

The first article from the ASCD Whole Child Symposium (2014) conducted a study about the significance of teacher leaders and how that role has changed in the last 10 years. The participants were taken from the ASCS, about 125,000 teachers, principals, and superintendents world wide. The findings were that the role of teacher leadership has changed, meaning much more is being asked of teachers now as opposed to 10 years ago. Teachers are taking on more roles that were traditionally designated for the principal. This has made schools run more efficiently, but has taken a toll on teachers themselves. The argument is not to take proficient teachers out of the classroom and make give them administration duties, but rather to help teachers cultivate the skills and relationships necessary to lead the school from inside the classroom.

The second article, Teacher Leadership is Linked to Higher Test Scores by Madeline Will (2017) conducted a study regarding the relationship between test scores and teacher leadership in schools. Teachers participated in the Teacher Center's Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning survey, which led to data findings suggesting that teachers who do not have a say in what they teach do not implement the skills students need to achieve high test scores. Alternatively, teachers who have a stake in the curriculum they teach, teach highly effective lessons they are passionate about. This results in higher test scores and a deeper understanding of the material. It also gives students the opportunity to take part in their learning from the teacher. Teachers can be more adaptive to student needs and take student feedback into consideration. When students feel they also have a stake in their learning, they are more inclined to participate, take ownership, and have higher scores.

The third article, Teacher Leaders Creating Cultures of School Renewal and Transformation by Floyd Beachum and Audrey M. Dentith. The participants were 25 teacher leaders in five schools within a large midwestern city school district. The study showed that teachers who take a role in the decisions in their schools were able to make quicker and more transformative education policies than schools where teachers are kept out of these conversations. The demands of teachers and teacher leaders has increased over the years with the demands placed on students, the increasing number of students in poverty, and general mistrust of an outdated educational system. The solution seems to be to incorporate teachers into these decisions. Teachers have a deeper understanding of student needs and can implement changes more quickly than a principal or superintendent. Creating programs and curriculum that teachers believe in is an integral part of transforming education.

These articles suggest that the demands of teachers and teacher leaders has increased over the years, but the ultimate decisions are still being made in a traditional top-down fashion. This is not the best for students as teachers who have a stake in their curriculum can be transformative with their programs, creating student leaders and higher test scores.

This is going to have a big influence on my teaching practices. I have been working with the Instructional Leadership Team at my school to create and develop curriculum for the social studies department. Currently we are integrating global education and mastery learning, but there is no guide for what this will look like in a social studies classroom. My goal is to create an adaptable curriculum that can be applied to other social studies classes as a model, but can be changed to work with individual teacher styles. Integrating my own curriculum is very important to my practice as I implement skills to students. Canned or administrator created curriculum to not take into account individual student needs, teacher expertise, or teacher styles.