours of training to implement technology in their classrooms. (p. 312)

What Is Being Done in Professional Development

Unfortunately, professional development tends to miss these marks and limits the teachers opportunities to learn. According to Swanson (2000), "staff development offerings were deemed to be uninspiring and woefully inadequate". Horn and Garner (2022) point out that "large-scale research has repeatedly shown that typical professional development interventions have limited influences on teachers' instructional practices" (p. 73). There are many reasons for this. One is that theory and application tend to be divided and teachers are being taught to teach in professional development through lectures and textbooks (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Those providing professional development tend to focus on the wrong things, such as time, format, subject matter focus, whereas they should be focussing on thinking about teacher learning and change. As Spillane (2000) describes, what is key to successful professional development is a focus on pedagogy and content of the professional development.

When schools can not meet the needs of their teachers, they rely on other sources. One option that schools tend to rely on to provide professional development is to send teachers to conferences outside of the school system (Gabriel, 2005). Additionally, as Goodson and Hargreaves (2005) point out, "despite the rhetoric of lifelong learning, research internationally continues to show that, for the most teachers, formal development opportunities remain sporadic, occurring specifically through in-service

education and training events" (p.59). Unfortunately, not all teachers have access to such events, particularly teachers in urban schools where money can be a factor in not sending teachers to outside professional developments.

Professional development from outside of the school can not always be productive either. In her work with teachers involved in the TFA (Teach for America) program, Darling-Hammond found that even those who seemed best equipped to teach - bright and eager, from the best schools and highly intelligent teachers - had their successes compromised by a lack of access to the knowledge they needed to teach those specific students in that specific setting (1997). Darling-Hammond goes on to explain how these lack of supports led to a high attrition rate among these teachers.

Research does point to characteristics that lead to high-quality professional development. According to Horn and Garner (2022), these qualities include a focus on teachers' subject matter knowledge, being organized around materials teachers use in their classroom, focussing on specific and effective instructional practices, creating opportunities for teachers to learn actively, being coherent with the other learning activities of the teacher, garnering support from teacher communities, and being sustained over time. In their study of effective professional development, Garet et al (2001), found that:

> "...activities that are linked to teachers' other experiences, aligned with other reform efforts, and encouraging of professional communication among teachers appear to support change in teaching practice, even after the effects of enhanced knowledge and skills are taken into account" (p. 936).

Desmimone et al (2002), found in their study that their:

> "...longitudinal data indicate that professional development is more effective in changing teachers' classroom practice when it has collective participation of teachers from the same school, department, or grade; and active learning opportunities, such as reviewing student work or obtaining feedback on teaching; and coherence, for example, linking to other activities or building on teachers' previous knowledge" (p. 102).

All of this theorizes what should happen to make professional development effective, not what necessarily is happening regularly and consistently.

Yet something needs to be provided. Horn and Garner (2022) inform us that in order to "develop robust concepts about ambitious and equitable [math] instruction, teachers need support" (p. 73). Whatever the case, professional development needs to be built into the teaching schedule and maintain structures for team planning as well as cross-group structures for planning, communicating, and decision-making (Darling-Hammond, 1997). When left to develop their own practice individually, teachers often face challenges including finding the time (as little time remains available in the world of teaching), learning about the world beyond their classrooms, learning becomes discontinuous and fragmented, direct experiences are the primary source of learning, and others rarely become involved (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2005).

Horn and Garner (20200) also point to the inadequate support for math teachers as most professional learning is rooted in content and does not address the needs of the diverse learners. Because there exists a struggle in finding professional development that is truly effective particularly for mathematics teachers, other means of professional learning need to be explored. That being said, many locales are using a coaching model

for professional development of teachers, particularly leveraging teacher leaders (Campbell & Malkus, 2011).

The Effectiveness of Administrative Led Professional Development

Professional development is hard to assess - tools like student growth scores, teacher scores on pencil and paper tests (typically focussed on content knowledge), and/or teacher self reflection all have their merits, but none truly indicate the effectiveness of a professional development (Phelps et al, 2013). Thus, the effectiveness of the professional development opportunities are left to those providing the professional development opportunity to ascertain, something that most schools place in the hands of the administrators.

While many see the role of leading professional development as belonging to the administrator(s) of the school, research has indicated that principals struggle to fulfill this obligation, often blaming the teachers, claiming they do not care about professional development (Karacabey, 2020). However, there are factors that can help or hinder an administrator's attempt at successful PD. The attitude illustrated by Karacabey above is not one that leads to effective PD. Attitude of the administrator is important though as "the openness of school principals to innovations will provide an opportunity for teachers to try new methods they have learned during their professional development process" (Karacabey, 2020, p. 61). Another disconnect is that teachers are being led by those that have not had many, if any, experiences in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 1997). While school administrators may find relevant resources to use in providing professional development to their teachers, they struggle to:

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"...adequately determine individual and group development programs to provide teachers' professional development, … organize professional development monitoring forms for teachers, … organize educational activities …, … receive enough assistance from the surrounding experts and … assign individual reading and research tasks adequately" (Karacabey, 2020, p. 68).

Often administrators look to other professional developments that have been deemed successful to copy or adapt. The downfall here is that without the lens of pedagogy and content that the original creators used, the objectives are likely to be missed (Spillane, 2000).

Another issue that faces administrators is the conflicting roles of the teacher and the learner in a professional development.

"One structural issue (of professional development) concerns teaching as a practice, especially relations between the teacher and the learner (the classroom teacher). The teacher-student relationship is fraught with tension. On one hand, if (the leaders of the professional development) are to address and remedy their learners' misunderstandings, they must gain their trust before learners will confide their failures to understand what is taught. On the other hand, teachers in most formal settings are also placed in the position of evaluating learners' progress and certifying their competency. These circumstances often encourage learners to hide their deficiencies from their teachers. These tensings are accentuated with cognitive and situated approaches to teaching and learning because instruction is built on and tailored to learners' knowledge and experiences. (Spillane, 2000, 19).

Teachers may not want to readily admit to their administration what support they need, what misunderstandings they have, etc for fear of repercussions. This fear prevents learning from occurring, particularly when this power dynamic exists.

If school leaders are going to be capable of delivering successful professional development, they themselves need to learn and grow. These opportunities to learn can be formal, like PD for the school leaders, or informal, like social interactions (Spillane et al, 2009). This means they need the assistance of others to generate successful PD - one such

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source is the teachers in the building. When professional development is the work of a single individual (eg the principal) or a small group (eg the administration team), what is needed by the teachers can be easily missed. According to Goodson and Hargreaves (2005), "where professional development opportunities are insensitive to the concerns of individual participants, and make little effort to relate learning experiences to workplace conditions, they make little impact upon teachers or their pupils". However, when a teacher's professional development lacks the voices of the teachers, learning will not be as effective. In fact, according to Taylor and Bogotch (1994), a teacher's voice in decision making is positively related to a school's effectiveness.

In the case of Ducnaville, where student success was led through a series of intricate changes led by dynamic leadership, one reason their transformation was so successful was that both teachers and administrators participated in, not led, the professional development (Alford, 1997). Unfortunately, this is not usually the case - administrators either lead the professional development or remove themselves when they are not the lead. This is not an isolated experience. In fact, according to Nappi (2014):

> "...although traditional responsibilities such as ordering supplies, maining an inventory, and acting as a liaison between the administration and faculty are important, an administrator who limits teacher leaders to those responsibilities (and excludes them from professional development) can be thwarting the success of the school" (p. 32).

Teacher Leadership and the Math Teacher Leader

Knowing that administrators, even those with best intentions, fall short when it comes to the professional development of the teachers in the building, a need arises to find other ways to reach teachers in meaningful ways. That need is compounded in

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schools that are larger and more comprehensive as the number of teachers far out

numbers the administration. This is where teacher leaders step in. According to Goodson

and Hargreaves (2005), "the clear message from literature is that school improvement is

more likely to occur when leadership is distributed and when teachers have a vested

interest in the development of the school". Moreso, Mangin (2008) goes on to explain

that "instructional teacher leadership positions are intended to build collective

instructional capacity by providing teacher with effective professional development" (p.

77) so where administrators can not meet the needs of teachers in regards to professional

development, teacher leadership can. In fact, evidence exists that supports the claims of

teacher leadership and its positive effects on professional development, findings that

suggest teacher leadership leads to improved instruction (Cohen and Hill, 2001). This

professional development can be facilitated by teacher leaders, who in turn promote

ongoing improvement in instruction (Mangin, 2005). However, this demanding role is

one that the "profession does not understand and is only beginning to examine (Campbell

& Malkus, 2011).

To start, we must understand what a teacher leader is. This is something

fundamentally debated with many meanings and roles attributed to such an individual. As

Goodson and Hargreaves (2005) define, teacher leadership is closely tied into change and

school improvement as they define leadership as "providing vision, direction and support

towards a different and preferred state - suggesting change" (p. 15). Mangin and

Stoelinga (2008) define leadership as "setting a direction and getting others to head in

that direction" (p. 12). As opposed to a definition, Nappi (2014) points to a whole list of

roles that a teacher leader can take on including resource provider, instructional specialist, curriculum specialist, classroom supporter, learning facilitator, mentor, school leader, data coach, catalyst for change, or learner, all far reaching and varied. In terms of mathematics, Vasquez and Timmerman (2000) narrow this list to specialist, consultant, teal leaders and mentor. The roles of a teacher leader can be varied, and include grade level/subject area leader, vertical leader, back-up leader, mentor, peer coach, note-taker/recorder, parliamentarian/time-keeper, presenter, conference attendee, speaker/writer, school plan chair, faculty representative, host teacher, instructional audit leader, search committee panelist, community leader, student activities coordinator, technology leader, web page curator, and/or supplies coordinator (Gabriel, 2005).

However, Goodson & Hargreaves (2005) point to many of the blindspots in the current literature on teacher leadership including forms of leadership practice and a lack of investigation around the myriad roles teacher leaders can serve. In fact, many roles constitute teacher leadership, and most teachers are redulant to admit the role they are taking on is, in fact, teacher leadership. In order to be agents of change, teacher leaders must be able to influence actions in others and may do so by:

> "making expectations clear, sharing knowledge, sharing rationales, building rapport, providing verbal or written rewards or recognition, conducting positive one-on-one and small-group conversations, listening actively, modeling desired behaviors, supporting peer coaching, sharing power in making decisions, building collaborative energy, and providing follow-up training" (Hull et al, 2009, p. 120).

One way to impact teachers is through observation. Teacher leaders will use a protocol of a pre-observation conference, an extended observation noting instructional moves (or lack thereof) and student response, and a post-observation conference (Range

et al, 2013). Range et al go on to delineate the four necessary elements of the observations; based on teacher goals, followed in a cyclical format, based on data, and jointly planned and reflected on (2013).

Much has been said about what teacher leadership is and what it entails, but according to Mangin and Stoelinga (2008), researchers can agree that some of the fundamental characteristics of a teacher leader role are as follows: framing and communicating the school goals, knowing and coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress, setting standards, modeling expectations, protecting instructional time, and directing professional development. The qualities needed to serve in a teacher leadership role includes: principled, honest and ethical, organized, perceptive, empathetic and supportive, altruistic, accessible, resourceful, fair accepting, vulnerable, forward thinking, global, decisive, incisive, and intelligent.

Leadership itself can appear in many styles, however Hull et al (2009) narrow that list down to three:autocratic leadership where the leaders follow a clear top-down chain but that also makes them very transparent, democratic leaders who involve others in the decision making to reach consensus, and laissez-faire leaders who minimize their involvement in making decisions which can lead to teacher empowerment but also ambiguity. There is also debate as to whether or not those leaders should be a teacher in the school, as Campbell & Malkus (2011) point out, teacher leaders frequently do not have responsibility for the instruction of a classroom of students.

The Need for Teacher Leadership

Principals and other administrators can not carry the burden of professional development on their own. In their work with a large urban district, Spillane et al (2009) found that teachers rarely saw their principals observing them as a teacher, giving the teacher feedback, having in-depth discussions of teaching, or reviewing the student's work with the teacher. Teacher leaders help professional development to become more content focussed, active, coherent, consistent, and collaborative, core elements of any successful professional development (Campbell & Malkus, 2011). The need for teacher leadership is great. Not only does it support professional development, as previously mentioned but it also provides a myriad of benefits for the school, the students, the faculty, and beyond. Most important though is that research has suggested that school leadership, including teacher leadership, is the second most influential factor when it comes to student achievement, after classroom teaching (Tan, 2018).

Teacher leaders can lead the way when it comes to institutional change at an instructional level. Often schools seek to initiate change, change communicated by the school leadership and/or principal. However when the teacher leaders can "support and monitor teachers in their achievement of these expectations, teachers will feel a heightened sense of work morale and accountability, thereby benefiting student learning, (Tan, 2018, 23). One sure way to create change within the schools, to build capacity, is through the use of teacher leaders - not only as a voice and advocate for that change but also to carry through with the organizational changes that need to be made (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2005). This also gives teachers a sense of ownership as they become part of

the decision making processes (Nappi, 2014). Nappi goes on to point out that teacher

leaders are uniquely situated to lead that change "having an understanding of the needs of

the school and community allows the teacher(s) to implement practices that target the

specific needs of the students and the school" (p. 31). Teacher leaders are uniquely

positioned to assist teachers in adopting new practices as they possess technical and craft

knowledge as well as being members of the community and understanding the culture of

the school (Harrison Berg et al, 2014).

In fact, Goodson and Hargreaves (2005) point to the positive impact that teacher

leaders have on the school culture as a whole. Teacher leaders help to raise both the

intellectual capital as well as the social capital of a school by the way they can work with

teachers to increase their understanding of pedagogy and content as well as connect

teachers to one another raising their social capital (Harisson Berg et al, 2014; Nappi,

2014). As Nappi (2014) points out, teacher leadership can lessen the impact of

administrative turnover in schools, even at the principal level, as a heritage of shared

leadership remains in their wake.

Not only are teacher leaders beneficial to the students and the teachers, as well as

the administrators in their endeavors, teacher leadership benefits that teacher leader

themself. According to Goodson and Hargreaves (2005), findings "suggest that

empowering teachers to take on leadership roles enhances teachers' self-esteem and work

satisfaction, which in turn leads to improved performance due to higher motivation, as

well as possibly greater retention in the profession" (p. 39).

If all that was not enough, Manglin and Stoelinga (2008) detail a list of why teacher leadership is needed. This includes the teachers' connections with the classroom which, in turn, equips them to provide a situated perspective to teaching. Additionally, their expertise can have a profound effect on student achievement. Lord et al (2008) include that another appeal of teacher leaders is that they know how to best help other teachers change because they themselves have had to change. Ultimately though, Nappi (2014) sums it up best as she points to how school and student success are much more likely when leadership is shared and distributed and not left in the hands of the administration solely.

Teacher leaders as instructional coaches

As alluded to prior, one key component of teacher leadership is instructional coaching. As Cobb et al (2018) define, instructional coaching "involves teachers working with a person with content-specific pedagogical expertise who is charged with supporting them to improve the quality of their instruction" (p. 10). In the confines of this study, that person providing the support is the teacher leaders. Taylor (2008) finds that instructional coaching is not so easy to define as there exists a broad array of modes and methods, however defines instructional leadership as "the performance of a set of functions that establish goals for instruction and engage others in the process of classroom instruction and instructional improvement" (p. 12), instructoinal coaching being a form of this leadership. More specifically, Hull et al (2009) define a mathematics coach as "an individual who is well versed in mathematics content and pedagogy and who works directly with classroom teachers to improve student learning of mathematics" (p. 3).

Cobb et al (2018) discuss five key aspects of coaching expertise. These include content-specific pedagogical expertise, productive views of students' current mathematical capabilities, relationship building skills, having a professional vision for coaching, and group facilitation skills. Being able to function effectively along these five aspects supports the work of the teacher leader as an instructional coach. Cobb et al (2018) go on to enumerate several other necessities for instructional coaching including the coach having developed "ambitious and equitable instructional practices" (p. 129), providing ongoing professional development for the coach, and the coach being able to lead teachers' collaborative time when needed. In their work, Gibbons et al (2016) found that instructional coaches were most successful when the coaches centered learning around groups of teachers learning together, when goals were created based on the vision of the group, and when the coach was able to switch between monologic and dialogic role with teachers. Kane and Rosenquist found that instructional coaches were most successful when they developed joint expectations with the teachers, structured time to engage teachers, and designed systems through which schools might accomplish other pressing administrative work, to include discussions of who will do this work and when

As supports exists for instructional coaching, there are also hindrances for this practice. Hull et al (2009) point out some of these in their work including overcoming the belief that not all students can learn math, being able to have the coach 'get a foot in the door' of the teacher they are attempting to coach, and vague or ill-defined job descriptions for the instructional coach. Additionally, the instructional coach often gets lumped in with the administrators or principal of the school, having expectations placed

upon them that supercede their role, making it hard for the coach to maintain a "'balcony view' of the entire school" (Hull et al, 2009, p. 123). Taylor (2008) alludes to the notion that instructional coaches should be nonsupervisory and nonevaluative, however the role that I am in positions me as the evaluator of the teacher, as well as the instructional coach, providing its own unique challenges

Teacher leadership in mathematics

As we defined the notion of teacher leadership, we also need to define teacher leaders in mathematics. In their study of teacher leaders of mathematics in rural environments, Lotter et al (2020) found that teachers described the notion of teacher leadership in such ways as being able to see weakness and strength in others and supporting those people as well as someone who models best practices and is actively involved in professional development and PLCs (professional learning communities). Hull et al (2009) defined a mathematics coach, which for the intent of the work applies here as well, as "an individual who is well versed in mathematics content and pedagogy nand who works directly with classroom teachers to improve student learning of mathematics" (p. 3). For this to occur, leaders in mathematics need to be well versed in math content, well versed in pedagogy, able to engage classroom teachers, work to improve student learning, support mathematics learning and its teachers, and improve students' learning as well as teachers' teaching. Beyond notions of mathematical content knowledge and pedagogy, math leaders need to be knowledgeable of adult learning styles and strategies, group dynamics and social norms, data acquisition and interpretation, and confidentiality and trust-building (Hull et al, 2009). Bengo (2016) asserts that a

mathematics teacher leader must exhibit the qualities of content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, research knowledge, leadership skills, curriculum knowledge, and ability to differentiate instruction (although these qualities seem to closely mirror the qualities of a teacher leader in general, not just mathematics).

When it comes to coaching teachers in mathematics, most leaders fall into one of three styles: cognitive coaching which assumes that the individual's behavior is a result of their thoughts and perceptions, content-focussed coaching which is focussed on planning lessons to meet the needs of the students, and instructional coaching that levels the playing field between coach and coachee, positioning both as experts (Bengo, 2016).

Recently, the world of education has seen an increase in the number of teacher leaders, first starting with literacy specialists. However, with a push from organizations such as the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), we now see an increase in teacher leaders in mathematics education as well. According to Ellington et al (2017), today "school districts are employing mathematics coaches to provide much needed leadership and to support teachers' ongoing professional learning" (p. 146). The need for teacher leaders in mathematics is needed more now than ever as:

> "...mathematics education reform [recommends] that teachers change their mathematics pedagogy to included renewed focus on developing students conceptual understandings of mathematics rather than on the acquisition of procedural algorithms and computation, listening to an making sense of students' mathematical thinking, and engaging students in constructing relationships between mathematics and real-world problems (Vasquez & Timmerman, 2000, p. 364).

In fact, there is a recent push that math go beyond the conceptual and, as opposed to using real world problems to do mathematics, teachers show students how real world problems can be thought about and analyzed using mathematics (Ani, 2021).

The intent of a mathematics teacher leaders is for a:

"...knowledgeable colleague with a deep understanding of mathematics and of how students learn, as well as pedagogical expertise, to serve as an on-site resource and leader for teachers… to break the culture of teacher isolation whereby teachers work in private without observation or feedback and to collaborate with other professional development efforts in order to increase a school's instructional capacity" (Campbell & Malkus, 2011)

This is done through addressing curriculum, instruction, and assessment as well as supporting professional habits that advance schoolwide growth. As leaders and coaches of mathematics, teacher leaders have to pull teachers together to build a vision, initiate change, provide resources, act as a catalyst to that change, provide information about the change and engage teachers in meaningful conversations (Hull et al, 2009)

In mathematics, there is a shift to have students understand the conceptual more so than the skills. Inherently, this has caused many teachers to give pause, not wanting to give up on ways they found effective. However, according to Ellington et al (2017) in their research that placed math specialists in schools, many teachers who worked with the specialists changed their perceptions, "many no longer held traditional views about teaching and learning mathematics… instead they developed a sense making view of mathematics" (p. 193). Yet, teachers, including mathematics teachers, are faced with an overwhelming amount of work they must tackle including preparation for standardized tests and implementing alternative assessments, that work on mastering new pedagogical techniques can be daunting (Vasquez & Timmerman, 2000).

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Ellington et al (2017) point to the fact that when teachers work with instructional leaders in mathematics, be it in lesson planning, viewing a modeled lesson, etc, the teachers then reflect and adapt their lessons in ways that have positive effects on student outcomes. Campbell and Malkus (2011) found in their study of a district, the schools that had used mathematical instructional leaders scored on average 10 or more points higher than those that did not on the mathematical achievement tests, and that achievement only increased more in schools when these leaders remained in those roles even longer. Ultimately the work of a teacher leader in mathematics is to promote student success. However, students, all too often, do not feel confident in their mathematical abilities especially when it comes to higher level mathematics (Alford, 1997). Alford goes on to explain that teacher leaders can aid in this process with the use of vertical team meetings, a form of collaboration where earlier grades and their teachers can meet with the more advanced class teachers to discuss how to promote student success.

Leaders in mathematics need to ensure that their "work with principals and other administrators responsible for content to ensure that communication is as clear and consistent as possible" (Hull et al, 2009, p. 118). This means transparency. That transparency needs to also be applied across systems to ensure that all teachers are being held to the same standards and expectations. That transparency needs to occur with staff as well. Lotter et al (2020) point to a lack of literature on mathematics leadership, however in their study they found leadership for their teachers meant "management of interactive materials and equipment that required additional expertise, raining, and time"

as well as "understanding how mathematics content changes across grade levels and the need to collaborate with teachers across these levels to ensure teacher learning" (p. 42).

What Supports Teacher Leadership

There are several things that support teacher leadership, the first being time and training. Teacher leaders are not made by simply appointing a teacher to a leadership position. Leadership needs to be developed, and requires support and professional development, and a lack of staff confidence needs to be overcome (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2005). According to Campbell and Malkus (2011) developing teacher leadership takes time, and will emerge as the school administration and teachers learn to work together.

Coaching efforts are most successful when they are part of a larger initiative of the school or district (Hopkins et al, 2017). Teacher leaders and instructional leaders fill a role that principals can not always fill, one that is focussed on student learning, whereas the principal can be distracted by the many activities of the school (Tan, 2018).

In working with teachers, there are many strategies a teacher leader can implore to help their leadership. Mangin (2005) points out that the biggest step a teacher leader needs to take in improving instruction is to develop healthy relationships with the teachers being served. In their work, Range et al (2013) found the most influential factor that led to teacher reflection was a building of trust (followed by sharing the actual report from the observation). Additional factors that supported this reflection was linking the work to professional development as well as including positive comments.

While literature supports that this is not always the case, Bengo (2016) found that teacher leaders initiating change were more successful when the teacher leader was still teaching as well as coaching (as opposed to those that left the classroom entirely to be a teacher leader). In fact, a primary element of effective coaching is the content knowledge of the coach, which is illustrated from their work with the curriculum and in the classroom. This desire to be coached by a teacher leader still active in the classroom and espoused in the content stems from the need that teachers have to respect their coaches and their contributions to the classroom (Obra, 2010).

For teacher leaders to be effective, they need the support of their administration, as in a mentoring role for the teacher leaders. They can do this by supporting the teacher leaders' efforts at promoting instructional change and meeting with the teachers to offer guidance and support with regards to their roles (Mangin, 2005).

Teacher leaders are effective in influencing teacher practice to change when they incorporate four factors for the teacher: collaboration, reflection, knowledge, and ownership (Forrest et al, 2019). The collaboration in question was not just teacher to teacher but also a sense of teacher to coach, for example practices were introduced with phrases like "let's try this" or "we should do this". Regular, ongoing discussions led to reflection. The knowledge teachers needed was an understanding of the justification of the change. Ownership worked best, particularly coming from a coach, if there was a perceived shared ownership in the changes. Other factors that influenced teachers' change, for better or worse, were time and pressure.

Specifically in the field of mathematics, Bengo (2016) found that effective mathematics teacher leaders "requires that the math coaches are able to differentiate the help they provide to teachers" (p. 94).

What Hinders Teacher Leadership

One of the biggest hindrances to teacher leadership is the lack of research in the field of teacher leadership. First and foremost, there is a lack of research around preparing teacher leaders (Harrison Berg et al, 2014). If teacher leaders are not adequately prepared, they face a harder time meeting their goals.

In their work, Goodson & Hargreaves (2005) discuss the tension that teachers face between their work on change and new developments and the organization itself - for example the time available or the ability to move teachers beyond the status quo. Teacher leaders are often put in positions of power - whether real or perceived - and, unfortunately, power sometimes conveys a negative connotation (Hull et al, 2009). As Lord et all (2008) detail, the teacher leader mainly follows a show and tell model where they show through modeling of the instructional practice and tell the teacher being supported through planning, advising, and sharing their own experiences. Lord et al (2008) fears that this type of professional development lacks the critique and reflection to lead to sustainable change.

According to Lord et al (2008) one area that can hinder a teacher leader's abilities is that they have to draw heavily on their own experiences as a classroom teacher, and only their experiences. It boils down to who they are and what they know that they can implore to help their colleagues meet their aims.

While teacher leaders can bring a wealth of knowledge to their work, they can lack some skills required for the job. Chief among these according to Lock et al (2008) is the ability to give hard feedback, feedback where a leader's feedback is required even though it challenges the teacher's practice.

Administration must support teacher leaders and their learnings. In their study on a mid-sized urban district, Spillane et al. (2009) found that teacher leaders had less formal opportunities to learn, particularly when compared to the administrators in the building. Mangin (2005) points out that teacher leaders had a considerably harder time making connections and breaking through teacher resistance when the administration failed to communicate the roles and responsibilities of the teacher leaders.

Teacher leaders also need to figure out how they fit into the culture of the school. In their research, Hopkins et al (2017) found that the instructional coaches they worked with struggled to "facilitate interactions with and among teachers in schools that did not have strong instructional leaders or a collaborative culture" (p. 227).

Specifically, in the field of leading in mathematics, there are several challenges that arise. Hull et al (2009) list some of these as the belief held by society that some students cannot learn mathematics, being able to break through to teachers (both physically meeting them in their work space as well as reaching them on a professional level), and ill-defined or vague job descriptions. Bengo (2016) outlines how it's difficult for teacher leaders to help some teachers improve instruction in mathematics be it because they are resistant to change as it is not easy to learn or because they believe the new strategies are ineffective.

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Identity

The notion of identity, particularly in the world of teaching, is one that leaves more questions than answers. As Garner and Kaplan (2019) state:

> "...the growing literature on teacher identity faces conceptual and methodological challenges, primary among them is the very diverse and often vague treatment of the concept of teacher identity, and the difficulty of integrating findings across the very diverse methods used to investigate it" (p. 8)

This is compounded by the notion that, as Webb (2009) states, teacher identities are often remade and/or reaffirmed in response to many stimuli including policy change that is perceived beneficial to children. Luehmann (2007) described teacher professional identity as socially constructed through interactions with others, subject to change, varied and dependent on social context and experiences. As Garner and Kaplan (2019) point out, the teacher identity is also constantly altered by professional learning - notions of who the teachers are, what they believe, and what they want to be. When this is then compounded with the notion that the teacher's identity is constantly being shaped with the personal life and identity of the teacher, then understanding teacher identity becomes an arduous task (Hammersley-Fletcher & Qualter, 2010). Looney et al (2018) summarize this notion as they point out from a socio-cultural perspective, identity is framed and re-framed over the teaching career, mediated by the contexts in which the teachers work and live.

Once the teacher shifts into the world of teaching, understanding identity becomes more nuanced, again with conflicting understandings of this transition. For example, Hanuscin et al (2014) described that for teachers to fully transition into teacher leader roles they must change their professional identity. Gonzales and Lambert (2001) describe how a teacher's identity shifts as they become leaders, from experiencing new leadership

and instructional roles, reflection upon these experiences, and receiving feedback, the identity of the teacher may change. Wenner and Campbell (2018) offer an explanation of thick versus thin identities in teacher leadership - thick being one that is assumed consistently and intentionally, and thin being one that is assumed occasionally or when called upon. Carver (2016) conceived the teacher leader identity as almost a metamorphosis, born of the teacher identity and, once formed, the teacher identity is abandoned.

On top of all that teacher leaders contend with in forming their identity, managerial control has increased greatly in the world of teaching recently, as well as levels of accountability for teachers and teacher leaders, forcing identities to alter in light of these pressures (Hammersly-Fletcher & Qualter, 2010).

Models of Identity
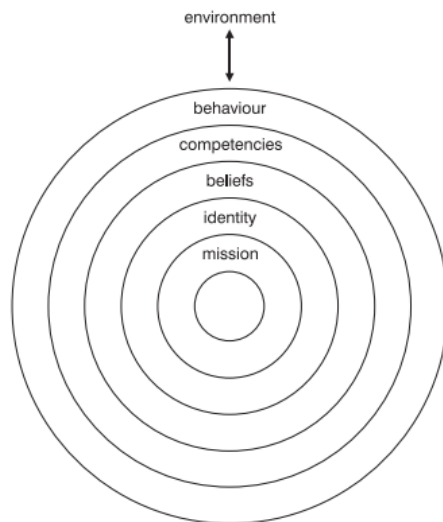
Figure 2: Korthagen and Vasalos's (2005) Onion Model

Accordingly, there needed to be a lens through which to examine the identity of a teacher leader. Thus, two models will be examined to form a model that will be used for the context of this paper. The first comes from Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) Onion Model as seen above in Figure 2.

As Korthagen (2013), each layer can be summed up in the following questions:

Environment: What do I encounter? What am I dealing with?

Behavior: What do I do?

Competencies: What am I competent at?

Beliefs: What do I believe?

Identity: Who am I (in my work)?

Mission: What inspires me? What greater entity do I feel connected with?

It is through this Onion Model approach that the findings will be discussed. To reach that outer ring, question one, that of the lived experiences of a dual role educator, will address the environment and behaviors of a dual role educator. Then, question two, around the beliefs and efficacies will cover the next two layers, or the beliefs and competencies according to Korthagen (2013). By understanding those layers, the final layer, that of the identity (in which I will include dispositions) can be understood.

The other model is similar, that of Garner and Kaplan (2017) known as the Dynamic Systems Model of Role Identity. This appears below in Figure 3.
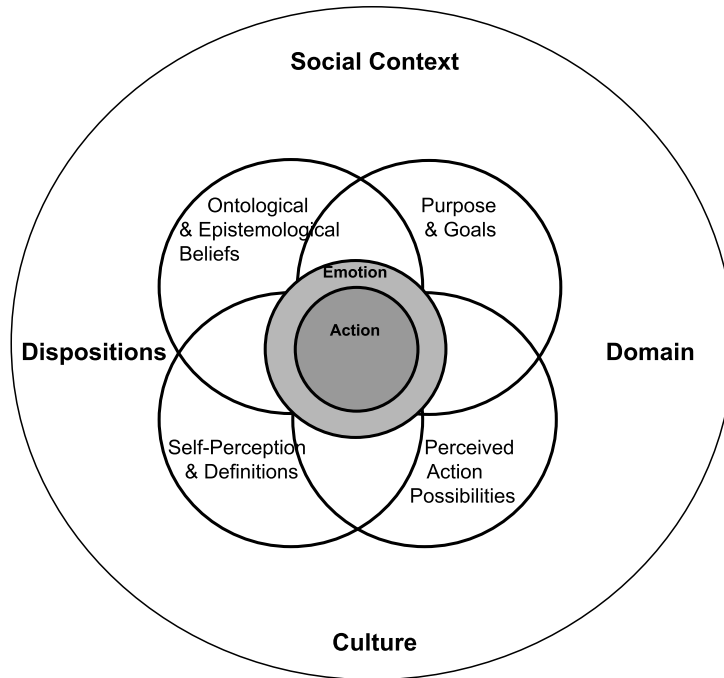
Figure 3: Garner and Kaplan (2017) The Dynamic Systems Model of Role Identity.

The four circles that intersect, beliefs, purposes and goals, perceived action possibilities, and self-perception, form the four pillars of the formation of identity, the anchors of identity, and those are expressed and represented through the emotions and actions of the individuals. Garner and Kaplan (2019) define these four circles as follows: Ontological & Epistemological Beliefs: The knowledge that the teacher holds as true regarding the world of teaching.

Purpose and Goals: The teachers specific goals and committed purpose in teaching Self-Perception and Definitions: Knowledge and perceptions of a teachers's own self-defined characteristics.

Perceived Action Possibilities: Perceptions of what a teacher can or cannot do to reach their goals.

Thus, many similarities can be made between this and the Onion Model of Korthagen (2013). Both name beliefs and efficacies (Garner and Kaplan call this Self-Perception) are pivotal to understanding the identity a person lives. Perceived Action Possibilities are also included in efficacies and beliefs and they include what the teacher believes they can and can not do. The only difference then is that Kaplan and Garner (2019) include the notion of Purpose and Goals as being a pillar to understanding Identity whereas Korthagen does not.

Kaplan and Garner (2019) go on to explain that identity formation is bound by four factors: those of culture, dispositions, subject domain, and social context and interactions. One thing to point out that is at the heart of this model is that a teacher can hold multiple identities, and these identities can be hierarchical - meaning some identities can be a sub-identity of another aspect of the teacher. How I situate these two models will be drawn together in Chapter 3. That said, there are few notions that deserve note.

Other Elements of Identity

First concerns emotion. Looney et al. (2014) propose there is an emotional element to one's identity. However, I view emotion as residing in efficacies as these are a way for teachers to attribute how they feel about themselves in regards to an element of teaching. They are a product of an action. For example, as will be mentioned later, there can be a feeling of loneliness, an emotion experienced by the teacher leader. However, this is housed in their efficacy of the position, housed in the notion that to be successful

as a teacher leader you need to separate yourself from others, this separation causing that loneliness. Not that this negates or diminishes the emotion felt, rather, to understand the source of the emotion. This does not mean that emotion will not be discussed, rather to understand that it is housed in the notion of efficacies for the sake of the findings in Chapter 4.

In regards to beliefs, as Schoenfeld (1983) points out, behavior - our actions and experiences - are a result of our beliefs - beliefs about ourselves (our efficacy), beliefs about the task, and beliefs about the social environment in which the task resides. In the world of teaching, Voet and De Wever (2019) point to domains of teacher beliefs including epistemological beliefs, beliefs about the orientation of teaching, self-efficacy, perceived student ability, beliefs about the subject matter, and beliefs about the place of work. Thus beliefs are at the center of both models above, being a key component of the formation of identity. According to Sinha and Hanuscin (2017), identity must be aligned with actions and beliefs .In the work with mathematics teachers and leaders, Bengo (2016) found that all teacher leaders made decisions based on their knowledge, goals, and beliefs.

One thing not mentioned in either model are values. Hadar and Benish-Weisman (2019) talk about values, and their place in a teacher's identity. They define values as "abstract motivations guiding behaviour and evaluation of self and others" (p. 139). This definition would situate a value somewhere between a belief and a disposition. However, as they later ascribe values as being a "guiding principle", as a researcher, I posit that values reside in the dispositions of a teacher.

Dispositions

As evidenced in Kaplan and Garner's (2019) model, the notion of Disposition is a key influence of identity. In fact, it is the only factor that influences the educator's identity that is a construct of the self and not an outside influence. Thus, it is imperative to understand what dispositions are and how they are related to the identity of an educator.

While many definitions of disposition exist, and there are overlaps in those definitions, there also exist some conflicting characteristics of dispositions. For example, Taylor & Wasicsko (2000) define dispositions as the personal qualities or characteristics of an individual, which include their beliefs and values. Villegas (2007) goes further to say that dispositions encompass how one responds or behaves based on their beliefs. Many have written on dispositions from Saultz et al (2021) who write on the dispositions towards social justice in pre-service teachers to Burton et al (2022) who write about elementary teachers dispositions towards STEM courses. Yet, limiting dispositions to a set of beliefs moves contrary to what Kaplan and Garner (2019) argued with their model.

As Goffman (1959) points, there are two selfs we present - the self we give and the self we give off. Herein lies the difference between beliefs and dispositions. Beliefs reside in the self we give where as dispositions reside in both - the self we give and the self we give off. Thus, ascertaining dispositions will require looking not only at what was said and presented but also the actions and unintended communication of the individual. It is in these actions as Borko et al (2007) say that dispositions are found.

Dispositions can be stated and accepted, however, there is a benefit to uncovering the dispositions in a study such as this. According to Thronton (2006), "instead of coming from *a priori* notion of what makes for the best dispositions, this approach comes from observations of teachers in practice and what transpired in the classroom" (p. 67). Thus, deciphering the dispositions becomes more genuine.

To be clear, there does exist differences between identity, particularly role identity, and dispositions. Role identity refers to the 'you' assumed at different points in time due to the circumstances presented. For example, while as a teacher, I assume a teacher role identity, there may be times as a teacher I have to show care for a student, care that may be typically a part of my father role identity. Dispositions however exist in all identities. They are similarities in tendencies to act on beliefs no matter what role is being filled. As we will see in Chapter 5, the dispositions that I purport exist in the role identities discussed.

One final note, as dispositions are external factors of identity, as Kaplan and Garner (2019) point to in their model, this means that dispositions play into all of one's identities and are not harbored within one realm. Thus, in answering the third research question on identities and dispositions, both will be named separate from one another.

Dispositions versus pedagogical judgments

Research has recently begun around the notion of pedagogical judgements. Pedagogical judgment is a form of teacher sense-making, navigating the complex nature of why a pedagogical action is taken (Horn, 2020). Horn and Garner (2022) go on to add that pedagogical judgments are the "synthesized understandings that anchor and guide

teachers' actions" (p. 25). Horn and Garner (2022) go on to describe how pedagogical judgements evolve from the interplay between pedagogical action, pedagogical reasoning, and pedagogical responsibility. There exists a more fluid nature of pedagogical judgment, adapting and changing over time as these three elements interplay within the interactions that a teacher has.

The idea of pedagogical judgment then resides only in the educational setting. In regards to the dispositions that will be discussed in Chapter 4, these can be thought of as pedagogical judgments a sthey are dispositions that apply to the educational environment. However, it should be noted there are differences in these terms. As mentioned prior, dispositions play out in all roles, not just in the role of the teacher. For example, one disposition that will be discussed is stewardship. While this plays out in the classroom as a disposition, as the teacher, I seek to continuously serve the students, it can also be thought of as a pedagogical judgment - rooted in pedagogical action (as will be discussed), pedagogical reasoning (the thought process around why the need to serve the students), and pedagogical responsibility (noting why it is important pedagogically that the teacher serve the student). However, when I assume the role of a weightlifter in the gym for example, this disposition continues outside of the pedagogical judgment when I seek to support anyone in need as well as clean up not only after myself but also others that have left equipment lying around. Thus, for the sake of this paper, I will approach my dispositions, knowing they are rooted in pedagogical judgments.

Conclusion

Much has been said to elaborate on the world of urban education and teacher leadership. The groundwork for secondary mathematics instruction in an urban setting was laid as we first examined the first the teachers of urban schools and the conditions, characteristics, and students there of. Then we looked at how secondary education in urban schools is shaped by the school and resources, the current research and researchers, and the influence of the dominant culture.

Laying this groundwork provided reason that teachers needed professional development to adapt to the many challenges of an urban school. To that end, we examined the current state of professional development including what is being done and the effectiveness of administrative led professional development. Seeing a need for more, we turned our attention to teacher leadership, looking at what teacher leadership is and the need for teacher leaders. Once that was established, we looked at a key component of teacher leadership, instructional coaching, as well as what supports and what hinders teacher leaders.

Finally we examined identity and the research behind the formation of identity particularly for teachers and teacher leaders. We examined the models and elements of identity. We finally concluded with a look at dispositions and how these compare and contrast with both identity and pedagogical judgments.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

As has been mentioned, the research into teacher leadership lacks that perspective of the teacher leader. Noting this lack of literature led me to look for those with knowledge about this field could be ascertained. However, to uncover the intricacies of this role, the beliefs, the efficacies, the identities, the real experiences of a dual role teacher leader, the best way to bring all this to light would be to use myself, the researcher, as the subject, as I have lived the dual role teacher leader life. In order to clearly illustrate the experiences, the beliefs, the efficacies, the identity, the implications, and the aims of such an individual, I implored the methodology of auto-educational criticism (or auto-criticism for short) allowing for myself to be both the subject and the researcher.

This term, auto-educational criticism, was first coined by Uhrmacher, McConnell Moroye, and Flinders (2017) as they inform us that "one may write about one's own life in the contexts of being a teacher,…, and in doing so, one would want to interpret one's own narrative with categories that bring new intellectual ideas to life". This differs from a simple autobiography where one uses the story to unpack te events in their own life. In fact, Creswell (2013) argues against the term autobiography because according to him, a

study like the one I conducted "reflects the history, culture, and personal experiences of the researcher", making it much more than an autobiography.

Auto-criticism is still a relatively new methodology, noting that first mention of the term in the 2017 work of Uhrmacher, McConnell Moroye, & Flinders. Being a new methodology, this provided room for exploration in utilizing this emerging methodology. Furthermore, being so closely aligned to the work of educational criticism, this method is not fixed, and its features can be altered to use many forms of representation, as I have done in this work.

Connoisseurship and Criticism

Eisner (1991) defines connoisseurship as "the ability to make fine-grained discriminations among complex and subtle qualities". Connoisseurship stems from a deep and prolonged involvement within the confines of what is being consumed. This implies a need for the connoisseur to be able to discriminate. Uhrmacher, McConnell Moroye, & Flinders (2017) liken this discimiation to that of a wine connoisseur who use all their senses and past experiences to discriminate the qualities of the wine. A connoisseur must also be able to ascertain the complex and subtle qualities. As this researcher not only "believe[s] that their interests are worthwhile and shared by others who care about the quality of their engagement with these interests" as well as "make[s] efforts to increase their abilities to see and hear the full range of qualities that an experience efforts" (Uhrmacher et al, 2017, p. 10) in the realm of teaching and teacher leadership, this situates the researcher as a connoisseur.

As a connoisseur of teacher and teaching, I, as the researcher, had the ability to recognize and develop "nuanced meanings". This allowed the research here to examine, at a more intricate detail, the experiences of a teacher leader as compared to what already exists in the literature around the dual field of teaching and teacher leadership. Currently, those that are contributing to research in this field right now are not necessarily the ones in the field, allowing them to only make casual observations similar to what a new participant may be able to recognize.

The next part of this process was to provide the information in a way that is accessible, sharing what was learned through the connoisseurship: this is the art of criticism. This means entailing both what the evidence was as well as the conclusions drawn from that evidence. While auto-criticism remains a relatively new methodology, the researcher will rely on the tenets of educational criticism and autoethnography that overlap with auto-criticism to guide his work.

Educational Connoisseurship and Educational Criticism

Educational criticism, and educational connoisseurship, were first coined by Eliot Eisner (1998) as a qualitative approach seeking to improve education. Eisner (1998) eloquently lays out the definitions and differences of connoisseurship and criticism as follows:

> "Educational connoisseurship gives access to the complex and subtle aspects of educational phenomena, and it is through such access that educational critics secure the content they need to function as critics. If connoisseurship can be regarded as the art of appreciation, criticism can be thought of as the art of disclosure. The primary purpose of the critic is educational… providing the material through which perception is increased and understanding deepened. To do this… the critic must function as an educational connoisseur. Criticism depends upon awareness of qualities and their antecedent and contextual

conditions for its content:… One cannot be a critic of any kind without some level of connoisseurship." (p. 86)

As someone who resides in the field (and as you will see further in the "About the Researcher" section), I have steeped myself in education, particularly mathematics education, as well as educational leadership, affording me the ability to be a connoisseur. As I seek to "transform the qualities of… teaching and learning into a public form that illuminates, interprets, and appraises the qualities that have been experiences", I will move into the realm of educational criticism. As I am applying this to myself, this becomes auto-criticism.

Central to this notion of educational criticism is that the observer, or researcher, is capable of writing an illuminating and illustrative account of an educational setting (Locke & Riley, 2009). This is why, as the researcher, I have named (and will name) my connection to the fields of education and teacher leadership so that my capabilities of writing such a piece are appreciated by the reader.

The educational criticism has four major dimensions: description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics (Eisner 2002). The first three of these Eisner (2002) sums up as:

> (1) Description: Eisner uses the term to refer to 'vivid rendering of the qualities perceived in the situation';
> (2) Interpretation: This attempts 'to provide an understanding of what has been rendered by using, among other things, ideas, concepts, models, and theories from the social sciences and from history'; and
> (3) Evaluation: This 'attempts to assess the educational import or significance of the events or objects described or interpreted'. (Eisner 2002, 234)

The fourth dimension, thematics, Eisner (1998) describes as naming the recurring messages from which the critic writes about. As Eisner (1998) describes, themes are

pervasive, and these "pervasive qualities tend to permeate and unify situations and objects" (p. 104). The goal of this researcher will be to establish themes from the use of auto-criticism, to name them so that others may begin to examine themselves and their settings to see if such themes arise.

To understand the nature of auto-criticism is to understand the similarities and differences between this approach and autoethnography. Autoethnography is written and recorded by the subject of the study. As Muncey (2005) tells us, "in order to take the leap into creating an autoethnography one has first to recognise that there is no distinction between doing research and living a life" which is why I have and will continue to share about myself and my life – as the research is grounded in my life. Creswell (2013) points to several characteristics of autoethnography, including "containing the personal story of the author as well as the larger cultural meaning" (p. 75). Possibly the most basic, yet strongest, definition of authoethnography is "a self narrative that critiques the situations of self with others in social contexts" (Spry, 2001, p. 710).

Autoethnography

Entering into auto-criticism would differ from the works of autoethnography as ethnographies focus on culture and the meaning of the interactions between those (or the self) involved in that culture (Creswell, 2013). The work of this researcher differs from that of autoethnographies as this would "employ analytic categories and would still require interpretation and evaluation… [and] stem from aesthetics and ecology, as well as some combination of race, class, gender, and/or religion" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 79).

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Creswell (2013) defines autoethnography as written and recorded by the individual who is the subject of the study as well as containing "the personal story of the author as well as the larger cultural meaning for the individual's story" (p. 73). Martin et al (2019) lays out three stages for an auto-ethnographic approach to researching education: Stage one - writing in a reflexive journal as much as one can around the phenomenon being studied, state two - examining the writing looking for trends and significant events, and stage three - triangulating the findings with literature and input from others.

Objectivity and Subjectivity

The pursuit of objectivity in an academic endeavor such as this is complex. As Eisner (1991) describes, "to be objective is to experience a state of affairs in a way that reveals its actual features". In qualitative research, objectivity is seeing things the way they are. Yet the danger lies in discerning the subjective from the objective. Researchers, especially in cases like this, often seek ontological objectivity, or veridicality, to avoid this subjectivity. This is done through procedures and established criteria.

However, these procedures and criteria do present a danger as Eisner (1991) describes in that these may lead a researcher to miss opportunities to research new insights that could be found in something less procedural. On the other side, objectivists argue that approaches like auto-criticism threaten objectivity with its focus on data collection and observations rooted in personal judgment. Yet this use of self allows for multiple perspectives that while may not be measurable, do add to the knowledge and understanding of an area. As Eisner (1991) concludes, these lived experiences contribute

greatly to our understanding of the human experience, something that is not merely

ascertained through procedure and criteria, rather can also be ascertained through

descriptions that are complete and lavish such as through a novel, a film, etc.

Given the nature of this auto-criticism, the approach of the researcher is that of a

guide, rather than pointing to the mathematics or the scales, to provide the general map

that is more interpretive (Eisner, 1991). As a guide and as the researcher, it is up to me to

call out the nuances that may otherwise be missed. There is ultimately a subjectivity to

this type of auto-qualitative approach, one though that allows the researcher to clarify

personal stakes within the research (Peshkin, 1988).

One last challenge in this realm of objectivity and subjectivity comes from the

researcher being able to give light to the experiences documented. Thus once the research

is acquired, the process of analyzing the data should start with a blank page as if

examining this data anew, then while visiting the data, critique it. This means assessing

and addressing categories of data as it arises. With this though comes another danger as

Eisner (1991) points out "labels and theories provide a way of seeing… but a way of

seeing is also a way of not seeing".

Framework

Study Design

In order to shed light on the world of the dual role of the teacher and teacher

leader, I created a journal for four weeks straight (as well as several entries both prior to

and beyond that mark - beyond due to the pandemic striking at the end of the 2020 school

year, disruptions to education beginning March 13th, 2020) to explore the world of the

dual role teacher. While this journal was kept every school day for four weeks, then periodically thereafter, how it appeared was as unique as the day For example, some days the journal was verbal and then transcribed, some days the journal was a composition of letters and emails, some days the journal was composed using poetry. The entries themself were not always chronological within the day, some written with how the events affected me and others by what stuck most with me.. It is the belief of this researcher, as well as the likes of Eisner (1991) that these alternate forms of capturing data filled a void that traditional means could not as he explains:

> "[It] can provide what might be called 'productive ambiguity'. By productive ambiguity, I mean that the material presented is more evocative than denotative, and in its evocation, it generates insight and invites attention to complexity."

As such, the writing in my journal was not linear at all times and did not always seek to tell a story. Instead, on days where the events led me to do so, my writing appeared more poetic, more raw, less linear. For example, in the journal entry from November 19th, 2019, I chose to center the entry on an event in the middle of the day to explain how I perceived the rest of the day from that lens. This entry did not occur in a linear pattern, rather as a chance to process the emotions I went through when reflecting on the day. But the insight it provided into who I am, my motivations, and my identities is substantial. This handling of the data allowed the reader, as well as myself as both the participant of the research and the researcher, to present it in a manner that was significant to me at the time, and not just following a linear script. As Barone and Eisner (2012) ascribe, "it is the evocative utilization of such data that makes the work expressive and affords individuals who…

read it with the opportunity to participate empathetically in events that would otherwise be beyond their reach" (p. 8).

Additionally, journaling was able to capture my two selfs - the self I give and the self I give off. As Goffman (1959) describes the difference here, the self I give is that framed in the traditional sense of communication, what I say, what I meaningfully communicate non-verbally, etc. The self I give off involves a wide range of actions and perceptions. It is this later self, the self that I give off that constituted a majority of the journaling as while I may not recall the words and conversations, I was able to recall the intent, the feelings, the emotions, the actions, the activities, etc.

Formation of Research Questions

To understand the formation of the research questions and the methodology for examining the journal, a model of identity must be established. This combines the elements that were discussed in chapter 2 around Korthagen's Onion Model and Kaplan and Garner's Dynamic System Model of Role Identity. This model is below, a model I created and engaged with, seen in Figure 4 below.
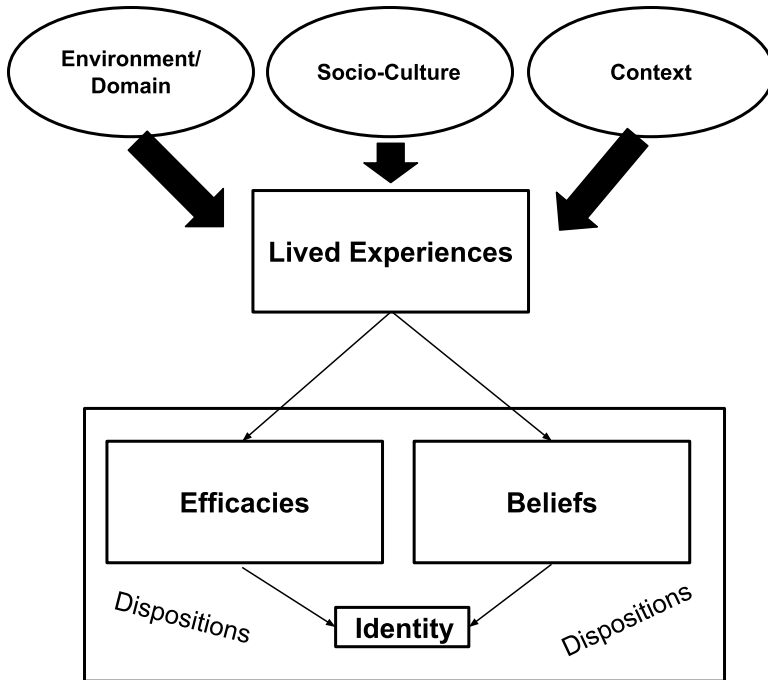
Figure 4: The Framework for Understanding Identity

In this model, the outside factors still remain that shape one's experiences - the environment/domain, the culture of that environment, and the context of the experience. These all shape the lived experiences of the dual role teacher leader. As described, these experiences give way to the efficacies and beliefs of the teacher leader. However, one area where this model differs from the prior models is that both efficacies and beliefs point to the identity and the dispositions of the teacher leader. Dispositions are as fundamental to a teacher as is their identity. Like identity, dispositions can be malleable. However, they differ from identity in that they are the beliefs that can be seen consistently through practice. Dispositions also present the goals that the teacher leader

has for their work, goals that are exemplified over and over by the actions of the teacher leader.

This gives way to the first three research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?

2. What are the beliefs and efficacies of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?

3. How do these experiences influence the identity and dispositions of an individual such as this in a dual role of teacher and teacher leader?

The last two questions come from the work with other teachers in order to help them in their professional development. These are:

4. How does such an individual develop his/her aims for himself and his peers?

5. What challenges and opportunities present themselves to enhance or take away from such aims?

Analyzing the Data

Below outlines the process this researcher used to arise at the findings in Chapter Four, and ultimately conclusions in Chapter Five. This process included first the journaling of events and then the codifying of the data to interpret the findings.

Journaling Events

Figure 5 details how the researcher journaled about events of the day. While there was a pool of experiences that the researcher lived, symbolized by the pool itself (or the oblong cylinder on the bottom), each and every event experienced in the day did not reach the point where it bubbled up in the writing. Those that did bubble up did so because of one, or a combination of, four factors: my teaching and interactions with my students, my observations and interactions with my coachees, my meetings and interactions with my administration, and my involvement with the community and interactions with other teachers, parents, etc. Of course, even these interactions, on their own, could not have bubbled up as they have nothing to fuel the fire. What fueled the fire is me – the researcher and the teacher/teacher leader. What fueled these experiences are my efficacies and beliefs. As mentioned before, efficacies show my guttural reaction to what is happening - the happy, the frustrated, the sad; because what had occurred either reinforced or contradicted what I had believed to be an efficacy (although this notion will be explored more in Chapter Five). Those beliefs and efficacies are represented as the logs under the pool of experiences.
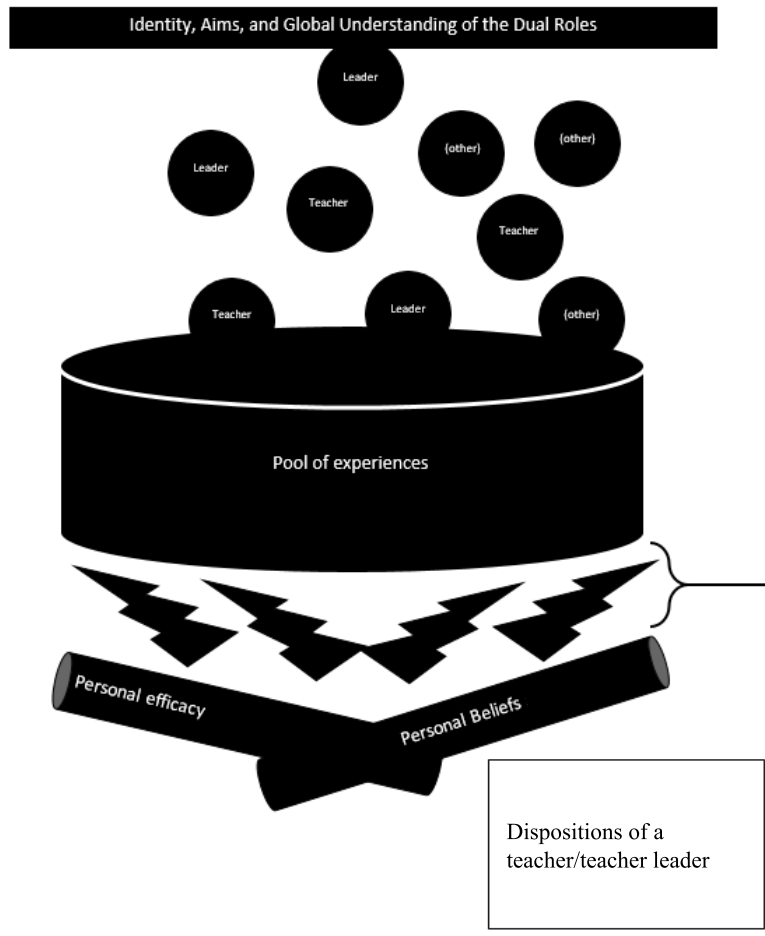
Figure 5: Fire Analogy Illustrated - Data Analysis

However, without a flame, nothing would have boiled up. The flame in this case are my dispositions, dispositions that will be unearthed in Chapter Four. Experiences in the four aforementioned domains that either confirmed, challenged, or obliterated elements of my efficacy or beliefs, either supported or distorted my notion of my dispositions, these experiences were what caused those events to be of note, to be written about. Those experiences that fueled the same element of my identity as a teacher, as a

leader, or another part of me, created a bubble with the capacity to rise above the experiences and impacted my identity and/or my aims in this type of dual role.

For example, if I had an interaction with an administration that validated my teaching that interaction, in turn, bubbled up at the surface to something that I wrote about in my journal. If that type of occurrence were to exist in isolation, or close to it, that bubble, that set of experiences, would not rise up as being impactful. Conversely, if those types of occurrences that validated my efficacy as a teacher in turn did not shape my identities, they too did not rise to the surface of experiences discussed in the findings. Interactions such as those that failed to bubble up did not make into the findings in Chapter Four.

Some experiences, of their own accord, did, in the moment, shift my identity, my aims, or the way that I saw the role of a teacher and teacher leader. These, of course, were included in the journal and their implication immediately identified. As I completed the journal, I was, of course, aware of the research that I was conducting, thus if I perceived that I am shaped in a way, immediately by an experience, that perception became a reality and, thus, became something that merited description as such.

Once this journal was done, using the tenets of Eisner, I sought to interpret and evaluate what the journal told me, particularly in relation to the research questions. This was then compiled into themes using the process described below.

Codifying the Data and Findings

Having finished the journal, the process of analyzing the data present in the journal began. As I read through the experiences that bubbled up, I put them through the

following test to see how they shaped my analysis of the data. I read each and every sentence, paragraph, idea, over and over to see if it registered as an event to be codified. The first question was "what layer of my identity does this impact?" with the choices, from Korthagen's (2014) Onion model of behavior, competencies (or efficacies), beliefs, dispositions (which is not in the model but added in to uphold the work of Kaplan and Garner (2017)), or identity. Then I asked "which identity is reflected to have been impacted" with the choice being the teacher, the teacher leader, or other. Finally, I asked "what was the source of the event" with the choices being myself, coaching, the ILT meetings, teaching, department or staff meetings, supervisors, the community, my family, or the school as a whole. It is important to note that if the first question was answered with dispositions, research (Kaplan and Garner, 2017) says this is not housed in an identity, and I soon realized that it was irrelevant to codify an experience associated with my dispositions as affecting an identity.

Once the coding was completed, the researcher then mapped out all of the codes, connecting them in a series of webs to illustrate the findings. First, the experiences of the teacher and the teacher leader were laid out in their own intricate web to illustrate what was experienced and how those experiences were related. Then, the experiences were examined to see both what efficacies could be ascertained from the writing about the experiences as well as what beliefs could be seen as represented by the actions. These again were built into a system of webs, illustrating the connections between the efficacies and beliefs of the teacher and the teacher leader.

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From the web of efficacies and beliefs, those key characteristics, or here the beliefs boiled down to a category that embodied the beliefs evident, that were represented in all roles rose to the level of dispositions. These dispositions were then mapped out in a web to create connections between themes and ideas. It was these webs of interconnecting behaviors, efficacies, beliefs, and dispositions that allowed me to determine what prominent themes arose as well as how those could be interpreted in the body of chapter four.

The events in the journal also served as empirical evidence for me as the teacher and teacher leader, and led me to one of two paths: one that aided me as I created new aims for myself and for the teachers I worked with in one of the roles, the teacher or the teacher leader, and the other which addressed the aims I had by highlighting their importance, giving me reason to change them, or causing me to abandon those aims. Thus, as the journal is examined, those events that created aims or impacted the aims I had as a teacher and teacher leader were used to answer the final two research question, "How does such an individual develop his/her aims for himself and his peers?" and "What challenges and opportunities present themselves to enhance or take away from such aims?". Every event in the journal obviously did not impact these aims, and yet aims occured because of a single event or several events came together, so as the journal is codified, both types of events that impacted my aims were addressed.

In the end, all events will be codified using the aforementioned system but not all events were used to answer all five research questions. Only those that rose to address

that given question using the aforementioned criteria were addressed in questions, particular beyond the first.

Limitations to the Study

As I entered into this, I needed to name for myself a few limitations to the work that I pursued. To begin with, the many roles that I played in this process, the Philomath of the world of teaching and teacher leadership, the researcher, the participant, the journalist, did influence each other. As a participant here, I had already been influenced by the Philomath, as the research I had conducted has had a direct influence on my role as a teacher and teacher leader. Thus, by conducting this study, the learnings I found as a researcher were swayed by these many roles and the simple act of conducting this research.

Additionally, while this research does shed light on a field that is devoid of research, it is merely one perspective. My lived experiences cannot be identical to those who also serve in this capacity, and nor can their story be identical to mine. No two experiences will be the same. However, findings will be limited to my experiences and not the general experiences of many. The way the findings are analyzed in Chapter Five maintain this perspective, that of the experiences of one individual. Thus, the conclusions drawn are not about all individuals who lived or do live this experience, rather how the findings resonate or dispute current literature on teacher, teacher leadership, the dual roles, and the identities thereof.

About the Researcher

It is only just that if I am positioning myself as one that is capable of using auto-educational criticism that I relay a bit of my background in education as well as teacher leadership. I have been a High School Mathematics teacher now for 21 years, beginning at the age of 21. I have taught just about every course imaginable, from courses such as Pre-Algebra and Algebra I Part I to Calculus and Probability and Statistics. I have taught in both the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs. I have not only served students across the continuum of high school math, I have worked to create new courses to meet the needs of the students. For example, the course I referred to earlier, Algebra I Part I took Algebra and split it over two years. I helped turn that into a class that was just one year but held over two consecutive periods (and the group I worked with were all sophomores and older). Additionally, at my current place of employment, I have had the chance to work with some of the brightest students in the city and we still weren't meeting their needs, so I created a course (that tied into the International Baccalaureate curriculum and allowed students to take the Further Maths exam – a test only about 300 students in the world take each year) that consisted of college level statistics, discrete math, graph theory, and set theory.

The school year that this journal was written (the 2019-2020 school year) I was teaching three courses all in the International Baccalaureate curriculum. This was due to the fact that as a leader of the department, I often take on the classes that no one wants, and no one felt comfortable or had the experience with high level mathematics (I mention "had the experience" because if I had offered the courses to another teacher in the

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department and they took it - which is very doubtful - the community would be upset that someone who is inexperienced in teaching the course would be doing so when someone who had experience was not teaching it). Thus, my schedule had the first four periods off to attend to coaching, teacher meetings, leadership meetings, etc and then 5th Period was HL (Higher Level) Mathematics - Applications and Interpretations Year 2, 6th Period was HL Mathematics - Analysis and Approaches Year 1, and 7th period was HL Options. HL Mathematics - Applications and Interpretations was a course in its first year that contained a lot of higher level statistics, probability, linear algebra, calculus, and graph theory that most teachers had little to not exposure to. The HL Mathematics - Analysis and Approaches was the first year we were offering the course, so I had one other teacher (Anna) also teaching it with me wherein we covered pre-calculus, calculus, and statistics. Finally, the HL Options course covered advanced math work in discrete math and number theory, graph theory, set theory, and statistics.

My teaching of mathematics is not just limited to content knowledge though. I have been recognized in both my places of employment, as well as nationally, for my ability to teach mathematics. As a teacher, for the past seven years, I have been awarded the highest possible rating, Distinguished, in my district. Additionally, I have received awards from students and faculty alike for my teaching. Not only that, but I have been a National Board Certified teacher for over 10 years now, which means that I not only received my certification but also passed my recertification.

I have taught in two states and four different high schools. I have taught at two different colleges – an introductory algebra designed for mechanics looking to become

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apprentices as well as method classes for to-be teachers. I have taught at a summer program for the gifted – teaching Algebra I to students who were not even in middle school. And I have taught in less traditional settings – on the field as a Rugby and Football coach, on the stage as an Improv Team and Speech Team coach, and in the after school hours as a sponsor to groups like the Gay Straight Alliance and a Pep Club sponsor. Suffice it to say, I have been in a good number of roles as an educator.

As to the world of being a teacher leader, I had my first foray into that within the first few years of teaching. At the first school I taught at, I was made a course leader after a few years of teaching. In that role, I led other teachers in that course to ensure we were preparing and sharing lessons and assessments. I was asked to then lead the development of a new course we offered, and in doing that, I was asked to present my findings at our state conference.

When I moved to Colorado, my leadership roles varied and developed. I initially became involved in the state conferences and that organization, presenting at the conferences and participating in various events and volunteer opportunities with them. Then, as I worked at the charter school, I was tossed into many leadership roles such as overseeing my department, helping train the staff as they moved to block classes (90 minutes as opposed to the traditional 45 minute period) and being a part of the hiring team (and mentoring those new teachers).

Finally, in my current location, as I mentioned earlier, I have served as a leader from my first year. Aside from what I have mentioned though, I have served on committees to shape the school and district, from the work to restructure our school to be

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more culturally aware to district work in constructing assessments to be used across the district. In the formalized teacher leadership role that I hold, I have also been asked to use what I have learned to help the district as a whole, both in serving on Advisory Councils so that the district could better shape this program to serving as a mentor for teachers new to this dual role. I still continue my involvement with many outside organizations, presenting at conferences and serving on the board for the state's mathematics teacher organization.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

As described in the methodology section, as a researcher, I examined my own practice of teaching as well as a teacher leader, in addition to the moments in my personal life that affected what was happening in the school as this contributes to the identity of a teacher (Hammersley-Fletcher & Qualter, 2010). This was done by journaling every day during the school week for four weeks straight. This process was interrupted however by the Covid-19 pandemic as it swept across the United States. When it hit the school systems, the research was four weeks in. As a teacher, this was devastating. As a researcher, this left me to decide what to do with the remaining year and the journaling process.

Thus, once school started up again (about three weeks later), I continued to journal when matters arose that necessitated journaling. As school was not in session other than virtually (and that was left to the discretion of the teacher how that would look), and we were asked to suspend our teacher leadership roles of observation and evaluation, journals followed either meetings that were held that left a lasting impression or great emotions that I felt because of what was being experienced. It would not have done good to journal every day as days were just the atypical educational experience.

Thus, the findings below will detail not only the five initial research questions but how being a teacher during the pandemic and its effects on these roles played out. Those questions again were:

1. What are the lived experiences of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?

2. What are the beliefs and efficacies of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?

3. How do these experiences influence the identity and dispositions of an individual such as this in a dual role of teacher and teacher leader?

4. How does such an individual develop his/her aims for himself and his peers?

5. What challenges and opportunities present themselves to enhance or take away from such aims?

The Lived Experiences of a Dual Role Educator

While capturing the essence of what an educator does on a daily basis is incredibly difficult, the journal that was recorded as part of this research can help to categorize and streamline those experiences, thus answering the research question: "What are the lived experiences of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?". These experiences can be broken down into three different areas, that of the educator, that of the teacher leader, and that of the individual working in

those roles. It is imperative to understand these lived experiences as they set the stage for the beliefs, efficacies, dispositions, and identities, but they also serve as data in the analysis and implications in Chapter Five.

As an Educator

While relating every detail of a teacher's day, the myriad of responsibilities and roles they fulfill, is a tedious endeavor, the experiences were summed up in themes listed below. However, what is most important that the reader ascertain from this section is both to understand the realities of the urban setting at AHHS as well as to understand why I as a teacher leader had to rely on my dispositions in order to successfully serve in this dual role (particularly when considering the overwhelming amount of work and time this work takes on).

To embody everything that a teacher experiences on a daily basis would consume more than this dissertation can cover. It is imperative for the reader to understand the roles and responsibilities of a teacher in order to gain further clarity around how a teacher leader affords to serve in both roles. That said, I will highlight what is evident in the journal as written. As an educator, the experiences captured here speak to what an educator does to prepare and enact lessons, what and how the teacher enacts these lessons, and how the educator continues to support students outside of class time. On top of that, as an educator, there are many other duties and responsibilities that are expected, duties that supersede teaching, including attending meetings and professional development, sponsoring additional activities (as this researcher's sponsorship of the

Gender Sexuality Alliance - or GSA - plays a role in the stories the journal tells), and meeting additional expectations set by administration at the school and district level.

Preparing and Enacting Lessons

As research has pointed out (for example, Cobb et al, 2020), teacher leaders must be well versed in preparing lessons that are equitable and meet the needs of all learners. Therefore it only makes sense to discuss the types of ways lessons were prepared and enacted by me as a teacher.

As a teacher, one area that I noted that I spend an abundant amount of time on is planning lessons and preparing for class with the students. While this didn't always become evident in the journal (as the journal covers what happened during the school day and much of that work occurred outside of the school day), there are several examples that come to light to illustrate all that is entailed in a day of teaching as illustrated below:

"So I got to my room and got to work. Again, I don't know if I mentioned this, but I like doing the problems I'm going to assign the day of so they are fresh and with me when I teach. So, that's how I spent the morning, but that went by rather quickly as half of 6th and most of 7th were activities that I had to have planned out already. ... So I turned to grading – and worked on the tests because I knew they would take me the longest. Not that I don't have plenty of other stuff to grade." - February 28th, 2020

"And I used my prep time to prep. Doing those problems. Particularly because in my haste on Friday I threw away work I needed for today. Ugh." - March 2nd, 2020

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Inherent in these quotes are elements of my identity as a teacher (pieces that will be addressed later), however what is clear from these quotes are a few things. First off, as a teacher, I stress preparation. Not just having a lesson plan, but one that involves ways for students to interact with the mathematics, one that I have completely worked out before the students engage in the work, and one that is based on what I have learned from grading the work the students produce. Additionally, while most teachers will use their Prep time to prepare the next lessons, it is a rarity that I have that time for the material, rather that is spent on teacher leadership (which will be covered in the next section). It is important to me that the lessons I enact are creative and engage the students. This adds an extra layer to the preparation of materials as I mentioned earlier. For example:

"6th Hour we played the puzzle game – and they enjoyed it and got pretty far so I was happy. They didn't finish but that's ok cause we can finish tomorrow and they all seemed to do really well." March 9th, 2020

The puzzle game, referred to above, is just one of many activities that I have created over my tenure of teaching. To give the reader a sense of what this entails, as a teacher I find a set of problems for the students around a given topic. The students work in a group to successfully complete these tasks (usually problems that reinforce a set skill). When they get a solution, they check it with me and, if correct, they get their next problem and a puzzle piece (from a puzzle I have made). Suffice it to say, an activity like this with so

many moving pieces (literally) takes quite some time to prepare, just part of what embodies the work of an educator.

This is not to say though this all comes easy or without a cost. During the last week of journaling, as the stress of the times and the workload were mounting, it is easy to see the overwhelming amount of struggle I was facing as a teacher.

"Today is the kinda day that if I could have stopped to have a melt down and let tears stream down my face, I would have. I am exhausted (due to being up late preparing materials for school this next day). I am overwhelmed. I am feeling defeated...
So it should come as no surprise that as I drove to work today, the mixture of extra traffic and extra exhaustion led me to get into an accident. I'm still not sure how it happened." - March 9th, 2020

Again, this alludes to more themes that will be generated in the next section, but I mention this now to bring to light the amount of work I do as a teacher to feel prepared for the students.

What and How Lessons are Enacted

This is all to prepare for that moment that the students enter the classroom. Once there, a myriad of tangible and intangible experiences occur. These experiences include connecting to the students, reading and responding to the students, communicating with the students, assessing the students, enacting the lesson - which requires me to be able to edit the lesson in a moment (or at least be flexible to allow for spontaneous teaching

moments), grouping students, giving students the one-on-one support they need, making difficult decisions, and living up to the expectations I set for the teachers I coach. Below are a few excerpts from the journal that illustrate these points of teaching:

"I did teach today too – I promise. And it was a good day of teaching. I'm still using the "marking the work" as I told Mark about yesterday and I even had to stop a class when I saw similar errors occurring around the room, but was able to empower a student who wasn't making that error to explain to the class what he knew. Yes, I'm reinforcing that I was preaching good teaching, and that I did it. I know, self-aggrandizing, but it worked well. And I was happy with my craft today." - February 19th, 2020

Here is an example that not only illustrates the teaching that I use when in the classroom but also how the lines between coaching and teaching at some points can become blurred. Additionally, there are elements of my identity embodied here, but that will be addressed in the next section. All that said though, this gives a clear example of what one may see as they watch my classroom as a teacher.

This example is something that I planned for as an educator. However, not all the moments of teaching can be planned for. In the following example Drake passed out in class. This is not something a teacher plans for, myself included. This leaves the teacher in a position of being in charge but not having a clear path forward, thus having to rely on the instincts of a teacher:

"Well, for the third time in my teaching career (yes third), I had a student pass out in my class. Which reminds me of the other times. The first time, well that was during a final and this tall skinny white boy just clunked over on top of this larger black female and the look she gave, like "what the fuck….", has stuck with me. And the second, Grant – oh Grant – I'm still not sure what happened, but his was in the age of skinny jeans, and when we flipped him over and his skinny jeans sagged down, well lets just say I got to see more of him than I wanted to. And today made three.

I knew, knew it was gonna happen. Or something at least. When Drake walked up to me during 6th hour, he was white as a ghost. He said he needed a drink and didn't feel well, and I tried to get him to just sit down. Except he more collapsed onto me. And the rest of the kids – and I'm laughing now out loud as I write this (because of their reactions) – did one of two things; they were completely oblivious to what happened because they were so invested in the lesson or they stopped what they were doing to help out. But that was the end of the day." - March 6th, 2020

This is what I would dub as a spontaneous moment in teaching - something that as a teacher, I am forced to respond to yet have never been trained as to how to respond. While this was, as I mentioned, my third time experiencing this, it does not make it any easier to handle. Even still, while responding to situations as a teacher that I was never trained for can be tough, some of the more everyday occurrences can be difficult to handle as well. For example, I had a group of students who missed for a few days due to a competition, and when they returned, I was faced with the following dilemma:

"...but then they were at a loss over what all they missed. And I felt bad having to say, "you missed, you'll have to wait on that and I will get back to reviewing some of this material later in the week, but I can't stop and reteach everything in the moment". Which was part of the reason (I didn't review the material for the absent students), but it's also like I'm telling a story I barely know. If I get off track, I may not remember the early parts adequately nor will I be able to get back to this point in the story." - March 9th, 2020

This occurred in a class that was brand new to me, and frankly, material that was very challenging. The point of my mentioning this though is to highlight that as a teacher, often difficult decisions like this arise. This will be developed more later in this chapter as well as in Chapter 5 as it presents an interesting dilemma that occurs a handful of times in the journal.

However, as I do work around understanding the students, as highlighted below, I feel better equipped to make these decisions as they arise. Connecting with the students in a myriad of ways is a big piece of the work I do as an educator. For example, on our last day of in-person school, in my last period, which was entirely seniors, I saw how much they needed to bond with each other, more so than any lesson I could provide them on that day, so I let them have their fun and bond in a way that would be meaningful to them, as silly as it was, as follows:

"By the time 7th hit, I had my student aide working on assembling the calculators (unpacking and putting on the chargers), which meant a lot of cardboard. So, I did little to stop the eventual cardboard robot Pi Man that they turned Anthony in, because, again, that whirlwind feeling. Well that, and I know they are kids. They enjoy playing with each other. And I wasn't about to say – "you don't know when you'll see each other again, but be serious now and don't have fun". So, I let it slide. And let them have their fun." - March 13th, 2020

Teacher Work Outside of Classroom Obligations

As mentioned earlier, so much goes into the lessons I teach my students, whether intentionally planned out beforehand or because we adjusted in the moment. Thus, it should not be surprising that as a researcher, I found that I also dedicated much of my time outside of class time for the students and to support them. Portions of the journal bring to light how students accessed me for additional help during my Prep periods, during lunch, and after school.

Again, there is no way to fully embody what teaching looks like on a daily basis, but I bring to light the examples above to help the reader understand the lived experiences of this educator. Aside from the work with and for students (before, during, and after class), as an educator, there are still many more responsibilities that must be met as a teacher. These include sponsoring extracurricular activities, attending meetings and professional development, and attending to additional duties and responsibilities.

Sponsoring Extracurricular Activities

As this may seem unnecessary to discuss, listing the activities I had to work on not only develops the setting for later conclusions that will be drawn this chapter about beliefs, it is also necessary to further that notion of the need for a teacher leader to develop tools to effectively do this job as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

While over the tenure of teaching, I have been responsible for coaching and sponsoring many activities and athletics, here within this body of work, what is documented is the educator's work with the Gender Sexuality Alliance, or the GSA. This consisted of meetings twice a week: once with the executive team to plan the meetings and once with the entire student group. While this is completely voluntary, it is something that this educator is dedicated to serving, and, as such, weighs heavily on me as the educator and thus is referred to throughout the journal. For example:

"And then I had my GSA officers. We are prepping a lot – the GSA Assembly next month and the Drag Show. And I know it may be 'unprofessional' but I was talking about our assembly and saying how we could improve upon what we saw [during the assembly we had during the school day that day] and how we could make the follow up time more impactful." - February 25th, 2020

Additionally, as an educator, I make brief mention in my journal of the Math team which I sponsor, again independent of being paid, rather just becoming another commitment that exists as an experience of this educator.

Meetings and Professional Development

Seeing the experiences of professional development as an educator will not only reinforce what the research has outlined for professional development in Chapter 2 but will also lay the groundwork for the decisions I made around professional development as discussed in both this chapter and next.

The world of teaching, aside from the world of being a teacher leader, is full of meetings as well, meetings as a staff, meetings as a department, meetings to collaborate curriculum and teaching, professional development, and so much more. Meetings become so ingrained that it almost becomes a joke in the world of teaching as seen in this excerpt from my journal (a poem written to tell tell the students how I was feeling in quarantine due to COVID-19 being separated from them):

"If I could tell you how it's felt

These past few weeks...

...To not have the emails,

The phone calls,

The meetings,

Ugh the meetings,

The office hours,

The collaborations,

The early mornings and

The late nights

And the thousands of decisions I have to make each day"

 - March 25th, 2020, If I Could Tell You

This was written with the intent of reading it to the students, the community. That never happened unfortunately, but it can be seen here how much that simple act of meeting burdened myself and the other teachers I work with.

Additional Duties as a Teacher

Finally, as an educator, there are constant additional duties you are being asked to complete. For example, we are asked to walk the hall once a week at the start of an assigned hour of teaching to ensure students are going where they should. Here is an excerpt depicting one such walk where I was both able to forge a relationship that was built around instructional mentorship but also a responsibility to sever the school:

"So I did my hall walk with Mr. Cook. It was mostly uneventful. But he's one of the Spanish teachers so we talked a little about what happened. And he's new to us, and teaching, so it was good for him. Unfortunately, at the end of the walk we came across a few students making poor choices (ditching class, ditching school) so had to go to the office and report it." - February 25th, 2020

Again, as in many other instances, aside from the experiences that I as a teacher live, parts of my identity (which will be addressed in the following section) are evident.

However, I include this here to showcase what exactly these walks entail. Again, this is one such example of additional duties that teachers are called on to complete on a daily basis in the world of teaching.

As a Teacher Leader

Just as understanding the lived experiences as a teacher are pivotal to understanding my efficacies, beliefs, and dispositions as a teacher, so are they are important to understanding my efficacies, beliefs, and dispositions as a teacher leader.

While a good deal of literature exists to corroborate my depiction of the lived experiences of teaching, and much exists to a finer point that details the lived experiences of urban educators of mathematics, not nearly as much exists to depict the realities of teacher leaders. While this role is considered half of my employment at Alexander Hamilton High School (or AHHS) the amount of writing that exists in the journal recorded as the research here on the researcher's role as a teacher leader far outweighs what is written on the role of the educator. While themes can and will be drawn from that simple notion alone, for now, I acknowledge it for the reader to be forewarned of the imbalance as they progress through these findings.

As a teacher leader, most of the lived experiences can be divided into one of five aress; my work as a coach of teachers, my work as a department leader, my work as a member of the Instructional Lead Team (the body of staff consisting of the other teacher leaders and the administrators), my work with supervisors and administration, and my work to respond to the needs of the school - the students, staff, and community members.

Work as a Coach of Teachers

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this work as a coach of teachers, or instructional coach, is where a vast majority of the work as a teacher leader is completed. It is in these interactions that beliefs and efficacies discussed later this chapter will be found. Additionally, this lays the foundation for answering research questions four and five, or the work around aims with the teachers that are being coached. Finally, this speaks to the work in Chapter 5 around tools that I need to create as a teacher leader as well as the impact of a teacher leader.

Before delving into the work that I do with teachers as a teacher leader, it will help for the reader to understand the educators I work with. Within the department there are 11 teachers (including myself). Seven of those teachers are on my caseload (meaning that I both coach and score them throughout the year). These include: John, a Black male teacher slightly older than myself who spent his entire teaching career in the elementary schools before joining us a few years ago, Betty, a White female teacher who had worked with us a few years then left to travel the world and came back for this school year, Ally, a seasoned Middle School teacher, White female and middle-aged, who had won many accolades for her role there but was looking for a challenge so moved up to high school with us (and her children attended AHHS), Mark, a middle-aged White male teacher who originally worked as an engineer before switching over to teaching, Clark, a middle aged Black male who joined us the same year as John having worked in middle schools up to that point, Anna, a younger teacher who was hired after student teaching with me for a

year, and Cindy, a younger White female teacher who had moved from a Virginian elementary school to join us this year.

Additionally, the other members of the department, Scott, an older White male who recently transferred from another high school in the district so he could also teach a course in the Social Studies Department, Gary, a young White male teacher who focuses a lot of time and energy on coaching Cross Country and Track, and Elaine, a White female teacher and the most seasoned member of the department at our high school also involved in world of the International Baccalaureate (in fact one of the authors of the text books they used in her class) did receive coaching from me even though their evaluator was Roger, the administrator, Assistant Principal, who oversaw the Math department. This is detailed in figure 6 below.

Roger (evaluates me and the teachers I do not, as well as serves as the administrative liaison to the math department.)

Me (and the teachers I serve)

John
Betty
Ally
Mark
Clark
Cindy
Anna

Scott
Elaine
Gary
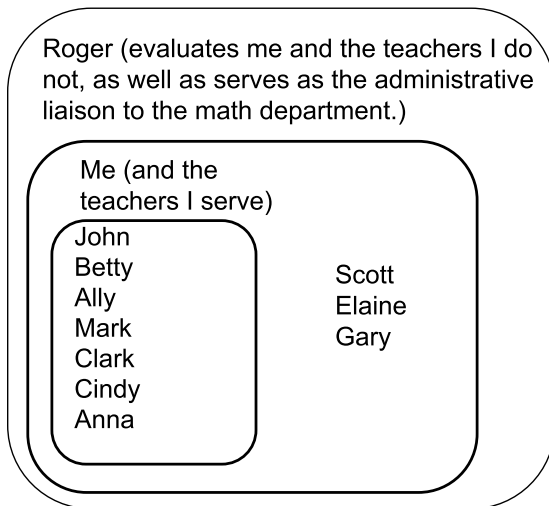
Figure 6: Teachers and Administrators of the Math Department at AHHS

When examining this first area, that of a coach of teachers, it is best to think of actions taken before an observation, during an observation, and proceeding an observation.

Work Prior to the Observation

Prior to an observation, as a teacher leader, I find a goal or reason to observe the class. This goal can vary from simply assessing where teachers are to determine next steps of growth to focussing on specific and concrete teaching actions during the lesson. Often these goals originate from one of two sources - the teachers themselves upon being asked what they need as well as from my assessment of the teacher's well-being. As the teacher leader, I aim to be organized and use Calendaring tools to schedule these visits - both the observations themselves and the follow-up conversations. Thus, unless told otherwise by administration, my visits are always planned with the teachers not only so they know what to expect but also to keep me organized.

While asking teachers what they need can happen in a variety of ways, one method that I found to be effective and uplifting is what I helped the rest of the Instructional Lead Team implement in a staff meeting, where in we "asked them (the teachers) for a wish – they wrote on a post-it something that could help lift their spirits" (February 26th, 2020). Another, simpler example of asking teachers was when I went in to watch Anna's class on February 28th, 2020 as she was searching for tips to handle 'senioritis' that led to her seniors not wanting to do much and struggling to keep up. An example of asking the teachers what they needed as it connected to me assessing their needs was after the administrator over the Mathematics Department, Roger, decided to do

scored observations of the teachers in my department. This disheartened several of them as he had not been their evaluator and they were not used to his style of leadership, observation, and evaluation. Thus, I addressed this issue with talking with both Roger, then asking the team if I could help more as seen below (during a department meeting):

"This moved us into partials. After talking with Roger, I told them about how I could do a second partial IF they wanted another score. We just had to set it up. But I don't think that became priority one with everything else going on." - March 12th, 2020

That said, given the next day we found out that we were going to be shutting our doors due to the Covid Pandemic, I wasn't able to support teachers here as originally planned (however, it also ended up not mattering as because of the pandemic, end of the year ratings of teachers were optional). Assessing their needs also comes in just daily interactions, knowing that a teacher is not performing up to their potential, talking to the teacher about their personal well-being, or even based on what is seen in quick visits throughout the day. In fact, there are times where I am assessing needs up to the last minute, even working with teachers to change scheduled visits and debriefs when and if they do not work for whatever reason.

Observations of Teachers

Once I as a teacher leader have a solid understanding of a goal for the teacher, the next steps occur as I observe the teacher. Many decisions have to be made before stepping into the room (and while in the room) of a teacher that is being observed: what

kind of observation will it be (short visit like 5 - 15 minutes or long visit like 30 minutes through the whole period), how will the observation be documented, how will data be gathered during the observation, how will (or will) the observation be followed up with in the moment, and what can and should be done to coach the teachers while in the classroom (even though that may not be planned). As a caveat to that last point, as a teacher leader, I do believe in many types of observations including co-teaching and live coaching among many other strategies. However, being towards the end of the year, most of the observations at this point were traditional observations.

As Figure 7 depicts below, this observation is the first stage of a model incorporated by me as a teacher leader in our observation feedback model. The remaining stages will be addressed in the next portion of this section.

As mentioned, the first step is deciding what kind of observation works best for the given outcome - a short focussed observation or a long observation to absorb everything that is happening in the classroom. For example, on February 28th, having worked ahead and having a little extra time, I was able to do some small visits where I could not only observe three of the same classes (Integrated Math 1) but also leave notes of encouragement based on what I saw in these short observations. Some of these smaller observations happen out of necessity and not just by choice. For example, as mentioned earlier, I try to make my schedule flexible to meet the needs of my teachers. This sometimes means finding coverage for one of my classes so I can watch a teacher as was

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 1. Coach Observes,      │
│ scripts, interacts      │
└─────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 2. Coach assesses the   │
│ evidence                │
└─────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 3. Teachers verbally    │
│ assess their performance│
└─────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Coach looks for highlights  │   │ Coach looks for lowlights   │
│ to leverage (both what is   │   │ to work on (both what is    │
│ said and seen in the lesson)│   │ said and seen in the lesson)│
└─────────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 4. Coach (re) addresses │
│ these with the teacher  │
└─────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 5. Teachers to fill in  │
│ the gaps from step 4    │
└─────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 6. Both look for a theme│
│ to emerge on lowlights  │
└─────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ 7. Both jointly construct│
│ aim and action steps    │
└─────────────────────────┘
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Figure 7: Observation Feedback Model

the case on March 12th, 2020 where I watched John during a class I typically teach. This required me finding a substitute teacher (which was ok as they were just taking a test that day). But as I don't want to put that burden on another teacher, I make observations like those shorter so I can return to my own classroom.

     Once in the classroom, as a coach of the teacher, I do my best to gather evidence - be that evidence that I am giving my attention fully to (ie I'm simply watching with no distractions like a notepad or a computer) or one that I am documenting via the computer

or a notepad. Regardless of how the evidence is gathered, this all stems from what I see as an observer in the classroom and what I can infer from what I see. Knowing this though, it is imperative to me to always keep in mind that perceptions are just that. As written in a larger poem (Color by Numbers, March 5th, 2020):

"What I see as White

You may see as Black

What I see as Male

You may see as Female

What I see is that what you see is what matters

Because perception

Is everything"

This also informs later parts of the observation cycle depicted in Figure 7. To describe every detail of every lesson observed would be far too tedious, rather what follows is examples of what I see and how I responded. For example, the following came from an observation of Betty where I noted that she seemed to be 'off her game' and had to figure out what those intangibles were that were preventing her from being successful. On February 21st, 2020:

"Betty... has seemed off lately. This could be my imagination, this could be because I know she's thinking of leaving, this could be because of her jetlag, this could be because

I've been so overwhelmed with my year and I know that she's doing well enough that I don't have to give her as much time as others, but whatever it is, this intangible is there. And it's a hard class – way too many students for that class. But she's doing ok. It wasn't stellar and it wasn't awful. It was a few examples to warm-up and then an activity that had the students doing as many problems as they could while circulating the room."

Several takeaways can be made from this entry about an observation. First, as a teacher leader entrenched in the lives of the teachers, I can not help to make inferences about what I am seeing and why I am seeing it. To that end, in the case of Betty, the inference of her not being happy and thinking about leaving ended up being founded and she did not return to our school the following year. Additionally, what comes to light for me are contradictions, for the better or worse, of what I expect of teachers. I expect Betty to perform at a high level as a teacher, and, as mentioned, this lesson was not 'good' or 'bad' (highly subjective terms, but used in the journal as it was written for me, not necessarily the rest of the world). This contradicted what I knew to be true of Betty, so something I wanted to discuss during our debrief. Finally, the lesson itself was addressed in the observation itself. These pieces, the tangible "what is happening", as well as the intangible, "what can I infer about the teacher, students, lesson, etc" as well as "what contradicts my assumptions" are constantly scrolling through my mind as I observe a class.

Sometimes those contradictions come in because of what I see in that given lesson. For example, that lesson mentioned earlier where Anna wanted me to help her

with the 'senioritis' issues had students working on a pre-test where she asked the students to work in complete silence. However, during the pre-test, she then circulated the room having conversations (not about the mathematics) with the students.

The inferences made as an observer of the teacher is something that has matriculated over time. The harshness of my attitudes toward Gary will be discussed further in Chapter Five. That aside, what is important is noting the inferences, the 'teacher intuition', a skill that I will discuss again in Chapter Five. However harsh my feelings were, they are important here to understand what I was feeling and, accordingly, what I was seeing.

"But then, I went to Gary's room. And yeah. It wasn't much better than what has been happening. At least today he was talking to the students who "cared" about the worksheet. He told students how to do the math and answered questions but could not inform right or wrong and could not give next steps. Why? Cause he didn't prep it. In fact, he told me later he had recently printed the worksheet so he couldn't prep what the students should do with it. And I knew that, even without him saying it. I've gotten really good with my 'teacher intuition'. So I can read between the lines. For example, when the teacher wasn't aware that one of the problems had 'ugly decimals' or didn't know how to answer certain questions, his lack of preparedness became obvious." (February 25th, 2020)

A lot of what is written here relied on inference made during the lesson, but inferences that were confirmed during the debrief of the lesson. Having done this work for quite some time now, I can not deny the power of my ability to infer what I don't see, however, I do not act on those inferences, rather seek to confirm or deny them. As a side note, one of the reasons I was asked to coach him was that Roger was considering letting Gary go (a consideration that became moot with the pandemic as schools were essentially told not to fire any teachers during that time). Thus, the comparison to past lessons (both seen by myself in prior observations and what Roger had told me) as a part of what I considered during the observation.

One thing that, as an observer and a coach, I try to do while doing an observation is to interact with the students themselves. In fact, one of the lessons observed on March 6th, 2020, where I went to Betty's classroom, most of the time I was there was spent working with pockets of students, mostly ones that I had already known but a few additional students as well. Doing so, I was able to not only observe what was happening in the classroom from the student perspective, but also ascertain the learning that the students were doing throughout the lesson and the unit.

There are also times that, in the moment, coaching can happen best so that a teacher can see immediate results. For example the lesson referred to earlier of John on March 11th, 2020, I had previously seen Clark do the same lesson. I knew where John was headed with the lesson and knew how I could help him be proactive, so as I was observing him (doing a review with a series of problems), I advised him to leave the problems accessible to all students at all times - either through him or other students

writing them on the board. This was due to the nature of the lesson (the problems being on a powerpoint that only briefly were displayed before moving on to the next one) and students struggling to keep up. There are also moments in the lessons that call for praise, immediate praise. Rather than interrupt the lesson, I tend to use a post-it note to leave a message for the teacher. For example, in the February 27th, 2020 journal entry, there are excerpts that talk about me doing this with Mark, Clark, and Elaine. Small notes to tell them how I appreciated their enthusiasm, their relationships with students, and their myriad of ways to explain a problem

Working with Teachers After Observations

Once the observation is complete, as mentioned prior, I tend to follow what is displayed in Figure 7 as my guideline for how to proceed. First, I myself analyze the data that I have transcribed during the lesson, assessing the evidence based on what I had noticed during the observation. At times that data that can lead to huge underlying issues, such as with discipline and the issues that plagued Ally as documented on February 20th, or small issues such as with Cindy when I visited her on February 20th and, after examining what I saw, had a few ideas of areas of improvement that included "...having some of the more quiet students or reluctant students paraphrase an explanation given by another student and when doing a day like today, instead of weighting each assignment the same (and in four assignments at 5 points apiece, that meant 20 points) so not finishing one dropped a student to a C, to instead think about making full completion an A+, missing one assignment an A, missing two a B, and so on…".

From there, as a teacher leader, I seek to get the teacher's personal critique of the lesson I observe in order to see if they see similar or different high and/or lowlights. I then use paraphrasing of what I heard the teacher call out to reiterate the highlights and lowlights. If needed, additional elements are added to the list if it is important that the teacher is aware of. From here, a conversation occurs between the teacher and the instructional coach to move beyond these elements and create action steps. An example of this process of the post observation protocol, in particularly the lead up to the aim and action steps created, can be seen in my observation and debrief with Scott below:

"After the lesson, I jotted myself some major things that I wanted to get Scott to work on that included: outlining what success looks like for a task, chunking the tasks, assigning roles for conversations or group work, be conscientious about grouping, give explicit written directions for a task, give relevance to the task, and highlight these conventions that he expects the kids to hold.

When we met after school to discuss the lesson though, I let him do the talking. This was much more of a coaching session in that he verbalized several items on that list above that I paraphrased and formed into his goal for the next six weeks. It ended as:

In order to aid students to engage in tasks, the teacher will:

1.   Help the students to chunk the task (not always, particularly with smaller tasks or tasks that can be more open middle),

2.   Provide checkpoints where students should engage with their partners about how the problem is progressing, and

3.   Ensure the students understand what success on the task means (without giving away the whole process)." (February 24th, 2020)

While some areas of the process outlined above (and in Figure 7) are glossed over in the journal, the crux of this process can be clearly seen, and not just here, but in most of the debriefing conversations that were conducted between the teachers and myself as their instructional coach.

Aside from the typical coaching as addressed above (the events that occur before, during, and after observing a teacher teaching), there are a few other methods of coaching exemplified in the journal (which is not to say this list is exhaustive of what a teacher leader can and should do to coach teachers, rather what occurred during this window of time). The first of these is co-planning. Mention of this type of coaching occurs several times in the journal, from working with one teacher to working with a team of teachers; from planning a single lesson to planning an entire unit. Below is an example of the work done with the Integrated Math II Team around coplanning a unit, the nature of the relationships, the work we completed, and the aims we sought to meet by completing this work:

"That aside, I had a great conversation with Clark and John as we planned for their upcoming unit, including building in activities that will promote student engagement. We

first planned the unit by looking backwards from the assessment. As the next few units are not integral to further math success, we focused on what was integral for success AND what was being assessed (which happened to overlap well). So they are going to start with exploring shapes and areas and angle sums. We are going to build out a Math-O (a bingo game to play in math) for block day next week. I sent them the template and asked them to see what they can do. Additionally, we decided that the way of teaching the area of regular polygons with apothems is antiquated. I showed them another way of doing it, using the Law of Sines. And of course I trust them, but it's not in the curriculum so I worry if they can do it. I said I would help, or even write it for them, but they were insistent they could handle it. I hope I didn't overstep my bounds. But outside of that, it was a good time. It was exactly what they were hoping for. So I think it was worthwhile." (March 3rd, 2020)

Other themes from my identity are in this passage, but that will be explored later in this paper.

A few other methods are mentioned in the journal, including either co-teaching with a teacher or working as a substitute teacher in order for a teacher to attend to something else, as done with Anna on March 3rd, 2020 where I ended up co-teaching with her student teacher so that she could take a much needed mental break. Another form of coaching is encouraging teachers to observe other teachers and then debrief with those teachers on what they saw. Finally, as an instructional coach, as shared in the

journal, I ended up providing coaching for teachers who were not on my caseload but needed that additional push, particularly with someone who knows the content well.

Work as a leader of the department

Contending with the role of the department chair was another responsibility I had to contend with. Understanding this role and the experiences there of allows me to generate the efficacies and beliefs held by myself in this role. It is then from comparing these beliefs to the beliefs of other roles that dispositions can be drawn later in this chapter.

The role of a department chair is far from a new role, in fact it has and does exist in many forms across the many levels of education in the United States and beyond. This ambiguity is something that persists in the world of education and has led to a lack of consensus among teachers and department chairs throughout a school, district, state, and even the nation (Bliss, Fahrney, & Steffy, 1996). In fact, empirically, as an educator that has worked in two states and four different schools, this researcher can attest to the myriad of responsibilities department chairs are asked to fulfill depending on the school itself.

That said, it is also important to note that within the math department at AHHS, there are several different leadership roles that need to be filled - the instructional coach, the department chair, the department representative to the School Leadership Team, as well as a few roles that can be from the department (but do not necessarily need to be) including a member of the Collaborative School Committee and the Personnel Committee. During the 2020 school year, as a teacher at AHHS, I also served as the

Instructional Coach, was amidst my three-year term as department chair (something voted on by the department) and was voted on to the Collaborative School Committee. These roles are not dependent upon each other, at various points, I have served as the representative for the School Leadership Team, but opted to share that responsibility with another member of the department, Mark. I mention all of this so that the reader understands that, while I do serve in two distinct roles, the Department Chair and the Instructional Coach, and the two do become intertwined, it is not necessary to do both. For me, that has been a choice that I have decided to carry forth as I see the two as pivotal to each other.

As to the role on the Collaborative School Committee, this work is limited as the group meets only once a month. In fact, the only mention of it is in the March 2nd, 2020 entry of the journal as follows:

"I had CSC today. I wish I could say it was exciting and we accomplished lots. We didn't. But we talked about current issues – class sizes, what we are trying to accomplish –our strategic planning including Honors English for all and our combined honors/regular class, and our challenges – how are we preparing kids for state testing (and how are we preparing our students to WANT to take these tests and perform to their fullest)."

The idea of a combined honors/regular class was one of my goals for the 2020-2021 school year, to have our Integrated Math I course cater to both students within the same section, as alluded to above. Again though, this stemmed from my role as both a

department chair (in charge of scheduling our department) and the instructional coach (having a good understanding of what the teachers and students are capable of in these courses).

All that said, most of the work that is done for the department as a whole exists through the role of the department chair. The only mention of department chairs in the district agreement are as follows:

- " During the first month of each school year, the SLT (school leadership team), in consultation with the department chairs at the secondary level.. shall develop a written contingency plan for class coverage occasioned by a shortfall of substitute teachers." (p. 28)

- "The Department Chairs at the secondary level…, in collaboration with the principal, will establish procedures whereby teachers may indicate assignment preferences. All such procedures should emphasize the needs of the students as the primary consideration for assignment." (p. 53)

- "Department chairpersons shall be provided time to fulfill the duties of that assignment as determined by the principal after consultation with the CSC (Collaborative School Committee". (p. 25)

As that last bullet has been so ambiguous, the role of the department chair has been left to that person to craft as their own and then attend regular meetings (as alluded to in the journal on March 11th, 2020). To add to the ambiguity of the role, the first two bullets which expressly call out the responsibilities of a department chair have never been addressed with the department chairs expressly (although the second has been alluded to, which will be addressed below).

Thus the work that I have done as a department leader can be broken down into two main areas, work I do with the members of the department and work I do for the department.

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Work of the Department Leader Done with the Department

The work that occurs with the members of the department generally falls into one of two types of meetings; the atypical department meeting that occurred about once a week and the course-level meeting led by a specialist (except for courses that didn't have a specialist so it fell to me as the Department Chair and Instructional Coach to lead) that occurred once a week for the three primary courses - Integrated Math I, Integrated Math II, and Integrated Math III.

During department meetings that consist of all members, we tend to focus on a myriad of tasks including relaying information from the administration, completing tasks assigned and/or self-assigned, problem solving around issues we are facing as a department and school, and engage in critical conversations around teaching and culturally responsive teaching. For example, the following excerpt from March 5th, 2020 exemplifies a typical meeting, "2nd Hour we met as a department to discuss courses for next year (and the victories we've had there), the accuplacer (and the victories we've had there), upcoming events like Pi Day and the GSA Assembly, and then time to break into smaller groups to plan". The victories referred to in the courses for the 2020-2021 school year involve both creating courses that would encourage more students to engage in math together (less tracking and segregation) including creating a Calculus class that would cater to both students entering the International Baccalaureate program and those that were not as well as creating a course for our Integrated 1 students where they had a chance to earn Honors credit within the course as opposed to being split between two distinct courses for honors and non-honors. The Accuplacer victories refer to the number

of students that demonstrated proficiency during the Accuplacers and thus were on track to graduate. These were dilemmas that the Math Department worked to problem solve throughout the year. An example of some of the critical conversations that occur in our department is recorded in the February 20th, 2020 journal entry where we discussed as a department being intentional on creating and utilizing groups in the classroom.

Additionally, as mentioned, there are meetings that I as the Department Chair and Instructional Coach attend weekly in order to collaborate amongst courses. These meetings are generally used to plan, examine data, and discuss whatever other issues are pertinent to the course at the time. For example, when we concluded the department meeting on March 5th (as mentioned above), we broke into courses where I led the Integrated Math III team. As they were the ones most affected by the Accuplacer exam and its results, we went over that and how to best prepare those that still needed to pass the exam.

Work of the Department Leader done for the Department

However, there is work that I do for the department, knowing their wants and needs as a whole. These include departmental duties, such as hiring and creating the department schedule, processing data for the department, collaborating with the district and their requirements, as well as responding to requests from administrators as the department chair. That said, all these tasks involve me making decisions for the department as well as problem solving. For example, from March 11th, 2020, we see an excerpt where I am asked to work on the department schedule and do so in a way that

creates extra work for myself to both problem solve and respond to the request of the

administrators:

"I stopped by Ruby [the Director of Academic Operations]... She also filled me in on the

scheduling part of the department chair meeting I would be missing. We basically needed

to decide who would teach what next year. I've done this many times, so I was familiar.

But this is also something I deeply care about so when I wasn't running around with the

rest of my day, my thoughts (and actions) went back to this whenever I could spare

them... Of course the whole thing with Gary – my administration's idea is that I do twice

the work and make two schedules – one with him and one where it's a new hire, but that

means twice the work for me...One thing I did notice when I started looking was that

Elaine was going to have only one of the SL classes that she currently has two sections

for. That boggled my mind a bit. And I also noticed the HL numbers for Anna and I were

a little lower too. So, I did some digging and found a lot of kids missing from those lists.

It took some doing … [as] there was a glitch in the registration... So glad we caught it but

it made my scheduling work somewhat obsolete."

As I will discuss in a later section on my work with supervisors and administrators, there

are reasons I am so adamant about completing tasks that the administrators request of me.

Even in a case as above where it meant much more work than originally planned.

      Another case where I worked for the department was in getting clear direction as

to what they could and could not do at the start of the pandemic and the school closures.

Many were worried about the uncertainty of it all, particularly those in 'tested courses' (ie Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate). After much running around and consulting with administrators, I was able to give them the best detailed instructions as I could (March 13th, 2020).

As to hiring teachers for our department, this is a role that I initially created for department chairs, first by asking to be a part of the process and then helping to push other department leaders to do the same. As of the 2020 school year, it was fairly commonplace for department leaders to be a part of the hiring process. Due to restrictions within district protocol, the department chair can not vote for a candidate, however it has never been the case that a candidate that we pursued was not one I was also interested in hiring in our department. This process also includes looking over resumes to select candidates to interview, contacting potential candidates for interviews, and sitting in on the interviews (February 24th, 2020).

There are several mentions of examining data for the Accuplacer results within the journal in order to work with the administrators to help ensure our students were on track to graduate. Also, as mentioned, I do spend a lot of time collaborating with the district on different projects - in fact, on the March 13th, 2020 journal entry, there is a short story of me getting 120 graphing calculators from the district to meet the needs of our students.

Work as a Member of the Instructional Leadership Team

As an Instructional Coach, I am also a member of the Instructional Leadership Team, a team that is composed of the Principal, all of the Assistant Principals, the other

teachers who serve as an Instructional Coach, and a few other individuals who hold leadership positions within the school. As far as the work done with the ILT (or Instructional Leadership Team), the scope and depth has varied over the years and from principal to principal. One thing decidedly missing from our team was a mission statement. That said, it is best to understand what the ILT is by examining what we do through our meetings as an ILT, while also examining the contributions that I as a teacher and member of the ILT bring to the group. Additionally, the body of teachers on the ILT (and during the 2019-2020 school year, there were seven of us) would meet on our own and the work there will also be discussed below. Both of these meetings (the meeting of the whole ILT and the meeting of the teachers on ILT) would occur weekly. Understanding the dynamics of this team will allow me to draw conclusions about the nature of the role, particularly the loneliness of this role, as outlined in Chapter 5.

What is Done on the Instructional Leadership Team

As I mentioned, being without a mission generally left many of our ILT meetings feeling all over the place. There was some structure in that once a month the meetings were dedicated to work with data (which I shared responsibility for planning) and once a month the meetings covered our own professional growth. This data was left to the team I was on to decide what and how we would use that data. At times that data was purely quantitative, pulling grades and comparing results across contents, grade levels, genders, and/or ethnicities. Sometimes this data was a practice in asking leaders to bring in action steps for the teacher and analyzing the nature of these actions steps in a qualitative nature.

However, there were meetings, as on March 4th, 2020 where it seemed we covered many small and unrelated topics as seen below. This points to the lack of a mission of the team as well as some of the frustrations of a teacher leader as will be discussed in Chapter Five:

"We met to talk about grades and how its our job to check what grades our teachers are [giving students]. And look for the strange stuff. And it's a lot. But it is important. The things some teachers are doing to fluff their gradebooks. Because there's a fear of too many F's… And its funny that this small portion of the meeting can occupy most of my brain space. Cause we talked about other things – hiring updates (and how we lost a Spanish teacher), course changes and adjustments made, how we can get TAs to receive a grade for authentically helping in classes, etc."

While much of what we accomplished appears unrelated and unguided, as above, much of the work can be classified in one of four areas - decisions we as members of the ILT make, problem solve for issues facing the school, plan professional development for the school, and examine data from the school. The example of the excerpt below from February 19th, 2020 exemplifies these four practices within one situation:

"Our ILT meeting. And I thought it was good. Last week, I showed a tracker I used to see how teachers are interacting with students based on perceived race and gender [and then

walked around the school using that tracker as we observed classes] and today we were looking over what we saw and coming up with actionable ways we can address this.

One big takeaway was that teachers were not thinking cogently about their 'working groups' (our fancy way to say seating charts). So we as a group of 7 (of the 12 that should be there) decided we should address this with the staff. During PD. But PD tomorrow is CRE [culturally responsive education]. And this has been painful – not because I think learning about CRE is painful but because the method of delivery has been painful. And these are teachers. The PD has been a series of lectures with no application. Its not good teaching. So when Dr. Skye [the principal] pulled up the presentation and saw over 20 slides of dense text, we knew we were faced with the same thing yet again.

But here we had a practical application to what the PD was supposed to be on. So we, as an ILT, after what was almost an hour of culminating discussion, decided that we needed to charge our staff with creating "working groups" during our next PD – and give them time to do so. We would follow up on the 27th to see how it went. And we, as coaches, would be there to examine how the working groups were – well – working."

This example shows how we examined data (the data generated using the trackers the week prior) to identify a problem to solve i.e. the way students were seated/grouped, which then led to decisions to be made to address the problem, which in turn affected the professional development for the next meeting.

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My Contributions to the Instructional Leadership Team

That said, something to note from the excerpt above is how the data was

generated using a protocol that was developed by myself and presented to the ILT the

week prior. This is just one of my many contributions to the ILT (both in and out of

meetings). As mentioned prior, it was my duty to help lead the session on data (being the

math person) once a month that I co-planned with Roger, the Assistant Principal

(although that usually meant me doing most of the work). This notion of me doing most

of the work was part of something that I have found myself relying on a lot as I worked

with new administrators (either to the building or in general), that of coaching up.

Coaching up is as it sounds, intentionally coaching without the formality of coaching

those that are superiors. One example occurred when I heard teachers I work with express

concern over how discipline is handled within our building. Roger, being over discipline

and being the one I co-planned the data meetings with, was poised to see what exactly the

teachers were concerned about. Thus, as I worked to plan our ILT Meeting (that would

have occurred on March 11th), on March 10th, 2020, I recorded the following, showing

the extra work and contributions I am willing to take on as a teacher leaders, as well as

alluding to some themes that will be developed later this chapter like coaching up:

"I was debating about tomorrow's ILT meeting, where we do the data dives that me (and

Roger) are supposed to plan, but it ends up being me usually. So, I figured we could use

data both on an individual student level (like a case study) to see what was happening

with our current freshmen as well as globally with discipline. My hope is that it can trace back to what has (or more aptly hasn't) been done with discipline."

Again, this work happens outside of the ILT Meetings as well, the work of coaching others above me, as in the following excerpt from "Donuts" on February 21st, 2020, again showing both this notion of coaching up as well as laying the foundation for understanding my relationship with the administration:

"When the administrator I work with stops by

To ask for help

And a donut

To find out how he can reach a teacher

I help him reach for that little bit of frosting

Caught in his chin

And I help him reach out to those that can help him

Help that teacher

Help him

Nourish him"

Aside from the work with the ILT that involves coaching and coaching up (formally or informally) I also contribute by addressing the needs of the school during the ILT meetings. For example, on February 26th, 2020, "... I brought up what I had been

troubled with and what we talked about yesterday in our meeting – that there may be some issues with morale. And made the suggestions we came up with – giving a break from PD so that people can have time as well as be more cognizant to recognize the positives without focusing on the 'but's'".

Teacher Meetings for the Instructional Leadership Team

The meeting referred to here is the meeting of the teachers on the Instructional Leadership Team. That is the time where those of us who work as teachers can come together to discuss the concerns we were having both within the role itself and within the school as a whole. For example, my department had many frustrations working with Roger, as the administrator over our department. Thus, during the March 10th, 2020 meeting of our teachers on the ILT, I addressed this with the group as follows:

"We had our teacher only leadership meeting and I brought up the frustrations that my team is having with Roger. And Special Ed shared the same frustrations (as he is also over them). And we talked about it but felt helpless."

Even though we could not solve the issue, it helped having those that I felt comfortable sharing with to discuss the concerns I was having.

That said, this meeting of just the teachers on the ILT was not just meant to allow us to have a safe space to express concerns. It also allowed us to serve as a barometer of the school (living in the dual role of a teacher and a teacher leader) as well as work to meet the needs of the staff. There were a couple of conversations that ensued in our ILT

meetings that resulted from conversations about the school itself during our teacher

meetings, including why teachers were missing so much work time and what we could do

to boost teacher morale (i.e. the wishes we had them complete) (February 10th, 2020).

Work with Supervisors and Administrators

As a teacher leader, much of my work revolves around working with

administrators. As such, I often find myself placing administrators in one of four roles -

an authority, a mentor/coach, a partner, or an obstacle.

Administrators as an Authority

To understand the first is to understand a little of my identity. Growing up in a

poor household, I often found myself thinking about power in society by ascription and

not achievement. I valued those in charge simply because they were in charge, not

because of who they were or what they did. To this day, I still hold those in with a title in

this position of authority over me. While I do question their actions at times, it takes a lot

for me to confront a person of authority when I do not believe in the course of action they

are taking. Thus, my guttural response to a person ascribed a title above mine (in schools

that's assistant principals, principals, and district officials) with this status of an authority

- and as such I aim to both appease those in authority and respond to their requests to the

best of my ability.

As such, examples of both types of interactions with the administration as an

authority can be seen throughout the journal. For example, the February 19th, 2020

journal entry makes note of an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meeting that I filled

in after Roger, the assistant principal, called and asked that I fill in - even though I was

not a teacher of the student. However, being asked, I responded to the request so as to appease the person of authority, in this case the assistant principal. Another example was on February 24th, 2020 when the administrators emailed me asking me for the results of the Accuplacer exam we had given just two weeks prior. "The email I received this morning was asking for the results. So, my job became to gather this data in a presentable way for my teachers, administrators, and the special educators. And I was off. My excel skills at their finest – vlookups and all!" (February 24th, 2020). This example further points to how I respond to requests from administrators, by doing it as quickly as I can and in the best way that I can in order to appease them, regardless of what I have to do at the time.

Administrators as a Mentor or Coach

I often turn to administration for guidance in a coaching and/or mentoring capacity. For example, working with Gary, after the February 19th incident during the day where as I walked in and he was at his desk working with a student who was either not in that class or working on something for another class while the rest of the students were supposed to be working, but most were not, I include in my journal how I reached out to Roger to handle this situation. Bare in mind the reason I was working with Gary was that Roger had asked me to (going back to that first notion of how I see administrators as an authority and will do as I'm asked).

Administrators as a Partner

As time goes by and as I work with certain administrators, I can see glimpses of a partnership, an equal playing field. For example, in our work with Gary in order to see

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where he would stand at the end of the year (whether the administrators wanted to keep him on as a teacher or let him go), Roger went in to watch him, then saw me at the end of the day to tell me the lesson was "fucking atrocious" (February 20th, 2020). I bring this up to highlight the fact that this interaction made it seem as if we were equals for a moment, the fact that he, Roger, felt he could be as candid as he was about what he saw in Gary's lesson. It may be seen that Roger sees me as an insider with the candidness of this comment, even though, as later described in Chapter Five, I did not always feel like I belonged. In fact, this conversation was initiated as I walked down to Roger's office at the end of the day (as I had noticed he went into Gary's classroom earlier). Again, my feeling as though I could walk in at the end of the day for a quick discussion on the matter put us on the level of partners, at least in this battle.

Administrators as an Obstacle

Finally though, there are times when what I do with and for administrators is more about clearing obstacles than working with them. The following excerpt from the February 19th, 2020 journal entry shows how I felt after one such interaction where we were asked to help fix a situation that the administration would not approach:

"and if you want us to change things

to make our world a better place

when you see the error of our ways as clearly as the rest of us

then stand

stand up for that change

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or don't ask us to work on change

because there is nothing worse than talking about change

and not changing

and when those loose bricks in the foundation of our work

come tumbling down tomorrow

was it better to sit

or should you have stood" (If You, February 19th, 2020)

The frustration that resonates here came from our discussion in our ILT meeting about

changing the Professional Development the next day to meet the needs of the teachers but

then, after talking to the presenters, the principal, Dr. Skye decided to only give 15

minutes of teacher time as opposed to the nearly hours worth we had asked for. Again, as

pointed out in this entry, I worked to make the best of this situation, overcoming the

obstacle that administration had laid out for me and the rest of the staff, but I also did it as

I was told in order to appease the principal.

Work to Respond to the Needs of the School

As a leader in the school, I also feel it is important to be a leader in all facets of

what I do as well as create opportunities for students and community members alike to

become engaged in the school in other exciting ways outside of just class time. While

neither of these exist necessarily as a prescribed requirement for my job (or jobs), these

are roles that I do take to be part of my leadership position.

Being a leader in the school means sometimes sacrificing what I had planned for the better of others. For example, on February 25th, 2020, the following occurred during one of my coaching periods, an example where I stepped up, not because I had to but because it was needed in the moment to serve the school:

"So during first hour, it came to light that one of the Spanish teachers decided today they would not come back. Starting today... So after my meeting, as I was walking out, some of the students saw me and said that their teacher hadn't shown up. So I went with them, called the office [and spoke with the receptionist] who said that a sub was supposed to come, only he wasn't. So because one adult decided to up and quit (and emptied all her personal artifacts from the classroom so the kids knew something was up) and another didn't know how to follow simple instructions to cover the class, I had to give up my already stretched time to watch this class. And I couldn't abandon them – they had already been abandoned. So I stuck with them, took them to the assembly, took their attendance, and kept them engaged."

As is clear here, while this was not my problem to solve, it was one where I felt obligated to be the solution. Sometimes, this process is simply identifying needs within the building and figuring out how I can be proactive to address them in the future. For example, on February 28th, 2020, as I reflected on discipline within the school, I could see that many teachers struggled and fell to one of two extremes - relying on administrators every time

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a behavior issue occurred in their classrooms or ignoring the behavior issues occurring in their classroom - and thus, made it a goal to focus on discipline with my teachers (and others) during the next school year.

Leadership to Engage Students and Community Members

As to events that I conduct within the school, and the community, one such mentioned throughout the journal is Pi Day. Typically it is sponsored by the families of the school who donate food and prizes and all day we have events set up in a central location where classes can come, engage in activities and enjoy circular treats, such as pie. However, with everything that occurred due to the pandemic, on March 12th, 2020, we decided to switch up the way events would take place and we brought the Pi Day festivities to the individual classes.

As an Individual

Aside from the experiences of me as an educator and me as a teacher leader, there are experiences that either supersede both of those roles or live in a space that is a combination of those roles. These include the experiences that affect my wellbeing, be it emotional highs or lows, and the effects that my identities (as an educator, a leader, a father, etc) have on each other particularly within the confines of work.

One finding is that positive experiences often lead into other positive experiences, like a cascading outcome. For example, on February 20th, 2020, I recorded the following:

"The rest of our meeting, accordingly, went well. We talked about Pi Day. We laughed about the plural of compass (which I enjoy saying as compii but I know that is not right).

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We talked about how we are getting our kids to graduate via Accuplacer. And we celebrated some victories...

With the meetings behind me, I was able to enter into an observation of Cindy with little to no stress. Mostly because I don't ever have to worry about coaching Cindy. She's receptive and wants to grow. And she has. And today was no different."

Whether the perceptions I had of Cindy were true or were merely amplified due to how happy I was going into the observation can not be ascertained merely from the journal. What can be assessed though is that one positive experience leads to the next. When the positive experiences are not readily there, or when the days seem to be filled with negative experiences, at times, I would work to find the joy to breed that positive nature such as on March 12th, 2020 when I received the free calculators from the district (and was not expecting them). They would not benefit me per say, but I still found joy in receiving these for our department.

Unfortunately, the reverse can also occur. When faced with the burden and stress of the dual roles, that emotional weight can stay with me. For example, in the journal entry from March 9th, 2020, the day I got into a car accident on the way to work, many things occurred throughout the day to compound my frustrations, stress, and feeling overwhelmed, including a teacher missing the debrief meeting we had scheduled. As such, at the end of the day, I just left and forgot that I had to host a rehearsal for the GSA (Gender Sexuality Alliance). I felt even worse afterwards having done that. These

feelings of being overworked and overwhelmed can spiral me into other thoughts of despair about myself as on February 27th, 2020 where I wrote:

"I'm in a rut. And just like most ruts, I feel the tires spinning, and I'm not going anywhere. I don't know why. Maybe cause there's absolutely no challenge to grow. Maybe because I'm tired and overwhelmed and its easy to maintain than it is to push. Whatever the case, I can't seem to get anywhere."

As such, there are times and ways I look to overcome these negative feelings. One example that occurs in a few instances across the journal is building relationships with colleagues that I hadn't always had strong existing relationships with. For example, as discussed earlier, doing the hall walks with Mr. Cook helped build a relationship between the two of us (February 25th, 2020). Or how I worked with Mr. Play on the GSA Assembly and in doing so, we discussed things beyond teaching, building our relationship. As such, FAC (or Friday Afternoon Clubs), when I could attend, became something that also built me up (as seen on March 6th, 2020 and March 13th, 2020).

It is also important to understand how the roles can overlap and affect one another in their actions. For example, being a father has many perks, however a 3-year old poking you all night and keeping you up is not one of them, and in fact as this happened on night in the journal, the next day became incredibly tough for me as a teacher and a coach (February 25th, 2020). Another element of my identity that I did not think would affect me negatively was my political identity, and, during the primaries, when a staff member

found out I voted for a candidate she did not support, she confronted me about it when I was teaching which definitely affected my teaching and day (March 6th, 2020).

Thus, as can be seen throughout, the experiences of a teacher and of a teacher leader are vast and many and, when the experiences of other identities are intermixed, it becomes much more complex and vast.

Beliefs and Efficacies

In order to answer the second research question, "what are the beliefs and efficacies of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?", I am imploring Korthagen and Vasalos's (2005) Onion Model that describes the different levels where reflections can take place. It is seen below in figure 2:
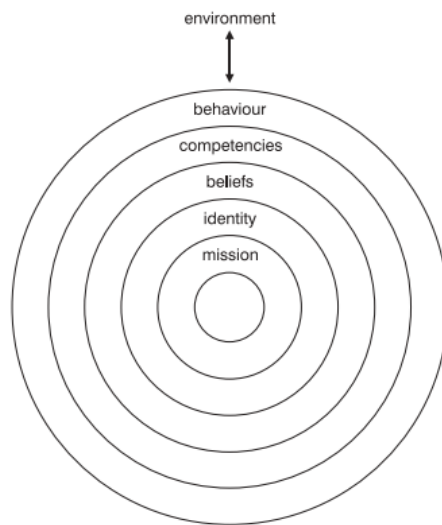
Figure 2: Korthagen and Vasalos's (2005) Onion Model

In responding to the first research question, the environment and behaviour were addressed (ie what external influences occurred around me and what actions I took in my role). In order to get to the identity and dispositions (and answer the third research question) though, one must first travel through competencies and beliefs. Thus, in order to understand the identity of someone in a dual role such as this, it is important first to examine the competencies (or as I refer to them within this paper, the efficacies) and the beliefs. Understanding these will allow us to see what bubbles up (using the analogy created in Appendix A) as to elements of the identity of a teacher and teacher leader - these broken down into the personal identity (or how such a teacher and teacher leaders sees themself) and their dispositions (or beliefs so deeply ingrained in the individual, they are reflected in all the individual says and does). To clarify here by way of example, a teacher may believe that all students are equally deserving of his attention but in the classroom all students do not receive that equal attention, thus this belief would not rise to the level of a disposition. In this situation however, one disposition that may explain why a teacher would not attend to each student the same is that it is the teacher's job to move all learners as far as they can along their path of learning and that will not always look the same from one learner to the next.

Thus, to answer this question, "what are the beliefs and efficacies of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?", we will examine efficacies and beliefs in both the realm of teaching and in the realm of being a teacher leader - both exemplified in both the words written and reflected in the beliefs behind the

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words and actions. These efficacies can be ascertained through examining the aforementioned experiences and drawing conclusions based on what was written about their outcomes.

Additionally, these efficacies are important to understand as, in Chapter Five, I will discuss the power of high self-efficacy in terms of being a teacher leader.

Efficacies of the Teacher

As a 19 year teacher and one who constantly strives to learn and improve and grow, it should be no surprise that as a teacher, I have a high self-efficacy. There are times where I see flaws: doubts, bad days, outside influences throwing me off. Aside from that though, I truly believe I am good at what I do in the classroom. Not only that, I want to constantly get better, however that continues to be a struggle because of insufficient support, but I have found a few ways to grow as a teacher, particularly in the dual role of a teacher and teacher leader.

Example of High Self-Efficacy and Doubt as a Teacher

Even on the first day of journaling, February 18th, 2020, examples of both the high self-efficacy as well as some of my teaching flaws can be seen in the following, speaking to the nature of my roles - my self-efficacy in teaching but also my ability to critically analyze that teaching due to my teacher leadership role:

"...it was not my most rigorous of days – in that they weren't doing dynamically tough math problems. Not that it wasn't important content, it just ended up that all the classes I taught were doing lessons that lacked a bit of that rigor. I don't know. I mean I did my

best to inject rigorous elements. I got the students to talk and move around and you know share ideas, etc. But definitely didn't feel like it was an A+ day. … The content contained a lot of fundamentals to bigger concepts as well as vocabulary and application there of... So, yea, it was fun at times. Getting the students, for example, to create a graphic for different statistical sampling techniques, getting the students to create their own word problems, playing with the different graphs in graph theory… on the flip side… I did do a pretty good job of circulating the room, marking the students papers with feedback as they were working…"

In reflecting on this entry, it becomes evident that I am my harshest critic. While I stated that the lessons lacked the rigor I was hoping they would have and said that was a negative, I also pointed out that I created rigorous elements to boost the lessons. What exemplifies the high self-efficacy is the ability to get students engaged, to interact with all students throughout the lessons, as well as adapting the curriculum I found to lack rigor to be rigorous. Still, there is that lingering doubt that is peppered throughout this entry. That doubt is also fueled by a humbleness that I have as a teacher, particularly when talking about my craft. This humbleness, as well as high self-efficacy, is exemplified again in the following day's entry wherein I write, "...it was a good day of teaching. I'm still using the "marking the work"... and I even had to stop a class when I saw similar errors occurring around the room, but was able to empower a student who wasn't making that error to explain to the class what he knew... I know, self-aggrandizing, but it worked well. And I was happy with my craft today." (February 19th, 2020).

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What Creates Doubt

Throughout the journal there are many entries, not just from the first two days, that speak to the high self-efficacy that I have for myself as a teacher. However, just as many, if not more, talk about my flaws. These stem from me picking up on my own imperfections or speculating where one may arise. For example, after observing lessons from John and Betty on the same day in Integrated Math I - a course I was slated to teach the following year - I began to wonder as I saw these two struggling if I could be any more effective in teaching that course (February 26th, 2020). Aside from those moments where I struggle as a teacher, particularly when I try something that didn't quite work as intended, doubts like this seem to stem from a few areas.

As mentioned earlier, the courses I teach tend to be the ones that other teachers did not want to teach - as was the case with HL Mathematics - Applications and Interpretations - Year 2 (5th hour). However, that did not make me an expert on the material by any means and in fact there were times I struggled to fully conceptualize the material, as on March 4th, 2020, wherein I wrote, " I tried to be upfront with 5th hour about how this material is new for me… be transparent… but that I'd try and I'd seek out answers that I didn't know… but I still don't feel like the best teacher here because I don't own it.". The uncertainty of the material I was in charge of teaching, even if I had mastered it myself prior to teaching it, compounded with the lack of experience teaching the material made me doubt my efficacy with this class.

One other area that leads me to doubt my abilities is when forces outside my control affect what I am able to do as a teacher. For example, the struggles of technology

can be real and do place a heavy burden on teachers, aside from even the ability to learn

to use different systems. For example, on February 21st, I wrote:

"And today…. Was a hot mess. I suppose it goes back to last night where I was moments

away from throwing my computer against the wall but for save of this journal, I did not.

The lousy Classflow just stopped working so I couldn't finish prepping my lessons. But I

knew I had to shop before school for the CCTM Social tonight, students coming in before

the day started, I had observations first hour, meetings second hour, students coming in

third hour, which left me only fourth hour to not only do my pre-lesson prep material but

also plan the lesson that I had intended to plan last night. So yeah – I was in a daze."

I have high expectations for myself as a teacher and yet, I'm not one to work ahead on

the little things (like transferring the lessons from our old platform to the new one of

ClassFlow). So something like a website being down all night has the potential to throw

me and all day, my teaching, I felt, suffered from that.

A Desire to Grow as a Teacher

That being said, there is a desire for me to grow as an educator. As earlier cited,

the February 27th, 2020 journal entry starts with me describing how I am in a rut as an

educator and do need to be challenged. As much as I was worried about teaching the

Integrated I math course in the next year (February 26th, 2020), I was also excited about

the challenge of doing so. Part of the reason for this need to be challenged, this rut I was

facing, was a lack of coaching for myself as an educator. In fact, during the four week

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span of the journal (and in all the entries during the pandemic and school closures) there is not one mention of me being coached as a teacher, because I was not, even though I had coached all my teachers via observations and other means several times throughout the journal. In fact, on February 19th, 2020, I wrote the following to Ally, another teacher in our department, in an email:

"On a completely different note, I would personally love some academic coaching - and as you can imagine, I don't get much support in that department. So I was wondering if you ever had the time, could you stop by a fifth hour and give me some feedback? I want to honor your time, so if you tell me ahead of time, I can let you know if its a good day/time or not. Or just come by without the heads up. Any potential for growth would be greatly appreciated."

I was desperate to get feedback from a peer I trusted and admired, any feedback for that matter. This was also a coaching move, but that will be discussed later.

Due to this lack of coaching, there were several actions I would take in order to improve myself and my instruction. While I know the circumstances differed slightly, on February 26th, after seeing the assembly, we discussed in the GSA how we could make our assembly even better. This notion of using what I see (as a coach of teachers) allows me to build upon good instructional practices and make them better. I also find inspiration in those around me, for example Blake. Blake used to work with our school as a district Math Partner. His positive attitude and demeanor always inspired me, and when

he applied for a job with us I was hoping he would take it as I knew he could continue to inspire me to be a better teacher (March 4th, 2020).

Beliefs as a Teacher

The beliefs of the teachers that will be outlined and grouped according to themes below are rooted in the earlier experiences I listed as a teacher. These beliefs will, in turn, give way to the dispositions later discussed in this chapter as well as allow me to draw conclusions about the inherent nature of beliefs and dispositions in Chapter Five.

As a teacher, there are many beliefs I hold that can be ascertained from the journal either because they are directly stated or because the actions taken indicate a belief I hold. These beliefs fall into two categories, beliefs held about teaching itself and beliefs held in the realm around teaching. The beliefs that I hold embody what I also believe to be components of high quality teaching. These beliefs can be broken down into four areas: necessary characteristics of a teacher, the fundamentals of a teacher (needed before students even enter the classroom), the ability to engage students in culturally responsive education, and the ability to engage students in the learning process itself.

Beliefs of What is Necessary to Be a Teacher

Reflecting on the entries in the journal, three main qualities appeared that embody what I see as necessary for high quality teaching; professionalism, reflectiveness, and passion. These beliefs also speak to the amount of work that a teacher and teacher leader is responsible for as well as the self-efficacy of myself as a teacher, believing in and reaching these high expectations of teaching.

Belief in Professionalism

As for professionalism, my beliefs and feelings came out when discussing the Spanish teacher who left suddenly and I was caught in the middle so I covered that class. In this instance what is highlighted is what I see as the responsibility of the teacher to the students and their job (as in showing up for said job and communicating effectively) as well as how I responded to the situation (following protocol and stepping in to help where needed) (February 25th, 2020). Another situation where my ideals of professionalism where illustrated was when I became incredibly frustrated with the students as a sponsor for the GSA and wanted to let my emotions take over and "lose it" (as I predicted I may on February 25th, 2020), rather I bottled it up and discussed it calmly with the students present.

Belief in Reflection

Another characteristic of a teacher of high quality is their ability to reflect. Throughout the journal, one can see a theme of reflection (both on coaching and teaching and what influences those two respectively). However, it would be easy to deduce that the reflection was a part of the journal. Here is a place where I as a researcher need to address the subject, as in myself, to clarify a point. When I started teaching, my commute home was over an hour long most days due to traffic. All that time left me with my own thoughts and a natural cycle of reflection started as I began teaching. Thinking about what went well, what didn't, why did a student respond a certain way, why did I respond a certain way, etc. This ability and desire to reflect has become so ingrained into the me of a teacher that at this point I can not turn it off, it's a natural occurrence. Thus, what you

see in the journal is not a 'one time' thing for me, this is what I naturally do, but what I

do in my mind as I reflect is far more than I can include in any journal. Suffice it to say,

reflection has always been a part of my teaching philosophy and the ability to do so is a

characteristic I see as necessary for high quality teaching.

Belief in Passion

A final characteristic of a high quality teacher is passion. While this seems

obvious, a former principal of mine put it best, as recorded on February 20th, 2020, " He

told me 'A teacher has to be passionate; passionate about mathematics or passionate

about teaching, either way, they have to have that passion - you, you have both'. I try to

keep that passion alive and well for him (and for me).". As will be discussed in Chapter

5, there are more implications here (around the effect of a mentor and how they shaped

my beliefs and dispositions), but for now it is important to note that a belief I hold as a

teacher is that it is important to be passionate.

Beliefs in the Fundamental Skills Needed to Be a Teacher

The beliefs that follow not only inform my practice as a teacher but, as will be

seen, my beliefs as a teacher leader. This goes to further understand the dispositions that I

have as well as the nature of the role identities of the teacher and teacher leader.

Aside from the characteristics of a teacher that I as a teacher believe are

important, the journal also reflects some fundamental skills that are needed in order to be

effective in teaching, even before stepping into the classroom. A teacher needs to be an

effective communicator, and this process of communication begins before the teacher or

students even enter the classroom. A teacher needs to establish a discipline

policy/procedures that they feel comfortable following through with (and this takes a lot of work to fine tune). A teacher needs to develop unit plans built upon backwards design. A teacher needs to create lessons that are well prepared, have timing and structure, and have been worked through by the teacher prior to delivering the lesson. These beliefs bubble up from the entries in the journal. For example, when giving feedback to Anna on March 2nd, 2020, part of the feedback included this notion of clearly communicating to the students the expectations for the lesson (another topic to be discussed in Chapter 5 is the interconnectivity of teaching and coaching). Likewise, when working with Clark and John on March 3rd, 2020, we discussed how to prepare lessons looking backwards from the district assessment.

Belief in Preparation

Part of lesson planning that I believe is important for a teacher is working out the solutions of the tasks that I will be covering with the students ahead of time, either the night before or morning of, so it is fresh in my mind (February 24th, 2020 and February 28th, 2020). This is also important because it allows me to look over student work and catch mistakes I may not have been able to catch had I not worked out the problem. Of course this rests upon having lessons planned and planned out well ahead of time. From the first day of journaling, this notion of effective lesson planning and working out the solutions comes out as I am working with Mark, observing his class, where I wrote "...but really that's a smaller issue when compared to the more major issue – because he didn't look over the slides prior to that period [he was reusing material from a previous school

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year], he hadn't taken the time to complete any of the tasks he was asking his students to do" (February 18th, 2020).

Belief in Having a Discipline Model

I also believe it is imperative that a teacher comes up with a discipline policy that they can uphold as a teacher. After an observation of Ally and Betty (separately) I became acutely aware that some teachers were merely hoping for classroom management to happen without putting in the work. On February 28th, 2020:

"There's a sense of powerlessness as a teacher. If you don't establish clear procedures for misbehaviours [sic] (I just spelled this the English way – damn IB), then it leaves you in a place where you can't develop new systems as the year progresses. I have to remember this next year – clear, sustainable, student honored systems. As it is now, a lot of teachers use the systems in the building, but they are broken. So most teachers feel either obligated to ignore misbehaviors, and those that don't seem to have the office on speed dial. I know there is a place in between and I will find it next year. I just have to come in knowing I have to find it at the start. Clear and consistently."

That aside, it is not easy for a teacher to develop their procedures. The practices I used are alluded to on the March 3rd, 2020 journal entry when I mentioned the Kindness Wheel (that Natalie, a PE teacher, came in to see). The procedure I had developed was that as a class we developed a set of norms we could uphold on a daily basis. If the norms were not followed, students would spin the Kindness Wheel where every number aligned

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to a different act of kindness they would have to perform. For me, this worked. This may not be the case for everyone but it was something I could and do uphold.

Belief in Culturally Responsive Education

Once the school year begins, two of my core beliefs kick in to guide what I do and how I do it in the classroom - that of providing students a culturally responsive education as well as ensuring that lessons are engaging for all students. As a teacher, I believe that the cornerstone of culturally responsive education is student-teacher relationships. For example, on February 26th, 2020, when I found a student waiting for me when I returned from a meeting, the following occurred:

"And then [student] was waiting and had a discussion about what amounted to me doing extra work to help him. Of course I said yes. I can't say no, but I really can't say no to students who ask me to help them when the need arise."

This speaks to my dedication to that student-teacher relationship that I believe is imperative to achieve high quality instruction.

As mentioned prior, some of my beliefs about teaching come through in coaching sessions. The following excerpt was written after watching a teacher continue to struggle with some of the same issues. Each of these statements aligns with a core value I have in regards to culturally responsive teaching:

"And when the flaws are the antithesis to what I believe

It hurts even more

When a teacher perpetuates stereotypes

"Only the loud, self-confident white male students are the ones that understand"...

When a teacher presumes too much of students,

"The only reason I'm doing this is because I wonder if some of you have forgotten"

When a teacher denies students their ability to share their understanding,

"Don't give me more than a one word answer"

When a teacher assumes every kid knows exactly how to start,

"I'm gonna come and check on the few sticks I pull"

When a teacher cannot read the room,

"I'm gonna give you a few more minutes on this task"

When a teacher likes to hear himself talk,

"Now I know you just did this but here's how I would"

When a teacher provides no feedback to students,

"No, you're wrong"

Students disengage

And I can't blame them…

And so I feel stuck

And I feel pained

And I don't know where to go from here" (March 10th, 2020)

This poem speaks to how I as a teacher firmly believe in Culturally Responsive Teaching that is student centered (and builds those student-teacher relationships) and yet, when I see a teacher working against that it pains me considerably. It is important to note that this is a poem and not all of the quotes were directly taken from the observed teacher, however some of the quotes that were not were spoken loudly with the actions of the teacher.

This relationship building not only paves the way to Culturally Responsive Teaching, but also should be a two way street. For example, on March 3rd, 2020 when coaching Gary, I discussed creating a simple survey to give the students in order to learn more about them and ensure he is meeting their needs and goals. As to the other end though, it is equally important that the teacher be willing to share information about themself with the students in the class. In fact, in a February 25th, 2020 lesson, the students got onto the topic of what generation I belonged to - Generation X or the Millennial Generation. I could have simply pushed this conversation aside without discussing who I was with the students, but rather decided to make a Venn Diagram where we filled in qualities that I possess as well as which generation those qualities aligned to (and it turned out they concluded I was a Xenial - an even mix of the two generations).

I would even venture to say that many of the beliefs illustrated here follow Gutierrez's (2001) model of teaching for and with social justice. From providing students with opportunities to place themselves in mathematics (quite literally in the Venn

Diagrams) to the myriad of activities that the students engage in that require them to think critically about their world.

Belief in Student Engagement

Finally, a belief I value as a teacher is that students need to be engaged in the lesson throughout (and that is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that). This engagement comes from the varied tasks presented by the teacher including tasks that are rooted in the real world (and/or circling back to the last point, rooted in culturally relevant materials), tasks that encourage discourse, and tasks that encourage collaboration. As to those tasks that are real world (and culturally relevant), the February 26th, 2020 journal entry refers to a project my 6th hour class completed where they worked to design new packaging for a company that would reduce the waste they produced and then proceed to mail a letter to said company with that recommendation. Throughout the journal there are mentions of a myriad of 'canned activities' (i.e. activities that I can apply at any given time but need to come up with the problems to do so) like the Puzzle Activity, the Points Game, the X Factor, etc. These activities vary in group sizes, purpose (i.e. is it a competition, attempting to complete a given task, the class working against the teacher, etc), and level of movement/physical activity.

Regardless of the engagement, how it happens, it is the belief of this educator that there are two elements that are necessary for any activity; discourse and collaboration. For example, on February 28th, 2020, the students completed a scavenger hunt with a partner assigned through an activity that got them moving around the room. Then, once they started, I circulated throughout the room to see how they were doing, noting how it

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was `` great seeing them work and talk and I could ask questions (and I did)...". The two components of collaboration and discourse were being heavily used here to help foster the activity. Another, different type of activity that involved collaboration and discourse occurred on February 27th, 2020, as students were asked to complete some "... IB [International Baccalaureate] style problems through a protocol of talking as a group about how to do the problem (without solving it), then work on their own for two minutes, then work with a partner for two minutes, then whole group for two minutes".

All that said, there is still the belief of this teacher that at times there are parts of lessons that need to be a little more skills based, a little more traditional, particularly in these higher level classes where I lack that efficacy with the material. For example, coaching Cindy on March 8th, 2020, we discussed ways to include more of the skills-based type activities in the classroom. As mentioned earlier, in reflecting on the March 3rd, 2020 journal entry, I discuss how I resorted to more traditional methods to cover the material for the 5th hour as I was not as familiar with the content, so for me as the teacher, it felt safe and necessary.

Beliefs about Mathematics and Math Teachers

Outside of the class itself, there are beliefs about education that I hold as a teacher. To begin with, there are beliefs about the mathematics and mathematics teachers in general that come through during the journal. For example, there are certain items we still teach in math that I believe are antiquated, for example, working with John and Clark on March 3rd, 2020, we discussed the notion of apothems and how there are other ways that make finding the area of regular polygons much simpler yet we still are required to

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teach apothems (however we decided they would skip that piece). As to teachers in general, for example, on March 5th, 2020, I wrote the following:

"We live in a color by numbers world

And the unwritten rules are pretty clear

Teachers know how to follow rules

We are the maker of rules

Not the breaker of rules

Especially Math Teachers"

This excerpt shows one of the general beliefs I have of math teachers in general, that archetypically they will adhere to rules, and, in fact, they relish in making rules for the students to follow (both in the classroom and when it comes to the mathematics). Of course the list in both of these fields, about mathematics and about math teachers in general, is a lot larger for the subject, but what is reflected in the journal specifically are these ideals.

Beliefs in Teacher Work Outside of the Classroom

Additionally, there are many responsibilities that all teachers have to adhere to aside from what they do in the classroom - like Professional Development (PD), Collaborations, and Teacher Duties. With each of these come a set of beliefs that can be seen from the journal entries. On February 19th, I discussed how PD had lacked practical application that I and other teachers needed, pointing to how I believe that PD should be

something that teachers experience and not just hear. As to collaboration, this is something that I as a teacher value. This can be seen both as a coach, for example working with the Integrated Math I team on February 21st, 2020 where we planned an activity and they jumped right into creating and planning, and as a teacher as there are many mentions of collaborating with Anna on the course we both taught to create lessons. Finally, as to the teacher duties, such as the hall walk that I conducted with Mr. Cook is something that I see as an obligation, going back to the notion of a teacher being professional, that I must do and do well. However, that doesn't mean I enjoy the duty, but I will make the most of it as seen on the February 25th, 2020 journal entry where I used it to talk and work with Mr. Cook, discussing the events of the other teacher who suddenly quit.

Efficacies of the Teacher Leader

When looking to the efficacies that I as a teacher leader embody, again, it is imperative to examine those efficacies through the lens of the work does as a coach of other teachers, the work done as a department chair, and the work done as a member of the Instructional Leadership Team as well as the work with the administration of the school. That said, just as in the world of teaching, it is important to note that I as a teacher leader have a high level of self-efficacy for myself. While that will come through in a few ways, it is important to point out because, throughout the journaling, it was much easier to write about struggles than successes.

Efficacies as a Coach of Teachers

Within the world of coaching, much of the job done is devoted to assessing teaching. Sometimes that assessment is formative, informing the practices of me as the coach as well as the teacher, and some of it is summative wherein I am evaluating teachers. To be able to assess teachers is an imperative piece of the work.

Ability to Assess Teachers and their Lessons

As mentioned earlier, while not many entries speak to how I feel about my ability to do this task, on March 5th, 2020, while observing two teachers who were conducting lessons far outside of the normal math class (Ally was doing SAT reviews in a unique way and Scott, who also teaches classes in the Humanities, was conducting a lesson on writing in one of his math classes), as the coach, I was able to see how great these lessons were and communicate that not only to those teachers, but, in Ally's case, to the rest of the department so that they could see a unique way to do test prep.

Teacher and Student Intuition

Another area within coaching that I feel I possess which is important to the job is this notion of intuition - both a teacher intuition and a student intuition. This is the ability to pick up on what is not seen that is contributing to the teacher's lessons (or the student's learning of a lesson). While I will touch on this again in the next section as it is a belief of this teacher leader that effective coaches have this intuition, here, I would like to address how I feel successful at it (and according to assessing and coaching teachers). An example of this, as well as my high efficacy in this area, occurred in the February 25th, 2020 entry where I worked with Gary. Recall, here he was not fully planned, and, even

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though I had no way of knowing for sure, during the debrief he informed me that this was in fact the case. This excerpt also does well to help define this notion of teacher intuition as well as pointing to how I feel I have 'gotten really good' with it.

Not only does this intuition apply to the teacher, but to the students and their learning as well. For example, again working with Gary on March 3rd, 2020, observing one of his Honors classes, I noted that the students were mostly disengaged throughout the lesson. Gary wanted to say that the students should be responsible as they were honors level students. Below is what I wrote about our conversation after seeing students mostly disengaged from the learning:

"I'm just floored by how little the students were doing. And I hear him – he blames the kids. And I get that to a point. But he also admitted later that they want to do well and they need the unit reviews to do well – because those look like the test. So each lesson on its own doesn't mean much because students aren't held accountable until the test, and there they get this magic review. He's built a ship where he may be the captain but he's not driving. The students are. He's created a system they can game. And so they just play in class."

This is an example of that 'student intuition', the ability to interpret the students actions. This skill of intuition is one that I believe I do well and it improves my ability to coach teachers accordingly.

Teacher Feedback

What fuels this efficacy is the feedback received from the teachers in the

department, particularly those teachers who are coached by me. These forms of feedback

happen many ways, some who are comfortable are direct and forthright. Others who

struggle to find the words, find other ways, like in this excerpt from "Donuts" in the

February 21st, 2020 journal entry:

"And when the teacher who is on the verge of being fired

Who I've not had the pleasure of helping this year

But have helped when I can this year

Who knows I mean well for him

But doesn't seem to know how to mean well for himself

Says "Thank you…"

"You've made me work hard"

"All these donuts just mean I run more"

And while it was donuts

It was so much more than donuts

It was a thank you

It was a thank you for making him work hard

It was a thank you for always bringing my gifts to his craft of teaching

In a way that pushed him to grow

And all the words unsaid

Sprinkled in there that mean so much more than

Donuts"

These moments contribute to my ability to coach as well as maintain my level of

self-efficacy.

Areas Where Self-Efficacy Lacks

All that said, there are times throughout the journal where I illustrate my

weaknesses as a coach from admitting my imperfections to the doubts that creep up in my

mind.

Admitting Imperfections

For example, when working with Anna on February 27th, I felt it important to

admit that I was not perfect, that I too needed support to be successful, and not just within

the world of teaching, but additional mental support and that there was no shame in that.

Additionally, on March 2nd, 2020, the journal entry includes a poem that touches on how

hard it is sometimes to make sure that all the words that leave the mouth of the coach are

the words intended. Especially as I am a fast talker. Thus, there are often times when I

feel like I have to correct in the moment to let the teacher know that what I said may not

have been exactly what I meant.

Self-Doubt

Through all this, the imperfections I can see in myself, there are times where I

doubt what I am doing. For example, working with Scott on March 9th, 2020, again, who

was not on my coaching load but who I was helping in order to assist Roger with

coaching math teachers, the following occurred that made me doubt if what I was doing

truly had value and if the teacher I was working with truly trusted me as a teacher leader:

"[Scott] said: "I don't want you to put anymore stuff in there" referring to the Whetstone

system that the district uses for observations. His worry is that they (THEY = the district)

will use this all against him in some sort of negative tracking kinda way. And, while now

I can see that, it really hurt me in the moment. Maybe because it made me think, was I

doing this for the system or for me or for him? I want to be helpful, but what I heard

amounted to "you're not being helpful".

This situation clearly illustrates that element of doubt that holds me back at times. Oddly,

these doubts seem to come out when working with teachers who have been teaching

longer than I have as they only appear in the journal, in conjunction with the work I did

with Scott and Elaine, the only teachers in the department who have more experience

than I do. That said, when mistakes do arise, I do seek to fix them as quickly and

effectively as I can. For example, on March 10th, 2020, Mark came in during lunch to

debrief the lesson with me. I became frustrated as he wasn't scheduled to come in and I

had students I was working with. However, I had never scheduled the debrief time. Thus,

I alluded in the journal how I quickly worked to fix that mistake by talking with him later

about what had happened.

Emotional Toll of Coaching

All that said, what also chips away at the efficacy that I have as a coach, and a teacher leader, is the emotional toll of the work, the hard work, we do. On March 6th, 2020, I concluded my journal entry with, "Lets just say, if I could have crawled under a rock and hid, I would have... It was that kinda day". Days like these, times like these, where no one thing points to the stress and burdens of the day, rather the day itself was just that heavy, affect how I see myself as a coach. Other times, there are specific instances, such as on March 10th, 2020, where I wrote:

"And so I feel stuck

And I feel pained

And I don't know where to go from here:"

This was referring to the work I was doing with a specific teacher, and accordingly, it can be seen that this work as having a toll on myself and lowering my efficacy, particularly in working with this teacher.

Efficacies as a leader of the department

As a department chair I also have a high self-efficacy in the work I do with the teachers. When my department was asked on November 19th, 2019 about the department, here is what happened:

"My department being forced into a focus group led by an outside organization and – when asked what they think is working well at our school, the first answer they gave was "Joe"."

Not only do they constantly reassure me in what I do (I am the Joe they referred to), and I am ever thankful for that, but two things come to light in the journal that show I feel like I can lead them well - that I know them and their needs well (specifically the need to feel successful, the need to feel valued, and the need for time) and that I have been able to hire quality teachers throughout my time as department chair.

Understanding of Teacher Needs

As mentioned earlier, there were several teachers in my department who I was not the evaluator for, but after working with Roger, it was decided that I would still coach these teachers. That included Scott. As mentioned on February 24th, 2020, only from working with Scott as a member of our department led me to understand that he needed to state his own goals, put them in his words. He hears more of what he says than what others say.

But beyond simply knowing the department members and their personalities, as a department chair, I believe that I do a good job of knowing their needs - needs to feel success, to feel valued, and to have time.

A Need to Feel Successful and Valued

As mentioned earlier, one of the strategies I incorporated to help the teachers feel successful was to leave notes as I visited their classes about the successful things I saw.

Teachers received multiple notes like this throughout the journal and it worked to allow me to play to those positives when I had tougher conversations with some of them, such as on March 2nd, 20202 working with Anna and Elaine. Speaking of the work with Elaine, one way I have found to value her, as well as show how I feel she has been successful, is to rely on her expertise in the world of the International Baccalaureate program. This is done very sincerely though, not in a manner to just make her feel something that is not there, as she has done much work with the IB organization including moderating exams as well as even being part of writing one of the textbooks (March 2nd, 2020).

The Need for Time

These needs to feel valued, successful, and have time to work was something that I pressed for, first within the meeting with the teachers of the ILT and then with the joint meeting of all ILT (teachers and administrators). On February 25th, 2020, during that teacher meeting, we decided the following, in response for the teachers need to have their time and positions valued:

"So we talked about how we could use these to help our teachers feel a little better about their work, and without the 'but'. You know, that lesson went great, 'but'… I think that's an awesome idea, 'but'… you've done your job, 'but'… So the hope is to try to convince our administration to do some visits, short, with little notes of praise. Additionally, giving

the teachers some spare time, no strings attached, on Thursday during PD. I know these

are whole staff, but maybe my department will feel it too!"

While this was done for the whole staff, again, as I end this section, it was my hope that

in doing this my department would feel their needs met. I know that my department feels

that we do meet a lot, which goes back to my belief in the importance of collaboration,

but also to that end, I respect them and their time, so if, for example on February 27th,

2020, I can cancel a department meeting to honor that desire for more time to do work, I

can and will.

Hiring Teachers

Aside from knowing the teachers in my department, I have also played a proactive

role in hiring teachers for our department, and this is also an area I feel that I excel.

Examining the March 4th, 2020 entry from the journal, the day we interviewed Blake (the

former district support partner of our department), I wrote the following after staying late

that day:

"But it was for interviews, and that's a good thing. I mean, I get to continue to help guide

and mold our department by finding the best available talent (both new and experienced)

and have a say in who gets taken on at our school. And its been the case that the ones I've

always seen as the top candidate, provided they have accepted, we ended up hiring that

candidate."

The ability to hire quality instructors comes from the ability that I have to weigh the current needs of the department, determine red flags in the hiring process (from resume through interview), and ultimately, as mentioned above, choosing that right candidate. To know the needs of our department for example, on February 24th, I wrote that "...I want people that have experience, have worked with high school, have dual language abilities... Not that experience is a must, I love coaching, but if there are going to be a few new hires, getting a lot of new teachers may not be the best…". This was based on the fact that we were going to be losing Betty and she could speak Spanish with her students, as well as knowing that we were going to lose more teachers (they had just not come forward about it yet), so I wanted to avoid our department being overwhelmed with new teachers. Additionally, on February 24th, 2020, I point out some red flags, for example, multiple times in the past candidates that apply from other nations who don't know the systems think that we are a college and so we bring them in to the interview and they are shocked (so unless I can speak with them ahead of time, I often pass on resumes like this). Also, if candidates are applying from schools or institutions I do not respect, I worry about interviewing them as it is hard to coach out the bad habits they may have picked up from those institutions.

Efficacies in other areas of Leadership

Finally, working with the administration, as well as the rest of the Instructional Leadership Team, there are several efficacies that I note in the journal, such as my ability to coach up and my ability to see the needs of the school (and when they are not being met).

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Acknowledging the Needs of the School

For example, knowing that teachers were frustrated with how discipline was being attended to by administration, on March 10th, 2020, when planning for our Instructional Leadership Team meeting, I pulled several students information to do small case studies on, but these students also highlighted how little was happening from administration to attend to the students pulled and their discipline issue. This was a bold move, one that I would not do if I did not feel that I can coach up, at least in a manner that requires us to all look at data and draw conclusions.

As to identifying the needs of the school, one reason that I feel that I am equipped to do this well is that I work with the Instructional Leadership Team (so I understand the decisions being made whether or not I agree with them), but I also have to live them as a teacher and then interact with students around those decisions. For example, on February 24th, 2020, we had an all school assembly around Black History month which was a great assembly. On top of that, when we returned to class we were to conduct a discussion around a series of questions sent out. This is where I saw needs arise as through the lens of a teacher, the directions were very unclear and there are also teachers who struggle to have these kinds of conversations with their students. Another example occurred on February 20th, 2020 where following our morning Professional Development, we had time to return to our department and have a practical conversation about what we were learning. Because we did this, the members of my department saw this PD as one of the most successful Professional Developments of the year. This left me

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with the task of identifying this need (that we have time to apply what we are learning in PD) and then follow through on making that a reality.

However, working with adults, particularly those in administration, can cause me to doubt and/or create lower efficacies in some of my abilities particularly in working with administration as well as knowing that adults are much more challenging to work with than students.

Doubts from Administrators

These doubts that creep up further some of the conclusions around the nature of the teacher leader role outlined in Chapter Five. For example, working with Roger as the administrator for the Math Department has been tough. He had a strong hand in two teachers leaving that year (Ally and Betty), teachers that I valued for what they could contribute to our department. I knew this was coming, so on March 10th, 2020, I discussed this with the teachers on the Instructional Leadership Team as follows:

"We had our teacher only leadership meeting and I brought up the frustrations that my team is having with Roger. And Special Ed shared the same frustrations (as he is also over them). And we talked about it but felt helpless. Dr. Skye doesn't like to hear that she is wrong about things, so I can't bring it up to her. I could try talking to him, but I think he has to see it first."

Handling this situation left me feeling many doubts about how I could be successful as well as relying on that ability to coach up to try to address the problem. Unfortunately,

due to the pandemic, there wasn't much time for me to do that and we ended up losing three teachers that year.

Doubts When Working with Adults

There are several mentions throughout the journal about how working with adults is much harder than students, and generally not in reference to the adults I coach, rather with teachers who are not on my caseload (like Elaine on March 2nd), those outside of my department like the incident I had with a co-worker about who I voted for (on March 6th), and with administration as mentioned above with Roger. That said, again in mhy work with being a leader, there is generally a high level of self-efficacy save for the few instances mentioned in each of the areas (of coaching, leading the department, and working with the administration and the rest of the Instructional Leadership team).

Beliefs of the Teacher Leader

Just as in the realm of efficacies, beliefs that have arisen within the realm of teacher leadership, particularly around coaching, leading a department, and the other work of leadership such as working with administrators and supervisors as well as the school and community as a whole. Again, what is important to note is that not only are these beliefs rooted in the experiences listed earlier this chapter, experiences as a teacher leader, but they also allow me to draw conclusions about my dispositions as outlined later in this chapter. As a researcher looking at the journals there are so many beliefs that can be ascertained, however, I do know as the educator and teacher leader there are many more beliefs that I hold besides what are listed here. This gives the reader a good base of the system of beliefs that I have about leading within an urban highschool.

Beliefs of Mathematics in Teacher Leadership

However, I would be remiss to not first discuss that as a math teacher, a coach of math teachers, a leader of the math department, and a school leader who is seen as an expert in mathematics, to not discuss my beliefs of mathematics itself. One belief that comes through in the journal is the joy that I experience with mathematics. From the lessons to the activities to the seemingly mundane tasks of excel and its formulas, that sense of joy around mathematics can be seen throughout the journal. Even the gift of receiving the anonymously donated calculators on March 12th, 2020 left me feeling incredibly happy.

However, there is a dark side to mathematics that I know and understand. A dark side that can only be appreciated by someone who knows and understands mathematics deeply and intimately. By one who views the world through many lenses, in an effort to create a more equitable society. This came through in the journal entry from March 19th, 2020 (after the lockdown had started):

"They say that Math is Objective

Clear goal

One right answer

Black and white

They

Those are the "they" that don't understand math

Because math can say whatever we want it to say

And when one presents math in an Objective manner

It can easily be taken as truth

By the "they"

Because we've reinforced this Objectivity of Math

And in doing so, we've created pandemic

That's fueling a pandemic

We allow people to spread misinformation

Deadly misinformation in this case

And it hurts

My heart

My soul

My mathematical me

So much I can't decide if I should fight more

Or lay low and suffer in silence

Eyes wide open

To the blindness of my peers

A mathematical blindness formed by us,

The math teachers

Who insisted we live in an Objective subject

As opposed to the Subjective object that Mathematics is

And told their students that was the truth

And made them believe in this Black and White world

Where numbers always tell the truth

And the knowledge they present is always true

Imagine if they only knew"

The entirety of this poem speaks to many of my beliefs of mathematics, a field that I do enjoy greatly. But that joy and understanding let me see what was happening in the world as we started the lockdown, the misinformation being spread in the name of mathematics. This could only occur because it is my belief that the world sees mathematics as objective when it is far from objective.

Beliefs as a Coach of Teachers

As a coach of all the math teachers in some capacity or another, I have developed beliefs on each and every one of them. These beliefs have been developed as I have gotten to know and work with them, reinforced by what I see when working with them, contradicted by what they surprise me with, and sometimes I'm not sure what to believe about a teacher under certain circumstances. That said though, these beliefs tie heavily into the aims that I create for those teachers as well as the challenges that arise when addressing those aims (which addresses research questions three and four). Thus, these beliefs will be discussed during that section of this work. The focus here are the beliefs around coaching that I hold as well as the beliefs around the teachers as a whole.

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To be clear, coaching has become an artform for me. As such, there are certain elements that make that work more successful, elements that I fundamentally believe are necessary for effective coaching. To begin with, it is a belief of mine that an effective coach will always look to see the teacher as a whole person rather than examining a simple slice of time. In doing this, it opens the door to other effective coaching strategies that I firmly believe in such as praising and playing to those positives, and creating and fostering a two way street of the coaching process. Once that is established, coaching can take on many different forms. Following an observation, there is a spectrum of approaches that include consultation, collaboration, and coaching with a teacher. Under the collaboration and consulting models, it is important for teachers to have a hand in creating their own next steps, and that belief is one I hold as a coach. Yet, coaching can and should happen outside of observations and debriefs, it is imperative to go beyond this traditional model. Finally, I do believe that there are limitations to coaching.

Beliefs around Seeing the Teacher as a Whole Person

This notion of seeing teachers as a whole person is something that can be as simple as knowing that a teacher is not feeling well so that visiting the class that day would do no good (as with Elaine on March 12th, 2020), or knowing when teachers need to take time for themselves to recover from the stresses of the job (such as with Anna on March 2nd, 2020), or finding alternate ways to meet the needs of the teacher when they feel jaded by the system (as with Scott on March 11th, 2020). This comes through each and every identity I serve as a leader - the teacher (who collaborates with other teachers),

the Department Leader, and the Instructional Coach - and allows me to see the teachers in all areas of the realm of teaching, giving me the ability to see the whole person.

Beliefs in Praising and Playing to the Positives

Because I can see the whole person and because I know how I respond to being coached, I believe in the importance of praising the teachers, sincerely, for the work they do and then using that praise and playing to the positives. As mentioned earlier, this helped in working with Elaine a teacher with much more experience teaching and with working with the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, such as on March 2nd, 2020, when I wrote, " I tried to play into the positives… ask questions – both of the material/lesson and as an IB expert (her, not me)". Another example of this occurs on March 5th, 2020 when I visited Ally, Scott, and Gary (short visits), leaving them notes to encourage them with what and how they were doing. In fact, as mentioned prior, I followed up with Ally's lesson and shared that with the department.

Belief in the Two Way Street of Coaching

However, for all of this to happen, there needs to be a two way street between the coach and the teacher. For example, working with Gary, who again was not a part of my caseload rather a teacher in my department who I started to assist as he needed more coaching, I needed that two way street, that dialogue between us to be completely open and transparent, and thus, on February 25th, 2020, the following occurred which allowed us to get to a deeper understanding of each other and our intentions for the roles we served:

"So, I had to ask – I laid it out there and asked Gary if he wanted to come back. And he does… I was trying to coach him to say here's what you need to be doing if you wanna stay. And he wanted to argue with it all... And I had to cut him off again and say that this is not about me, this is about him making a good impression on whoever walks in. And what he is doing right now is not doing that."

This moment was pivotal for us. It allowed us to clearly see where the other was coming from. Oftentimes though, coaching comes across as the expert telling the teacher what and how to do. Not having a conversation about the why and the motivation. It is my belief that having those kinds of conversations are imperative to coaching.

Beliefs in the Forms of Coaching

The coaching that often happens, that of an expert telling the teacher what and how to do is actually just one method of coaching - consultation. The others include collaboration and coaching by its definition. It is my belief as a coach that there is a time and a place for three methods of reaching teachers - consultation (wherein the teacher is told exactly what next steps are needed - however I do try to ask before I consult if the teacher wants me to tell them what I see as the next steps), coaching (wherein the teacher independently creates their next steps based on the conversation up to that point), and collaboration (somewhere in the middle, where next steps are jointly created). Within the areas of coaching and collaboration, I believe that the power of the teacher creating their own next steps is tremendous, and can lead to more ownership of where the teachers will go from there. This power is confirmed in research such as Horn and Garner (2022). All

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that said, here the focus will be on the belief in these three methods to develop aims for the teacher, however, the aims themselves and the process of developing those aims will be covered within the findings of research questions four and five.

Example of Teacher Consultation

Working with Mark on February 18th, 2020, I felt that I needed to utilize the model of consultation as his growth at this time needed explicit direction to say this is where you need to go next. Going back to knowing the teachers and seeing the teachers as a whole person, my work with Mark has led me to conclude that "he just needs that push to hear 'this is what we want to see' as opposed to letting him come up with action steps he generates himself that may not push him".

Example of Teacher Coaching

However, just the opposite approach was used with Scott on February 24th, 2020, where in "When we met after school to discuss the lesson though, I let him do the talking… his was much more of a coaching session in that he verbalized several items on that list [that I had generated prior to our debrief conversation] and formed into his goal for the next six weeks". This was in part due to the power of the coaching method and my belief in teachers developing their own next steps, but also because for Scott, someone who has been teaching for quite some time and has a lot to say about teaching, it was important for him to come up with his own next steps.

Example of Teacher Collaboration

Working with Betty on March 6th, 2020, we were able to work together to develop her next steps as "most of these were ideas she had already, it just took me

talking with her for her to pull them out". Again, these three methods appear throughout the journal, these are just instances of where and when (and why) each of these methods were implemented.

Belief in Coaching Outside of the Observation Cycles

However, coaching does not have to occur in the traditional manners - it is my belief that there are many different ways that coaching can happen and that coaching should go beyond the traditional model. For example, on February 26th, 2020, both Betty and John were conducting the same activity in their Integrated Math 1 classes so I went to each of them (in the same hour) to help them. During this time, I saw a great many similarities and differences. It gave me an insight into the realm of the teachers, this co-teaching model of coaching. It also helped me, particularly with John, start to generate more ideas of goals for him as the year progressed. In fact, as I worked with Betty in another class later that year, I noted how I needed to co-teach with her more (provided she would be ok with that) simply because of the sheer size of the class (March 6th, 2020). Aside from co-teaching, there are examples of co-planning lessons and collaborations that worked in place of coaching sessions throughout the journal (and referred to prior).

Another example occurred after watching Gary on March 3rd, 2020, instead of leaving him with actionable steps to work on, we decided he needed to get to understand the students more to know how to motivate them so we developed a survey he could give to the students later that week. Aside from varying the way I have given feedback, I also have tried to observe lessons in different ways. For example, on March 11th, 2020, when

visiting Clark, "I didn't take formal notes, just walked around, helped kids, and got a feel for what was happening… my biggest take away for him was to find a way to leave the questions up so that students could go back to them when need be".

As mentioned in the efficacies sections, one ability I have that I believe is fundamental for the job of coaching teachers is the notion of teacher and student intuition. For example, visiting John on March 11th, 2020 (doing the same lesson as Clark above), what I noted was "He's got the heart and passion, but not the follow through with the kids… he doesn't hold them accountable – academically or behaviorally… he has all the right pieces there, just doesn't follow through so the kids run him over… that is definitely going to be the heart of the debrief". These are not necessarily elements that can be observed in a single lesson - the ability to hold students accountable, rather a deduction made based on the evidence in front of me as a coach.

Belief in the Limits of Coaching

Beyond all my beliefs about coaching, one belief that I hold that grounds me in reality is that there are limitations to coaching itself. An example of this feeling comes through in the poem written on February 19th, 2020, wherein I write:

"if you don't want to help yourself,

I can't help you

if you want to make excuses

you'll have an excuse

if you want to fail

you will fail

if you won't stand your ground

you'll fall for anything

Just don't fall on me

cause I tried

and I can't care more than you do

even though I do"

What resonates in this piece is that there is only so much I can do as a coach. All the care I have for how a teacher will not do any good if they do not act. If they choose to fail, they will. If they make excuses, growth can not occur. There are also limitations to what I can do. For example, the lesson that I watched that both Betty and John did during the same period on February 26th, I noted how powerful it would have been to have them watch each other and, while this is a strategy I have and do utilize, it's not one that works at the moment, it requires planning. Thus, as powerful as it would have been to have them watch each other, it could not happen. What's worse is that I believe in keeping what happens in one classroom to that teacher (unless I explicitly discuss with the teacher otherwise and get their consent), so I couldn't even give comparisons to the two of them about how they each did with the lesson.

Beliefs as a Leader of the Department

As the department chair, there are certain beliefs that have developed that guide my practices within the department. To begin with, it is important to have a vision of where the department is headed. More so, there are certain qualities that I believe a leader in this role should exemplify which include a love of mathematics (and a passion to share that love), the ability to sympathize with the teachers, and to be protective of the teachers in the department. That said, there are stereotypes of math teachers that I believe that do cloud my work with the department at times.

Belief in Having a Vision

As mentioned though, the first thing necessary to run a department, in my belief, is to have a vision for that department - whether that vision is something developed as a group or as a leader, whether it is written or is held in mind and heart - regardless, direction and vision are imperative. The piece, "Color by Numbers" from March 5th, 2020, sums up the vision I have for my department. While small excerpts have been shared up to this point, I know share the entirety of the piece in order to understand the full vision I have for our math department.

"We live in a color by numbers world

And the unwritten rules are pretty clear

Teachers know how to follow rules

We are the maker of rules

Not the breaker of rules

Especially Math Teachers

And the number of our Colors

Black, white, brown, yellow, red

Are right where they are supposed to be

And that's the problem

We know to color

Our 1s white

Our 2s yellow

Our 3s red

Our 4s brown

Our 5s black

Because those are the rules

And we follow the rules

And we don't go outside of the lines

And the funny thing is –

As clear as the lines are to us -

The lines aren't always that clear

The colors aren't always black and white

Or rather

What I see as White

You may see as Black

What I see as Male

You may see as Female

What I see is that what you see is what matters

Because perception

Is everything

So, go on

Tell me how to break the rules

Because I want to

Tell me how I get others to break the rules

Because I want to know that too

Tell me how we can create a rich tapestry

Where any color can be any number

And we can end up with a work of art

Not a hot mess

And tell me its ok

Its ok to try

Its ok to make a mess sometimes

Its ok if the picture isn't what you or I ever intended

Tell me its ok to break the rules

And let me create a masterpiece"

To be clear, the numbers listed here in conjunction with the colors is not a personal belief,

rather how I see the students treated within the confines of our school and community

based on their 'color' (ie the closer the number is to 1, the better they are treated, the better grades they received, the more opportunities they get, the more social currency they have access to, etc). Therein lies the vision that I have for our department. To treat all students as the ones if you will, or, at the very least, to work with all students to advance them as close to the 'one' that they want to be. This is not to be mistaken with a colorblind philosophy which would say to see each student the same. That is not something I as a teacher and teacher leader believe in. Rather, to see the best in each student regardless of their backgrounds.

Beliefs in the Qualities of a Teacher Leader

As a leader of the Math Department, there are certain qualities I believe said leader must possess. Accordingly, there are beliefs that I myself possess as necessary qualities for this role which include a love of mathematics, an ability to sympathize with the teachers being led, and a belief in being protective of those being led.

Belief in a Love of Mathematics

One of the other beliefs that I hold for the department is to share that love of what binds us together, that of mathematics. One example of this came through during our Pi Day celebrations on March 13th. Teachers all pitched in through a variety of ways, be it contributing food to share with students, serving students when food was delivered, pushing aside the learnings for the day to have fun and enjoy the students celebration of mathematics and the activities, and creating activities for other teachers to use with their students. The best part about this is that much of the love and joy and good humor was shared over text messages (not a preferred method of communication but given the

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sudden need to change our plans due to the pandemic, we needed to communicate quickly and effectively). This plan was full of jokes and GIFs as well as that love of mathematics.

Beliefs around Sympathizing with and Being Protective of Teachers

I also believe that as a leader of a department, two qualities are important to possess; sympathy for the teachers and a protective nature of the members of the department. For example, the department has had many concerns around the new graduation requirements in the state, particularly around the component of showing competency in Mathematics in order to graduate. The options all seemed as though they were going to create a lot of extra work for the students. However, on February 24th, 2020, the following occurred:

"And it wasn't that we did something phenomenal, I mean we did, getting so many kids to check this off their list of things to do to graduate. But its also just a big sigh of relief, and knowing this option exists. It saves us so much work in the ways of preparing portfolios or over prepping for standardized tests. And I'm sure my department is happy too!"

The feelings I had were for my department - these feelings of happiness and relief. Yes, they were my feelings, but I know they also would become the feelings of the rest of the department.

This sympathy occurs in several forms. From relishing in the mutual successes as above to understanding and sympathizing around the needs of the teachers. This was discussed in the section on the efficacies of a teacher leader - where it was stated that this is something I believe that I do well - but its also something that I believe is important for a teacher leader.

Additionally, I believe it is important for a teacher leader to be protective of the teachers they serve. The concern over losing teachers has been discussed several times over. As well as the steps taken to discuss these concerns with others. This was all done out of a feeling of being protective of the teachers I serve. Fearing that we could lose up to five teachers (from March 4th, 2020), made me more want to act on behalf of our department. As mentioned, in the end, we lost three teachers (one to return to their home state, the other two felt emotionally pushed out by administration). Knowing these feelings agitated that feeling of protection within myself as well as acting on behalf of the department.

Biases and Stereotypes

Unfortunately, there are a few beliefs that I hold that I wish I did not, biases about the teachers based on what I knew of the past and what I am confronted with in terms of stereotypes. As mentioned in Chapter 1, coming into the role of a leader at the AHHS has many challenges, most particularly overcoming the low expectations that teachers had for themselves. This has left an imprint on me, how I occasionally see the teachers in the department, particularly as whole. For example, on February 20th, 2020, I expressed the following after watching a teacher who was doing really well, "So when the teachers say

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things like "these kids don't want to learn", it frustrates me – because I don't think that's the case…". However, no one had said this. At least not this year. This was me going back to what the teachers of the past had expressed.

Additionally, I am prone to position teachers in terms of past experiences. This is evident with Elaine as I struggled coaching her based on prior experiences with coaching her. I brought those into the classroom and into the journal and the entries that pertained to her. Likewise, there were existing biases with Gary and Mark that explain some of the tone that is seen and heard in the journal. Both had been coached and had the opportunity to collaborate on active steps to address some of the struggles they faced as teachers. So when I saw each of them resorting to old techniques that were not as effective, ones that we had worked in the past to develop new strategies around, it was frustrating and my bias showed.

Often, I also fall into stereotypes when thinking about the body of teachers. The poem at the start of this section points to a few of these, such as math teachers being the ones who make rules for students and not rule breakers and math teachers are quick to fulfill stereotypes of the students. I know that this does not embody all math teachers nor does it embody all the teachers in the department, however, it is there in my mind, and I have to be cognizant of it. Thus, as mentioned prior, it is a belief of mine that leaders can have negative perceptions, or biases, such as I do, and it is imperative to be cognizant of them.

Beliefs as a Leader of the School

Working with fellow teachers leaders, the administration, and the school as a whole has led to the development of certain beliefs over the course of the time spent in these dual role positions.

Beliefs around Administration

Many of these beliefs that are edified in the journal come from work with administration. Beliefs have formed over time around how they can make me feel, what they ask of me at times, and how I can best reach them, the administration.

Beliefs around How Administration Affects The Teacher Leader

In working with the administration, it is my belief that there will always be a sense of frustration, and some level of disagreement, simply due to the mixed realities of the dual role, whereas an administrator lives in only one of these worlds. For example, as we readied for the pandemic, the administration made some decisions that did not sit well with me, as depicted on March 12th, 2020:

"They canceled school for the next three weeks (well, two – the third is Spring Break). And the part that boggles my mind is that, even though I (at least and I hope they did too) saw this coming, there wasn't a plan to ensure all students received instruction – so their directive was 'no instruction'.Which just leads to many more unanswered questions. What does this mean for our school year if we have an "extended spring break"? What if its not just two weeks? What about my kids taking AP and IB exams? What about state testing? What about my paycheck? What about hourly staff or SSP paychecks? What do

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we do next week (where they say only some people are needed on Monday and Tuesday)? What will my wife and kid's school do?"

While I can understand the directive we received as teachers from an administrative standpoint, from a teaching standpoint it 'boggled my mind' because there were so many unanswered questions that came with this directive. Again, it was not about agree or disagree, rather, a lack of clarity around the many questions that followed. These questions hit to all elements of my identity too, me as a teacher, me as a leader of teachers, me as a parent and member of a family. All of those feelings combined with this decision left me incredibly frustrated with our administration.

Beliefs in Healthy Disagreements with Administration

While this was not a disagreement per say, it is my belief that disagreements, healthy ones at least, can and should arise between those in dual roles such as myself and the administration. After the first round of the Accuplacer results (as mentioned prior), we still needed to work on getting a relatively small number of students to pass the Accuplacer and it happened that most of those students were in the Integrated 3 course, the one that I worked as a Specialist for. So, on March 5th, 2020, I met with the Integrated 3 teachers to make a plan, and then shared that with the administration. Here is what follows:

"The teachers decided they would use Edgenuity to help all students do better on the Accuplacer next time around and then we would find a way to have them tested again towards the end of April. Accept, later in the day I find that maybe we can't have them

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tested outside of the math class. That maybe we'd have to do it right after SATs in April.

... But I can't fight this."

It discouraged me that the administration made decisions that I disagreed with about the math students and their teachers without consulting or working with me as their leader. There were many reasons that I disagreed with their plans; losing time with students in class, testing major exams so close together, working contrary to what this body of teachers developed, etc. Again though, this disagreement arises from living in both worlds, and as a dual role individual, it is my belief that disagreements will always occur between teacher leaders and administrators.

Beliefs around What Administration Asks of Teacher Leaders and Teachers

My work with administration also brings up feelings and beliefs around how some of the work we are asked to do as teacher leaders is merely to check a box. For example, compiling the data of the Accuplacer, making two schedules for my department, or asking my teachers to make plans for the pandemic without knowing all the necessary information were all examples that occurred throughout the journal that left me with this feeling.

Beliefs around Reaching Administrators as a Teacher Leader

As mentioned earlier though, it is hard to express disagreements to administrators, at least for me, so I beleive in the power of coaching up to address some of the areas of concerns as I wanted to do with Roger. This occurred when planning data meetings with him and having conversations with him that got us to talk on a more personal level.

Beliefs around Being a Leader in the School

As a leader within the school, there are several beliefs that tie to my work as a teacher leader, that of having a responsibility to the school and its morale as a whole as well as a responsibility for all teachers and their well-being.

Belief in a Responsibility to the Morale of the School

When looking at the whole school, you can see evidence of the belief of standing up for the morale of the whole school evident when creating a plan for our teachers to feel a morale boost with the other teacher leaders or responding to how teachers were affected by the Black History month assembly in that there was little guidance for them to carry discussions in their classrooms following the assembly (both on February 25th, 2020). In fact, this belief of working for the morale of the school (coupled especially with the belief in being protective of the members of the department), led to the following entry on March 9th, 2020:

"Today is the kinda day that if I could have stopped to have a melt down and let tears stream down my face, I would have. I am exhausted. I am overwhelmed. I am feeling defeated. I still don't know what to do about our teachers and how they feel about leaving because of Roger. And I'm exhausted."

Experiences such an emotional response to the low morale of the teachers served shows how deeply this belief is held.

Beliefs around the Well-Being of Teachers

As to the well being of the teachers, there are two areas that arose that showcased the belief that I have in attending to this well being. The first, as mentioned before, was noting the discipline issues in the school as a whole on February 28th, 2020. Following the encounter of students in the hall, during the walk with Mr. Cook, I noted how I wanted to help teachers be more adept at handling the issues especially considering the lack of support that they get from the central office around disciplining students. Additionally, on March 4th, I noted how teachers struggled with grades at times, particularly because of the pressure they feel about not having as many failing students in their class. I could feel the pressure they felt on both sides, not having failing students but also keeping the class rigorous. Here, again, I had a desire to work with other teachers on how to overcome this feeling, particularly as we head into a new school year.

Beliefs and Efficacies as an Individual in a Dual Role Position

In examining the journal and the dual roles, there were elements of my beliefs and efficacies that spoke to the whole individual, neither fitting neatly into one role or the other. These beliefs tend to fall into one of two areas - how I do the work and how I handle the work.

Beliefs around How I Do the Work

In doing the work, I believe that it is important for an individual such as myself to wear multiple hats at all times. For example, during the following observation, the following occurred which required me to complete multiple tasks wearing multiple hats at once:

"I moved to the other end of the hall and watched Cindy. They were playing Jeopardy, and I told her how I appreciated how all students were brought in to the activity and working hard not only to win the game but also ensure understanding.

Two funny side stories – Lori (a Special Education teacher assigned to work with some of the math classes) was in there and working to assign kids with classes for next year and I shared with her about the new Algebra Class that is intended to help students catch and keep up in math. She had some older students (rising Juniors) would could benefit from the class.

Also, when I left some of the kids were asking who I was. [Cindy] told them… and apparently one of the kids shouted, "oh yea, the guy with the jacked arms"."

This just points to how I may be serving one role, that of the observer, but also have to interact with my other roles, like a department leader helping a Special Education Teacher understand the new math course, or even the role of an individual who values personal health.

Beliefs around How I Handle the Work

On the other end of this spectrum though, when the personal identity, particularly the stress thereof, interferes with my professional self, two things happen: I have efficacy in my ability to push through the personal in lieu of the work increases, however I also believe my professional strengths are not at their highest as I do the work. This was particularly evident on March 9th, 2020 wherein I got in an accident on the way to

school. When this happened, "...I handled [it] fairly well… even though I got into the accident at 6:30 am, I was able to exchange all the necessary information, call my insurance, get a rental car, get my car towed, and be at work by around 9:30… which left me one period to make sure my day was ready". And I made it through the day, in a haze and probably not the most successfully, but because of my beliefs and efficacies I got through it.

That said, the world of teaching and leading can leave me feeling many emotions about the work, about myself, about the people I work with, etc. For example, after work on February 19th, 2020, I wrote the following as part of 'If You':

"If you asked me,

today was awkward

and messy

and disheartening

and thrilling

and groundbreaking

and breaking

and painful

and pleasant

and reminded me why I work with students and not adults

and made me love the adults I work with

and made me think less of the adults I work with"

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As such, I believe in the importance of two outlets to handle the emotions and emotional turmoil of this work - peer interactions and, oddly enough, alone time. To the peer interactions, I so firmly believe this that on February 27th, 2020, I discussed our faculty breakfast, a time to socialize with each other on a personal level, but also a time that was created and organized by myself. Also, the mention of happy hour time on both March 6th and March 13th, 2020 alludes to the need to have those interactions with my peers in order to overcome the worries and woes of the day.

When I am at work and feeling the stress, alone time is very important for me. On February 27th, 2020, I had to leave work early to attend to my personal children which left me with lots to do the next morning. As I write my entry on February 28th, 2020, I speak to how grateful I was not to run into people Friday morning and attend to the small talk, rather I was able to focus and get done what I needed - and it was what I needed, and I believe that is a necessary, the alone time when needed, to be successful in this job.

Dispositions and Identities of the Dual Role Teacher and Teacher Leader

Thus, by examining deeply the experiences of the teacher and teacher leader, I was able to draw out beliefs. Those beliefs that are lived in all roles then can be stated as dispositions. These dispositions are important to understand as they are going to be pivotal in much of the discussion in Chapter Five.

As mentioned before, while I am a teacher and a teacher leader, which means I both lead my department and coach/evaluate members of my department, I am so much more - a member of the Collaborative School Committee, a member of teacher leadership organizations, a board member of the state mathematics teaching council, a student, a

parent, a community member, and the list goes on. How I see myself, the qualities that define me, are my identity, or as Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) defines it, "[identity] has to do with how we experience ourselves and our self-concept" (p. 53).

These identities are formed by many factors as mentioned by Kaplan and Garner (2019), but many of those are external to the teacher leader. However, since dispositions affect and shape identity, it becomes necessary to examine these dispositions first, then examine the identities.

Thus, to answer the third research question, "how do these experiences influence the identity and dispositions of an individual such as this in a dual role of teacher and teacher leader?", we will examine the dispositions evident in all of the identities and then the identities themselves.

Dispositions of a Dual Role Educator

Aside from my identity, the who I am as a teacher and teacher leader, there are dispositions, core beliefs that embody not just what I say but also what I do, that shape who I am as a teacher and teacher leader. To understand this, for example, on February 18th, 2020, as I was teaching my lessons, I felt that they were not the best (in part as I felt like I was getting sick), yet I still incorporated elements that I see as fundamental to engaging students and promoting culturally responsive teaching (two of my dispositions that will be later discussed). Whether I think they are or I think they are not, these parts of my belief are so core they are always a part of what I do as a teacher, a coach, a department leader, a member of the Instructional Leadership Team, or any other role I fulfill within the school. To that end, these dispositions can be reflected in all the roles

and identities I assume. These dispositions can be broken down into eight main areas; a disposition of high expectations for all, a disposition towards culturally responsive teaching, a disposition towards engaging all learners always, a disposition towards the beauty and power of mathematics, a disposition of embracing the connections between coaching teachers and my teaching, a disposition of stewardship, a disposition of the passion for education, and a disposition towards action. All of these dispositions can be named dispositions as they appear as beliefs in both the roles of the teacher and the teacher leader (as seen in answering research question two) and they are embodied in the actions of the teacher and teacher leader (as seen in answering research question one).

A Disposition of High Expectations

This disposition of high expectations is one I put on both myself and those that I work with as a teacher and a teacher leader. As to myself, this is evident in the self-efficacy that I have mentioned prior - the belief that (for the most part) what I do, I do well in the realm of teaching as well in the realm of teacher leadership. This in part due to the high expectations I place upon myself in both of these roles. Shortly after the pandemic began and schools were placed on quarantine, I wrote the following (on March 19th, 2020):

"Do we want to do the work and see our students have the opportunity to advance or do we want to focus on the myriad other things that our lives are intertwined with at the

moment? I know this is my job. So I know this is what I should do. So I advocate for us

to keep teaching. I offer my self as a support to all those that need additional help."

I include this to illustrate that even during the pandemic, I still had high standards for

myself and my work. That I would push through and keep teaching as much as I could as

well as advocating and supporting others that were trying to do the same.

The Importance of Transparency

In maintaining high expectations for myself, I attempt to also be as transparent as

possible. For example, when I struggled with the new curriculum in my 5th hour Higher

Level mathematics course I was teaching, I wrote the following on March 4th, 2020,

"And I tried to be upfront with 5th hour about how this material is new for me... Be

transparent... But that I'd try and I'd seek out answers that I didn't know". While this

skill of transparency is easier with students, I do still aim to be transparent with the

teachers I serve, particularly as the department leader. For example, on March 13th, 2020,

when teachers were instructed what was meant by "no instruction" during the first few

weeks of the quarantine. This is not something that I knew the answer to, and instead of

making up something for the teachers in my department, I offered to clarify it with the

administration, and did so and reported back to the teachers.

Owning Biases

Another part of the high expectations I have for myself is being aware of and

owning my biases, and even at times being transparent about them. For example, as

mentioned earlier in this research, I have biases towards the types of candidates I do and

do not look for when hiring a Mathematics teacher. Oddly enough, as a math teacher, I at times hold a negative bias of the atypical math teacher. Earlier in this research, I referred to the stereotypes I have of math teachers (for example, that they insist on being rule-setters and rule-followers). However, in that earlier example from March 13th, 2020, I had to talk to administration about what their intentions for the first few weeks of quarantine were because of the meticulous nature of the teachers I serve, needing to understand all the details of every event and decision. As a leader of this department, knowing this has created a bias in me that makes it difficult for me to present new information to the department, knowing how meticulous they will be about whatever I present.

As a teacher, it has been more taxing for me to come to terms with the biases I have towards students. Unfortunately they have and do exist. But being aware of them, a task I make a responsibility of mine if I am going to truly have high expectations of myself, is the only way I can overcome them. In the journal entry from July 29th, 2018, I wrote about, and eventually read to a room full of educators, the biases that I have had to deal with, ranging from overcoming preconceived notions of the Black community (placed on me in part due to my upbringing) as well as working to not let my biases towards students who are from wealthier families not interfere with my interactions with them. The later of those is illustrated in the following excerpt:

"I grew up pretty far from a life of luxury

Five kids in a three bedroom house,

And my bedroom,

      That I shared with my brother

      Was so small it fit a set of bunk beds and one dresser

      (Mine was out in the hall)

Yet it wasn't till I knew we could receive Free Lunches,

      Which we adamantly denied

      That I knew we were poor.

So to get where I am took lots of work,

      You know, in a profession notorious for how well it pays

      But I made it,

      I made me

And in making me, I inadvertently made a bias

      One that I could verbalize,

      But ignored its consequence

          I was bias against those that were from the other side of luxury

I would be an angry teacher

      Angry with those that took a laissez-faire attitude

      And yet showed signs of wealth

Sometimes that anger would show itself in the way I treated these students

Sometimes in the way that I ignored them

Sometimes in the way that I assessed them

      To me they became a hole

A blank that I made into what I wanted to see

And it wasn't until I was asked to begin thinking about my biases,

That I revealed to myself the harm I was doing.

I can't change this bias

I can't undo the world of want I was born into

That creates resentment in those that have never wanted

But I can recognize it,

I can rationalize it,

I can see that it is a factor in how I treat the students

And I can consciously and cognitively factor out that bias

I can make the effort

And I do."

This piece was related to working with rational functions in mathematics. In a rational function, what is known as a 'hole' occurs when a factor is evident in both the numerator and denominator. In other words, this was a factor that I could see and yet affected me so negatively inside until I took the time to try to understand why this was occurring.

Limits to the Work

As mentioned earlier though, there are limits to what I can do. I know my strengths and weaknesses. As mentioned prior, I have high self-efficacy due to ratings I have received as a teacher and a coach, however, one area that the teachers have marked me down is my ability to help them in their work with English Language Learners. I

mentioned earlier in each realm I find limits to what I do, areas that raise doubts, for example in teaching when confronted with material I am not as certain about or in coaching when working with teachers that are more experienced than I am. However, I do seek to overcome these limits first and foremost by learning more about where I struggle (as mentioned prior, my passion for learning more about my roles of teaching and coaching), but also through use of a mentor and/or support system.

Need for a Support System

This notion of a support system is imperative for a role such as this, so much so that this, in and of itself, could be considered its own disposition. However, I feel it is connected to my commitment of high expectations of myself (as if I did not care about my performance I would not seek the mentorship of others). I have alluded to how I have relied on my past principal, Les, to serve this role of mentor, and how I have hoped that Roger would fill this role too. In fact, working with Roger has been almost cyclic - we both learn from each other. For example, in the following excerpt from 'Donuts' on February 21st, 2020:

"When the administrator I work with stops by

To ask for help

And a donut

To find out how he can reach a teacher

I help him reach for that little bit of frosting

Caught in his chin

And I help him reach out to those that can help him

Help that teacher, help him

Nourish him"

As mentioned, this was a two-way street as on March 11th, 2020, I discussed with Roger how I can better reach Scott since he was being, what I felt, resistant to my feedback.

However, this support system can come from a few other places. As mentioned earlier, one place is during our meetings with the other teachers on the Instructional Leadership Team. This time allowed me to both share my concerns and help others work through their concerns. Additionally, other staff members can and do serve in this capacity. As discussed earlier, when Blake interviewed, I had hoped he would take the job because I knew he could offer that support to me. Additionally, as on March 13th, 2020, other teachers that I have built relationships with serve in that capacity. For example, being able to sit and have a beer and talk with Vince on this date was incredibly supportive. Not just because Vince understood what was happening at the school (with the onset of the pandemic), but also because he knew me - we had been teaching together for the past 9 years as we both were hired at the same school prior to AHHS at the same time and we both applied for and received jobs at AHHS during the same year, unbeknownst to each other. But a final, and incredibly important support, is my wife who also happens to be a high school teacher. As is the case, we tend to discuss work matters with each other, particularly since I used to work with her at my prior place of employment. When working with Gary, the following occurred on February 20th, 2020:

"And this is how I ended my day. But the stuff with Gary really got to me. So there's that cloud that I am seeing today through. And I like him. I think he's a good guy. Kids like him. But, damnit, he won't work……….. And I feel partly to blame – even though I haven't been working with him until this semester and he's found reasons for me to not come in all but one time. So I don't know. I've just got to listen to my wife and move on here. He doesn't want it. And I can't make him want it."

And so, even though I didn't entirely give up on Gary, I did ensure he wanted it, he was willing to work, and stopped trying to bend my schedule to him, rather ensure he holds to our times.

High Expectations for All

This notion of high expectations does not only extend to me, but to all of the learners I interact with, student and teacher alike. This stems from what I have seen when those expectations are not in place. For example, during an observation on March 3rd, 2020, the teacher had little to no stated or written expectations in place during the visit and, accordingly, the following occurred:

"I sat there in 1ˢᵗ hour and watched students joke around, play on their phones, talk about everything but math, and when I asked [the students], well "what am I supposed to do". The class consisted of tasks – let the kids try the task for five minutes, then the teacher does the task for five minutes. That student work time was very little student work

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(because why would they). And those that did shut off during the teacher work time, so we got half the kids tuning out at any given point in the lesson. On top of that, those turned off are being loud and distracting those that are trying to tune in at that time. So, minimal, if any, learning."

This is what I seek to avoid as an educator, in all capacities. Learning that is devoid of expectations. Because when expectations are not in place, this is what ensues.

An Expectation that Learners are Ready to Learn

That said, the biggest expectation that I have for learners is that they are ready to learn. They need not have mastered everything up to that point, but on this day during this time, they are committed to the learning. This philosophy is summed up on February 20th, 2020 when I write, "I've been known to say to teachers (when struggling with students), "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them pass math"... [and] the same is true with teachers, "you can lead a horse to water, but you can make them teach… good? at all? like they know they should?". With students, this seems to be less of an issue than with the teachers I worked with. The frustrations expressed earlier in working with Gary show that I know he is not always ready to learn (or teach for that matter).

An Expectation that I Support Learners

Additionally, I am willing to scaffold the steps needed for success - both with students and teachers alike. For example, the project that I mentioned on February 26th, 2020 where students were writing letters to companies about reducing the amount of

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waste they were producing by repackaging their items, was heavily scaffolded in what we expected of them (with the room to still be creative and unique). Working with teachers, as I used the model outlined in Figure 2, when we set a goal, we create smaller steps, usually three steps, in order to meet that larger goal. I want the students alike to succeed, but that success is set high, and I will continue to set high expectations for both as I see what happens when I do not, but I will also provide the scaffolds needed to reach those expectations.

A Disposition of Culturally Responsive Teaching

While the notion of culturally responsive teaching may seem overwhelming, for the sake of this work, I have broken this into seven tenets that I have found in and among the work I have done as a teacher and a teacher leader, and evidenced in the journal. These tenets embody what I mean by culturally responsive teaching. These include building meaningful relationships with learners, empowering learners, moving each learner along on their own journey (which may not be the same as their peers), caring for all learners, providing individualized attention for all learners, ensuring all learners have the opportunity to learn, and developing an appreciation of other cultures.

Developing Relationships

As discussed in response to research question one, part of the work of the teacher and the teacher leaders is developing relationships. So much can be gained from developing strong relationships with learners, the dynamics of the classroom can shift completely. For example, when working with Betty around how big her class was and its effects on February 21st, 2020, I discussed with her how "she could leverage that

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relationship she has with the students to seek their candid support – what and how can they help her when the room is so overrun with students". Not only does this illustrate that disposition of relationships with students as learners, but it also illustrates how I had a strong relationship with Betty whereas I could have such a conversation with her about the problem she was having. This is not only a suggestion I give to teachers, but one I have enacted myself. On March 3rd, 2020, I recorded the following:

"5th hour has been putting me in an interesting predicament. Its material I've never taught (in my 19 years) – coupled differential equations. So I told them I had to take a more direct approach. And it wasn't bad, but it wasn't my best me. I still have two more days of it. And I'm not giving up, but ugh, its tough stuff. I don't envy the students. I only have to feel confident when I teach it – they have to remember it as they prepare for the IB exams."

Not only does this showcase my building upon my relationship with this class in my ability to talk about how and why I was teaching the materials the way I was but also that empathy I have for the students is apparent as I know that they have to make the material more permanent than I had to in order to teach it.

Empowering Learners

The art of empowering learners is also pivotal in working with any learner. This is why I believe in, if I can, getting teachers to determine their own action steps, their own growth plans (as will be discussed when answering questions four and five). This can also be seen in the feedback that teachers received as their action steps. For example,

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when working with Gary on March 2nd, 2020, one of the action steps we landed on was to "give students more voice in the lesson, both in how they are asked to participate (i.e. presenting problems to the class) as well as making an effort to hear from all students". This is also something that I do as a teacher, to empower my learners in the classroom. For example, in teaching my 7th hour on February 28th, 2020, "they worked out problems created by their peers – who then assessed how they did on these problems". This allowed each student to feel like an authority over the material they created as well as in how they gave feedback to their peers.

Moving Each Learner

In attempting to move each learner as far as I can along their journey, this can only occur from abandoning pride and a sense of what is 'most important' to the educator and focusing on the learner. While this is true for most of the learners I worked with, there was a tension with this when it came to the work with Gary, a tension that I will discuss in Chapter Five. To thois notion though, earlier, I referred to the lesson planning with Clark and John on February 27th, 2020 over their upcoming unit. During this time, we built a plan based on what they knew and the strengths they had, not on what I saw was best. I did act as a consultant when asked, answering questions about what is important for higher level classes, but let them work out the overall sequence and plan for the unit. An example of this in my own classroom was on March 2nd, 2020, when working with my 7th hour class, I wrote:

"My seventh hour did a Points Game where they reviewed how to work with sequences. I just filled in the gaps. And facilitated. And posed questions. And answered questions. And listened. And checked for understanding. And formatively assessed. And provided feedback. And provided next steps."

By doing this activity, I was able to give feedback and next steps when and where needed, not assuming that all had the same information coming in, rather providing the necessary information to complete their understanding on an individual (or small group basis).

Caring for the Learner

A cornerstone of this disposition, that of culturally responsive teaching, is the art of caring. As Gutierrez (2013) states, "If you're really serious about teaching, you have to tie your fate to the fate of your students". I think this was even more true for Gary - the amount of care I had for him was immense. But it appeared as though I was frustrated with Gary during many of the journal entries. I would posit however that great frustration only stems from a great care. If I didn't care about Gary or his fate, I would not have been frustrated in the results I was seeing.

This is the notion of caring that I bring to my students - both the ones in my classrooms and the ones I teach through coaching (i.e. the teachers in my department). This care can come in the form of simple gestures like ensuring a teacher gets his copies even though he came in after me (as with Gary on February 26th, 2020) or like bringing in donuts for the members of the department as I did on February 21st, 2020:

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"And there's a bit of magic when that box opens

Teachers come

And the sight of such sweets

Opens a teacher up in ways words can't

A simple gesture

And I feel like that thin veil

Of chocolate frosting

Has paved the path between me and that teacher

Making what was little, a little more

Making what was lot, a little more

One after another, they file in

Grabbing a treasure

Flashing a smile

A "thanks"

A small conversation

And even though it was donuts,

It was so much more than donuts."

This art of caring extends far beyond the simple gestures though. Caring as a teacher

means having empathy for the students. For example, on March 13th, 2020, the last day

before we were placed on quarantine, I allowed my seniors to have a little more fun than normal as follows:

"By the time 7th hit, I had my student aide working on assembling the calculators (unpacking and putting on the chargers), which meant a lot of cardboard. So, I did little to stop the eventual cardboard robot Pi Man that they turned Anthony in, because, again, that whirlwind feeling. Well that, and I know they are kids. They enjoy playing with each other. And I wasn't about to say – "you don't know when you'll see each other again, but be serious now and don't have fun". So, I let it slide. And let them have their fun."

While I was not in the same position as them, experiencing my senior year of high school in a pandemic, I could imagine how hard it was for them, and so I allowed them to build memories that would last a lifetime as opposed to focus on learning a lesson that they may or may not have remembered. This comes from that art of caring. This caring can be hard for many teachers as it requires feeling deeply about those they work with. The journal illustrates time and again the turmoil that working with Gary put me through as his coach, but that all stemmed from this notion of caring.

Individualized Attention for All Learners

Beyond caring, but certainly tangential to it, is the strong belief in providing individualized attention for all learners. This came out in many ways. From lessons where I take in individual feedback from students as well as provide individual feedback to students to coaching sessions catered to that teacher. In fact, coaching a teacher is

intimate and individualized by nature, provided the coach does not follow a protocol and rather coaches the individual. However, again, this is seen in both coaching and teaching as I provided the following feedback to Gary on March 2nd, 2020, whereas he would "encourage the students to communicate with each other by assessing each other's work and giving them written and oral responses to the work". Here I was helping Gary form ways to provide that individual attention to each student and their progress. This is why as a teacher, I believe in consistent feedback, because I believe strongly in that individual attention. Several times throughout this paper, I have mentioned how this practice is an element of my classroom.

Providing All Learners with the Opportunity to Learn

However, learning can not occur unless I as an educator both believe and act on the idea that it is my job to ensure all learners have the opportunity to learn. This is one of the reasons that I serve as the sponsor for the Gender Sexuality Alliance (to ensure that these and all students have the opportunity to learn). Through my work with the GSA, we were able to share this message with the rest of the staff during our Professional Development morning meeting on March 12th, 2020, wherein:

"GSA had a chance to present to the school about the assembly they were planning and how to acknowledge their LGBT students. They did phenomenal, the way they interacted with the adults and how they answered their questions. We made sure to remind the staff

that even though the assembly may not (will not) happen as planned, that these are things to be mindful of as a teacher of LGBT students."

Having these students share first hand how they are denied the right to learn allowed teachers to see how they too can work to ensure all can learn. As mentioned earlier, this is why my vision for the Math Department centered around providing the same opportunities for all learners regardless of their cultural background. This extends to the teachers I worked with as well. For example, even though I knew that Ally was not returning the following year, and possibly not returning to teaching at all, I still worked with her in meaningful ways as described in the February 19th, 2020 journal entry.

Developing an Appreciation of All Cultures

The final piece of culturally responsive teaching that I deeply believe in is developing an appreciation of all cultures. As before, that is one of the reasons that I do the work that I do with the GSA. It is also why I value things like the surveys I coached Gary around on March 3rd, 2020 in order to find out more about the students. This last piece is embodied by the other six pieces as it comes from building relationships, it comes from empowering learners, it comes from providing individual attention, it comes from caring.

A Disposition of Engaging All Learners

While the disposition of engaging all learners can be considered a part of culturally responsive teaching, it is so fundamental to who I am as an educator that it deserves it's own section. Before I even knew what culturally responsive teaching was, I

was firmly grounded in this notion of engaging all learners. By engaging all learners, I mean finding creative ways to get learners to participate in the learning, ensuring that the learners feel valued, attending to the emotional needs of the learners, and putting learners first.

Using Creative Means

As mentioned when describing the experiences of this role as a teacher and as a teacher leader, I aim to bring creativity and a variety of ways to engage the learners. In the classroom, this can exist from a variety of ways that I engage the learners in completing math tasks (games, partner or small group work, student generated problems, etc) to the types of tasks that I ask the students to complete, like the Trash Project. Working with teachers as a leader, the same applies as I mentioned the variety of ways I coach the teachers through standard observations, co-planning lessons, co-teaching lessons, and more.

Ensure the Learner Feels Valued

All of these creative methods though would not be effective if I did not ensure that the learners themself felt valued. One way I do this is by what I have dubbed the Pencil Test, which I describe in my journal entry from July 25th, 2016 entitled The Pre-Work, the Me Work:

"Think about your classroom. Think about two students. The first is that kid who always comes in to class late, bedraggled, never having homework done, and always needing something. That something is usually a pencil. And every day this student asks for a

pencil. And you've given this student at least 50 pencils already this year so you pull out the two-inch golf pencil with no eraser and throw it to the student across a room. The second student is your best student, always on time, always does their work, always polite, and never needs a thing: until today. Today, this student asks for a pencil and you pull out your best pencil, the one you got for teaching 10 years, that gold-plated mechanical pencil that's engraved with your name. The pencil test says, if we are willing to give such a great pencil to the second student, why are we not willing to do so with our first?"

I use this to reflect on my interactions with all learners to ensure that I am valuing them. I question whether the way I interacted with the learner was due to my preconceived notions of that learner or was I giving that learner the best I could in that moment. While this is fairly obvious to how that applies to the classroom and interactions with students, when it comes to the teachers I work with (and for), examples of this include giving the teachers more time to do their work (and less meetings) when I can, giving the teachers notes that praise the work they do, and even just bringing in small treats for the teachers like the donuts.

Attending to the Needs of the Learner

Part of ensuring that the learners feel valued includes attending to their well-being. As a coach of teachers, examples of this include how I worked with Anna around her request for some emotional/mental health support (as on February 27th, 2020) or working with Gary around candidly determining what he wants out of the job, which

ultimately left us both in tears (as on February 25th, 2020). There are times when I carry

the burden for the teachers too. When working with John, I always valued his input and

his dedication to growth. We had a relationship built upon trust and care. Yet, there were

others in our building that doubted his abilities and often relayed to me their concerns,

particularly the concerns of administration. As such, on February 28th, 2020, I wrote:

"But I'm worried. I want John to survive. A black man in a public school devoid of black

role models. We need him. But he needs to grow so much more. And he can't hide behind

teaching all honors classes because his own confidence in harder math waivers at times.

If any administrator had walked in on that, he would be close to being considered for

dismissal."

John has the heart and passion for the work, but struggles with his own confidence, and

his well-being would suffer tremendously if I, or anyone else, would focus on the

negatives with him. There are some teachers, particularly math teachers, that want to

know what to fix and how to fix it. it. John is the opposite. He wants to know what is

working and how to capitalize on that. I know this about him so have found other ways to

build him up, by reminding him of the good practices he uses (through the sticky note

also mentioned in this journal entry) and by co-teaching with him (which was alluded to

later in the journal entry).

  This also applies to the students. I mentioned already how on that last day before

the pandemic I attended to my seniors well-being by letting them play in class with each

other. But other simple actions have shown this such as when I took the class outside to learn (as on March 4th, 2020) or listening to my students' requests for who they do or do not want to work with (as on February 28th).

Putting Learners First

A final piece in engaging all learners is putting learners first. An example of this was on March 2nd, 2020, where I gave up most of my free time to attend to Anna's request of a day off for her mental health so I went in and helped where I could with her student teacher who was teaching classes that day. Thus, by using creative means to engage the learners, ensuring the learner feels valued, attending to the well-being of the learner, and putting the learners first, I can and do ensure that they remain engaged in what we are doing in the moment.

A Disposition of Mathematics

As I am a Mathematics teacher who works with Mathematics teachers, I would be remiss if I did not mention that I have a disposition towards the beauty and power of mathematics. This comes through in the lessons and assignments I produce as a teacher. For example, the project with my sixth hour where they sought "to sway a company to change their product (or packaging) in order to help the environment" (February 26th, 2020). The joy I expressed in receiving the free calculators from the district (on March 12th, 2020) also illustrates this love of mathematics. These feelings I have about mathematics spread from me not only to the students but also to the other teachers. The Pi Day celebrations that I mentioned prior is something that I started at AHHS a while back. First it was just me and then I spread it across the department. What I noticed this

year was not only this a moment where I experienced joy with mathematics but other teachers did as well, and shared that joy. Thus, when planning for Pi Day adapting to the oncoming pandemic, "we kept the Tree Maps that Ally made (as a handout for students to do if they wanted), the Trivia that I made as a way to raffle off the gift cards, and the notion of doing some art (be it actually art or jokes or poems) about Pi to the teacher and gave small prizes the teacher could give out". All of this came from collaborating with the teachers in a fun and positive way around mathematics.

A final place that this love of mathematics is seen is scattered throughout the poetry I chose to write in order to express myself. There are subtle allusions to mathematics, such as on February 19th, 2020 where I wrote:

"just don't land on me

because I tried

but there's a limit to what I can do

even though I stretch beyond that limit continuously"

Here the use of the words "limit" and "continuously" were intentionally used to connect to their mathematical meanings. The piece on March 5th, 2020, "Color by Numbers" directly includes mathematics as a way to illustrate the unintended 'rankings' of students. The piece produced on March 13th, 2020, "The Point of Inflection" is all about comparing the ride of number of cases of COVID to a roller coaster ride, and longing for that point of inflection where the dramatic rise would start to slow. The piece from March

19th, 2020 directly addresses my feelings about mathematics and math teachers. Even in the older journal entries (in Appendix C), this use of mathematics to express myself is evident. The piece, Rationalizing our Biases, at its core relates teachers examining their biases to Mathematicians analyzing Rational functions, looking for breaks in the graph and why they occur.

A Disposition of the Connections of Teaching and Coaching Teachers

As I have mentioned prior, and will continue to develop in Chapter 5, there is an intrinsic connection between teaching and coaching (and leading) teachers. There exists a cyclical nature between teaching and coaching, that one is constantly improving the other. Additionally, both have (and together have) this notion of a scale, one that I have dubbed the 'teacher scale'. However, and most importantly, because the two become so intertwined, it is also important to be cognizant of this and be able to compartmentalize the two at times.

Coaching Influences Teaching

When observing a teacher, or any interaction that occurs in the realm of coaching, I feel improves my craft of teaching, be it something so wonderful that I need to try, something I know I should do but be more cognizant of, something that I do as a teacher that is edified by seeing it (or not seeing it) in another teacher, or something that I see that I know I should not do. Many of these moments have been alluded to prior in this work, for example, watching Ally review for the PSAT and SAT exams on March 5th, 2020 where I saw her try a new way to cover this material that inspired me as a teacher. I always have a discipline plan for my classes, but seeing a few teachers struggle made me

rethink what I wanted from my plans in the following years as on February 28th, 2020, where I wrote:

"I have to remember this next year – clear, sustainable, student honored systems. As it is now, a lot of teachers use the systems in the building, but they are broken. So most teachers feel either obligated to ignore misbehaviors, and those that don't seem to have the office on speed dial.[ho] I know there is a place in between and I will find it next year. I just have to come in knowing I have to find it at the start. Clear and consistently."

This gave me a chance to look back at what I was doing and how I can improve that method simply by watching other teachers and the systems they tried as well as their successes and failures.

In watching Scott on February 24th, 2020, I pointed out certain teacher moves that he incorporated including that "he circulated and prodded and left groups with next steps to move them further along the task… and eventually had a student present the task at the end". I highlight these strategies as they are strategies I use and seeing them being done by another teacher and work so well reaffirms the good practices that I too use. Finally, as I mentioned prior in watching Gary and his lack of expectations, that reinforced something I don't want to do, that is leave the students with little expectations of the work they should produce.

Teaching Influences Coaching

Conversely, what I do in the classroom tends to influence how I coach. I note in the February 18th, 2020 journal entry how Mark needed to be more cognizant of his checks for understanding with the students, a practice that I had been focussed on and even mentioned on the February 19th, 2020 journal entry how I incorporated these strategies into my classroom. Additionally, the aims I have for myself tend to work their way into the aims and vision I develop for the teacher and the department as a whole. I had been cognizant of my work around social justice in the classroom (hence the project) and so the notion of equity had become a big part of the work I was doing as shown in the pieces of poetry written on March 5th, 2020 and March 10th, 2020.

The Teacher Scales

In both the world of teaching and in the world of working with teachers, there exists this notion of scales. In fact, the two can overlap at times, share a scale if you will. Consider figure 8 below:

What I give as a teacher and/or coach to contribute to the learning

What the learner outputs in response to what was given by the teacher
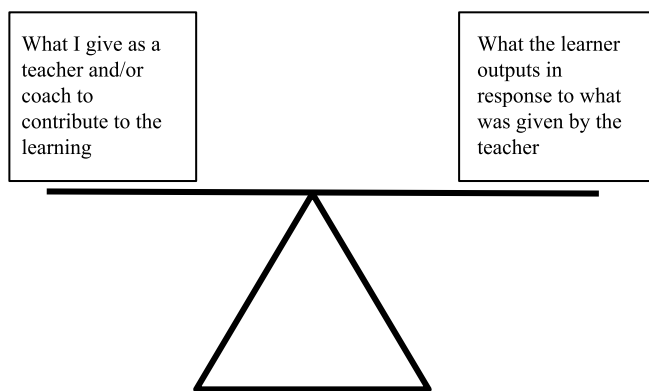
Figure 8: The teacher scales

These teacher scales appear throughout the journal in various forms such as on February 26th, 2020, where I write:

"And its just another example of lots of giving, and the taking comes from my work with the students. Most days, I take away a full cup. Not yesterday. But each day, the cup starts full. And I work to keep it full. [fg]And I tend to leave with it full."

When I see the learners responding so well to what is being presented, it leaves me feeling balanced, full. And each day I can usually reset the scales and not let the prior day (and where the scales left off) affect the next. Yet, as a teacher and/or a teacher leader, when I feel the left side far outweighs the right, it can have an emotional toll on me. For example, the situation with the Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) where we were planning their assembly appears below. Here, I compared it to the prior assembly that just had happened with the officers of the GSA. A conversation that I had with the students, one I thought was private yet important so we can build and grow, was repeated to other individuals in the school. After doing so, on February 25th, 2020, the following occurred:

"I suppose this comparison was the wrong way to address this because later in the day I get these accusing emails from the Assembly coordinator questioning what I said to them. This – this frustrated me so much that I almost want to kick GSA out and be done with

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them. It's a clear example of self-righteousness and ingratitude. Its going to be rough tomorrow."

This is a role where I put in a lot of work and I do not get paid for, yet do because I believe in it. So to have the students betray me in this way certainly made me feel the scales tipped down to the left and the emotional toll can be seen. The opposite is also true though, in that when I see the fruits of the teaching, my scales are balanced, and I do experience joy and peace. For example, watching my students engage in an activity on February 28th, 2020, I noted how it "went well, all that work and only two small errors (and both copy errors [on the student's parts])... It was great seeing them work and talk and I could ask questions (and I did) but they had the work down". Seeing the students so engaged and putting in so much effort towards their learning, being so successful, left me feeling balanced and positive about the day. As has been illustrated throughout this work though, the role I fill as a teacher can easily affect how I feel about my coaching and vice-versa. Thus, these scales are intertwined and it's a running scale throughout the day where an interaction in one realm can balance out an interaction in another.

The Need to Compartmentalize the Roles

With all that said, knowing how intertwined these two roles are, there also exists, at times, the need to compartmentalize what is happening in one role. There are often times (such as on February 21st, 2020 and on February 25th, 2020) where the work of the coach stood to get in the way of the work as a teacher and I needed to turn off that coach part so I could attend to the needs of the students I would be interacting with. Likewise,

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the negative interactions I had with my colleague over differing political beliefs left me

feeling despondent on March 6th, 2020, so much so that I needed to compartmentalize

that interaction and then fill it with positive interactions from other peers.

A Disposition of Stewardship

The next disposition is one that is a natural part of who I am as a teacher and a

teacher leader is this notion of stewardship, one where I work to serve the students, the

staff, and the community at large. Prior to the journal used for this research, I had written

an entry in my personal journal that included the following:

"And know that my light can make a difference

To quote Hamilton – no not the man

When you interact with your fellow human beings, think –

"I have the honor to be your obedient servant…"

That honor, that light, will shine

As you act with light

With love

With kindness

And you live to serve your fellow man… or woman… or…

The hell with gender…" (April 9th, 2019)

This piece of my disposition constantly leads me to say 'yes' when asked to do

something that I know will benefit the one asking. This goes beyond an issue of

boundaries, it becomes an attitude to ensure that I serve those I am working with. The

belief in stewardship is one that I hold so intrinsically that it guides my work and becomes action. The nature of what I do in and of itself, teaching and working with teachers, are jobs of service. Thus, this disposition towards stewardship comes naturally to me.

In the piece written on March 13th, 2020, which details us entering into the pandemic and my frustrations with the way COVID (and accordingly schooling) was to be handled by those in authority - both nationally and locally, I talk about how I want to "save" those around me. Or at least try to. As is detailed in this piece, that is the only way I can serve them. This not a notion of saviorism as I am only seeking to help my fellow man. This embodies that nature of stewardship. Those around me (on this ride) are students, fellow teachers, community members, etc. It was incredibly saddening when we lost a member of our school, a student, to the COVID virus. To know that I couldn't serve and save everyone, to know that the systems weren't perfect. But I still tried to serve.

Serving the Students

Activities like Pi Day were designed to serve the students. To give them a chance to have fun, enjoy mathematics, and let them know that we, their teachers, care about them. And I literally served them - I went to all the classes delivering the treats and activities we had procured. In part, this activity served the community as a whole as it allowed families to be involved in ways like donating goods or donating their time (although I did inform them that we would not need volunteers due to the nature of the pandemic).

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Serving the Teachers

As to the teachers I coached, on March 12th, 2020, I volunteered to score them again in a scored observation if they had wished. This was an act of service on my part, giving up time (or at least planning on giving up time) to help teachers. Particularly as they were going to receive a partial observation score from Roger and many were worried about how that would affect their overall yearly rating. This spirt of stewardship can be seen in many of the undertakings that were written about in the journal, service towards the students, the staff, and the community as a whole.

Serving as a Trusted Colleague

In regards to being a trusted colleague, I often find out much about my peers and colleagues that they may not be willing to share with others. For example, on February 25th, 2020, I noted after observing Betty and sensing something a little off that:

"This could be my imagination, this could be because I know she's thinking of leaving, this could be because of her jetlag, this could be because I've been so overwhelmed with my year and I know that she's doing well enough that I don't have to give her as much time as others, but whatever it is, this intangible is there."

Much of what I cite here, her jetlag, her thinking of taking another job, came from her confiding in me. In fact, at the conclusion of the year, Betty did end up leaving. That trust also was illustrated with Anna as she shared with me how she wanted to seek therapy

(February 27th, 2020) or how she just sought refuge in my room when needed on February 26th, 2020.

Putting Myself Last to Serve Others

I also tend to put myself last in the work that I do. This can have unhealthy consequences. However, dispositions are not always about what is best, rather what we tend to. So even when it puts me at risk, I side with helping others before me. I cited previously how on February 27th, 2020, that I felt like I was in a rut. I didn't expand upon this as I did not give myself time to. I was so concerned with the many other facets of the job that my own needs did not get addressed. Another example was giving my time to Anna (on March 2nd, 2020) so she could take the day off for herself. Unfortunately, this comes with its side effects. On March 3rd, 2020, I write:

"I am exhausted. How exhausted? Well so much so that I (1) left my water bottle, school keys, and calculator on my desk at school, (2) had to buy a coffee at 6:30 pm, and (3) made a list of three things and my brain knows there is a third one but can't even process what that is right now."

This was one of three days that I had to be at work until 6:30 (or later) that week as I mentioned in the March 4th, 2020 journal entry, to point out the amount of work I was doing as well as the toll it was taking on me and my sleep. However, I still remained last to my work. All of this hard work, this exhaustion I am willing to put myself through, is a part of my dedication of service to my colleagues and my students.

A Disposition of Passion for Education

As I seek to understand my dispositions, it is also apparent that I act with and because of a deep passion for education. My passions abound in teaching, coaching, educating, mathematics, and the list goes on. Both in working with teachers and students. This passion is made clearly evident as I write on March 5th, 2020, "I got to spend a lot of time today doing what I love – working with students and working with teachers". This is what I love. This is what I am passionate about.

Passion Leading to Frustration

This passion can, fortunately or unfortunately, work both ways though. For example, working with Gary on March 3rd, 2020, I wrote the following:

"And I don't know why I care so much. I mean – I care, that's what I do. But even though his words say he wants to be here, his actions REPEATEDLY say otherwise. Its like I always say, "you can lead a student to water, but you can't make them pass math". Same is here – I can keep telling him what and how and why he needs to do things, but I can't do it for him. And he doesn't want to do it. So if he doesn't want to do it, why do I care?"

The extreme aggravation I felt was because of the extreme passion I have - for teaching and for those teaching. Additionally, as we planned for life entering the pandemic, on March 13th, 2020, I wrote the following to describe the ride that going through teaching during a pandemic felt like:

"And as we continue to rise

A single tear streaks down my face

Carving scars into my cheek as it is pushed down by our ascent

A tear of fear

Mostly for others

But a little for myself

A tear of frustration

Because this ride didn't have to end up this way

But I was powerless to change it

A tear of uncertainty

A tear of pain

A tear of life

Living

But alone

Alone with so many others"

The passion about the students and teachers, my fears and worries for them as well as

myself, are clearly evident in the emotion displayed here.

Passion Leading to Joy

However, this passion is not a bad thing. Being so ardent in my work does have

its benefits. For example, on February 18th, 2020, I talked about all the fun I had with the

material I was teaching that day. On February 19th, 2020, I discussed how I enjoyed

making connections with both students and teachers over the homemade Valentine's Day gifts that I brought into the classroom and placed on my desk. On February 28th, 2020, I discussed some of the lessons and activities that I was passionate about including a project and students earning their Unit Circle cards.

What Fuels Passion - Seeking Improvement

This passion is fueled by three elements - how I see myself as someone always seeking to improve and grow, the fact that I need to be the best I know I can be (and have worked to be rated highly effective as an educator and leader to do so), and the need to be valued. Unfortunately, as I started the journaling process, I decided to keep the journal entries to the school day itself, yet much of the professional development occurred outside of that time, instances that show how I seek to improve myself by learning with and from others. For instance, I refer to a district meeting on February 27th, 2020 and the CCTM Social on February 21st, 2020, both meetings outside of the school day that allowed me to work with others on my practice. However, my journal also points to me seeking additional input (from Ally on February 19th, 2020) as well as how my coaching influenced my teaching, for example the conclusions I made about how I wanted to handle the start of the following school year on February 28th, 2020.

What Fuels Passion - Self-Efficacy

It has also been discussed that I have a high self-efficacy for both what I can do in the classroom with my students as well as with the work I do with other teachers (in the sections on my efficacies). This is in part due to my continual ratings from my evaluators, earning top marks (i.e. being rated Distinguished) in both my work as a teacher and a

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leader. This does not happen though without lack of want or try. I strive to put in my best at all times, even when, as mentioned in earlier sections, there are reasons that it is hard for me to do so at times. On February 26th, 2020, I noted in regards to my teaching that:

"My teaching doesn't do anything to make me doubt myself as a teacher, but it doesn't push me because I'm at a perceived pinnacle. And I don't want to sound conceited. But no one tries to knock me down a few pegs. I wish they would so I could grow again."

While this speaks to a lot in my perception of who I am as a teacher, it certainly speaks to my perception of myself as a teacher.

What Fuels Passion - Being Valued

Finally, the need to be valued and seeking validation for the work I do fuels my passion. As I mentioned on February 25th, 2020, I know "from personal experience I need the gift of 'gifts/cards'". This also speaks to why I constantly seek a mentor or someone that can make me feel valued. As I write on February 20th, 2020:

"You know, my job can be lonely. It can be isolating. And being the only man that works as a teacher leader in our school, and separated, physically and many other ways. At least the administrators are mostly men, but they too are so far physically. And their world is slightly different. But at least [Les] understood when he was our principal (the principal before Dr. Skye). And I could go down there and just sit and talk. Some days I wish I could have that with Roger. It won't be the same, but its better than nothing. Which is

why I found myself in there at the end of the day anyway. To talk. To decompress. To vent. And to commiserate."

This need to connect emotionally stems from a need to feel valued. Having another person who serves in a similar role, another man who is willing to sit and work and talk with me. That is what I needed to feel that value.

A Disposition Towards Action

The final disposition that is evident in who I am as a teacher and a teacher leader is that I am a doer. This can be made most clear by what is not seen in the journal. While there are moments of frustration, anger, stress, sadness, etc, there are not moments where I give up. I find a way to do or commit to finding a way to do it. And I do. For example, on February 24th, when I received an email asking for the results of the Accuplacers, I didn't hesitate, I dug in and compiled the data and sent it in to the administrators. Or on the same day when I had to review the resumes of potential candidates for our open positions and narrow down the candidates. This is also evident with my work with students, for example on February 25th, when the GSA presented a concern they were having I instantly emailed the administrators to address their issue.

This piece of my identity, being a doer, or as I refer to it, my 'hands' (stemming from the notion of three types of people - those that lead from their head, those that lead from their hands, and those that lead from their heart), this identity is personified in how I created roles for myself, I am always wearing multiple hats, I work hard at what I do, and I have a need to know. This first element, the roles I have created for myself, have been

alluded to already - from this position itself where I worked to form a committee at our school to write a grant to get the program for teacher leaders to my role on interviews (ie having the department chair a part of that process) to the coordinator for our monthly breakfasts during our staff meetings.

Serving in Multiple Roles

As I discussed my beliefs of working in these roles, I discussed how I believe it is important that I am always wearing multiple hats with examples as to when that was important. This connects to me being a doer as I can ont sit idly by in one role when another role is called into action. This is why when I observe a teacher, I seldom just sit, but I also interact with the students as a teacher would, such as with Betty on March 6th, 2020, or with Clark on March 11th where in I walked around and worked with students to get a perspective on what was happening as opposed to sit and take notes. With working hard, there aren't specific mentions in the journal of 'this was hard work' rather implications that can be deduced from what is (and is not) in the journal. There are many examples from allusions to working at nights and in the early mornings to comments like "as crazy as this week has been, today I got to leave at a decent time" (March 5th, 2020). The way that many entries had to be compartmentalized into hours of the day to focus on the work done during those hours and the way those hours were always filled with work or work related tasks.

A Need to Know

Finally, there's a need to know I have that fuels my ability to 'do'. This is evident in my work with Gary, how on February 25th, 2020, I had to ask him rather candidly if he

wanted to come back and work with us the following year. This was because it affected

what and how I would do my work with him. While there may have been more tactful

ways to get to this information, the 'doer' took the direct route of asking him outright.

Identities of a Dual Role Educator

To go back to Kaplan and Garner, identities can and do exist as a sub-identity of a

larger identity. Simply put, the identities assumed by this dual role educator all exist in

these subsets. This is illustrated below in figure 9:
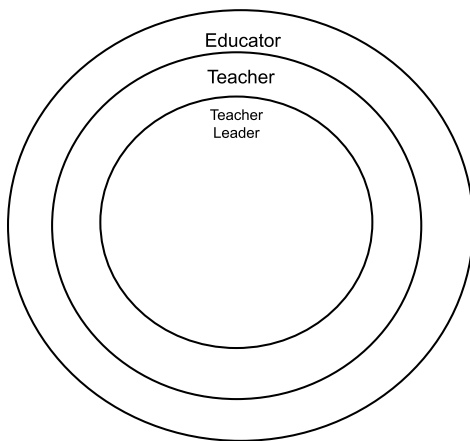
Figure 9: Identities of this Dual Role Educator

The identities are constructed all within the realm of being an educator. Inside of that

identity exists the identity of the teacher. Inside of that exists the identity of being a

teacher leader.

To understand this construct, take for example, a decision I would be faced with

as a teacher leader. That decision has to pass through two gates before I would agree to it

as a teacher leader - is this something that I as a teacher can abide by? Is this something

that will benefit the education of all involved? Similarly when coaching a teacher, advice that I share must be something that I would not only be willing to implore as a teacher but also be something I feel would benefit all learners most. Conversely though, there are actions I would take as a teacher that I would not necessarily coach others to do. For example, the Kindness Wheel (as referred to on the March 3rd, 2020 entry) is not something that I have attempted to get others to incorporate in their teaching. Whether that is because I know how intricate this is as a disciplinary model or because I want to keep something for myself is something I need to cess out for myself. However, what remains is this part of my being a teacher does not enter the realm of teacher leadership. Also, when I come across new methods, ideas, project, etc in the world of teaching, I am much more likely to try incorporating that strategy (if it passes through my identity as an educator and I can see how it can benefit all learners) well before I would coach someone on imploring said strategy.

These identities will be discussed below starting with the identity of a Teacher Leader and working out to understand how each is encapsulated within the next.

Identity of the Teacher Leader

Throughout the entirety of the journal, this role of a teacher leader is evident. The teacher leader appears as a coach of teachers, as a department leader, as a member of the instructional leadership team, as contributions are made to the school as a whole, and as the teacher leader works in tandem with the administration to solve problems. To reiterate the experiences, the efficacies, and the beliefs of the teacher leader would be redundant. Yet all of these contribute to this identity.

There were times when this identity and the beliefs and efficacies thereof were challenged. For example, on February 19th, 2020, I write:

"if you don't want to help yourself,

I can't help you

if you want to make excuses

you'll have an excuse

if you want to fail

you will fail"

The work with this teacher (Gary) was threatening my sense of stewardship. I always seek to serve and help, yet, here I was claiming "I can't help you". However, what shows up a few lines later, "I can't care more than you do", aligns with the belief in the teacher scales, so reinforces this notion that there has been some give and take, and not just give on the part of the teacher leader. I even go on to admit later (on February 20th, 2020) that I felt like I had failed, chipping away at my self-efficacy in terms of being a teacher leader.

Another situation that arose that challenged my identity as a teacher leader reads below:

"We had our teacher only leadership meeting and I brought up the frustrations that my team is having with Roger. And Special Ed shared the same frustrations (as he is also

over them). And we talked about it but felt helpless. Dr. Skye doesn't like to hear that she is wrong about things, so I can't bring it up to her. I could try talking to him, but I think he has to see it first." - March 10th, 2020

Following this, I had made a plan to confront Roger about these issues. This is something that goes beyond my zone of comfort as a teacher leader. While I can entertain disagreements, to bring something so harsh to an administrator, something that needed to be addressed, ultimately challenged me to grow. This is in part that the reasons were rooted in my dispositions: the need to serve my and other teachers, the deep care that I have for the teachers as part of the Culturally Responsive dispositions, and the disposition towards action.

A final journal entry that showed my identity as a teacher leader alter was from shortly after we announced the school closing for the pandemic:

And in doing so, we've created pandemic

That's fueling a pandemic

We allow people to spread misinformation

Deadly misinformation in this case

And it hurts

My heart, my soul, my mathematical me

So much I can't decide if I should fight more - March 19th, 2020

Here, my worth as a teacher leader was being tested. I didn't know how much more I could reside in that disposition of mathematics when all around me, people were spreading misinformation with mathematics. This led the teacher leader in me to be silent, at least for a while, in response to what the world was facing. It led me to resist the disposition towards mathematics and its beauty and power.

Aside from the instances this identity wasn challenged or changed, it is evident that this identity is housed in the teacher identity and the educator identity. Particularly in the world of coaching math teachers, it's easy for me to put myself in that situation and think about what I would do and how I would handle the lesson (the teacher identity), and then to use pedagogical content knowledge to piece together what I am seeing and what I am not seeing (the educator identity). For example, on February 18th, 2020, after watching Mark teach his lesson, I noted the following:

"Additionally, I think with him working out the tasks, I think he would have seen there were a lot more arduous then he thought at first. So when he asked the students to do the problems which involved solving for the missing information in a triangle using Law of Sines and Law of Cosines, in the ambiguous case, AND there were two sets of answers for each of the problems, having not worked it out himself, I think it gave him an unrealistic expectation of how the kids could make the connection to solving both situations at once."

This analysis of what was occurring in the classroom was born from my own personal understanding of the material and what I do when I teach material like this. For example, I think about the amount of work presented here in one task for the students to do, and as I reflect on my own teaching, I know I would either break up that task or only ask the students to do part of the task (especially as they are first learning the concepts). This way we can see if they are mastering the smaller steps to finally accomplish such a big task as this problem. This is not to say I do not believe in challenging the students, rather that I want to assess the learning happening in the moment and not get lost in a large task. All of that with the aim of seeing that everyone has access to the material, imploring that educator identity.

Evidence of the teacher me living in the role of the teacher leader (especially the position of the teacher coach) is riddled throughout the journal, from tasks such as asking the teacher to evaluate their own teaching (as I would ask a student to evaluate their own learning) to focussing on building and sustaining strong working relationships with the teachers I coach and lead, to the meetings I facilitated in the Instructional Leadership Team meetings where I relied on what I knew about good teaching to design those meetings. Who I am as a teacher leader is who I am as a teacher. There are elements from this identity though, a teacher leader, that are rooted here and, accordingly, exist in the other two identities.

Loneliness from This Identity

One element of my identity that is due to being in a dual role and not just a teacher is the sense of loneliness. Not being an administrator and not being just a teacher

puts me in this role that separates me from most others in the building. Unfortunately, this does create a sense of loneliness in all capacities and functions when serving in education, knowing there are few out there who do what I do as well as knowing I can't have the same collegial relationship with my peers that I would if I were just a teacher.

When working with teachers, like Gary, this became evident, particularly on February 25th, 2020, when I wrote:

"But what made the conversation tough was he was incredibly defensive, and maybe that's because of his work with Roger. I was trying to coach him to say here's what you need to be doing if you wanna stay. And he wanted to argue with it all. Justify his poor teaching with excuses."

I felt this tension between my role and Roger's role. I felt like I was being seen as the administrator and not the teacher leader. I was not there to evaluate Gary, rather to help him - and help him keep his job. Yet he responded to me like I was another administrator there to break him down.

Likewise, I feel that separation from administration, and even at times the rest of the Instructional Leadership Team teachers. For example, on February 20th, 2020, I wrote:

"You know, my job can be lonely. It can be isolating. And being the only man that works as a teacher leader in our school, and separated, physically and many other ways. At least

the administrators are mostly men, but they too are so far physically. And their world is slightly different."

This loneliness is also why I led the creation of the teacher meetings (those that work on the ILT). At least we can talk about what we are feeling and facing in a secure way. And it did and does help, but the loneliness still persists.

The Imposter Syndrome

The other element of my identity as a teacher leader that comes out at times, and accordingly creeps its way into my other identities, is a feeling of being an imposter. Doubt creeps in more so in the world of coaching then in the world of teaching, particularly, as mentioned before, when I coach the teachers with more experience than me like Elaine. In fact, after watching her on March 2nd, 2020, as I discussed next steps with her, I wrote (and felt) the following, "I don't know… It's a work in progress.. But it leverages what she tries to do already". The doubt came out immediately as I reviewed my potential action steps and said 'I don't know'. Also, working with Scott, another teacher with more experience than me, on March 9th, I expressed how I heard him saying (without saying) that I was 'not being helpful'. These doubts often leave me feeling like an imposter, doing a job I wasn't meant to do.

Identity of the Teacher

The best that I can do to sum up this identity, is to say when I am in the building, I am always a teacher. The story of helping the student teacher on March 3rd exemplifies

this - that even in my duties, my personal responsibilities, and in helping out a teacher, I couldn't stop being a teacher:

"See, I got to help out and teach 3rd hour so Anna could take the day off. And so I stopped by after our hall walk duty (which was a little long so I could collect cookie money). That cookie errand (my daughters were selling girl scout cookies and colleagues had bought some - I was attending to that) though gave me a chance to see some classes I don't normally see.

But 3rd hour, I stopped by Anna's room to help out with the activity that I had planned and [the student teacher] decided she would try. So I helped her run X Factor. It was fun but chaotic. But fun. And it gave me a chance to try the activity before I did it myself during 6th hour. Not my students and all, but I do know a good number of them."

The want to see other classes and the joy that act created speaks to me the teacher. Then, the way I jumped in to work with the class and the student teacher during the 3rd hour - something I didn't have to do, but the teacher in me couldn't say no to, also speaks to this identity.

That said, it stood that throughout this journal, writing about the act of teaching was always difficult for me. As I wrote on February 25th, 2020:

"Why can't I write more about what I teach? Maybe cause its so much to teach. Maybe cause its too much of me to see it. I'll get better… but teaching is to the point where

small things happen where I learn to be better and the rest edifies my current beliefs about how good of a teacher I am. I don't know."

I tend to lean towards this being attributed to this piece of my identity - that being a teacher is so much of who I am, so ingrained in who I am, that makes it so difficult to write about, paramount to thinking about breathing. Just like with breathing, we only think of it when we are having a hard time, just like my journal seems to reflect the times I struggled with teaching more so than when teaching was happening as it should.

One instance where this identity was confirmed occurred in the excerpt below:

"And I made my way back to the room. And then Malcolm was waiting and had a discussion about what amounted to me doing extra work to help him. Of course I said yes. I can't say no, but I really can't say no to students who ask me to help them when the need arise. Who am I kidding – I can't say no to most anyone that asks for help." - February 26th, 2020

This reinforces the disposition of stewardship. I had a clear reason to deny the student - the amount of additional work I was taking on for him - but I refused to say no. This just exemplifies that part of the teacher me that exist

Conversely, an instance where part of my identity was altered, at least in the moment, occurred below:

"And I felt bad having to say, "you missed, you'll have to wait on that and I will get back to reviewing some of this material later in the week, but I can't stop and reteach everything in the moment". Which was part of the reason, but it's also like I'm telling a story I barely know. If I get off track, I may not remember the early parts adequately nor will I be able to get back to this point in the story." - March 9th, 2020

What occurs here is a challenge between two parts of my identity, two dispositions as they relate to teaching; that of culturally responsive teaching and the tenet of giving all students the individualized attention they need, and the disposition of high expectations, particularly for myself. Here, I was holding myself to a high standard, to have this material mastered and understood, and then convey it in a way that made sense to the whole class. In this case, that disposition of high expectations for myself won out against a disposition of culturally relevant teaching. While it did not alter my identity per say, it made me realize that, at least in this case, there was a hierarchy to the dispositions in the realm of teaching.

Identity of the Educator

Outside of being a teacher and a teacher leader, a bigger role I encompass is that of an educator. As explained earlier, this becomes its own layer as its the final gate that decisions in teaching and leading must pass through for me to advocate for that change. For example, on February 20th, 2020, it was written:

"One big takeaway was that teachers were not thinking cogently about their 'working groups' (our fancy way to say seating charts). So we … decided we should address this with the staff. During PD. But PD tomorrow is CRE… [This] PD has been a series of lectures with no application. Its not good teaching. So when Dr. Skye pulled up the presentation and saw over 20 slides of dense text, we knew we were faced with the same thing yet again. But here we had a practical application to what the PD was supposed to be on. So we… decided that we needed to charge our staff with creating "working groups" during our next PD – and give them time to do so… I volunteered with another teacher to help the PD presenters figure out how they can implement this in their PD presentation… Genuine real applicable working time is what the teachers need – and we have a chance to give that to them".

Here a lesson was to be presented on behalf of school leadership (which as a teacher leader included me). However, the teacher in me knew that we needed to meet the needs of the teacher, time to do the work we were constantly being asked to do. On top of that, this final identity was the ultimate gatekeeper - that of the educator. For teachers to gain the most from the PD, a time to practically implement what they were learning was needed.

Additionally, this educator identity houses many other identities outside of the scope of this paper. One such identity as alluded to earlier is that of being a leader in the state in education, serving on a state board and presenting at state conferences. Another sub-identity that falls under this identity is that of being a father. All that I do for my

children revolves around educating them and preparing them for the world outside our house. This comes in conjunction with a disposition of caring - a disposition I hold very deeply for my own children.

Developing Aims and the Challenges of these Aims

Looking at the fourth and fifth research questions, which state, "How does such an individual develop his/her aims for himself and his peers?" and "What challenges and opportunities present themselves to enhance or take away from such aims?", it would be best to ascertain these aims through looking at the teachers themselves and the aims that were developed as well as the challenges that arose during the process. One important note, the aims set for the teachers being coached were the aims of the coach himself. Their aims were my aims.
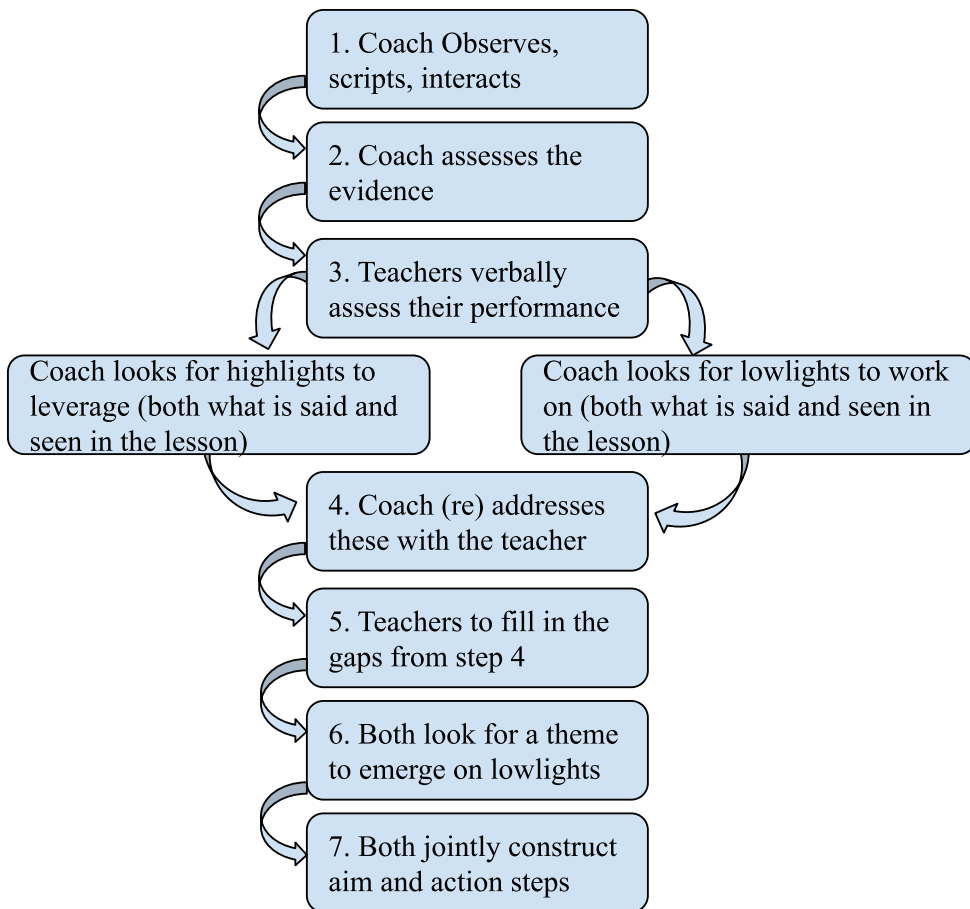
Figure 7: Observation Feedback Model

Prior to this though, re-examining Figure 7 (above) will ground the reader in the

process of developing those aims. As a coach, this is the process followed to get to the

point where an aim, and action steps to accomplish that aim, are developed. This is not a

process that has been informed by others, rather one that I as a coach of teachers have

developed over time. To clarify a few points on this flow chart, during step 4, the coach

may simply be paraphrasing what the teacher said in step 3, helping the teacher to shape

what was said into those buckets of what went well and what did not. The coach may also

contend some of what was said, particularly if they are not in agreement. This usually

happens if the teacher sees a fault that wasn't really there (or at least not evident). Last though, the coach may refer back to the lesson to bring to light elements that were missed in the teacher's self assessment.

For step 7, the aim that is created is the overall goal for future lessons. This aim may seem to be something that is large, almost too big to accomplish on its own. It usually is something that can be assessed through data, but not always. Because it may seem large for the teacher, action steps that can lead to that bigger aim are developed. These action steps are small elements that can, if need be, be practiced with the teacher, be it in a coaching session, in planning, or simply in future lessons.

Accordingly, the next sections will be dedicated to the teachers on my caseload as well as the other teachers in my department that I coached. The aims and action steps developed will be discussed as well how we progressed on accomplishing those aims. It is important to remember though that this is generally a six week process yet, with the onset of the pandemic, we stopped after four weeks, so the aims will not appear to have been met, but the progress towards them can be discussed. This also meant that some of the teachers didn't get to the point of designing an aim and action steps. My work with Gary during this time culminated in a survey he gave the students, the work with Clark and John was around co-planning and them watching them implement those plans (with a little co-teaching), and seeing that Ally and Cindy were not coming back the following year, coaching was a little different with them.

Scott

My first full observation of Scott teaching a class at all, not just this year, was on February 24th, 2020. This was due to the fact that he wasn't on my caseload, however I had offered to work with the teachers to help Roger, the administrator who evaluated the mathematics teachers I did not have on my caseload, as the mathematics was outside of his comfort zone. During this time, I noted the following:

"But 4th I watched Scott. And yea, it was interesting. His class was about what I would have expected (as this was the first full class I've seen of him teaching math). He started with a task that was good, but incredibly unclear. And of course the students struggled. But he circulated and prodded and left groups with next steps to move them further along the task. And eventually had a student present the task at the end. But – and there's many buts here – there was a definite sense of favoritism (and lack thereof), there was a lack of structure, and there was an ownership of intellectual power that was strangled by Scott. After the lesson, I jotted myself some major things that I wanted to get Scott to work on that included: outlining what success looks like for a task, chunking the tasks, assigning roles for conversations or group work, be conscientious about grouping, give explicit written directions for a task, give relevance to the task, and highlight these conventions that he expects the kids to hold."

This embodies those first two steps in the process utilized to create aims and action steps. After the lesson though, later in the day, we met and discussed what occurred in the

lesson, using the protocol. He talked about his strengths and weaknesses and I paraphrased what I heard. From that, he was able to come up with the following aim and action steps:

"In order to aid students to engage in tasks, the teacher will:

1.   Help the students to chunk the task (not always particularly with smaller tasks or tasks that can be more open middle),

2.   Provide checkpoints where students should engage with their partners about how the problem is progressing, and

3.   Ensure the students understand what success on the task means (without giving away the whole process)."

These action steps are reflected either directly or indirectly in the notes I had written for Scott, so the aim and action steps that Scott had created were a great place to start our work.

While these obviously do not encapture all of the aims I had listed in my observation for Scott, part of the work is to ensure that the teacher does not feel overwhelmed, so giving three things to focus on appears to be a good number (and most teachers generally receive three parts to their action steps as will be illustrated throughout).

On March 5th, 2020, I was able to return to Scott's classroom in order to leave him some positive feedback on what I was seeing in the classroom. These visits tend to

be short - anywhere from five to fifteen minutes depending on what is happening in the classroom. During this visit, I saw definite movement towards his overall aim as well as evidence of the action steps. During this visit, I noted:

"I went to Scott who was working on a writing project. And he was excited about it. And so the kids were too. And they were engaged and talking about the history of math. And I thought it was so cool how excited and invested he was and how it made the kids excited and invested. And so I told him."

Because he was working on an individual project, it was hard for him to demonstrate the second action steps (around checking in with partners). But the overall aim, students being engaged in the task, was clearly evident during the visit. Leaving such positive feedback helped to pave the way for what I saw on my final visit.

During my time in Scott's classroom on March 9th, 2020, I saw definite movement towards accomplishing the aim and action steps we set up. In fact, as recorded in the journal:

"Then fourth hour I got to watch Scott. And it started fine. I mean it was great. He had a really good lesson going. And I think he always had it in him, but he was doing some of the things we had talked about recently, namely:

1.	Help the students to chunk the task (not always particularly with smaller tasks or tasks that can be more open middle),

2.   Provide checkpoints where students should engage with their partners about how the problem is progressing"

This being my first go with Scott, I was very happy to see so much movement in such short time. As I said before, Scott is one of the individuals who is harder for me to coach since he is a more experienced teacher than I am. What also leverages my work with him is that I know he has high opinions of me, and that helped him in his work with me to reach his goals. In fact, as I alluded to earlier, when the department was in the focus group, Scott was the one that said that I was one of the best things about the school (and yes the rest of the department agreed). Thus, in the case of Scott, this may be the most complete and successful tale of what coaching should look like as he helped to co-create an aim and action steps, an aim that he was achieving and action steps I saw in place in the classroom.

Mark

Conversely to Scott, while Mark had a full cycle of coaching (well as much as I could in four weeks), he did not see the successes that Scott did. We started his work on February 18th, 2020, Mark has stated that he wants the preparation of teaching to be easy. He is the teacher that is constantly behind in his grades. Knowing this has peppred my view of him. Below is an edited version of what was documented in the journal from this first visit:

Today I watched Mark, and while watching his class, I just noticed what I always notice while working with him, which is why it's a little frustrating. In that, he understands the material, and he understands some of the components of good teaching, and he won't put in the work.

He wants to reuse the same things he has used in the past which is fine, but doesn't look back on [the lessons]...

So, he knows he should be coming up with clear expectations on his slides, it just doesn't happen. And he pointed it out himself today when I talked to him about how the lesson went. But… he didn't look over the slides prior to that period, he hadn't taken the time to complete any of the tasks he was asking his students to do... And this was noticeable to me and the students... For example there was a slide in there asking them to work out a problem they had just done. And he asked the kids to work through it and it wasn't till a few minutes later when the students were saying "hey mister, we just did this problem" that he realized his error.

...as he was going through the examples with his students, letting them try them on their own, he couldn't tell them if they were right or wrong, he could only look over their work and make superficial comments like "looks good". So the feedback the students were getting was not high quality and he didn't have a way to help the students move along... So it was just frustrating because it goes back to this notion, this big issue that we've had… How do we get him to do a little more of the front loading. And not just pull up a presentation he made three years ago and think he can use again without doing it…"

Reviewing these notes, it is clear to see that working with Mark has its challenges from the start, there is an unwillingness to do the work that he either has or that I perceive (or both). This makes it hard for him to accomplish his aims. Additionally, while he is great at taking notes during our conversations, he doesn't look back at them unless he knows the observation will be scored. So seldom do I see changes in his instruction.

This does not mean he has never responded to coaching. We have slowly built up systems over the years to help him get around the room effectively (and not always to the same students). But again, this was slow, and this was something he saw worked well for him and he could (easily) do. Unlike with Scott, when it came to creating his aim and action steps, I did the heavy lifting after hearing what he had to say about the lesson. While he did note some of the same feedback I had, pointing out that he didn't have clear expectations for the students. I created the aim and action steps as follows:

"So I created a goal for this six weeks that fell into three different buckets. A goal which we talked about in his debrief. Which is essentially around him being able to give more genuine and productive feedback as well as assessing where the class is at. And it broke down into essentially making his own exemplars of the tasks he's expecting the students to do. Secondly coming up with a way to mark the student's papers as they are working as he is checking for understanding/circulating. Which should hopefully push him around the room a little more to interact with all students at some level. And then finally using

that data from his circulating and marking the papers to respond to issues either whole class or with the few students who had those issue."

The decision to create the aim and action steps for Mark was also due to my perceptions that this is "where I see him lacking and he just needs that push to hear "this is what we want to see" as opposed to letting him come up with action steps he generates himself that may not push him".

This may have made accomplishing those goals a challenge for Mark because I came back two more times (like with Scott) to do one visit to write a positive note and one to follow up on how these goals were progressing. The visit for the positive note occurred on February 27th, 2020, where I noted:

"I also watched Mark in his one non-honors class, Integrated Math 3. And while I saw some of his problems that exist in honors, he was a lot more genuine and relationships were obvious. The tasks and timing left something to be desired, but I didn't say that as I wanted him to hear some positives. So I focused on the obvious relationships and the ways he had leveraged them."

He wasn't utilizing any of the action steps that were discussed, if he had, that would have been what I noted as I left. So, while he was making strides in this class, developing relationships, he was not working on the types of tasks he was having the students do nor

was he checking their understanding. Here though, I hoped accentuating a positive may build him up to try more of what we coached around later.

Alas, this was not the case. I made my final visit on March 10th, 2020, After visiting his class, I felt so defeated and wrote the following:

"I spiral down

This week, this month, this year

Running into myself

And the things I've already said and done

Because I see the things I've already seen

So I loop into myself

And it's a painful collision

It hurts the soul

When sometimes you look at the same situation,

The same lesson,

The same teacher,

The same flaws

And biases

And insecurities that try to hide

And you realize your words fall on deaf ears

Or lazy ones

And when the flaws are the antithesis to what I believe

It hurts even more

When a teacher perpetuates stereotypes

"Only the loud, self-confident white male students are the ones that understand"

When a teacher refuses to put in the work,

"I don't know if you have the answer or not"

When a teacher presumes too much of students,

"The only reason I'm doing this is because I wonder if some of you have forgotten"

When a teacher denies students their ability to share their understanding,

"Don't give me more than a one word answer"

When a teacher assumes every kid knows exactly how to start,

"I'm gonna come and check on the few sticks I pull"

When a teacher cannot read the room,

"I'm gonna give you a few more minutes on this task"

When a teacher likes to hear himself talk,

"Now I know you just did this but here's how I would"

When a teacher provides no feedback to students,

"No, you're wrong"

Students disengage

And I can't blame them

And I've said these things over and over to him

To the teacher

But this teacher is refusing to learn

And so I feel stuck

And I feel pained

And I don't know where to go from here"

This sums up what I saw and heard while in the classroom observing Mark on this date. While some of the quotations came directly from the class, others were paraphrased by his actions and intentions (like "Don't give me more than a one word answer"). From what I could see, Mark was not progressing towards his aims.

One challenge that arose here was the emotional toll that his teaching (falling to the same old habits) weighed on me. The way I felt like I was constantly saying the same things and then not seeing any change led to what felt like a "painful collision" with myself. The frustration really landed with myself here, not with Mark. I could not figure out the necessary steps to take to move him forward. For that, I felt this heavy emotional toll as my disposition was being challenged.

All that said, this last lesson was during the week we eventually went into quarantine and I know that Mark was acutely concerned about the COVID 19 virus (as he was the only one who refused to participate in any Pi Day activities). So this could have been weighing on his mind, running him on autopilot. It is hard to discern the root of his challenges with grasping what was being coached - the perceived laziness, the fear of COVID, or something entirely different. Whatever the case, here the aim and action steps were clearly not reached.

Betty

The next three teachers, Betty, Anna, and Elaine, all got to the point where they created an aim and action steps with me, but stopped there. In the case of Betty, as we will go through momentarily, this was a class I had not been in yet so I didn't want to jump to conclusions on the first visit. For Anna and Elaine, both had issues on the follow up to check in on their progression (Anna had told her student teacher to teach that week - and didn't tell me, and Elaine was out sick the day I was supposed to come in).

As to Betty though, my first visit with her during the time of the journal process was on February 21st, 2020. As I had not been in this class yet, I used it as a time to get a sense of the class, figure out what was going on and where some of the supports may be needed. In the journal, I wrote of the lesson and the follow-up (that occurred immediately after the lesson):

"And I got to watch Betty with her first hour… And it's a hard class – way too many students for that class. But she's doing ok. It wasn't stellar and it wasn't awful. It was a few examples to warm-up and then an activity that had the students doing as many problems as they could while circulating the room. We discussed minor tweaks that could have helped during the lesson as well as how she can unabashedly ask for help if she needs it in that class. Because I understand. And I would help.

And we talked about how she could leverage that relationship she has with the students to seek their candid support – what and how can they help her when the room is so overrun with students. But it was my first time in there, and I hope to get in there a few more

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times during this cycle to narrow in on what we need to truly focus on. I didn't want to assume I knew the best for her when I haven't been in there yet."

As mentioned, I understood what Betty was dealing with in this class as the year prior I had taught a section. This helped me to both sympathize and empathize with Betty in her work here. Betty was also one of the teachers that I knew was considering leaving our school at the end of the year (and she ended up doing so). That also affected what and how I saw - both from her as well as the lens I was looking through. I became more protective of her, helping her grow but also trying to remain as positive and useful as I could in my work with her.

It should be no surprise given how Betty was feeling in her position with this class that she asked on February 27th, 2020 (when asked for her wish) that she get heartfelt notes about what she was doing in class. Accordingly, I stopped by one of her classes on February 28th (not the one listed in the first visit) that I also happened to be in with on the 26th. When I went on the 26th, it was to help her and the students with an activity that we had co-planned in which the students received a cup that listed how many items were in it (between washers and candies) as well as the weight of an individual washer, an individual candy, an empty cup. They were to then determine the number of washers and the number of candies in their cup. I saw a lot of great things, and seeing this was a class that I knew could be difficult at times (Integrated Math 1), I returned to that class to leave a heartfelt note on February 28th, 2020. In it, I told her how engaged the

students were with the tasks they were doing. In fact, one student surprised me with the brilliance they showcased in solving a system of equations. In the journal, I wrote:

"And as I was leaving to put the note on her desk praising her for how she got the kids to work, I stopped by a few kids and asked them how they got the answer to the problem they were working on. And the answer I got blew my mind. It showed a fluid understanding of both systems of equations and the situation they represented. He was able to go back and forth between the two in explaining his answer. And I was in awe. This was a traditional Integrated I and this student showed some very high level understanding. I don't know if everyone could have done that (and didn't stay to find out) but it was incredible. And I told him – that his thinking was some of the most astounding thinking I had ever heard to such a task – he was proud of himself."

So I knew that Betty had the ability to both keep even the most reluctant of students engaged as well as challenge them to deeper thinking. Thus, when looking at the Integrated III Honors class that I had viewed on February 21st, 2020, I looked back at these strengths to leverage what we were seeing in the Integrated Math 1 class that was missing from this Integrated Math III Honors class.

On March 6th, 2020, I then recorded in my journal about my time in Betty's Integrated Math III Honors class as well as the aim and action steps we developed:

"First hour was with Betty and her Integrated Math 3 honors... They were practicing Polynomial division (fun stuff) with the box method (even more fun). And it was good just there was no accountability to the lesson itself. So in our debrief, we talked about the following strategies:

In order to keep students engaged in the mathematical tasks when they are given a chunk of tasks to complete in a period, (particularly in Int Math 3 H), the teacher will:

1.   Use methods like chunking the time (with verbal checkpoints), setting criteria for a grade for the day (ie finish 5 problems, get an A+, finish 4 problems, get an A, etc), or using the Green Light, Red Light approach so students know when to check in with the teacher,

2.   Have extension tasks for groups that finish the tasks effectively and with enough work, and

3.   Have a few keys to the work available for groups that feel stuck to resource

Most of these were ideas she had already, it just took me talking with her for her to pull them out."

As I mentioned prior, this aim and action steps were co-created however they leveraged what I saw successful in other classes, strategies she knew of and had implemented elsewhere, just not in this class. Thus developing this plan happened very naturally and was something that the teacher could implement without overextending herself.

Unfortunately, due to the bumped up timeline with Betty (giving it an extra lesson to develop the aim and action steps) and because of the shortened time frame with closing

down schools due to the COVID pandemic, I was not able to see how she progressed on these goals within this class. Thus the challenges and opportunities of reaching this aim and these action steps could not further be developed.

Anna

While working with Anna was not difficult, what did present challenges was finding a balance of time between my free time to observe and the lessons she would be teaching (as opposed to her student teacher). In the end, because of this, I was only able to conclude one small visit to honor her with one full observation (which included a note with positive feedback) and then a few days later our follow up conversation. During the visit of her class on February 28th, 2020, I recorded the following:

"After third hour, I got to go watch Anna and her 4th hour Calc Class. This is a class that I used to teach, so I saw a lot of stuff I had done in the past. Not that I'm surprised or upset – I know that it takes time to make everything your own. And this she felt was good the way it was… She's worried about senioritis – but they all worked hard on the pre-test that she started them off with. The funny thing was, while she asked for 'complete silence' during this time, she was the one that kept having conversations with the students. And once they were done, she took the class back over and led them first through a review of the pre-test and then onto the Unit Circle. All the while, the only time any student gave an extended answer was ONCE. The rest was guided by her with small popcorn questions that the class could shout out in response. So, I have lots of ideas here. To the senioritis – well they seemed to do well when having a no-stakes assignment, so

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more of those. Plus having a clear route to success from here on out. But in general, how does she 'share the power' in this class? I too left her a note, cause why not?"

Working with Anna has always been easy as when she began at AAHS, she was my student teacher. Accordingly, she is used to the ways that I make lessons and has been using a lot of my stuff, slowly adapting it to fit her style. This in turn makes coaching easier as I know the lessons well.

However, even though there were several struggles with the implementation of the lesson, when we met to debrief on March 2, 2020, I followed Anna's lead with what she wanted to work on. This was in part due to her having the student teacher (so we thought it best to create a goal that went just beyond what happened in front of the classroom). Thus, we settled on the following:

"And I coached. I worked with Anna on her seniors. We decided to do the following: In order to help the students overcome Senioritis (particularly in 4th and 7th), the teacher will:

1.   Utilize more low-consequence activities that students can feel comfortable 'failing forward'

2.   Provide clear outcomes for daily success after a small instructional lesson, and

3.   Set up a clear path for success/passing the class for the remainder of the year.

The difference this time was I leveraged what I saw that was working, what I knew the

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teacher could handle but needed a chance to feel successful and feel like she could do this. Particularly as she has felt overwhelmed lately."

Even though I couldn't see her work on this goal (as the next visit I attempted, she failed to mention her student teacher was teaching - March 12th, 2020), as time passed, she was able to make progress here, even in teaching through the quarantine as students still were in need of that clear path for success. Thus, a great opportunity was born from this aim and its action steps as it laid the foundation for her work during remote teaching and learning for the remainder of the school year as was the case due to the quarantine from the COVID-19 pandemic. Again, though, the challenge here was that I could not readily assess whether this aim and these action steps were being met, due to timing and the pandemic.

Elaine

The last teacher to receive an aim and action steps was Elaine. However, as I mentioned earlier, I was not able to follow up on these because the lesson that was scheduled for me to do so (on March 12th, 2020), Elaine was out sick. So, my work with her during this time was limited to a visit on February 27th where I was able to leave a positive note and then my observation and debrief on March 2nd.

During that February 27th, 2020 visit, I noted the following:

"I then went to Elaine and saw her presenting the same problem to the students (an integral with Trig) in three ways – a lesson that I thought had a lot of merit. And I told her that. I would have enjoyed seeing the kids bring those methods forward, but it still

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worked well and she still expected the students to do some of the cognitive load (finished the problem on their own for example)."

Working with Elaine can be tough as she has been teaching longer than I have. While she has extensive content knowledge, thus doing a lesson like this is second nature for her, her pedagogical knowledge sometimes takes a back seat to what is easiest for her and the students. Thus, I was happy to see something that relied heavily on that content knowledge and yet pushed some good pedagogical practices. Lessons like this make it easier to engage in a dialogue around teaching with Elaine.

However, when it came to the full observation of Elaine, where we worked to develop the aim and action steps afterwards, it was not as easy. It became a challenge for us to come up with an aim and action step that I felt she would attend to, and as such, wrote the following of the visit and debrief:

"I also watched Elaine's class. And ugh. Not like it was bad ugh. It had some great moments. But ugh. She is so hard to coach. I can't remember if I talked about the PTSD I sensed on Gary after having had bad coaching this year, but I have that with Elaine – as her coach. So I tried what I tried on Anna. I tried to play into the positives. Ask questions – both of the material/lesson and as an IB [International Baccalaureate] expert (her, not me)... But in talking after school, she wanted to find ways to get the students to communicate more. So we talked about that. I think we will land with something like: In order for the students to communicate more (and with each other), the teacher will:

1.   Give students more voice in the lesson, both in how they are asked to participate

(ie presenting problems to the class) as well as making an effort to hear from all students,

2.   Leveraging what the teacher sees in checking for understanding to get students to

share out to the whole class, and

3.   Encourage the students to communicate with each other by assessing each other's

work and giving them written and oral responses to the work.

I don't know. It's a work in progress. But it leverages what she tries to do already. And

re-emphasizes it as good teaching. These are all strategies she has tried.."

Coaching Elaine has always been a challenge. Finding aims and actions she would adhere

to also has become a struggle. As mentioned, that could be just the mindframe I am in

when I'm around her as her coach. That said, it was definitely an opportunity for me to

focus on the positives and to build off those to help her reach her goal. A goal she

verbalized which is another opportunity here - to work specifically around something she

seemingly cared about. However, the challenges are still there - particularly the doubts

that I harbor about her responsiveness to coaching. Again though, due to her being ill and

the pandemic, I could not see if our aim and action steps positively affected her teaching

in any way or not.

Gary

The rest of the teachers did not get to the point where we developed aims and

action steps in the way outlined in Figure 7. That isn't to say there were not aims or

action steps that we worked on. However, it will appear differently. For Gary, this was a

work in progress, helping to find ways to get him to be more proactive around the teaching and show that he cared so he could keep his job. For Clark and John, the work was around co-planning a unit, then a lesson, and watching that lesson come to fruition. For Ally and Cindy, the work centered around giving them what they needed to finish the year, provided they had already decided they were not returning.

As to Gary though, during the four week period that I recorded the journal, I documented five different visits. I knew there was a lot of work to be done (based on conversations with Roger, the Assistant Principal that was evaluating Gary, before I started my visits). The visits on February 19th (and 25th - this was not an official visit, but rather me walking by) let me to a few initial conclusions. During these visits though, here is what I documented. From February 19th, 2020:

"I don't know what to do with him anymore. It's one excuse after the next. And I just talked to him about how he has to always be ready to be watched by any administrator or even the superintendent. Always. No excuses...
[When I got there] I wasn't expecting to walk in on the students just sitting around doing "work" while he sat at his desk with a student who was working on stuff that wasn't even for that class. I wasn't expecting the lack of effort. And the excuses. [But that's what I got.] "Oh, its almost the end of the six-weeks so kids are working on making up missing work so that they can get their grades up"... Even if you wanted them to make up work,

that doesn't mean you don't work. That. That is an excuse. I could go on and on about my frustration, but I walked out.."

The way I saw Gary in this moment was in relation to myself. I thought as a teacher would I do the same things that Gary is - and the answer was no. This informed my frustrations, particularly that he was not doing the work the way I would, and, accordingly, to me, it appeared as he wasn't doing the work.

The great sense of care that I had for Gary coupled with the notion of the 'teacher scales' made it hard for me to stay in the room with him. I cared so much about his success, but that didn't seem to be reciprocated. According to the teacher scales, as I was caring and investing more than I should, particularly considering I was coaching Gary because I knew he needed help not because he was my direct responsibility, and the little input I saw from him in the process, pushed those scales way down and to the left, leaving me feeling miserable, hence my frustrations expressed.

Then, as I was walking the halls on February 20th, I noticed his evaluator, Roger, walking into his room. I decided to check in at the end of the day with Roger to see how this went. This is what Roger said during that time:

"And it was the same thing. Gary at his desk. Working with a kid not in the class. Occasionally answering questions of students who came up to him. But not seeking out understanding (or even assuring students were working). They had worksheets for a test they would have Friday. But there was no instruction occurring, no accountability, no

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math. And we are talking about a 90 minute period here so that means over an hour of free time for the students.

And I don't think its going to end well. In fact I know its not. Because in my conversation with Roger... he mentioned that Dr. Skye said he should just tell him he's not welcome back next year – but then she rescinded that (seemingly temporarily)."

Thus, what I was seeing was also being seen by other individuals within the school who served as a coach and evaluator.

By the time I was ready to see his class on the 25th (a shorter planned visit), I had my doubts on Gary's intentions for the world of teaching itself. Seeing the lesson on the 25th didn't help much either, as what I saw is documented here, in this excerpt from my journal:

"...I went to Gary's room. And yeah. It wasn't much better than what has been happening. At least today he was talking to the students who "cared" about the worksheet. He told students how to do the math and answered questions but could not inform right or wrong and could not give next steps. Why? Cause he didn't prep it. In fact, he told me later he had recently printed the worksheet so he couldn't prep what the students should do with it…"

When all this was taken together, the lack of planning and engagement coupled with the knowledge that his job was on the line, my first aim for Gary, mostly for me but a little

for Gary, was to get a better idea of if he wanted to return to teaching, if he cared enough to fight for his job.

During our debrief conversation on the 25th of February, that was the goal I had for the conversation, and here's how that occurred:

"So, I had to ask – I laid it out there and asked Gary if he wanted to come back. And he does. I don't think he'll be asked back, but he wants to be. But I had to ask because I've been telling him how he needs to be constantly on his 'A game' and today wasn't that. For a lot of reasons. But to just work on a worksheet that the teacher doesn't prep…. But what made the conversation tough was he was incredibly defensive, and maybe that's because of his work with Roger. I was trying to coach him to say here's what you need to be doing if you wanna stay…"

At this point, hearing Gary vocalize that he wanted to do the work made it easier for me to work with him as a coach as well as led me to want to come back to work on creating an action plan that included an aim and action steps.

The next observation occurred on March 3rd, 2020, where I saw marked improvement, but it was still far from where he needed to be. Seeing him do the work helped to rebalance those 'teacher scales', as described in Figure 4, and led me to be more willing to work with him. Here's what occurred during that observation and debrief:

"But today… I worked with Gary again. And I'm just floored by how little the students were doing… he blames the kids… [He] admitted later that they want to do well and they need the unit reviews to do well – because those look like the test. So each lesson on its own doesn't mean much because students aren't held accountable until the test, and there they get this magic review.

Literally, I sat there in 1st hour and watched students joke around, play on their phones, talk about everything but math, and when I asked, well "what am I supposed to do". The class consisted of tasks – let the kids try the task for five minutes, then [the] teacher does the task for five minutes. That student work time was very little student work (because why would they). And those that did [the work in the student time] shut off during the teacher work time, so we got half the kids tuning out at any given point in the lesson. On top of that, those tuned off are being loud and distracting those that are trying to tune in at that time. So, minimal, if any, learning.

… [During the debrief] while the lack of students "doing" was what I should have focused on (and yes it was discussed), I reframed this around, how can we create structures that will be solidly in place by the time his next full observation occurred. To that end though, to create structures without listening to those that the structures are for would be useless. So I asked him to create a survey.

Let's see how he does with this… but he needs authentic systems with ALL of his classes."

Thus, for Gary, we left it at a task for him to conduct - a survey, and then analyzing the data from that survey. I do wish that we had the time to go back and see if and how this survey ended up working for him and his students, but, with this being so close to when we went into quarantine, these results were never discussed (although Gary did inform me that he did conduct these surveys). To that end, I hope that it was meaningful and worthwhile for Gary to have done this. I do hope it informed his practice for the remainder of the year. However, whether this aim was achieved or not remained unclear.

All that said, because the remainder of the year was done remotely, the district decided to decree that, unless a drastic case was made, no teacher would be terminated at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. This gave Gary another year and another chance to redeem himself.

Clark and John

As the work I did with Clark and John traveled a different (or less typical) route, I am pairing them together to illustrate what we did and why. In the end, the two were working toward the same goal, that of the implementation of the lesson (as part of the unit) we co-planned, Clark, John, and myself. However, to paint a picture of the two teachers and their teaching prior to this lesson, we will first examine the smaller visits I had with these two teachers - for Clark that was to write his note of praise, and for John that was to both write his note of praise as well as help to implement the washer and candy task that I helped Betty with.

My visit with Clark to write him a note of praise occurred on February 27th, 2020, where I noted the following:

"Seeing that I was observing Clark, I started with him (but I stayed for a half hour). Clark has gotten better. But there's still room to grow. He's very active in the room, he moves to and fro ensuring all kids are working. But the tasks and the support he provides still need a boost... I did write in his note how I thought that his enthusiasm and way of getting around the room were great though, and they are."

This laid the foundation for what I wanted to work with Clark on - the tasks and feedback he was providing during the lessons. This is one reason that I made my initial aim for Clark around co-planning the unit and lessons.

As to John, as mentioned, I had two visits with him prior to our work on co-planning. The first was to help the washer and candy lesson on February 26th, 2020 where I noted that John's struggle with this lesson came from the students being "resistant to work, would rather socialize than engage, and weren't concerned with their academic outcomes". While this wasn't necessarily indicative of the lesson plan itself, it was the follow through, the implementation of the planned lesson. This is why I wanted to see him put in action something we planned together, ensuring there were supports to prevent this type of behavior.

The other lesson, where I left a note of praise, occurred on February 28th, 2020. Unfortunately, the same themes emerged, that the students seemed to be more in control than the teacher. The following is what I noted in my journal entry:

"And finally, I watched John. And I struggled to write my note. Oh boy did I struggle. Because the kids were not working. The expectations to think and participate weren't there. The kids were in control and they knew it. And he knew it. It wasn't till he sat with two kids, one-on-two, that he not only got some good teaching in, but showcased his strength – and its in how much he cares for these students and the relationships he's able to build. So that's what I wrote in his note."

This helped to reinforce the notion that John needed more time on developing lessons with clear and explicit expectations.

Seeing as Clark and John also taught the Integrated Math 2 Honors classes and both needed some work on planning, that is where I set my aim. To plan with them. It was also to help them as they wanted to know what was most important to cover in the upcoming unit for students to be ready for the next class. So, on March 3rd, 2020, I met with them to co-plan. A lot has already been said about this planning session, how we worked through the unit and picked out the key concepts they needed covered, which met what they expected of the meeting. For me, we got to plan a lesson (or at least laid the groundwork), which included building "out a Math-O [a game that gets students to work individually on a series of problems so they can do a lot of individual practice] for block

day next week,,, I sent them the template and asked them to see what they can do". This was the lesson that I was able to watch for each teacher.

As I entered Clark's room on March 10th, 2020, it was my aim to see him using a lesson that had higher level, engaging tasks, as well as him giving meaningful feedback. From what I saw, and what is included in this journal entry, that was happening. The biggest thing hindering student engagement was that some students were progressing slower than others so when Clark switched the slides to the next problem, those that needed more time didn't have it. So before I left, I told him it may be worthwhile to write down the tasks on the board so students can go back to them if need be. Other than that, we were both happy with how the lesson progressed, particularly in regards to those aims.

For John on the other hand, I was hoping to see students on task and engaged with the math because they were adhering to the clear expectations of John as their instructor. Typically I would not be able to watch John's Honors Integrated Math 2 class as it only occurred when I was teaching. However, my 7th hour was taking a test so I found another teacher leader to watch my class and went to see John for a little bit, but under a time restraint as I told the teacher covering my class that I would be back in about 30 minutes. During my time with John, here is what I noted:

"And John… oh John… He's got the heart and passion, but not the follow through with the kids. He doesn't hold them accountable – academically or behaviorally. He has all the right pieces there, just doesn't follow through so the kids run him over. That is definitely going to be the heart of the debrief. However, I didn't get to see the activity – he was

starting it as I left – so I left him with the same advice I gave Clark about having the problems remain on the board (or better yet, having a problem kid write them on the board for the class."

Accordingly, it appeared that the aim I had for John did not happen as the students still seemed to be in more control of the class than John was.

As such, in both cases, it seemed to fit their needs and wants, and where I saw their needs, to have me co-plan and watch that lesson that we co-planned together, to help meet the aims I was developing for each of these teachers. With Clark, that appeared to be successful in both planning the lesson and the unit, as well as in the implementation of the lesson. With John, the lesson struggled as past lessons had.

Ally and Cindy

Knowing these two teachers were not returning the next school year, that led to a different tactic for each. The biggest aim I had for the two was to make the remainder of the year as pleasant as possible as they both were hard-working, talented teachers. Ally couldn't see herself in the classroom anymore after this school year, particularly working with the administration at our school (and having had bad experiences in past schools). Cindy was offered her dream teaching position in the school she was at before she joined us, and that was also back in her home state.

Thus, working with Ally, my aim for her was to meet her wish which she presented on February 27th, 2020, which was to be reminded that she was a good teacher. Thus, for Ally, my focus was on giving her notes of praise, which I had an opportunity to

do on February 28th and March 5th. Also, in doing this, my aim was that accentuating these positive moments would build to more positive moments like these.

On February 28th, 2020, I recorded the following in the journal about the first visit in which I left a note that positively praised her work:

"I started with Ally. It was undeniable that she had cared about the lesson she had planned, that she cared about honoring the students, and that she cared about validating their mathematical successes. For example, she called on a student to answer a question who was off task. He gave a great answer – but for the last problem and not what she asked. Rather than embarrass him or point out his flaw, she let him go with it and honored his insight into the problem. And so I told her that. I told her how it was great to see her always highlighting the best of students. I just worry that she didn't have a handle on any of the management."

Again, the note I left only encouraged the positive, and did not discuss the work around classroom management. However, by accuentuating and leveraging the strong systems and values she has in place, I hoped that the management would be addressed in future visits.

Accordingly on March 5th, 2020, I did not see any issues with management. In fact, here, I recorded the following of the visit:

"I went to Ally – where she was getting kids to work on SAT preparation and they were doing so great. They were helping each other, they were motivated to do the work, they were self selecting what to work on based on their prior practice exams. And I told her how I thought it was awesome. And then she shared that with the whole department."

Even without outwardly addressing classroom management during that prior visit, by honoring her creativity and structures, as well as how she cares for the students, she developed a lesson that engaged all the learners and led to little to no behavioral issues on the part of the students. Thus, by accentuating the positives with Ally, I not only accomplished the aim she sought to have met, that she was reminded she was a good teacher, but also the aim that I saw was important to address, that of classroom management.

As to Cindy, she welcomed the typical observation feedback (partly as that was what her job was going to entail during the next school year) as well as she had requested in her wish that I help her plan the Calculus unit in her class as she was least familiar with that material. Thus, my work with Cindy had two aims; one was to be there, providing bite-sized meaningful feedback, not in the typical aim and action step format, but more so smaller strategies to implement and the other aim was to help her with the Calculus she would be teaching.

To the first aim, I visited Cindy on February 20th as well as March 6th and concluded both with small bite-sized feedback. On February 20th, when I visited, Cindy was using stations to get all the kids actively engaged throughout the lesson, illustrating

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that they cared and wanted to grow in their understanding of the material. The feedback I had for her was limited to the following: "having some of the more quiet students or reluctant students paraphrase an explanation given by another student and, when doing a day like today, instead of weighting each assignment the same (and in four assignments at 5 points apiece, that meant 20 points) so not finishing one dropped a student to a C to instead think about making full completion an A+, missing on assignment an A, missing two a B, and so on". She was incredibly receptive to this feedback. From what I saw in future lessons, discussions, and just walking by, she utilized these, just as she seemed receptive to try most anything I suggested.

On March 6th, I got to watch one more full lesson with Cindy. This one was different from the first, in that it did not involve stations, rather the students were doing more direct learning. This was in part due to Cindy's background being in elementary school and this topic being a little more advanced (solving systems of equations). Here's what I noticed:

"Then later that day I got to watch Cindy – and again, its great to see her teach. Here though it was obvious that she had that elementary training. She was teaching systems to the students but had a very rigid way of seeing how to approach solving systems by elimination. So that's where we talked during the debrief was about other strategies that we could implore to help students both conceptualize the math as well as get in the skill practice that they needed to be successful with the material."

Again, this feedback was so bitesized that it was not something I could look for in every lesson. Thus, this aim, while I know Cindy heard and internalized it, I could not assess if she met this aim.

The other aim I had for Cindy was to help her with the Calculus unit. We met on March 4th, 2020 to do this planning and she left feeling she had a pool of resources as well as could come back and ask questions if she needed. This course, an International Baccalaureate class, is one I had taught before so I had the resources needed to do this course, and was not simply meeting with her because she asked. I had the expertise needed to assist her. During our time together, I "shared a bunch of resources with her (from when I taught [the course]), explained to her the philosophy of Calculus in that course, and helped to clarify some of her misconceptions of the curriculum". She felt relieved when we were done, letting me know that this aim too had been accomplished.

Thus, with Ally and Cindy, due to the nature of their positions, that they were leaving after the school year, that left us with little to accomplish, mostly ensuring they felt good about where they were. For Ally, that meant feeling appreciated and being reminded that she was a good teacher - something that was accomplished and had the effect of influencing future classes positively. For Cindy, likewise our aims were met by helping her with small bite size feedback that she used to better her lessons as well as helping her with planning the Calculus unit and providing her with the resources to do so.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Implications

Introduction

As the findings point out, the life of a teacher leader is intricate, weaving in and out of one role, the teacher, into the other, the leader, often making the two seemingly inseparable, two sides of the same mobius strip. Many challenges face the teacher leader - from working with administration to working with teachers, to mediating conflicts (Gabriel, 2005). Yet, we know these roles are important in leading schools, advocating for change, and improving instruction, ultimately leading to student success (Manglin & Stoelinga, 2008).

The effects of serving in a leadership role such as the one I serve (as illustrated in the findings) can have impacts on that teacher's identity. From examining experiences to the beliefs and efficacies that surfaced to the identities and dispositions inherent in those roles, the complex nature of such a role is revealed. One can start to understand the identity of such an individual. This reflection has profound impacts on not only the teaching of the individual reflecting, but also teacher (and teacher leadership) education in general (Kim & Greene, 2013).

By first examining the findings laid out in chapter 4, we can then look to implications for the world of teacher leadership. These include an examination of the

notion of identity and dispositions, mainly how those identities and dispositions are formulated and what shifts or shapes those. We will also examine implications in the world of research around teacher leadership with a particular emphasis on the disconnects between the study of this teacher leader and the literature on teacher leadership. We will also discuss the implications for professional development, both for the teachers in the school that has teacher leadership as well as for the teacher leaders themselves. Finally, we will examine the implications of entering into a pandemic as a teacher and a teacher leader and what effects this had on the teacher and teacher leader.

Following these implications, there will be a discussion of these findings and implications, a closer look at some of the limitations now that the study has been concluded, and suggestions for future research based on these findings.

Summary of Findings

Setting out to answer the four research questions below was an arduous task. It required not only deep introspection, but also an intricate process to arise at the conclusions of the findings, working through layers in Korthagen's Onion Model (2017). Combining his work with work of the Garner and Kaplan (2019) and their Dynamic Systems of Role Model Identity, a new model was introduced by the researcher. This allowed the researcher to examine the journal created, look for experiences, sess out the beliefs and efficacies of a dual role teacher leader, and thus identify the identities and dispositions of such an educator. The model in Figure 4 (as seen below) suffices to understand how the identities and dispositions were uncovered.

Environment/
Domain

Socio-Culture

Context

Lived Experiences

Efficacies

Beliefs

Dispositions

Identity
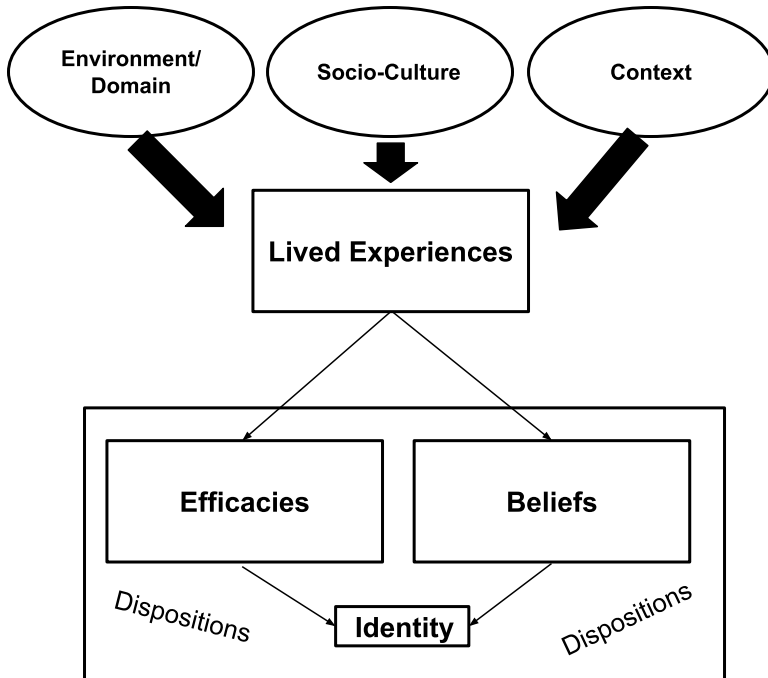
Dispositions

Figure 4: The Framework for Understanding Identity

After examining these experiences and how the led to identity and dispositions of a teacher leader, the professional development being provided to the teachers was examined. Here, the aims created or created were examined as well as the results of that work, and the challenges and opportunities that arose in this work.

The Lived Experiences

Recall, the first research question alluded to the lived experiences of a teacher leader in an urban setting in all the roles served. That question stated:

1. What are the lived experiences of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?

In answering this question, the researcher examined the journal and pulled out

experiences, both general and specific instances of such work.

As a teacher, these experiences included what an educator does to prepare and

enact lessons, what and how the teacher enacts these lessons, how the educator continues

to support students outside of class time and other teaching duties such as attending

meetings and professional development, sponsoring additional activities, and meeting

additional expectations set by administration at the school and district level.

As pointed out, a bulk of the teacher's time was devoted to planning lessons that

were intricate and detailed. Enama (2021) discusses how intricate lesson plans are the

backbone of effective teaching, these lesson plans include:

> "taking into consideration learners (age range, background, level of language
> development and learning styles), lesson goals, objectives and outcomes, content
> knowledge, materials, various activities, the sequencing and timing of these
> activities, and assessment" (p. 342).

Thus, it's clear to see why this can and does take so much time. However, I would be

remiss to not mention that this may be because of the teacher leadership status that I hold.

While it was clear from the journal entries, not all of the teachers spent as much time

planning, I did wanting to illustrate effective teaching which may be due to my role as a

teacher leader (Goodson and Hargreaves, 2005).

Once the students entered the room, the work was not over. On the contrary, there

was a myriad of issues to contend with including connecting to the students, reading and

responding to the students, communicating with the students, assessing the students,

enacting the lesson - which requires me to be able to edit the lesson in a moment (or at

least be flexible to allow for spontaneous teaching moments), grouping students, giving

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students the one-on-one support they need, making difficult decisions, and living up to the expectations I set for the teachers I coach. Much of this is to ensure that the lesson is adequately differentiated to meet the needs of all the learners of mathematics in my classroom. Differentiation is pivotal to student learning, and as Marks et al. (2021) point out, when used with varied activities and heterogeneous grouping (practices incorporated by me as a teacher as illustrated in the findings) a productive constructivist environment emerges.

On top of what is done prior to the lesson and during class, as a teacher, much time was spent supporting the students - letting them work with me when we both had free time during the day, during lunch, before school, and after school. Combining that with all the external duties like teacher meetings and club sponsoring, the amount of work is vast. In fact, it is this vast workload as a teacher that is a major cause of burnout in education, including math education, which leads to teacher attrition (Iancu et al, 2018). While the work of a teacher is overwhelming, and adding in the work of a teacher leader makes it more so, I would be remiss not to remind the reader that as a teacher leader at my school, I do teach two less periods than other teachers (teaching only 3 periods instead of 5).

Moving to the teacher leader role, again, the experiences there are just as vast. This work was broken up into five categories, as a coach of teachers, as a department leader, as a member of the Instructional Leadership Team, in conjunction with supervisors and administrators, and in response to needs of the school. Most of the work as a coach falls into those three stages of observation laid out by Range et al. (2013)

which include the pre-observation, the observation itself, and the post-observation meeting.
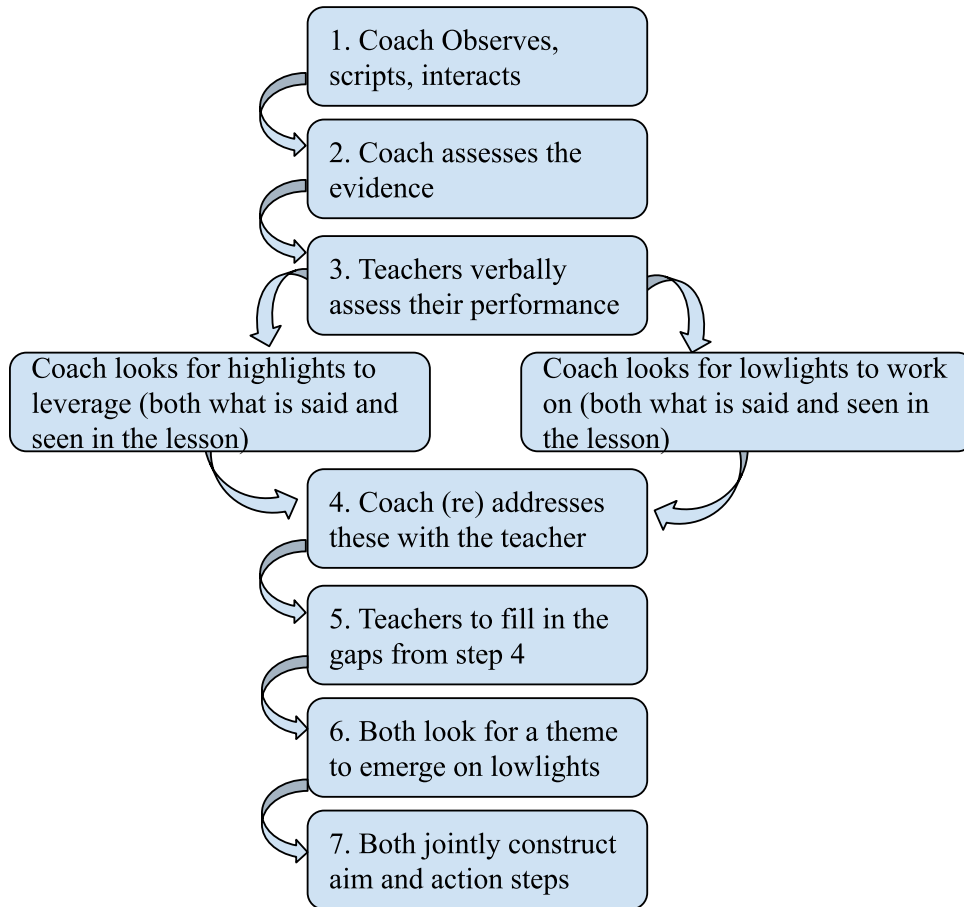
Figure 7: Observation Feedback Model

The pre-observation work entails making clear a goal for the observation. This is done in a myriad of ways, but is essential to the observation according to Range et al. (2013). For me, this happened through asking the teachers what they need or from an assessment of what the teacher needs. Following the pre-observation work, the observation can occur. As discussed, observations can look different from one teacher to the next depending on their needs. However, what I find imperative is following up

quickly from the observation to the discussion. As Gabriel (2005) points out, this is

pivotal, relating it to the example of a student misbehaving and how much more

beneficial it is for the teacher to call home that day as opposed to waiting for a few days.

From there, we, the teacher being observed and me as the teacher leader, enter into a

post-observation discussion, using the model generated in Figure 7 (as seen above).

Again, this is not a model that was given to me as a teacher leader, rather one I developed

over time and a variety of training that is implicit in the journaling.

While my role as a teacher coach makes me a member of the Instructional

Leadership Team, it does not necessarily imply that I have to lead the department. I chose

to do that (and am elected by my peers) to provide continuity in leadership and prevent

multiple voices possibly conflicting or complicating the tasks we are to accomplish. The

role of the department leader is one that is ill-defined by the school and district itself,

limiting the role to a few minor duties. However, in conjunction with my vision for the

department and the work of the school, I have made the role so much more, at least for

myself. The work with the department included one of two types of meetings; the

atypical department meeting that occurred about once a week and the course-level

meeting led by a specialist (except for courses that didn't have a specialist so it fell to me

as the Department Chair and Instructional Coach to lead) that occurred once a week for

the three primary courses - Integrated Math I, Integrated Math II, and Integrated Math III.

Additionally, the work I do for the department includes duties, such as hiring and creating

the department schedule, processing data for the department, collaborating with the

district and their requirements, as well as responding to requests from administrators as the department chair.

As a member of the Instructional Leadership Team, there were many meetings that were attended to help shape the direction of the school itself. However, without an explicit mission, the meetings seemed to feel disconnected and scattered. There were also meetings the teachers from the Instructional Leadership Team had on their own to improve their work with teachers. Many of these meetings I had a pivotal role in either because I was facilitating the meeting or because of the contributions I made.

The work with administrators and supervisors can vary by tasks and needs. Most of this work revolves around my department; the teachers and the programs we are implementing. However some of this work was based on my understanding of mathematics and tools like Excel to do computations and analyze data. In the end, the work with administrators put them in one of four roles: an authority, a mentor/coach, a partner, or an obstacle.

Finally, as a teacher leader, the work being done was in response to the needs that arose when they arose. These fell into two realms; work that I did to better the school as a teacher leader and work to provide opportunities for the community to engage with the school in a positive way outside of the classroom.

The experiences of me as an individual were also pointed out. These are experiences that affected the work I did as a teacher. This is to be expected as we know the profound effect that a teacher's personal identity can have on their teaching identity (Hammersley-Fletcher & Qualter, 2010). These experiences address both the emotional

highs and lows experienced by me as a person aside from the teaching role as well as how those personal experiences at times conflicted with what happened at schools and the identities I had assumed.

The Beliefs and Efficacies of a Dual Role Educator

In order to answer the second research question and get to the heart of the identity and dispositions of a dual role teacher leader, from the experiences discussed, we needed to first pull out the efficacies and beliefs. These efficacy and beliefs will in turn point to the identities and dispositions (as well as how these experiences influence the identity and dispositions) of a teacher leader. Thus we must first answer the question:

2. What are the beliefs and efficacies of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?

As a teacher, several efficacies were discussed in the findings - both in areas of high and low efficacy. In general, I view myself as having high self-efficacy when it comes to teaching. This is exemplified in the variety of activities and the student engagement I discussed from the journal entries. However, be it out of humbleness or being a harsh critic of myself, I pointed out several areas where I lacked self-efficacy such as teaching higher level mathematics I was not familiar with and being able to spot flaws in my lessons. This feeling of low self-efficacy at times was compounded by a lack of support for me as a teacher. I felt that I was not getting the professional development that I needed as a teacher. This is imperative for several reasons. According to Young et al. (2019), "lack of professional development can inhibit urban mathematics teachers

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from transforming their teaching to enhance student learning" (p. 312). However professional development serves another role, that of fulfilling the desires of the teacher to "improve their professional competence, to progress their careers, and [to experience] the intrinsic enjoyment of the learning" (Cameron et al., 2013, p. 378).

As a teacher, the beliefs I hold impact the work in the classroom and the work surrounding the classroom. The beliefs I hold about the classroom surround what I consider highly effective teaching and can be surmised in four areas: the necessary characteristics of a teacher, the fundamentals of a teacher (needed before students even enter the classroom), the ability to engage students in culturally responsive education, and the ability to engage students in the learning process itself. Outside of the classroom, I maintain beliefs around mathematics and professional development (as well as other areas) that influence my role as an educator. These beliefs align with that of Voet and De Wever (2019) and thus are pivotal in the formation of my identity as a teacher.

When it comes to leadership, the efficacies and beliefs are more nuanced and play out in three different realms - as a coach of teachers, as a department leader, and as a leader in the school. First, in regards to a coach of teachers, the efficacies I shared from the journal include my ability to assess lessons as well as teacher and student intuition (or the ability to know or understand what a teacher/student did or is going through without being told). These are continuously built up by the feedback I receive from the teachers I work with. Areas where I show lower self-efficacy include being able to communicate exactly what I am intending as well as my own self-doubt. It is no surprise that doubt would arise in a teacher leader as Cambell and Malkus (2011) state, "this is a demanding

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role, and a role that the profession does not understand and is only beginning to examine". These demands are a cause of high emotion, and such emotion can lead to lower self-efficacy at times.

Other areas of leadership included leading the department where efficacies were named around understanding the needs of the teachers, particularly the need to feel successful and valued as well as time, as well as around hiring teachers for the Math Department at AHHS. Aside from being a coach of teachers and a teacher leader, some other efficacies came out including understanding and acknowledging the needs of the school. However, self-doubt came in when working with administrators as well as working with adults, particularly those who had more experience teaching but still needed support.

As to the beliefs held as teacher leader, the beliefs again followed the roles played, including that of a coach of teachers, a leader of a department, in working with school leaders, in working on behalf of the school as a whole, and overall ideas that did not fit neatly into a single category. As to a coach, beliefs were built around seeing the teacher being coached as a whole person, which included praising their work and playing to the positives, as well as creating and fostering a two-way street with the teachers. This two way street, built on trust, is imperative as Taylor (2008) points out, "trust supports problem solving, social exchange, professional learning, experimentation, and a moral imperative to take on the difficult work of school improvement" (p. 27). Additionally, there were beliefs in the power and practice of the three different types of coaching: consultation, collaboration, and coaching. Other beliefs included the power of coaching

outside of a typical observation cycle as well as the limitations to coaching. On top of it all, there was a belief in the power of mathematics that played out in all realms of leadership and teaching.

In terms of being a department leader, the first belief mentioned was the belief of having a vision for a team of teachers. This is important as Harris and Muijs (2005) point out that "there is evidence to suggest that the possibilities for school improvement are extended if there is a clear vision linked to high-quality support… [and] this vision needs to be shared and regularly reconfirmed as the process of change takes place" (p. 132). There was also a belief in qualities necessary for a department leader including a love of mathematics (and sharing that love), the ability to sympathize with teachers, being protective of teachers, and fighting low expectations. However, it was also mentioned that there were stereotypes that shaped my views of the department as a whole.

There was continued discussion around what a teacher leader does with the administration and the beliefs formed there. Mainly, there were beliefs on the emotions that administrators could produce in this teacher leader, the power of disagreements with administrators, what and why administrators ask of teacher leaders, and how I as a teacher leader reach the administrator. As to the school as a whole, the beliefs presented centered around responding to the school's morale as well as to all teachers' well-being. Finally, there were beliefs dispelled around how I do the wide scope of this work as well as how I handle that.

The Dispositions and Identities of the Dual Role Teacher Leader

After outlining the beliefs and efficacies, the dispositions and identities are able to be formed and discussed. This allowed an answer to the third research question:

3. How do these experiences influence the identity and dispositions of an individual such as this in a dual role of teacher and teacher leader?

As dispositions are, in the model of Kaplan and Garner (2017) evident in all identities, understanding these common threads in all identities was imperative to occur first. The first of these was a disposition of high expectations. These expectations were evidence for myself and for others. This led to a strong sense of transparency. Additionally, this meant the need to own my own biases. In accomplishing this work, and maintaining my own high expectations, I needed a support system. The expectation that I put upon the learner is that they are ready to learn whereas I expect myself to provide whatever scaffolds the learner needs. These high expectations, according to Hull et al (2009) tend to be coupled with teachers who have high self-efficacy. They go on to describe that "effective teachers have high expectations for students and work to provide students with opportunities to meet them" (p. 89). This mirrors the high expectations that I have displayed for all of my learners as well as the high self-efficacy I mentioned earlier.

Aside from high expectations, there is a disposition towards Culturally Responsive Teaching that is evident. Geneva Gay (2018) defines Culturally Responsive Teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, frames of reference, and pefromance styles of ethnially diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 37). Yet this does not simply happen without working towards this toal. Herein

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lies the seven tenets that embody culturally responsive teaching including developing relationships, empowering learners, moving each learner along their path, caring for the learners, individualized for all learners, providing all learners with the opportunity to learn, and developing an appreciation of all cultures. Each of these are designed to get me closer to that goal of Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Connected to this notion, but separate as it embodies all I do in education is a disposition of engaging all learners. This is something that I feel as a teacher when it is not working and do whatever I can to make learning meaningful and engaging. Hull et al (2009) point to the importance of engaging learners from allowing students to achieve at greater levels to learning more to learning that crosses all groups of students regardless of race, gender, socioeconomics, etc. For me, engaging students means finding creative ways to engage the students, ensuring that the learner feels valued, attending to the needs of the learners, and putting the learners first. As with all dispositions, this one holds as a leader of teachers as well from using creative ways to coach teachers to spending extra time with teachers to ensure they feel valued.

Additionally, there is a disposition of stewardship evident in all roles served by the dual teacher leader. This stewardship includes serving the students, the teachers, the colleagues, and, in the process, putting myself last. Oddly enough, this disposition has been shown in literature to account for a positive view of leadership from teachers. According to Peterson et al (2017), stewardship was the leading trait assigned to academic leaders that teachers claimed holding educational wisdom.

Another disposition evident in the research was a disposition of passion for education and teaching. This was made clear in the emotions felt, from great frustration to immense joy, all intensified by the passion for education. Things that fueled the passion included a strong self-efficacy (as concurred by Hull et al above), constantly seeking improvement, and being valued. Mangin (2008) stresses the need for professional development of teacher leaders, and not just to prepare them for the role but also to satiate that need to continue to learn and grow.

A few other dispositions mentioned included a disposition towards mathematics (not just in the curriculum taught but in the ways it can be applied as a leader), a disposition of action, being someone who serves in multiple roles and always with a need to know, and a disposition towards connecting the teaching of students and the coaching of teachers. This final piece included a conversation around the teacher scales as seen in figure 8 below. Thus, all these dispositions live out in the identities I uphold within the school.

```
┌─────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────┐
│ What I give as a│              │ What the learner│
│ teacher and/or  │              │ outputs in      │
│ coach to        │              │ response to what│
│ contribute to   │              │ was given by the│
│ the learning    │              │ teacher         │
└─────────────────┘              └─────────────────┘
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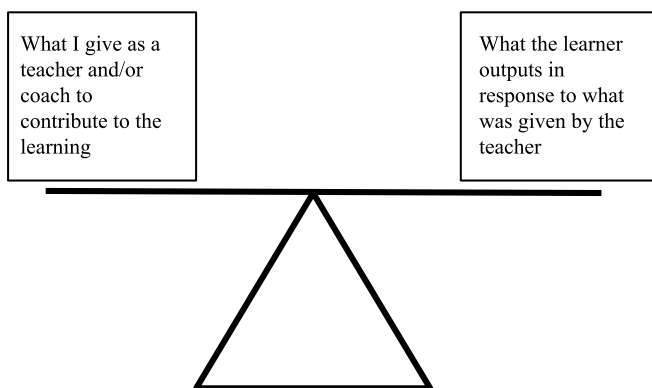
Figure 8: The teacher scales

These identities have been compartmentalized down to three essential titles: the educator, the teacher, and the teacher leader. The teacher leader is a sub-identity of the other two, meaning that what I am as a teacher leader is a part of what I am as a teacher and a part of what I am as an educator. What I do as a leader is grounded in these other two identities. Following that is the teacher, which is still a sub-identity of the educator. Here, as a teacher, being more familiar with the role and having served in it longer, there is more to this identity than that of the teacher leader: more I know, more I do, more I try, more I experience. Finally, the identity of the educator embodies both of these roles as that role ultimately serves the entirety of my being within education as well as houses the dispositions.

Aims and Challenges

The final two research questions, four and five, as illustrated below:

4. How does such an individual develop his/her aims for himself and his peers?

5. What challenges and opportunities present themselves to enhance or take away from such aims?

were discussed as I walked through the teachers I supported during the school year. With the first five teachers covered, there were specific aims, or goals, that the teachers were hoping to achieve. Each of these aims was aligned with three action steps that formed a picture of high-quality instruction in order to meet those aims. This fits into the model created by Hull et al (2009) where they state "coaches must form a clear picture of a high-quality mathematics program with factors about progress that they can discuss with

teachers" (p. 101). Hull goes on to posit that these aims should be rooted in one of six core areas - equity, curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment, or technology.

When coaching Scottt, the aim was centered around learning as it was to aid students in engaging in tasks. Over the period of time we worked together, this aim was moving in a positive direction. Even though I was worried at first as Scott is a more experienced teacher and I thought he would not be as open to coaching, getting his perspective in creating the aims led to meaningful steps and work. In addition, receiving feedback from me, positive feedback, aided this work. One other factor that helped in my coaching of Scott was the high opinions he had of me.

Unfortunately, the work with Mark was not as successful. The aim we created with Mark, or rather that I ended up creating for him (which was one challenge in this work) was to apply more consistent whole class formative assessments with feedback, thus centered in that tenet of assessment. What little progress was made was due to Mark's ability to make genuine relationships with students, something I leveraged with praise. However, there were too many challenges to overcome. On my part, I had a perceived laziness of Mark which marred my views. Thus, watching him repeat the same mistakes put a heavy toll on me. As to Mark, the challenges he faced included not following through with the aim and action steps, but that could have been that he was overwhelmed with feelings of dread and despair as we got closer and closer to schools closing due to the pandemic (however we did not know until the day before that the schools would close when they did).

In my work with Betty, as she had asked I help a course I hadn't worked with that year, this put us behind in the cycle, and so while we got to an aim, that of aiding learning by keeping students engaged in the tasks assigned, I did not get a chance to observe her attempt at these action steps. I felt great about the direction this was headed though as I had taught the course before so had lots to offer her, I had been able to make small visits where I paid lots of positive praise to all I saw, and I knew this aim was based in other successes she had already had. In fact, this aim and its action steps came about naturally in the conversation we had following the initial visit. That said, the one challenge we faced was I knew that Betty was considering leaving teaching that year (and in the end she did).

With Anna, we co-created an aim around working with students through senioritis, a goal rooted in several key areas such as teaching, learning, and assessment. As she had a student teacher, we were able to create aims and action steps that were not only rooted in what was working already but that she had the ability to practically apply. The challenges with Anna were time - time got away from us in that she had the student teacher running lessons on the day I was to observe her progress here.

Working with Elaine, I was initially challenged by the experience gap again. Additionally, Elaine is the only one I had coached before that I had felt I hadn't had a positive experience with, so I had a form of trauma (as described in the journal) when working with Elaine. Thus, I chose to play to the positives, her ability to think creatively about a lesson structure as well as her knowledge of the curriculum and let her design an aim which ended up being around learning in that she wanted the students to

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communicate more and more with each other. However, the day I was to see how this was matriculating, she was out sick which left us this far in the work, having developed the aim and action steps.

Gary is the teacher I saw most and that makes the most references in my journal as far as teachers I coached, and oddly enough he wasn't even on my caseload. My coaching was out of a sense of care for him and his ability to stay on as a teacher with us. The aims created (in a less formal manner) was for Gary to be more proactive and illustrate that he does, in fact, care about teaching (a revelation made when I eventually asked him if he did care). The challenges presented were great; many others had seen these flaws so Gary thought lowly of his ability, he did not know how to effectively plan for student engagement, and - with my work with him - there was an imbalance in the teacher scales (meaning I was putting in a lot more than what was coming out). In the end, we were making strides to help him improve, including a student survey to see what they need him to do as a teacher, but due to the pandemic he never had a chance to give that.

With John and Clark, while there was not a formal aim, we focussed on co-planning a unit together to help fill the needs they had both in ways of curriculum (understanding and implementing) as well as learning (including key components to get the students more engaged in the mathematics). In the end, planning the lesson together as we did ended successfully for Clark as this lesson fit the needs and wants he had as well as his ability to implement the tasks. However, for John he struggled as he was challenged by the students taking control of the lesson.

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Finally, as Ally and Cindy had already submitted their resignation for the end of the year (both were moving out of state), my aim was just to help them finish the year as successfully and comfortably as possible. With Cindy this meant both the practice of bit-sized feedback (as her job the following year would entail her doing the same) and helping her through the Calculus unit she would be teaching. For Ally, she just wanted to be reminded she was a good teacher, having come to us from a very successful school where she had performed well, she hadn't been feeling successful this year. While we made great progress with both, there was the challenge of them not coming back so nothing to hold them accountable to the work.

Analysis and Implications

Throughout this work, much has been said of the lived experiences, and accordingly the beliefs, efficacies, dispositions, and identities, of one dual role teacher leader. From the work in the classroom, to the work with other teachers, to the work with the school as a whole, the experiences are vast, varied, and rich. The implications of these experiences are noteworthy and add to a growing body of literature on teacher leadership, particularly when teacher leaders are in dual roles as well as serving in urban schools.

In order to understand the full scope of dual role teacher leadership and its implications, first we will examine what supports the dual role teacher leader depicted throughout this paper. Then we will examine what hinders this teacher and the dual role they play. Following, we will discuss the implications of a dual role teacher leadership on the teachers and school as a whole. From there, we will examine the implications from this study on the notions of dispositions and identities. Finally, we will look to one

challenge faced by myself as a dual role teacher and teacher leader and the implications around the tensions experienced between dispositions and identities.

What Supports This Dual Role Teacher Leader

Much has been said already about the dual role teacher leader, the successes and the struggles, the accomplishments and the missed opportunities. However, a deeper examination of these findings can lead to a few key factors that attribute to the success of the dual role teacher leader. These include a strong sense of one's own dispositions, particularly those that align with research on successful teacher leadership. These include the dispositions towards action, culturally responsive education, mathematics, and a passion for education. Aside from these dispositions, both the duality of the role as well as a high self-efficacy support the dual teacher leader role.

Dispositions

Understanding one's own dispositions is paramount to teaching and teacher leading. As Katz (1993) defines "dispositions as patterns of behaviors that are exhibited frequently and intentionally in the absence of coercion, representing a habit of mind", teachers and teacher leaders need to be cognizant of what they are doing and why. There are dispositions that lead themselves to a more productive educational environment, and as Dewey (1922) points out, dispositions can be taught and cultivated. Thus, as a teacher leader, recognizing what dispositions aid in this work will lead others to understand what dispositions need to be cultivated and taught to serve in such a role.

Towards Action

As mentioned during the findings, much of the teacher leadership program itself came about due to the doings, the actions, of this teacher leader. From then on, and during this study, the teacher leader was grounded in a disposition of action. This can be seen in the steps that were taken in the journal to give each teacher their one wish. What is absent from the journal is that I never received my wish so, even though this was something that the leadership team decided all would do, not everyone did act accordingly. Another element absent from the journal is a discussion of what coaching should look like. However, that did not stop this teacher leader from coaching teachers, even teachers not directly on my caseload. In fact, this ties in neatly with the works of Gabriel (2005) who warns against teacher leaders procrastinating and champions their actions towards accomplishing their goals. Specifically, for this teacher leader, developing their own tools as well as developing a system of time management supported my work as a teacher leader. Note, these tools are not described to say that these tools must be established by an effective teacher leader, rather, in light of having frameworks to work with, that the teacher leader be able to craft and hone the tools necessary to succeed in the role.

Developing Own Tools - Observation Framework

While much has been written about observation cycles (see Ellington et al (2016) or Forrest et al (2019)), completing the work of a teacher leader in an urban school setting devoid of research and professional development led this teacher leader to develop their own tool for observations and debriefs. This is captured in figure 7 below. While this process was developed after time and cultivation, it is grounded in research that

exists, unbeknownst to the teacher leader at the time of development. As Lord et al (2008) point out, "providing powerful feedback requires that teacher leaders move beyond mere sharing of expertise toward a more complicated engagement around the work" (p. 70). The implementation of jointly created aims and action steps provides this type of support.

Additionally, placing focus on just one item, as opposed to the myriad of issues that may be present is also highlighted in the literature. According to Gabriel (2005), "you still might observe things that need to be corrected; that is not your main function for entering the classroom" (p. 127). Getting lost in the minutia can get tedious for both the observer and the teacher being observed. The ability to look for larger themes that embody these smaller issues leads to greater and more substantive change.

Pointing out the highlights of the lesson are imperative as Hull et al (2009) make note that teachers who are seeking to improve their practice need reassurance that they are headed in the right direction. Additionally, these feedbacks, Hull et al continue to point out, need to be grounded in data that would be accumulated in steps 1 and 2. Taylor (2009) echoes these notions and goes on to promote self-reflection on the part of the teacher as evident in step 3. Taylor (2009) concludes by pointing out that teachers are much more likely to enact the new practices when supported and that work is done side by side with the expert, the teacher leader, as in step 7.

Developing Own Tools - Teacher Scales

While on its own, the teacher scales may seem to be trivial, they provide a way for the teacher leader to reflect on what they are experiencing and why. The teacher

scales, for reference, appear below in figure 8. As Hull et al (2009) point out, it is important for teachers to reflect on their lessons and, if the lesson was ineffectual, to think about the teaching rather than the students. Likewise, it is important for a teacher leader to reflect upon their own teaching of teachers and decide when things do not got as planned, where and why the issue occurred. Being able to place oneself along these scales can aid in that reflection.

As Harris and Muijs (2005) point out, reflection is "centrally concerned with improving practice rather than collecting knowledge" (p. 60). Having tools such as this teacher scale can aid a teacher leader in that type of reflection needed.

Developing Own Tools - Teacher and Student Intuition

A final tool that has been referred to is intuition. This is meant to say that as a teacher leader in a classroom, the leader can correctly deduce, or intune, truths about the teacher and the lesson itself from the observation. Likewise, seeing a student at work, a leader can intune what or why the behaviors that are being exhibited stem from. From an educational standpoint, when students rely on intuition alone to make judgements, we know that learning is not occurring (Murniasih et al, 2020). However, the ability to manage intuition as a coach and observer, founded on experience and evidence is important to the job of teacher leadership. According to Taylor (2005), "effective practice depends on a clear understanding and the personal expectation that one can mobilize the necessary knowledge and skills… under varied and unexpected circumstances" (p. 24). It is important that a teacher leader validates tools like this to maintain that personal

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expectation that they can, in fact, practice effective coaching regardless of the circumstances.

Time Management

As laid on in Chapter Four, the experiences and responsibilities of a teacher are immense. We know that teachers are overburdened, from data suggesting that 8% of teachers leave the profession each year (Suture et al., 2016), a majority of them citing " dissatisfaction with some aspect of the job that stems from poor leadership, lack of control over teaching, or too much testing pressure with too little support as the reason for exiting the profession". This is no surprise as the amount of work and pressures that teachers face are vast. This makes teacher time a commodity, something pointed out several times in the findings as well as by researchers including Kahn et al (2016) who stated when it comes to teaching, "time is the most precious thing in the world" (p. 250).

When looking at teacher leadership, the burdens of time are still greatly felt. In fact, in their case studies of three different high schools utilizing a teacher leadership program, Harris and Muijs (2005) found that time was a major barrier that impeded educational initiative via teacher leadership. Combine the two roles, teaching and teacher leadership, and a need arises for those teacher leaders to create their own way to manage time.

The journal alluded to this researcher's approach, using scheduling platforms, post-its, and excel to organize the tasks and calendars of the role. This is not something that is inherent to the role, rather something that had to be created, had to be done, in order for this teacher leader to be able to function in the role.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Much has been said about culturally responsive teaching and the tenets this teacher leader uses both in class and in the role of a teacher leader. However, what is important here is how these tenets also mirror what research suggests supports teacher leaders in their roles. This comes mainly in two areas, first, building relationships with teachers, and, second, combatting unhealthy beliefs in teachers.

Relationships

Recall that healthy relationships, particularly built on trust, are imperative in working ith teachers, often the most influential component towards having a teacher reflect on their practice with the teacher lear (Mangin, 2005, Range et al, 2013). Being able to build and forge healthy relationships supported this teacher leader in their work. For example, in my work with Anna on February 27th, 2020:

"She had asked for help with her mental health. And I think she thought that only I would see the card so that's why she wrote tha… So after lunch, I swung by and asked her, "were you writing the card thinking that I was the one that was going to see it". She instantly turned red, started laughing, and then started to leak (as she put it). Suffice it to say, yes she wanted me to see it, yes she was hoping only me, but she was serious. And I did tell her there's no shame in wanting mental supports and that we do have that here. And I told her that I have been getting ready to look for someone to support me. And we talked. And I can't remember everything we said, but I know I left her feeling a little better than when we started."

This is to show the importance of relationships and trust. First, the teacher, Anna, trusted only me to see such a personal message about themself. Second, this turned into an opportunity to improve our relationship as Anna was able to connect with me on another level, knowing that I too felt the burdens and the need for help.

Other work substantiates these claims, claims that effective relationships lead to teacher growth. For example, Harris and Muijs (2005) found that as relationships developed between teachers, the more the relationship was forged, this made the teacher "more or less effective in driving change forward" (p. 139). Hull et al (2009) list a series of actions that develop relationships and rapport with teachers including being professionally friendly, being visible and accessible, keeping confidences, and staying touch.

Not only that, but strong relationships can combat some factors that normally hinder a teacher leader such as the power dynamic and the organization's status quo (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2005, Hull et al, 2009).

Unhealthy Beliefs

It is not unusual to come across unhealthy beliefs that teachers foster towards students and learning. In fact, many beliefs still exist in teachers today such as all students can not learn mathematics or the new strategies for teaching math are ineffective (Hull et al, 2009, Bengo, 2016). These beliefs are not held in one who upholds the dispositions of culturally responsive teaching, and, in fact, work contrary to several of the

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tenets listed under that disposition. Thus, it has been helpful for this teacher leader to be grounded in these tenets in order to help curb unhealthy beliefs of teachers.

Unfortunately, these unhealthy beliefs still exist within AHHS. Take for example this excerpt from March 10th, 2020:

"And when the flaws are the antithesis to what I believe

It hurts even more

When a teacher perpetuates stereotypes

"Only the loud, self-confident white male students are the ones that understand"

When a teacher refuses to put in the work,

"I don't know if you have the answer or not"

When a teacher presumes too much of students,

"The only reason I'm doing this is because I wonder if some of you have forgotten"

When a teacher denies students their ability to share their understanding,

"Don't give me more than a one word answer"

When a teacher assumes every kid knows exactly how to start,

"I'm gonna come and check on the few sticks I pull"

When a teacher cannot read the room,

"I'm gonna give you a few more minutes on this task"

When a teacher likes to hear himself talk,

"Now I know you just did this but here's how I would"

When a teacher provides no feedback to students,

"No, you're wrong"

Students disengage"

As mentioned prior, not all of these quotes were direct quotes of the teacher (although some were), they were all perceived either because of what was said or what was done. The teacher leader's disposition towards culturally responsive teaching was what made hearing these things so emotionally draining. However, because of this disposition, these difficult discussion items did not go unnoticed nor unmentioned. This is a something that can hinder teacher leadership, the inability to give effective feedback to other teachers, especially when it is in terms of a difficult conversation (Lord et al, 2008). Yet what supports having such a difficult conversation for this teacher leader is that these conversations are rooted in this disposition of the teacher leader, particularly around culturally responsive teaching.

Mathematics

As a mathematics teacher, a leader of the mathematics department, and a coach of teachers of mathematics, it is important that I have a disposition towards mathematics. While it may seem obvious that a math teacher should hold math as a core tenet to their being, a disposition, not all mathematics teachers do so. For example, elementary teachers have higher math anxiety than individuals in other fields of study, such as business, physical science, and health sciences (Bryant, 2009). This does not stop at elementary teachers as many competent and high-performing adults can feel anxious about math as well (Lee, 2009). Hull et al (2009) point out that it is the job of the math

leader to ensure that all math classes are providing content beyond basic computations. In an urban high school this is only compounded as Flores (2007) points to "the fact that African American and Latino students are less likely than White students to have teachers who emphasize high quality mathematics instruction, and appropriate use of resources" (p. 32).

Bengo (2016) and Hull et al (2009) remind us of the importance of a high level of mathematical content knowledge in order for a leader of mathematics to be successful. Thus, this being a disposition of this teacher leader is imperative in being successful in the work done. This is showcased in the teaching, coaching, and in the way mathematics is used in instructional leadership meetings.

Hull et al (2009) explain that the mathematics leader needs to "understand the developmental nature of mathematics and the interconnections among concepts (p. 6) as well as have a rich and up to date content knowledge. Being a teacher leader who has taught most of the courses offered at AHHS as well as many other courses outside what is now offered there, that content knowledge has been mastered by this teacher leader.

Manno and Firestone (2008) point to five characteristics that entail a content expert including recognizing and addressing content deficits, advocate for their subject area, could work around and with a variety of curriculum, could use their content knowledge to build trust with their colleagues, and spend less time in professional development around the content. The ability of this teacher leader to observe and give feedback on courses from Integrated Math I through Calculus point to the content

knowledge. Being able to work with teachers in and around their curriculum points to most of the rest of these characteristics.

Passion for Education

The final disposition that clearly aids a role such as this dual teacher leader role is one of a passion for education. Particularly as it pertains to mathematics, many reforms are being moved forth on shifting the focus of mathematics education to a more conceptual approach. Working with teacher leaders, particularly those that are passionate about education, can make this transition much easier for the teachers involved (Ellington et al, 2017). More so, the power that comes from the teachers seeing those that are leading them move forward with the work can make it less daunting. As it is, teachers are inundated with fears and pressures that make applying new techniques a daunting task (Vasquez & Timmerman, 2000). Thus, having a teacher leader, one passionate about education, applying the same techniques can make it less daunting.

As mentioned before, teacher leadership is most effective when it includes collaboration, reflection, knowledge, and ownership (Forrest et al, 2019). These are skills that a classroom teacher incorporates consistently throughout the process of teaching. Thus, applying these as a teacher leader becomes second nature for a teacher who has a disposition towards education.

. It has been said that having a teacher leader coaching teachers can be a hindrance because those teacher leaders will rely on a either a show and tell model (using what the teacher leader knows as 'good instruction' as a guide to inform the teacher being coached) and that what the teacher leader has to offer relies heavily on their own

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classroom thus making the professional development for the teacher being coached to lack true critique and reflection (Lord et al, 2008). However, as Mangin and Stoelinga (2010) point out, "teacher's connections to the classroom - creating learning opportunities for students, assessing student performance, and adapting their teaching practice accordingly - provide them with a situated perspective on the core technologies of teaching" (p. 50). Thus, if the teacher leader in question struggles in the classroom, accordingly they will struggle as a teacher coach as they will lack these necessary skills to aid their fellow teachers. However, as a teacher passionate about education, a teacher that has proven themself capable in the classroom, the experiences that I bring to the teachers I coach go beyond this simple mirroring or show and tell approach. In fact, that can be ascertained by the variety of approaches seen throughout the journal in working with teachers (such as co-planning, co-teaching, observations, etc) as well as the variety of methods implemented in the classroom as well as advised to be implemented in the classes of the teacher being coached.

The Duality of the Role

While this will come back once more, the notion of the duality of this role is important. As mentioned above, having the perspective from the classroom makes the teacher leader all the more effective in what they do. In so many ways, Gabriel's (2005) quote holds precisely for the importance of this role, "leaders are both teachers and learners". This unique positionality ensures that the leader is always teaching, not just the teachers that they are leading, but also the students they are teaching. Thus, it gives

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teacher leaders the opportunity to try and initiate changes they would like to see in their teachers. This creates a non-stop cycle of teaching and learning for the teacher leader.

There is a power in teachers leading teachers. As Bengo (2016) points out, by the sheer act of the teacher leader still teaching and enacting change, that change was much more successful across the school. As Obra (2010) points out, teachers want to be coached by a teacher leader still active in the classroom and espoused in the content stems - this leads to a sense of respect for those coaches. Harris and Muijs (2005) point that "teacher leadership is a catalyst for changing beliefs and behaviours and is thus directly associated with increases in teachers' self-esteem and self-efficacy" (p. 73).

As pointed out in the journal in several instances (working with Betty or Cindy on planning their courses for example), having taught the courses they struggled with positioned me to help them in a more genuine and effective way, not just engaging in conversations around the pedagogical but also the content skills needed. Additionally, when working with John and Clark to co-plan the unit and lessons, my knowledge of the courses beyond the one they were teaching allowed me to provide more insightful suggestions to the curriculum they were working with.

The importance of the duality of this role, of being a teacher and teacher leader, is something that has been emphasized throughout this body of work. Suffice it to say, it was a great support to this teacher leader in their work.

Self-Efficacy

As Hull et al (2009) points out, "teachers who are confident in their abilities to teach are more likely to find that students master required knowledge and skills" (p. 89).

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This is paralleled in the world of teacher leadership. As Harris and Maijs (2005) pointed out conversely, a lack of experience and confidence was identified as a barrier to teacher leadership. While I presented doubts and low self-efficacy at times, for a majority of the time and work, I maintained high self-efficacy in all realms (connected to the disposition of high expectations). In fact, as Hull et al (2009) mention, high self-efficacy leads to high expectations of students and self. Thus, this disposition towards high expectations is fueled by the self-efficacy this researcher brings to the work and, in turn, the work produced raises the teacher leader's self-efficacy. This cyclical nature between teacher leadership and the disposition of high expectations helps the teacher leader to continue to grow in their field.

What Hinders This Dual Role Teacher Leader

While much has been said as to what can support the teacher leader as shown through this investigation, there are also several factors that can hinder a teacher leader that are evident in this study. These include the nature of the role itself and a lack of professional growth.

Loneliness of the Role

As Harris and Muijs (2005) point out, the loneliness of this role as teacher leaders can be ostracized by their peers. In fact, this isolation is one of the main barriers to the field of teacher leadership. Gabriel (2005) points out that, particularly for the department chair role, as a teacher leader they are neither teacher nor administrator, caught in this middle ground that few occupy. As Hull et al (2009) point out, for teachers, isolation can

lead to teaching initiatives to fail. Similarly, the same can be said for teacher leaders, being isolated can cause the initiatives they are implementing to fail.

This middle ground that Gabriel referred to became noticeable when working with Gary on February 25th, 2020, where I journaled about how he was defensive with me due to his interactions with Roger - the administrator he normally was evaluated by. He could not separate my role from his and saw me as working against him. Another example of this loneliness appears in what is not in the journal. The journal only refers to two instances where I engaged with peers in a less formal, more social way, and the latter being the last day of school before shutting down for the pandemic.

Lack of Administrative Support

One area that a teacher leader should feel support from is the administration. This support can come from providing professional development (Spillane et al., 2009) to creating structures in the building that welcomes the teacher leadership program (Mangin, 2005). In fact, teacher leaders are most effective when their principal relies on them to achieve the larger goals and objectives of the school and actively scaffolds and supports their transition into becoming teacher leaders (Weiner, 2011).

However, it is clear from the journal, and particularly from what is not mentioned, that these important supports were not provided to the teacher leaders at AHHS. In fact, much of the journal's mention of the administration was in regards to disagreements or how we, as teacher leaders, could work with them to accomplish what needed to be done. While, as mentioned prior, disagreements with administrators can be healthy, it does reinforce that feeling of loneliness that teacher leaders experience. Whether this lack of

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support was intentional or not, it was felt by this teacher leader and often left me guessing as to how to best proceed.

In Wenner's (2017) research of teacher leadership in an urban school, she found that teacher leaders felt empowered and productive because of the support of the administrators. They go on to discuss how the reform needed to push the school forward relied on the cooperation of teacher leaders and administrators. In fact, as alluded to at several points in the journal, there was a formal principal I had worked with, Les, who had offered that support from creating the system of teacher leadership through decisions about the department - that two way street led to many successes and a feeling of empowerment for me, the teacher leader.

Ultimately, what is most telling to the state of the administration, particularly Roger who oversaw the department, was that there were three teachers who left at the end of the school year, the greatest loss in a single year I had seen as a member of the math department at AHHS. According to Urick (2016), positive perceptions of administration contribute to less attrition and conversely, negative perceptions lead to an increase in attrition as we saw this year.

Lack of Mentor

Teacher leaders play a substantial role in the foundation of the school, from actions like designing staff development to setting policies to evaluating teacher performance (Harris and Muijs, 2005). To carry on such tasks, the teacher leader needs to have a mentor they can work with in order to accomplish these goals. Oftentimes, as Gabriel (2005) points out, teacher leaders are asked to be mentors. In fact, as it shows up

in the journal, this teacher leader served as a mentor for new teacher leaders in the district (for example, on the March 3rd, 2020 entry I refer to my three hour mentor meeting). However as a teacher leader, I myself did not have a mentor, and never had a formal mentor. That said, in the first few years of the program, our former principal Les, served in that role for me.

As discussed in the journal on February 19th, 2020, I tried to engage in that type of relationship (that of a mentee-mentor) with Roger as he was that administrator over our department, seeking him out when I needed advice. That really never came to fruition. This compounded that sense of loneliness as I wrote in the February 20th, 2020 entry:

"You know, my job can be lonely. It can be isolating. And being the only man that works as a teacher leader in our school, and separated, physically and in many other ways... At least the administrators are mostly men, but they too are so far physically. And their world is slightly different. But at least Les understood when he was our principal. And I could go down there and just sit and talk. Some days I wish I could have that with Roger. It won't be the same, but its better than nothing. Which is why I found myself in there at the end of the day anyway. To talk. To decompress. To vent. And to commiserate… I used to have that with Les. I learned so much from him. Many lessons I want to carry with me forward about myself as a leader and myself as a teacher… Anyway, to help me do this, he told me "A teacher has to be passionate; passionate about the mathematics or passionate about teaching, either way, they have to have that passion - you, you have

both". I try to keep that passion alive and well for him (and for me). But I still need that support. I need the help sometimes."

While the world of teacher leadership is still so new, little research is available on the notion of mentoring teacher leaders. However, to combat the loneliness of the role as well as to develop an administration that is more supportive of teacher leaders, a mentorship program is strongly encouraged, particularly in house with administrators.

Emotional Toll

There are several journal entries that indicate the emotional toll the role of a teacher leader has on the individual, particularly myself (although others are mentioned at times). A few of those entries follow.

From the February 26th 2020 journal entry, I noted that the teachers on the instructional lead team (including myself) "were just gonna touch on some updates, but we were all feeling the weight of the school on our shoulders – the burden all of the teachers have felt". Then, on March 3rd, 2020 and March 9th 2020, I wrote:
"I am exhausted. How exhausted? Well so much so that I (1) left my water bottle, school keys, and calculator on my desk at school, (2) had to buy a coffee at 6:30 pm, and (3) made a list of three things and my brain knows there is a third one but can't even process what that is right now."
"Today is the kinda day that if I could have stopped to have a melt down and let tears stream down my face, I would have. I am exhausted. I am overwhelmed. I am feeling

defeated. I still don't know what to do about our teachers and how they feel about leaving because of Roger. And I'm exhausted."

All of these entries point to the emotional toll this job can have on the person serving in it. These passages just reaffirm the research that speaks to the loneliness of the role as well as the position that it puts teacher leaders in (Harris and Muijs, 2005, Hull et al, 2009, Gabriel, 2005).

Lack of Professional Growth

Another hindrance to the role of teacher leadership is a lack of professional development opportunities and ultimately professional growth. As previously mentioned, the key to developing teacher leaders is the ability to help them grow professionally (such as with professional developments) as well as the time to do so (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2005, Campbell & Malkus, 2011). Professional development for teacher leaders not only increases their knowledge and skills as leaders but also as a means for building capacity and facilitating school improvement initiatives (Mangin, 2008). As Taylor et al (2018) point out, this professional development is even more impactful when the teacher leaders and administrators work together to develop skills that support sustainable change.

Yet, as mentioned before, there are elements in the journal that, because of their absence, stand out. Not once in the period of the journal, particularly if we include the time of teaching during the pandemic, was there a mention of any type of professional development for the teacher leaders at AHHS. Research has shown that those that are selected for teacher leadership positions tend to be those that are motivated, particularly

to learn and grow (Mangin, 2008). When this motivation though is not fulfilled, when teacher leaders are denied professional development, their ability to effectively coach teachers diminishes as teacher leaders need to remain current on best practices (Bengo, 2016).

For this teacher leader, a lack of professional development led to two noticeable outcomes that had negative impacts. The first is that the teacher leader sought out other opportunities for professional development, such as the mentoring program and serving on the state board of mathematics education. While these proved worthwhile, they also compounded existing stressors leading to the emotional toll explained in the prior section.

The other negative impact was the impasses with teachers that this teacher leader needed support in overcoming. The first, as mentioned prior, occurred with Gary. When I asked for support from Roger, the response was simply that Roger would handle it, not only taking away from a learning experience for me as a teacher leader but also negating my authority as a teacher leader. Another example was more subtle, but when teachers were not available for follow up visits as scheduled. Whale we shortly thereafter entered into the pandemic, one can not help but wonder how those teachers would have responded, or if they would have responded, in the future.

The Impact of a Dual Role Teacher Leader

As much has been said about what supports and what hinders a teacher leader, what needs to be considered is the impact of the teacher leader. As Taylor et al (2018) point out, the list of all that teacher leaders can accomplish in a school is immense and includes such accolades as increasing student achievement as well as championing new

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initiatives for the school and/or community. At this point, the power of a teacher leader should not be debated as research has shown convincingly that teacher leadership benefits all involved.

However, what remains is whether or not this teacher leader had an impact on the school and community during the work over the course of the journal. As this journal occurs only from the perspective of the teacher leader, that becomes even more difficult to ascertain. What can be discussed is the amount of times and the ways the teacher leader interacted with the teachers, as well as the school, and let the data speak for itself in terms of the impact on the teachers and the building. Analysis will show that, even in light of the hindrances toward the work, the teacher leader provided the teachers and the school with many opportunities to learn and grow. This section covers the types of benefits that a teacher leader can have for the teachers they work with which include both the time spent working with the teachers and the practices implemented. The section is concluded with a comparison of the roles this teacher leader played in the school to what research has proposed that a teacher leader should play.

Other Teachers

During the time the journal covered, four weeks or twenty school days, the school itself provided a few professional developments for the staff. This included one longer meeting (extending roughly 90 minutes) and three shorter meetings (each about 30 minutes). During the long meeting, about 30 minutes of the time was devoted to school wide announcements. During the shorter meetings, two were dedicated to school wide

announcements and one was dedicated to learning. This means that in total, there was about 90 minutes of teacher learning.

During this same time, teachers received observation and coaching from me in numerous forms. The content of these meetings has been mostly covered in the findings section. Again, this is not to draw conclusions on the quality of professional learning that teachers received from myself as opposed to the school wide PD as a whole. Rather this is to set a standard. Teachers received 90 minutes from the school and then whatever they received from their teacher leader. Again, for me as a teacher, there is an absence of me working with an administrator on improving my instructional practices in the journal. Additionally, there was no discussion in our instructional leadership team meetings on the consistency of coaching teachers in whatever capacity. Table 1 below shows the amount of and type of interactions the teachers in my department spent with me. Again, this is not to pass judgment, not to say the quality of professional learning that teachers received from myself or from the school. However, what it does point to is the opportunity to learn that the teachers had under my guidance.

Table 1: Number of times Teacher interacted with Teacher Leader

Teacher	Full Observation	Partial Observation	Coaching Meeting	Informal Meeting	Other	Discussed T with Admin
Mark	2	1	1	0	0	0
Scott*	2	1	1	2	0	0
Elaine*	1	1	1	0	0	2
Ally	1	1	1	0	3 - Email,	0

					student data, Pi Day	
Betty	2	1	2	0	1 - Assisted a Lesson	0
Anna	1	0	2	5	1 - Subbed for Teacher	0
Gary*	3	1	2	1	0	4
Cindy	2	1	2	0	1 - Co-planned	0
John	1	1	1	0	1 - Co-planned	0
Clark	2	0	1	2	1 - Co-planned	0

For all of the teachers listed above, that opportunity to learn outweighed what was provided by the school as a whole, in terms of the amount of time spent. While that makes sense knowing that all teachers should have access to a teacher leader or an administrator to support their professional development, not all teachers received this type of development. As noted earlier, I as a teacher did not receive this type of development as a teacher. As Table 1 illustrates, teachers had anywhere from three to six visits with me that were either formal observations, short observations, or coaching sessions. While not all teachers took advantage of it, teachers had up to six different informal meetings with me, either planned or unplanned. While the final column does not speak to the work that the teachers did with the teacher leader, what it does illustrate is that the teacher leader was working to better that teacher in alternate ways.

While a barometer of success can not be drawn from the work done with these teachers, what can be discussed is the types of interactions and how that aligns with what literature says about professional development. Campbell and Malkus (2011) named three essential elements to professional learning that were evident in the work this teacher leader completed with the teachers. The first is that learners have prior knowledge that is accessed during instruction. This occurred in numerous ways, from having teachers give input into lesson plans that were co-created to having teachers explain their lessons prior to the observations. Second was that the learners apply what they learn and actually understand what they are learning. The opportunity for this appeared when teachers were asked to put into action the lesson plans that were co-created, when they were asked to apply the action steps that were co-created, when they were asked to contribute to creating those actions steps.The final element is that learners are given a chance to reflect and monitor their learning as well as what they don't understand and what questions they have. This is a part of the observation process as teachers are asked to reflect on how they did with the lesson as well as sculpt their own next steps.

A few other notes about the professional development the teachers received under the coaching with a teacher leader. Research shows us that professional development is traditionally devoid of being focussed on the individual, rather its aims are toward the collective (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008). In their work with a teacher leader, each teacher had that opportunity to have their individual needs met. Many characteristics of high quality professional development including fostering deep collaboration, forming partnerships, providing opportunities for teacher enquiry and action research, giving

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teachers time to talk about teaching and learning, grounding in the work of the teacher and the school, and being sustained and supportive (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2005, Darling-Hammond, 1997) are not evident in school-wide professional developments. However, as seen in the findings these qualities were evident in the work of the teacher in a one-on-one or one-on-few situation.

School

As to the school as a whole, this is a lot more tough to measure the impact of a teacher leader on the outcomes of the school. Again, as the only data here is from the perspective of the teacher leader, the effect of the contributions is not measurable. The point here is to illustrate that a teacher leader does have the potential to impact the whole school.

In the journal, there were two key moments illustrated where my involvement as a teacher leader impacted the whole school. The first was in the February 20th, 2020 professional development meeting where I helped to lead the teacher to a practical implementation of the learnings happening in the professional development sessions. The second was on February 27th, 2020 where we provided the teachers an opportunity to ask for a wish, an activity that I helped to co-create and facilitate. Both exemplify the elements of quality professional development mentioned above, particularly forming partnerships (knowing a teacher leader was going to help them receive their wish), providing opportunities for teacher enquiry and action research (giving teachers the time to work through the groupings and ask questions in the process), grounding in the work of the teacher and the school (connecting the grouping work to the lessons being taught in

the whole school professional development), and being sustained and supportive (again, knowing they were going to be supported in getting their teacher wish) (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2005, Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Identity and Dispositions

As Kaplan and Garner (2017) pointed out, dispositions exist outside of an identity. They do not tie themself to one identity of the individual, rather to the person as a whole. One implication for teacher and teacher leaders here then is for one to be able to name a disposition, then that disposition must reside in every layer of one's identity. For example, as a teacher, I have belief in the notion of teaching for and with social justice as mentioned in Chapter Four. However, that belief, however strong, is not always reflected in my work as a teacher leader. Thus, as I am not living this belief in all identities, it does not rise up to a disposition.

Thus, figure 10 below shows these identities and dispositions. This is not to say that all teacher leaders need to fit these identities and dispositions (although the case has been made already that these dispositions align with what research says are necessary teacher leaders). Rather, this is to set the stage around implications that can be pulled from the findings around identity and disposition. These implications include the structure and importance of the nested identities and the benefits thereof, a deeper discussion of the connection between the dispositions and the efficacies and beliefs of the teachers as well as the connections between the three, and finally how coaching becomes a reflection of teaching.
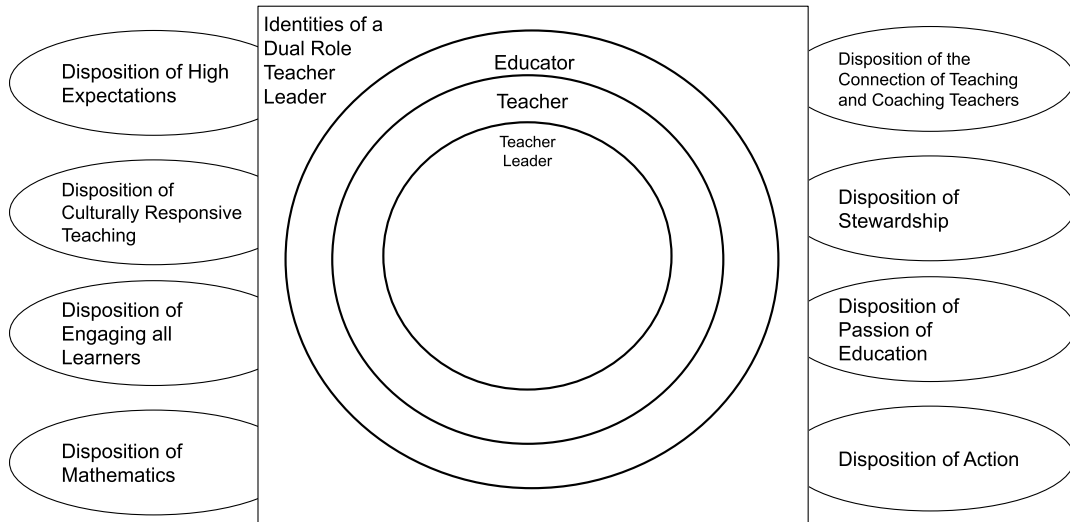
Figure 10: Identities and Dispositions of Dual Role Teacher Leader

The figure here resonates with the figures that were the basis for the work around

identity. While this does not include every layer of each of the role identities (the

behaviors, the competencies, the beliefs) as outlined by Korthagen (2017), it does

embody that notion of the final identity with those circles at the center of the diagram, or

the role identities. This also works in tandem with the model of Kaplan and Garner

(2019) in that the dispositions rest outside of the identities yet play a consistent role in

how the role identity is enacted. Additionally, the notion of nesting the identities within

each other comes straight from the work of Kaplan and Garner.

What this brings to the literature is two useful premises. First, that these identities

are nested. How, or if, they nest for other roles in the educational setting may change. Yet

for this teacher leader, for myself, this is how these identities align. This can then help in

the professional development of the teacher leader, knowing and understanding that the

identity of the teacher leader is rooted in the identity of the teacher. This model also

speaks to the practical application of understanding the dispositions of a teacher leader and how they exist in all realms of the dual role teacher leader's role identities. knowing these can also shape the teacher leader and, as mentioned previously, can be pivotal to successfully implementing the dual roles of a teacher and teacher leader.

The Teacher Leader, the Teacher, and the Educator

Research has shown little on the identity of a teacher leader. This research includes Hanuscin et al (2014) who described that for teachers to fully transition into teacher leader roles they must change their professional identity. Gonzales and Lambert (2001) described how a teacher's identity shifts as they become leaders, from experiencing new leadership and instructional roles, reflection upon these experiences, and receiving feedback, the identity of the teacher may change. Wenner and Campbell (2018) described teacher leadership identity as being thick or thin depending on the intensity of the leadership and when and how it is illustrated. Carver (2016) had posited that teachers maintain a teacher identity while birthing a teacher leader identity and abandoning that once they become the teacher leader. While all these models have practical implications, they do not fit neatly with each other.

Moreso, the research procured here shows a different story than these theories posited above. Carver's (2016) claim that the teacher identity is abandoned and Haucin et al's (2014) claim that the teacher's identity must change to encompass the teacher leader roles is contrary to the model discussed here with this researcher. This researcher's claim that the teacher leader identity is housed inside of the teacher identity, a sub-identity

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using the notion of Kaplan and Garner (2017), maintains that the teacher leader identity is a subset of the teacher. The teacher identity is not abandoned as Carver (2016) posited.

The teacher identity does not change to fit the teacher leader identity either as Haucin et al (2014) suggested. What can and does occur though, as the teacher leader is a subset of the teacher, when the teacher leader is moved by the experiences they have - such as seeing a great lesson (like with Ally on March 3rd, 2020) - this alters the teacher leader's identity to include such practices, which in turn alters the teacher identity. While this somewhat aligns with the model suggested by Gonzales and Lambert (2001) who state the teacher's identity shifts as they become a leader, the why it shifts is missing. Why the teacher's identity shifts is because the teacher leader identity is a sub-identity of the teacher.

The closest explanation to what was observed with this teacher leader is that of Wenner and Campbell (2018) who discuss the notion of thick and thin identities. Based on the model developed here, that circle that embodies the teacher leader can be a small circle, only a tiny identity sometimes attended to, or a thin identity, or it can be thick almost nearly the size of the teacher identity. What this research would posit though that shifts from this notion is that the teacher leader identity does always increase, and when that identity increases, as the teacher leader grows, one of two things occur, this notion illustrated in figure 11 below..
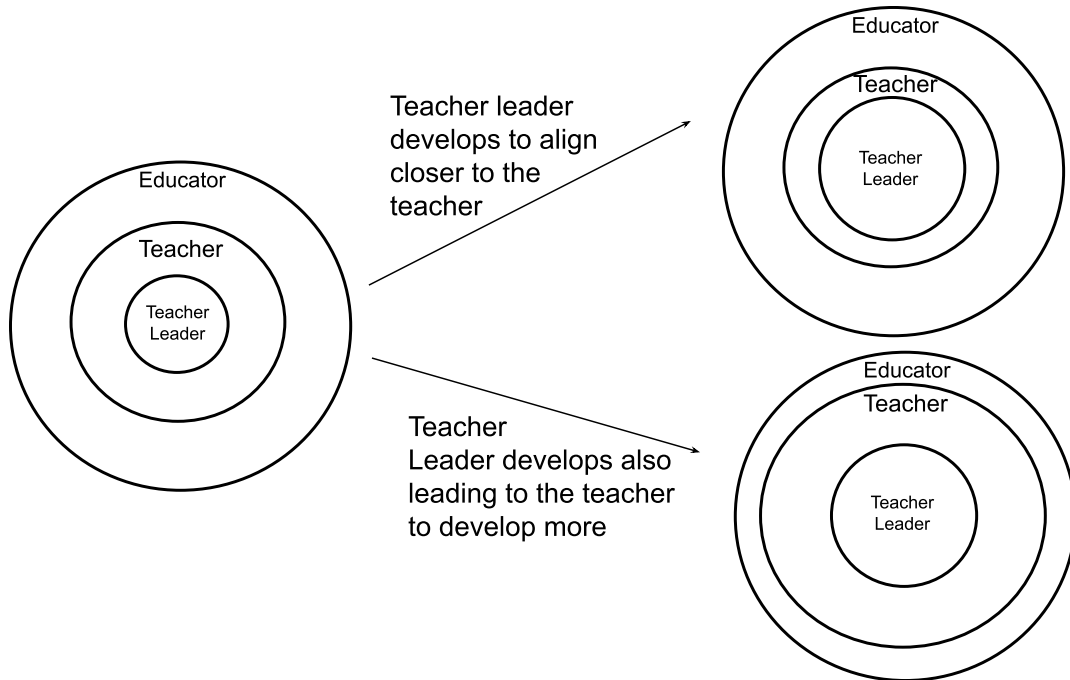
Figure 11: Identities as they change over time

The first is the teacher identity also grows as the teacher leader develops a new facet that also plays a role in the teacher identity (as seen in the bottom branch). The second is that when the teacher leader identity grows, it does so as it aligns more and more with the teacher themself, making the two identities closer in size and being (as seen in the top branch).

Benefits of Teacher Leader as a Sub-Identity of the Teacher

In their 2022 work, Wenner and Campbell found that teacher leadership had the following benefits on all teachers: "feelings of empowerment for all teachers in a school, colleagues receiving support that is relevant and encourages professional growth , and teacher leadership contributing significantly to school change" (p. 162). As it has been

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positioned, teacher leadership is a sub-identity of the teacher identity. This structure is what leads to such profound results with teacher leadership.

In his work, Taylor (2008) points out that for school leaders to lead teachers to initiate change, they must follow three cognitive schemata: first to devine, explain, interpret and develop the objectives and requirements of the action, second to motivate the teachers to show them they can make the change and that the outcomes will produce student learning outcomes, and third ensuring a fundamental knowledge of the instructional content and pedagogical skills. Yet, even the best school leaders struggle to move teachers through these schemata. As Bandura (1986) points out, having the knowledge and skills does not necessarily guarantee effective performance of the action.

However, Taylor (2008) goes on to illustrate that teacher leaders, or coaches, are positioned to lead teachers through these schemata. This is because not only are the teacher leaders situated in the teacher identity as well (unlike the administration who is advocating for change), but they also have access to teachers in a different way - to be able to "plan and implement specific lessons, give constructive technical feedback on practice, prompt self-reflection, and provide professional development sessions to individuals and groups (Taylor, 2008, p. 25).

All teachers become empowered when working with a teacher leader. This notion of empowerment is discussed by Hull et al (2009) in regards to a math class as follows:

> "Empowerment is a continuous loop. Teachers believe they can teach mathematics to students and are willing to expend the time and energy to do so. When student performance demonstrates success, teachers feel a strong sense of accomplishment. This sense of accomplishment rejuvenates teachers, leads to

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additional efforts, and raises even higher expectations for student learning." (p. 17-18)

A teacher leader encourages this as they not only encourage success, but provide the necessary tools for teachers to reach that success through planning, collaboration, observation, and conversations (Taylor, 2000, Gabriel, 2005).

Much has already been written about how the teacher identity plays a role in the teacher leader providing professional development to the teachers they are working with. As illustrated in the previous section, being attentive to the needs of the teacher as a teacher and a teacher leader, when working with teachers, this teacher leader has ensured that professional development is built upon the ideals that the foster deep collaboration, form partnerships (both in and out of schools), generate teacher and pupil leadership, provide opportunities for teacher enquiry and action research, give teachers time to talk about teaching and learning, grounded in the work of the teacher and the school, are sustained and supportive, and generate collective capability (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2005, Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Dispositions

Much has been said in this paper already about the dispositions of this dual role teacher leader, mainly how they exist in all identities of the dual role educator as they exist outside of the identities (Kaplan and Garner, 2017) as well as how these dispositions situate the teacher leader to be equipped to handle the role of the teacher leader.

In regards to dispositions, one note worth highlighting is in Chapter Four, I discuss an instance where two dispositions were put in contention. Ultimately, this is the only type of case in the journal where two dispositions were opposed. From that, all I can

draw is that (1) a deep sense of regret emerged from it, and (2) one disposition triumphed in the decision that was made. That said, there is room for more research into this notion of competing dispositions, beyond the scope of this paper.

However, what remains to be illustrated in conjunction with the dispositions of this teacher and teacher leader are the connections between the beliefs and efficacies in the identities of the teacher and teacher leader and these dispositions.

Beliefs

As defined, dispositions are beliefs that we see placed into action, or as Hunziker (2017) defines them, dispositions "comprise a teacher's stance, or way of thinking and being". Thus, to illustrate this point, the beliefs espoused throughout the journal are mapped out below in figure 12. and the overlap of the two sets of beliefs points to the eight dispositions that were claimed by the researcher.
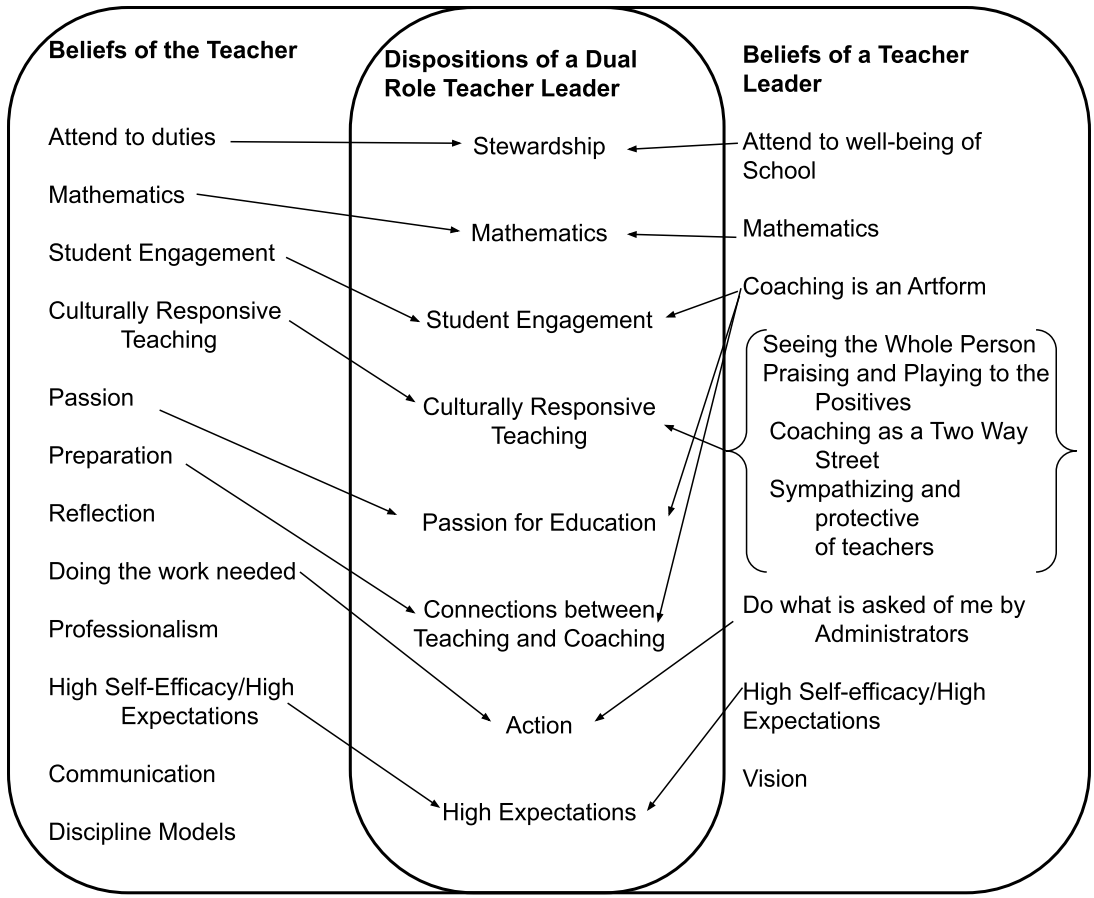
Figure 12: The Overlap of Beliefs and Dispositions

Thus, it is clear that the beliefs that are claimed to rise to the level of disposition at least exist in these two identities. While some don't appear with the same wording, for example, attending to duties and attending to the well-being of the school, both point to the same disposition, in this case stewardship.

Efficacies

While efficacies do not play a major role in dispositions, they provide us with two insights. First, they further the notion of the disposition of high expectations and second,

the emotions felt and expressed in the journal, as mentioned in Chapter 2, are evidence of my efficacy, or rather, my ability to achieve my aims and beliefs.

As evidenced in the journal, oftentimes I as a teacher and teacher leader have high self-efficacy. According to Hull et al (2009), a high level of self-efficacy points to success and this success, in turn, allows a teacher and teacher leader to raise the expectations for themselves and others. Having high expectations for oneself leads to reaching these new expectation levels which once again raises the level of self-efficacy. And thus the cycle repeats, feeding the disposition of high expectations.

For example, on February 19th, 2020, I wrote:

"So why the frustration? To begin with, Gary. I don't know what to do with him anymore. It's one excuse after the next. And I just talked to him about how he has to always be ready to be watched by any administrator or even the superintendent. Always. No excuses…I wasn't expecting to walk in on the students just sitting around doing "work" while he sat at his desk with a student who was working on stuff that wasn't even for that class. I wasn't expecting the lack of effort. And the excuses."

The level of frustration exemplified here is because the work with Gary was testing my abilities as a teacher leader. I knew what he needed to do to get better, but felt he wasn't listening to the advice being given. This, in turn, was contrary to my high self-efficacy and high expectations for myself and others. Hence the emotion felt and the feeling that I was not showcasing a disposition that I hold.

A different example, also on February 20th, 2020, occurred in our department meeting when I wrote:

"The rest of our meeting, accordingly, went well. We talked about Pi Day. We laughed about the plural of compass (which I enjoy saying as compii but I know that is not right). We talked about how we are getting our kids to graduate via Accuplacer. And we celebrated some victories in finding courses that will best suit the needs of our students next year and in the future."

Here, emotions indicated a positive experience, a high self-efficacy. This is because I was living out several dispositions including the disposition towards mathematics, high expectations, and action.

Thus, it can be discerned that moments of extreme emotional levels, be them anger, frustration, joy, or whatever, can be traced back to a disposition and if that disposition was being enacted or if it was being deterred.

Lessons Learned from Gary and Roger

As I neared the conclusion of examining the data in the journal, I couldn't help but notice a disconnect. This disconnect was mentioned earlier, that of two dispositions coming in conflict (as the case of teaching the lesson and having students want me to go back over material covered earlier that week forcing the dispositions of Culturally Responsive teaching and high expectations to come in conflict). This tension is one that is merited as Neil Bohr (1997) points out "There are trivial truths and there are great

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truths. The opposite of a trivial truth is plainly false. The opposite of a great truth is also true". If dispositions are great truths, then they can come in conflict with one another as two great truths.

This was also made clear in my work with Gary and Roger. Much was written about these two, Gary about how he struggled to perform as a teacher so much so he was in danger of losing his job and Roger about how he caused me and my department to struggle under his leadership. The work with these two caused, once again, the two dispositions of Culturally Responsive Teaching (specifically that of caring) and High Expectations for myself and my learners to come in conflict.

What this says about identities

In both cases, that of Roger and that of Gary, I wanted to get to the heart of what was truly going on. With Gary, I eventually had a conversation with him to begin to bridge this gap, wherein we talked about how he needed to show he cared and he informed me he did want to stay in teaching, this took a while to come to. Journal entries before this show me feeling less of Gary and seemingly illustrate a lack of care. After this conversation, my tone changed. I still had doubts in what Gary could do, but the tone changed. As for Roger, I never had the conversation with him around my concerns. I had planned to, yet with the pandemic hitting, the conversation never came to be.

As a teacher however, if I were working with a student that exhibited the issue Gary had in my eyes (a lack of care towards his work, a lack of preparation for class), I would quickly have that conversation with the student. Likewise, if I had similar concerns about a student that I did of Roger (that they were negatively effective those

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around them), I would also quickly respond to that student. I would not let it build up or fester over time, tarnishing my perceptions of those students.

This tension though can be reconciled with the notion that the identity of the teacher leader is a sub-identity of the teacher. My teacher role identity is much more developed than my teacher leader role. However, the fact that I eventually had these conversations (or planned on it) shows that this teacher leader identity is striving to be more like the teacher identity. The fact that I can not fully live up to the teacher I am as a teacher leader is, in and of itself, a tension that I face too. Yet these models give me hope that I can grow in my teacher leader identity to become more like the teacher identity, thus providing a way to more quickly and effectively resolve tensions such as this should they arrive in the future.

A battle of dispositions

Again, it is important to note how these two great truths, these two dispositions, rose to conflict with each other. It seems in every case where these two dispositions, that of High Expectations and that of Culturally Responsive Teaching came in conflict, the disposition of High Expectations won out, meaning the decisions I made mostly sided with high expectations. I do believe that both could have been served in each of these cases mentioned. However, in the moment, I sided with high expectations.

This goes back to the power of efficacy in this role. If a teacher and teacher leader has high self-efficacy, it can push them to try more creative and powerful ways of reaching their learners (Hul et al, 2009). Thus, to keep myself going, as a measure to

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preserve this role, I sided with high expectations, expectations that fueled my efficacy and allowed me to keep performing these tasks.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

The aim of this dissertation was to bring to light the realities of a secondary mathematics educator with experience working in a dual role of teacher and teacher leader in diverse urban settings in order to understand the current realities of urban education and the efforts being made to right the wrongs that the research so glaringly points to.

Through an examination of the current literature, the researcher discussed the world of urban education, particularly as it related to learning mathematics, the professional development of teachers, the role of the teacher leader in the schools, and the shaping of a teacher and teacher leader's identity and dispositions.

By imploring the methodology of auto-educational criticism, as well as extensive journal and coding, the researcher was able to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?

2. What are the beliefs and efficacies of an individual in a dual role of high school mathematics education in an urban setting - working as a teacher and as a teacher leader, coaching and evaluating his/her peers?

3. How do these experiences influence the identity and dispositions of an individual such as this in a dual role of teacher and teacher leader?

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4. How does such an individual develop his/her aims for himself and his peers?

5. What challenges and opportunities present themselves to enhance or take away from such aims?

Findings indicated the intricacies of the lived experience of the dual role teacher and teacher leader, outlining a myriad of experiences in each role.

As to the beliefs and efficacies portrayed, when examined thoroughly, many beliefs overlapped in the two areas, giving way to the answer (or partly thereof), the third question, the dispositions of this teacher leader. The identities of this teacher leader were laid out as the "teacher leader", a sub-identity of the "teacher" which was a sub-identity of "the educator". The aims discussed in questions four and five were delineated one at a time as each teacher the teacher leader worked with was examined.

Finally, through analysis, several conclusions were ascertained. What supported this teacher leader was a system of dispositions that served in all roles and aligned with the qualities needed, from research, to be successful as a teacher leader. Not only that, the disposition of action led this teacher leader to developing tools to aid him in the work, as well as the duality of the role and a high self-efficacy supported the work of the teacher leader.

What hindered this teacher leader was the loneliness of the role, which included lack of a mentor or administrative support, and ultimately took an emotional toll on the teacher leader, as well as a lack of professional development for the teacher leader.

The impact of the dual role teacher was then examined. Without quantifying the ultimate results of this work, the researcher was able to make claims about the time and

types of support given to provide professional development to teachers and the school. This was supplemented by existing research around professional development and how this work aligned well to the teacher leader (as opposed to any school leader).

Finally a deeper analysis of the identities and the dispositions were discussed. As the identities were discussed, known models were refuted or challenged in light of the experiences of this researcher. The notion of the teacher leader being a sub-identity was also clarified and the benefits thereof were ascertained. The dispositions were also re-examined to see how they mirrored the beliefs of myself as a teacher and a teacher leader. The role the efficacies played in the dispositions were examined as well. Finally the tensions that were faced as a teacher leader speak to the intricate inner workings of the role identities and dispositions.

Further research is still warranted and needed based on the findings and analysis here. First of which would be the model of identity that was found to exist here as shown in figure 10 below. It is worth researching more to see if this model holds (with the exception that the dispositions may be different) or do other models rise to be more effective in capitulating the identities of the teacher and the teacher leader.
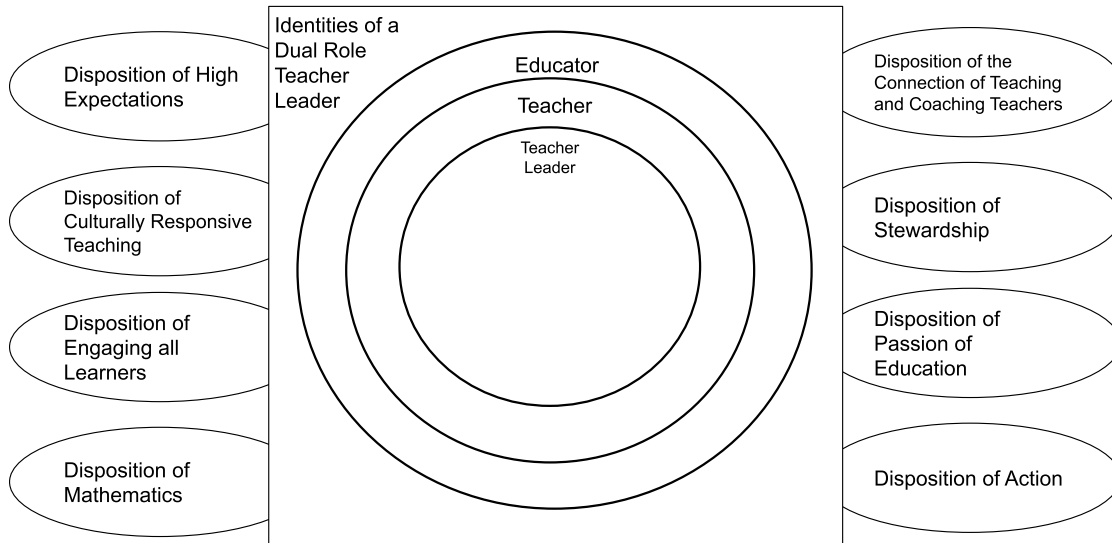
Figure 10: Identities and Dispositions of Dual Role Teacher Leader

Another area as mentioned before is around dispositions. In the world of teaching, what occurs when two or more dispositions come in opposition of each other as pointed out occured to me in the March 10th, 2020 journal entry.

Finally, as mentioned prior, because this journal only exists from the perspective of the teacher leader, further research from the perspective of the teachers being led may bring to light the ramifications of a teacher leader on classroom practices and the school as a whole.

A few last notes as I conclude this research. First, the timeframe that the journal exists in (between February and May of 2020) were, and still remain to be, the hardest three months in public education. Having to constantly reflect back on that time during this process has been emotionally painful - reliving the fear, the hardships, the tears, the losses. Teaching still has not recovered and the last two years of public education have

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been nothing short of traumatic for teachers. I bring this up to make the point of how emotionally trying this whole experience has been, unintentionally of course.

On another note, writing this has allowed me to learn so much about myself, in ways I didn't even understand until I started making the connections. For example, seeing something like dispositions, a notion often thought of as almost esoteric, and then being able to reflect on my writing to see this notion come to life, this process was amazing. I would smile to myself as I noticed the overlap of beliefs and how those beliefs were constantly enacted, because I knew what that meant: there was a deeper part of me at play, these dispositions that I've come to know and cherish as they embody who I am. People often don't get the opportunity to hold such a fine microscope up to the events of their lives and see what there is at a minute level. I am honored to have done such a feat and will cherish this experience.

Finally, the road to finish this paper has not been an easy one. So I would like to thank those that did not give up on me and supported me throughout this whole process, including this dissertation committee, and especially Dr. Banerjee, Dr. Cutforth, Dr. Michalec, and most importantly, my advisor for this long and tiresome road who continually gave me motivation to finish - Dr. Uhrmacher. Thank you.

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Appendix A: Journal Entries (prior to February 18th, 2020)

The Pre-Work, the Me-Work (July 25, 2016)

We all want to be that teacher. The fact that you're spending time right now reading about what it means to incorporate social justice in your classroom means you want to be better. Not that you're not good right now – you're actually great – you just know that there's always room for improvement. So you're here and you're ready to dive in to this teaching for social justice thing. You want your students to change the world (and don't we all!) and you're ready to put in the work to teach them how to change the world. And I applaud you for that… But… And there's always a but…

Before we can teach for social justice, teach our students to, as Paolo Friere calls it, "write the world", we need to teach our students to "read" the world, they need to learn about social justice. This means our students need to be able to recognize the realities of the world; the injustices, the inequities, the –isms. And they have to be able to lay claim to those injustices, inequities, and –isms. But…

Before we can teach about social justice, we need to teach with social justice. We need to recognize our students for who and what they are. If we are to get students to act on issues they see as important, we the teachers need to know that the students deem to be meaningful and important. We need to walk the walk and show students what they world

can be like through the lens of our classroom, a place without injustices, inequities, and –isms. But…Before we can teach with social justice, we need to establish meaningful relationships with our students. We cannot build a culture in our classroom conducive to making change if we don't get to know our students. We cannot value the immense experiences and wealth of knowledge our students bring if we don't ask them. We cannot simply make students respect each other, especially if we do not respect the students. Meaningful relationships are paramount to dynamic teaching. But …

Before we can make meaningful relationships with our students, we as teachers have to understand our own dispositions and biases. No, we need to do more than just "understand" them, we need to lay claim to them. We need to own them. And I can't tell you what your dispositions are. But (ok – this is another but, but it's for a different reason), I can tell you what dispositions are, what my dispositions are and how I have laid claim to them especially as they relate to teaching for social justice, and I can challenge you to examine your own practice to find out what your dispositions are.

So what are dispositions? They are the core values, ideas, and notions - the underpinnings of your being as a teacher - that shape your beliefs, intentions, and actions. And they are reflected in your beliefs, intentions, and actions. Understand? It may help if I give you a non-example.

Meet Joe. Ok. Not me. Some other Joe. Joe claims that he has a disposition that his physical health is of utmost importance. He believes this so deeply that he works out every day for two hours. He eats well. He takes all the protein shakes. He gets his 8-hours of sleep each night. Seems like he holds this disposition in high esteem. Yet, when he

goes to the gym, he only works out his arms. Sure he's got amazing arms that can do amazing things. The rest of him though, is left out, lacking. By examining his actions, we can see that Joe's disposition is that the strength and success of his arms are of utmost importance.

These dispositions can be tricky to navigate. It takes a lot for us to truly examine what we value and how those values hold water when examined in conjunction with our beliefs, intentions, and actions. But it is imperative for us to constantly reflect to see if these dispositions we want to claim really do hold water.

In my personal journey, I have found that the following six dispositions do hold for me. These dispositions also allow me to teach with, about, and for social justice. I am not telling you my dispositions to say you must hold the same, rather to understand what it means to look at and formulate your own dispositions. Then, you can see if the work of social justice aligns to the dispositions that you hold.

All students deserve my attention, love, respect, and care. More so, no student deserves to be treated less than the next – by myself or anyone else. Every student I teach is the best student I have ever had.

Many teachers would like to lay claim to this disposition. But I challenge you to test this. I have. And in challenging it, I had to face the fact that I hold biases. And to be brave, vulnerable, and demonstrate the power of this, I am going to show you an area that I have to be very mindful of when it comes to this.

I have a bias. And I know I have a bias because I've allowed myself to reflect. First, a little background. I grew up poor. That's enough background. I could go on, but know that I grew up poor and had to struggle to get where I am at and could not afford to take any of my education for granted. That said, when confronted with students who come from wealthy backgrounds and flaunt it in a manner that becomes flippant towards the teacher or the education (whether it is in my class or other classes), I can become a lot more irritable in my interactions with said students. I know this. I am cognizant of it. So, I have to put myself in check. Don't worry, I'll teach you a way to put yourself in check – not only with this, but with all dispositions. But that's coming.

It is not a sign of weakness to care. It is a sign of strength. In fact, only the truly strong can care for students because it takes tremendous strength to do so.

I'm a guy. And guys don't care. They don't eat quiche. They don't cry. Because it's not macho. But I challenge that notion. Gender aside, I say it's easy and weak not to care. If you don't care, then you can't be hurt. Then you don't have to do the work. Anything worth fighting for must be cared about. As a PhD student, I have written about this. What follows is an excerpt about caring that I value:

"Most urban mathematics educators have not yet adopted the following philosophical motivation, as laid forth by Gutierrez (2013) when she states, 'If you're really serious about teaching, you have to tie your fate to the fate of your students' (p. 31). It is often equated that this notion, a notion of caring, particularly for the students, is a weak

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character trait. Yet in urban education, it takes the strong to care, the strong to truly tie their fate to their students in such a sympathetic way (Noddings, 2005)."

I can make a difference. I can be a positive influence. I can help students succeed no matter what society has dictated for them.

As they say, the proof is in the pudding. And thanks to social media, I have the pudding. Below is just a small sample of students and their interactions with me after they have left school. Interactions that remind me how much I can make a difference, big or small.

"I wanna give you (a present)… you were my favorite teacher back in high school I wanted to get you something as a thank you…" This student gave me a sword. I know, a sword, right? But it went with my tattoo and this student knew enough about me to know I would appreciate it, sought me out to say thank you and give me this gift.

"I thought you might want to know I got a 100% on my first Calculus test". A former student of mine, a Latino male, first year in college, wanted me to know as soon as he took his first math test how well he did

"Hey, its _____. I have always felt bad about the way I said (or didn't say) goodbye to you. I just wanted to let you know I appreciate everything you did for me. After spiraling downwards for awhile, I now finally seem to have everything on track… I wouldn't be the person I am today if it hadn't been for you" What the student is referring to is that I

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reported her when I found out she was suicidal. Going back to number 2, this was difficult, because I cared. And because I cared, I knew I had to report her. And she hated me for doing so. Hated me for the next few years. And that's what I thought her opinion was of me, until I got this. And I knew, I know, I make a difference.

I cannot treat every student the same (which is not a contradiction to number 1 – in fact, when you consider number 1, it's a necessity).

Every student has a story. I seek to find out that story. Through interactions. Through writings (yes, I ask my kids to write). I seek to find out their history and their present. Their present through meaningful formative activities, activities that get the kids to tell me how they think and feel about what we are doing, how they feel about what we are doing, how I can reach them better. And they appreciate that. I know, because they often tell me how refreshing it is to have a teacher react to what the students tell that teacher about what works best. And I have to know what works best if I'm going to teach them. I have to know their story. Take for example the following story written for me by a student in their Math-ography (a mathematical autobiography):

"…Pre-calc was another story entirely. I think I spent the year confused mostly because the way he taught wasn't really helpful. Rather than teaching the class lessons most of the time he would give us an assignment on the board to do and would put up an example of how to do it and expect us to do the problems…Not that it mattered because sometimes on our unit tests he would give away answers and help us, basically defeating the purpose

of a test… In my new math class with Mr. ____ I was completely lost. At first I seemed ok but when we moved on to new units I wasn't so good at… I suffered through most of the class because I wasn't accustomed to the teaching style and because I never wanted to ask for help... Then during junior year I met you as my math studies teacher… I was learning really well when you were there but then got completely lost when we got a new teacher. Now you're my teacher again."

What did I learn here? Lots. I learned what this student valued in a teacher. I learned that she valued me as a teacher. That it was hard for her when she lost me as a teacher (an unfortunate outcome when the Pre-Calculus teacher she described was fired halfway through the year and I had to take some of his classes). That she needs someone to check in on her, not just talk at her. That it is important that she can talk to her teacher. And so much more. So, how can I treat this student the same as every other who may not have the same story, the same needs, and the same background?

It is my job to move every student as far as I can along their road through learning. I'm a beer drinker. You kinda have to be to do this job. But that's another story. And I live in a city with a lot of beer and a lot of breweries that I frequent and do a lot of tasting.I always see the same thing when I watch people taste. Here's what they do. They try the first one and they say how it's refreshing, lightly hopped, with citrus undertones. And then they try the second one and they say how much better or worse it is than the first one. No longer is the conversation about the elements of that beer, rather how it compares

to another beer. And we tend to do the same with our students. We look at where the students are in relation to the others. Or worse yet, we look at students in relation to their grades. "She's a C student", "She's at the top of the class".

I prefer to look at each student standing at the precipice of a road. The end of the road may be different from one student to another (and usually is). And in that road are blocks, potholes, detours, construction, etc. It's my job to help guide them down that road, fix some of the potholes along the way, and help them to arrive at their destination. Where they are on that road is a direct reflection of me as their teacher.

I am responsible for the academic and behavioral outcomes of all of my students. I think this says enough. So, in lieu of explaining this, I leave you with a small poem I wrote about my feelings here:

Math is out there

    We know that

    And we know that math

But our students don't

    Yet

And a majority of what they do know

    What they've been taught (what they've learned?),

Has been given to them,

Particularly by way of the white, European male.

So we, as teachers, have two choices –

Give them something that lacks relevance

Positions us as the Mathematically Empowered

And students as deficits

Or let them reinvent maths in a meaningful way.

There you have my dispositions. I know these are my dispositions because I constantly test them. What I use to test my dispositions I have dubbed, "The Pencil Test". Allow me to explain.

Think about your classroom. Think about two students. The first is that kid who always comes in to class late, bedraggled, never having homework done, and always needing something. That something is usually a pencil. And every day this students asks for a pencil. And you've given this student at least 50 pencils already this year so you pull out the two-inch golf pencil with no eraser and throw it to the student across a room. The second student is your best student, always on time, always does their work, always polite, and never needs a thing: until today. Today, this student asks for a pencil and you pull out your best pencil, the one you got for teaching 10 years, that gold-plated mechanical pencil that's engraved with your name. The pencil test says, if we are willing to give such a great pencil to the second student, why are we not willing to do so with our first?

When faced with interactions, it is our reactions that truly show our dispositions. It's important that we reflect upon these interactions. That we dissect them. That we not seek to place blame, but to understand why.

So, now it's your turn. I leave you with two challenges before you begin this long road towards teaching for social justice. The pre-work. The me-work.

Determine your dispositions. Write them down. Talk about them. Share them with others. Share them with students. And if you're serious about social justice, see that they align to the charge of teaching for, about, and with social justice. I feel my dispositions place me in a space where social justice is a natural consequence of what and how I teach. It may not be for you. Don't force something that you're not comfortable with or that you are unable to confront.

Reflect. Use that Pencil Test. Be sure that you are living these dispositions. And if you're not (and that's ok), challenge yourself to live them or re-evaluate your dispositions.

And once you are committed to understanding you, all those "but's" will go away. Once you understand your dispositions and biases, you will be ready to build relationships with students and then you will be able to teach with social justice and then you will be able to teach about social justice and then you will be able to teach for social justice. And then, you will be able to change the world.

The Mathematics Leader

As I sat with my colleagues, fellow teacher leaders in other departments as well as school administrators, I felt othered. And it's a feeling that happens quite a bit being a math teacher. I know that other departments have their reasons to feel different, to not be a part of the fold at times, it just seems that those times are many in the world of math. And this day was no different.

We were engaging in an exercise to improve our coaching of the teachers we work with, focused on giving action steps after observing a lesson, an exercise being facilitated by our school's Leadership Partner (an individual that works with leadership teams across the district). In order to do this, we engaged in watching videos of teachers and then worked individually, and as a group, to craft action steps that we would provide to the teachers in the video had we been the ones to actually coach them. The first video was of a Science teacher and her class – setting up stations and offering directions (that were incredibly confusing) for her students to follow. In debriefing our ideas for this video, I was one of the first to be called on by the facilitator. This had a lot to do with the fact that she, the facilitator, had looked over the action steps that teachers in our building had been given by their evaluators and had noticed that the ones I had written, for the most part, had met much of the criteria that was needed.

In turn, each group had a chance to share their action steps for the teacher in the video and we were able to offer feedback and grow from what we heard from others. The facilitator then offered a second video for us to repeat this process. As she cued up the video, the facilitator informed us that this time, it would be a Math teacher we would

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watch. And this made me happy, I could feel in my element (not that I don't feel comfortable coaching teachers in other departments, but Math is my forte). As the video started, the camera zoomed in on the teacher and we heard her say, "Now I know you don't like fractions, so today…". From that first sentence, I knew, outside of structures and directions, teacher voice and student voice, engagement and lecture, what I would suggest this teacher focus on to improve her instruction. Society has othered math so much in portrayal of and discussion around mathematics that the last place that should happen is in the Math Classroom. As if this sentence was not evident enough of the teacher's feelings about Mathematics, the remainder of the lesson was presented in a dull and lackluster tone, one that dredged up memories of a typical image of a math class that society loves to portray; passionless.

Again, after the video, we repeated the process of sharing out, one group after the other, and while I was sure I had the biggest leverage point in my grasp, the idea that coaching needed to occur around how the teacher presents Mathematics itself to the students, not a single group noted this lack of passion, this unenthusiastic representation of my content, this negative talk of what Math students can and can not do, not a single group echoed these sentiments. They were focused on a lack of student engagement, student's use of academic vocabulary, and the teacher's delivery of the content. While I didn't disagree with what they had to say, those issues were not the heart of the struggles in the classroom. When it was my turn to voice my action step, I climbed on my proverbial soapbox. I believe in the words of the late Elie Wiesl:

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"Always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence

encourages the tormentor never the tormented."

Doing so others me though. It drains me. It makes me feel that I continually have to

prove my worth to a society that has determined my work is worthless. And I wish I

could say that this is an isolated incident – where I had to use my position as a leader of

Mathematics to stand up for Mathematics and the way we as a society talk about,

represent, archetype, and in some cases even resent, Mathematics.

But this is the heart of a Math Teacher – a Math Leader. This is my heart. And this

is what I can and will fight for – an opportunity for all students to learn about the beauty,

the wonder, the magic, the elegance, the power, the dynamics, and the wonder of

mathematics.

Rationalizing our Biases - July 29th, 2018

We all have those people we meet that we are instantly drawn to…

Those people, for whatever reason, who…

Make us smile

    Put us at ease

    We want to treat a little better

It could be because they remind us of someone we know

    Because they greet us with a smile

    Because they are also crazy enough to be a math teacher

    Because of their voice

    Their hair

    Their clothes

    Or because they eat string cheese by taking big bites and not stringing the cheese

But as we all are masters of

Looking for and making use of structure

    We see patterns emerge

These patterns of positivity

    Are actually biases

So, what's the problem with biases?

    The solution –

        If they can cause us to treat some better

They can cause us to treat others worse

As a teacher, you are what you reveal

      And what you conceal

      Well, conceal from yourself

And you can hide from yourself

But your beliefs

      Your Language

      Your Action,

Experiences,

and Feedback

Reveal more that you may intend

And these biases can shape our students

Our students' outcomes are a function of our beliefs

      Our biases

What we reveal on the top

And what we conceal underneath

It's quite rational really

When the biases we reveal zero in on a group of students,

      Their outcomes are zero

When the biases we reveal

      And the biases we conceal

Zero in on a group of students

Because you know you have the bias

But chose to ignore it,

      You create a hole in your students

And if you don't recognize your biases

But those concealed biases reveal themselves

      And those biases zero in on a group of students,

          You infinitely break those students and their potential outcomes

Just as all functions have a vertex, an origination,

      So do our biases

I know –

      Your mind is blown right now

      (And if not, talk to a high school teacher to see what I mean)

But to really understand

      I am going to take that proverbial step out onto the ledge

      I am going to reveal

        Strip down to my biases

      And show you how I confronted them

Biases that are revealed

Step back to the mid-90s with me,

      When the Macarena made its debut

And Jerry Garcia left us,

Where we were riveted by Mel Gibson in a kilt

And OJ Simpson putting on a glove

When I was in High School.

Our school was rather homogeneous,

White,

Lower-Middle Class,

Christian

With our biggest subgroup being Muslim students from the Middle East

And even though we were years from 9/11,

The white students (me being a part of that group)

Took issue with the Muslim students

There were some Muslim students who crossed the color line and befriended me and my

White peers

But for the most part, there was resentment,

Palpable

The concern that every time "those kids" spoke in a language we didn't understand,

They were talking about us.

So the White students flaunted our bias of Muslim students

Our revealed biases relegated our peers

To nothing

My revealed biases

Originated in the society that I ws

And then, one weekend, a group of us went to a lake in a small (all White) town in

Michigan

One of the group members happened to be Muslim

Yet everywhere we went, I repeatedly heard whispers of "N******"

And I knew they were talking about our friend.

I couldn't help but thinking how ridiculous this was

Until I couldn't help but think how ridiculous I had been,

Revealing a bias that I didn't even understand

Making people who didn't deserve it feel like nothing

Because even though I wasn't in a position of power,

As we teachers are,

As a white male, I was in a position of power

So I abandoned this bias

Biases that are Revealed and Concealed

I grew up pretty far from a life of luxury

Five kids in a three bedroom house,

And my bedroom,

That I shared with my brother

Was so small it fit a set of bunk beds and one dresser

(Mine was out in the hall)

Yet it wasn't till I knew we could receive Free Lunches,

    Which we adamantly denied

    That I knew we were poor.

So to get where I am took lots of work,

    You know, in a profession notorious for how well it pays

    But I made it,

    I made me

And in making me, I inadvertently made a bias

    One that I could verbalize,

    But ignored its consequence

        I was bias against those that were from the other side of luxury

I would be an angry teacher

    Angry with those that took a laisez-faire attitude

    And yet showed signs of wealth

Sometimes that anger would show itself in the way I treated these students

Sometimes in the way that I ignored them

Sometimes in the way that I assessed them

    To me they became a hole

    A blank that I made into what I wanted to see

And it wasn't until I was asked to begin thinking about my biases,

    That I revealed to myself the harm I was doing.

I can't change this bias

I can't undo the world of want I was born into

That creates resentment in those that have never wanted

But I can recognize it,

I can rationalize it,

I can see that it is a factor in how I treat the students

And I can consciously and cognitively factor out that bias

I can make the effort

And I do

Biases that are Concealed

Growing up poor,

In a homogenous community,

I didn't have to go far to hear an… off-color joke

Family, friends, strangers… I heard a lot

And it angered me

But I didn't show it

I just tried to act like I was mildly amused and then walk away

As I got older and bolder, I confronted these sorry attempts for humor

Because I was not a racist

I had Black friends at college,

I spent three summers working at a camp for youth in an all-Black community,

I was encultured and could talk about cultures other than mine

I was an ally

Or so I thought

And it wasn't until I had two students come in late to class,

The first a white female who I let into the class with a disappointed glare

The second a black male who I demanded go get a pass to prove he wasn't ditching

And the rest of the students with whom I had a good relationship with

      Pointing out my blatant hypocrisy

      That I realized I hadn't escaped the bias of the Black community that were thrust

upon me

         I had just chosen to ignore them

      And my biases,

         Those concealed that I didn't reveal

      Were breaking my students

It was at this moment that I decided to really examine how I was responding

      Why I was responding

      And to whom I was responding

To ensure I was treating the individual as an individual

      And not as a label

And we all do it – we use labels to inform our interactions

Male and female

      Having a son and two daughters, I see this one all the time

Black and White

Straight and Gay

Student and Teacher

And the list goes on

      And on

But the time has come for us to move beyond the label

      And look at the person

Your students are what you say they are

      They are smart

      They are beautiful

      They are amazing

      They are gifted

      They are a gift

And they will become what you believe

So you have a choice

You can let your biases shape your students into

      Nothing

      A hole

      Broken

Or you can work to rationalize your biases

      And seek to create the smart, beautiful, amazing, gifted individuals that they were

meant to be.

Another Parent

I am not one to judge another person's parenting ability. I have three kids. I know how hard it can be bringing your kids out in public. I know that kids can try their parent's patience. And when it comes to schoolwork, particularly math homework, that patience can be tried even more. However, as I am sitting here typing, I am also listening to a mother help her son with his math homework – his first grade math homework. Maybe I should have offered my help. But I didn't. As they struggled over understanding concepts like compensation and adding on, concepts that are not foreign to me as I have learned about them in my education courses and also have a first grader at home, it was clear that all parties involved were losing their patience. And then it came to a head. The mother finally snapped. To paraphrase, her diatribe went something like this:

> " Do you know why I am a musician? Because I can't do math like this. I hate
> math. I always have. I don't understand why they are having a 7 year old argue
> their point. Arguments should be saved for when kids know how to argue, like
> when they are 14. But we have to do it. So please, bear with me and let's finish
> this problem. So, now, what is…". (Observation, 2018)

I felt like interjecting. I felt like saying something. The reason that we have these feelings about mathematics is that society allows such feelings to be perpetuated. That, as a math teacher, it is really hard to hear others dig into my profession like that. That there are so

many more ways to go about these additional problems and that is what makes them so great. But I sat in silence. Well, sat and typed.

And then, as we both got up to get our children, I could see how visibly upset she was. She felt like she was failing her child. Because of math. And again, I wanted to say something, as a parent – not just as a math teacher – to help comfort her. But again, I didn't. Parenting can be hard, and in a lot of ways it's harder than teaching. As a teacher, a leader in math education, and as a parent, navigating this in-between world will always be a mystery. Emotionally, this interaction between mother and child was difficult for me. But I know it was difficult for them. I hope that in my role, I can find ways to ease that burden, at least with the families I work with directly.

We Can Be Legend - April 9, 2019

Many of you are sitting here today,

Listening,

Relaxing,

Enjoying

Residing in that margin of perception,

The one that comes from being,

Or assumedly being,

At one spot on the globe of sexuality.

A spot where over 95% of the population claims to reside

And I know,

I've relished in the comfort of being in that one spot.

And because you've always belonged,

You haven't longed

To know where you belong.

But that needs to change,

And we,

And I mean all of us,

Particularly those that don't want to disrupt their comfort

Need to start getting uncomfortable.

We need to throw down our pillows of privilege

We need to stop hiding under a blanket of an idealized straight world

We need to walk a mile in pair of high heels,

And then back again

And we

Yes you, and you, and you, and even you,

Need to ask ourselves

Where do I belong?

There is a battle going on

      Yes we are worlds at war

And whether or not you know it,

      You are a part of this war

Choose a side -

So suit up,

Because we are about to embark upon a great journey

And we

We can be a legend

We can be epic

Because

Every day we have a choice

And don't let anyone tell you differently

      We do

      You do

You have a choice

You can choose who you love

Let me say that again

You can choose who you love

Which isn't the same as choosing who you looo-oooove

I know what some of you are thinking right now,

"Here comes another white hetero cis gender male Christian telling me who I should

love"

No,

This isn't another white hetero cis gender male Christian telling you who you should love

Not in that way,

This is a white hetero cis gender male Christian telling you who you can love

And how you can love

And why you should love

And that when we love,

We can conquer this darkness with our light

Because these are dark times my friends,

Times where hate crimes against our LGBTQ family members is continuously on the

rise,

Doubling in some cities in the last 2 years alone

Times where a gay couple are beaten within inches of their life

Merely for walking hand in hand from a gay club

Times where a woman can be killed in her own apartment,

Because she identified as a she,

Where other thought she should be a he,

And times where a gay couple can be attacked,

First with words,

Then with a knife,

Right here in our own city.

But before you give up hope too soon

Know there is so much light in this world

So much kindness

So much love

Just stop

And look

Simple acts of kindness,

Acts of love,

Every day

Someone holding the door for you,

Someone picking up a pencil you dropped

Someone offering up their seat so you can see the board

Someone welcoming you

Someone acknowledging you

Someone accepting you

And this doesn't happen by accident

This happens out of love,

We make can conquer with love,

Warriors of love,

Of light,

So much light

We can crusade to conquer the dark

But we need to do this together

Let the beauty of our love be what we do

So, how do we fight the darkness?

How do we win?

How do we Ally ourselves?

As someone who is on this journey,

Let me guide you towards victory,

By sharing with you how I have taken up my sword

So lift your sword

And look

Into the sword

And into your own eyes

Because we cannot fight when we don't know what we are fighting

Here's your challenge,

A challenge for all of us,

And my gay friends, I do mean ALL of us –

      Examine your biases

Done?

Good…

Well, probably not.

If it was that easy, everyone would do it!

So how do we… do it?

The next time you interact with someone

And the human being you interact

      Well, you don't treat like a human being

Stop

And think back,

And ask yourself the hard question

"Why?"

And the answer better start with "I" and not He, She, They

And then dig deeper – empathize, compartmentalize, internalize

Instead of "He kissed his boyfriend in front of me"

Think "I have not been exposed to many gays and don't know how to react"

Think "And yet, I expect him to be ok with straight PDA"

Instead of "She's dressed like a boy"

Think "I am uncomfortable with his gender being ambiguous"

Think "His gender doesn't affect my life, nor should it affect the way we get along"

Instead of "No cisgender, straight person can understand what I'm going through"

Think "I have been hurt by straight people, but that does not mean all straight people will

hurt me"

Think "I can't expect the straight community to accept me if I don't let them"

It is not enough to raise your sword

It is not enough to look at yourself in the sword

You have to choose the right sword,

Master it,

Choose the light sword

And know that my light can make a difference

To quote Hamilton – no not the man

When you interact with your fellow human beings, think –

"I have the honor to be your obedient servant…"

That honor, that light, will shine

As you act with light

With love

With kindness

And you live to serve your fellow man… or woman… or…

The hell with gender…

Fellow human

And finally – fight

Face down the darkness,

The Gandalfs

The hate

It is not enough to love and support,

But you,

We

Must educate the world around us

Must stand up to those who spread the dark

Must join the cause for justice

And yes – we must

Because, we, GW, have the potential for greatness

We can be a place where all feel home

We can banish the darkness from our halls

And let light always shine

Where love wins

We can

We must

Because we can be a legend

Now raise your swords my fellow warriors

Be ready to put yourself out there

To get uncomfortable

And to find where you truly belong,

All the while making all others feel they belong

Raise your sword

And lets change the world.

November 19th, 2019

Today I have failed

I have failed and this failure resonates so deep.

Because of its truth.

Because of its origin.

Because of what it hides.

Because of its ability to cloud the rest of the day.

I have struggled to reconcile a policy that I don't agree with. That every assignment we give our students should be marked, pen to paper so that students are assessed and students are learning from their mistakes.

This all sounds good and right and feasible – until you start to think about it…

… if I am grading students on what they do outside of class and not what they do in the class, am I assessing their knowledge or their ability to access the right means to be successful?

Because I have fought against that – the notion that a grade can be bought. And it is bought – everyday.

A parent buys their child a computer, a cell phone, a calculator – and another cannot.

A parent pays for a tutor for their child – and another cannot.

A parent can afford to not make their child work, or do extensive chores, or watch their siblings – and another cannot.

A parent can afford the social capital of their circles to their child – and another cannot.

And who meets our measures of success when we say to a child "your grade is determined by what you do outside of class" is those that can afford it.

And as someone who always wanted – I never wanted to be that teacher.

And this has been a challenge from me – how do I reconcile my beliefs and my job?

In its wake is a pile of papers I have collected and should "grade" but cannot in good conscience.

So when a teacher pointed this out to me –

Telling me that my students were ALL complaining to her,

I had to face the reality that my inaction has been a failure.

And facing that failure -

My day instantly darkened.

It didn't matter that the day was full of many greats –

My department being forced into a focus group led by an outside organization and – when asked what they think is working well at our school, the first answer they gave was "Joe".

My observation of one of my teachers who came from a school that said he was underperforming, yet in so many ways, was doing a phenomenal job.

My lessons that I shared with my students were really good – getting students to see their world through the eyes of rotation and calculus… getting students to understand, hands-on, how to determine when success will first occur statistically.

All of this was cast in a shadow.

My perception of the relationship I have with my students instantly darkened.

They know I would do most anything for them – and have in some cases.

They know they can talk to me.

And if they can't talk to me, I have plenty of instances where they can write to me about what they are experiencing in and out of class – how can I improve.

While they have mentioned this as a small comment here or there, it's not been ALL my students and it has not carried the ill will that I heard in her voice.

And now I don't know…

My understanding of the relationship I have with my teacher was darkened…

She had just had her first full observation of the year.

And while there were good things, there were definitely things that needed improvement.

And they aren't new to her. But when a score – a number was attached – they became real.

And she really thought about these things – emailed me ideas that night as to what she could do to improve.

But was this her way of saying – "I know you're not perfect so don't pretend you are when you observe me"? Cause I never do – I always admit where I struggle, and am happy to proclaim when someone I coach does better than me.

But if this was a comment of spite – what does that mean?

The shadow stayed

And when I stepped into my role as a father

I was forced to shine some light here

When I got my children from school, Elsa was visibly upset

Something had bothered her

She finally admitted that she had to play by herself at recess – something that is hard for a

first grader to understand.

And I asked if anything else happened – and she said no.

So I asked her – what if I gave you 100 dollar bills and you accidentally lost one – would

you be so upset that you lost one or would you be excited that you still have 99 dollars

remaining?

And then I thought about my lost dollar –

My lost moment –

And while the day is still cast in a shadow, it's a little brighter –

And I am resolved to fix it.

Starting with what I can fix. Myself.

And then, I can look to the others – the students, the teachers, the stack of papers that I

need to decide how I can right the wrongs and not just right their wrongs…

And I leave the day more determined – to be better and to stay out of that darkness.

Not that it was a bad darkness. Because it was in that darkness that I found some light –

and the light that shines in darkness IS always the brightest.

Appendix B: Journal

February 18, 2020

(From recording)

So, I think I'm getting sick, and right there, that's putting me in this big haze, this big cloud, that surrounds me. I know I taught today, and I know I coached today, but thinking back, I can't remember much. It was a good day. That I know. But I couldn't focus for long on a single task. And I think that's often neglected. The idea that teachers are human and that sometimes body and mind aren't fully cooperating with the purpose of the day. And do I understand that when I watch the teachers I coach that they may not be having a stellar day either? I've had a headache that won't stop and the rest of my body just seems to follow that. But what I do know…

I started today working with a new cycle, a new six weeks, and I wanted a new goal for each of my teachers. And so, starting with the first teacher I observed today, we created a goal based on what we saw. Today I watched Mark, and while watching his class, I just noticed what I always notice while working with him, which is why it's a little frustrating. In that, he understands the material, and he understands some of the components of good teaching, and he won't put in the work.

He wants to reuse the same things he has used in the past which is fine, but doesn't look back on it based on the notes that we've given during our coaching sessions. So, for example, he knows that one of his biggest goals for this semester is that he wants to make sure the students know exactly what is expected of them. And when its expected. And he knows he should be looking at how he's using his presentation materials (Powerpoints) to make that happen. But.

(tape break)

So, he knows he should be coming up with clear expectations on his slide, it just doesn't happen. And he pointed it out himself today when I talked to him about how the lesson went. But really that's a smaller issue when compared to the more major issue – because he didn't look over the slides prior to that period, he hadn't taken the time to complete any of the tasks he was asking his students to do. At least not ahead of time. And this was noticeable to me and the students. In the way the slides roll out. It was clear he didn't look at the slides before presenting them today. For example there was a slide in there asking them to work out a problem they had just done. And he asked the kids to work through it and it wasn't till a few minutes later when the students were saying "hey mister, we just did this problem" that he realized his error.

And, you know, as he was going through the examples with his students, letting them try them on their own, he couldn't tell them if they were right or wrong, he could only look over there work and make superficial comments like "looks good". So the feedback the students were getting was not high quality and he didn't have a way to help the students move along the right path.

Additionally, I think with him working out the tasks, I think he would have seen there were a lot more arduous then he thought at first. So when he asked the students to do the problems which involved solving for the missing information in a triangle using Law of Sines and Law of Cosines, in the ambiguous case, AND there were two sets of answers for each of the problems, having not worked it out himself, I think it gave him an unrealistic expectation of how the kids could make the connection to solving both situations at once.

So it was just frustrating because it goes back to this notion, this big issue that we've had, of how do we overcome this 'laziness'. How do we get him to do a little more of the front loading. And not just pull up a presentation he made three years ago and think he can use again without doing it. So, there' that.

We coached about what we saw. And I was clear to point out that, in order to be more effective in responding to the students needs, he needed to work his own exemplars ahead of time. So I created a goal for this six weeks that fell into three different buckets. A goal which we talked about in his debrief. Which is essentially around him being able to give more genuine and productive feedback as well as assessing where the class is at. And it broke down into essentially making his own exemplars of the tasks he's expecting the students to do. Secondly coming up with a way to mark the student's papers as they are working as he is checking for understanding/circulating. Which should hopefully push him around the room a little more to interact with all students at some level. And then finally using that data from his circulating and marking the papers to respond to issues either whole class or with the few students who had those issue.

But Mark is hit or miss with ideas and who knows how much he will gravitate towards. With some of these suggestions. You know, they were mostly imparted upon him by me because its where I see him lacking and he just needs that push to hear "this is what we want to see" as opposed to letting him come up with action steps he generates himself that may not push him. So I don't know how much ownership he will take from it. When I refer back to those goals from the semester, those were goals that he had helped me to jointly create that we had set based on data from first semester. And so now, this is me trying to push him along that spectrum. Because included in those goals (that included the clear expectations) that he could name he did not do was his ability to answer students' questions based on the tasks they are working on. However if he doesn't give them feed back, student's won't know to ask questions. And if he doesn't do the tasks, he won't know if they have questions. So I'm trying to find a way to get him to give meaningful feedback to students.

But you know, my day was much more than just one coaching session. And a follow up conversation with that teacher. Another thing that really just left me a little sour is just this notion that a lot of the teachers I coach who are feeling uncomfortable right now about how this year is progressing and a lot of them are somewhere on the spectrum of considering do they belong at our school another year – should they stay another year. And it really worries me. And so I sent a message to my fellow coaches if they have seen this and how can we combat this. And I haven't heard back yet. Hopefully they have some better ideas than silence because I need to do something to boost morale. Its really low right now. And I don't know how much my administration sees. And maybe they

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shouldn't . Maybe its just my department. I'm not sure. So I'm trying to figure out where and what and how to handle this.

I had a teacher, Anna, who addressed me and said she has been thinking about it a lot lately, not that she'll do anything for next year (more likely than not) but it has been on her mind. And so my goal is to figure out how can I get people to be more comfortable so they want to stay.

And its never about me. At least they never say its about me. My staff seems to appreciate what I do for them, the ones that I coach, the ones in my department. They seem to appreciate my feedback and my ability to work with them. So its bigger than me. I don't know exactly how to figure this out, how to solve it right now. And I'm trying. And I think we made a little bit of progress last week when we just got the chance to sit and talk like people for a while. But again, its never me or the department. Our department has gotten so much better in the time we've gotten here. And people love being a part of the department and they feel like they have a team that they can truly collaborate and work with. Its more endemic of what's going on in the school as a whole, this feeling of unease that my teachers have.

I think, completely shifting gears, that part of my work as a teacher was completely stymied by this whatever is going on with my body. Because it was not my most rigorous of days – in that they weren't doing dynamically tough math problems. Not that it wasn't important content, it just ended up that all the classes I taught were doing lessons that lacked a bit of that rigor. I don't know. I mean I did my best to inject rigorous elements. I got the students to talk and move around and you know share ideas, etc. But definitely

didn't feel like it was an A+ day. And again, its partly because I think I'm feeling far from an A+ myself. And partly because in gathering these lessons together, I knew it was going to be a lot of teacher directions, and, at the same time, not tough stuff, if that makes sense. (The content contained a lot of fundamentals to bigger concepts as well as vocabulary and application there of). So, yea, it was fun at times. Getting the students, for example, to create a graphic for different statistical sampling techniques, getting the students to create their own word problems, playing with the different graphs in graph theory… So it was fun stuff, in my three classes, but I just – walking through a haze –I didn't feel like I was fully there as a teacher.

But on the flip side, and again, this is that whole "how things are so interconnected", I did do a pretty good job of circulating the room, marking the students papers with feedback as they were working (exactly what I was coaching Mark on). Particularly because it was something we were just talking about.

So I'm going to stop here. This was exhausting enough, getting through this much feeling the way I do. And I'll give my mind a break. And maybe more will come to me once I get home.

February 19, 2020

If You

If you asked the coach me,

today was awkward

and messy

and disheartening

and thrilling

and groundbreaking

and breaking

and painful

and pleasant

and reminded me why I work with students and not adults

and made me love the adults I work with

and made me think less of the adults I work with

and…

if you don't want to help yourself,

I can't help you

if you want to make excuses

you'll have an excuse

if you want to fail

you will fail

if you won't stand your ground

you'll fall for anything

Just don't fall on me

cause I tried

and I can't care more than you do

even though I do

and if you want us to change things

to make our world a better place

when you see the error of our ways as clearly as the rest of us

then stand

stand up for that change

or don't ask us to work on change

because there is nothing worse than talking about change

and not changing

and when those loose bricks in the foundation of our work

come tumbling down tomorrow

was it better to sit

or should you have stood

this job can be

so

frustrating

to sit on the edge of greatness

and watch people excuse away

what is right in front of them

and then complain that it never was great

and they didn't get what they want

and when you fall

and you fall

and you fall

and when the building falls

just don't land on me

because I tried

but there's a limit to what I can do

even though I stretch beyond that limit continuously

So why the frustration? To begin with, Gary. I don't know what to do with him anymore.
It's one excuse after the next. And I just talked to him about how he has to always be
ready to be watched by any administrator or even the superintendent. Always. No
excuses. And so, because I wanted to help where I could and fill in an IEP meeting as the
Gen Ed teacher that meant my observation of him got pushed back about 35 minutes. In a
90 minute period.
I wasn't expecting to walk in on the students just sitting around doing "work" while he
sat at his desk with a student who was working on stuff that wasn't even for that class. I

wasn't expecting the lack of effort. And the excuses. "Oh, its almost the end of the six-weeks so kids are working on making up missing work so that they can get their grades up". Even if that is the case, which it shouldn't because six-week grades are as about as meaningful as a 100 dollar bill to a woodpecker, even if you wanted them to make up work, that doesn't mean you don't work. That. That is an excuse. I could go on and on about my frustration, but I walked out, I just couldn't. Nor would I sit in there and watch nothing.

And to make matters worse, a few minutes later, after I walked out to check in on Pete, a handful of his students walked out of the room.

And I don't know what to do with him. He's not going to get renewed.

I'm emailing our admin. I have to.

So, I'm pausing this so I can do that. I can't let it fester in me. And I owe it to him to once again instill upon him how important it is that he is always at his "A" game. Maybe he knows something I don't.

Here's what I sent Roger:

I'm not sure where we are at with Gary, but...

I was supposed to coach him 3rd hour today. I told him I'd be there at the start of the period but after your email asking me to be in that IEP meeting, I saw him in the hall and said I'd come later. And immediately after that IEP meeting, I went up there about 9:40 (about 30-35 minutes into the period).

And I walk in on student doing "work" so that they can bring their grades up for the six-week grading period. He was at his desk working with a student that wasn't even in

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that class (or at least on something that wasn't for that class). If I were observing and scoring it would be a lot of 1s.

I just wanted to give you a heads up. And if he thinks/knows he's not coming back, maybe that's why he's mailing it in. If not, he's not helping his case.

Please don't discuss this event per say with him, but we should talk. I'm just frustrated, so sorry if I sound like I'm ranting.

Anyway, as this has taken up too much of my mind and day, let's put it behind me for now.

And onto the next hill. Our ILT meeting. And I thought it was good. Last week, I showed a tracker I used to see how teachers are interacting with students based on perceived race and gender and today we were looking over what we saw and coming up with actionable ways we can address this.

One big takeaway was that teachers were not thinking cogently about their 'working groups' (our fancy way to say seating charts). So we as a group of 7 (of the 12 that should be there) decided we should address this with the staff. During PD. But PD tomorrow is CRE. And this has been painful – not because I think learning about CRE is painful but because the method of delivery has been painful. And these are teachers. The PD has been a series of lectures with no application. Its not good teaching. So when Dr. Skye pulled up the presentation and saw over 20 slides of dense text, we knew we were faced with the same thing yet again.

But here we had a practical application to what the PD was supposed to be on. So we, as an ILT, after what was almost an hour of culminating discussion, decided that we needed

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to charge our staff with creating "working groups" during our next PD – and give them time to do so. We would follow up on the 27th to see how it went. And we, as coaches, would be there to examine how the working groups were – well – working.

And with only 4 teachers in our ILT meeting, and two of them not going to be here tomorrow, I volunteered with the other teacher to help the PD presenters figure out how they can implement this in their PD presentation. Well, long story short, Dr. Skye talked to Paul and left it at "we may have 15 minutes at the end for that". Which just went counter to everything we talked about in our meeting. Genuine real applicable working time is what the teachers need – and we have a chance to give that to them – but because of the ego of the two presenters, we are not giving them what they need???

I don't know. I'm going to try to fix it. I feel like I have to as my name is attached to this agenda. But I can't do anything today. I have to wait till tomorrow – so then you can hear about it.

As for the rest of the day – well –again, aside from the coaching part of me, it was good. And I take that back, the informal coaching I did and the actionable steps towards solving some problems was good.

Seeing me as a person, my students, the members of the GSA, and some of the fellow teachers (who I coach) was a big win. I brought in my Valentines gifts – gifts that were all homemade – a Pencil holder from ***, string art from ***, a pennant of hearts from ***, and the handmade pencil case (K + J) from ***. So, talking about these with everyone was both fun (with the students) and inspiring (with the teachers).

And I began to push the ball on some major upcoming projects – the GSA Assembly (getting time during PD for the GSA students to talk to the staff), Pi Day (figuring out where, when, and how to get volunteers/donation), my yearly plight to get snacks and prizes to keep students motivated during state testing (again figuring out how to coordinate donations), and setting up trainings and the possibilities of new curriculum.

I did teach today too – I promise. And it was a good day of teaching. I'm still using the "marking the work" as I told Mark about yesterday and I even had to stop a class when I saw similar errors occurring around the room, but was able to empower a student who wasn't making that error to explain to the class what he knew. Yes, I'm reinforcing that I was preaching good teaching, and that I did it. I know, self-aggrandizing, but it worked well. And I was happy with my craft today. This reminds me – another email.

(To Ally)

I know you're not here Friday and I hope you don't miss much if we do meet 2nd. I'm going to follow up with Betty and Anna tomorrow to see if they can/want to. But I don't see this as a one and done. So, even if we do miss, we can loop you in next time!

On a completely different note, I would personally love some academic coaching - and as you can imagine, I don't get much support in that department. So I was wondering if you ever had the time, could you stop by a fifth hour and give me some feedback? I want to honor your time, so if you tell me ahead of time, I can let you know if its a good day/time or not. Or just come by without the heads up. Any potential for growth would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,

This has been a hard coaching situation. She's not coming back and has decided to (most likely) leave teaching. So, I've tried a few things – we are focusing on working on developing more meaningful curriculum (the first part of the email) but also I'm hoping that she can, like me, learn about her own craft from coaching me. I hope.

Anyway, to wrap up – teaching is good and fun and I love math (I read that and I know how corny it sounds… ugh) and I love teaching. And I do love coaching. But I love coaching on the fruitful days. And today was not fruitful.

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I've been known to say to teachers (when struggling with students), "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them pass math". The same is true with teachers, "you can lead a horse to water, but you can make them teach… good? At all? Like they know they should?". And that's where we are with Gary.

I don't think he wants to teach. After my frustration on Wednesday, which I could have been more clear about, he did something VERY similar today – except it wasn't me watching him.

As I settled into PD this morning, I saw Roger and asked him if he saw the email I had sent him. He said no, read it, and informed me that he was planning on visiting Roger anyway. During 4th. Today. I said, "ok, I won't" as I was thinking of making a pop in since I couldn't do yesterday. I started the hour with Cindy (and I'll come back to that and PD) and after about 30 minutes in there, I walked back to my classroom. As I was

entering my room, I happened to notices Roger entering Gary's. Flash forward to the end of the day, I swing by Roger's office to ask how it went.

And it was the same thing. Gary at his desk. Working with a kid not in the class. Occasionally answering questions of students who came up to him. But not seeking out understanding (or even assuring students were working). They had worksheets for a test they would have Friday. But there was no instruction occurring, no accountability, no math. And we are talking about a 90 minute period here so that means over an hour of free time for the students. And I don't think its going to end well.

In fact I know its not. Because in my conversation with Roger later that day, he mentioned that Dr. Skye said he should just tell him he's not welcome back next year – but then she rescinded that (seemingly temporarily). I don't' know where that leaves us. When I asked Roger about the lesson, he said it was "fucking atrocious". And this was the last conversation that I had in my day. Well that and discussing another teacher in my department who is also on his caseload – Elaine – and how she had been excusing tests and quizzes as opposed to holding kids accountable for making up missing work. And this is how I ended my day. But the stuff with Gary really got to me.

So there's that cloud that I am seeing today through. And I like him. I think he's a good guy. Kids like him. But, damnit, he won't work……….. And I feel partly to blame – even though I haven't been working with him until this semester and he's found reasons for me to not come in all but one time. So I don't know.

I've just got to listen to my wife and move on here. He doesn't want it. And I can't make him want it.

Anyway – PD. Well that was… interesting. I got access to the presentation this morning and when I looked at it, nothing was set up as we had proposed for the end. Additionally, there were still 25 dense slides ahead of what we wanted to give the staff over 30 minutes to work on (creating learning groups for their classes). So I just changed the slides. I wasn't going to play around and waste time talking to people, I edited the assignment slide and we went with that.

And, of course, it was almost 9:40 by the time we (me and Lisa) got up there to preview our portion. And so when we were done, the hope was teachers would start to work, but with less than 20 minutes before the first class would start, most teachers were anxious to return to their classrooms.

My department had our department meeting after this though. And so we circled back to the PD. And I don't know if it was the practical application or what, but several department members praised this as being one of the most productive and "learning-est" PDs they had been to. And we had a practical conversation about the implications of the PD in our department meeting following the time in the session. I wonder if I can follow up about this – how do we continue these conversations within our department?

The rest of our meeting, accordingly, went well. We talked about Pi Day. We laughed about the plural of compass (which I enjoy saying as compii but I know that is not right). We talked about how we are getting our kids to graduate via Accuplacer. And we celebrated some victories in finding courses that will best suit the needs of our students

next year and in the future. And then I gave them the charge to work on developing a DDI for the next week – and surprisingly, after breaking out, they all did!

With the meetings behind me, I was able to enter into an observation of Cindy with little to no stress. Mostly because I don't ever have to worry about coaching Cindy. She's receptive and wants to grow. And she has. And today was no different. She had all of her students working and set up the class so they could work individually on a series of tasks while a few visited her for one on one instruction. That instruction was tailored to meet the needs of each group. And its obvious that the students both care and are growing in their ability.

So when the teachers say things like "these kids don't want to learn", it frustrates me – because I don't think that's the case. Students don't want to learn when teachers expect little from the students. And this is a lesson I can learn – not for this year, but for when I do go back to teaching some of the more struggling students. I wish my teacher knew how much they inspire me sometimes – from the smallest of actions, to the grandest of feats.

Anyway, as I said, it was a great lesson, and my advice was limited to small things to help the lesson along such as having some of the more quiet students or reluctant students paraphrase an explanation given by another student and when doing a day like today, instead of weighting each assignment the same (and in four assignments at 5 points apiece, that meant 20 points) so not finishing one dropped a student to a C to instead think about making full completion an A+, missing on assignment an A, missing two a B,

and so on. And discussing this with her, over lunch, while the math team used my room, went well as she is always receptive to learn and grow.

The rest of my day was as planned. Nothing too exciting, just teaching some Unit Circle to my sixth hour. And after that, I settled in, grabbed my stuff, and went to check in with Roger – where we talked about all that 'fun' stuff.

You know, my job can be lonely. It can be isolating. And being the only man that works as a teacher leader in our school, and separated, physically and many other ways. At least the administrators are mostly men, but they too are so far physically. And their world is slightly different. But at least Scott understood when he was our principal. And I could go down there and just sit and talk. Some days I wish I could have that with Roger. It won't be the same, but its better than nothing. Which is why I found myself in there at the end of the day anyway. To talk. To decompress. To vent. And to commiserate.

I used to have that with Les. I learned so much from him. Many lessons I want to carry with me forward about myself as a leader and myself as a teacher. I'll never forget how he would ask me to rank my teachers (and I hated this). In the end, this was so he could make sure we kept only the best teachers in our department and the rest 'moved on'. Anyway, to help me do this, he told me "A teacher has to be passionate; passionate about the mathematics or passionate about teaching, either way, they have to have that passion - you, you have both". I try to keep that passion alive and well for him (and for me). But I still need that support. I need the help sometimes.

I have to get over what I can't fix. But when its my job to fix it, I do feel like part of me failed.

Friday, 2/21/20

Donuts

If you want to find a way to a teacher's heart

Cards show you care

      But can easily crumble

Apples are appetizing

But atypical

Pictures can be pretty

      But there's only so many places to put them

Money would be magnificent

      But when there's not much…

No no

The way to a teacher's heart

The way to teachers' hearts

Is simple

Round

Baked or fried

Glazed or plain

Sprinkled, frosted, swirled, even cerealed

And apple fritters

Donuts, simply put,

Are the way to a teacher's heart:

Donuts

In the immortal words of Homer,

"Mmmmmm….."

And there's a bit of magic when that box opens

Teachers come

And the sight of such sweets

Opens a teacher up in ways words can't

A simple gesture

And I feel like that thin veil

Of chocolate frosting

Has paved the path between me and that teacher

Making what was little, a little more

Making what was lot, a little more

One after another, they file in

Grabbing a treasure

Flashing a smile

A "thanks"

A small conversation

And even though it was donuts,

It was so much more than donuts.

When the administrator I work with stops by

To ask for help

And a donut

To find out how he can reach a teacher

I help him reach for that little bit of frosting

Caught in his chin

And I help him reach out to those that can help him

Help that teacher

Help him

Nourish him

When you talk to the teacher

When I talk to the teacher

That I have never felt close to

And she truly thanks you,

Thanks me,

Because she had no breakfast,

Maybe that thanks means more.

And when the teacher who is on the verge of being fired

Who I've not had the pleasure of helping this year

But have helped when I can this year

Who knows I mean well for him

But doesn't seem to know how to mean well for himself

Says "Thank you…"

"You've made me work hard"

"All these donuts just mean I run more"

And while it was donuts

It was so much more than donuts

It was a thank you

It was a thank you for making him work hard

It was a thank you for always bringing my gifts to his craft of teaching

In a way that pushed him to grow

And all the words unsaid

Sprinkled in there that mean so much more than

Donuts

And sure I had my donuts

But I left with so much more

Because the way to our hearts

Is through that hole

And that's what makes us whole.

And today…. Was a hot mess. I suppose it goes back to last night where I was moments

away from throwing my computer against the wall but for save of this journal, I did not.

The lousy Classflow just stopped working so I couldn't finish prepping my lessons. But I

knew I had to shop before school for the CCTM Social tonight, students coming in before

the day started, I had observations first hour, meetings second hour, students coming in

third hour, which left me only fourth hour to not only do my pre-lesson prep material but

also plan the lesson that I had intended to plan last night. So yeah – I was in a daze. A

glaze.

And, oh yeah. There was donuts.

But I survived getting to first hour. I survived the craze and the haze and the glaze. And I

got to watch Betty with her first hour. And Betty is another good teacher – but she has

seemed off lately. This could be my imagination, this could be because I know she's

thinking of leaving, this could be because of her jetlag, this could be because I've been so overwhelmed with my year and I know that she's doing well enough that I don't have to give her as much time as others, but whatever it is, this intangible is there.

And it's a hard class – way too many students for that class. But she's doing ok. It wasn't stellar and it wasn't awful. It was a few examples to warm-up and then an activity that had the students doing as many problems as they could while circulating the room. We discussed minor tweaks that could have helped during the lesson as well as how she can unabashedly ask for help if she needs it in that class. Because I understand. And I would help.

And we talked about how she could leverage that relationship she has with the students to seek their candid support – what and how can they help her when the room is so overrun with students. But it was my first time in there, and I hope to get in there a few more times during this cycle to narrow in on what we need to truly focus on. I didn't want to assume I knew the best for her when I haven't been in there yet. But I will. And it's a good class – big but good.

We also met, me, Betty, and Anna, to talk about how we could make a more rigorous task for a freshmen in Integrated Math 1. I suggested a task I had recently seen, and we just jumped on it – planned away to make it a reality. Which is the great thing about the Integrated Math 1 team. They do that. I'm excited to teach Integrated I again next year –

or that's the plan at least… Or did it go so well because there's that haze over Betty? And she just said yes to say yes and move on?

And while that only took me to second hour, that was a huge portion of my mental day.

I had another conversation with Roger. About Elaine and how he can address the more endemic issue behind her altering grades – relationships.

He also mentioned how he scored Gary. Two 1s and two 2s. I know because I looked.

And then I prepped. And prepped.

And I have a lot to do this weekend between work here, sending out my coaching notes and scheduling next week of coaching. And my work as a teacher – grading and planning. And my work on this.

And so third and fourth and lunch went by quickly but with lots that I accomplished.

And then I taught. With a lot of games today – Post-it Game and MathO.

And all in an effort to finish the day and get to the CCTM social in time.

I know that a vast majority of what I have written has been to describe my life as an academic coach. But that is not all of what I do. And today was a day where my other leadership roles/efforts were called into action. Starting with an email this morning.

We have been giving all of the High School Juniors the Accuplacer exam so that they can enter college remediation free, but, more importantly, so they can graduate. With the 2020 plan in Colorado, students have to show proficiency in both Math and English in order to graduate – so its not just credits anymore. Anyway, after many hours of planning and deliberating, one of the best ways we found we could try (at least) to show competency for graduation was via the Accumplacer. The plan was simple – give it and see how we did and go from there.

Well, two weeks ago we gave it and last week we did the make ups. The email I received this morning was asking for the results. So, my job became to gather this data in a presentable way for my teachers, administrators, and the special educators. And I was off. My excel skills at their finest – vlookups and all! And we got it down to only 28 students who didn't pass (and 30 students who had yet to take it). And it wasn't that we did something phenomenal, I mean we did, getting so many kids to check this off their list of things to do to graduate. But its also just a big sigh of relief, and knowing this option exists. It saves us so much work in the ways of preparing portfoilios or over prepping for

standardized tests. And I'm sure my department is happy too! Now to work on the rest of these students… But at least we have the class next year for students to show competency.

So, all morning this was my task. And the day ended with another one of those department type tasks –we have to hire another math teacher (well more than one), and I needed to peruse the resumes to decide which candidates to interview. Ok – I didn't need to, but ever since I have took over the department, I have inserted myself into the process of hiring teachers. And, aside from the times were our hands were tied and we were limited on the number of applicants, we've done good. I've always seen eye-to-eye with the personal committee (or they've always seen my eye).

So what do I want in an applicant? Well, I have a few biases – I worry about those coming from other nations as sometimes I think they confuse us with a college. I worry about those that changed careers well through life as they sometimes have a warped view of education. I worry about those that come from certain institutions that I don't respect as much as others. And I want people that have experience, have worked with high school, have duel language abilities. Not that experience is a must, I love coaching, but if there are going to be a few new hires, getting a lot of new teachers may not be the best….

As for the middle of my day – after the work with the spread sheets, I spent quite a bit of time working on finishing my prep. I like to save the "doing the task" till the morning of

so its fresh in my mind. And, its something I know is of utmost importance. I spent most of my time during the rest of the morning that wasn't spreadsheeting and lunch finalizing these plans.

But 4th I watched Scott. And yea, it was interesting. His class was about what I would have expected (as this was the first full class I've seen of him teaching math). He started with a task that was good, but incredibly unclear. And of course the students struggled. But he circulated and prodded and left groups with next steps to move them further along the task. And eventually had a student present the task at the end. But – and there's many buts here – there was a definite sense of favoritism (and lack thereof), there was a lack of structure, and there was an ownership of intellectual power that was strangled by Scott. After the lesson, I jotted myself some major things that I wanted to get Scott to work on that included: outlining what success looks like for a task, chunking the tasks, assigning roles for conversations or group work, be conscientious about grouping, give explicit written directions for a task, give relevance to the task, and highlight these conventions that he expects the kids to hold.

When we met after school to discuss the lesson though, I let him do the talking. This was much more of a coaching session in that he verbalized several items on that list above that I paraphrased and formed into his goal for the next six weeks. It ended as:
In order to aid students to engage in tasks, the teacher will:

1. Help the students to chunk the task (not always particularly with smaller tasks or tasks that can be more open middle),

2. Provide checkpoints where students should engage with their partners about how the problem is progressing, and

3. Ensure the students understand what success on the task means (without giving away the whole process).

With Scott though, there's a lot of talk. A lot. But letting him talk got him to all of this so that's good. And he said it, not me which is better. Now I just need to hold him to his word.

I did teach again. I do teach. I promise. I feel I don't write a lot about that. But that's because its so natural. Like breathing. And I don't write about breathing. Oddly enough, I did utilize some of my list for Scott in my own teaching spontaneously. When teaching the Law of Cosines, I gave steps for the proof and chunked out the proof so that a different member of the group had to check in with me (and their group mates) before they could move on to the next steps.

2/25/2020

I often tell people that my job would be so much better if it wasn't for the people. And I don't mean the students – kids are kids and they're always what I expect. But when you couple how tired I am with the day I had, not only was I validated in my feelings about

adults, but my feelings about kids was challenged and there are a few I'm ready to throw in the towel with. I had some wins, yes. But I nearly lost it several times.

So here goes – again today was like yesterday in that I felt behind the eightball with all I wanted to do for my lessons (and my student aides not showing up today). So, again, with that and the lack of sleep due to a 3 year old poking me all night saying "daddy… daddy.." and then kissing me… well I was already near implosion. So here goes:

1st Hour – Meet with my fellow teacher ILTs

So, I finally got an answer to my message from last week. At least from the four other teacher leaders there. We talked about who was and was not feeling this low morale. And we talked about how we can reach our staff with their "love languages". I don't normally believe in stuff like this, but I know from personal experience I need the gift of "gifts/cards", and several of my colleagues need the gifts of "verbral praise" and "time". So we talked about how we could use these to help our teachers feel a little better about their work, and without the 'but'. You know, that lesson went great, 'but'… I think that's an awesome idea, 'but'… you've done your job, 'but'… So the hope is to try to convince our administration to do some visits, short, with little notes of praise. Additionally, giving the teachers some spare time, no strings attached, on Thursday during PD. I know these are whole staff, but maybe my department will feel it too!

2nd Hour and Assembly –

So during first hour, it came to light that one of the Spanish teachers decided today they would not come back. Starting today. Forget the notion of fulfilling your obligation, she just up and quit. So after my meeting, as I was walking out, some of the students saw me and said that there teacher hadn't shown up. So I went with them, called the office who said that a sub was supposed to come, only he wasn't. So because one adult decided to up and quit (and emptied all her personal artifacts from the classroom so the kids knew something was up) and another didn't know how to follow simple instructions to cover the class, I had to give up my already stretched time to watch this class. And I couldn't abandon them – they had already been abandoned. So I stuck with them, took them to the assembly, took their attendance, and kept them engaged.

And the assembly was good – it was to celebrate Black History Month. The problem, and not for me, was that the staff in charge had these lofty ideas of the classes discussing the assembly afterwards but only gave a list of questions without any protocol or prior background to have these conversations. So, most classes did not do this.

Including the Spanish class. But I know that because I left the sub (who found their way up there) and he was clueless as to what to do. I found a Spanish teacher to get him something to give the kids, but it had nothing to do with the Assembly.

3rd Hour – Hall Walk and Watching Gary

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So I did my hall walk with Mr. Cook. It was mostly uneventful. But he's one of the Spanish teachers so we talked a little about what happened. And he's new to us, and teaching, so it was good for him. Unfortunately, at the end of the walk we came across a few students making poor choices (ditching class, ditching school) so had to go to the office and report it.

But then, I went to Gary's room. And yeah. It wasn't much better than what has been happening. At least today he was talking to the students who "cared" about the worksheet. He told students how to do the math and answered questioned but could not inform right or wrong and could not give next steps. Why? Cause he didn't prep it. In fact, he told me later he had recently printed the worksheet so he couldn't prep what the students should do with it. And I knew that, even without him saying it. I've gotten really good with my 'teacher intuition'. So I can read between the lines. For example, when the teacher wasn't aware that one of the problems had 'ugly decimals' or didn't know how to answer certain questions, his lack of preparedness became obvious. I can't even think about a positive other than it was better than the really bad he's been exhibiting lately…

Lunch – Debrief and GSA

So, I had to ask – I laid it out there and asked Gary if he wanted to come back. And he does. I don't think he'll be asked back, but he wants to be. But I had to ask because I've been telling him how he needs to be constantly on his A game and today wasn't that. For a lot of reasons. But to just work on a worksheet that the teacher doesn't prep….

But what made the conversation tough was he was incredibly defensive, and maybe that's because of his work with Roger. I was trying to coach him to say here's what you need to be doing if you wanna stay. And he wanted to argue with it all. Justify his poor teaching with excuses. And I had to cut him off again and say that this is not about me, this is about him making a good impression on whoever walks in. And what he is doing right now is not doing that. I still need to follow up with the major take aways. But, he did say that Roger would tell him when he would score again, so I told Gary we can work on that lesson, getting it ready for that scoring.

And then I had my GSA officers. We are prepping a lot – the GSA Assembly next month and the Drag Show. And I know it may be 'unprofessional' but I was talking about our assembly and saying how we could improve upon what we saw and how we could make the follow up time more impactful. I suppose this comparison was the wrong way to address this because later in the day I get these accusing emails from the Assembly coordinator questioning what I said to them. This – this frustrated me so much that I almost want to kick GSA out and be done with them. It's a clear example of self-righteousness and ingratitude. Its going to be rough tomorrow.

Yet, in the same meeting, they presented me with a grave concern and I acted on it. Contacted admin and followed up in person later. But things like this aren't good enough for them. Me giving up my free time is not good enough. I'm gonna lose it tomorrow.

4th – Prep

I finally had time to make sure my lessons were good to go, including the puzzle.

And then the classes I taught – 5th, 6th, and 7th.

My state of mind and the material made it only so-so. Except the puzzle game. Which we get to finish tomorrow. Why can't I write more about what I teach? Maybe cause its so much to teach. Maybe cause its too much of me to see it. I'll get better… but teaching is to the point where small things happen where I learn to be better and the rest edifies my current beliefs about how good of a teacher I am. I don't know.

2/26/2020

Ahh Wednesdays… These are the long days. And its just another example of lots of giving, and the taking comes from my work with the students. Most days, I take away a full cup. Not yesterday. But each day, the cup starts full. And I work to keep it full. And I tend to leave with it full. Which I think is why its hard for me to write about. My teaching doesn't do anything to make me doubt myself as a teacher, but it doesn't push me because I'm at a perceived pinnacle. And I don't want to sound conceited. But no one tries to knock me down a few pegs. I wish they would so I could grow again.

But back to the day – it started in the copy room. Cause I needed copies. And I got in there with Gary and Clark. And again, conversations with Gary digressed to idle chit chat and didn't go near where we should be talking – his lessons and teaching. And he wanted to leave so I could copy without making his copies for the day. Of course I wouldn't let him do that.

Then, I returned to my room to help a few students and welcome my first hour kids and Anna (as she needed to hang out in my room). But, alas, my rest wasn't for long. I needed to head to our meeting for the ILT. The meeting was supposed to be brief, and it wasn't long, but it wasn't brief. We were just gonna touch on some updates, but we were all feeling the weight of the school on our shoulders – the burden all of the teachers have felt, we have felt. So Dr. Skye suggested we share a positive. And it honestly took me a while to find my positive. This happened Tuesday in my 6[th] hour. They wanted to know if I was a Gen-X or a Millenial. So, we constructed a Venn Diagram to solve the problem. And, as I told them, the conclusion was I was right in the middle.

Ok, not the best story, but I enjoyed that brief exit from the traditional curriculum to the personal questions. And so I shared. As did the rest of the ILT. And there were laughs – some in conjunction with misery. But it segwayed well into the big question that our principal had – why are teachers missing so much?

So I brought up what I had been troubled with and what we talked about yesterday in our meeting – that there may be some issues with morale. And made the suggestions we came up with – giving a break from PD so that people can have time as well as be more cognizant to recognize the positives without focusing on the 'but's'. We also decided to clarify the PD assignment from last week and give them more time to focus on it. As well as asked them for a wish – they wrote on a post-it something that could help lift their spirits. We will see how it goes.

And I made my way back to the room. And then Malcolm was waiting and had a discussion about what amounted to me doing extra work to help him. Of course I said yes. I can't say no, but I really can't say no to students who ask me to help them when the need arise. Who am I kidding – I can't say no to most anyone that asks for help.

Then, with third hour I went to help out with the activity we co-planned for Integrated Math 1 – weighing the cups and using that to find out how many washers and candies were in each one. I stopped by but they weren't ready so I set my student aide on the task of addressing the letters that my 6th hour wrote as part of their project – in order to sway a company to change their product (or packaging) in order to help the environment. But I'm straying. My point was I took a small break before I went back to help John and Betty with their classes and the activity.

The two classes were so different but had some similarities. Betty's class had kids engaging in the task, trying to find the answers and having a generally positive demeanor – most of the students in John's class were resistant to work, would rather socialize than engage, and weren't concerned with their academic outcomes. I wish they could have seen the difference. It would have been a great coaching maneuver. That said, there were similarities in that some students were resistant to even trying, most students needed lots of support and feared failure. And it made me wonder – am I going to be effective in teaching Integrated I and Algebra I next year? If these two can't, why do I think I can? But I want to try and I want to have fun. And I want to help get to the root of this disengagement and help students get back on track to graduate.

But this was my way of coaching. Not traditional. Not goal setting. But there are goals to set with John.

Lunch came and so did GSA. And while I wanted to talk with the kids, the situation was not conducive to that as I had many others in here at the same time. So I left my frustrations bottled. They were focused in on the drag show – and made many requests of me that I happily obliged with (see, I'm a sucker that always says yes). We had Scott up here to talk to the kids about the theater. And while he was up here, I chatted with him about girl scout cookies and if he was gonna do the drag show. His response (to the drag show, not the cookies) was ominous, particularly given his absences (ie his leave). He

said it would be best if he did not perform… so I wonder if he thinks that everyone knows what happened with him – cause I sure don't.

And the rest of the day was me in the classroom. 5th was giving a test. And you'd think that meant I got work done. And I'm sure I did somethings – made my key for the test, readied for seventh, but I can't remember exactly what… And 7th was more Graphs (yeah!) with some puzzle game, a process quiz, and a lesson on the last little bit of Graph Theory.

2/27/2020

I'm in a rut. And just like most ruts, I feel the tires spinning, and I'm not going anywhere. I don't know why. Maybe cause there's absolutely no challenge to grow. Maybe because I'm tired and overwhelmed and its easy to maintain than it is to push. Whatever the case, I can't seem to get anywhere.

Take for instance this morning. We had free time after the short PD and, wanting to extend that, I gave the department a week without meeting, so from basically 8:10 to 10:40, I had nothing "to do". And in hindsight, I feel like I did just that – nothing. I mean, I know that's not true, but I also know it wasn't nearly as productive as I could have been – and, like I said –I can't remember what it did entail. If I had to guess, lesson preps? But that wasn't 2 ½ hours. Oh, I got the letters to the office to be mailed. So there's that – all

of 5 minutes that I can account for. I think I planned out Friday's Lesson for 6th (so I could send it to Anna) as well. But maybe I finished that later. Gosh its not even been 10 hours and it's a blur. But in my defense, it was a long day as I didn't get back home until almost 8.

And starting early, with PD, was a good way to start. See, we have a rotating breakfast schedule where once a month, a department or two brings breakfast for the staff (something I initiated, then it fell to the wayside, but I was asked to pick back up this year). And today was one of those days. So started with some free morning treats (including donuts). Then our meeting consisted of some quick announcements, myself and Lorraine reviewing the PD assignment and telling staff they had another week to accomplish it, and then the "wish" activity. And then we were free to do our thing.

When I got my wishes, nothing was too surprising. Ally wanted reminders that she is a good teacher. John wanted someone to teach his 3rd hour for two weeks (and after yesterday, I could see why). Mark wanted someone to pay his student loans. Betty wanted some heart felt notes. Cindy wanted help prepping calculus. And Anna. Oh Anna. Well, lets just say when Dr. Skye dropped off these to me, she was concerned about Anna and what she put on her wish. She had asked for help with her mental health. And I think she thought that only I would see the card so that's why she wrote that, but I told Dr. Skye I would follow up.

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So after lunch, I swung by and asked her, "were you writing the card thinking that I was the one that was going to see it". She instantly turned red, started laughing, and then started to leak (as she put it). Suffice it to say, yes she wanted me to see it, yes she was hoping only me, but she was serious. And I did tell her there's no shame in wanting mental supports and that we do have that here. And I told her that I have been getting ready to look for someone to support me. And we talked. And I can't remember everything we said, but I know I left her feeling a little better than when we started.

As to the other wishes, well it had been my plan that I would go around, watch teachers for a few minutes, and leave a note that praised what I saw. Seeing that I was observing Clark, I started with him (but I stayed for a half hour). Clark has gotten better. But there's still room to grow. He's very active in the room, he moves to and fro ensuring all kids are working. But the tasks and the support he provides still need a boost. However, we missed our post-observation meeting somehow so I have to do that next week (in addition to Cindy's wish) and move forward with a goal. I did write in his note how I thought that his enthusiasm and way of getting around the room were great though, and they are.

I also watched Mark in his one non-honors class, Integrated Math 3. And while I saw some of his problems that exist in honors, he was a lot more genuine and relationships were obvious. The tasks and timing left something to be desired, but I didn't say that as I wanted him to hear some positives. So I focused on the obvious relationships and the ways he had leveraged them.

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I then went to Elaine and saw her presenting the same problem to the students (an integral with Trig) in three ways – a lesson that I thought had a lot of merit. And I told her that. I would have enjoyed seeing the kids bring those methods forward, but it still worked well and she still expected the students to do some of the cognitive load (finished the problem on their own for example).

Ally and Gary were testing, and I was just in Scott's 4th hour earlier this week, so I moved to the other end of the hall and watched Cindy. They were playing Jeopardy, and I told her how I appreciated how all students were bought in to the activity and working hard not only to win the game but also ensure understanding.

Two funny side stories – Lori was in there and working to assign kids with classes for next year and I shared with her about the new Algebra Class that is intended to help students catch and keep up in math. She had some older students (rising Juniors) would could benefit from the class.

Also, when I left some of the kids were asking who I was. She told them that 'was Mr. Bolz' and apparently one of the kids shouted, "oh yea, the guy with the jacked arms". (Of course I only know this because she came and told me later).

We had lunch – which meant math team in my room where I sat getting work done while they met. And then 6[th]. It was an Anna lesson, so there was a lot of direct instruction. But it needed that for a few reasons, so I used what I called my "think aloud" approach. This is where I go through a process, uninterrupted, and when we are done, I give them time to write down what they saw, code their process with notes, and discuss what they saw with their groups so they can ask questions. And there were a lot of good questions as well as a development of pros and cons as to when to use the methods (Law of Sines and Law of Cosines) when dealing with the Ambiguous Case. But I could tell that they were taxed. So, we did a brain break where they had to go and talk to random people after walking around the room. They had to talk to each other about how they were genuinely doing, about what law they liked better, and about how to solve the ambiguous case. We then finished the lesson with some IB style problems through a protocol of talking as a group about how to do the problem (without solving it), then work on their own for two minutes, then work with a partner for two minutes, then whole group for two minutes. After that, we went over the solutions and how they would be graded.

After class, I spent some time working with students then had to go to my district meeting for two plus hours. If I were to go into all of that too, that would diverge a little from the point here and take another three pages. SO I won't. Just know that my job pushes me into other roles that take up more time than I have some times.

As eventful as today was – it was rather uneventful.

I got to leave a little earlier because the wife and kids had a funky schedule (the kids were off, Finn had to go to day care still, but they couldn't leave till 7 when the babysitter was coming). And so I was able to make my copies quickly and quietly, and aside from seeing Jen (who normally turns Rhonda – what she calls the copier – on) who's one person I don't mind talking with that early, I avoided the awkward small talk of "thank god its Friday, right?". I probably wouldn't have used the copy room had I not sent some of my stuff down the day before, but it is what it is.

So I got to my room and got to work. Again, I don't know if I mentioned this, but I like doing the problems I'm going to assign the day of so they are fresh and with me when I teach. So, that's how I spent the morning, but that went by rather quickly as half of 6th and most of 7th were activities that I had to have planned out already. So, by the time that 1st hour rolled by – aside from the work that I wanted Henry to do, but him not being there, he couldn't – I was basically ready for the day. So I turned to grading – and worked on the tests because I knew they would take me the longest. Not that I don't have plenty of other stuff to grade.

Since I was quietly working and he was off, Malcolm stayed to work with me during 2nd

hour as well. Sure we were interrupted – Mark buying Girl Scout Cookies, Anna just to talk, Clark to talk to me about the interviews coming up – but it was productive and by the start of third I was done with the tests –which is good for me.

This gave me the chance to do more visits where I can leave happy notes. As it ended, I got to see the same class (Integrated Math I – one honors section and two college prep session). I started with Ally. It was undeniable that she had cared about the lesson she had planned, that she cared about honoring the students, and that she cared about validating their mathematical successes. For example, she called on a student to answer a question who was off task. He gave a great answer – but for the last problem and not what she asked. Rather than embarrass him or point out his flaw, she let him go with it and honored his insight into the problem. And so I told her that. I told her how it was great to see her always highlighting the best of students. I just worry that she didn't have a handle on any of the management.

And I kinda know why. There's a sense of powerlessness as a teacher. If you don't establish clear procedures for misbehaviours (I just spelled this the English way – damn IB), then it leaves you in a place where you can't develop new systems as the year progresses. I have to remember this next year – clear, sustainable, student honored systems. As it is now, a lot of teachers use the systems in the building, but they are broken. So most teachers feel either obligated to ignore misbehaviors, and those that don't seem to have the office on speed dial. I know there is a place in between and I will

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find it next year. I just have to come in knowing I have to find it at the start. Clear and consistently.

After Ally, I went to Betty. And yes Betty had some of the same issues that Ally did. The inability to quell all of the disruptions, but she was trying. The small teaching I saw was very straight forward, almost methodical, but the students engaged when she released them. And as I was leaving to put the note on her desk praising her for how she got the kids to work, I stopped by a few kids and asked them how they got the answer to the problem they were working on. And the answer I got blew my mind. It showed a fluid understanding of both systems of equations and the situation they represented. He was able to go back and forth between the two in explaining his answer. And I was in awe. This was a traditional Integrated I and this student showed some very high level understanding. I don't know if everyone could have done that (and didn't stay to find out) but it was incredible. And I told him – that his thinking was some of the most astounding thinking I had ever heard to such a task – he was proud of himself.

And finally, I watched John. And I struggled to write my note. Oh boy did I struggle. Because the kids were not working. The expectations to think and participate weren't there. The kids were in control and they knew it. And he knew it. It wasn't till he sat with two kids, one-on-two, that he not only got some good teaching in, but showcased his strength – and its in how much he cares for these students and the relationships he's able to build. So that's what I wrote in his note.

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But I'm worried. I want John to survive. A black man in a public school devoid of black role models. We need him. But he needs to grow so much more. And he can't hide behind teaching all honors classes because his own confidence in harder math waivers at times. If any administrator had walked in on that, he would be close to being considered for dismissal. I think its going to take co-teaching with him next year so he understands.

After third hour, I got to go watch Anna and her 4th hour Calc Class. This is a class that I used to teach, so I saw a lot of stuff I had done in the past. Not that I'm surprised or upset – I know that it takes time to make everything your own. And this she felt was good the way it was…

She's worried about senioritis – but they all worked hard on the pre-test that she started them off with. The funny thing was, while she asked for 'complete silence' during this time, she was the one that kept having conversations with the students. And once they were done, she took the class back over and led them first through a review of the pre-test and then onto the Unit Circle. All the while, the only time any student gave an extended answer was ONCE. The rest was guided by her with small popcorn questions that the class could shout out in response. So, I have lots of ideas here. To the seniorits – well they seemed to do well when having a no-stakes assignment, so more of those. Plus having a clear route to success from here on out. But in general, how does she 'share the

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power' in this class? I too left her a note, cause why not? Only Gary and Scott left to give A note to, but I'm sure Ill give more as the year progresses.

When I got back, I needed to set up the rest of my lessons that I was hoping my student aids could do, but they were all no-shows. So, between the remaining of fourth and lunch, I did that, and ate, and talked to Gabri and Kailey who were dropping off some information sheets for me (to help me prep the Trig Project).

And then teaching happened – 5th hour I'm trying new groups – a la the assignment for PD. So we started there. I should do more so they can talk about who they are working with (not that they don't know a lot already). They did some problems on their own, we did some together, and then the Investigation. I always underestimate how long these will be as they could only get half way through.

6th hour brought a smaller lesson on using trig to find areas of triangles. Some good discussions and discoveries, the points game to assess their understandings, then the exit slip which consisted of a harder area problem, making up the Unit Circle quiz (and earning their cards) for those that hadn't passed yet, and asking them about potential project partners.

Finally 7th hour was up and we did some quick review as they worked out problems created by their peers – who then assessed how they did on these problems. From there, I

used my walking activity to scatter them around until they could high five a partner for the scavenger hunt activity. This went well, all that work and only two small errors (and both copy errors). It was great seeing them work and talk and I could ask questions (and I did) but they had the work down.

All that ended, and I had a few kids come in to do work and make up assignments. Anna stopped in so we could divvy out the work for HL Analysis for next week. Mark asked me to FAC and I normally would have but with the kids I had to get home and pick up Finn so I declined. And then I left. Another day down.

3/2

It's hard sometimes

Knowing the right words to say

As a coach

As a teacher

As a mentor

As a human

But we are always on

And editing every sound that squeaks past our lips

Before we can squeak

Would lead to conversations that

Would be seemingly endless

Waiting

For

One

Word

And

Then

The

Next

So we squeak

We speak

And the words sometimes land

And the words sometimes bounce off

And the words sometimes hurt

And the words sometimes can't

As humans

As speakers

We know this

But we don't when we listen

We forget that the speakers are like us

Human

We don't realize that there's a human on the other end

We expect perfection

At all times

At all costs

Having to monitor what I say and how I say it

I can't

Not always

So I know I'm

Far from perfect

And not knowing how things land

If they land

Or if they hurt

Makes my job even harder

I wish I could say I felt productive today.

I was. I mean, I did my job. But I can't say for sure what I accomplished. And I am always looking to accomplish.

I taught today. But a lot of my teaching was without traditional teaching. I mean, truth be told, aside from facilitating warm-ups in each of my three classes, I went over maybe one sample problem in each of my classes. My fifth hour did their group investigations, discovering how to work with motion, vectors and derivatives. My sixth hour did a jigsaw activity where they learned about different trig identities then taught their peers. My seventh hour did a Points Game where they reviewed how to work with sequences. I just filled in the gaps. And facilitated. And posed questions. And answered questions. And listened. And checked for understanding. And formatively assessed. And provided feedback. And provided next steps. And… hope learning happened.

As to my job as department chair, I poured over more Accuplacer data. Ok, not poured over. But I did hunt it down. I also got together samples of student work for our interviews on Wednesday. I put them together, made the key, and assessed the students so that others in the room would know how the candidate did.

And I used my prep time to prep. Doing those problems. Particularly because in my haste on Friday I threw away work I needed for today. Ugh.

And I coached. I worked with Anna on her seniors. We decided to do the following:
In order to help the students overcome Senioritis (particularly in 4th and 7th), the teacher will:

1. Utilize more low-consequence activities that students can feel comfortable 'failing forward'

2. Provide clear outcomes for daily success after a small instructional lesson, and

3. Set up a clear path for success/passing the class for the remainder of the year.

The difference this time was I leveraged what I saw that was working, what I knew the teacher could handle but needed a chance to feel successful and feel like she could do this. Particularly as she has felt overwhelmed lately. She's taking off tomorrow – something she has seldom done. And I said I would help by stopping in and watching her student teacher work as her sub during a few of the periods. I'm sure it will be fine and all, but I should get in there anyway. (Which reminds me, I have a few more 'happy notes' to write).

I also watched Elaine's class. And ugh. Not like it was bad ugh. It had some great moments. But ugh. She is so hard to coach. I can't remember if I talked about the PTSD I sensed on Gary after having had bad coaching this year, but I have that with Elaine – as her coach. So I tried what I tried on Anna. I tried to play into the positives. Ask questions

– both of the material/lesson and as an IB expert (her, not me). I still need to formalize where she will go with this. But in talking after school, she wanted to find ways to get the students to communicate more. So we talked about that. I think we will land with something like:

In order for the students to communicate more (and with each other), the teacher will:

1. Give students more voice in the lesson, both in how they are asked to participate (ie presenting problems to the class) as well as making an effort to hear from all students,

2. Leveraging what the teacher sees in checking for understanding to get students to share out to the whole class, and

3. Encourage the students to communicate with each other by assessing each other's work and giving them written and oral responses to the work.

I don't know. It's a work in progress. But it leverages what she tries to do already. And re-emphasizes it as good teaching. These are all strategies she has tried. But to keep them at the forefront would help.

Except Elaine is the queen of excuses. And my words become water off her back. But maybe that's the PTSD in me talking.

And my fatherhood entered into the workplace today as I delivered Girl Scout Cookies. And my role as a school leader. I had CSC today. I wish I could say it was exciting and we accomplished lots. We didn't. But we talked about current issues – class sizes, what we are trying to accomplish –our strategic planning including Honors English for all and our combined honors/regular class, and our challenges – how are we preparing kids for

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state testing (and how are we preparing our students to WANT to take these tests and perform to their fullest).

Again – I know it was a long day. And I know it should have felt productive. But I just didn't feel it.

3/3/2020

I am exhausted. How exhausted? Well so much so that I (1) left my water bottle, school keys, and calculator on my desk at school, (2) had to buy a coffee at 6:30 pm, and (3) made a list of three things and my brain knows there is a third one but can't even process what that is right now.

But today. Well yikes. I worked with Gary again. And I'm just floored by how little the students were doing. And I hear him – he blames the kids. And I get that to a point. But he also admitted later that they want to do well and they need the unit reviews to do well – because those look like the test. So each lesson on its own doesn't mean much because students aren't held accountable until the test, and there they get this magic review. He's built a ship where he may the captain but he's not driving. The students are. He's created a system they can game. And so they just play in class.

Literally, I sat there in 1st hour and watched students joke around, play on their phones, talk about everything but math, and when I asked, well "what am I supposed to do". The class consisted of tasks – let the kids try the task for five minutes, then teacher does the task for five minutes. That student work time was very little student work (because why

would they). And those that did shut off during the teacher work time, so we got half the kids tuning out at any given point in the lesson. On top of that, those turned off are being loud and distracting those that are trying to tune in at that time. So, minimal, if any, learning.

And he was supposed to talk to me about the lesson during lunch, but he went to Futsal instead… And didn't tell me. Luckily I caught him at the end of the day. While the lack of students "doing" was what I should have focused on (and yes it was discussed), I reframed this around, how can we create structures that will be solidly in place by the time his next full observation occurred. To that end though, to create structures without listening to those that the structures are for would be useless. So I asked him to create a survey. Here's how I framed it:

The teacher will create a survey to gain insight on:

1) What motivates the students (carrots and sticks)

2) What the students' goals for the class/year/high school are

3) What the student sees as his/her strengths and areas of growth as well as the teacher's strengths and areas of growth

Let's see how he does with this… but he needs authentic systems with ALL of his classes.

And I don't know why I care so much. I mean – I care, that's what I do. But even though his words say he wants to be here, his actions REPEATEDLY say otherwise. Its like I always say, "you can lead a student to water, but you can't make them pass math". Same

is here – I can keep telling him what and how and why he needs to do things, but I can't do it for him. And he doesn't want to do it. So if he doesn't want to do it, why do I care? That aside, I had a great conversation with Clark and John as we planned for their upcoming unit, including building in activities that will promote student engagement. We first planned the unit by looking backwards from the assessment. As the next few units are not integral to further math success, we focused on what was integral for success AND what was being assessed (which happened to overlap well). So they are going to start with exploring shapes and areas and angle sums. We are going to build out a Math-O for block day next week. I sent them the template and asked them to see what they can do. Additionally, we decided that the way of teaching area of regular polygons with apothems is antiquated. I showed them another way of doing it, using Law of Sines. And of course I trust them, but its not in the curriculum so I worry if they can do it. I said I would help, or even write it for them, but they were insistent they could handle it. I hope I didn't overstep my bounds. But outside of that, it was a good time. It was exactly what they were hoping for. So I think it was worthwhile. And it was my patented, 'lets get this done' approach. Which I think they appreciate. So it felt like we did a lot in a short amount of time. But it was talk. I'd rather see work then talk, but I will trust them to get the work done.

And that was my day in coaching.

Teaching was another story. See, I got to help out and teach 3rd hour so Anna could take the day off. And so I stopped by after our hall walk duty (which was a little long so I

could collect cookie money). That cookie errand though gave me a chance to see some classes I don't normally see.

But 3rd hour, I stopped by Anna's room to help out with the activity that I had planned and Marie decided she would try. So I helped her run X Factor. It was fun but chaotic. But fun. And it gave me a chance to try the activity before I did it myself during 6th hour. Not my students and all, but I do know a good number of them.

5th hour has been putting me in an interesting predicament. Its material I've never taught (in my 19 years) – coupled differential equations. So I told them I had to take a more direct approach. And it wasn't bad, but it wasn't my best me. I still have two more days of it. And I'm not giving up, but ugh, its tough stuff. I don't envy the students. I only have to feel confident when I teach it – they have to remember it as they prepare for the IB exams.

7th was fairly similar, but I have taught it (once before) and I was able to save time at the end to play the Post It game.

And 6th was like 3rd – but my class. We played the X Factor just like they did. They were super engaged which was awesome. Well, some were – I couldn't tell if all were as I had to facilitate. Oh, but it was also dually interesting cause of my visit. Narissa and Sarah. Narissa wanted to see my Kindness Wheel. And sarah was with her. But Sarah felt the need to bash my election choice = I voted for Warren as I appreciated her policies and thought, including in education. Sarah is a Bernie fan. We can't all be perfect – kidding, not kidding.

I did end my day with my three hour mentor training meeting.

But I'm so tired. So tired. And yeah. I should go to bed.

3/4/2020

I told you I was tired. This morning I lost my phone, drove the wrong way to school, and realized I left the tv on all night last night. And now I'm truly getting sick. My throat is so sore that swallowing anything is a chore. But I march on.

And it was a long day. I mean, getting home at 6:30 at night, been gone for more than 12 hours kinda day. And it's the third this week. And its only Wednesday.

But it was for interviews, and that's a good thing. I mean, I get to continue to help guide and mold our department by finding the best available talent (both new and experienced) and have a say in who gets taken on at our school. And its been the case that the ones I've always seen as the top candidate, provided they have accepted, we ended up hiring that candidate. This time, I'm glad we have several good candidates because we are gonna have several openings (but one for sure right now). And we had two "good" candidates that were experienced and one newer teacher that didn't interview great but had some potential. So, we will see what their videos of teaching look like.

One of them was Blake. I'd lover for him to come work with us. I love his positive attitude and his sense of good teaching and his dedication and his excitement. He's always been good to us. I just hope he would take it – and we could offer him what he'd want. He wants a job like mine, and I'm not ready to give up mine, but I'd love for him to be a Teacher leader.

But back to the day. It was long. I said that. But it was. It started with the usual. The meetings. We met to talk about grades and how its our job to check what grades our teachers are getting. And look for the strange stuff. And it's a lot. But it is important. The things some teachers are doing to fluff their gradebooks. Because there's a fear of too many F's. And administrators are great at talking out of both sides of their mouths. "We want more kids passing our class because every child should succeed. We want our classes to be challenging and rigorous." And not that I don't believe in those statements, but the way they use the grade book as a measure of that sometimes…

And its funny that this small portion of the meeting can occupy most of my brain space. Cause we talked about other things – hiring updates (and how we lost a Spanish teacher), course changes and adjustments made, how we can get TAs to receive a grade for authentically helping in classes, etc. But it was the grades that I remember most.

After our meeting, I got to sit with Cindy for a while to help her through the Calculus unit she has coming up. I shared a bunch of resources with her (from when I taught Math Studies), explained to her the philosophy of Calculus in that course, and helped to clarify some of her misconceptions of the curriculum. I think they will be fine. She's a hard worker and it's a shame we are losing her, but at least these students will be better from having her as their teacher.

And the day moved into my educator portion – GSA, 5th Hour Applications, 7th Hour Options. And I tried to be upfront with 5th hour about how this material is new for me. Be transparent. But that I'd try and I'd seek out answers that I didn't know. But I still don't feel like the best teacher here because I don't own it. And missing 5 students because of

Rogerots means that I have less students and so I can feel the lull as I struggle through getting them through their struggles.

Suffice it to say, by 7th hour, I was a little bit pliable. Meaning, after their process quiz, I was swayed into taking class outside for a lesson. The kids knew of this mini-amphitheater spot where I could use the ground and chalk and they could see from seats in the amphitheater. So we did. It was fine. It meant more direct instruction, but a change of scenery is always nice. I had to be mindful to not chalk myself up though because of the interviews.

After 7th, getting back to the classroom, wrapping things up, and shagging kids out of my room, I had to run to the office for our 5 interviews for math teachers. Which is fine cause some days I think we may need 5 more teachers (ok – well at least three I think – we know about Cindy, I'm pretty sure about Ally, and I don't think Gary will be asked back). But then there's Betty. And Mark. Both are big question marks still…

As to the interviews, I was happy with them mostly. Even our bad ones weren't that bad. Some years, all five would have been hired on. But I was especially happy that Blake interviewed. And there was one other very strong candidate, one strong candidate and 2 just ok. We're gonna ask the top three for videos of their classroom so we can decide who will fill this position (but know we have at least one or two more to fill still).

3/5/2020

We live in a color by numbers world

And the unwritten rules are pretty clear

Teachers know how to follow rules

We are the maker of rules

Not the breaker of rules

Especially Math Teachers

And the number of our Colors

Black, white, brown, yellow, red

Are right where they are supposed to be

And that's the problem

We know to color

Our 1s white

Our 2s yellow

Our 3s red

Our 4s brown

Our 5s black

Because those are the rules

And we follow the rules

And we don't go outside of the lines

And the funny thing is –

As clear as the lines are to us -

The lines aren't always that clear

The colors aren't always black and white

Or rather

What I see as White

You may see as Black

What I see as Male

You may see as Female

What I see is that what you see is what matters

Because perception

Is everything

So, go on

Tell me how to break the rules

Because I want to

Tell me how I get others to break the rules

Because I want to know that too

Tell me how we can create a rich tapestry

Where any color can be any number

And we can end up with a work of art

Not a hot mess

And tell me its ok

Its ok to try

Its ok to make a mess sometimes

Its ok if the picture isn't what you or I ever intended

Tell me its ok to break the rules

And let me create a masterpiece

Or a mess

But hopefully a masterpiece

Well the good news of today is that – as crazy as this week has been, today I got to leave at a decent time. And it was a good day in teaching – I know I did something right when, in a block period, a student who tends to be more reluctant says "there's only 2 minutes left" as if shocked the whole lesson went by so fast.

And that's how I felt about this day. Things were over almost as soon as they started.

PD was about how we perceive race and how that plays out in the classroom. And then it was done.

2nd Hour we met as a department to discuss courses for next year (and the victories we've had there), the accuplacer (and the victories we've had there), upcoming events like Pi Day and the GSA Assembly, and then time to break into smaller groups to plan.

And I thought we had a good plan set up for Int 3 (since I have to lead that team even though I don't teach it…?). The teachers decided they would use Edgenuity to help all

students do better on the Accuplacer next time around and then we would find a way to have them tested again towards the end of April. Accept, later in the day I find that maybe we can't have them tested outside of the math class. That maybe we'd have to do it right after SATs in April. Maybe not all teachers wanted to use Edgenuity for all students. But I can't fight this – I'm only one man and those teachers need to do what they can. Whatever. I'll live.

So that meant I got to spend my off hour doing happy visits. The ones where I can go in, watch for a little, and leave notes of happiness – or just positives – about what I saw in the classroom. I went to Ally – where she was getting kids to work on SAT preparation and they were doing so great. They were helping each other, they were motivated to do the work, they were self selecting what to work on based on their prior practice exams. And I told her how I thought it was awesome. And then she shared that with the whole department.

I went to Scott who was working on a writing project. And he was excited about it. And so the kids were too. And they were engaged and talking about the history of math. And I thought it was so cool how excited and invested he was and how it made the kids excited and invested. And so I told him.

I went to Gary. And yea. It was good for Gary this year. But it wasn't good. But I looked for the good. And I told him.

And then I had my lesson – and I'm not sure how it went so quickly, but it did. And kids made some great discoveries. And they learned. And they leaned on each other.

3/6/2020

Well, for the third time in my teaching career (yes third), I had a student pass out in my class. Which reminds me of the other times. The first time, well that was during a final and this tall skinny white boy just clunked over on top of this larger black female and the look she gave, like "what the fuck….", has stuck with me. And the second, Grant – oh Grant – I'm still not sure what happened, but his was in the age of skinny jeans, and when we flipped him over and his skinny jeans sagged down, well lets just say I got to see more of him than I wanted to. And today made three.

I knew, knew it was gonna happen. Or something at least. When Drake walked up to me during 6[th] hour, he was white as a ghost. He said he needed a drink and didn't feel well, and I tried to get him to just sit down. Except he more collapsed onto me. And the rest of the kids – and I'm laughing now out loud as I write this – did one of two things; they were completely oblivious to what happened because they were so invested in the lesson or they stopped what they were doing to help out. But that was the end of the day. Or almost. The day ended in a bar with other teachers swapping war stories.

I got to spend a lot of time today doing what I love – working with students and working with teachers. First hour was with Betty and her Integrated Math 3 honors and I like that class – probably because I taught it last year AND I know quite a few kids in here, all good (but all are good) and all I like to check in on. They were practicing Polynomial division (fun stuff) with the box method (even more fun). And it was good just there was no accountability to the lesson itself. So in our debrief, we talked about the following strategies:

In order to keep students engaged in the mathematical tasks when they are given a chunk of tasks to complete in a period, (particularly in Int Math 3 H), the teacher will:

1. Use methods like chunking the time (with verbal checkpoints), setting criteria for a grade for the day (ie finish 5 problems, get an A+, finish 4 problems, get an A, etc), or using the Green Light, Red Light approach so students know when to check in with the teacher,

2. Have extension tasks for groups that finish the tasks effectively and with enough work, and

3. Have a few keys to the work available for groups that feel stuck to resource

Most of these were ideas she had already, it just took me talking with her for her to pull them out. And the kids were trying – but because they were motivated. Most wanted to learn, which was a plus. But again, that class is so huge that there's only so much one teacher can do. I have to just try to advocate to be a helper more.

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We talked about this second hour as well as where Integrated Math 1 was going. And it was good to get them to think more about tasks – rich and meaningful tasks that can engage the students and get them doing math that they know but haven't seen in quite that light yet. We talked about experiments and different sequencing to give kids a better chance at meeting the goals for the unit.

Then later that day I got to watch Cindy – and again, its great to see her teach. Here though it was obvious that she had that elementary training. She was teaching systems to the students but had a very rigid way of seeing how to approach solving systems by elimination. So that's where we talked during the debrief was about other strategies that we could implore to help students both conceptualize the math as well as get in the skill practice that they needed to be successful with the material.

And then I taught. 5th was – well what it has been. Me trying to stay one step ahead of the students with this curriculum. Them puzzled. Me slightly ahead of puzzled.

And 6th –well I told you about Drake. But it was going well because I just let them loose on some station problems, I didn't mandate when or how much they do (mostly because I was attending to Drake) and they ended up doing far more than I would have anticipated.

And 7ᵗʰ Hour brought us to the Post-it game. They had been asking for it, so I delivered. We actually started it on Wednesday but we had tons more problems we could use (on recurrence relations) so we used that activity to get them to practice.

Suffice it to say – by the end of the day – the end of the week - I was drained. Mentally, physically, emotionally. It didn't help that on Thursday I got into an electronic argument with Sarah over politics. And it was dumb. Because I even asked her "Are you trying to fight" and she proceeded. So she pushed me out. And that's fine. I don't need people in my life who are going to take such a hardlined view on politics that they can't see the forest for the trees. I'm trying to remember myself that there's always a person behind electronic posts – and remember that. Trying. But my point was I needed a drink but was worried about running into Sarah, but still chanced the school Happy Hour (as some of my other peeps didn't get back to me). And I'm glad I did. I had fun, laughed, drank a beer.

And I learned some stuff that made my toes curl. Mostly how Roger is the single reason that most of my team (and the Special Ed team) is considering leaving. And I don't know how to handle that. But that's a next week issue. I hope I can find that answer soon….

3/9/2020
Today is the kinda day that if I could have stopped to have a melt down and let tears stream down my face, I would have. I am exhausted. I am overwhelmed. I am feeling

defeated. I still don't know what to do about our teachers and how they feel about leaving because of Roger. And I'm exhausted.

So it should come as no surprise that as I drove to work today, the mixture of extra traffic and extra exhaustion led me to get into an accident. I'm still not sure how it happened. It was stop and go traffic and light rain. It was stopped. Then it was go. So I went, as I was going I reached down for my coffee. By the time I looked up, I was too close to the car in front of me to stop. The whole thing still feels surreal. And I'm still in a daze. Not because I was hurt, but because it still feels like a dream, a fog. I still can't believe I let this happen. And what's worse is that, even though I had been a pretty great driver, nothing major outside of a few small incidents when I first started driving over 20 years ago, this is my third accident in a little over a year (two involved rear ending in poor weather and one was – I'm not even sure what it was but it ended with me in a handicapped parking sign).

And it shouldn't be a surprise. I've been emotionally burnt. With everything that is going on with work. And now all of this with the virus that is taking over the US. Its funny how people are denying what's happening, but look at the numbers – we are consistently doubling our infections every two days. I'm not worried for me. I'm not worried for my family (although I thought for a hot second that Finn had it this weekend). I'm worried about our society, my loved ones like my aunts, uncles, and mom.

Well, I suppose I am a little worried about myself. This weekend when I was walking Winnie at night, I heard helicopters. And given our current administration in the White House, lets just say I was afraid rash decisions weren't being made. I couldn't help but wonder if they were sizing us up to see if they wanted to bomb us to destroy the spread of the virus in our state. I know it was irrational, and I tend not to be overly irrational but I couldn't help but think this. Obviously it didn't happen, but who knows what irrational decisions our government may make in the coming days and weeks.

So, yea stress is a real thing. And combine that with a lack of sleep and listening to people on the radio talk about the crises we are headed to and you get the accident I had this morning. Which I handled fairly well. Even though I got into the accident at 6:30 am, I was able to exchange all the necessary information, call my insurance, get a rental car, get my car towed, and be at work by around 9:30. Which left me one period to make sure my day was ready. Good thing I stayed up late last night to ensure I was ready.

Then fourth hour I got to watch Scott. And it started fine. I mean it was great. He had a really good lesson going. And I think he always had it in him, but he was doing some of the things we had talked about recently, namely:

1. Help the students to chunk the task (not always particularly with smaller tasks or tasks that can be more open middle),
2. Provide checkpoints where students should engage with their partners about how the problem is progressing

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And it went great. Until he came up to me and said: "I don't want you to put anymore stuff in there" referring to the Whetstone system that the district uses for observations. His worry is that they (THEY = the district) will use this all against him in some sort of negative tracking kinda way. And, while now I can see that, it really hurt me in the moment. Maybe because it made me think, was I doing this for the system or for me or for him? I want to be helpful, but what I heard amounted to "you're not being helpful". So, I don't know where that leaves me…

Classes were..

Well, 5th hour –we finally got through the bulk of this new and difficult material and of course today is the day that many of the students who were out for robots came back. They all loved that the warm-up had an answer that ended up being their team number… but then they were at a loss over what all they missed. And I felt bad having to say, "you missed, you'll have to wait on that and I will get back to reviewing some of this material later in the week, but I can't stop and reteach everything in the moment". Which was part of the reason, but it's also like I'm telling a story I barely know. If I get off track, I may not remember the early parts adequately nor will I be able to get back to this point in the story.

6th Hour we played the puzzle game – and they enjoyed it and got pretty far so I was happy. They didn't finish but that's ok cause we can finish tomorrow and they all seemed to do really well.

And 7th hour was a review of all the old material – both from this unit (the first half first semester) and trigonometry which was like 2-3 years ago for these students. We played

the points game to help, and they informed me (after having me for a second – and some for a third – time) that the game was getting boring. Noted.

I was supposed to debrief Scott after school, but he cancelled. And maybe that was another reason I felt he was not encouraged by my being there. Another problem to solve…

Unfortunately, or fortunately, I forgot about the GSA rehearsal after school – I thought it was Tuesday – and I had to be the one to get Finn from daycare so… I abandoned them. If I wasn't feeling bad enough already.

Lets just say, if I could have crawled under a rock and hid, I would have. It was that kinda day.

3/10/2020

I spiral down

This week, this month, this year

Running into myself

And the things I've already said and done

Because I see the things I've already seen

So I loop into myself

And it's a painful collision

It hurts the soul

When sometimes you look at the same situation,

The same lesson,

The same teacher,

The same flaws

And bias

And insecurities that try to hide

And you realize your words fall on deaf ears

Or lazy ones

And when the flaws are the antithesis to what I believe

It hurts even more

When a teacher perpetuates stereotypes

"Only the loud, self-confident white male students are the ones that understand"

When a teacher refuses to put in the work,

"I don't know if you have the answer or not"

When a teacher presumes too much of students,

"The only reason I'm doing this is because I wonder if some of you have forgotten"

When a teacher denies students their ability to share their understanding,

"Don't give me more than a one word answer"

When a teacher assumes every kid knows exactly how to start,

"I'm gonna come and check on the few sticks I pull"

When a teacher cannot read the room,

"I'm gonna give you a few more minutes on this task"

When a teacher likes to hear himself talk,

"Now I know you just did this but here's how I would"

When a teacher provides no feedback to students,

"No, you're wrong"

Students disengage

And I can't blame them

And I've said these things over and over to him

To the teacher

But this teacher is refusing to learn

And so I feel stuck

And I feel pained

And I don't know where to go from here

Aside from the many students I conferred with about their IAs, and aside from the teacher I described above, and aside from worries about the coronavirus and my car, and aside from the anxiety of my teachers that I feel more than ever, well… there's no aside from all of that. Its been a lot to handle. And I don't know if I'm any closer to solving it all.

Nor am I any closer to solving the issues I've been having at school. We had our teacher only leadership meeting and I brought up the frustrations that my team is having with

Roger. And Special Ed shared the same frustrations (as he is also over them). And we talked about it but felt helpless. Dr. Skye doesn't like to hear that she is wrong about things, so I can't bring it up to her. I could try talking to him, but I think he has to see it first. So, I was debating about tomorrow's ILT meeting, where we do the data dives that me (and Roger) are supposed to plan, but it ends up being me usually. So, I figured we could use data both on an individual student level (like a case study) to see what was happening with our current freshmen as well as globally with discipline. My hope is that it can trace back to what has (or more aptly hasn't) been done with discipline. From there, I can try to further see what I need to talk about with Roger.

And Ally was helpful. She gave me some students to use as a case study. Ones that I could also use to investigate their behavior ATOM and conference ATOM and see what has actually happened with them. And I made good headway on all that – until Roger stopped by 4th to talk to me about what we should do tomorrow – finally. He suggested grades, which is funny because we joked this morning that he would suggest we talk about grades. And I get that we need a clear message, so we decided to shorten up that discussion on how we get a clear message, and then go from there. So, I nixed the whole discipline discussion because all that it would reveal (which I think will come out in the case studies) is that only in the cases where the administration wrote up referrals were there serious consequences to the behaviors.

Amidst all of that, I saw Mark. And yea – that's what the above is about. I don't get how he doesn't change. I'm a little glad he is looking for a new job because after Gary, he's probably the weakest teacher in our department. Ok, judgement, I know, and maybe anger and frustration too, but I can't help it. Scott, when he was principal, often asked me about who my top and bottom teachers were and so my mind goes there constantly. But Scott had a way of helping those bottom teachers see their way out the door….

Lunch came and I had both GSA and students talking about their IAs. I know that Mark wasn't scheduled though. So when he stopped by, I was like "no no not right now". Only to realize later, I never scheduled a debrief time with him… ugh, I'll have to fix that tomorrow or soon…

Then, as a teacher, I got to finally go back over some of the prior materials for my 5th hour so that those where were roboting could get caught up. I tied it into the warm-up and told them their process quiz would look similar tomorrow. 6th Hour we finished our Puzzle Activity. And 7th hour we played Last Man Standing as our way to review and they were on it. Coincidentally, they won cookies so I have to add that to my to do list.

And that's more or less how my day ended… I'm not sure what tomorrow – or the rest of this week will bring though.

3/11/2020

Best laid plans eh… I had our ILT meeting worked out, so beautifully. And of course, we switched gears because of fear of schools shutting down. Which is a real fear and I don't blame them for doing this. I think its important for us to come up with a plan. It just pushes back against what I was trying to accomplish – and I don't know how or when I will get to that.

So, we made plans. We did discuss the gradebook because we need students to know what they can and can not work on if we have cancel school. Plus, the department chairs are meeting this afternoon – a meeting I can't go to - (and then meeting with their departments tomorrow) so they can discuss what we decide today. Then we talked about what we could and could not do if we had to cancel school. We decided we could have students work from home. We just needed a good grasp on how many needed computers and internet access. So I did what I do and I made a survey. Again, we developed a plan that could get it to all students and I ensured that plan could happen. We also discussed how departments needed to develop their own systems for what 'online schooling' would look like as we wouldn't want teachers reinventing the wheel at this point.

I hung around a few minutes after to talk to Roger. I wanted to touch base about Scott. I had a thought. If I can't get him to respond to what I put in Whetstone, then I can score what I saw (if it was good) in Whetstone and let that be a catalyst to building more trust

with him See, I haven't had him all year. This is new. He's not used to constant visitors. So he needed to see the carrots of my visiting. I mean, the fruits of our discussion were obvious in what I saw so I wanted to reward that. I additionally asked Roger about the additional partial. Teachers are allowed to have a followup partial IF they wanted. So I suggested to Roger that I be the one to offer that (as he hasn't finished all of the original partials anyway).

And that started the whirlwind of today. I stopped by Ruby. I asked if she could email the survey to all of the students. She said she could. She also filled me in on the scheduling part of the department chair meeting I would be missing. We basically needed to decide who would teach what next year. I've done this many times, so I was familiar. But this is also something I deeply care about so when I wasn't running around with the rest of my day, my thoughts (and actions) went back to this whenever I could spare them. Well this and worries of where we are going next. Both as a school and as a community/district/state/country.

But by the end of the hour, I got to so see Clark enact the lesson we planned the week prior where we decided we would do a review game (Math-O). He's got so much energy, its great for all of the kids. I didn't take formal notes, just walked around, helped kids, and got a feel for what was happening. My biggest take away for him was to find a way to leave the questions up so that students could go back to them when need be. I'll get to see John do a similar version of the game 7[th] hour.

At lunch, we had GSA. And I had kids stopping in for help. And IAs. And Mark was supposed to stop in. But he didn't. But the GSA kids practiced their speeches for the assembly and that was great! They impressed me and their peers. Unfortunately, I doubt we will be in school for this. Let's hope we can reschedule…

Then, 5th – more frustration with this new material. But they had their process quiz after a similar warm-up and I think they were rather successful with that. And then they moved on to connecting Euler's method with the new material we are learning. And they weren't so successful there. But we have time (I hope). 7th hour was testing, but I used that time to go and watch John with his Math-O.

And John… oh John… He's got the heart and passion, but not the follow through with the kids. He doesn't hold them accountable – academically or behaviorally. He has all the right pieces there, just doesn't follow through so the kids run him over. That is definitely going to be the heart of the debrief. However, I didn't get to see the activity – he was starting it as I left – so I left him with the same advice I gave Clark about having the problems remain on the board (or better yet, having a problem kid write them on the board for the class). I went back, watched my kids as they finished up the test. Tried to do other work but my mind kept wandering to the possibility of the school cancellation and the department schedule.

I worked and worked on it – even though I could and should be doing other things. But my mind kept going back to it. And the uncertainty. Of who we will hire. Of what will happen with Gary. Of what teachers will think.

I think my best bet is to come up with some ideas and then talk to the teachers individually tomorrow during our department time about what their thoughts are. Without promises yet of what we can or will do. But an idea of what I'm trying to do.

Of course the whole thing with Gary – my administration's idea is that I do twice the work and make two schedules – one with him and one where it's a new hire, but that means twice the work for me…

One thing I did notice when I started looking was that Elaine was going to have only one of the SL classes that she currently has two sections for. That boggled my mind a bit. And I also noticed the HL numbers for Anna and I were a little lower too. So, I did some digging and found a lot of kids missing from those lists. It took some doing – on me, Anna, and Elaine's part – but we hunted down the names of all the kids missing from each of those lists and were told there was a glitch in the registration, hence the large number of missing students. So glad we caught it but it made my scheduling work somewhat obsolete. Oh well, I know what I have to work on now.

3/12/2020

Well, they did it. They cancelled school for the next three weeks (well, two – the third is Spring Break). And the part that boggles my mind is that, even though I (at least and I hope they did too) saw this coming, there wasn't a plan to ensure all students received instruction – so their directive was 'no instruction'. Which just leads to many more unanswered questions. What does this mean for our school year if we have an "extended spring break"? What if its not just two weeks? What about my kids taking AP and IB exams? What about state testing? What about my paycheck? What about hourly staff or SSP paychecks? What do we do next week (where they say only some people are needed on Monday and Tuesday)? What will my wife and kid's school do? And this is where I am today so I'm not seeing today as it was, but through this lens… And, honestly, the day became mostly about some of these what ifs – and then most of that work was negated by the messaging from the district. Ugh. Nothing went as planned today. Not that there were disasters, but just not the way I would have envisioned.

Elaine was feeling sick and was thinking about going home. She was one of the teachers I was supposed to watch. So I didn't. And Anna failed to tell me that her student teacher was teaching the lesson – until today. So I couldn't really reschedule that. That left me with a 2nd hour of meetings, a 4th hour of my own planning time, and a 6th hour of teaching. Oh, and PD to start the day.

PD time was us pretending that things weren't going to happen – but planning for the worst. We got an overview of what department time would be and then the GSA had a

chance to present to the school about the assembly they were planning and how to acknowledge their LGBT students. They did phenomenal, the way they interacted with the adults and how they answered their questions. We made sure to remind the staff that even though the assembly may not (will not) happen as planned, that these are things to be mindful of as a teacher of LGBT students.

From there we broke into department time. Our agenda (which would carry us into 2nd hour), included:

1. Gradebooks

2. What to do if we don't have school

3. Pi Day

4. Partial Evaluations

5. Courses for Next Year

6. Testing

   - Interim

   - Accuplacer

7. Course Breakouts -

- A plan for what will happen if we don't have school

- Interim Preparations

The gradebook info was what we discussed in ILT – making sure that students can understand what zeros and blanks and missings all mean – and ensuring we are using one of those at all times. The what to do if we don't have school (or as it was changed on my

board – how to prepare for the end of the world) was us discussing tools we could use if we were going to teach (and we're not – so that was SOMEWHAT wasted). Between Khan, and Zoom, and Schoology, and a myriad other resources, we felt equipped to make decisions. Additionally, I provided my two cents which was that it may be best that we focus the next two weeks on a unit that, if missed, didn't effect the rest of the curriculum greatly.

Then we talked about Pi Day – which for us is going to be tomorrow (although now I'm thinking of how I can make something happen, but not it). We get treats and prizes donated by the community and school and we then provide those to the students through having them come to the library and participate in games and food. Although, again, we won't have it in the library because of all the concern around people sharing germs.

This moved us into partials. After talking with Roger, I told them about how I could do a second partial IF they wanted another score. We just had to set it up. But I don't think that became priority one with everything else going on.

I jumped into Testing to remind them of the position we are in with Accuplacer and Interims. I then overviewed the courses we are offering next year and said I would talk individually with teachers about what they want to teach next year. This worked out well because then I didn't have to have a grand plan ready to go yet. Not that I'm sure of that grand plan. I know I need two plans though. One with Gary and one without. So, I used 4[th] to come up with those plans (and I did a decent job I think), getting most everyone what they wanted, except for Gary. And then I had them break out into the courses they are teaching to talk about their plan while I talked to them one-on-one about their

schedule requests. This also worked out well because Scott and Mark weren't here… But this also meant that I postponed the Int Math 3 collaboration (on preparing for the end of the world till tomorrow) so they were actually saved the "no instruction" planning for instruction meeting.

One strange and odd surprise occurred during 4th. I got an email saying I had three large packages delivered. I thought it may be in response to the letters our students had sent the companies about managing their waste. But when I got down there were about 120 calculators that seemed to have come from the district (although not entirely sure and there was no forewarning). So I borrowed some students and lugged them up to my room. And they were nice – Ti-84 color screen with the charger – so we were happy about that! Between those meetings and the master schedule, the rest of the day seemed to blur by. I know we did math during 6th. They had their process quiz and then a jigsaw to determine the graphs of the six trig functions. I was supposed to end my day with a virtual meeting, then race to get to my daughter's concert but with everything going on, both were cancelled, so it ended up being a quiet (and worry filled) evening at home.

3/13/2020

Point of Inflection

I knew it was starting -

When I heard the clicks,

Felt the bumps,

Saw the crowds -

So I buckled in

Strapped on that harness

And this crazy ride started

This ride

It just keeps getting steeper

And steeper

And it's enough to scream

If you had a chance to catch your breath

I look around

I see people closing their eyes

Blind to our ascent

I see people screaming in joy

As if this ride was made for them

As if the ride will have a happy ending

Cause that's how rides work

I see people not strapped in properly

And I worry for them

And I reach for them

Knowing full well I can't reach them

Or maybe I don't want to reach them

For fear of being pulled off too

And as we continue to rise

A single tear streaks down my face

Carving scars into my cheek as it is pushed down by our ascent

A tear of fear

Mostly for others

But a little for myself

A tear of frustration

Because this ride didn't have to end up this way

But I was powerless to change it

A tear of uncertainty

A tear of pain

A tear of life

Living

But alone

Alone with so many others

And if I could trust the drivers of this crazy ride

I'd feel a little more at ease

But trust is earned

And these drivers have long ago lost that in my eyes

Sometimes I think they just want the attraction of the ride

And nothing to do with the ride itself

They don't care about us, the riders

If they did, they would have ensured our safety long ago

No - they care about how they can make money on the ride

How they can cut corners

And how they can keep their business going

Screw the passengers

I don't know when or how this ride ends,

But I just long to be able to see the horizon again

To see what lies ahead

And not up

I need this ride to make that turn

I need that point of inflection

Even if it means we will race down this huge hill we just climbed

I need it

So I can breath again

So I can scream

So I can hope

Till then

I keep my eyes open

I see the ride for what it is

And maybe I will find the courage to grab onto those that need help

Or maybe I won't

Maybe I'll just hold tight to my own harness

And pray for the future

If yesterday was a whirlwind, today was a tornado. After writing last night, I started a group chat with the math teachers to decide what to do about Pi day and the multitude of Pies and other deserts in the math office. The consensus was to cancel the big stuff and have Pi Day delivered to them. We kept the Tree Maps that Ally made (as a handout for students to do if they wanted), the Trivia that I made as a way to raffle off the gift cards, and the notion of doing some art (be it actually art or jokes or poems) about Pi to the teacher and gave small prizes the teacher could give out. But that meant most of the day not teaching was spent delivering the pies, handouts, prizes, silverware, plates, etc. There was one teacher who opted his class out of anything Pi Day for fear of spreading germs. And while I kinda get it, the rest of the team jumped on and started calling him a bubble boy… which was kinda funny, but I still respected his decision. I just felt a little bad for his kids.

On top of that, we had to adjust to this notion of "no instruction". I asked for clarification, and this didn't mean "no assignments", just nothing due the first day back. So, I spread the word, particularly to those classes with a deadline of national testing. I composed my thoughts for my three classes and sent them each a message outlining what will be expected. Of course, I reviewed that when they were in class. Each period had the chance to then work on math stuff and/or engage in pie and pi day activities. But I had that feeling of floating through this tornado all day, like I wasn't in control and I could only see what was happening but not stop any of it. By the time 7th hit, I had my student aide working on assembling the calculators (unpacking and putting on the chargers), which meant a lot of cardboard. So, I did little to stop the eventual cardboard robot Pi Man that they turned Andrew in, because, again, that whirlwind feeling. Well that, and I know they are kids. They enjoy playing with each other. And I wasn't about to say – "you don't know when you'll see each other again, but be serious now and don't have fun". So, I let it slide. And let them have their fun.

So it was crazy. Who knows if I said all the right words to the kids today. The ones in my classes. The ones that showed up. There wasn't perfect attendance today by far. But I tried. We tried. Pi day helped. And we did make it that much more enjoyable for the students.

And then I needed to have my fun. I told Kevin even before this craziness started that we needed to get a beer soon. So, I found him after school and we hung out – and so did a lot of other teachers – from my department but also from across the school. It was like a goodbye without the goodbyes. No one knew for sure when we'd see each other next, but we talked like we would soon. And who knows. Maybe I will. Maybe I'll hang out with some of them somehow depending on how all this spreads.

3/19/2020

They say that Math is Objective

Clear goal

One right answer

Black and white

They

Those are the "they" that don't understand math

Because math can say whatever we want it to say

And when one presents math in an Objective manner

It can easily be taken as truth

By the "they"

Because we've reinforced this Objectivity of Math

And in doing so, we've created pandemic

That's fueling a pandemic

We allow people to spread misinformation

Deadly misinformation in this case

And it hurts

My heart

My soul

My mathematical me

So much I can't decide if I should fight more

Or lay low and suffer in silence

Eyes wide open

To the blindness of my peers

A mathematical blindness formed by us,

The math teachers

Who insisted we live in an Objective subject

And told their students that was true

And made them believe in this Black and White world

Where numbers always tell the truth

And the knowledge they present is always true

Imagine if they only knew

This week has been mind-shattering. To be thrust into social-distancing. Self-quarantining. At home with my wife and three kids. And trying to figure out how my identity as a teacher and a teacher leader remains intact. Here's what I've learned:

1 – We use the notion of equity to get what we want. So many teachers in DPS have taken to social media to praise the decision that 'no instruction' was provided these first two weeks under social distancing. They say if we tried to provide instruction many will be missed. Many will fall behind and gaps will widen. I don't disagree, but I strongly feel that by doing nothing we widen the gaps even more. We know about the Opportunity Gap, and a lot of what that says takes place over the summer – families that are more well-to-do find ways for their children to remain intellectually engaged in the summer – through sports, jobs, classes, clubs, etc. Whereas those that can't afford those opportunities fall behind. What we see now are students in families with the social and/or financial means providing their children with learning opportunities, whereas those that can't afford to are not. And they don't have the hand of the school to help balance that out. We see gaps sprout up from the summer – but we could be talking about a 5 month delay for teaching. And that gap would be insurmountable.

So why do people so vehemently defend their notion of equity? Why do I defend my position that providing nothing does more harm? Ultimately it goes to what we want. Do we want to do the work and see our students have the opportunity to advance or do we want to focus on the myriad other things that our lives are intertwined with at the

moment? I know this is my job. So I know this is what I should do. So I advocate for us to keep teaching. I offer my self as a support to all those that need additional help.

2 – I do miss my teachers and hope for the best – but I don't know how to make that happen. Social media is great for this. I can check in on them. I can share things with them. I can laugh at their posts, provide my own witty comments (or pictures), and feel connected. But I also have reached out by creating a group chat. And it still goes with comments ranging from building a headboard (ok that was me) to games they are playing to food they are cooking to trips they are taking (or not taking). Its good to hear from people every once in a while. Know they are still going strong. I can (and should) do more. And probably will once we know more.

3 – I despise being in the dark. The way our district has handled the communication around what is happening has been utterly criminal. We don't hear about what they are (or aren't) planning. We just have to wait. And then, I get an email saying "lets look at what online classes could look like". Followed by, in the same day, the governor announcing all schools will be out until after 4/17. And we still don't know what it will look like. And we still have people pressing we do nothing to teach our kids.

And we don't know where this leaves our students taking AP and IB exams that give them college credit (and make it more affordable). AP has not cancelled anything yet, they merely state they are looking at ways for testing to occur at home. And IB hasn't

496

made any announcement. Because they are world wide. It seems they will still push for testing but provide some documentation for students unable to test. But documentation does not earn college credit. So, all of this that's left unknown… Particularly around my job. I don't like it.

4 – Its hard being a working parent. Its hard being a stay at home parent. But its incredibly hard doing both. Particularly when you are trying to potty train a three year old.

5 – Math has been weaponized. See my poem. It's just how I feel after seeing so many 'bad' posts on social media. I just couldn't respond anymore so left them with: "I see some of your posts with bold claims supported by facts and numbers and charts, and I can't help but think… 'Y'all need(ed) some better Math Teachers!'".

I just screenshot that post so I can just drop it anytime I see bad math being represented as facts that distort the truth.

6 – Uncertainty. This week is my wife and kids "in school" at home. Next week is their Spring break – so I'll just be checking on my kids periodically. The following week is my spring break so I'll be checking on my kids and doing my work still. And then – come April 7th when both my wife and I are teaching online and two kids are learning online

and, oh yeah, there's a three year old, I'm not sure how that's gonna go. And how long

that's gonna go. And it worries me.

3/22/2020

We have a choice

We always have a choice

We can choose to survive

We can choose to thrive

This is not an easy time

Let me say that again

This is not an easy time

It's not an easy time

It's not an easy time

But

We can either hide inside while attending to ourselves

Our needs

Our well beings

Or we can extend our love to the world

From at least six feet

I see those that are hiding

Dwelling

Stuck in a cycle of fear

And panic

And depression

And loneliness

And these emotions are tearing you apart

Unleashing in ways that mistreat your fellow human

Separating you

And increasing that loneliness

But you are not alone

We

WE

Are all in this together

We are all together alone

And that's what unites us

From at least six feet apart

And so many things can happen from at least six feet

A smile

A wave

A hello

Reaching out to loved ones

With a phone call

A face time

A text message

An email

A letter

My god, a letter –

When was the last time you wrote a letter?

What better time?

An act of kindness –

From six feet

And without leaving any residue

Use social media to

Say a kind word,

Avoid an argument,

Check in on lost loved ones,

Reply to those silly "show me your 19th picture" posts because

It will brighten their day seeing your adventures

It will brighten your day seeing that memory

Disagree but avoid hate

Get to know people

And not just the persona you see

Reconnect

Rekindle

(or rekindle…)

Redefine

Your relationships

Your self

Your place in this world

Offer your services to your community

Share what you know

About cooking

Sewing

Teaching

Learning

Living

Loving

And don't give up trying

Whatever our choices

They may fall on death ears

That letter may not get read

That chalk message may go unnoticed

That picture you post may go unseen

That student may not be reached by the lesson

But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try

We have to try

Because why fight for a world

That we are too afraid to make better?

Remember –

This too shall pass

We will emerge from this

We will have lost loved ones

And my heart aches

And breaks

For those that we may lose

I see a world on the horizon though

One that is founded in the love that we

Right now

Have a chance to spread

So think about this

As you sit in your Social Isolation

Practicing Social Distancing

The world you want to live in

When this passes

And make that world a reality

I'm tired and furious of the "we can't", "we won't", "what about", etc. I know I'm a man

of action, but to lose ourselves to inaction because of constantly wondering about the

what-ifs does nothing for anyone. Least of all our students.

I'm tired of the excuses. We can do something. We must do something. Will it ever be

perfect? No. But it will be better than nothing. Especially if we do what we do out of

love. And hope. And peace. And understanding.

So, as I brace myself for a week of perpetration as to what an actual Online classroom

can look like, I ground myself in that. In the above.

3/24/2020

I had the chance to go into the school today.

I cried.

I miss it.

I miss being me and the me I am in there.

At home I'm not that whole me

Just a part of it

I miss my colleagues

And wonder about them

And their well being

My team

And I'm teamless at home

Or – at least – I'm with my home team

Not my away team

That team that consumes half of my life

And I love my home team

And I don't want anyone to think differently

But I love my away team

And the players

And the game

And I'm allowed to miss it

Miss them

Miss me

3/25/2020

If I could tell you

If I could tell you how it's felt

These past few weeks –

To be without the daily lesson plans,

The grading,

The parent contacts,

To be without the constant questions of "why"

And "what if"

And "can I go to the bathroom now"

To not have to worry about 30 students for 50 minutes at a time

How I can engage them

Check their understanding

Assess them

Support them

Scaffold

Differentiate

Group

And get them to collaborate

And then not have to worry about how I keep those same kids

Invested in a 90 minute block lesson…

To not have the emails,

The phone calls,

The meetings,

Ugh the meetings,

The office hours,

The collaborations,

The early mornings and

The late nights

And the thousands of decisions I have to make each day

To be without the times we've laughed together

The times we've cried together

The times we've learned from each other

The times we've grown from each other

The times where we've lifted each other up

The smiles

The warm fuzzies

The hope

The peace

The passion

The inspiration you continuously supply

If I could tell you how it's felt –

Truly felt –

To be without you

My GW community

My home away from home

To be without all of that

Is to be missing a piece of me

And that's what I feel

But here's what I know

I know that we are strong

And with our strength comes a great passion

For our fellow human

For our fellow Patriot

And I've seen and heard of some awesome feats that you have already accomplished

From how you care for and spend time with your families

To how you've reached out and touched the community

Acts of giving

Acts of caring

Acts of love

And know there is so much more you're capable of

And time will show all these Patriots have to offer

I know that we will get through this,

Even though when we come back

Our community may be a little smaller

Our hearts may be wounded

Scarred

We will march on,

Together alone.

And I know there will come a day where we will see each other

And I'm warning you now,

I'm gonna hug you –

Not because I'm a hugger

But because I'll need that physical connection

To know it's real

I know that you are making the world a better place

By sacrificing time outside

To stay in

I know that you are witnessing a pivotal moment in history

And having gone through this

Our futures will be much brighter

In your hands

I know you are learning

Peace

Justice

Equity

Passion

Kindness

Sacrifice

Truly learning these ideals

Beyond any book,

Any paragraph,

Any sentence

And I know you feel alone

I know that

Because I feel that too

But we are connected

Not just because of a building

But because we are all experiencing this

Together

And that's what I know

So here's what I will do

I will keep fighting for you

Students

Parents

Coworkers

Community members

I will do my best to meet you where you're at

Academically

Emotionally

And I will help you to find some sense of normalcy

In these not so normal times

In this not so normal world

And I will help you learn more about this not so normal world

So you can change it

For the better

I will teach you –

No

I will do more than teach with you

I will join you

I will share in your successes

Of which I know there will be many

I will laugh with you

Because through it all,

You bring a smile to my face

I will weep with you

When it is time to

I will be a virtual shoulder to cry on

When the tears become a rain storm

I will carry you

When you are overwhelmed with sadness

I will cheer and celebrate with you

And I will not give up

So don't give up

And I will love my GW family

Today

Tomorrow

Always

And I will do anything for my loved ones

And I will be there for my loved ones

Just as I am here now

5/31 –

I think I sorely underestimated the emotional toll that reading and analyzing this journal would have. It is not easy. I'm reliving some really hard times – examining them under a microscope to truly understand what I was doing and feeling at the time. It makes my heart heavy. I know I need to finish it, but its becoming more of a chore or a burden. It hurts.

It also hurts because this is a reality, but a warped version of the most recent reality that I've known as a teacher. For over 2 and a half months now, being isolated, being able to isolate that part of me that lived in the school and the classroom I could survive. But having to face that, recall those experiences in the cloak of this dark time, makes it so exhausting.

I will get through, I know I will. I keep counting down the pages… But I needed to put in words the toll it has placed upon me. I fight on…

I am on a boat

A lifeboat

Alone

We all are

And some boats I can see

512

And others I can not

But seeing is just seeing

And it makes me feel even more alone

Every day

Floating

Finding my way

Finding our way

Some of us think they know the way

Others don't even know how to steer their boat

Others follow

Others shout for help but their cries,

Lost in the waves

But we keep going

Not sure if

And where

We will get

And it didn't have to be this way

We could have been connected

We still can be connected

If we chose to move as a team

But in sea of survivors

Everyone is trying to survive

No one is trying to lead

No one is trying to lead the sea of life boats

Some of us are trying to lead

But not all of us –

Not that we all could

And not all of us are being led

I lead

I lead a group of my peers

And leading is tricky

Because I have to constantly look forward so I know where we are going

Which means I can't always look back to make sure everyone is with me

And there are times I have lost my party

Or members there of

And there are times where we look like a well formed fleet

I try

I still try

Even though I don't know if I'm taking them in the right direction

I can see a few others ahead of me trying to lead

But I can't always make out where they are going

Or why

And it scares me at times

It scares me to feel so alone

It scares me know so many rely on me

It scares me to not know…

But here's what I do know

I know there will come a time

When the boats will dock

And most of us will find our way back

Most of us

I hope

Until then

I charge on

And hope I can get my team

To safety

Appendix to the Journal – My Dispositions I post in my room

1. All students deserve my attention, love, respect, and care. More so, no student deserves to be treated less than the next – by myself or anyone else. Every student I teach is the best student I have ever had.

2. It is not a sign of weakness to care. It is a sign of strength. In fact, only the truly strong can care for students because it takes tremendous strength to do so.

3. I can make a difference. I can be a positive influence. I can help students succeed no matter what society has dictated for them.

4. I cannot treat every student the same (which is not a contradiction to number 1 – in fact, when you consider number 1, it's a necessity).

5. It is my job to move every student as far as I can along their road through learning.

6. I am responsible for the academic and behavioral outcomes of all of my students.