

Natural Born Leaders
An Exploration of Leadership Development in Children and Adolescents

by

Robin Eileen Sacks, M.A.

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto**

© Copyright by Robin Sacks 2009

**NATURAL BORN LEADERS
AN EXPLORATION OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS
Doctor of Philosophy (2009)
Robin Sacks
Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology
University of Toronto**

Abstract

This research aims to identify core elements of leadership development in children and adolescents using grounded theory methodology. Initial focus groups with student leaders in elementary and high schools suggested key differences in students' implicit theories of leadership and their identities as leaders. A follow-up survey was constructed to measure these differences. Findings suggest age-based distinctions in students' implicit understanding of leadership, what constitutes leadership behaviour, who has the capacity to lead, and what kinds of leadership they would like to take on. These distinctions form the basis for a conceptual model illustrating four phases or "stories" of leadership identified by children and adolescents: the task-oriented "helper," the responsibility-oriented "deputy," the role-oriented "agent" and the identity-oriented "ambassador."

Acknowledgements

I would like to give thanks to my dissertation committee members – Dr. Michel Ferrari, Dr. Ken Leithwood and Dr. Phil Groff for volunteering to serve on my committee on top of their already busy schedules. The combination of Dr. Ferrari’s wealth of knowledge, Dr. Leithwood’s research expertise and Dr. Groff’s wisdom provided thoughtful analysis of my work and contributed greatly to my own development as a scholar and a researcher. I appreciate their ongoing mentoring over the years.

I would also like to thank the young student leaders who participated in the focus group sessions. Their insight and enthusiasm along with their willingness to explore their own leadership development were central to this work. I would also like to thank the team at *Me to We* for taking an interest in this work early on and helping to disseminate the survey.

Of course I thank my family, friends and colleagues at OISE for their support from the very beginning of this process. In particular, it is my husband Kenny who is not only my greatest source of support, but also a formatting genius.

Table of Contents

Chapter One

Context of the Study and Review of the Relevant Literature.....	1
How Much We Don't Know.....	1
A Brief Overview - Theories of Adult Leadership.....	1
Applying Adult Theories of Leadership to Youth.....	3
The Need for Leadership Research Focusing on Children and Youth (Part 1): To Challenge the Prevailing Assumption that Adult Definitions and Theories of Leadership Apply to Youth.....	5
A Brief History of Youth Leadership education.....	5
Leadership Development from Early Childhood Through Adolescence.....	7
<i>Early Childhood Leadership</i>	7
<i>Childhood Leadership</i>	9
<i>Adolescent Leadership</i>	10
Significance of Youth Leadership Education and Opportunities.....	11
The Need for Leadership Research Focusing on Children and Youth (Part 2): To Advance The Current Body of Knowledge Which is Short on Empirical Evidence and Youth Voice.....	12
The Importance of Youth Voice.....	13
Answering The Call for Leaders.....	14
The Need for Leadership Research Focusing on Children and Youth (Part 3): To Help Educators Develop Best Practices in Leadership Education to Prepare the Next Generation of Leaders.....	15
Purpose of the study.....	15
Research Questions.....	15
Significance of the Study.....	16

Chapter Two

Methodology.....	18
Overview.....	18
Research Design.....	18
Background to the Research Design.....	18
Rationale for Grounded Theory.....	20
Rationale for Mixed Methods Research.....	21
Research Design - Phase One: Qualitative Data Collection.....	22
<i>Participant Selection</i>	22
<i>Conducting the Focus Groups</i>	24
<i>Qualitative Data Entry</i>	25

<i>Qualitative Data Analysis</i>	25
<i>Open Coding Phase</i>	26
<i>Axial Coding Phase</i>	26
<i>Selective Coding Phase</i>	26
Research Design - Phase Two: Quantitative Data Collection	27
<i>Survey Design</i>	27
<i>Quantitative Data Analysis</i>	30
<i>Ethical Considerations</i>	30

Chapter Three

Results	33
Phase One: Qualitative Data Results	33
<i>Overview</i>	33
<i>Participants</i>	34
<i>Review of Focus Group Findings</i>	34
Elementary School Students	34
<i>Elementary Student Participants</i>	34
<i>E1. General Understanding of Leadership</i>	35
<i>E1.a. Anyone Can Be a Leader</i>	35
<i>E1.b. Leadership is about Character Traits and Personal Qualities, not Skills</i>	35
<i>E1.c. Leadership Looks Different for Boys and Girls</i>	37
<i>E2. Leadership Identity</i>	38
<i>E2.a. I'm a Leader Because I Help Out A Lot</i>	39
<i>E2.b. I'm a Leader Because I'm Good at</i>	39
<i>E2.c. Early Leadership Identity is Tied to Adult Assignment and Approval</i>	40
<i>E2.d. Belonging to Clubs and Teams Constitutes Leadership</i>	41
<i>E3. Leadership Development</i>	42
<i>E4. Mediating and Moderating Variables</i>	45
<i>E4.a. Opportunities and Taking Advantage of the Situation</i>	45
<i>E4.b. Encouragement</i>	47
<i>E4.c. The Busy Teacher is the Primary Roadblock</i>	47
<i>E4.d. Insecurity</i>	48
<i>E5. Outcomes of Leadership Opportunities</i>	50
<i>E6. The Unanticipated Benefits of our Leadership Focus Group</i>	50
Secondary School Students.....	52
<i>S1 General Understanding of Leadership</i>	52
<i>S1.a. Not Anyone Can Be a Leader</i>	52
<i>S1.b. Leadership is Being in Charge of and Organizing Clubs, Teams, Events, etc</i>	53
<i>S1.c. You Do Not Need Followers to Be a Leader</i>	55
<i>S1.d. Leadership is Primarily about Character Traits and Personal Qualities but Also (Albeit Secondarily) About Skills</i>	56
<i>S2. Leadership Identity</i>	56
<i>S2.a. I Am a Leader Because I Step-Up</i>	57

S2.b. <i>I am Also a Leader in Informal Ways, Too</i>	57
S2.c. <i>Taking Initiative is the Highest Form of Leadership</i>	57
S2.d. <i>I Would Like to Have More Say in School Decisions</i>	58
S3. <i>Leadership Development</i>	60
S4. <i>Mediating and Moderating Variables</i>	62
S4.a. <i>Opportunities and Education</i>	62
S4.b. <i>Role Models</i>	63
S4.b.i. <i>Teachers and Coaches</i>	64
S4.b.ii. <i>Family</i>	64
S4.b.iii. <i>Friends</i>	64
S4.c. <i>Teacher Enrolment</i>	65
S4.d. <i>Red Tape</i>	66
S5. <i>Outcomes of Leadership Opportunities</i>	67
S5.a. <i>Earning the Trust of Adults</i>	67
S5.b. <i>Getting away with Mischief and Misdemeanors</i>	67
General Interpretation of Phase One Focus Groups.....	68
<i>Emergent Patterns – Differences Between Cohorts</i>	68
<i>Emergent Patterns – Similarities Among Cohorts</i>	68
Phase Two: Quantitative Data Results.....	72
<i>Overview</i>	72
Review of Survey Findings.....	73
<i>Participant Demographics</i>	73
<i>A Portrait of the Young Leaders</i>	74
<i>Are young leaders born or made?</i>	74
<i>Why do youth take part in leadership opportunities?</i>	74
<i>Recent Behaviour</i>	75
<i>Personal and Civic Values</i>	76
<i>Important Issues</i>	76
<i>Role Models</i>	78
<i>Future Plans</i>	79
<i>Beliefs about Leadership</i>	80
<i>Characteristics of a good leader</i>	80
<i>Leadership behaviours</i>	81
<i>Conceptions of leadership</i>	83
<i>Leadership Education and Experiences</i>	86
<i>Outcomes of Leadership Experiences</i>	90
<i>Drawbacks to Leadership</i>	91
<i>On feeling different</i>	91
<i>On responsibility</i>	91
<i>On expectations</i>	92
<i>On identity</i>	92
<i>Requests and Recommendations</i>	92
<i>Elementary School Students</i>	94
<i>Secondary School Students</i>	94

Summary of Phase Two Findings	97
1. <i>General Understanding of Leaders and Leadership</i>	97
2. <i>Leadership Identity</i>	97
3. <i>Leadership Development</i>	97
4. <i>Mediating and Moderating Variables</i>	98
5. <i>Outcomes of Leadership Opportunities</i>	98
Phase Two Data Analysis Review	98

Chapter Four

Discussion.....	100
Overview.....	100
The Applicability of Adult Models of Leadership to Youth.....	100
Theoretical Framework.....	102
<i>Primary (K-3): “The Helper” - Task-Oriented Leadership</i>	108
<i>General Conceptions of Leaders and Leadership</i>	109
<i>The Helper</i>	109
<i>Experience</i>	110
<i>Tools</i>	110
<i>Stance</i>	110
<i>Task-Oriented Leadership - Concluding Thoughts</i>	111
<i>Junior (grades 4-6): “The Deputy” - Responsibility-Oriented Leadership</i>	111
<i>General Conceptions of Leaders and Leadership</i>	111
<i>The Deputy</i>	113
<i>Experiences</i>	113
<i>Tools</i>	114
<i>Stance</i>	115
<i>Responsibility-Oriented Leadership - Concluding Thoughts</i>	115
<i>Intermediate (grades 7-8): “The Agent” - Role-Oriented Leadership</i>	117
<i>General Conceptions of Leaders and Leadership</i>	117
<i>The Agent</i>	117
<i>Experience</i>	118
<i>Tools</i>	118
<i>Stance</i>	119
<i>Role-Oriented Leadership - Concluding Thoughts</i>	119
<i>Secondary (Grades 9-12): “The Ambassador” - Identity-Oriented Leadership</i>	120
<i>General Conceptions of Leaders and Leadership</i>	120
<i>The Ambassador</i>	122
<i>Experience</i>	122
<i>Tools</i>	124
<i>Stance</i>	124

<i>Identity-Oriented Leadership - Concluding Thoughts</i>	125
<i>Profile of a Developing Leadership Identity</i>	125
<i>Engaged</i>	125
<i>Passionate</i>	126
<i>Open-minded</i>	126
<i>Caring</i>	126
<i>Confident</i>	126
<i>Reflective</i>	127
<i>Responsible</i>	127
<i>Optimistic</i>	127
Limitations of the Study.....	128
Recommendations for Future Research.....	128
<i>Longitudinal Studies</i>	128
<i>Long-Term Impact</i>	128
<i>Demographic Differences</i>	129
<i>Further Validation of this Theory and Testing of a Stage Theory</i>	129
<i>Expanding the Theory& Identifying the End-Game</i>	129
<i>Application of Theory</i>	130
Conclusions.....	130
<i>Implications for Policy</i>	130
<i>Implications for Practice</i>	131
References	133

List of Tables

Table 1. The Process of Building Grounded Theory	19
Table 2. Summary of Findings from Elementary and High School Focus Groups	69
Table 3. Recent Behaviour of Elementary and Secondary Students	75
Table 4. Civic Values of Elementary and Secondary Students	76
Table 5. Important Issues to Students	77
Table 6. Students' Future Plans	79
Table 7. Student Ratings of Leadership Traits.....	80
Table 8. Student Ratings of Leadership Behaviours – Positive Associations	81
Table 9. Student Ratings of Leadership Behaviours – Negative Associations.....	82
Table 10. Leadership Beliefs	83
Table 11. Average Student Rating of Leadership Opportunities.....	88
Table 12. Extent of Leadership Opportunities for Elementary and Secondary Students	89
Table 13. Effects of Leadership Experiences on Students.....	90
Table 14. Students' Recommendations for Future Leadership Education	93
Table 15. Evidence for the Application of Adult Theories of Leadership to Youth	101

List of Figures

Figure 1. Experience-Tools-Stance Framework as it Pertains to Children and Adolescents	105
--	-----

List of Appendices

Appendices have been removed, but are available upon request from the author.
Contact robin.sacks@utoronto.ca.

Chapter One

Context of the Study and Review of the Relevant Literature

How Much We Don't Know

The single most common criticism in the youth leadership literature is how little there is of it (Lee, Rechina, Chin, 2005; Matthews, 2004; Edwards, 1994; Trawick, 1988). A review of more than 5000 studies published in Stodgill's Handbook of Leadership conducted in 1981 did not list any studies relating to youth leadership (Bass, 1981). I conducted a Scholar's Portal keyword search for "leadership" to see if that trend had changed in the intervening years: 95,923 peer reviewed articles returned hits but only 55 (0.001%) were related to "youth leadership." Of those 55 articles, 21 are descriptive analyses of various leadership programs, life histories of leaders and commentaries; 11 are program evaluations (3 of which are experimental program evaluations with control groups); 2 are literature reviews; 10 are case studies; and 11 are quantitative studies. When the search was broadened to include other terms such as "student leadership" or "children and leadership," the list lengthened but not considerably.

This thesis aims to add to the literature on youth leadership by contributing a grounded theory study that examines leadership development from the perspective of child and youth leaders. In the sections that follow I offer an overview of the current body of leadership literature which reveals the need for this type of research as a foundation for improved youth leadership education and programming. I begin with a brief outline of the dominant models of adult leadership because they often serve as the de-facto models of youth leadership in both research and practice. An overview of the literature on child and youth leadership follows that highlights some of the gaps in current body of knowledge, particularly the lack of both empirical evidence and youth voice in our understanding of youth leadership. Finally, I outline the significance of this research for future research, policy and practice.

A Brief Overview - Theories of Adult Leadership

It is not necessary for the purpose of this particular research to delve too deeply into the ample literature on leadership in adults. Instead, this section offers a brief overview of basic

definitions and theories from the work of prominent academics in the field. This introduction to the main themes from the adult leadership literature is useful insofar as they serve to delineate the differences between youth and adults when it comes to leadership skills and attributes.

Academics in the field of leadership seem to agree that the term leadership is not clearly defined (Janda, 1960; Bennis, 1959). Yukl (2001) surveyed the leadership literature and concluded that “researchers usually define leadership according to their individual perspective and the aspect of the phenomenon of most interest to them” (p.2). Quoting Stogdill (1974, p.259), he adds that indeed “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept.” Yukl presents a list of representative definitions from the past half-century:

- Leadership is the *behavior of an individual* when he is directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal. (Hemphill & Coons, 1957, p.7)
- Leadership *is interpersonal influence*, exercised in a situation, and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal. (Tannenbaum, Weschler, & Massarik, 1961, p.24)
- Leadership is the *initiation and maintenance of structure* in expectation and interaction. (Stodgill, 1974, p.411)
- Leadership is the *influential increment over and above mechanical compliance* with the routine directive of the organization. (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p.528)
- Leadership is the *process of influencing the activities of an organized group* toward goal achievement. (Rauch & Behling, 1984, p.46)
- Leadership is a process of *giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort* and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose. (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990, p.281)
- Leaders are those who *consistently make effective contributions to social order* and who are expected and perceived to do so. (Hosking, 1988, p. 153)

Researchers in the field typically study leadership from one of 4 angles. Early leadership literature from the 1930’s and 40’s tended to focus on the trait approach, which emphasized the personal attributes of leaders including intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability. These traits, thought to be innate, were often associated with history’s great social and political leaders, giving rise to what became known as the “great man” theory of leadership (Northouse, 2001). However, the lack of compelling evidence linking specific traits to

organizational outcomes led researchers to forgo this angle (Goethals, Sorensen & MacGregor-Burns, 2004).

The emergence of behavioural psychology in the 50's gave rise to a *behavioural* approach as researchers sought to develop new taxonomies of leadership actions and activities. Different patterns of behaviour were grouped together and labeled as styles. The four main styles were: (1) concern for tasks in which leaders emphasize productivity and goal attainment, (2) concern for people in which leaders emphasize their followers' needs, interests and development, (3) directive leadership in which leaders make decisions and expect compliance, and (4) participative leadership in which leaders share decision-making (Wright, 1996). The behavioural approach stimulated a content analysis of leadership tasks that allowed for comparisons of effective and ineffective leaders. However, findings across research were inconsistent and researchers began to examine the roles of context and setting more closely (Doyle, 2001).

The *situational* approach arose as researchers began to entertain the idea that leadership needs change from situation to situation. Research here focused on the different processes through which leadership emerges and the different ways in which leaders and followers interact in various circumstances. Much of the literature promoted the idea that effective leadership was contingent upon a combination of factors including the relationship between leaders and followers, the structure of the task and the leader's position of power (Fiedler and Garcia 1987).

The *influence* approach explains leadership in terms of the amount and type of power and how power is exercised (Yukl, 2001). Research derived from this approach typically focuses on the relationships between people, specifically the dynamics of power and influence, rather than traits, behaviours or context. Both leadership and followership are considered to be products of the relationships between leaders and followers.

Applying Adult Theories of Leadership to Youth

Research from the past two decades has illuminated a number of differences between adult and youth leadership. Studies have compared youth leadership to transformational, trait-

based and influence models of leadership. Smyth and Ross (1999) videotaped small groups of youth working on projects and then coded their exchanges for elements of transformational leadership. They found that the youth did not display behaviours relating to vision-building or contingent rewards for performance that mark transformational styles of leadership. Roach et al. (1999) also found that vision building is typically absent for youth conceptions of leadership. They argue that too often youth leadership programs are based on theories of adult leadership which leads to programming that does not adequately address the ways that youth define, value and enact leadership. Myers et al. (1990) show that youth don't utilize hierarchical organizational structures to solve problems but often take a participative approach to leadership. These findings, taken together, suggest that models and styles of adult leadership such as transformational leadership or trait models are not necessarily appropriate for youth.

Trait-based research also revealed differences between adults and youth. Morris (1991) compared responses of 58 high school student leaders and 58 school principals, superintendents and directors of education using the Leadership Traits Inventory. The LTI measures nine traits: consistency, flexibility, creativity, knowledge, sense of purpose, compassion, clear priorities, integrity, and good listening. The adolescent leaders ranked integrity, good listening and knowledge highest while adult leaders ranked sense of purpose, integrity and knowledge highest. Adolescent leaders ranked good listening and creativity significantly higher than adult leaders. Adults ranked sense of purpose, consistency, and flexibility significantly higher than adolescents.

MacNeil (2006) analyzed the differences between adult and youth leadership literature to determine the applicability of adult leadership theories to youth leadership development. She noted a key difference in focus between adult and youth leadership literature, namely that the literature addressing youth leadership development most often focuses on leadership ability (skills, knowledge and talents) while adult leadership literature focuses on both ability and authority (voice, influence and decision making power). To explain why youth leadership literature omits authority, MacNeil cites Giroux (1996) who argues that 'youth' as a social construct tends to be defined as a social problem, something to be suffered through, with youth being seen as alien or disconnected from the real world. MacNeil sees this negatively defined social construct as "adultism," since one group (adults) has the power to construct the definition

of another group (youth). Adultism, MacNeil concludes, “can be a tremendous obstacle for youth leadership development” (p.33). She resolves the tension by drawing from the literature on collaborative leadership to argue that adults need to make room for youth to practice authority and participate meaningfully as leaders in their schools and communities.

***The Need for Leadership Research Focusing on Children and Youth (Part 1):
To Challenge the Prevailing Assumption that Adult Definitions and Theories
of Leadership Apply to Youth***

Stodgill’s assertion that “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (1974, p.274) highlights the lack of clarity around adult definitions of leadership. The question arises: If leadership is not well defined amongst adults, how can educators know which skills, theories and models from the adult literature are best suited for children and youth – if any at all? A review of the youth leadership literature from the past thirty years (presented in both the previous and following sections) reveals an uncontested yet widely held assumption that leadership styles and models developed for adults are equally applicable to youth. This assumption is indicative of a tendency among researchers to view youth leadership from what Dempster and Lizzio (2007) refer to as an “outside-in” perspective. As a result, the current literature is lacking a well-established theory of youth leadership development constructed from young people’s own implicit ideas about leadership. To better understand youth leadership development, it is necessary to increase the current body of knowledge to include children and youths’ conceptions of leadership. How do young people define leadership? Why do they define it in the way they do? How do they conceive of their own leadership development and what kinds of education have most helped them to acquire knowledge and skills? Accessing student voice to answer these questions will help educators to determine best practices in programming and contribute not only to the body of knowledge on youth leadership but also to adult leadership.

A Brief History of Youth Leadership education

Until the later part of the 20th century, efforts to instill leadership in youth were largely extra-curricular, occurring through opportunities like student government, newspapers and clubs. Leadership skills were not taught to students as part of a formal curriculum, perhaps because children were not thought of or expected to be leaders. Instead, certain procedural elements

relating to leadership were taught in courses such as civics or government (Finney, 2002). Additionally, traits like honesty and courage were taught as part of the standard curriculum in the first North American schools. These lessons had no specific connection to leadership per se but instead were part of a well-established effort to help students develop morally. In colonial times teachers were expected to teach virtues and to incorporate prayer and bible readings into their lessons (Travers & Rebores, 2000). Students studied from the *McGuffey Reader* which taught inspiring stories about honesty, hard work, thriftiness, patriotism, kindness and courage. By 1919, the McGuffey Reader had the largest circulation of any English language book in the world next to the Bible (Lickona, 1997). Even though the lessons did not highlight leadership, the McGuffey reader instilled in students the traits that could contribute to leadership in later life.

The first formal introduction of youth leadership into education did not occur until 1972, when U.S. Commissioner of Education Sidney Marland published the first federal definition of giftedness. He defined gifted and talented children as

“those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. Those are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to society.” (Marland, 1972)

The Marland Report named six areas of childhood giftedness – the sixth being leadership ability. Matthews (2004) explains that the inclusion of leadership in Marland’s definition of giftedness resulted from efforts by researchers in child psychology at the time like DeHaan and Kough (1956) and Jarecky (1959) to broaden the definition of giftedness to include areas other than intellectual capabilities.

Early theories of youth leadership were rooted in the belief that leadership potential properly nurtured during childhood and adolescence would translate into significant contributions to society by those individuals later in life. Early models of youth leadership were based on established models of adult leadership. (Black, 1984)

Leadership Development from Early Childhood Through Adolescence

Early Childhood Leadership

In her observational study of nursery and kindergarten classes, Perez (1982) found that children as young as 3 assert influence over classmates. She concluded that students with high verbal ability, independence and sense of structure were more likely to act as leaders. Lee et al. (2005) identified four different leadership styles in preschool children. They found that preschool leaders showed advanced social and cognitive capabilities, verbal language proficiency, dramatic skills, creativity, imagination, and independence. These young leaders displayed behaviours such as recruiting others to play, offering new and interesting ideas for play, being sensitive to others feelings, and being silly. Lee et al. conclude that because leadership styles emerge at a very early age, educators can provide a variety of contexts for children to influence each other in play and develop their leadership skills.

Other research into early childhood leadership focuses on verbal skills (Kitano, 1983; Perez, Chassin, Ellington & Smith, 1982; Trawick-Smith, 1988; Wolfle, 1989). Using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) Perez et al. (1982) found that preschool children who were gifted in leadership had high verbal abilities which enabled students to easily convey ideas, communicate feelings and give directions. In addition, Perez et al. (1982) found that preschool leaders were also sensitive to the needs and concerns of their fellow students. Kitano (1983) found that preschool children identified as leaders were frequently sought out by their peers for companionship, ideas and decisions. They also interacted easily with peers and adults and readily adapted to new situations.

Trawick-Smith (1988) observed 32 preschool students during play. He identified skills relating to leadership and followership in young children including peer acceptance, socio-dramatic play ability, social and emotional adjustment and frequency of social interaction. He determines three styles of unskilled leadership among children: bullies, isolates and bootlickers. While he sees both leadership and followership as essential aspects of social participation,

Trawick-Smith argues that some children take the role of follower while others emerge as leaders.

Hensel (1991) observed kindergarten students' classroom interactions. She found that children who exhibited leadership in their dramatic play with other students were also identified most frequently as helpers. In a class discussion about "what is a leader" the children's ideas centered on students who were chosen to help out such as the person who collected the lunch money or the person who led the line to recess. One child stated that she had never been a class helper or line leader. A girl who had been identified as a leader showed her problem-solving capability when she quickly stated, "Tammy can be a line leader today when we leave." Hensel concludes that although the children could not readily define leadership on the basis of skills and competencies, they were able to identify leadership skills in their peers.

As part of his dissertation research, Bailey (1991) developed a leadership instrument for preschool children to measure unintentional leadership behaviour in young children. Using discrete leader-follower dyadic interactions, he detailed accounts of children in two preschool classes who were most often followed, copied or joined and who had the greatest impact on others in the group. He found that (a) younger children most often followed older children, (b) joining was observed in younger children while copying was most often observed in older children and (c) child nominations were more accurate than teacher nominations in predicting leadership scored on the instrument.

Finally, Fu (1979) coded leadership and followership behaviours for 48 kindergarten children using four dimensions: successful leadership, unsuccessful leadership, followership and non-conformance. Leadership behaviours were considered any attempt at commanding, directing, or persuading another child. Successful leadership occurred when a student gained compliance, performance, submission or imitation. Unsuccessful leadership occurred when a child's leadership behaviors failed to gain compliance, performance, submission or imitation. Non-conformance was said to occur when a child ignored another child's leadership behaviours. The students were then scored using Fu's Nursery School Leadership Observation Schedule. Fu found differences between students of differing socio-economic status: middle class children

exhibited more followership behaviours, while lower class children exhibited more non-conformance. Middle class children displayed more successful leadership behaviours, more sensitivity toward their followers and used more verbal persuasion than lower class children.

Childhood Leadership

The earliest literature on childhood leadership held to the trait approach to define the term and identify young leaders. Pigors (1933) pinpointed four characteristics of leadership in children: strong self control, increased grasp of abstract ideas, social awareness and increased memory to recall remote rather than immediate goals. Pigors himself, however, questions whether these signs of early leadership ability determine leadership later in life.

In another trait-based study of 694 6-11 year-old children, Harrison, Rawls & Rawls (1971) found that students frequently chosen as leaders were more intelligent, higher achievers in school, more socially adept, and better adjusted than those children who were infrequently chosen as leaders.

School age children have been shown to nominate both popular and controversial children as leaders (Coie, Dodge, and Coppotelli, 1982). Crockett, Losoff, and Petersen (1984), asked students in grades six, seven and eight to identify the most salient characteristics of a leader. The students chose personality, dominance, popularity, and physical appearance as key elements of leadership. In a five-year longitudinal study, Coie and Dodge (1983) found that peer nominations for leadership were relatively stable over time and that being nominated as a leader was positively predictive of becoming or remaining popular. This finding was replicated by Edwards (1994) who concluded that peer nominations of leaders were relatively stable over time for a group of girl scouts. Leaders appeared to be selected on the basis of perceived competence in skills such as organization, goal setting, and generation of new ideas, rather than on the basis of empathic dimensions such as thoughtfulness and sensitivity. Popularity and attractiveness also played a significant role.

Adolescent Leadership

Van Linden and Fertman (1998) designate three stages of adolescent leadership development: awareness, interaction and mastery. During the “awareness” phase, adolescents come to see themselves as potential leaders. They move from a confounding belief about having very little control or say over one’s life to a more sophisticated view of personal control and autonomy. In the second phase – interaction – teenagers take leadership action to “try on” their new identity as leaders. According to Van Linden and Fertman, this stage is marked with both enthusiasm for new experiences and frustration due to lack of experience in dealing with stress and challenges. Stage three, termed the mastery stage, is marked by a focused energy in an activity or a cause that the adolescent cares about. During this phase, students gain confidence in their ability to take action or “step up” to a new challenge.

Van Linden and Fertman (1998) draw upon the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership in order to help educators distinguish between doing leadership and being a leader. Academics in the field of leadership will no doubt note the liberties that Van Linden and Fertman take in their definitions of these two terms; nevertheless, their distinction sheds light on an important aspect of youth leadership development and is worth noting.

According to Van Linden and Fertman (1999), transactional leadership focuses on “the skills and tasks associated with leadership, such as speaking in public, delegating authority, leading meetings and making decisions” while transformational leadership “focuses on the process of leadership and what it means to be a leader. It is concerned with how individuals use their abilities to influence people” (p. 12). Most youth leadership programs focus on developing transactional leadership skills. Those skills are, to be sure, simpler to teach, implement and measure. However, more needs to be done to understand the psychology of youth leadership – in particular the shifts that occur in the personal identity formation of a developing leader – so that effective curricula can help youth to move through the stages of leadership development with a clear understanding not only of the skills necessary to lead, but also the self-confidence and identity of a leader.

Lyons, Saltonstall and Hanmer (1990) identified two types of leadership in their study of adolescent girls: interdependent leadership and autonomous leadership. Interdependent leaders are concerned with incorporating all members of a team into decisions and tasks. Their main skill lies in listening to everyone and synthesizing ideas. This style dovetails with Van Linden and Fertman's transformational style of leadership. In contrast, autonomous leaders excel in identifying problems and offering fitting solutions. They also excel in asserting influence over team members to explain their ideas and move ahead. The researchers note that there are strengths and weaknesses to both styles and that for effective leadership an understanding of both modes and an ability to be flexible and balance both modes is necessary.

In a study of 203 adolescents (79 leaders and 124 non-leaders) McCullough et al. (1994) identified the primary characteristics of a leader. The profile of the adolescent leader that emerged from their research is a student with high internal locus of control and prestigious career aspirations who lives in a two-parent family structure. Adolescent leaders were not found to have higher self-esteem than non-leaders.

Significance of Youth Leadership Education and Opportunities

Most program evaluations of leadership development education initiatives indicate that leadership is a skill that can be taught and that the skills of leadership are strengthened through practice (Roets, 1988; Karnes and Chauvin 1985; Karnes and Stevens, 1999). Leadership education and opportunities strengthen a variety of skills necessary for the demands of work and life such as problem-solving, decision-making, and communication. Moreover, leadership education has been shown to contribute to positive youth development including increases in self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation and engagement.

In their evaluation of a summer leadership program for high school students in Tennessee, Smith, Smith & Barnette (1991) showed significant differences between pre and post tests in openness and self-esteem and only slight gains in responsibility, emotional stability and sociability. In a follow up questionnaire three months after the program, students said that the three skills most influenced by the leadership development curriculum were encouraging teamwork, listening to different viewpoints, and taking risks when necessary. Five items were

rated lowest: facing problems rather than postponing them, performing well under pressure, encouraging healthy competition, demonstrating initiative and accepting criticism.

In one study parents of students who participated in the University of Southern Mississippi's leadership studies program reflected positively on the outcomes of the program for their children. They reported an increase in the students' self-confidence, responsibility, sense of pride, and motivation to initiate activities. They also reported improved communication and time management skills (Karnes & Meriweather 1989).

Roach et al. (1999) report findings from a longitudinal study of youth involved community organizations. They offer a list of benefits of immersion in effective youth-based organizations which includes:

- pro-civic and pro-social values;
- strong locus of control;
- independence in reading for pleasure;
- seeking out non-school classes and opportunities;
- motivation to seek bases for acquiring and adapting knowledge;
- self-images that place themselves as effective learners making use of higher education resources;
- stable high academic achievement;
- strong sense of self-efficacy for future tasks and goals;
- sense of commitment to community service and volunteering;
- desire to work to correct economic inequalities.

Not all research has found that leadership development programs produce positive change. In an evaluation of a 12-week leadership training program for high school students, Hynes et al. (1978) found that knowledge about leadership improved, but leadership behaviour and attitudes did not. The authors suggest that it is easier to change the leadership situation than to change leader behaviour or personality.

***The Need for Leadership Research Focusing on Children and Youth (Part 2):
To Advance The Current Body of Knowledge Which is Short
on Empirical Evidence and Youth Voice***

The current body of knowledge on child and youth leadership as outlined in the sections above presents a number of challenges for researchers, educators and policy makers. Most

notably, there is simply not enough empirical data to draw conclusive evidence about how leadership develops throughout childhood. Most articles on the subject are theoretical in nature or case studies of a single program. Additionally, youth leadership researchers seem to presuppose a link between adult models and definitions of leadership and youth models and definitions. There is not enough evidence on youth leadership development to confirm the legitimacy of this link. Finally, the research on youth leadership lacks youth voice. This “outside-in” perspective sets up a narrow view of leadership development in which any number of key elements may be missing. These challenges are problematic for practitioners wanting to implement leadership education as well as for policy makers who need adequate data to justify the allocation of funds to youth leadership education initiatives.

The Importance of Youth Voice

The construction of a new theory on youth leadership development based on the perspective of students demands a core focus on student voice. Research on student voice suggests that there are a number of benefits to including students as active participants in research as well as curriculum development and reform. However, student involvement in these processes has not traditionally been the case. Erickson and Shultz (1992) describe the status quo:

“Virtually no research has been done that places the student experience at the center of attention.... If the student is visible at all in a research study he is usually viewed from the perspective of adult educators’ interests and ways of seeing, that is, as failing, succeeding, motivated, mastering, unmotivated, responding, or having a misconception. Rarely is the perspective of the student herself explored” (p. 467).

Cook-Sather (2002) advocates for the authorization of student perspectives in school reform. She singles out the unique role of educational researchers for their position outside the classroom, citing nine recent studies that have prioritized student voice. These studies, argues Cook-Sather, position students and student voice as “a legitimate impetus for change” (p.6).

Other empirical research has illuminated several benefits of youth-centric understandings both in schools and community organizations. Engaging students in school improvement efforts has been found to increase students’ empowerment, motivation, commitment to their own

achievement and school goals, which, in turn, allows schools to better understand and respond to the needs of their students (Hudson-Ross, Cleary & Casey, 1993; Sanon, Baxter, Fortune & Opotow, 2001; Raymond, 2001; Levin, 1999).

Community organizations have also been shown to benefit from the inclusion of student voice. Zeldin (2004) collected data from eight different community organizations that engage youth in governance and found positive outcomes for students, adult leaders and the organization as a whole. Youth reported feeling a sense of belonging and importance, feeling respected by adults, a sense of obligation to the organization and increased commitment to their communities. Adult leaders reported enhanced personal efficacy and belonging, as well as a sense of exhilaration when sharing successes with youth. Organizational leaders reported that youths' "fresh perspective" was vital to the organization's work and enhanced innovation, organizational procedures and community outreach.

Taken together, the findings from studies on youth voice in both school and community settings suggest that youths' ideas can drive innovation and improve outcomes. I believe that this innovation can extend into the domain of youth leadership development. The experiences of schools and organizations suggest that examining students' perspectives yields knowledge not possible through adult perspectives alone. Working from this premise, my aim is to offer students a central voice in this research in order to understand youth leadership development and drive innovation in leadership education.

Answering the Call for Leaders

The popular media has been reporting on the current leadership crisis, citing the failures of the Iraq war, the Katrina clean-up disaster, the sub-prime mortgage crisis and the economic melt-down as examples of failed leadership extending from Washington to Wall Street. A 2008 survey revealed that 80% of Americans believe there is a leadership crisis in the United States – up from 65% in 2005 (Rosenthal, Pittinsky, Purvin, & Montoya, 2008).

In a recent article published in the Harvard Business Review, Douglas Ready surveyed the landscape of leadership in the business world and concluded that a "perfect storm" is

threatening. He cites the upcoming mass retirement of the baby boomer generation along with multiple changing business conditions like the growth of overseas markets as challenges facing many organizations (Ready & Conger, 2007). Working as a consultant, Ready claims to have witnessed numerous companies forced to pass on deals because they lacked the leadership talent to take on new projects. Recent research reinforces this claim: A survey of 400 executives found that 69% fear a pending dearth of leadership and more than 75% were concerned about their organization's ability to develop future leaders (Paton, 2007). Writing about what he calls the "leadership gap," Tim Ringo, head of IBM's Global Capital Management team asks, "without sufficient leadership talent, who will set the direction? Who will paint the vision? Who will lead the change?" (Ringo, 2008).

***The Need for Leadership Research Focusing on Children and Youth (part 3):
To Help Educators Develop Best Practices in Leadership Education
to Prepare the Next Generation of Leaders***

Educators can help to solve the leadership challenge by delivering exceptional leadership education to all students thereby creating a pipeline of young people prepared to lead as adults. A comprehensive effort to provide leadership education for all students at every stage of development may succeed in producing the next generation of leaders. With the requisite education and training, young adults entering the workforce will have at least a decade of experience and a solid foundation of knowledge and skills enabling them to confidently and successfully take on leadership roles in the workforce.

Purpose of the study

My research aims to explore leadership and leadership development from the perspective of children and adolescents in order to establish a model of leadership development.

Research Questions

To conduct my research, I employed grounded theory in the multiple methods research design incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection. The first phase of my data collection consisted of focus group interviews with student leaders in both elementary and

secondary schools. The aim of the first phase was to gain a broad understanding of young leaders' conceptions of leadership and their own leadership development.

As a point of departure, I chose two research questions for the qualitative data collection:

1. How do young leaders define leadership in general?
2. How do young leaders characterize their own leadership development?

These questions drove the initial focus group discussions but given the emergent and recursive nature of grounded theory methodology a number of other areas of interest arose. As a result, new questions were developed and added to successive focus group schedules.

The main themes that emerged during the phase one qualitative data collection were further tested during phase two using a large-scale survey administered to 164 young leaders. The second phase of the study included quantitative data collection aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of students' leadership opportunities, their evaluations of those opportunities, the perceived outcomes and students' own recommendations for improved leadership education.

Significance of the Study

Understanding leadership development in children and youth is an important preliminary step in the process of improving and developing effective leadership education. This research aims to fill a gap in our understanding of what youth leadership looks like and what youth leaders themselves say about how to best help them to develop their skills. These findings have implications for future research, public policy, program development, and ultimately, society at large.

Researchers in the fields of child development, child psychology and education have remarked that there are many gaps in youth leadership research (Lee, Rechina, Chin, 2005; Matthews, 2004; Edwards, 1994; Trawick, 1988). A basic theory is necessary to help move the field of youth leadership development forward. Results from the data collection will help to develop such a theory that can serve as a foundation for future research on youth leadership.

This research can help to inform youth policy at the school board and ministry levels. The past few years have seen an increasing interest in children's social-emotional development. Initiatives like *Finding Common Ground* developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education or *Character Matters* at the York region district school board show an effort to foster positive child development in all children. This research will give youth a voice, allowing them to offer policy recommendations to the school boards and ministry about what kinds of leadership programs they feel work best. Their collective voice can help to point the way towards funding the kinds of programs that youth most want to join.

This research can help strengthen leadership education. The findings speak directly to school teachers and administrators, as well as leaders of community organizations that involve youth, informing them about the kinds of leadership opportunities and education that have most helped youth to develop as leaders as well as the kinds of opportunities they would like to see. This data will be of great significance to administrators looking to implement leadership programs in their schools and to educators or organizational leaders who are designing leadership programming.

Ultimately, this study can make a contribution to society by improving the quality of education and programming for the next generation of leaders. Students who are given the opportunity to learn and practice leadership will enter adulthood better prepared to solve problems and bring about change in every facet of their lives.

Chapter Two

Methodology

Overview

This chapter offers a description of the research design and study methodology, including a discussion of instruments used to gather data, both qualitative and quantitative and the specific data analysis procedures. The chapter also includes a description of the study's participants.

Research Design

This multi-phase mixed-methods research employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection. Phase one of data collection included focus groups at 11 schools (6 elementary and 5 secondary) made up of approximately 6-8 students each. Phase two of the data collection was a survey of youth leaders from across Canada.

Background to the Research Design

This thesis uses the grounded theory method. First proposed in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss, the intent of grounded theory methodology is to generate a theory based on data collection and categorization, setting aside (as much as possible) a priori theoretical notions (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory protocol suggests that I use the data from the students to build an emerging model of youth leadership development without being constrained by the theories that adults have developed through observational studies or through pre- and post- testing on leadership measures.

There are typically 5 phases in the process of building grounded theory: (1) research design; (2) data collection; (3) data ordering; (4) data analysis; and (5) literature comparison. Each phase consists of a number of steps that help to establish validity and reliability though it is generally accepted that these phase do not necessarily occur sequentially (Pandit, 1996; Creswell, 1988). The table below, adapted from Pandit's (1996) work, outlines the process with respect to this research.

Table 1.
The Process of Building Grounded Theory

PHASE	STEP	ACTIVITY	RATIONALE	REPRESENTATION IN THIS THESIS
1. Research Design Phase	Review the technical literature	Definition of research question and a priori constructs	Focuses efforts, sharpens external validity	The literature review presented in chapter one examines the adult leadership literature as well as child and youth leadership literature focusing on both theoretical and empirical work.
	Select cases	Theoretical sampling	Focuses efforts on theoretically useful cases	
2. Data Collection Phase	Develop rigorous data collection protocol	Create case study database Employ multiple data collection methods	Increases reliability and construct validity Enhances internal validity	The methodology outlined in this chapter explains the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods as well as the corresponding data coding and analysis procedures.
	Enter the field	Overlap data collection and analysis	Speeds analysis and allows for adjustments to data collection	
3. Data Ordering Phase	Order the data	Arraying events chronologically	Facilitates data analysis	Given the nature of this research, ordering the data chronologically was unnecessary.
4. Data Analysis Phase	Analyze	Use open coding Use axial coding Use selective coding	Develops concepts, categories, and properties Develops connections between a category and its sub-categories Integrates categories to build theoretical framework	All three types of coding were used (as outlined in the following sections of this chapter). The open and axial coding phases showed replication of themes across cases. Theoretical saturation was first identified after 8 focus groups. The team continued to collect data from three more sites to ensure theoretical saturation.
	Theoretical sampling	Literal and theoretical replication across cases	Confirms, extends and sharpens theoretical framework	
	Reaching closure	Attain theoretical saturation	Allows for recognition of diminishing marginal utility and end-point	
5. Literature Comparison Phase	Compare emergent theory with extant literature	Comparisons with conflicting frameworks Comparisons with similar frameworks	Improves construct definitions and internal validity Improves external validity by establishing the domain to which the study's findings can be generalized	The findings were compared with the leadership literature pertaining to both adults and youth to find commonalities and differences, as discussed in chapters 3 and 4. Other leadership literature such as Martin (2005) and Sternberg (2008) were introduced to help frame the "story" developed during the selective coding phase of data analysis.

Rationale for Grounded Theory

As illustrated in the first chapter of this thesis, the body of literature on youth leadership is small and there are not enough empirical studies and no well-established theories to drive educational practice. Without a solid theoretical foundation, hypothesis generation would be a difficult and unreliable process. Grounded theory methodology resolves this challenge because it begins without hypotheses, allowing hypotheses, categories and frameworks to emerge organically over the course of data collection and analysis. The emergent nature of grounded theory is also well suited for this particular research context, in which relatively little is known about the phenomenon up front, because data collected may highlight fertile areas for further investigation and inform subsequent focus group and survey questions.

Additionally, Glaser's dictum "all is data," provides the conceptual breathing room to incorporate data from interactions and details in analyses that would otherwise have been omitted (Glaser, 2001, p.145). My analysis in chapters three and four makes use of data outside the prescribed schedule, including conversations with school teachers and principals who helped to organize the focus groups as well as the relationships among the student leaders.

Grounded theory methodology was used by Komives (2005) to study leadership development in college students. Her research team interviewed 13 students who embraced leadership as a collaborative process and therefore "exhibited the theoretical dimensions of relational leadership" (p. 594). The chosen methodology was justified by the researchers' objective "to understand how a leadership identity develops" (p. 594). In their appraisal of Komives' research, Dempster and Lizzio (2007) criticize the "outside-in" view of leadership with minimal referencing of student voice, leaving "the research terrain from the students' perspective largely untraveled" (p.278). My research draws from Komives' grounded theory methodology but also responds to Dempster and Lizzio's criticism by focusing on youth leadership from the "inside-out," allowing student voice and the students' perspectives to play the central role in our understanding of youth leadership development.

Rationale for Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research is formally defined as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Burke-Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Within this framework there are many possible variations of research approaches depending on the number and sequence of phases as well as the emphasis on the status of each method used. Sechrest and Sidana (1995) argue that mixed method approaches are more pragmatic than singular method approaches because they incorporate the strengths of both methodologies.

The primary goal of this research, namely to construct a grounded theory of youth leadership development, poses a challenge that can be addressed by employing mixed methods. With relatively little up front data to contextualize the phenomenon, and therefore a relatively large vacancy to be filled with new knowledge, it is difficult to know whether depth or breadth will provide the greatest discovery payoffs. Depth could offer greater insight into specific areas of interest to the students, while breadth would allow me to make generalizations about youth leadership development on a wider scale. I determined that a mixed methods approach would solve this challenge because of the opportunity to collect and analyze two sets of data– one deep and the other broad.

For this study I chose to prioritize qualitative data collection, which would provide me with a deep understanding of students’ leadership beliefs and development. I judged depth of understanding to be crucial to the foundation of knowledge necessary for the development of a grounded theory largely because the qualitative data gathering and analysis phases would allow for exploration, discovery, induction and hypothesis generation. However, in order to be able to make confident assertions about any resulting theory, I deemed it necessary to follow-up the initial deep exploration with a broad-based survey allowing me to access the ideas and beliefs of many students on a wide variety of issues relating to leadership and leadership development. This second quantitative phase would focus on confirmation, hypothesis testing, and deductive analysis. The literature on mixed methodologies typically refers to this type of research as a qualitative dominant mixed methods approach, defined as an approach that

relies on a qualitative, constructivist... view of the research process, while concurrently recognizing that the addition of quantitative data and approaches are likely to benefit most research projects (Burke-Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Taylor, 2007, p.124)

The qualitative and quantitative data collection phases are described in greater detail in the following sections.

Research Design - Phase One: Qualitative Data Collection

In order to gain an initial understanding of student leaders' conceptions of their leadership development, the decision was made to run 11 focus groups (6 with elementary school students and 5 with secondary school students). I chose focus group methodology believing that I could facilitate an open and engaging conversational atmosphere for the students that would enhance the data beyond that of one-on-one interviews. According to Kitzinger (1995), the interaction between focus group participants benefits the data collection because it (a) encourages participants to generate and explore their own questions; (b) helps to identify group norms; (c) highlights common attitudes and priorities; and (d) provides insight into the operation of group social processes. Throughout the focus groups I observed how the students were able to explore and clarify their views as a group, commenting on each other's thoughts and anecdotes and often learning about themselves in the process. The focus group method also allowed me to see the ways that the students communicated with each other including teasing, praising and even occasionally arguing.

Participant Selection

Eight of the eleven schools selected were already participating in a large-scale, multi-methods study on leadership in elementary and secondary schools that sought to understand how leadership is distributed in schools across various levels of the organization (Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon & Yashkina, 2009). As an adjunct to this project, I proposed that data be collected from students to understand student leadership as well as to help determine the extent to which students play a role in distributed leadership models. The school district that participated in this study is a large urban/suburban school district north of Toronto comprised of

31 secondary schools and 157 elementary schools. The district serves a culturally and linguistically diverse student population that is relatively affluent, ranging from middle to upper class families despite many newly immigrated Canadians. With a large immigrant population, the district school board is committed to assisting newcomers with a smooth transition through community and language programs. Within schools, the board also places a great emphasis on character education through a board-wide initiative entitled *Character Matters* (CM) in addition to special programs that address literacy impediments, technology in the classroom, and school wide safety.

These eight schools were selected based on nominations by district superintendents for their commitment to a shared leadership model by the school administration along with marked improvement in student achievement over the past three years and relative consistency in the school leadership. All but one of the eight schools are located in a suburban part of the district and therefore contain culturally diverse student populations.

The student leaders chosen to participate in the focus groups were nominated by the school principal. Principals were encouraged to consult guidance counselors and teachers in making the selection process. The nomination form requested that principals nominate student leaders who represented various forms of school involvement and leadership. Principals were also required to justify each nomination. The decision was made to have principals, rather than the students themselves, nominate the focus group participants. The goal of the nominations was to access a broad swath of student leaders, from the obvious class president to the shy student whose leadership potential may be less evident. The research team believed that principals (in consultation with teachers and guidance counselors) knew each of the students well enough and could be trusted to provide this kind of breadth in nominations. Had the students themselves chosen, there would have been a greater risk of nominations being too heavily weighted in favor of the popular children, as evidenced by Crockett, Losoff, and Peterson (1984), Coie and Dodge (1983) and Edwards (1994), all of whom found popularity to play a significant role in peer nominations of leadership.

The other three schools selected were from a large, urban school district that teaches 90,000 students in 201 schools. The school board prioritizes student leadership with a number of board-wide leadership development initiatives including a summer program and mentorship opportunities. The board's director in charge of student leadership nominated four schools based on their high-level of commitment to providing leadership opportunities to their students. This was evidenced by the fact that each of the four schools has a teacher designated as the school's student-leadership coordinator. The director believed that this leadership coordinator could serve as a liaison for this research project at the school and provide me with additional information if necessary. Of the four schools, three were able to participate. Scheduling conflicts prevented access to the fourth school.

Conducting the Focus Groups

Each focus group was conducted by two researchers and lasted approximately 90 minutes. The focus groups were digitally recorded and transcribed for coding purposes. The questions differed slightly between the elementary and high school groups, but dealt mostly with students' own experiences as leaders. Questions included:

1. What do you think being a leader means?
2. Do you consider yourself a leader? Why or why not?
3. What kinds of leadership things do you do at school, at home, in your church (synagogue/mosque) or community?
4. Were you born a leader or do you think you developed into one as you got older?
5. Can anyone be a leader?
6. What is your earliest memory of you being a leader?
7. Who are your role models for leadership?
8. What kinds of leadership education or opportunities would you like to have to help you develop your leadership even further?

These open-ended questions were designed to give the students an opportunity to reflect on their beliefs about leadership as well as assess their own abilities, opportunities, and experiences. To further ensure that students understood the objectives of the research and felt comfortable each session began with personal introductions by the researchers, a brief overview of the research project and assurances, based on Spradley's (1979) approach, that we want to understand your thoughts and experiences and therefore it would be impossible to say something wrong or dumb.

The group setting appeared to put the students at ease quickly. Most participants were energetic and enthusiastic as they recalled their own examples and they would often assist one another in recalling and clarifying particular events and situations. In most cases we achieved what Steward and Shamdasani (1990) referred to as a “synergistic group effect” in which members draw from one another to outperform their individual capacities. We attribute this to the students’ pre-existing comfort level with each other, their excitement around participating in a university research study and our own efforts to create an open and engaging atmosphere.

Qualitative Data Entry

The researchers entered the data from the focus groups into a word processing program. The first 8 focus groups (4 elementary and 4 secondary) were transcribed in their entirety. All words and utterances (“uhm,” “yeah,” etc.) spoken by both the students and the researchers were included in the transcripts. Transcriptions were undertaken by a single researcher. To check for accuracy a second researcher read the transcripts while simultaneously listening to the focus group recording. Research notes were also entered into the software.

Following the data collection from the first eight schools, the open coding process described below was undertaken. Once the preliminary categories were determined, the audio recordings from the final three focus groups were not transcribed verbatim, but instead were mined for quotations illustrative of the categories.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Immediately following each focus group, the two researchers separately determined the ideas and themes that emerged and then compared and combined notes for future reference. Special notice was taken when ideas were repeated, when there was consensus among all students, when there was significant disagreement between students as well as instances of enthusiasm or new insight.

The three stage coding process described below followed the procedure outlined in Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Open Coding Phase.

The initial round of data analysis involved noting themes and patterns that described the overall features of leadership that emerged during the data collection. Codes were developed based on repeated ideas identified by the researchers. If the same idea was expressed by three or more different respondents it was considered a pattern, given a title and coded as a “preliminary category.” Additional quotes that might serve to dimensionalize or disconfirm the preliminary categories were specifically sought out and coded as such. The open coding phase defined 14 preliminary categories for elementary students and 16 preliminary categories for secondary school students. These preliminary categories form the basis of many of the sub-categories described in chapter four.

Axial Coding Phase.

During the axial coding phase relationships between categories were considered. As a result of this phase distinctions were drawn between categories and sub-categories and early hypotheses regarding causal relationships, developmental stages and mediating and moderating factors were formed. This axial coding phase allowed for determination of the five overarching categories described in chapter four and the corresponding sub-categories (most of which were preliminary categories from the open coding phase).

Selective Coding Phase.

During the selective coding phase, I re-examined the data to identify a “story line” that could incorporate the categories and sub-categories from the axial coding process. It was at this time that I drew from two established theories of leadership: (1) Roger Martin’s “stance-tools-experience” framework and (2) Robert Sternberg’s “stories of leadership.” Martin’s framework was particularly useful in categorizing and describing the leadership phenomenon as the students saw it, allowing for distinctions to be drawn between the different age groups represented in the

study. Sternberg's narrative framing of leadership identity as "stories" provided me with a conceptual framework for the portrayal of students as the protagonists in their own leadership stories, with different characterizations of their leadership identities they matured. The results from the selective coding phase are outlined in the discussion section of this thesis.

Research Design - Phase Two: Quantitative Data Collection

To further investigate the categories and sub-categories determined during the open and axial coding phases, a second phase of data collection was conducted with a larger sample of student leaders from across Canada.

The quantitative data collection involved a partnership with *Me to We*, a Toronto-based organization that helps teachers and students in both elementary and high schools to learn about world issues and take action by fundraising for projects in developing countries and offering overseas volunteer opportunities (see www.metowe.org). *Me to We* offers tips for teachers on how to establish a team of student leaders to carry out service projects as well as a leadership curriculum they can implement with their students. There are currently 1500 teachers from across Canada on the *Me to We* mailing list. The *Me to We* executive agreed to help disseminate the survey through a short write-up in their newsletter. Interested teachers were then given the URL (a link to the survey on-line) to pass along to their *Me to We* student leaders to complete. The survey was available on-line for 6 weeks.

Survey Design

The survey was designed with two main goals in mind. The primary goal was to further investigate and quantify the categories and sub-categories that emerged from the focus groups data analysis. The second goal was to gather data for *Me to We*, allowing the organization's leadership to learn about the student participants and collect feedback specific to *Me to We's* program.

The survey was developed in two stages. In the first stage, questions were designed to further investigate the main themes from the phase one qualitative data collection. These questions determined more specifically general beliefs about leadership, opportunities to learn and practice leadership skills, evaluations of those opportunities, beliefs about personal outcomes of leadership experiences, other factors that contribute to leadership development and recommendations to schools about improvements to leadership education.

In the second stage of survey design, a team of leaders from *Me to We* including the curriculum development director produced a number of items to include in the survey. These items related specifically to *Me to We's* programming and more generally about issues most important to students and their plans for the future. Two items from the survey which measure (1) important personal values and (2) behaviour in the past twelve months were drawn from a survey conducted on 3000 18-28 year-old adults in 2005 by the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) to assess the impact of service learning initiatives (NYLC, 2006).

In total, the survey was made up of 47 items covering 16 areas of interest. The information below maps the 16 areas of interest onto the 5 categories that emerged during the phase one data analysis:

I. General Understanding of Leadership

- 1) beliefs about leaders and leadership (4 items: #24, 25, 26, 28)

II. Leadership Identity

- 2) beliefs about self as leader (2 items: #27, 29)

III. Leadership Development

- 3) opportunities to learn leadership skills (2 items: #11, 18)
- 4) opportunities to practice leadership skills (3 items: #10, 12, 16)
- 5) evaluations of those opportunities (2 items: #15, 17)

IV. Mediating and Moderating Variables

- 6) reasons for getting involved (1 item: #13)
- 7) school culture and leadership (5 items: #19-23)
- 8) leadership role models (1 item: #33)

V. Outcomes of Leadership Experiences

- 9) drawbacks to being a leader (2 items: #14a, 14b)
- 10) outcomes of being a leader (3 items: #15-17)

VI. Other Data

- 11) demographic information (9 items: # 1-9)
- 12) values and most important issues (3 items: #32, 34, 35)
- 13) plans for the future (1 item: #30)
- 14) recent behaviour (1 item: #31)
- 15) requests and recommendations for leadership education and opportunities (3 items: #36-38)
- 16) feedback specific to *Me to We's* programming (9 items: #39-47)

The complete survey can be viewed in Appendix A. Many of the items, particularly the demographic data items, were answered with a drop down menu. Other items could be answered on either a four or five point Likert scale. Typically, a four point scale was used when it was deemed important that students decide on which side of an issue they stand. For example, when asking students to determine if a good leader needs to be honest, smart, popular, etc. a four point scale was used comprised of (1) definitely yes; (2) sort of; (3) not really and; (4) definitely not. In subsequent data analysis these scales were collapsed to show agreement and disagreement statistics. A five point Likert was used in other cases, such as assessing the extent of agreement or extent of experience. In addition, there were seven open-ended questions allowing students unlimited space to respond to items such as recommendations to principals for future leadership opportunities and to explain why they look up to their chosen role models.

The survey was reviewed and piloted prior to the on-line launch. The instrument was reviewed by 20 fourth-year undergraduate students, planning to enter into teaching degree programs who volunteered at the time in elementary school classrooms. These students agreed to participate in the research to help determine the content validity of the instrument. They reviewed the items for content, clarity and appropriateness for the age and developmental level of the younger children (grades 4-6) who would participate in the study. The reviewers offered suggestions which were incorporated into the instrument prior to the pilot.

The survey was piloted by 6 students (3 elementary and 3 secondary) who participated in *Me to We's* program the previous year. This convenience sample was representative of the students who participated later in the phase two research in that they were the same age range of the students and they had been a part of *Me to We's* leadership program. Three items were added

to the end of the pilot to assess the students' perceptions on how long it took them to complete and the overall complexity level of the questions. Additionally, an open ended question was added offering the pilot students an opportunity to relate any additional issues or thoughts about the survey.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Data were analysed with SPSS statistical analysis software. Initial descriptive analyses including means, standard deviations and frequencies were performed on each of the items. The primary statistical test used was the t-statistic for independent samples, which was performed to further investigate the differences between elementary and secondary school students that were identified during the phase one focus groups. The rationale for using the t-statistic was to evaluate whether the mean value of leadership items for elementary students differed significantly from the mean values of those same test items for secondary students. For this study, the dependent variables (those items that were compared between elementary and secondary students) were operationalized as ordinal variables based on the scores obtained along the four or five point Likert scales.

Other exploratory analyses were conducted such as bivariate regression analyses to test the predictive capacities of leadership tasks on leadership identity and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to identify whether or not demographic differences like grade point average and urbanicity influenced leadership dimensions. The significance level set for all tests in this study was 0.05.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure high standards of ethical consideration, I followed the guidelines set forth by the University of Toronto's ethics committee including guidelines on the use of human subjects, guidelines for creating informed consent documents and data security standards (see www.research.utoronto.ca/ethics for more information). Prior to contacting the school boards, I obtained written approval from the University of Toronto's research ethics review board for both

the qualitative and quantitative phases of data collection and analysis. The research was deemed to be low risk, the lowest risk rating a study can obtain. I also obtained approval to conduct the focus group sessions from both school boards involved in the study.

Students participating in the focus groups sessions were required to have a signed parental consent form prior to participation in this study. The students themselves were also given an information sheet and an assent form to sign. The consent and assent forms met the elements outlined in the university's guidelines for drafting consent forms including language and style principles as well as recommendations for content (copies of the forms are available in appendix B). The forms were constructed as an invitation to participate and contained a statement of the general purpose of the study including the expected results of the research. The role of the student as a participant in the focus group session as well as the time and date of the focus group were included along with assurances that participation was not required and a student could opt out of answering any or all questions asked during the focus group. Parents and students were given a phone number and e-mail address of a contact at the University of Toronto if there were further questions. In addition, parents and students were given a copy of the form for their own files.

Parental consent forms for the phase two surveys were distributed to participating teachers. A URL link to the form was distributed to teachers along with the teacher invitation to participate and the URL to the survey. Teachers were instructed to print, distribute, collect and return by fax or mail the parental consent forms before they passed the URL for the survey to their students. When a student logged on to the survey he or she was directed to the student assent form, for which he or she was able to click "yes" or "no" to confirm participation in the study. Like the consent and assent forms for the phase one focus groups, the consent and assent forms for the phase two surveys met the elements outlined in the university's guidelines for drafting consent forms including language and style principles as well as recommendations for content (copies of the forms are available in appendix B).

I suspect that the ethical guidelines set forth by the university presented a research limitation that may have affected the return rate of surveys. Teachers were asked to serve as the

administrators of the survey by printing, distributing, collecting and returning parental consent forms prior to distribution of the survey's URL to the students. Teacher participation in this time-consuming process was entirely voluntary. A total of 164 surveys were completed.

Data security standards for personally identifiable and confidential data set forth by the University of Toronto's ethics committee were closely followed. The focus group data were transcribed using students' names. A "find and replace" procedure allowed each student's name as well as the school name to be replaced with a pseudonym. The original files along with a key code file were password protected and stored on the researcher's computer, which is also password protected. Only de-identified data were printed in hard copy form. Additionally, the phase two surveys asked students to identify their schools. This variable was recoded into numeric form and the key was stored in a password protected file.

Chapter Three

Results

This chapter includes results from both the phase one focus groups as well as the phase two survey. It is presented in two sections representing the two phases of data collection. The first section offers results from the phase one focus groups beginning with a brief overview of the five major themes identified during the axial coding phase of qualitative data analysis as well as an overview of the participants. Results from the elementary student focus groups are presented first followed by the results from the secondary student focus groups. The qualitative data results section concludes with a summary of the findings from the phase one focus groups including similarities and differences between elementary and secondary students with respect to their leadership conceptions and development.

The second section offers results from the phase two survey. This section begins with a brief overview of the areas of investigation included in the survey. It is followed by quantitative analyses of each of the areas of investigation, with particular attention paid to differences between elementary and secondary student responses to the survey items. The quantitative data results section concludes with an assessment of the main challenges presented by this dataset as well as a mapping of the phase two survey data results onto the leadership categories developed during the phase one data analysis.

Phase One: Qualitative Data Results

Overview

The purpose of phase one of the research was to examine young leaders' beliefs about leadership and their own leadership development. The focus groups revealed 5 broad themes relating to (1) general understanding of leadership and leaders, (2) leadership identity, (3) leadership development, (4) mediators and (5) outcomes of leadership opportunities. Most of these themes revealed differences between the elementary and high school students' beliefs and understandings.

Participants

The focus group samples consisted of student leaders from 11 schools (6 elementary and 5 secondary). Each school's principal was asked to nominate 6-8 student leaders to participate in our focus group. The nomination form requested that principals nominate student leaders who represented various forms of school involvement and leadership. The form required principals to justify each nomination. Principals were encouraged to consult guidance counselors and lead teachers in making the selection process. The make-up of the student focus groups represented a wide range of abilities, perspectives, and interests.

Data from the nomination forms highlighted a key difference between leadership at the elementary and high school levels. Elementary school principals chose student leaders on the basis of their personal qualities, while high school principals selected students on the basis of their involvement in a range of activities. Remarks typical of elementary principals such as "bright," "responsible," "good listener and learner," "all 'round supportive student," "shows leadership qualities," "popular among peers," "has complex thinking skills," and "shows perseverance" contrast with the high school principals whose nomination forms stated roles such as student council (presidents and vice presidents), student trustees, prefects, event organizers, team captains, and members of school leadership classes.

Review of Focus Group Findings

Five broad themes emerged from the focus group interviews. The sections below outline each of the themes. Elementary school students' results are presented first, theme by theme, followed by secondary school students' results.

Elementary School Students

Elementary Student Participants

A total of 42 students participated in the focus groups at the elementary schools. More girls participated (n=26) than boys (n=16). Most of the students were in grades 7 (n=14) and 8 (n=15). However, there were also students in grades 5 (n=6) and 6 (n=7).

E1. General Understanding of Leadership

E1.a. Anyone can be a leader.

E1.b. Leadership is about character traits and personal qualities, not skills.

E1.c. Leadership looks different for boys and girls.

E1.a. Anyone can be a leader.

In each of the focus groups we asked “can anyone be a leader?” and the students had a common response – “yes, but...” The ‘but’ refers to their understanding that for leadership to emerge, students require opportunities and encouragement. Comments like, “You need to be given opportunities to show that you are a leader” were common among the elementary school students. The students did not believe that some students were better suited than others to lead or influence an environment. Instead, their common view was that any student, when given the opportunity can be the leader.

E1.b. Leadership is about character traits and personal qualities, not skills.

Comments about leaders were heavily weighted in terms of leadership characteristics such as optimism, perseverance and initiative. No students in any of the focus groups mentioned leadership skills like time management, project planning, and delegation. Even when we asked more pointedly about what leaders specifically do, students didn’t mention leadership tasks or skills. In one case the facilitator asked “what are some things that good leaders do?” and the students responded “They take charge but not in a bossy way” and “they respect themselves and their peers.” This finding matches those discussed above in the literature review, like Crockett et al. (1984) and Harrison et al. (1971) who found that children appear to prioritize traits and personal qualities in their definitions of leadership. Adults also prioritize traits and personal qualities when defining leadership, however adults appear to focus on different traits such as sense of purpose and consistency (Morris, 1991), neither of which was mentioned by students in this study.

The character traits that students named most often came directly from a district-wide character-education initiative called *Character Matters*. The school board in which most of the

focus groups took place mandated a *Character Matters* team (made up of teachers, administrators, parents and community members) which compiled a list of 10 characteristics for schools to promote: (1) Respect; (2) Responsibility; (3) Honesty; (4) Empathy; (5) Fairness; (6) Initiative; (7) Perseverance; (8) Integrity; (9) Courage and (10) Optimism. While there is no prescribed implementation for *Character Matters*, most elementary schools hang posters, name a ‘character of the month’ and have a monthly school-wide assembly which showcases a particular character trait and awards students who display it. In answering the question “what makes a good leader” students nearly always listed the *Character Matters* characteristics. When asked about the connection between CM and leadership, the students agreed that *Character Matters* helps them to understand leadership and develop the personality of a good leader. One girl explained,

It seems like the *Character Matters* is sort of kind of a leadership course but not exactly... We had a language unit just on character. And we had to keep a character journal about how you would react to certain things or feel in certain situations. How would you show this character trait in this situation? Stuff like that. It was kind of leadership. It helps.

Outside the 10 *Character Matters* traits elementary students named confidence, vision, cooperation and courage to overcome obstacles. They were also very clear that a good leader cannot be bossy. One girl noted that she used to be bossy “from kindergarten to grade three” but then realized that she was confusing bossiness with leadership.

It appears that when students are asked about “leadership” they think about leaders. They are concerned with who leaders are rather than what tasks leaders perform. This focus on traits may reflect the students’ familiarity with the *Character Matters* traits, which can be seen on posters adorning the walls of every school – both elementary and secondary – in this particular school board. It might also represent the first signs of development of a deeper understanding of the relational aspects of leadership -- that those in leadership positions must exhibit specific traits in order for them to be perceived and respected by others as leaders.

E1.c. Leadership looks different for boys and girls.

Students in elementary schools saw a clear difference between boys and girls when it came to leadership. Some of our focus groups were comprised of all or nearly all girls, which allowed us to ask the students about their impressions of gender differences. Here is some revealing text from one focus group in which there was only one boy:

Facilitator: I notice there is only one boy in this room.

Lisa: Guys don't want to be labeled as leaders.

Facilitator: As the lone man in the room – what do you have to say about this?

Joe: People try to call me names for being leader, but I just ignore it.

Facilitator: Do you think other guys don't take on leadership because they don't want to get called names?

Joe: Maybe.

Facilitator: Are you the only male leader in your class?

Joe: Not really. There are a few guys, but girls are the majority. They're more open to it.

Facilitator: Is it cool in your group of friends to be a leader?

Karen: Yeah.

Facilitator: For you? (directed to Joe)

Joe: Not as much. No. The boys don't respect leadership the same way. Leaders that are chosen don't get the same respect.

Karen: But it is cool to be athletic, but not the school leadership stuff. Not the fundraising. The girls do that. It's all girls.

Lisa: It would be chaos if a boy tried to lead a fundraising event.

[Laughter.]

Rose: I've seen guys step up but usually they just don't want to. It's too time consuming maybe.

Donna: Yeah the boys are like, "man I don't want to come to that meeting. I don't want to miss recess. I want to play basketball." Stuff like that.

Facilitator: This is so interesting. What about the real world – like in the adult world – do you think there are more men leaders or women leaders? What do you think?

Rose: Both men and women are leaders.

Donna: I think most of the leaders are guys in the real world, but not here.

Karen: With girls there's trust and you have to gain their trust and they have to gain yours. Guys aren't like that.

Donna: Girls could lead the world if they weren't so mean to each other emotionally. Look at the guys – they're all friends. The girls are so mean. They keep count of every single thing. They remember things.

Karen: Girls are really judgmental and this is stopping us from ruling the world.

During the conversation, the students noted a clear difference in the kinds of leadership that boys and girls are willing to undertake -- girls are involved in projects like fundraising efforts while boys take on leadership through sports. This was a common distinction across schools. Indeed, it may be something as simple as girls' willingness to work on a project through recess while boys prioritize the opportunity to run around with their peers and burn off energy. However, a boy who chooses to remain inside and work with a group of girls on a fundraising project is made fun of by the other boys. He is less respected, as Joe says. The fear of being teased or even bullied because of this choice could dissuade boys from participating in these opportunities.

The students also showed insight into relationships among girls. They suggest that one reason why leadership might look different for boys and girls is because boys and girls treat each other differently. The girls identified lack of trust, cruelty and judgment as characteristics of girls' (and not boys') relationships. These negative elements could have an impact on the kinds of leadership that girls undertake or on their willingness to share their leadership projects outside of their immediate peer group.

E2. Leadership Identity

E2.a. I'm a leader because I help out a lot.

E2.b. I'm a leader because I'm good at...

E2.c. Early leadership identity is tied to adult assignment and approval.

E2.d. Belonging to clubs and teams constitutes leadership.

E2.a. I'm a leader because I help out a lot.

The students were asked to tell us why they thought they had been nominated to participate in our focus group. Most students listed some of the teams or clubs they were on and many, nearly all, also added in comments that they “just help out a lot around the school” including helping teachers, the principal or the librarian.

Another student explained that she is a leader because she sets an example

Sara: I think I set an example in the classroom.

Facilitator: How so?

Sara: I do my work and I try hard.

The students' responses suggest a kind of modified version of a behaviourist model of leadership. In this case, their conceptions of what constitutes leadership in their own lives are those mature, responsible tasks and behaviours that would elicit adult approval. While students agreed that they are leaders in their class or school, they don't necessarily see themselves as the same kind of heroic leaders they've learned about like Gandhi or Martin Luther King, who typify leadership. Instead their leadership is rooted in the things they do and the small ways in which they help out around their school.

E2.b. I'm a leader because I'm good at...

In three of the elementary school focus groups, students indicated that natural talent helps children to stand out as leaders. In one focus group in particular, a shy boy who had contributed little to the group discussion was singled out by the other students for being a leader “in his own way.”

Maya: Well not everyone can be a loud leader.

Kayla: Yeah, look at Sam – he's quiet almost all the time, but he's amazing at making things like paper airplanes and fixing people's things too. Everyone goes to him for stuff like that.

Facilitator: So he's a leader in a quiet way. Sam, do you agree with that? What do you think?

Sam: Uhm, I guess that's right. I'm good with my hands and everyone knows it, and I get a lot of attention for my drawings too so I guess that makes me a leader. I don't know.

Kayla (to Sam): Well even though you aren't loud, I think people still know that you're a leader – just in your own way.

In this case the students identified their peer as a leader because of his exceptional abilities. In another case, one student said that he is usually the leader during game play at recess because he is “one of the best boys at sports.” These examples represent an early form of informal leadership among peers in which the leader naturally emerges because of skill or talent. It appears that students are willing to assign leadership to students whose talent stands out.

E2.c. Early leadership identity is tied to adult assignment and approval.

Many of the examples that the students gave of leadership involved helping a teacher or the principal at school. Three typical examples follow:

“I do things for everyone around here. Like I'll photocopy stuff for the principal.”

“I help my teachers. They trust me to mark tests.”

“I help Ms. R. a lot in the library.”

Photocopying or marking tests are tasks that do not constitute leadership by adult standards, but were often the first examples of leadership named by the students. This pattern suggests that children do not need to be given adult leadership roles, per se, but rather expanded responsibilities to instill in them a budding sense of self as leader.

In one case a student spoke about being “head of decorations” which had two elements resembling adult leadership – influence and oversight. However, the student was clear about the importance of the teacher in assigning the task and helping her to complete it successfully:

Facilitator: What do you do if you're a project manager? What are your jobs?

Nina: I was head of decorations.

Facilitator: So what did you do?

Nina: I had to decide about the decorations and decide who is doing what and then I had to follow up with everyone to make sure they did it properly.

Facilitator: Who made you head of decorations?

Nina: The teacher.

Facilitator: Did the teacher say what kind of decorations she wants?

Nina: Yeah, but then we really decided together.

This example stood out because Nina was asked to delegate tasks and oversee her peers as they hung the decorations. Unlike photocopying or marking tests, roles like “head of decorations” or costume director for the school assembly can give students a low-stakes opportunity to practice more sophisticated elements of leadership like decision-making and delegating. However, these kinds of roles do not seem to be necessary during this period of leadership development. Instead, most students were proud to share the ways in which adults show their trust in them by asking them to perform tasks that extend their responsibilities. These simple tasks appear to play an important role in early leadership identity, particularly self confidence and trustworthiness.

E2.d. Belonging to clubs and teams constitutes leadership.

Another pattern that emerged from the focus groups was the children’s belief that simply participating on a sports team or belonging to a club, without any formal leadership role, constitutes leadership. When we asked students why they felt they were chosen to participate in the focus group, many students answered by listing the things that they were involved with, like the soccer team or the chess club.

This curious pattern suggests a number of key elements in a child’s developing understanding of leadership. First, it is possible that students feel that if they are on a team or club (even if they are not the captain) they excel in that area and can therefore consider themselves leaders. This theory would fit well with students’ belief that being good at something makes one a leader. Another possibility is that students feel that trying out for a team takes courage and motivation and that belonging to a team takes ongoing effort and extra work – all elements of leadership. A third possibility is that students feel they learn leadership skills like teamwork from their participation on teams, even if they are not the team captain. In any case, the connection of simple participation with leadership has useful practical applications for

leadership identity development. Coaches and teachers can help students to draw a clearer connection between the skills and attributes they learn from participation and their own development as young leaders.

E3. Leadership Development

The elementary school students were able to describe a trajectory to their leadership development as their leadership tasks and skills became increasingly advanced. Most children felt that their earliest memories of leadership were in kindergarten, when they were asked by the teacher to perform a task, like hanging the coats on the hook or handing out snack. At this early stage, there did not seem to be any personal characteristics or leadership-personality traits attached to the experience, just a sense of efficacy resulting from being assigned a task to complete on behalf of the teacher or the class.

The next advance in leadership skills and identity, according to the elementary school children occurs around grade three, when children are given ongoing “leadership” tasks to complete and must do so without prompting from the teacher. The most common example of this stage was a “job wheel” that the teacher hangs in the class which assigns various tasks to students who must take it upon themselves to check the wheel and complete the task. This level indicates an increase in autonomy and a sense of taking ownership of the class environment. In this case, no one is singled out as the leader, yet the children felt that opportunities like the job chart, which required them to behave responsibly, had a direct impact on their personal leadership development.

By grade five or six, students reported another advancement in their leadership, feeling at this age that they are able to take on a leadership role for a larger project, such as ‘head of decorations’ for a class party or ‘costume director’ for a school assembly. These roles are typically assigned by the teacher, although there were some examples of the class voting for students to fill certain positions, like assistant team captain for colour day (captains were students from older grades). Many of the students in the focus groups were in this stage and felt satisfied with the kinds of opportunities these roles provided for them. They were able to identify the ways that the teacher still figured largely in their leadership, by suggesting costumes

or overseeing the hanging of the decorations, for example. They understood that although they had a more substantial title, their decision-making was curtailed. Still, the students said that these expanded responsibilities instilled in them a sense of confidence in their leadership.

By grade seven or eight, students report taking on leadership roles with more responsibilities and less direct teacher oversight. Students in this age group listed a number of roles such as captains for sports teams, director of the class fundraising project and organizer of a school assembly. Students in this phase of leadership tend to take on more decision-making responsibilities. One student explained, for example that “the leader of the chess club who is in grade 8 is the leader of the team, and he gets the strategy going.” In this case there is a teacher who oversees the club, but he allows the student to lead the team in strategizing. This seemed to be a pattern among teachers. Another student explained, “On our music and athletic council and there are two teachers that lead us but it is run by us basically. They are just there for support and stuff.”

The next stage was a projection for the elementary school students. We asked them, “What’s next for your leadership development?” The students felt that they looked forward to taking on leadership roles with greater responsibilities and also to take initiative on their own ideas to see a project through. Most students said that they did not feel ready for this stage yet, but that they hoped to gain the confidence in high school needed to achieve it.

The following is an excerpt from a focus group that describes each of the advances:

Facilitator: At what age do you think schools should start encouraging students to be leaders?

Jamie: Right away... kindergarten.

Leah: Yeah give them opportunities so as they grow they could take on more and more.

Facilitator: Ok what could you give a student in kindergarten to do as leadership?

Mike: Handing out snack, putting away toys.

Sam: Make sure everyone is ready to go home.

Jamie: Make sure the coats are hung up on the rack.

Sam: Small things.

Facilitator: Is that telling a student to do something that's responsible or is that giving a little student a leadership opportunity?

Jamie: Both. You can put it out into the open and see who volunteers to take on the responsibility.

Sam: It should be an open opportunity.

Facilitator: And then do you think in kindergarten a lot of students would want to take responsibility?

Leah: Yeah. They like to feel like they help.

Mike: My brother is in kindergarten and their class does "special students" and each student is in charge of taking the attendance down to the office. Every student gets a chance to be the leader.

Facilitator: Do you think boys would take more opportunities in kindergarten?

Mike: Yeah they're all the same in kindergarten. There's no boys and girls.

Facilitator: When does that split happen?

Mike: Like grade 3.

Sam: That's when they decide – I'm more for sports or I'm more for music.

Facilitator: So what about like grade 3 then – how do you think teachers should offer opportunities for students to be leaders in grade 3?

Jamie: I know my math teacher has a job chart and he rotates names throughout the chart and each day a different student is in charge of something different. It's kind of like telling them what to do.

...

Facilitator: What age can you say to a student 'I want you to take this fundraiser on and I want you to guide how we're going to raise funds etc...?'

Sam: Some people may be ready in grade 6 and some may not be ready until grade 10. It depends on their maturity level. It depends if they're ready to take on that big responsibility.

Facilitator: What's the earliest that might happen?

Sam: Grade 5 or 6 maybe.

Mike: It's hard to put an age to it.

Leah: Maybe not the whole thing, but parts of it. Give them an important role.

Mike: I think grade 7.

Facilitator: It goes from taking responsibility for something to taking the role that you decide how things are going to happen. And you guys have been doing that for a little while now so then what's next?

Leah: Actually coming up with our own ideas and finding other people to help us and actually making it happen.

Jamie: Creating something.

Leah: From scratch.

Sam: You're like the chef of the project.

Facilitator: And that doesn't really happen at this school yet?

Sam: Not really.

Leah: But I guess as we get older that might happen. I hope in high school.

Facilitator: Do you guys feel ready for that next step?

Sam: Not yet.

Leah: Not right now no.

Sam: Maybe we are but we're a bit afraid still.

Leah: That's when courage comes up, right, and perseverance,

Mike: And optimism

[Laughter.]

E4. Mediating and Moderating Variables

E4.a. Opportunities and taking advantage of the situation.

E4.b. Encouragement.

E4.c. The busy teacher is the primary roadblock.

E4.d. Insecurity.

During the course of the focus groups, the students mentioned a number of factors that contributed to or detracted from their leadership development, including school programming, specific interactions with encouraging adults, personal insight and friendships. The four most prominent themes are detailed below.

E4.a. Opportunities and taking advantage of the situation.

The children seemed to agree that opportunities to take on leadership tasks or roles were the key influences on their leadership development. We asked the students if they felt that they were born leaders or if they developed into leaders during childhood. Students argued both sides

of this issue, but all agreed that either way, it was circumstance and taking advantage of opportunities that has made them the leaders they are. One boy explained why he felt that no one is really born a leader. He said,

“I don’t think you can be born to be anything. It’s about the choices you make. Its not like you are born and you say yes, “I must be a leader.” How can you decide that when you are a year old? So say you are in grade 2 now, okay, and you are doing drama, and you are working in a 5 man drama group, okay. Will you take charge of that group or sit down and do nothing? ...Everyone could be a leader... You have to choose to. You have to take advantage of opportunities.”

Other students felt that they were born with some kind of inclination towards leadership. One girl explained, “I think I was born with some leadership, but I think other things in my life happened that made me want to be a better leader.”

Interestingly, a number of children expressed the belief that even difficult or challenging circumstances can be opportunities for leadership.

Lana: Sometimes circumstances turn you into a leader. Think of Terry Fox. If he didn’t have cancer, do you think that he would be who he is today?

Adam: Yeah, when circumstances change you see who you are.

Lana: Ordinary people might be little leaders but then they have a change or there’s an opportunity and then they become extraordinary people.

The students seem to agree that leadership, both for themselves as well as their role models is, to a large extent, situational in that opportunities engender leadership. Situational leadership, as it is represented in classical leadership theory posits that leaders alter their leadership style depending on the situation (Fiedler and Garcia, 1987). While the students’ experiences with leadership aren’t numerous enough to conceive of leadership styles shifting in this way, their earliest thinking about leadership seems to suggest an understanding of, and agreement with the importance of context in developing leadership.

E4.b. Encouragement.

Students agreed that encouragement from teachers, principals, family and friends contributed to their leadership development. They also noted that certain celebrities, even though they don't know them, acted as idyllic role models for engagement and leadership. The quote below illustrates the students' understanding that their parents are a source of encouragement and guidance:

Facilitator: What about your families. Do you think your family has anything to do with you being a leader?

Ivan: Yeah. They encourage you. They let you come to activities.

Sima: They let you participate.

Kareem: We still need their permission to do things.

Ivan: They also encourage and support us.

This conversation illustrates the tension that students can feel as they grow – beginning to think of themselves as young leaders, but at the same time understanding that they are still children who need parental supervision. The students did not appear troubled by the need for parental authorization, nor did they seem to suggest that this circumstance impedes their leadership; rather they seemed to understand that this was simply a fact of life for children.

E4.c. The busy teacher is the primary roadblock.

Students complained that circumstances at school occasionally prevented them from leadership opportunities. The most common barrier identified was the busy teacher. In every school we visited, students require teacher supervision for all clubs and activities. In a number of cases, students wanted to initiate a project or a club, but couldn't find a teacher willing to oversee the endeavor. In one school the children said:

Fatima: We wanted to have a drama club but they say it's too late in the year and teachers don't want to participate.

Lina: We don't want them to either.

Fatima: Yeah but they don't want to. The teachers think it's too late in the year and they're pretty busy. And it's hard to get everyone involved and to come to practices.

Albert: At the beginning of the year we wanted to start a soccer team but the teachers said they were too busy. They don't have the extra time to participate in extra curricular activity. Basically we don't have the supervision so we can't do much.

Facilitator: You tried to start the soccer club but you couldn't find teachers so it didn't happen. Are there other examples of that?

Lina: Mrs. Martin was my grade 7 teacher and she oversaw the student council and a lot of times I would go up to her and tell her ideas and she would usually bring them down and tell me why we couldn't do it.

Facilitator: Are there any great teachers?

Lina: Yeah, Mrs. Sing. She started a drama thing and the goat club.

Fatima: I think she's a leader because when she has an idea she makes it happen. Other teachers say they don't have time but Mrs. Sing always makes things happen. She has a busy schedule but she's organized.

The students expressed frustration regarding the lack of teacher availability for extra-curricular projects, although they also seemed to understand the teachers' point of view. Many students suggested that teachers be required to volunteer a certain number of hours each year to help students with extra-curricular activities.

E4.d. Insecurity.

At least a few students in each of the focus groups admitted to feeling insecure about their leadership. Many students remembered feeling shy or insecure as little children, but could pinpoint either an opportunity or a moment of encouragement from a teacher that helped them to feel courageous and to see themselves as leaders. One girl related the story of how encouragement and opportunities helped her to overcome her shyness:

Well one of my best friends, she was really shy, actually we were both really shy, but then from the complements from my teacher and I also went to Future Possibilities and through all that we gained confidence and we became leaders. Now we are helping other people out and hoping that it helps them and makes them leaders cause if it helped us why can't it help them?

In another focus group, students agreed that shyness and insecurity can be overcome through encouragement and opportunities:

Facilitator: Earlier you said something about a friend of yours that was given the confidence to be a leader. Do you think if maybe a teacher, or parent, or friend, gave someone the confidence that might make someone into a leader?

Mira: You have to give them chances. Like through more group activities children who are quiet, if a teacher boosts them up, maybe they could be a leader.

Peter: There are some people that want to be a leader but they feel insecure around others who are leaders so they step back from being a leader.

Insecurity figured largely in the elementary school focus groups. Many students explained how they have managed to overcome their feelings of insecurity through opportunities and successes. However, many students also suggested that they would need to gain even more confidence in order to take on leadership roles in high school. The students' reflections match classical development theory, particularly Erickson's stages of psychosocial development in which the fourth stage challenges school age children to overcome feelings of self-doubt and self-consciousness to gain a sense of competency (Cole, 2001; Erikson, 1968). It appears that being able to participate in projects or team challenges reinforces students' feelings of efficacy and responsibility and allows them to see the effects of their contributions. These positive experiences reinforce the students' developing leadership identity.

This finding also has implications for the literature on early leadership development. As described above in chapter two, early leadership research often identifies young leaders as those students who display advanced social skills (Lee, 2005; Trawick-Smith, 1988; Perez, 1982). Yet, the findings from the phase one focus groups indicate that it is possible for shy students to emerge as leaders in later childhood. These shy students may not have displayed the advanced social skills that teachers typically identify as early leadership. On the basis of this finding I suggest that the primary years are too early to identify potential leaders to the exclusion of other students and that the window of opportunity for leadership development remains open long past the primary grades.

E5. Outcomes of Leadership Opportunities

The students named a number of outcomes of their leadership education and opportunities. One of the most common outcomes was self-confidence. The following comment is a typical example:

Facilitator: And did this class project change how you are as a leader?

Shira: Yeah, I became more confident in myself.

Sharon: And I became more comfortable around others.

Other outcomes that the students mentioned include: gaining a sense of self as a leader, deepening friendships, feelings of pride and accomplishment, appreciation from teachers and the principal, enjoyment from being a part of a team, and increased energy and enthusiasm about future possibilities.

The students in the elementary school did not name any negative outcomes of leadership opportunities. This may be because students did not want to admit to negative outcomes in front of their peers. Indeed, the phase two survey, which offered students an opportunity to respond anonymously, revealed that elementary students occasionally feel different, ostracized, or overwhelmed with responsibility as a result of their leadership experiences.

E6. The Unanticipated Benefits of our Leadership Focus Group

One thing that struck us as researchers was that even though the students identified as leaders, had a working definition of leadership and could identify examples of leadership in their own lives, not one student in any of our focus groups had ever had a focused discussion about their own leadership development. Students had not previously been asked to reflect upon their experiences or to make explicit their own growth as leaders. This context engendered what felt for us as researchers like a very “fresh” and exciting conversation. Students were exploring a part of themselves for the first time, and because it is a topic that brings them a sense of pride and personal accomplishment, the students were highly engaged and very willing to think deeply about the topic and share their “aha!” moments. We typically ended the sessions by asking the

students what they thought about participating in the focus group. The following is a selection of responses:

- Just now I gained a new perspective of leadership and I realize that I'm developing. I see it clearly now.
- I see how you can learn from your mistakes.
- We all learned about each other too and we became more friendlier and we'll be able to talk about this too.
- I know I have this in me but I never stopped to think about what characteristics do I have? How exactly am I a leader?
- It's helpful to do this because you don't really think about it. It's good to just sit down and talk about it. We don't talk about it at school. And now we can.

Twice during the elementary school focus groups, students' own understanding of leadership shifted so dramatically that their own examples of leadership, which were sources of pride at the outset of the conversation became silly by the end. In both cases the students were in the intermediate grades (7 and 8), suggesting that they were ready for more complex leadership roles, but neither had they been offered, nor had they considered the possibility. The following is an excerpt from a focus group showing the students' transition into a new understanding of leadership:

Melanie: We did a fundraiser for the principal and we were doing some work – we had to wrap boxes and cut holes in them and cover them with newspapers and Ms. E. was telling us what to do instead of asking us and we weren't even sure what we were wrapping the boxes for.

[Laughter.]

Shawna: We were just told to wrap the boxes and she was telling us that we were heading up the fundraiser but we never had any say in how was going to go and we didn't even know what it's for... and they were telling us that we are the heads of it.

Facilitator: What was that fundraiser for in the end?

Melanie: We don't know.

[Laughter.]

Facilitator: And you're still "organizing" it? You're still the leaders of it?

Melanie: Yeah we just finished wrapping the boxes.

Shawna: But we don't know why.

Facilitator: Why don't you ask?

Shawna: I don't really want to talk to the principal.

Facilitator: Now, after our discussion about leadership, would you consider your role in this fundraiser leadership?

Melanie: ...no.

Shawna: In the beginning it was leadership, because we had to take responsibility, but now no. it's just like we're taking directions.

Melanie: Ms. E. is dictating.

Shawna: So we took on the responsibility but not really. It wasn't real leadership responsibility.

Facilitator: But she offered it to you as "come be a student leader?"

Shawna: Yeah.

Facilitator: So you stepped up...

Melanie: And now we're just workers.

In this example, the students saw how this particular opportunity, which was offered to them as leadership, was in fact only an opportunity to help out and that they were forgoing recess to be "workers." The girls displayed a great sense of humor about this realization. Melanie quipped, "Well, at least we're experts at wrapping now."

Secondary School Students

A total of 30 students participated in the focus groups at the secondary schools. Unlike the elementary schools, where more girls participated than boys, equal numbers of boys (n=15) and girls (n=15) participated in the high school focus group. Most of the students were in grades 10 (n=7), 11 (n=9) and 12 (n=9). However, there were also students in grade 9 (n=5).

S1 General Understanding of Leadership

S1.a. Not anyone can be a leader.

S1.b. Leadership is being in charge of and organizing clubs, teams, events, etc..

S1.c. You do not need followers to be a leader.

S1.d. Leadership is primarily about character traits and personal qualities but also (albeit secondarily) about skills.

S1.a. Not anyone can be a leader.

We asked the high school students if they felt that they were born leaders or if they developed into leaders. They agreed, with very few exceptions, that leadership is essentially an

innate quality. Students tended to qualify their perspective by stating that specific leadership skills were not innate and did develop over time. The following four quotes illustrate the students' beliefs:

“I have to say that developing into a leader is wrong, I think we are born leaders because everyone has their own personalities and some people are just good at leading and they are not afraid to step up. I just think it's within you and you develop it with other people's help.”

“I think I was a born leader... but then I took an interdisciplinary course which basically gave me the opportunity to gain more skills and learn more at the same time so I guess along the way you still learn skills of leadership.”

“I think I was probably a born leader because ever since grade one my reports cards said ‘shows great leadership qualities.’”

“I don't think I was a born leader but I think I was born to be a leader and I just taught myself over the years how to be a better leader.”

The belief that leadership is essentially an innate quality marks a key distinction between elementary and high school students in their conceptions of leadership. Elementary students defined their own leadership in terms of behaviors like helping the teacher. High school students, however, tended to adopt a trait approach to their own leadership, believing their leadership to be something innate about their character that draws them to leadership.

51.b. Leadership is being in charge of and organizing clubs, teams, events, etc.

The high school students agreed that leadership is about taking charge. Examples of leadership included planning a fundraiser, running the basketball tournament, editing the yearbook and being the captain of a team sport. There were no examples of “helping out” that dominated the examples of elementary school students. At one high school, I mentioned to the students that the younger children saw photocopying something for the principal as leadership and their response was to laugh. One student replied, “That's definitely not leadership. Doing someone else's grunt work is definitely not leadership.” Based on these examples, a preliminary

definition of adolescent leadership is emerging in which formal roles and the ability to “take charge” are paramount.

There were also a number of examples showing that students understood that even a formal title does not constitute leadership. The following conversation with a prefect exemplifies this belief:

Facilitator: You’re a Prefect?

Mary: Yeah.

Facilitator: So what does that look like in terms of leadership at school?

Mary: Tell you the truth, most of it, half the battle is just show up on time and doing what you are supposed to do. It’s not so much leadership in the sense of organizing anything but you kind of help other events run, like being a guide. We do a lot of ... like standing around and giving directions. But it’s not really leadership. I can’t call it leadership.

Facilitator: So you wouldn’t consider that leadership even though it’s officially a leadership role?

Mary: I guess it’s an opportunity for leadership, but we don’t really organize anything ourselves. Most of the teachers have already gotten that down and they just tell you what to do.

The students’ comments suggest an overall shift in their understanding of leadership. Taking directions or helping out, both of which were common examples of leadership with elementary school students, clearly no longer met the criteria for secondary school students. One student explained the shift in his thinking:

Facilitator: How is it possible that just a few years ago you would have been so excited to help a teacher to photocopy something and now you see it as grunt work?

Evan: I think I learned what real leadership is last year when I was the head of yearbook and even though there is a teacher supervisor, I pretty much did it all myself. I mean we had a team, but I was definitely in charge and I got that it was up to me to step up and be the leader and make it happen. So I think just getting older and gaining responsibility and actually having the success or failure rest on you makes you see what leadership is.

The conceptual shift appears to be a result of experience. Student leaders in high schools are given leadership positions with increased authority and responsibility. As they tackle the challenges that their new leadership roles demand, they expand their concept of leadership to include authority, increased responsibility, and taking charge. As a result the high school students abandon their previous working definition of leadership and most even consider it juvenile.

Sl.c. You do not need followers to be a leader.

Even though students agreed that they needed to be in charge to consider their role a leadership one, they did not believe that followers were a necessary component of leadership. Many examples of leadership included planning and execution that students undertook on their own. One girl saw her role as director of decorations for the school dance as leadership. She worked alone to plan and buy the materials. Another student gave the example of editing the photos for the yearbook. He, too, worked alone all year. A third student was in charge of selecting the quotes that were read over the PA system in the mornings. She, too, worked alone and considered this a leadership role.

In these cases, the students felt that their level of responsibility and authority over a project or a piece of a project in-and-of-itself constituted leadership. This belief marks a significant difference between youth and adult conceptions of leadership. Every model of leadership in the adult literature assumes followership as a necessary component of leadership. However, youth leaders suggest that for them, being in charge of something that makes an impact on the school or community, irrespective of followership, is leadership.

The relationship in this conception of leadership is not one of leader-follower, but instead leader-community. That is, the students feel accountable to the community to accomplish their project. They feel that they themselves must take charge and accomplish their goals because the community is counting on them.

S1.d. Leadership is primarily about character traits and personal qualities but also (albeit secondarily) about skills.

In each focus group, the facilitators asked, “What makes a good leader?” Students’ responses typically focused on character traits. The most common traits listed were passion, energy and confidence. Other traits included approachability, patience, loyalty, charisma, perseverance, competitiveness, and willingness to compromise. One student added “a leader is somebody that you can relate to and who everyone likes.”

The traits that the students named map neatly onto four of the five basic dimensions of personality known as the Big Five personality traits -- openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness (Digman, 1990). Passion, energy and confidence, the three most commonly identified responses, are elements of extraversion. Other identified traits like patience and perseverance represent conscientiousness. Approachability and willingness to compromise correspond with openness and loyalty corresponds with agreeableness. Research has linked leadership in adults to the big five personality traits. Judge and Bono (2000) showed that extraversion was a significant predictor of transformational leadership and that agreeableness and openness were positively correlated with transformational leadership. There also appears to be a connection between these broad-based personality traits and the profile of an adolescent leader.

Unlike the elementary school students, the high school students also added a couple of leadership skills such as organization and communication skills. High school students who have taken a leadership course or been involved in a leadership conference were aware of those skills associated with leadership like time management and communication skills. While only a few students focused on those skills when discussing their leadership, when pressed, they were aware of them and could explain how specific opportunities had helped them to develop the skills.

S2. Leadership Identity

S2.a. I am a leader because I step up.

S2.b. I am also a leader in informal ways, too.

S2.c. Taking initiative is the highest form of leadership.

S2.d. I would like to have more say in school decisions.

S2.a. I am a leader because I step up.

In each focus group we asked the students to introduce themselves and explain why they felt they were leaders in the school. In addition to listing the number of clubs, teams and projects they organized, many responded that they are people who “step up.”

“Whatever something needs to be done, I step up, I make sure things are done properly and on time and if something needs to get done, I’ll say that I’ll get it done.”

“I am here because whenever there is a leadership task at hand usually I will step up to the occasion, and if no one else is stepping up, I will.”

“Stepping up” was mentioned more frequently with high school students than any other characteristic or behavior. It appears to be the dominant indicator for students of their own leadership. Students suggested that it is connected to courage and confidence as well as a desire to be helpful to the school or community.

S2.b. I am also a leader in informal ways, too.

While the students did not use the term “informal leadership,” they did show a preliminary understanding of the concept and listed ways that they take on informal leadership roles. A number of students spoke about being the de-facto leader when placed in groups for class teamwork. Another girl spoke about taking on an informal leadership position on her skating team:

“I do synchronized skating, I probably led my team every year that I have skated, it’s not an official captain’s position but I am one of the older and stronger skaters so I kind of lead them and cheer them on.”

S2.c. Taking initiative is the highest form of leadership.

When we asked which leadership accomplishments made the students most proud, they most often answered projects for which they took initiative. In one case, a student who wanted to initiate a fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society was turned down by her vice principal after numerous revisions of a project plan. She was determined to go through with the

fundraiser, so she eventually called the Cancer Society and they helped her to organize the event off school grounds. She raised \$3000 and was extremely proud of her perseverance and accomplishment. Another student spoke of starting a tutoring club after she had been approached by students for help with math and science. She gathered together a team of top students who were willing to tutor after school. The students spoke of the administrative red-tape involved in launching a project, but felt that if an idea was safe and would not cost the school any money, the administration was usually supportive.

Those students who took initiative to launch a project displayed high levels of confidence in their ability to succeed. Upon further questioning, many students were able to situate their current confidence in their past successes from projects and opportunities during elementary school years. Through practice and early success, students internalized a personal sense of industry, allowing them to feel prepared to take initiative. Again, these examples fit rather neatly into Erickson's theory of psychosocial development in which the elementary school years provide students with experience to gain confidence in their own competence, allowing them to focus their teen years on more personal and identity-driven growth (Erickson, 1968).

S2.d. I would like to have more say in school decisions.

By far the most common criticism of the school's capacity to nurture its leaders was the lack of student voice in school-level decision-making. Students felt that too often decisions were made that affect their daily lives without consulting them. They suggested that it leads to a lack of respect among students for the school's administration and even school property.

Bella: The other day they just took away the benches that were in the halls. They didn't ask us, they just took them. I mean, if you are not going to listen to my opinion then I am not going to respect the school. If you are not going to give me a place to sit in the halls then I am going to leave my gum on the floor for you [laughs].

Rose: You rebel when you are not listened to.

Ahmed: They always tell us to come to them but they are never there.

Facilitator: So what kind of sort of decisions would you want to have a say in?

Bella: The appearance of the school.

Rose: Taking our bench away is like taking our property away, like we feel that when we come into this school we want to feel comfortable, like when they took the vending machines away and put them into the café without our say...

Facilitator: Do you feel that the teachers and the principal ask for students to assist with school decision making?

Kevin: Sometimes, we were thinking about an early start for the school year next year, and they came to ask us (student council) about what we thought of the idea.

Dan: I don't think they really cared, though. Sorry... but... cause [sic] the teachers had a vote and they decided on it, I don't think it really mattered what you said, I think they asked just to make you guys feel good. Personally.

Evan: Yeah, they ask our opinion once in a while, but I don't think they value it.

Rebecca: And then yesterday they did this survey and they were trying to make a new mission statement for the school. And I actually think it's going to be successful because of the way they went about doing it. They had different sessions asking us questions about what we see our community like and what needs to be improved and whatnot and I think that by taking that different spin and getting our input on it we are going to want to be a part of in this new initiative.

Evan: Yesterday I was so shocked when they came to us for the mission statement. I thought they're doing this because they wanted us to prepare for you guys (the focus group).

The widespread criticism about lack of student involvement in school level decision-making indicates the students' desire to feel a greater sense of ownership and connectedness to their environment. Their examples typically focused on relatively minor issues like the vending machines or hallway benches; they were not especially concerned with macro-level decisions like strategic planning. Ironically, administrators themselves appear to believe that they do involve students in school level decision making. The large-scale study of distributed leadership associated with this thesis surveyed 30 high school principals, of which 85% reported that they spent "significant" or "a great deal" of effort to involve students in school level decision making (see Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon & Yashkina, 2009 for a summary of this research). If this is, in fact, the case, and opportunities for involvement are available, students appear to be unaware of them.

In the past few decades a number of schools have begun to implement a model of education called participative democracy, which prioritizes student voice in both educational content and structure. The Directory of Democratic Education (www.democraticeducation.com) lists about 150 such schools currently in operation around the world, with two in Toronto. Students typically plan their own educational activities based on their interest and are guided by (rather than taught by) their classroom teachers. In terms of school structure, participative democracies allow all stakeholders to participate equally in the day-to-day decisions of the school by making and enforcing rules and procedures. A literature search revealed a few theoretical articles that link participative democracy to leadership development in children (Rolheiser & Glickman, 1995) and one case study in which a sixth grade teacher relates his experiences with implementing a participative democracy in his classroom, which resulted in the development of leadership skills. To be sure, the students in my own study were not asking for an overhaul of the education system, rather more opportunities to have their voices heard on issues that affect them.

S3. Leadership Development

The high school students identified a developmental path identical to elementary school students, with one notable difference. The students felt that their very early leadership could not be considered “real leadership.” Instead they felt that their earliest “real leadership” occurred in late elementary school (intermediate grades) or early high school. The following quotes exemplify typical responses from the high school students when asked, “What are your earliest memories of leadership?”

Adam: For me it was in Grade 7. We needed a student council president and no one stepped up so I did it and the whole year I had to make decisions and they might have been little decisions but I realized that I like stepping up like that.

Ahmed: Grade 8 when I got chosen to be an ambassador... and I just blossomed from there.

David: I remember, okay, a caretaker in our school had just died of a heart attack and it was so unbelievable and so unexpected. At recess everyone was feeling kind of sad and I remember talking to them about death and how it happens to everyone and this is like 7th grade which is pretty weird, for someone to be talking like this, but everyone was listening to me and I

remember saying to myself, “hey everyone is listening to me, this is kinda cool, I guess I can offer them some comfort.”

At one school, students spoke about developing a sense of self-reflection and the skill of self-analysis which has translated into improved leadership.

Facilitator: Can you identify the changes in yourself – like what has changed in you between elementary school and now that has you seeing things differently and feeling more like a leader?

Sarah: I think that now you’ve had more time to see how people react to you. I remember when I was little and I couldn’t get along with other students so well and I never really understood it, but now I know because I learned how to analyze myself and think about why things happen and now the next step for me is trying to do something about it.

Facilitator: When did you start analyzing?

Sarah: Grade 9 or 10.

Ali: I think it also has to do with what you’re taught in school. In grade 7 or 8 is mostly about memorizing things and then saying it back on a test to get 100. But in high school they’re asking me more to analyze things and think about them for myself. Not in every class, but some teachers are good about that and its helping me to think about how I am doing in my leadership roles and how I can learn and do better.

A conceptual shift seems to occur between elementary and secondary school with respect to an understanding of what constitutes leadership. Students in elementary school agree that helping tasks like decorating the stage for an assembly constitute leadership, while high school students no longer agree that this is the case. It appears that as soon as student have the opportunity to take on a formal leadership role in which they have even a minimal level of authority or influence they are able to integrate those concepts into a new mental representation of leadership. The former experiences, which were considered leadership at the time become trivial and are no longer thought of as “real leadership.” Even though high school students’ new experiences bring about a more sophisticated understanding of leadership that includes “stepping up” and taking charge in an authoritative way, important remnants from their earlier conceptions remain. Students continue to believe that character traits such as responsibility, trustworthiness and motivation are key elements of leadership.

S4. Mediating and Moderating Variables

S4.a. Opportunities and education.

S4.b. Role models.

- S4.b.i. Teachers and coaches.
- S4.b.ii. Family.
- S4.b.iii. Friends.

S4.c. Teacher enrolment.

S4.d. Red tape.

S4.a. Opportunities and education.

The students overall felt that there were many opportunities for leadership, and listed a number of opportunities that they felt contributed to their leadership development both in and out of school. At school there were the usual sports teams, clubs and fundraising projects that students can get involved with. The following quote was typical of the students' attitude at all four schools: "There are so many different opportunities and if you step up you can find something of your own." Another student remarked, "I think this stuff is available if you want it... if you make the effort to find it. I think for those who want to learn and experience you can get it."

Some of the students had also learned about leadership through coursework. Two of the schools offered the Ontario Ministry of Education's leadership course. This course got generally high reviews from the students who had taken it. One student said, "The leadership class is probably the best class if not the best class I've taken." Interestingly, in the schools which did not offer the course, students did not seem interested in taking it.

Facilitator: If there was a course that taught leadership would you want to take it?

John: Honestly, I probably wouldn't take it.

Victoria: You want to encourage it but there are so many other classes that you have to take.

John: Like chemistry, biology, physics, math, English...

Victoria: As much as you want to learn it you wouldn't want to spend 90 days learning about one aspect of leadership because you can always develop it somewhere else.

Another curriculum connection to leadership is Interdisciplinary Studies, which was only offered at one of the focus group schools. The students spoke very highly of their experience with this course:

There is the interdisciplinary studies which is different from the leadership class. It puts you in a placement in one of the classes where you have strengths, like mine was a strength in physical activities so I was placed in phys ed. How the course worked was for the first 3 or 4 weeks it was all in class, so we read a book about leadership, we did a couple of assignments and then were sent to a placement. We had placement for 4 days a week and then one day we were back in class. It was a really cool class where we could apply the leadership skills right in the class and we had a couple of presentations to make, a couple of assignments, group assignments, a couple of seminars – I thought it was a really fun class... It was a really good class.

The students also named a number of organizations such as DECA and LEAD which offer conferences that promote leadership. These conferences got generally mixed reviews. Students said that they felt energized by the conference, but the excitement faded and could not be sustained back at school.

Jenn: To tell you the truth I think that the conference is a nice day off, but it hasn't really helped. I mean I think I've been bombarded by the same message since grade 9, about taking initiative and being patient and all those things and you go to the conferences and meet like-minded people but that's it. And after the day's over you go home and you're still the same person -- like it doesn't really change you very much.

Rachel: I think the hard skills would be more valuable than telling someone to take more initiative and feel the passion.

S4.b. Role models.

When asked to name their most significant leadership role models, the high school students almost exclusively listed people with whom they had close contact. Some students also listed famous examples like Martin Luther King and Michael Jordan, but they rarely elaborated on how these people functioned as role models. Instead, students were eager to express how their coaches, family and friends served as examples of leadership. Here are a few examples:

S4.b.i. Teachers and coaches.

Bella: SAC (Student Activities Council) has been the best thing for me, it's made my high school. In grade 11, I didn't have a big role, I was a rep but then my teacher advisor was like "you need to be in an exec." So that inspired me... Just the motivation from the teachers helped and once I had one successful event I didn't want to stop.

Ahmed: I am a swimmer and I don't lead the team but our coach is so well respected and such a good leader that... just the fact that you are in his presence rubs off on you.

Jack: I find that Mr. R. in this school is completely inspiring. I went on an outdoor ed trip with him and you can feel the energy radiating off of him. Like once I was walking outside the school and he was running from the school to his car and back and I was like, "hey where's the fire," and he said "its right here." [laughs] I just find him totally inspiring, the energy and charisma for the lack of a better word.

S4.b.ii. Family.

Molly: I think I get [my leadership] from my mom because in the early part of my life my dad wasn't there so she basically, like in China, she raised me like a stereotypical male, like she raised me to be more aggressive than most other girls were. Like, she basically told me, "You know go out there and get them. You don't have to go and be a jerk but you don't have to lie back, stay back, you don't have to take anything you don't want to."

S4.b.iii. Friends.

Bella: And the other [role model] was Rose – she actually inspired me to be on council, I met her in grade six, and she's a natural born leader, I watched her on council for 3 years and then I said in grade twelve I want to be president, so I think I take after her.

Rose: I was going to say that I took after her (Bella) too because back in grade six I used to be the most unorganized person ever. I know it's a small thing but my locker used to be the most unorganized and she used to tell me to get things in order. She was always up there. She was my first friend. I felt

welcome because she came with open arms. I am a shy person when I don't know people but she opened me up. So if anything I think we push each other up.

Adam: Well back to peers, he's not here right now, but he probably would be if he wasn't in Ottawa, his name is Steve Anderson. I went to school with him since grade one and seeing what he's gone through with baseball -- he's playing for team Canada right now -- and he started off by playing house league. He never gave up, never quit. People on the team would make fun of him, put him down, but he kept doing it and that really motivated me... it definitely helped me.

S4.c. Teacher enrolment.

Students at each of the focus groups named teacher enrolment as the single most significant barrier to following through on their initiatives. The students expressed their frustration at the difficulty in enrolling teachers to supervise:

Facilitator: I am sure you need teacher support for things you want to do [Bella: "Everything"], how many teachers do you think would be actively supporting the activities you want to do?

Bella: Three percent of the teachers.

Facilitator: You've done the math?

Bella: No, like, if I take out the list of the teachers, it's ridiculous...

Rose: Some of the teachers are just... It's such a shame.

Bella: Not some most. You have six students in here that have done so many things, yet you only have two teachers to support them when you have a staff of 100. So I raised six grand, what if I could have raised ten grand? If I had more support, I could've.

Rose: And we try to get them to come and help. Like we ask them we beg, offer them food... but then its funny when we ask they say, "no, I've scheduled this" but then when the dance comes around they want to come for the free food.

Bella: The teacher is supposed to be a leader in the school. You're leading a whole entire class... I don't understand how a teacher can say I'll lead my students in class but I won't lead them out in life. I find that shocking. I don't think its right.

Ahmed: I think teachers do what they are interested in. Like you're not going to get Mr. H. to come out and coach soccer [laughs]. Every teacher has their likes and dislikes. So you've got to find something tangible for the teacher.

Jane: This year we didn't have a badminton team because we couldn't find a teacher that would supervise. And last year we had four or five people that made it to the OFSAA championships, so we definitely have the talent.

Leo: The same thing happened with pole vaulting team for track and field, pole vaulting that is a lot for two guys to go to OFSSA for one event but we didn't have anyone to supervise again.

Val: Same for cross country -- nobody else wanted to supervise.

Jane: When people have talent we don't want to lose it, but without teachers to supervise we can't do anything about it.

Simon: The thing is, even if they do volunteer, sometimes they don't always have the leadership abilities to make the students listen or follow them. We had problems with the rugby team. None of the students would listen to the coach. It was nice of him to volunteer but he didn't have the right approach

S4.d. Red tape.

Students at every school saw the administration as the primary barrier to taking initiative. In each school there were instances of vice principals rejecting project ideas or changing students' plans. One student said, "Sometimes you will suggest an initiative and by the time it gets approved, you're like this wasn't even my idea." While the students were eager to express their annoyance at these episodes, all of them identified important lessons from the experience. The following quote illustrates both the students' frustration and their acknowledgment of useful life-lessons learned:

Facilitator: ...sounds easy but are there ever any hurdles?

Bella: Oh yeah, admin. They're so strict. Like they want, there was this girl that wanted to have casino night – great idea, fabulous idea, she wrote it up, did the whole formal thing and they rejected in like 3 seconds.

Adam: Well that's because we can't have gambling at school.

Bella: Yeah, I think admin has so many restrictions from the board. And we can only do so much because we only have ten months to do stuff and two of those months are taken away because of exams.

Facilitator: So her proposal for casino night was shut down, immediately -- what kind of an impact will that have on a student like in grade 10 who comes in with all this energy with a proposal and gets shutdown in 3 seconds.

Adam: Well, at first, I'd be like damn, but I think that would motivate me more to come up with another idea, to show them that I am still interested in doing something. Take the points they gave me and improve.

S5. Outcomes of Leadership Opportunities

S5.a. Earning the trust of adults.

S5.b. Getting away with mischief and misdemeanors

The students listed a number of outcomes including increased self-confidence, friendships, and a sense of pride and personal accomplishment. Those are typical responses found in the literature. There were two other responses worth noting. The first is a sense of having earned the trust of adults; the second is being able to get away with things.

S5.a. Earning the trust of adults.

In one example a student wanted to organize a fundraiser for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. The vice principal initially denied her request to move ahead with her plan, but she persevered until he reluctantly relented.

Brittney: I believed so strongly in this heart and stroke thing and it was a complete success, it was a huge. But I was shot down, how many times, 'no you can't do this, no you can't do this, no you can't do this...'

Rita: Restrictions, restrictions, but she proved herself to him and now he trusts us all so much more. She said, "it's gonna work" and he said "oh is it?" and then \$6000 later he was like "wow, it worked."

S5.b. Getting away with mischief and misdemeanors.

Students liked that their high profile in the school allowed them some leeway with the teachers and administrators. One student said,

"We are not supposed to wear any beer propaganda and slogans and stuff and I wore a Molson Canadian jacket all winter and no one said anything. Its just a little thing, but if I was a student that hangs out in the smoking section or skips class all the time someone probably would have said something."

General Interpretation of Phase One Focus Groups

The coding process following the qualitative data collection of phase one revealed a number of differences and similarities that appear to define the age cohorts.

Emergent Patterns – Differences Between Cohorts

The data from the first focus groups suggest differences between the elementary and secondary students' conceptions of leadership:

- In elementary school the guiding belief is that anyone can be a leader; in high school only certain people have what it takes to lead.
- Elementary school students consider themselves leaders in their capacity to help with school fundraisers, projects or teams; high school students felt their leadership was demonstrated in their capacity to take initiative and carry out their project ideas.
- Elementary school students do not include initiative as part of their definition of leadership characteristics; high school students see that as a core element.
- In elementary school, students who participate in teams and clubs feel like they are getting leadership experience; in high school students feel that participation alone does not constitute leadership.
- In elementary school students are generally content with the leadership opportunities provided to them; in high school, students would like more opportunities to act on their project ideas.
- In elementary schools, leadership is not discussed formally in class; in high schools leadership is offered as a course and integrated into other courses like civics and gym.

Emergent Patterns – Similarities Among Cohorts

A number of similarities were also apparent:

- Both groups of students felt that encouraging teachers were crucial to their early leadership identity.
- Both groups of students named not only famous leaders as their role models, but also close family, friends, coaches and teachers.
- Neither group mentioned any skills (i.e. delegation, meeting facilitation etc.) when asked to characterize leadership. Even when pressed on this issue, students felt that leadership skills were generally less important than leadership traits.
- Both groups of students asked for more influence over school-level decisions.
- Both groups of students wanted better formal leadership training including opportunities for meaningful involvement.

The table below identifies 11 areas (made up of both categories and sub-categories from the coding process) to highlight the salient characteristics of each age cohort.

Table 2.
Summary of Findings from Elementary and High School Focus Groups

Category	Elementary	Secondary
1. Beliefs about leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone can be a leader (but they have to try) • Good leaders encourage leadership in others • Teachers can help shy students come out of their shells to be leaders • Early opportunities influence leadership identity • Girls are more open to being leaders than boys • Girls do fundraising, boys do sports • Girls do leadership in teams • Circumstances can bring out leadership (Terry Fox) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different leaders have different leadership styles • Seeing results is what makes you want to be a leader again and again • Leadership is about stepping up • Not everyone should be a leader
2. Beliefs about leaders' traits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, helpful, positive, persevering attitude, courageous, cooperative in groups, kindness, drive, courage to overcome obstacles, responsible, take charge but not in a bossy way • Leaders aren't always perfect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the strengths and weaknesses of others, leads by example, organized, good communication, inspirational, steps up and takes initiative, confident and not cocky, perseverance, well respected, compromise, passion
3. Leadership Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected to academic success • Connected to involvement on teams and clubs • Connected to helping teachers/principal • I used to be shy but now I'm a leader (because of teacher support or school activities) • Whatever I do in life I'll be a leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When things need to get done I step up • Connected to taking action • Connected to gaining others' respect

Table 2. (cont'd.)

Category	Elementary	Secondary
4. Early leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten: Everyone gets a chance to be leader – handing out snack, taking attendance to the office, putting away the toys, making sure the coats on the hooks, etc. • Grade 3: rotating job chart encourages leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First “real” leadership was in middle school – • Early competitiveness triggered the drive to stand out as a leader • Kindergarten leadership is actually bossiness
5. Opportunities to develop leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing and selecting next year’s student council • Future Possibilities (program) • Leader of the chess team chooses the strategy and supports others • Music and Athletic council – student run, teachers support • Mark tests for teachers • Helping out (picking up garbage) • Fundraising class projects • Colour council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being the oldest on the team • Organizing sports events • Student council • Youth committee at church • WOW (women offering wisdom) • Admin red tape helps to show what the “real world” is like • DECA, yearbook, tutoring, sports teams,
6. Leadership education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal – through opportunities and role models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I taught myself over the years to be a leader” • Coursework – leadership class, interdisciplinary class, “organizational behaviour,” civics and gym
7. School culture and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only students with good grades can be leaders because the teachers won't let others miss class • <i>Character Matters</i> encourages leadership and personal development • Overall students were happy with their opportunities, but saw some room for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student “buy-in” when school decisions include them (mission statement but not CM) • Administration is generally unenthusiastic about “big” or new ideas and likes to reject project proposals • Administrative turnover means new red tape and new management to get to know • Not enough teachers to oversee student initiatives • School is willing to support new ideas if they are free

Table 2. (cont'd.)

Category	Elementary	Secondary
8. Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers, Parents, Older siblings, cousins, group of friends all leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging teachers, seeing personal results
9. Hindrances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Busy teachers, peer pressure, insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Busy teachers, administrative red tape, time constraints, parents can be more concerned with marks than leadership
10. Role models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oprah, David Suzuki, teachers, Gandhi, church leader, family, other students, Terry Fox 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mom, friends, hockey coach, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, supervisor at work
11. Requests and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration and teachers can ask for student input (i.e. graduation ceremony, soccer field, small decisions) Feeling prepared to be a leader in high school Opportunities to take initiative in bigger ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New leadership programs (LEAD from Markham District) Explain the reasons for turning down proposals and initiatives without de-motivating us More teacher support for student initiative Train teachers how to help students to become leaders Train teachers how to oversee projects and teams but still let students lead All teachers must get involved outside of class with a student club, team, activity Student leader advisory councils made up of student alumni Give students space to try out their ideas Improved leadership courses for credit

The similarities and differences between elementary and secondary students' perceptions of leadership and leadership development presented in the section above suggest the possibility that leadership develops in stages. It appears that as children mature their conceptions about what leadership is, what constitutes effective leadership and their personal leadership identities also become increasingly sophisticated. These changes appear to coincide with students'

leadership experiences and opportunities. According to students, teachers and principals offer them more and more complex leadership tasks and responsibilities as they age. As a result, students' conceptions of leadership seem to change to reflect this increase in responsibility and accountability. To further investigate the differences between elementary and secondary students' conceptions of leadership, I constructed a survey for youth leaders that would allow me to gain quantitative data from a large group of students on a variety of leadership issues.

Phase Two: Quantitative Data Results

Overview

The purpose of phase two of the research was to examine more closely the five categories of leadership understanding and development that emerged during the phase one data analysis. As outlined in chapter two of this thesis, survey items were constructed based on comments made during the focus group sessions. The survey contains 47 items covering 16 areas of investigation. The information below depicts the five categories determined during the focus group data analysis and the corresponding areas of investigation within the survey.

I. General Understanding of Leadership

1) beliefs about leaders and leadership (4 items: #24, 25, 26, 28)

II. Leadership Identity

2) beliefs about self as leader (2 items: #27, 29)

III. Leadership Development

3) opportunities to learn leadership skills (2 items: #11, 18)

4) opportunities to practice leadership skills (3 items: #10, 12, 16)

5) evaluations of those opportunities (2 items: #15, 17)

IV. Mediating and Moderating Variables

6) reasons for getting involved (1 item: #13)

7) school culture and leadership (5 items: #19-23)

8) leadership role models (1 item: #33)

V. Outcomes of Leadership Experiences

9) drawbacks to being a leader (2 items: #14a, 14b)

10) outcomes of being a leader (3 items: #15-17)

VI. Other Data

- 11) demographic information (9 items: # 1-9)
- 12) values and most important issues (3 items: #32, 34, 35)
- 13) plans for the future (1 item: #30)
- 14) recent behaviour (1 item: #31)
- 15) requests and recommendations for leadership education and opportunities (3 items: #36-38)
- 16) feedback specific to *Me to We*'s programming (9 items: #39-47)

Areas covered in this results section include the lives of the young leaders in particular their values, behaviour, and future plans, youths' beliefs about leadership, perceptions and assessment of their leadership education and opportunities, outcomes of leadership opportunities (both positive and negative) and recommendations for improved leadership education. A complete survey can be found in appendix A of this thesis.

Review of Survey Findings

Participant Demographics

The sample for this survey included 164 students from elementary and secondary schools across Canada. 78% (n=128) of the respondents were girls. 34% (n=56) of respondents were in elementary school and 66% (n=108) were in secondary school. The student leaders reported good grades in school, with 58.5% (n=96) of students reporting an A average, 33.6% (n=55) reporting a B, 7.9% (n=12) reporting a C. One student claimed to have an F average.

Most of the participants were from Ontario (81%, n=132), with the rest from Alberta (10%, n=16), British Columbia (6%, n=10), and other (3%, n=4). These response rates generally reflect the distribution of *Me to We* participating schools across Canada: The program was founded in Toronto, maintains its headquarters in Toronto and was launched in Ontario before expanding nationally. Another factor for the unequal distribution across provinces might be the fact that the teachers were asked to distribute the survey a short time after the annual *Me to We* Day, which takes place in Toronto (see www.freethechildren.com/weday). Teachers from Ontario who participated in this high-energy event may have been more likely to take the steps necessary to have their students complete the survey. With 1500 teachers participating in the *Me to We* program nationally, the hope was that I would obtain a provincial distribution that would

allow me to analyze data across provinces. With so few students from provinces outside of Ontario, these analyses were conducted only as a matter of interest and exploration; there were no statistically significant differences found and no provincial data analyses were reported.

A Portrait of the Young Leaders

Are young leaders born or made?

Of the students surveyed, 25.4% believed they were born a leader, compared to 44.8% who believe they developed into a leader. (Nearly one third of students said they “weren’t sure.”) High school students were more likely than elementary school students to believe they were born leaders – 29% of high school students, compared with 17.1% of elementary students believed they were born leaders. Additionally 79.9% of students believed that anyone could be a leader compared to 20.1% who believe that not everyone has what it takes to be a leader. That variable also reveals differences between elementary and secondary students with 88.1% of elementary students saying that anyone can be a leader, compared with 76.1% of secondary students.

Why do youth take part in leadership opportunities?

For high school students, school requirements and resume-building played a large role in their decision to get involved with leadership opportunities. Other than those two factors, elementary and secondary students’ responses were nearly identical with the top three motivators being (1) to help with a cause or issue (66.5%), (2) to be a leader in my school or community (59.1%) and (3) to learn leadership skills (55.5%). Other factors included to make new friends (43.3%), to gain confidence (42.1%) and a teacher recommended it (28.7%).

Recent Behaviour

Overall, students report responsible behavior in both elementary and secondary school. As displayed in table 3 below, increased risk-taking is identified in high school with significantly more students reporting skipping school ($t_{134} = -3.52, p < .001$). High school students are also more likely than elementary school students to engage in political conversations ($t_{(134)} = -3.67, p < .001$) and to volunteer ($t_{(132)} = -2.79, p < .01$). The increase in volunteerism among high school students reflects the province's policy that all secondary students complete a minimum of forty hours of community involvement as part of the requirements for an Ontario secondary school diploma (OMOE, 2009).

Table 3.
Recent Behaviour of Elementary and Secondary Students

	Elementary Percent Often/Very Often	Secondary Percent Often/Very Often
Socialized with someone from another racial or ethnic group	83.3	81.9
Exercised	85.7	72.1
Performed volunteer work or community service	38.1	65.2
Discussed politics or political issues.	21.4	53.2
Played a leadership role in improving my community.	35.0	46.8
Attended a religious service	35.7	35.1
Expressed my opinion on a community or political issue by posting on a blog or other website.	16.6	14.9
Skipped school	0	4.3

Personal and Civic Values

As table 4 below shows, civic values appear to be of great importance to student leaders, regardless of age. Elementary students most valued “treating others with respect” and “making a difference” while secondary students placed the highest value on “learning and studying new things, even after I finish school.” Both groups placed least value on “being well off financially” and “becoming an authority in my field.”

Table 4.
Civic Values of Elementary and Secondary Students

Item	Elementary: Percent Very/Extremely Important	Secondary: Percent Very/Extremely Important
Treating others with respect	97.5	94.4
Learning and studying new things, even after I finish school	95.0	95.5
Making a difference	97.5	90.9
Being ethical and honorable in all that I do	90.0	93.2
Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	95.0	89.9
Socializing with people from different backgrounds	95.0	88.8
Having high self esteem	85.0	85.2
Being well-off financially	75.0	67.4
Becoming an authority in my field	58.9	66.3

Important Issues

Students listed a number of issues that concern them. As table 5 below indicates, the top three issues are education, poverty and the environment. Two of these three top rated issues may be a reflection of the students’ participation in the *Me to We* program, which prioritizes global

poverty and education. Many of the respondents would have spent time during the year learning about global poverty and education and may also have participated in raising funds to build a school or a water well in a poverty-stricken village.

Students also had an opportunity to write in open-answer format other issues that they considered important. Among the responses listed were: drug use, animal rights, and smoking. The information in the table below represents the percent of students who rated the following issues as among the 2 or 3 “most important.”

Table 5.
Important Issues to Students

Issue	All Students %	Elementary %	Secondary %
Education	54.3	42.9 (3)	60.2 (1)
Poverty	52.4	50.0 (1)	53.7 (2)
Environment	47.6	48.2 (2)	47.2 (3)
Child Labour	47.0	50.0 (1)	45.4 (4)
Hunger	38.4	35.7 (4)	39.8 (5)
Bullying	30.5	30.4 (6)	30.6 (7)
Health issues	29.9	26.8 (7)	31.5 (6)
AIDS	28.7	26.8 (8)	29.6 (8)
Violence prevention	27.4	33.9 (5)	24.1 (10)
World politics	20.1	8.9 (10)	25.9 (9)
Gun violence	19.5	17.9 (9)	20.4 (11)
Sustainable development	18.3	17.9 (9)	18.5 (12)
Local politics	9.8	5.4 (11)	12.0 (13)

Role Models

When asked who their top role models for leadership are, students listed a variety of people, from close contacts to celebrities to political figures. Elementary students listed celebrities (including Brittany Spears, Angelina Jolie, Tyra Banks, the Dixie Chicks, John Lennon, Dr. Phil, Bono and Wayne Gretzky) activists (such as Nelson Mandela, Craig Keilburger, Irshad Manji, Terry Fox, David Suzuki, Justin Trudeau, Jane Goodall and Rosa Parks) and people close to them (like teachers and parents). Secondary school students also listed celebrities (like Oprah, Ellen Degeneris, and various hockey players) activists (such as Craig Keilburger and Al Gore) and people known to them (such as my parents, my boss, my coach, my church leaders, my older brother, older players on the basketball team at school, grandparents and teachers).

As in the focus groups, high school students were more apt to see the people around them like coaches, friends and family as leadership role models, while elementary school students tended to list celebrities or well-known leaders.

Future Plans

Students reported on their plans for the future. As table 6 below shows, there were no significant differences between elementary and secondary school students' perceptions of their plans. Additionally, most students displayed an optimistic outlook on their futures. The table below summarizes the findings.

Table 6.
Students' Future Plans

Item: I plan to...	Yes	No	Not sure yet
Go to college or university	94.1	2.2	3.7
Volunteer	89.7	8.1	2.2
Stay physically fit	89.7	7.4	2.9
Vote in elections	88.2	8.1	3.7
Make a difference in my own community	84.6	8.8	6.6
Be informed on world events	82.4	11.0	6.6
Get married	82.4	5.1	12.5
Make a difference in other cities or countries	79.4	11.8	8.8
Have a child / children	77.9	9.6	12.5
Be able to support myself financially without the support of others.	76.2	3.7	3.0
Be a community leader	75.0	15.4	9.6
Travel the world.	73.2	4.3	4.9

Beliefs about Leadership

Characteristics of a good leader.

Students were asked to rate the importance of a number of leadership traits. There were no significant differences between elementary and secondary students in their responses. Table 7 below summarizes the respondents' beliefs about which traits constitute "a good leader."

Table 7.
Student Ratings of Leadership Traits

A good leader needs to be...	Percent "definitely yes" All Students	Percent "definitely yes" Elementary	Percent "definitely yes" Secondary
Passionate	91.9	92.9 (1)	91.5 (1)
Honest	86.7	90.5 (2)	84.9 (4)
Easy to talk to	84.4	81.1 (3)	86.0 (3)
A hard worker	83.8	76.2 (4)	87.2 (2)
Nice	70.4	71.4 (5)	69.9 (5)
Full of good ideas	53.7	52.4 (6)	54.3 (6)
A good talker	48.5	47.6 (7)	48.9 (7)
Smart	31.1	33.3 (8)	30.1 (8)
Someone who seems like a born leader	22.1	23.8 (9)	21.3 (9)
Popular	9.6	7.1 (10)	10.6 (10)

Leadership behaviours.

To further measure students' beliefs about leadership, they were asked to rate on a 4 point Likert-scale how strongly they associated a set of behaviours with leadership. Most students agree that leadership includes motivating others, helping out, and ensuring team satisfaction. Table 8 below summarizes students' beliefs about which behaviours constitute leadership.

Table 8.

Student Ratings of Leadership Behaviours – Positive Associations

Leadership is about...	Percent “definitely yes” All Students	Percent “definitely yes” Elementary	Percent “definitely yes” Secondary
Motivating others to make things happen	86.8	85.7	87.2
Always trying to help out	71.1	69.0	72.0
Making sure everyone in the group feels good about the project	67.6	64.3	69.1
Influencing others	59.6	59.5	59.6
Helping others with important jobs	51.9	51.2	52.1
Making decisions for the group	19.3	17.1	20.2
Having followers	13.4	7.1	16.3
Getting people to agree with you	11.2	2.4	15.1
Telling other people what to do	7.4	7.1	7.4

It is also interesting to highlight the other end of the spectrum -- the percentages of students who repudiate some of the behaviours that adults consider fundamental to leadership. For example, 68.7% of respondents do not think that leaders need followers, while 39% of respondents believe that leadership is not necessarily about influencing others. Table 9 below presents the students' level of disagreement with those behaviours typically associated with leadership in adults:

Table 9.
Student Ratings of Leadership Behaviours – Negative Associations

Leadership is about...	Percent “not really” and “definitely not” All Students	Percent “not really” and “definitely not” Elementary	Percent “not really” and “definitely not” Secondary
Getting people to agree with you	70.1	73.2	68.8
Having followers	68.7	66.7	69.6
Making decisions for the group	67.4	68.2	67.0
Telling other people what to do	55.1	38.0	62.8
Helping others with important jobs	48.1	48.8	47.9
Influencing others	39.0	38.1	39.3
Making sure everyone in the group feels good about the project	32.4	35.7	30.8
Always trying to help out	28.9	3.1	28.0
Motivating others to make things happen	13.2	14.3	12.7

Conceptions of leadership.

To further test the students' beliefs about leadership, a series of questions was asked that measure distinctions between various elements of leadership. Items were scored along a 4-point Likert scale corresponding to 1 (definitely not); 2 (not really); 3 (sort of) and 4 (definitely yes). The items are listed below in table 10.

Table 10.
Leadership Beliefs

Item
1 You are asked by the principal to photocopy something.
2 You are asked by the principal to photocopy a top secret document.
3 You are fed up with all the trash in the school playground so you take time after school to clean it up.
4 You are fed up with all the trash in the school playground so you organize a "clean up team" to help clean up the mess.
5 You convince your friends to come with you to the mall after school.
6 You convince your friends to volunteer at the community centre with you after school.
7 You convince your friends to start a music club at school but you refuse to be president.
8 You are a member of the school basketball team.
9 You are the best player on the school basketball team.
10 You're the most popular student in class, so what you say goes.
11 You do most of the work for the club, but you're not the president.

The first two items (“You are asked by the principal to photocopy something.” and “You are asked by the principal to photocopy a top secret document.”) were designed to measure differences in conceptions of leadership, taking into account varying degrees of responsibility. Based on the phase one focus group data, I hypothesized that more elementary and fewer secondary school students would agree that photocopying something could be considered leadership. This was, however, not the case. Both groups scored this item as “not really” with elementary students rating it lower than secondary students (2.00 compared to 2.39 respectively). This difference is statistically significant $t_{(138)}=-2.72$ $p<.01$.

I also wanted to further explore the idea that elevated levels of adult trust might encourage older students to perceive an otherwise benign task (or “grunt work” as one high school student in a focus group referred to it) as leadership. The results for this item were also unexpected: Elementary students did rate the “top secret document” item ($\bar{x}=2.33$) higher than the “something” item ($\bar{x}=2.00$). However, high school students rated photocopying a “top secret document” ($\bar{x}=2.11$) lower than photocopying “something” ($\bar{x}=2.39$). I am not sure what this result represents and this finding begs further investigation.

Items number 3 & 4 in table 14 (“You are fed up with all the trash in the school playground so you take time after school to clean it up” and “You are fed up with all the trash in the school playground so you organize a “clean up team” to help clean up the mess.”) were included in the instrument to explore differences in leadership understanding as it pertains to initiative-taking. Results for this set of items indicate that students do not consider cleaning the playground by one’s self to be leadership (as indicated by the mean score of 2.69) but that organizing a team to clean is leadership ($\bar{x}= 3.69$). There were no statistically significant differences between elementary and secondary students for these items.

Items 5, 6, and 7 from table 14 above were included in the instrument to investigate the concept of influence in three different contexts. Item 5 (“You convince your friends to come with you to the mall after school.”) was designed to measure influence without a formal leadership role. Students mean rating for this item was 2.04, or “not really” suggesting that students don’t necessarily consider informal influence among their friends to be leadership. Item

6 (“You convince your friends to volunteer at the community centre with you after school.”) was designed as a foil to item 5 in order to ascertain whether influence alone or influence in context would make a difference to students’ definitions of leadership. Not surprisingly, 57% of students (n=79) rated convincing friend to volunteer as “definitely yes” compared with 11% of students (n=15) who responded “definitely not.”

Item 7 (“You convince your friends to start a music club at school but you refuse to be president.”) was designed to pit influence against the importance of a formal role in students’ definitions of leadership. 75% of survey participants (n=104) rated this item as either “definitely not” or “not really” leadership, suggesting the importance of formal roles to both elementary and secondary students. The strong negative response by the students to this item may also have to do with their beliefs regarding “stepping up” as an important element of leadership. The refusal to take on a leadership role as indicated in the item may seem to students like shirking responsibility or refusing to step up to a leadership challenge. Taken together the responses from items 5, 6, and 7 suggest that students do not prioritize influence alone in their definition of leadership but instead take context into account.

Items 8 (“You are a member of the school basketball team.”) and 9 (“You are the best player on the school basketball team.”) were designed to investigate students’ beliefs around the importance of skill or talent as an element of leadership. Both items were scored by all participants as “not really” leadership. This finding contradicts focus group findings for elementary students, who often reported their own participation on a team as leadership. There were no statistically significant differences between elementary and secondary students on either item. There were also no significant differences in responses between the two items (a member vs. best player), suggesting that students do not necessarily consider skill to be an important element of leadership. This finding also contradicts the elementary student focus groups, in which students reported skill and talent to be a marker of leadership ability.

Item 10 (“You’re the most popular student in class, so what you say goes.”) was designed to measure the importance of popularity on leadership conceptions. Students’ responses to this item were split right down the middle with 49.6% of students (n=69) agreeing that this item is an

example of leadership and 50.4% of students (n=70) disagreeing. There were no statistically significant differences between elementary and secondary students on this item.

Finally, Item 11 (“You do most of the work for the club, but you’re not the president.”) was designed to test whether students prioritize having a formal leadership title over level of involvement in their conceptions of leadership. 58.4% of students (n=80) responded that this item was not an example of leadership while 42.6% of students (n=57) believe that it does constitute leadership. Results did not differ between elementary and secondary students. The response to this item differs from focus group responses, particularly in elementary school, in which students tend to agree that effort and engagement, rather than formal role, are central to leadership.

Leadership Education and Experiences

Students in both elementary and secondary schools agreed that they developed their leadership skills primarily at school (93.9%). The second highest ranking for leadership development was the home (59.8%). Students of all ages wrote that taking care of a younger sibling instilled in them a sense of responsibility and accomplishment. Other contexts with relatively high rankings were sports teams (49.4%), summer camp (43.9%), and community organizations (49.4%). Not surprisingly, secondary students, and not elementary students, felt that they learned leadership at their jobs (42.3% of high school compared to 21.4% of elementary students). The lowest ranked context for leadership development overall was religious organizations with 20.1% of respondents saying that they developed leadership at their church, synagogue, mosque or temple. Even though religious institutions ranked lowest overall, students who did develop leadership in a church context were very happy with their contribution. One girl wrote, “When I was 8, I asked if I could help at my church by helping with the readings. I have been reading at my church regularly since. This has helped to build my confidence and articulation, as well as practice speaking in front of crowds of people, some of which I do not know.”

In terms of formal leadership training, high school students felt that they gained skills first and foremost at leadership seminars and conferences (61.1%) and ranked those experiences slightly higher than their school courses (58.3%). Elementary school students ranked school courses first (55.4%) and seminars or conferences second (26.8%). Other students added that the St. John's Ambulance babysitting course, sports teams, volunteering overseas, and Brownie troupes helped to teach leadership skills.

Overall, students were very content with the opportunities they've had to develop specific leadership skills. There were no significant differences between elementary and secondary school students' responses to these items. On a 5-point scale which rates students' satisfaction level with various opportunities, the mean scores ranged from 3.58 to 4.39. Table 11 presents the findings:

Table 11.
Average Student Rating of Leadership Opportunities

Item	Elementary Mean	Elementary Standard Deviation	Secondary Mean	Secondary Standard Deviation
Working with a team	4.37 (1)	0.70	4.41 (1)	0.83
Good listening skills	4.14 (2)	0.89	4.17 (3)	0.95
Planning and managing a project	4.18 (3)	0.75	4.07 (5)	1.05
Problem solving	4.10 (4)	0.87	4.10 (4)	0.85
Communication skills	4.04 (5)	0.99	4.18 (2)	0.91
Conflict resolution	3.90 (6)	1.03	3.98 (7)	0.92
Public speaking	3.88 (7)	1.07	3.87 (8)	1.10
Self esteem	3.84 (8)	1.11	3.83 (10)	1.02
Time management	3.82 (9)	0.92	3.86 (9)	0.99
Motivating and inspiring others	3.76 (10)	1.07	4.07 (5)	0.99
Staying organized	3.69 (11)	1.00	3.82 (11)	1.06
Coping with stressful situations	3.63 (12)	1.05	3.55 (12)	1.23

However, when asked more specifically which skills students have actually had the chance to practice, the scores were much lower. The data reveal a clear disconnect between what the students say they are learning and what they are actually doing as leaders. A paired sampled T-test revealed significant differences. For example, students' mean score for "planning and managing a project" was 4.11, or "very good," but when asked how frequently students have "called a team meeting" the mean score was 2.93, or less than "a few times," $t_{(146)} = 8.48$, $p < 0.001$.

On a 5 point scale ranging from "never" to "very often," scores for items relating to skills implementation ranged from 2.35 to 3.85 for elementary students and 2.45 to 3.87 for high

school students. Table 8 below shows the scores for each task. Of the ten items, five show statistically significant differences between elementary and secondary school students' opportunities to practice skills. Interestingly, the rankings for elementary and secondary are nearly identical. Many students have helped lead fundraising initiatives, which may also be a result of their participation in *Me to We's* program.

Table 12 below shows differences in the extent of leadership opportunities between elementary and secondary students. The responses to the survey item "I have had the chance to..." were scored along a 5 point Likert scale corresponding to: (1) never; (2) once; (3) a few times; (4) often; (5) very often.

Table 12.
Extent of Leadership Opportunities for Elementary and Secondary Students

	Elementary School Mean (N=56)	Elementary School SD	Secondary School Mean (n=108)	Secondary School SD	t-test sig.
Fundraise for a project	3.85	1.32	3.87	1.22	.932
Initiate a new idea for a project	3.49	1.10	3.84	1.10	.073
Recruit participants for a project	3.22	1.23	3.78	1.07	.006
Delegate tasks	3.17	1.15	3.56	1.19	.063
Coordinate an event	2.96	1.26	3.39	1.38	.072
Evaluate a project after completion	2.83	1.31	3.32	1.30	.035
Lead a team meeting	2.66	1.22	3.27	1.43	.001
Create an agenda for a meeting	2.47	1.33	3.02	1.51	.034
Call a team meeting	2.35	1.21	3.20	1.42	.001
Draft a budget	2.21	1.41	2.45	1.39	.341

Outcomes of Leadership Experiences

Students assessed both the positive and negative outcomes of leadership. There were few significant differences between elementary and secondary students in these domains. Overall, students saw connections between their leadership opportunities and a number of social, emotional, and psychological outcomes including self-understanding, contentment and relationships with family and friends. See Table 13 below for a complete list. The highest rated outcome for which students saw a negative effect was “grades” (17.6%), suggesting that leadership activities draw time and attention away from homework and studying. In general, however, students appear to be extremely satisfied with the impact that leadership opportunities are having on their lives.

Table 13.
Effects of Leadership Experiences on Students

Survey Item	Positive Effect	Negative Effect	No Effect
Understanding the kind of person I want to be	89.7	0.6	9.7
Overall contentment	85.4	1.8	12.8
Other relationships with adults	83.6	3.0	13.3
Self esteem	83.5	3.0	13.4
Keeping informed on current events	80.4	3.1	16.6
Friendships	77.6	5.5	17.0
Family relationships	66.1	5.5	28.5
Grades	52.1	17.6	30.3
Keeping physically fit	53.3	10.3	36.4
Maintaining a healthy diet	47.6	12.8	39.6

The two items for which there were significant differences between elementary and secondary school students were grades and self esteem. Of the high school students, 23.2% felt that their grades were negatively affected because of their leadership roles, compared to only 4.3% of elementary school students, $t_{(143)} = 3.23$, $p < .01$. The second item is self-esteem, for which 43.5% of elementary school students drew a positive relationship between leadership and self-esteem, compared to 34.7% of high school students. Also, no elementary students claimed a negative effect of leadership on self-esteem, yet 5.1% of high school students did, $t_{(142)} = 2.09$, $p < .05$.

Drawbacks to Leadership

When asked what drawbacks there are to leadership, elementary and secondary students agreed that (a) they're way too busy (46.3%) and (b) they don't have time for their friends (22.0%). Students were offered the opportunity to write open-ended responses about the drawbacks to leadership. The following is a sample of their responses encompassing the most common categories:

On feeling different:

Elementary:

"Sometimes you get a bit set apart from other students, because they see you differently."

Secondary:

In my case, my friends don't support my leadership efforts. It has gotten to the point where I can't even talk about leadership in front of them.

On responsibility:

Elementary:

"When something goes wrong, people blame you."

Secondary:

"You become the target of people's comments. Anything that you do wrong will be magnified and spread around."

"The attention and stress as a leader does create a lot of emotional burdens because of the added responsibility."

"Leaders are often held as scapegoats in tough situations."

*On expectations:*Elementary:

“The teachers expect you to do stuff all the time.”

Secondary:

“People seem to be a lot more jealous of others with formal leadership positions. They hold high expectations (which is obvious and reasonable) and seem to use people’s leadership as a [way to] manipulate situations away from their own responsibility, and into the leader’s hands.”

“Another issue is that once people realized that I was a leader that put my work in, in future events they would always turn to me/expect me to be the leader when I didn’t necessarily want to take that position for the event.”

*On identity:*Elementary:

“Sometimes I feel like a “geek” for being so involved in things.”

Secondary:

“I overextended myself last year and I feel like I lost myself.”

Requests and Recommendations

Students were asked to comment on what kinds of leadership education and experiences they would like to help enhance their leadership skills. They were given an opportunity to check the two or three most important recommendations as well as a space to write in open-ended recommendations. From the quantitative data, there were no significant differences between elementary and secondary students. The results are represented in table 14 below:

Table 14.
Students' Recommendations for Future Leadership Education

Item	% of elementary students who listed the item among their top two or three choices	% of secondary students who listed the item among their top two or three choices
Leadership seminars outside of school through organizations like <i>Me to We</i>	48.2 (4)	60.2 (1)
Student involvement in school decision-making	50.0 (3)	55.6 (2)
Volunteering in community organizations	48.2 (4)	55.6 (2)
Clubs and teams at school	48.2 (4)	53.7 (3)
Courses at school	53.6 (2)	53.7 (3)
Overseas opportunities	57.1 (1)	53.7 (3)
Social action opportunities at school	44.6 (5)	51.9 (4)
Working with teachers to initiate my own project ideas	48.2 (4)	45.4 (5)
Mentorship programs	39.3 (6)	42.6 (6)
Courses for teachers on how to help students lead schools clubs and organizations	37.5 (7)	42.6 (6)
Courses for parents on how to raise a leader	25.0 (8)	24.1 (7)

The qualitative data elicited from the open-ended write-in section suggests differences between elementary and secondary students. Students in elementary schools wrote almost entirely about teacher encouragement, opportunities and the importance of inspiration. Secondary school students wrote much longer responses, covering topics such as school-level decision making, accommodation of leaders at school, supporting student initiative and offering opportunities to put leadership skills into practice. The quotations below represent the variety of responses.

Elementary school students.

- I would like them to call meetings more often of the social justice committee.
- We do not have very many courses which one can take to learn what real leaders do.
- I really just want to tell them it is so important for us to start as leaders now so we the future can make OUR world a better place we are the future!
- Involving children at an early age is the key.
- You could supply teachers with things they need for a good leadership program.
- I would like to do more big projects to help charities and other organizations.
- I would like to do more fundraising projects to help the community/ world.
- I would tell them, that we need to see visually what is going on out in the world. We can't just read it, and have few students in our school telling us about it. They need to witness something like I did at *Me to We* day.
- The best way to best support our leadership development is to expose us to the injustices of the world. Empower us with knowledge, and most importantly allow us to be independent. Allow us to debate, express our opinions, and organize projects. That way we will feel like we have accomplished something and we will be able to see the positive results off our efforts. Also we can improve on our mistakes. Overall, school does not always have to be extremely structured. If we create our own projects we will be motivated to accomplish them and we will be prepared to make a difference in an adult led society.
- I think my message would be: We need somebody to inspire students to become leaders! If you don't their might be no more Prime Ministers!!!

Secondary school students.

On teacher support:

- We work very hard to pull our project together, so instead of making us write proposals to you, come to our meeting and show support. Also pledge us and buy a ticket and attend our event.
- Actions speak louder than words. You can support us by being present.
- I think that the most effective way to support leadership development is through the teachers. The teachers are people that ever[y] student sees and there are a number of things that they can do to support leadership. They can promote leadership in the class, or in a club, or

through sports etc. The chain of command must therefore also thoroughly support leadership and a good principal is crucial.

- To keep their eyes open to all potential leaders and not just focus on those students who shine the brightest.

On practicality:

- Do PRACTICAL THINGS. We have so many leadership conferences, seminars and workshops that are just a waste of time and money because once you walk out the doors, you've gained nothing, just an ethical view on some issue or more facts and information. Information is good, but we've got to learn to balance that with practical ways for affecting change within our schools, communities and world.
- Students need to be given more opportunity and guidance to applying this knowledge they have obtained through leadership.
- I think that opportunities are the best way for me to show my community all that I've got. Workshops and seminars are good for starting off but applying that into the real world is very different.
- I think that opportunity is the only way to learn.
- People have inherent qualities that need to be brought out through initiative and opportunity. Forcing the ideas into them with classes, conferences, etc. is not very effective.
- I think that we should have resources to do more than donate money to places of poverty because I think more people would get involved then if it was more hands on work!

On accommodating schedules:

- Don't punish students for wanting to make a difference. I went away from school one week for a seminar and when I came back I had to do 7 tests in an hour.
- I would hope that all teachers understand that balance between school work and other activities is extremely important. Allowing time for the students to be involved in outside programs is extremely important. Also, teachers should be accepting those students who have stood out as leaders, and not pressure them to continue following the status quo.

On initiative:

- Encourage your students to start leadership initiatives, and when they come to you with them, be supportive and helpful, and make sure they know you think it's a great idea.

- Rejecting a student's idea to make change can have a lot of effect on them and what they do in the future.
- Give me more freedom to do what I want! There are too many restrictions that prevent me from making real differences in school. The Student Council does not have any real power except for entertaining the student body. In my mind, the Student Council should be able to really make important decisions such as organizing a huge campaign for environment or drug issues etc.
- I have great ideas but do not have someone to help me pursue these ideas.
- The message I would send is that Every time us as students try to make a difference... it gets shut down. But then they complain because we don't do anything to help.... I am finding that administrators are making it completely about education and we are being run down in school work. At our school we can only have one "buy-out" a month because it cuts into the course.... This just adds stress to students.

On school-level decision making:

- I don't feel that as students in my school, we have any say in the direction the school is going or the development of the school.
- The administration is not lenient at all.
- I would suggest that they create more opportunities for teens to decide how their school runs and allow them to influence what they learn.

On school culture:

- Without the encouragement of everyone around me also getting involved, I don't know if I'd be part of all of these clubs. If a school and community enforce the importance of caring for others, making a difference, and showing empathy and compassion, it will educate a string of leaders all itching to change the world.

Summary of Phase Two Findings

The findings from the phase two surveys can be described using the same five categories that emerged during the phase one focus group data analysis:

1. General Understanding of Leaders and Leadership

- Most students believe that opportunities and experiences, rather than innate qualities, make someone a leader.
- When asked about leadership traits, students ranked passionate, honest, easy to talk to, hard worker and nice as the top five traits. Less than one third of students listed smart and less than 10% listed popular as important traits.
- When asked about leadership behaviours, students listed motivating, helping, and making sure everyone in the group feels good as the top three leadership behaviours.
- Students believed that leadership is not about getting people to agree, having followers, making decisions for the group or telling other people what to do.

2. Leadership Identity

- Students' primary reason for taking part in leadership opportunities is to help with a cause or issue.
- Young leaders identify civic values like making a difference, treating others with respect and being ethical and honorable as their top three core values.
- Students identified education, poverty, the environment and child labor as the most important issues. Following those issues were hunger, bullying and health issues.
- The student leaders listed education, volunteerism, personal health and fitness and civic engagement as the four key components of their future plans.

3. Leadership Development

- School is the most important context for leadership development.

- Students believe that opportunities for leadership help them to develop good leadership skills. The five highest ranking skills were working with a team, good listening, communication, project planning and management and problem solving.

4. Mediating and Moderating Variables

- Teachers play a key role in encouraging students to take part in teams, clubs and projects.
- School administrators play an important role in leadership development by helping them to take initiative.
- Older siblings act as role models in leadership roles.
- Parents encourage their children to get involved in school activities outside the classroom.

5. Outcomes of Leadership Opportunities

- Students believe that leadership experiences contribute positively to their overall development including areas like self-understanding, contentment, relationships with peers, family and other adults, self esteem, knowledge of current events and academic achievement.
- Students believe that there are drawbacks to leadership experiences including lack of time for friends, feeling different or un-cool, and anxiety over high expectations set by others.

Phase Two Data Analysis Review

I was initially surprised and disappointed when the data analysis revealed so few statistically significant differences between elementary and secondary students. Because the phase one focus groups highlighted a number of key differences between the cohorts, I had hoped that those findings would be confirmed by the phase two survey. For example the survey data revealed no significant difference between the groups on items relating to leadership behaviours, but during the focus group sessions, elementary students highlighted helping behaviours while secondary students highlighted change-making and initiative-taking behaviours. In both this example, and throughout the survey, it was the elementary school students whose responses did not match what I had anticipated. The younger students more

closely resembled secondary students in their survey responses than they did in the focus group discussions.

Thinking about this unexpected finding led me to two possible explanations. First, the issue may be methodological. For many of the students, this was the first time they had been asked to analyze their own thinking with respect to leadership. As a result, their responses could have been based more on a canonical idea of leadership rather than on their own personal thoughts and experiences. In retrospect, I realize that even in the focus groups, it often took students some time or a series of probing questions to help them articulate their ideas. For many of the students, this particular format may have just been too simplistic, allowing them to click on responses without deeper consideration of the issues.

A second explanation for the finding is the possibility that elementary students are able to recognize sophisticated ideas about leadership, but are not yet able to generate those ideas on their own in conversation. Taken together, the findings from the focus groups and survey highlight the difference between what students can perform independently and what they can perform with guidance. In Vygotskian terms, the survey uncovered the elementary students' zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). This discovery has valuable real-world applications. By targeting instruction at the edge of the zone of proximal development, teachers can develop best practices and promote leadership development.

Chapter Four

Discussion

Overview

An exploratory study of public school student leaders in both elementary and secondary schools was conducted to examine the students' understanding and beliefs about leadership in general as well as their own leadership development. The findings of this study suggest phases of leadership development, which are presented in this chapter. The results are contextualized in terms of Roger Martin's experience-tools-stance framework (Martin, 2007) as well as Robert Sternberg's "stories of leadership" model (Sternberg, 2008). The chapter culminates with sections on limitations, recommendations for future research and implications of this work for policy and practice.

The Applicability of Adult Models of Leadership to Youth

Models of leadership in adults do not easily map onto children and youth, largely because the two key elements underlying all adult models – influence and authority – are absent from children's own self-generated models. By high school, new leadership opportunities allow students to begin to appreciate the connection between leadership and influence/authority, but my data suggest that, even among senior high school students, these elements are not fundamental to leadership.

Table 15 below revisits the definitions of adult leadership listed in chapter one to assess the extent to which each of the definitions is represented in the data.

Table 15.

Evidence for the Application of Adult Theories of Leadership to Youth

Definition of Leadership	Evidence from data to suggest applicability to youth
Leadership is the <i>behavior of an individual</i> when he is directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal. (Hemphill & Coons, 1957, p.7)	Students in the intermediate and senior years with formal leadership titles (i.e. student council president) see their own leadership in this way. However, those students also believe that this definition excludes many other experiences and opportunities that they consider to be leadership (i.e. photo editor of the yearbook).
Leadership is the <i>process of influencing the activities of an organized group</i> toward goal achievement. (Rauch & Behling, 1984, p.46)	In rare cases, high school students with formal titles understood influence to be a part of their leadership role.
Leadership is a process of <i>giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort</i> and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose. (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990, p.281)	Students involved in civic participation including organizations like <i>Me to We</i> spoke about both meaningful action and teamwork.
Leaders are those who <i>consistently make effective contributions to social order</i> and who are expected and perceived to do so. (Hosking, 1988, p. 153)	Student leaders, particularly in secondary school agree that they “step up” to take action and therefore others perceive them as leaders. There is an expectation that these students will take action when necessary.
Leadership is <i>interpersonal influence</i> , exercised in a situation, and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal. (Tannenbaum, Weschler, & Massarik, 1961, p.24)	none
Leadership is the <i>initiation and maintenance of structure</i> in expectation and interaction. (Stodgill, 1974, p.411)	none
Leadership is the <i>influential increment over and above mechanical compliance</i> with the routine directive of the organization. (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p.528)	none

Models of adult leadership, which are more complex than the brief definitions listed above, do appear to overlap in some ways with youth leadership. For example, trait models are applicable insofar as students in both elementary and secondary school focused on traits when asked to define leadership. Likewise, students were able to list behaviours that constitute leadership, suggesting overlap with adult behavioral models. Unfortunately, past research has primarily attempted to map adult traits and behaviours onto youth (Morris, 1991; Smyth & Ross, 1999). Behavioural and trait approaches, therefore, might be applicable from a research perspective, but any new research of this sort should begin with taxonomies that are either generated by the youth themselves or take into account youth conceptions of leadership. Overall, this study suggests that childhood and adolescent leadership are sufficiently different from adult leadership and therefore warrant models that clearly represent their own perspectives. The following sections present a discussion on leadership development in children and adolescents generated from the students' own ideas.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this chapter is to use the data to develop a story line that describes how leadership might develop throughout childhood and adolescence. My goal was to find a framework that could incorporate key elements and sub-categories from the five overarching themes identified during the axial coding phase of data analysis: (1) students' understanding of leadership in general, (2) students' understanding of their own leadership development, (3) their perspective on which mediators and moderators contribute to their leadership, (4) leadership identity and (5) outcomes of leadership experiences. My challenge was to find a story line that could incorporate the five themes listed above in the larger context of students' leadership development over time.

To create a story line that incorporates the key elements of leadership development, I draw from two existing models in the leadership literature: Robert Sternberg's "stories of leadership" and Roger Martin's "experience-tools-stance" framework. This process extends beyond the reach of grounded theory methodology by drawing from existing literature to organize the themes. As the explanation below shows, I do not use these theories to explain

youth leadership development, which would be a marked departure from grounded theory, but rather as heuristics to help organize the data.

Robert Sternberg (2008) refers to leaders' stories as the foundation of creative leadership. Sternberg identifies creativity as one of three qualities that together form the basis for successful leadership (the other two qualities being intelligence and wisdom). I draw from this work on creativity, specifically his taxonomy of leaders' stories, to help frame my discussion of leadership development in children and youth because my data suggest that children's leadership stories change as they develop their leadership skills and identities.

Sternberg (2008) argues that stories are the way in which a leader "distinguishes him or herself and the contribution he or she plans to make.... Stories need to address both individuals' own identities and those of the group to which they belong" (p.362). These are the key elements of Sternberg's model that apply to children and youth's leadership development. Sternberg has also created a taxonomy of stories that characterize leaders in the context of their organizations. For example, the carpenter is a leader who can build a new organization or society; the diplomat is the leader who can get everyone to work together; the doctor is the leader who can cure what is wrong with the organization; and the scout is the leader who can lead followers to new and uncharted territory. The complete taxonomy (from Sternberg, 2008 p.364) is listed below:

- The carpenter—The leader who can build a new organization or society
- The CEO—The leader who can "get things done"
- The communicator—The leader who can communicate with diverse followers
- The conqueror—The leader who is going to conquer all enemies
- The conserver—The leader who will make sure things stay the wonderful way they are
- The cook—The leader who has the recipe to improve the life of his or her followers
- The deep thinker—The leader who will make sense out of what is going on
- The defender—The leader who will save all followers from harm
- The deity—The leader who presents him or herself as savior
- The diplomat—The leader who can get everyone to work together
- The doctor—The leader who can cure what is wrong with the organization
- The ethicist—The leader who pledges to clean up the place
- The lifesaver—The leader who will rescue followers from otherwise certain death
- The organizer—The leaders who can create order out of chaos
- The plumber—The leader who can fix all the leaks

- The politician—The leader who understands how “the system” works
- The replicator—The leader who is going to be like some past individual
- The scout—The leader who can lead followers to new and uncharted territory
- The ship captain—The captain of a ship navigating through turbulent times
- The turn-around specialist—The leader who can turn around a failing organization
- The warrior chieftain—The leader who will lead followers to fight, defensively or offensively, enemies, seen or unseen

In this chapter I outline how each of the four phases of leadership development can be characterized by a different leadership story that allows children to understand their leadership in relation to the class, their school or the world around them.

In his book, The opposable mind: How successful leaders win through integrative thinking, Roger Martin introduces a theory to explain the kind of thinking that successful business leaders employ. Underlying his theory is the interplay between three foundational elements of leadership – stance, tools and experience. According to Martin, *stance* is the “most broad-based knowledge domain in which you define who you are in your world and what you are trying to accomplish in it” (Martin, 2007 p.93). *Tools* are the knowledge and skills one uses to organize thinking, understand the world and make effective choices for action¹. *Experiences*, according to Martin, form one’s “most practical and tangible knowledge” (p.99). According to Martin, experiences help us to acquire tools which add depth and clarity to our stance. Conversely, our stance influences which tools we use to navigate experiences.

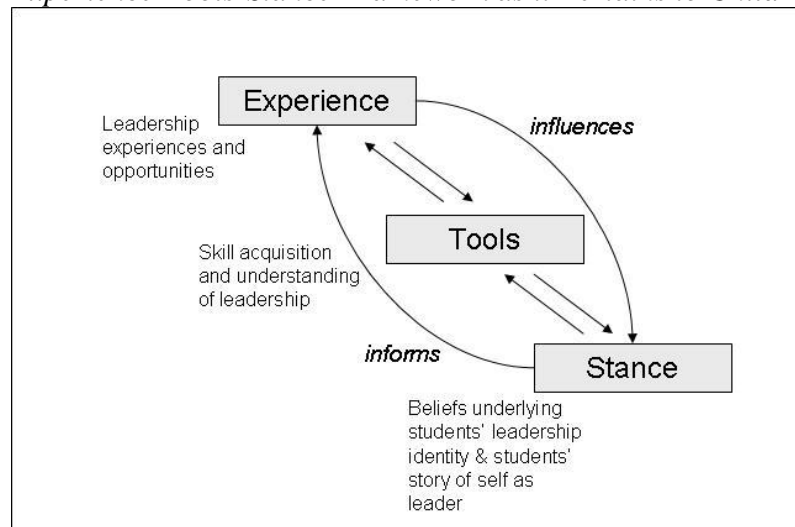
Roger Martin uses his framework to help explain the cognitive processes underlying successful business leadership. I believe that it can also prove useful in understanding how leadership develops in children and adolescence because it takes into account three critical elements that together present a comprehensive picture of leadership. In this framework opportunities (experiences) provide the context for acquiring the technical skills and theoretical

¹ Martin’s use of the term tools draws on both Vygotsky’s concept of psychological tools such as mapping and language which mediate thoughts, feelings and behaviours as well as Egan’s concept of cognitive tools such as imagination and abstract thinking. I note this to draw a distinction between those cognitive and psychological tools that will be discussed in this work and other important tools leaders use like the Blackberry.

knowledge (tools), which influence students' leadership stories (stance). Figure 1 below modifies Martin's framework using Sternberg's stories to suit student leadership.

Figure 1.

Experience-Tools-Stance Framework as it Pertains to Children and Adolescents



The data from my research allow me to draw preliminary conclusions about changes over time with respect to each element of the experience-tools-stance framework. Students spoke at length about many different leadership opportunities that have been offered to them, not only at school but also at home and in their communities. In the sections that follow I incorporate students' accounts of experiences such as school clubs, sports teams, student councils, volunteering positions and helping out at home that make up both formal and informal leadership experiences. The sections on stance are based primarily on the lengthy focus group discussions about leadership identity and students' beliefs about leadership in general.

Both the focus groups and survey data show that students are not always aware of the tools they learn from leadership experiences. In order to determine the tools that students learn from their leadership experiences I use their own ideas and supplement them with my own conclusions about what is likely learned from the experiences mentioned. For example, students in the junior years (grades 4-6) expressed their belief that participation in clubs, projects and teams has helped them to become leaders. While the students themselves did not necessarily identify teamwork as a leadership skill they acquired, I deduce that these experiences contribute

to students' teamwork skills and I include it among the tools listed. As I reported in my results section, for many students in both elementary and secondary schools, this was the first time they had been asked to reflect on their leadership development. It is not surprising under these circumstances that students did not always have the vocabulary to identify the tools they learned from various experiences. Additionally, Martin's conception of tools is limited to those cognitive tools that shape leaders' thinking. I have chosen to broaden the definition considerably to include not only cognitive tools like problem solving, but also practical tools such as drafting an agenda and social-emotional tools like efficacy and team-building. My choice to extend beyond Martin's definition reflects the multiple domains in which students reported leadership development.

My position is that the relationship between experience, tools and stance is a developmental feedback loop that goes largely unchecked in the education system. Data from both my focus groups and survey suggest that schools provide adequate variation in leadership opportunities for students – from courses, to participation in conferences, student councils, clubs and sports teams. However, because leadership opportunities, particularly in high school, are typically undertaken outside of formal classroom learning, students are left to themselves to draw connections between their leadership experiences and their learning outcomes. In other words, leadership learning is limited because it most often occurs implicitly. As a result, students don't always understand what it is they learned and educators are missing an opportunity to help them solidify the lessons.

This criticism is echoed by Smith et al. (1991), who argue that leadership experiences lack guidance to help students:

Presently, future leaders are still primarily acquiring leadership experiences informally through school contexts such as student councils, extracurricular clubs, and athletic programs. It is not unusual, either, that these opportunities are obtained through popularity contests, are only perfunctory roles, or are bestowed as a consequence of unusual talent in one area, such as athletics or music, and may not be available to other students who have potential leadership abilities. Even for those who do emerge through the school contexts, the development of their skills is often left to evolve without intervention or guidance that could enhance and enlighten their experience,

moving students more quickly and skillfully to assume leadership responsibilities (p.7).

Using Martin's framework, we can identify a two-fold gap in leadership education. First, students involved in leadership experiences are rarely taught about the specific cognitive and psychological tools they are acquiring. For example, I spoke to a number of students who told me that they had an opportunity to lead a team meeting in the presence of a teacher-supervisor, but not one student reported ever having a conversation with their teacher-supervisor about the process involved in leading a meeting or the specific leadership skills that leading a meeting requires. Students received no guidance leading up to the meeting to help them prepare and no follow-up feedback to help them improve.

The survey data also help to elucidate the disconnect between experience and tools. 71% of students said they've had excellent or good opportunities to plan and manage a team project. Yet, when asked how frequently they had performed specific skills related to project planning and management, the scores were low: 64% had never or rarely called a team meeting; 65% had never or rarely drafted an agenda for a meeting; 60% had never or rarely led a team meeting; 77% had never or rarely drafted a budget; and 59% had never or rarely evaluated a project after completion (n=164). The data suggest that leadership opportunities are not translating into clear and specific skill-building.

The second gap in leadership education made clear by the experience-tools-stance framework, is that the impact of leadership experiences on a student's stance – the particular element of the developmental feedback loop that most sculpts identity and shapes future choices – is not made explicit. As a result, the students I interviewed had neither the vocabulary nor the framework to contextualize their evolving confidence as leaders. Nevertheless, the students, regardless of age, were extremely enthusiastic when they were asked to reflect on beliefs about themselves and how they could use their leadership skills to make an impact on the world. Yet this was for every single student I interviewed the first time they had engaged in a conversation about leadership identity. In one case, after talking about how her confidence as a leader had

grown since kindergarten, a girl in eighth grade explained, “Just now I gained a new perspective of leadership and I realize that I’m developing. I see it clearly now.”

At what age do children first begin to develop a leadership story? Before I began my research, I had anticipated that this would occur in or around the junior years (4th-6th grade), which is when many schools introduce opportunities for formal leadership through class councils or group projects with assigned team leaders. But all of the student leaders I interviewed agreed that their earliest memories of leadership occurred in kindergarten. They reported that simple tasks like being asked to hand out juice or hold the door for the class helped them to think of themselves as leaders. However, these simple tasks are assigned to everyone, not only to students who show leadership potential. Many kindergarten classrooms have implemented a system wherein the “special student of the day” is responsible for a number of simple tasks. We can gather two conclusions from this: (1) If all students are offered these kinds of early leadership opportunities, but not all students grow up to be leaders, it stands to reason that the point of differentiation – the point at which some students believe they are leaders and others do not – occurs later in childhood. (2) Even though the experiences that students relate as early leadership like taking attendance to the office are not actually leadership, they are connected to students’ sense of self as a leader. They are the seeds of a later more sophisticated leadership stance that emerges in high school.

The next section outlines leadership development from kindergarten through high school in the context of experience-tools-stance and story. It is arranged into four categories that correspond to the cohorts in Canadian public school education: primary (K-3), junior (4-6), intermediate (7-8) and senior (9-12). Each section outlines the salient features of leadership experience, tools and stance for that cohort.

Primary (K-3): “The Helper” - Task-Oriented Leadership

Since my data collection did not include focus groups or interviews with primary school children, the information presented in this section is taken from students’ recollections and reflections about their early leadership beliefs and experiences.

General Conceptions of Leaders and Leadership

There is a significant gap between how adults and young children conceptualize leadership. Students in the primary grades typically adhere to a simple hierarchical model in which the nearest adult is the leader and all children are the followers. During this phase, the term leader is synonymous with the term boss. According to children in this stage all adults are leaders simply by virtue of the fact that they are “grown ups.” These kinds of simple leader-follower interactions occur both at school and at home but also extend into other contexts. For example, children at this age consider the bus driver to be a leader because he is the boss of the bus.

It is also interesting to note here that young children who influence play with other children are often identified as leaders by adults (Perez, 1982; Kitano, 1983), but not necessarily by their peers. This is likely the case because children’s understanding of leadership is always contextualized among adult interactions. Primary school aged children usually do not see themselves or each other as capable of assuming an adult-type of leadership role. Instead, children tend to see other children who attempt to direct play as bossy and are not inclined to accept their influence. Primary-age children do not understand the complex connection between influence and leadership in peer interactions. For them, leadership is only truly possible by someone with the authority to be a leader.

The Helper

I chose ‘the helper’ to characterize the young child’s task-oriented leadership story because it encompasses the key area of early leadership identity in primary age students. Young children’s experiences of leadership – those experiences that were reported by older children to have most contributed to their early leadership identity – were always stories of helping adults with small tasks like handing out snack or holding the door open for the class. The story of the helper characterizes both the child’s developing sense of responsibility and efficacy as well as her ability to understand herself as part of a larger group in which she can play a useful, positive role.

Experience

The earliest seeds of leadership development are planted in the primary grades through two main types of experiences: game-play and task accomplishment.

During game-play, children are given an opportunity to take on the role of the leader. Games like “follow the leader,” “mother may I?” and “Simon says” allow young students to practice being a leader in front of the class. Children understand that the leader in the game is only pretending to be the leader and that his/her leadership doesn’t extend beyond the parameters of the game. Nevertheless, this distinction is noteworthy because middle and high school students maintain that these types of early leadership simulations are the initial foundations of a leadership self-concept.

Older students also agreed that their earliest leadership opportunities were simple tasks delegated to them by their teachers. Jobs such as making sure that all the coats are on the hooks or helping to hand out snack are considered leadership at this age. Young children believe that anyone can be a leader and that it’s only fair to take turns being the leader and helping the teacher. Older children agreed that these kinds of simple, delegated tasks do not constitute leadership, yet they maintained that these early experiences helped to nurture the preconditions for a sense of self as leader. The children explained that being singled out to tackle a special responsibility, and being trusted by the teacher to succeed engendered in them a sense of self-efficacy, which gave them the confidence to take on more sophisticated leadership roles in later childhood.

Tools

Young children can learn the fundamentals of teamwork and cooperation, communication skills including good listening, body language and tone of voice, imagination, efficacy and simple problem solving.

Stance

Three simple beliefs form the foundation of a young child’s leadership stance:

- Grown ups are leaders; kids are not, unless designated as such for a specific task.

- I can be helpful by doing special jobs for grown-ups.
- When I'm bigger, I can be the leader.

Task-Oriented Leadership - Concluding Thoughts

The literature on early leadership ability typically focuses on adult conceptions of leadership like influence and authority (Perez, 1982; Lee et al., 2005). A number of studies have found a relationship between those elements of leadership and precocious communication skills in young children (Trawick-Smith, 1988; Perez et al., 1982). Others have found a connection between emergence of leadership in young children and advanced social-emotional development (Trawick-Smith, 1988). The most significant gap in the literature on early leadership is the lack of longitudinal research – tracking over time those students who were identified as leaders for their advanced verbal ability or social-emotional development. The literature to date doesn't assess whether those students are still leaders in high school and beyond. My focus group data suggests that, in fact, they are not, or at least not necessarily. Many of the older students remembered feeling shy in kindergarten, certainly too shy to act authoritatively over their peers. Those students would not have been identified as leaders in any of the studies mentioned above, yet they emerged as leaders in later childhood following a pivotal experience or adult encouragement. The predictive significance of this literature is in doubt. Particularly in the primary years, precocious communicators may seem to emerge as leaders precisely because they are precocious communicators. A longitudinal study could assess the extent to which advanced verbal or social skills in young children continue to affect their ability to influence their peers.

Junior (grades 4-6): "The Deputy" - Responsibility-Oriented Leadership

General Conceptions of Leaders and Leadership

The second phase, according to elementary school children begins around grade three, when children are given ongoing "leadership" tasks to complete and must do so without prompting from the teacher. These tasks are, like the primary years, rarely connected to influence or followership, but rather a type of expanded responsibility that helps the adults. The most common example of leadership during this phase was a "job wheel" that the teacher hangs in the class which assigns various tasks to students who must take it upon themselves to check

the wheel and complete the task. This level indicates an increase in autonomy and a sense of taking ownership of the class environment. In this case, no one is singled out as the leader, yet the children felt that opportunities like the job chart, which required them to behave responsibly, had a direct impact on their personal leadership development.

Children at this point begin to develop a more complex sense of interpersonal leadership, as experiences with their peers reveal characteristics that students identify as leadership. This marks a shift in children's conceptual understanding of leadership, as students are able to attribute leadership to each other and not only to adults. Leadership among peers is typically rooted in the recognition of another student's strength. For example, students who are gifted in sports will often take on a leadership role during recess and "step up" to determine game play like setting rules or choosing teams. These students are developing a deeper understanding of themselves and their peer interactions. Children know who is good at baseball and who is good at math and they are typically willing to concede leadership to the child with the acknowledged strength.

Students at this age are more aware of their environment and their roles in class, school and at home. Children are also typically given more chores and tasks to complete, which helps to promote a sense of self-efficacy. There is a connection between these kinds of expanded responsibilities and a child's developing sense of personal leadership.

Some schools begin to offer students formal leadership roles for children of this age group, asking students to elect a class president for example. The introduction of formal leadership roles helps children to understand that leadership can be extended to children. However, older students report (in hindsight) that these early leadership roles and tasks are deeply connected to adult approval; they have only little to do with leadership as they come to know it in high school.

High school students, however, did not dismiss these early leadership experiences. They agreed that these years were crucial in terms of building self confidence and overcoming shyness. Nearly all of the high school students remembered feeling shy and self-conscious in

their elementary school years. They reported that having to take on leadership roles which forced them to speak in front of the class or the school ultimately helped them to overcome shyness and gain the confidence that is necessary for high school leadership. The suggestion arising from these observations is that leadership education for junior students should include those activities and experiences that help children to explicitly build positive self-concept, so that their confidence is rooted in self-awareness and efficacy.

The Deputy

I chose ‘the deputy’ to characterize junior students’ responsibility-oriented leadership because it denotes the type of leadership experiences that typify this age group such as the job wheel and chores at home. A deputy is defined as someone who is authorized to act as a substitute for others as well as a person representing a constituency (deputy, dictionary.com, 2009). I felt that this story would resonate with children who feel a sense of responsibility because they are often assigned by the teacher to take actions that accomplish class or school tasks or by their mother to say, set the table while she fixes supper. Junior-age students understand that the teacher or the parent is ultimately in charge, but they are able and willing to help out in ways that demand a greater sense of responsibility than in previous years.

The second definition of deputy as “one who represents a constituency” also matches the experiences of junior students. Some junior students have the opportunity to serve as class president, which gives them a sense of feeling responsible to the whole class and representing the class in front of the school at assemblies or school meetings. A common experience for junior students that they consider to be leadership is participation with teams or clubs. The story of the deputy fits for these students as well who feel a sense of pride and responsibility to represent their club or team within their school and in many cases who represent their school during competitions or inter-school play.

Experiences

Leadership experiences for junior students fall into four main categories. The first category includes those tasks delegated by adults like bringing the attendance sheet to the school office or collecting homework assignments. These tasks resemble the kind of expanded

responsibility that marked the primary years, but typically require students to act independently. Students reported that teachers would often delegate a task to a specific student for the whole week and expect the student to complete the task without being reminded. Older students recalled these kinds of tasks as experiences that showed them that teachers trusted them and engendered in them a sense of responsibility and pride.

The second category of leadership experience is formal roles. Some teachers choose to stage class elections to designate a class president or leadership team that is in charge of class projects and activities. Physical education teachers will often designate students to act as captains of sports teams during class time. Students report that these formal roles with designated titles allow them to act like leaders.

The third category of leadership experience includes informal leadership. This occurs most often when one student feels a sense of expertise. A shy fifth grader recalled feeling like a leader during math class when he is often singled out to explain concepts or to help other students. His classmates pointed out that he is a leader when it comes to math class even though he is usually shy. Many high school leaders spoke about these early informal leadership experiences as central to their early leadership identity. They explained that their expertise in one area triggered the informal designation of leader by peers which engendered the confidence to step up as a leader when other formal opportunities arose.

The fourth category considered leadership by students at this age is participation in clubs, projects or teams – regardless of a formal leadership title. When junior students were asked what things they do that they consider leadership, many students responded with examples of their participation on teams. When pressed, “Are you the captain of the team or the president of the club?” they would often respond that those designations don’t exist in grade school because everyone on the team is a leader.

Tools

The experiences of junior students were not typically considered “real” leadership by older student leaders because they did not get to make decisions, lead meetings or manage

projects. Nevertheless, students did agree that many of the skills they use in their later leadership experiences like interpersonal skills were learned during their junior years. Some of the leadership-related skills that students at this age can learn and practice include:

- Problem Solving
- Conflict resolution
- Decision-making
- Public speaking
- Communication skills
- Recognizing others' strengths
- Self-understanding
- Self-efficacy

Stance

The stance of a junior is typically made up of 4 beliefs:

- Anyone can be a leader.
- I am a leader when I am singled out to help adults with certain tasks.
- I am a leader when I join clubs and teams.
- If I am good at something then I can be a leader in that area.

Responsibility-Oriented Leadership - Concluding Thoughts

Like the early childhood literature, the literature on leadership in children also reflects adult conceptions and therefore reveals similar findings. Harrison et al. (1971) linked influence in 6-11 year old students with high achievement, high intelligence, and advanced social adjustment. The students were rated by their teachers based on day-to-day observations. In Harrison's study, adults defined, determined and scored leadership in children. It is entirely an "outside-in" process. It is unclear whether the students themselves would concur with the scores or to what extent high achieving elementary students identified as leaders by their teachers turn out to be leaders later on in life.

The results from this study suggest that leadership in children as conceived by the children themselves differs from leadership in children as conceived by adults in two key ways. First, children in the junior years equate talent with leadership. The gifted math student feels like a leader in math class, but not necessarily in other areas like sports. Peer recognition of the talent

appears to be a primary factor contributing to a student's self-conception as a leader. Even a shy student may think of himself as a leader in a class in which his peers recognize his skill.

Second, children in their junior years believe anyone can be a leader. The general consensus among the children in this study was that there are ample opportunities for everyone to join clubs or teams and therefore ample opportunities for leadership for all. The students did not distinguish leadership based on personality or individual characteristics in their peers. Instead they typically agreed that any gifted student, any team member or anyone who helps the teacher is a leader.

It appears that the children in this study drew a distinction between children's leadership and adult-leadership. They understood that adult role models like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela displayed passion and authority which they knew to be essential characteristics of an adult leader. However, the students did not characterize their own leadership in those terms. The children focused instead on roles and responsibilities rather than personal characteristics. They did, when pressed, relate feelings of courage and pride, but the bulk of their determination of their own leadership came from the things they do, rather than the personal characteristics they display.

It is possible, however, to draw some connections between the expertise-based leadership and helping behaviours of children and certain kinds of leadership in adults. For example, like the children in this age cohort, informal teacher leaders are considered leaders by their colleagues because of their expertise and their willingness to help others out (Leithwood et al., 2007). This finding suggests that there may be areas of overlap between children's and adults' stories of leadership. More research needs to be done to confirm similarities and understand the ways that youths' stories may overlap with or develop into adult stories of leadership.

Intermediate (grades 7-8): “The Agent” - Role-Oriented Leadership

General Conceptions of Leaders and Leadership

High school students identified the years from grades 6-8 as their first “real leadership.” During these years they develop a more sophisticated understanding of leadership; in particular, they begin to expand the definition to include “making a difference.” Their role models for leadership at this age are typically heroic leaders like Terry Fox and Craig Keilburger -- leaders who made large-scale and lasting change.

During the intermediate years, many schools offer students the opportunity to participate in projects and organizations that impact their school or community. Food and clothing drives or other community service projects are common. Students see the outcome of their participation on the school or community, which has important positive effects on efficacy, confidence and motivation. This new confidence marks a pivotal point in the development of leadership identity. Students’ self-awareness at this stage enables them to notice and report their earlier shyness waning as they gain confidence. Students who take on leadership opportunities in their intermediate years come to see in themselves the possibility of being a leader who brings about positive change for the community.

The Agent

I chose “the agent” to characterize intermediate students’ role-oriented leadership because it represents a number of facets of the students’ sense of self as a budding leader. The first definition of “agent” listed on dictionary.com’s online resource is “a person... authorized to act on another’s behalf” (agent, dictionary.com, 2009). This definition overlaps with the definition of the deputy and reflects the continuity between junior and intermediate conceptions and experiences of leadership in which children are asked by their teachers, parents or other authority figures to assist them with important tasks. In their younger years, children were asked to perform simple tasks like bringing the attendance forms to the school office; as older children their responsibilities have expanded to include tasks like babysitting siblings or photocopying and disseminating a pamphlet for the school clothing drive. The agent’s tasks demand a higher level of engagement and responsibility than earlier tasks of either the deputy or the helper.

The second definition of agent listed online is “a person... that has the power to act” (agent, dictionary.com, 2009). This definition incorporates students’ increasing sense of efficacy and personal power to affect change in their schools and communities. In particular, students who participated in community service and civic opportunities saw themselves as young leaders making a difference for others in need. These experiences help students to see themselves as agents of change.

Experience

Student leaders in high school agreed that their first taste of what they called “real leadership” occurred during their intermediate years. These “real” leadership experiences occur in two main ways. The first is through a formal role, like captain of the basketball team or the chess club. An official title at this age holds significant meaning for students because it legitimizes their leadership. Students with official titles report feeling confident enough to direct teams, state their own opinions and behave in a way that motivates and inspires others.

The second way that students' report experiencing “real leadership” in the intermediate years is through participation with a community service or global project that makes a positive difference for others. Students who reported helping out on a team that raises money to build a well for a village in Africa saw themselves as leaders, regardless of a formal title. These kinds of experiences had very positive impacts on students’ motivation, engagement and desire to continue to help in their community or around the world in noticeable and significant ways.

Tools

Unlike previous leadership experiences, students agreed that the opportunities presented to them in their intermediate years could be considered “real” leadership. For example students who participated in *Me to We*’s projects to build schools or wells in rural Africa reported having some authority and influence over the project’s direction. They reported that they researched the region and its needs before deciding how to proceed. Students also mentioned that teachers were more willing to let students make decisions, lead meetings and follow through on ideas. Students in this age range believed that their teachers were the ultimate leaders and drove the

project through to completion, but they were very pleased with their own level of leadership and involvement.

Some of the leadership-related skills that students at this age can learn and practice include:

- Research
- Organizational skills
- Project planning
- Leading a meeting
- Project evaluation

Stance

The stance of an intermediate student is typically made up of four beliefs:

- Anyone can be a leader, if they want to put in the time and effort.
- I can do it.
- Leadership is being involved in planning and executing projects.
- Leadership requires time and hard work.

Role-Oriented Leadership - Concluding Thoughts

Student leadership conceptions begin, in this intermediate phase, to approximate adult conceptions. The students appear to take both influence and authority into account when reflecting on their own leadership experiences. Neither term was mentioned by students in any of the focus groups, but they understood that being able to make decisions on behalf of the group, for example, was a new development in their leadership. A formal leadership course as part of the curriculum, could, at this point in development, be instrumental in introducing students to adult conceptions of leadership and offering students a framework for thinking about the trajectory of their own development.

The enthusiasm that the middle school students displayed when discussing their community projects suggests that middle school is an appropriate time to introduce civic engagement as a key experience in leadership development. Civic engagement is defined by the

American Psychological Association as actions “designed to identify and address issues of public concern” (APA, 2009). It is an umbrella term that incorporates other experiential learning opportunities including community service and service learning. Civic engagement may take many forms including volunteering in a soup kitchen or writing a letter to an elected official. The corporation for national and community service reports that nearly 70 percent of middle schools now offer students community service opportunities. However, only 20 percent of middle schools provide a learning component to complement the service (CNCS, 2006).

The data from this thesis suggest students’ leadership development experiences require a corresponding learning component in order to help make developments in skills and stance explicit. Students in the focus groups, especially middle school students, related that this was the first time they were considering their own leadership development in terms of skills and self-identity. They were able to relate the details of their *Me to We* or other service experiences, but they had a much more difficult time drawing connections to personal learning outcomes. I believe this is largely due to the fact that they had not done so before. It was clear that students were energized and motivated by their contributions to their communities. Their first taste of making a difference for those in need, either in their own communities or around the world gave them a sense of meaningful personal accomplishment.

Secondary (Grades 9-12): “The Ambassador” - Identity-Oriented Leadership

General Conceptions of Leaders and Leadership

The high school environment is ripe for leadership development. Teenagers are mature enough to develop a sophisticated understanding of both the skills and dispositions that good leadership entails and also responsible enough to take on roles that allow them to make meaningful and valuable changes to their school and community. It is in high school that students differentiate between leaders and non-leaders among their peers. Until high school, it appears that students are willing to believe that anyone can be a leader if they so choose. By high school, however, adolescents tend to believe that some students are leaders and others are not. Student leaders most often self-identified as the kind of person who “steps up” to take on leadership while maintaining that most of their peers are not interested in taking on leadership

opportunities. The typical high school leader believes that some students have what it takes to be a leader, while others do not. The students who expressed this belief were speaking more generally about the kinds of traits and dispositions that characterize leadership like passion, motivation, courage and initiative. Indeed it is a set of traits like those mentioned above that form the foundation of high school students' conceptions of leadership.

Students also develop a more sophisticated differentiation between what constitutes leadership and what does not. In elementary school, students who participated in team sports or extra-curricular activities understood those experiences to be part of their leadership development. By high school, however, students believe that involvement alone does not constitute leadership, but instead that leadership requires some form of authority as a team captain or club president. It is interesting to note here, however, that high school students do not agree that leaders require followers. In this stage, they believe that influence and authority are necessary components of leadership, but that influence and authority over others are not. Students who work alone, like the editor of the yearbook photos, believe that these kinds of experiences constitute leadership because they offer opportunities to make an impact on their environment.

High school students also begin to differentiate between formal and informal leadership. Many students recognized that in some circumstances where no formal leader is present an informal leader can surface. The most common example of informal leadership given was the sports team, where students saw themselves as leaders or role models for other students, even in the absence of a formal title. These informal leaders identified their primary role as a motivator to other students on the team. The identification of informal leadership marks an important shift in the students' understanding of their role as leaders. Aside from the established importance of informal leadership in the leadership literature for adults which suggests that informal leaders often score higher on many leadership variables (Pielstick, 2000), young people who identify themselves as informal leaders may be more likely to behave as leaders in the classroom, at home or in their communities making them excellent role models for younger children.

The Ambassador

I chose “the ambassador” to represent the story of senior student leadership because the term well represents the self confidence, passion, engagement and work ethic of youth leaders. The title ambassador, which denotes a high ranking official, reflects the change in secondary students’ conception of leadership from earlier years in which anyone could be a leader to their new understanding in which some – but certainly not all - students are capable of leadership. The term ambassador reflects their conception that their passion, energy and willingness to step up to challenges sets them apart from other students who are not leaders and do not exhibit the same characteristics.

The term ambassador also reflects students’ capacity for increased task complexity. Student leaders in high school are capable of taking on long-term, complex tasks like producing the school play or directing a community service project. They are highly engaged in these activities and often put in long hours to ensure a project’s success.

Finally, the term ambassador reflects a sentiment shared by many student leaders who do work that stirs their passions. Examples of this include students who volunteered with *Me to We* to build schools or wells in African villages as well as students who took initiative to found a team or club (i.e. the tutoring club) or a community service project (i.e. charity walk-a-thon for cancer research). Of all the student leaders in the focus groups, this category of student appeared proudest to share the details of their projects and spoke eloquently about what their projects meant to them and how their projects affected the target communities. Students’ belief in their projects and their enthusiasm about sharing their accomplishments makes them excellent ambassadors for their chosen cause.

Experience

Leadership experiences in high school fall into four main categories. The first and most common category consists of those formal experiences that offer students an opportunity to take on established roles at their school like student council roles, sports team captains, club presidents, etc. Students who occupy these roles are often in the spotlight – presenting at school assemblies or making announcements over the school loudspeaker. Leaders in these formal roles

report noticeable growth in their self-confidence throughout the year. Leaders also connect these kinds of experiences to the development of many leadership skills like stress management, time management, motivating others, and conflict resolution. These roles help students to develop a sense of purpose and connection to the community. They typically identify those older students who held their same title as a key role model in their own lives and they see themselves now as role models for younger students as well.

The second category includes those experiences that require students to take initiative. A number of students related experiences of arriving at their new high school hoping to find a chess club, a badminton team or something of the like. When none existed, they made the decision to take initiative and create the team themselves. Students spoke of a whole host of skills that they learned from these experiences from creating a vision, to motivating others (including teachers) to get involved, dealing with administrative red tape and other roadblocks and following a project plan through to completion. Student leaders who had opportunities to take initiative were highly engaged in their school and their project. These student leaders share a core belief - "I can do this" - which energizes and focuses them. They spoke of a sense of ownership, efficacy, confidence, and pride. All of the student leaders spoke of their initiative-based opportunities as profoundly transformative and as the highlight of their high school career.

A third category includes leadership opportunities for which there are no followers. Some examples of follower-less leadership mentioned by high school students include editing photos for the yearbook, choosing the quotation for morning announcements or organizing decorations for the school dance. Each of these students worked alone to carry out their projects. The leadership literature for adults would not consider these kinds of tasks as examples of leadership because they lack the influence that leaders exert over followers. However, the students themselves believed these experiences to be leadership, explaining that they learned a number of key leadership skills and traits including motivation, self-directedness, problem-solving and time management. The students also believed that the roles had an important impact on the school community. The photo-editor of the yearbook explained that students keep their high school yearbooks forever and his choices will help to shape the memories of the entire student body. Likewise, the girl who chose the quotations believed that she was influencing the

student body because she gave everyone something clever to think about. Followerless leadership opportunities are particularly useful for introverted or shy students who lack the confidence or desire to speak at a school assembly but still want to use their skills to contribute to the community.

The fourth category of leadership in high school students is informal leadership. Students recognized that informal leadership occurs both in formal settings like sports teams and also in informal settings like peer groups. Informal student leaders self-identified as role models and recognized their ability to motivate and influence others. Some students who mentioned informal leadership roles questioned whether or not it could actually be considered leadership without a formal title. Upon consideration, those students recognized the leadership qualities that they gain from informal leadership experiences. They felt that informal leadership roles allow them to be leaders in any situation.

Tools

Some of the leadership-related skills that students at this age can learn and practice include:

- Initiative-taking
- Motivating others
- Influencing others
- Project management
- Delegation
- Time Management
- Coping with stress
- Integrative problem-solving
- Dealing with ambiguity

Stance

The analytical and questioning nature of adolescence makes for an excellent setting in which to explore issues of self identity. Students are able to understand the roles that beliefs play in their decision making. The connection between beliefs and outcomes can also be explored. An important goal for adolescent leaders is to articulate the beliefs that make up their personal stance. Students can investigate their own interpretations of their leadership experiences to

construct a powerful and positive stance. The following are some of the core beliefs that underlie the confidence of a successful teenage leader:

- I am a passionate and motivated young person, aware of my values and goals.
- I am excited to seek out or even create for myself opportunities for personally meaningful involvement in my community.
- Using my skills and ingenuity, I can help to tackle challenges in my community and around the world.
- I am willing to step up and do what needs to be done to carry out my vision.
- At my core, I believe “I can do it.”
- I am energized by success and results.
- Because I am young, I give myself room to make mistakes and I see slip-ups as learning opportunities.
- These experiences of my youth will help me to be an important leader in whatever field I ultimately choose.

Identity-Oriented Leadership - Concluding Thoughts

Arguably the most well-known work on adolescent leadership is that of Van Linden and Fertman (1998, 1999). Their distinction between transactional and transformational leadership development corresponds with the tools and stance components of this work. I agree with Van Linden and Fertman that leadership education and opportunities are weighted heavily in favour of skill-building, with insufficient attention paid to self-identity development. And yet, the students in the focus group seemed most engaged when discussing their developing leadership identities. Most had not had the opportunity to reflect on their personal growth and the elements that contribute to their confidence as a leader. In my opinion, this is the most significant gap in leadership education, particularly for adolescents who have both the sophisticated reflective capacity and inclination to explore elements of their identity and its relationship to their life experiences and goals. In the following section I outline the main characteristics and behaviours that contributed to the developing identities of high school leaders.

Profile of a Developing Leadership Identity

Engaged.

Developing young leaders are naturally curious about the world around them. They enjoy asking questions and seeking solutions to challenges. They feel energized by the process

of being part of the solution and are motivated to help improve their community. Students who were involved in community service activities like fundraising to build a school in rural Africa displayed this level of engagement with regards to the entire project – from research and learning about the situation overseas to finding creative ways to raise money for their causes.

Passionate.

Young leaders are passionate about their involvement, be it with community service, sports teams, drama, music clubs or other areas. Their leadership is acknowledged by their peers in large part because of this passion. “Passionate” ranked highest in the survey with 91.1% of high school students agreeing that a good leader definitely needs to be passionate.

Open-minded.

Young leaders are keen to seek out and evaluate a range of perspectives. They are flexible and willing to change their minds as new arguments or better information is presented. They understand the value of good feedback and are therefore appreciative of and able to incorporate all kinds of constructive criticism. They are open-minded in a way that allows them to see failure as an opportunity to learn and grow. This kind of open-mindedness was especially evident in students whose project ideas had been turned down by administrators yet were able to see the rejection as an opportunity to learn.

Caring.

Young leaders show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment (IBO, 2008). Students who spoke of their involvement with community service initiatives, from Me to We to raising funds for cancer research displayed this level of caring and compassion.

Confident.

Young leaders are confident in their ability to be a valued member of a team or community. They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies (IBO, 2008). This confidence

was especially evident in students who took initiative to launch projects in their schools and communities. The survey data revealed that 83.5% of students believe that their leadership experiences boost their confidence. This confidence also extends to peers groups as well, with young leaders feeling secure enough to assert themselves by making choices, taking stands, or participating in ways that might be unpopular.

Reflective.

Young leaders give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support learning and personal development (IBO, 2008). They enjoy engaging in discussions about personal development, seeking out ways to learn and grow and they are able to incorporate life-lessons. Even though many students in the focus group sessions had not had formal opportunities to reflect on their own leadership experiences and identity development, their high level of engagement when exploring these personal areas indicated both an aptitude and eagerness for self-reflection.

Responsible.

Young leaders follow-through on their plans. They hold themselves accountable to do what they say they will do. They complete tasks and projects by their deadlines. They arrive on time and are prepared for meetings. Students in the focus groups spoke about their commitment to stepping up to leadership tasks and “making sure that things get done properly and on time.” Additionally, high school students ranked “hard worker” second (behind passionate) with 87.2% agreeing that the characteristic is fundamental to good leadership.

Optimistic.

Young leaders have a can-do attitude. They volunteer to take on new roles and participate in meaningful projects or activities. They persevere in the face of obstacles and face challenges with a sense of enjoyment and self-efficacy. They are ambitious about their own lives, set goals for themselves and look forward to future accomplishments. Survey data shows that young leaders are looking forward optimistically with the vast majority of students planning to attend university, volunteer, keep fit, vote and make a difference in their communities.

Limitations of the Study

This study has the following limitations:

1. The data collection for this study was limited to students in grades 5-12. The discussion of leadership prior grade 5 is based on student anecdotes and recollections. The discussion of adult leadership is based on data found in the relevant literature.
2. The student leaders attended medium to large urban and suburban schools. No small schools were included in the sample. No rural schools were included in the sample.
3. The data collection method for phase two of the study, which relied on young leaders to access the internet survey, produced unbalanced groups. 81% of the respondents were from Ontario and 78% were female. These uneven demographics limited data analysis with respect to differences across genders or regions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research surfaced continually throughout the process of surveying the literature on youth leadership and conducting this study. The following sections present a number of possible avenues for further investigation.

Longitudinal Studies

In this study, students were interviewed at one point in time only; consequently leadership development over time was assessed through recollection. A long-term study involving interviews with the same students at regular intervals over the course of a number of years would allow researchers to more accurately evaluate changes in understanding, skills and identity.

Long-Term Impact

Outcomes of leadership education and opportunities on young people were identified in this research by the students' own assessment of the experiences. From this research alone there is no way to know which skills and knowledge have the most significant long-term impacts. In order to improve the quality of programming, research examining the long-term significance and impact of a variety of leadership opportunities would be beneficial.

Demographic Differences

The interviews from phase one suggest gender differences in leadership conceptualization and development. Further research into the relationship between gender and leadership development could lead to specialized education or opportunities that addresses the specific interests, skills, and understanding of children.

The influence of other variables such as race, socio-economic status, and geographic location were not a focus of this study, but could prove useful in helping to understand how leadership develops in different groups of students and how to best educate students of all backgrounds.

Further Validation of this Theory and Testing of a Stage Theory

Further testing of the phases of leadership development presented in this thesis is necessary to validate the theory. In particular, research that assesses the development of leadership in primary students is needed. Additionally, the data suggest a possible stage theory of leadership development in which the elements of each phase reflect the increasing complexity of previous phases. More data would allow for confirmation of discrete stages in leadership development throughout childhood and adolescence.

Expanding the Theory & Identifying the End-Game

Leadership development continues into university and indeed, throughout adulthood. Further research to expand the theory beyond adolescence would include college and university students, young professionals and experienced adult leaders. Expanding the theory would offer greater insight into the “end-game” of the developmental trajectory discussed in this thesis. As it stands, there is no clear, single outcome of this theory, largely because no one theory or model of adult leadership fit the breadth of student conceptions and experiences. While many students appeared to highlight charismatic views of leadership, others identified as quiet or informal leaders as well. Perhaps early leadership experiences give students a foundation for one or many leadership styles later in life, depending on personality and context. Further research is needed to understand how this developmental trajectory plays out later in life.

Application of Theory

This study did not investigate individual youth leadership education programs. Using the experience-tools-stance framework presented in this research, it would be possible to compare the scope and impact of individual programs. This type of research could be helpful for schools looking to implement leadership education.

Conclusions

Implications for Policy

The introduction to this thesis points to the social and economic challenges we are currently facing both nationally and internationally. One solution to these challenges is to make sure that youth enter the workforce equipped with the skills and confidence necessary to take on important leadership tasks. To prepare a generation of young people for the tasks ahead requires a comprehensive national leadership strategy. In their book *Made in Canada Leadership*, Henein and Morissette (2007) outline such a strategy and include the cooperation of the business, government and education sectors in improving the quality of leadership in Canada.

Henein and Morissette (2007) highlight their priorities for the field of education, which include the creation of core leadership educational materials provided to students “at all levels in all provinces, adapting it to age groups” (p. 198). The model of leadership development presented in this thesis contributes to their argument that such a far-reaching national educational strategy is justified. The findings in this thesis indicate that the positive impact of leadership opportunities and education, occurring even as early as kindergarten, play a crucial role in the development of skills and leadership identity. Additionally, the model developed as a result of this research can serve as the foundation for comprehensive leadership education that appropriately matches students’ developmental level with respect to their understanding of leadership and their readiness for increasingly sophisticated leadership tasks, roles and opportunities.

On a smaller scale, the findings of this thesis can help schools and boards to set policy for leadership development. In particular, the students’ suggestions for future leadership education and opportunities can help to guide schools and districts when making policy decisions about the

kinds of leadership opportunities that might suit their students. For example, nearly all high school students as well as many elementary students requested increased influence with respect to school-level decisions that involve them. A school or board wide policy addressing this recommendation might include a committee made up of interested students who would act as the student voice on appropriate school or district issues. Not only would such a committee help schools to incorporate the student voice into their decision-making processes, but the students themselves would gain valuable leadership skills including problem solving, decision-making and teamwork.

Implications for Practice

This study was undertaken with the expressed hope that the resulting theory would be applicable in practice. This work has practical applications for school administrators, curriculum developers, teachers and students.

School administrators can use the findings to guide their decision-making processes when choosing leadership programming for their students. The students' suggestions can help administrators to understand what kinds of leadership opportunities they are seeking. The model of leadership development presented in this thesis offers administrators a guide to choosing which program would be most appropriate for which students. Finally, the stance-tools-experience framework can help administrators to evaluate the scope of individual programs.

Curriculum developers can use the model of leadership development presented here to enhance existing leadership education curricula as well as to create new programs that incorporate what is now understood about children's developing leadership skills and identities. Using teaching techniques and ideas suggested by the students themselves, new curricula can focus on the kinds of experiential learning that would engage students. Additionally, the experience-tools-stance model provides developers with a framework for ensuring that programs are comprehensive and address not only the skills, but also the explicit development of leadership identity in students. In Appendix D, I have outlined a series of activities that complement each of the four phases outlined in this thesis.

Teachers can use the findings from this thesis to gain insight into leadership development as it relates to the specific stage of their students. I particularly hope that the discussion presented here on stance will help teachers to address issues relating to stance in their classrooms, providing students with an opportunity to explicitly explore their developing identities. Teaching leadership is not an easy task – lectures and text books do not necessarily help students to become better leaders. I hope that the findings and activity ideas presented in Appendix D can help teachers to think creatively about how to incorporate innovative and experience-based learning opportunities for their students.

Finally, the theory presented here can benefit students. The focus group participants were highly engaged when the discussion turned to leadership development across their own individual life-spans. One student remarked, “just now I gained a new perspective of leadership and I realize that I’m developing. I see it clearly now.” I believe that by teaching this model of leadership development to students we will be providing them with a framework to see their own development more clearly. They will be better able to track their own progress and know what tools and ideas they can work on next and what new opportunities await them as they improve their skills and gain confidence.

References

- agent. (n.d.). Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1). Retrieved June 22, 2009, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/agent>
- Allen, K. E., & Marotz, L. R. (2003). *Developmental profiles* (4th ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.
- American Psychological Association (2009) Civic Engagement and Service Learning • APA Education Directorate retrieved February 16th 2009 from <http://www.apa.org/ed/slce/civicengagement.html>
- Bailey, F.S. (1981). *A leadership observation instrument for preschool children*. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1981).
- Bass, B. (1981). *Stogdill's handbook of leadership*. New York: Free Press.
- Benninga, J. S., Berkowitz, M. W., Kuchn, P., & Smith, K. (2003). The relationship of character education implementation and academic achievement in elementary schools. *Journal of Research in Character Education*, 1(1), 19-32.
- Bier, M. C., & Berkowitz, M. W. (2005). What works in character education. *Leadership for Student Activities*. Retrieved March 19, 2007, from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3962/is_200510/ai_n15705012
- Billing, S.H (2000). Research on K-12 school based service learning – The evidence builds. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(9). Pp 658-663.
- Black, J. (1984). *Leadership: A new model particularly applicable to gifted youth*. ERIC Clearinghouse: National Institution of Education.
- Blasi, A., Lapsley, D. K., & Narvaez, D. (Eds.). (2004). *Moral development, self and identity*. Mahwah, New Jersey : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bluck, S. & Gluck, J. (2005) *From the inside out: People's implicit theories of wisdom*. In Robert J. Sternberg and Jennifer Jordan: *A handbook of wisdom: Psychological perspectives*. New York,: Cambridge University Press.
- Buhler, C. (1931) *The social behavior of children*. In C. Murchison (ed.) *Handbook of child psychology* (2nd Ed.). Worcester: Clark University Press.
- Burke Johnson, R., & Onwuegbuzie, A. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7) pp. 14–26.
- Burke Johnson, R., Onwuegbuzie, A., & Turner, L. (2007). Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), pp. 112-133.

Bush, G.W. (2007) Proclamation 8192: National Character Counts Week, 2007. Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents. Washington: Oct 29, 2007. Vol. 43, Iss. 43; pg. 1385.

Canadian Educational Association (2008). Focus on educating citizens: why does citizenship matter? CEA. Retrieved from <http://www.cea-ace.ca/foo.cfm?subsection=edu&page=cit> on March 31, 2008.

Cook-Sather, A. (2002). Authorizing students' perspectives: Toward trust, dialogue, and change in education. *Educational Researcher*, 31, (4). pp. 3-14.

Corporation for National and Community Service (2008). Retrieved March 27, 2008 from www.nationalservice.gov.

Corporation for National and Community Service (2006). Educating for active citizenship: service learning, school based service and youth civic engagement. Retrieved February 16th 2009 from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/27/f5/2f.pdf

Coie, J. D. & Dodge, K. A. (1983). Continuities and changes in children's social status: A five-year longitudinal study. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 29, 261-282.

Coie, J. D., Dodge, K. A. & Coppotelli, H. (1982). Dimensions and types of social status: A cross-age perspective. *Developmental Psychology*, 18, 557-570.

Cole, M. & Cole, S. (2001). *The Development of Children*. New York: Worth Publishers.

Creswell, J. (1998) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Crockett, L., Losoff, M. & Petersen, J. (1984). Perceptions of the peer group in early adolescence. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 4, 15-18.

Dempster, N., Lizzio, A. (2007). Student leadership: necessary research. *Australian Journal of Education*, vol.51(3), pp.276-285.

deputy. (n.d.). *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Retrieved June 22, 2009, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/deputy>.

Digman J.M. (1990). Personality structure: Emergence of the five-factor model. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 41, 417-440.

Doyle, M. E. and Smith, M. K. (2001) 'Classical leadership', *the encyclopedia of informal education*, retrieved November 2008 from: http://www.infed.org/leadership/traditional_leadership.htm

- Edwards, C. (1994). Leadership in groups of school age girls. *Developmental Psychology*, 30(6), 920-927.
- Erikson, E. H. (1963) *Childhood and Society*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Erikson, E.H. (1968) Life Cycle. In D.L. Sills (ed.) *International encyclopedia of the social sciences* (Vol. 9) New York: Crowell, Collier.
- Erikson, E.H. (1968) *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton
- Erickson, F. & Shultz, J. (1992). Students' experience of the curriculum. In P. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on curriculum* (pp. 465-485). New York: Macmillan.
- Fiedler, F. E. and Garcia, J. E. (1987) *New Approaches to Effective Leadership*, New York: John Wiley.
- Fiedler, F. E. (1997) 'Situational control and a dynamic theory of leadership' in K. Grint (ed.) (1997) *Leadership. Classical, contemporary and critical approaches*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Finney, D. (2002). Character education through student leadership development, citizenship education and service learning curricula. (Doctoral Thesis, Seattle University, 2002). (Retrieved from <http://proquest.umi.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/pqdweb?index=0&sid=1&srchmode=2&vinst=PROD&fmt=6&startpage=-1&clientid=12520&vname=PQD&RQT=309&did=764974691&scaling=FULL&ts=1226332957&vtype=PQD&rq=309&TS=1226332963&clientId=12520>).
- French, D.C., Waas, G.A., Stright, A.L. & Baker, J.A. (1986). Leadership asymmetries in mixed-age children's groups. *Child Development*, 57, 1277-1283.
- Fu, V.R. (1979). Preschool leadership-followership behaviors. *Child Study Journal*, 9(2), 133-140.
- Gergen, D. (2008). A deepening leadership crisis. AC360. Retrieved December 22nd 2008 from <http://ac360.blogs.cnn.com/2008/09/30/a-deepening-leadership-crisis/>.
- Giroux, H. (1996) Doing cultural studies: Youth and the challenge of pedagogy. In P. Leistyna, A. Woodrun, & S. Sherblom (Eds.) *Breaking free: The transformative power of critical pedagogy*. Cambridge, Harvard Educational Review.
- Glaser, B & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Adeline.
- Glaser B. (2001) *The Grounded Theory Perspective I: Conceptualization Contrasted with Description*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.
- Goethals, G., Sorensen, G. & MacGregor Burns, J. (2004) *Encyclopedia of Leadership* (Vol. 1). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

- Harrison, C.W., Rawls, J.R., & Rawls, D.J. (1971). Differences between leaders and non-leaders in six to eleven year-old children. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 84, 269-272.
- Hartshorne, H. (1928) *Studies in the nature of character*, by the Character Education Inquiry, Teachers College, Columbia University, in cooperation with the Institute of Social and Religious Research. New York: MacMillan
- Havercroft, J. and Keilven, J. (2003). *Character Matters* Implementation: Purposeful and Intentional. *Orbit*. 33(2), pp. 7-9.
- Hebert, Y. & Sears, A. (no date). *Citizenship Education*. Canadian Education Association. Retrieved from http://www.cea-ace.ca/media/en/Citizenship_Education.pdf on March 31, 2008.
- Henein, A. & Morissette, F. (2007) *Made in Canada leadership: Wisdom from the nation's best and brightest on leadership and development*. Mississauga: John Wiley & Sons Canada, Ltd.
- Hensel, N.H. (1991). Social leadership skills in young children. *Roeper Review*, 14(1), pp.4-6
- Hudson-Ross. S., Cleary, L., & Casey, M. (1993). *Children's voices: Children talk about literacy*. Portsmouth: Heineman.
- Huitt, W. (2004). *Moral and character development*. Retrieved March 19, 2007, from Educational Psychology Interactive Web Site: <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/morchr/morchr.html>
- Hynes, K., Feldhusen, J., Richardson, W. (1978). Application of a three-stage model of instruction to youth leadership training. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 63(5) 623-628.
- International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) (2008). *Middle years program: From principles into practice*. UK: Antony Rowe Ltd.
- Judge, T. & Bono, J. (2000). Five factor model of personality and transformational leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 751-765.
- Karnes, F., Meriweather, S. (1989). Developing and implementing a plan for leadership: An integral component for success as a leader. *Roeper Review* 11(4) 214-217.
- Karnes, F., Chauvin, A. (1985). *Leadership skills inventory*. New York: Disseminators of Knowledge.
- Kohlberg, L., & Turiel, E. (1989). Moral development and moral education. In G. Lesser (Ed.), *Psychology and educational practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Person/Scott Foresman.
- Komives, S, Owen, J. Longerbeam, S, Mainella, F. & Osteen, L. (2005). Developing a leadership identity: A grounded theory. *Journal of College Student Development*. 46(6), pp. 563-611.

- Kitano, M. Young gifted children: Strategies for preschool children. 1982. *Young Children*, 37, (4), 14-24.
- Kitzinger, J. (1995). Qualitative research: Introducing focus groups. *British Medical Journal*, Vol.311,no.7000,pp.299-302.
- Leithwood, K., Mascall, B., Strauss, T., Sacks, R., Memon, N., & Yashkina, A. (2007) Distributing leadership to make schools smarter: Taking the ego out of the system. In *Distributed Leadership According to the Evidence* (Leithwood, Mascall & Strauss, eds.) New York: Routledge.
- Levin, B. (1999). *Putting students at the centre in education reform*. Winnipeg, Canada: University of Manitoba, Continuing Education Division.
- Libby M., Rosen, M., Sedonaen, M. (2005). Building youth-adult partnerships for community change: Lessons from the youth leadership institute. *Journal of Community Psychology*. 33(1) 111-120.
- Lickona, T. (1997) Educating for character: The school's highest calling. Retrieved March 15, 2007 from http://www.glc.k12.ga.us/passwd/trc/ttools/attach/chared/resources/speech_Lickona.pdf
- Locke, B. (2004). Service-learning and leadership life skills: An experimental study. (doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University 2004). DAI-A 65/07, p. 2461, Jan 2005.
- Lyons, Saltonstall and Hanmer (1990). Competencies and visions: Emma Willard girls talk about being leaders. In C. Gilligan, N. Lyons, T Hanmer. *Making connections: The relational worlds of adolescent girls at Emma Willard School*. (pp. 183-214). Cambridge, MA, US: Harvard University Press.
- MacBeath, J. (2004). *The leadership file*. Glasgow: Learning Files Scotland Ltd.
- MacNeil, C.A. (2006). Bridging generations: applying adult leadership theories to youth leadership development. *New Directions for Youth Leadership Development*, 109, 27-43.
- Markow, D., Martin, S., Comey, G., Zwanziger, E., Kim, A. (2006) The national survey on service learning and transitioning to adulthood. Harris Interactive, Inc. Retrieved December 20, 2007 from www.nylc.org/rc_downloadfile.cfm?emoid=14:664&property=download&mode=download
- Maryland, S. (1972). *Education of the gifted and talented*. Washington, DC: USGPO
- Martin, R. (2007). *The opposable mind: how successful leaders win through integrative thinking*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- McBurney, D.H. (1994). *Research Methods*. Brooks/Cole, Pacific Grove, California.

- McCullough, P. Ashbridge, D., Pegg, R. (1994). The effect of self-esteem, family structure, locus of control, and career goals on adolescent leadership behavior. *Adolescence*, 29(115) 605.
- McMannus, T. (2002) National Association of Secondary school principals. Retrieved March 19, 2007 from <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2266/National-Association-Secondary-School-Principals.html>.
- Messmer, Max. 1999, July. Building leadership skills. *Strategic Finance Magazine*, 81(1).
- Morganosky, M., Creekmore, A. (1981) Clothing influence in adolescent leadership roles. *Family And Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 9(4), 356-362.
- Morris, G.B. (1991). Perceptions of leadership traits: comparison of adolescent and adult school leaders. *Psychological Reports*, 69, 723-727.
- Myers, M.R., Slavin, M.J., Southern, W. (1990). Emergence and maintenance of leadership among gifted students in group problem solving. *Roeper Review*, 12(4), pp. 256-261.
- Niemi, R. & Chapman, C. (1999). The civic development of 9th through 12th grade students in the United States: 1996 (Report NCES 1999-131). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Northouse, P.G. (2001). *Leadership, theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- NYLC (2006). The national survey on service-learning and transitioning to adulthood. Retrieved February 4th 2007 from http://www.nylc.org/happening_newsarticle.cfm?oid=5453.
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2006). *Guidance and Career Education Grades 11 and 12*. Retrieved March 20, 2007 from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/guidance1112currb.pdf> Ordover.
- OMOE (Ontario Ministry of Education) (2009). Policy/Program Memorandum No. 124a: Ontario secondary school diploma requirement: Community involvement activities in English-language schools. Retrieved on May 23 2009 from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/124a.html>.
- H.H. (1997). Setting an example worth following: The challenge of teaching leadership. In J.A. Boccia (Ed.). *Students Taking the Lead: The Challenges and Rewards of Empowering Youth in Schools* (Vol. 4) San Francisco: Jossey- Bass, Inc.
- Pandit, N. (1996). The Creation of Theory: A recent application of the grounded theory method. *The Qualitative Report* 2(4). Retrieved March 2nd from www.nova.edu/ssss/QR?QR2-4/pandit.html
- Paton, N. (2007). The baby-boomer leadership vacuum. Retrieved November 10, 2008 from Management Issues web site: <http://www.management-issues.com/2007/10/22/research/the-baby-boomer-leadership-vacuum.asp>

- Patrick, J (1991). Teaching the responsibilities of citizenship. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No ED332929)
- Perez, G. S.; Chassin, D. R.; Ellington, C. & Smith, J. (1982). Leadership giftedness in preschool children. *Roeper Review*, 4, (3), 26-28.
- Piaget, J. (1965). The moral judgment of the child. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Pielstick, C.D. (2000). Formal versus informal leadership: A comparative analysis. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 7 (3). 99-114.
- Pigors, P. (1933). Leadership and domination among children. *Sociologus*, 9, 140-157.
- Public District School Board Writing Team (2001). Course profile: Leadership and peer support. Retrieved October 2007 from http://www.curriculum.org/csc/library/profiles/11/guidance_p.shtml.
- Raymond, L. (2001). Student involvement in school improvement: From data source to significant voice. *FORUM*, 43(2), 58- 61.
- Ready, D. and Conger, J. (2007) Making your company a talent factory.” *Harvard Business Review*. June pp. 68-77.
- Reed, C.F. & Bechtel, D. (1997). We have ideas: Students; voices in restructuring. In J.A. Boccia (Ed.) *Students Taking the Lead: The Challenges and Rewards of Empowering Youth in Schools* (Vol. 4) San Francisco: Jossey- Bass, Inc.
- Rizzo, M., & Brown, J. (2006). *Building Character through Community Service: Strategies to Implement the Missing Element in Education*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Roach, A., Wyman, L.T., Brookes, H., Chavez, C., Heath, S., Valdes, G. (1999). Leadership Giftedness: Models Revisited. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 43(1) pp.13-24.
- Rolheiser, C & Glickman, C. (1995). Teaching for democratic life. *Educational Forum*. 59(2), 196-206.
- Rosenthal, S., Pittinsky, T., Purvin, D., Montoya, R. (2008). *National Leadership Index 2008: A national study of confidence in leadership*. Center for Public Leadership at the John F Kennedy School of Government – Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Sacks, R. (2000). *Peace by PEACE curriculum*. Toronto: Sponsored by the Toronto District School Board. (for more information see <http://peacebypeace.sa.utoronto.ca/index.php> or <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/peace/>)
- Sanon, F., Baxter, M., Fortune, L., & Opatow, S. (2001). Cutting class: Perspectives of urban high school students. In J. Shultz & A Cook-Sather (Eds.), *In our own words: Students’ perspectives on school* (pp. 73-91). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Sechrest, L., & Sidana, S. (1995). Quantitative and qualitative methods: Is there an alternative? *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 18, 77–87.
- Shore, B., Cornell, D., Robinson, A., Ward, V. (1991) *Recommended practices in gifted education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Smith, D.L., Smith, L., Barnette, J. (1991). Exploring the development of leadership giftedness. *Roeper Review*. 14(1) pp.7-12.
- Smyth, E., Ross, J.A. (1999). Developing Leadership Skills of Pre-Adolescent Gifted Learners In Small Group Settings. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 43(3) pp.204-211.
- Spencer, Emily (2007). Leadership models and theories: A brief overview. Retrieved May 12, 2008 from <http://www.cda.forces.gc.ca/CFLI/engraph/research/pdf/12.pdf>.
- Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Hold, Rinehart & Winston.
- Sternberg, R. (2008). The WICS approach to leadership: Stories of leadership and the structures and processes that support them. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19, 360-371.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. London: Sage.
- Travers, P. D., & Rebo, R. W. (Eds.). (2000). *Foundations of education* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Trawick-Smith, J. (1988). Play leadership and following behavior of young children: Lets say you're the leader. *Young Children*, July, 51-58.
- United States Department of Education. (2004). *No Child Left Behind*. Retrieved March 19, 2007, from <http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/next/index.html>
- Van Linden, J., Fertman, C (1998). *Youth leadership: a guide to understanding leadership development in adolescents*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wright, P. (1996) *Managerial Leadership*, London: Routledge.
- Yukl, G. (2001). *Leadership in organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Zeldin, S. (2004). Youth as agents of adult and community development: Mapping the processes and outcomes of youth engaged in organizational governance. *Applied Developmental Science*. 8(2), pp. 75-90.