

Dr. Terri Edwards Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology

Northeastern State University
500 North Grand, Tahlequah, Oklahoma 74464
918-444-3751 Fax 918-458-2351

CLASSROOM TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CLASSROOM,
SCHOOL, AND EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to describe the opinions that 35 elementary and secondary teachers have about their leadership in the classroom, in the school, and in the educational community. Q methodology was used to create an instrument for participants to utilize in expressing their opinions framed using the Formative Leadership Theory. The teachers sorted a sample of statements representing the theory in the three contexts of classroom, school, and educational community twice; once using opinions of their actual leadership and once considering their ideal teacher leadership potential. Each participant then completed a demographic survey.

Findings and Conclusions: The results indicate three types of opinions expressed by the teachers named Classroom Oriented Teachers, Collaborative Teachers, and Collegial Teachers. The largest number of teachers identified with working with students and leading within their classroom as Classroom Oriented Teachers. They spent the least amount of effort and time in other leadership activities. Collaborative teachers welcomed colleagues and the community into their schools to assist with decision making. Collegial teachers interacted well with administration and welcomed them into their classrooms. Two thirds of the teachers involved in the study viewed their ideal leadership as their current situation. The others viewed Collegial leadership as their ideal leadership. How teachers engage in teacher leadership will affect their future actions for improved student learning and necessary school change.

This study used Q methodology to describe the opinions that 35 elementary and secondary teachers have about their leadership in the classroom, in the school, and in the educational community.

The driving force behind my research is the premise that teachers should be organizing and operating our schools. They are on the front lines and they have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to take on this task. Various obstacles are inhibiting teacher leadership and we must uncover these in order to progress with teachers leading the way. The first hurdle that must be addressed is giving teachers a VOICE.