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## Educator Reaction To Secondary Students Having Leadership Roles

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EDUCATOR REACTION TO  
SECONDARY STUDENTS HAVING LEADERSHIP ROLES

by

Noel R. Cronin

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

December 2017

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To Lucas and Marcos for your continuous love and enlightenment. Special dedication for my soldiers; subordinate, superior, and peer. Our battles need buddies. Follow me!

“Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm”.  
– Publilius Syrus

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Inspiration in Stride**

#### **Introduction**

So there I was, in early Spring 2008, seven of ten miles into the Victory Ruck March during the final week of Army boot camp. The pinnacle training event of the experience when the group realizes that we have indeed survived and are now soldiers in service to our great nation. It was in this euphoric moment when I had the epiphany that became the origin of my capstone question. My capstone question evolved over the years as I gained experience in a variety of fields and became “How do a diverse group of educators react to the idea of assigning secondary students leadership roles in teaching their peers and communicating information in the classroom environment?”

The initial exhaustion induced epiphany of how to develop and maintain leadership in classroom settings was focused on the connection between public school classes and Army classes. With further thought and study it was clear that any classroom setting, such as flight lines, locker rooms, and corporate training events all could benefit from a structured leadership format. After reevaluation, the idea streamlined into how to encourage students to take the lead in the classroom, and be applied to any educational environment. But I want to take you back to the initial realization during the ruck march.

Ignoring the pain of the pavement and the fifty pounds of gear on my back, I noticed how well the group was established in terms of leadership roles and information dissemination in a relatively short period of time (not short enough according to my feet). While hiking, I pondered how well such structure could be employed in other educational settings, reflecting on other

instructional experiences I have had over the past few years. Albeit traditional and nontraditional public educational settings, to flight training in various aircraft, and to Army exercises; they all had instructional leadership in common. Meaning, a dedicated leader in charge. It was then I recognized the military for the amazing educational environment that it is. I bravely spoke up to ask permission from the closest leader to me, who just happened to be my Drill Sergeant; to pull out my notepad to write down what I thought was an intellectual discovery. How to develop and maintain leadership in classroom settings, or something like that was what I could make out from my chicken scratch on that perspiration moistened page. The idea has stuck with me in the training and deployment exercises that followed. It even came full circle back into traditional public school environments upon my return from overseas duty.

The main points of this introductory first chapter are highlighted in four parts. First, the journey to this question as a classroom teacher. Then coaching ice hockey where leaders are born through sweat and tears. Then above the ground and in hangers for pilot training. Who ever thought clouds can be classrooms. Finally a soldier, where the question has traveled across the US and halfway around the world, and too many different education settings since its inception during that fateful ruck march. All in all the hints to the answers to the question lies in part with the demonstrating and maintaining the demeanor of authority, not only in command presence, but also authority of the subject matter and the environment throughout the course of the event. To gain the full picture, we must go back in time to 1995 to find a wide-eyed younger man, fresh out of college and ready to explore the world in search of answers. I inevitably only found more questions.

### **Classroom Teacher**

Before becoming the Officer and Gentleman Scholar I am today, I was a newly licensed earth science teacher back in the mid '90's. This is where the journey to the research question begins. The quest for me as a teacher was to gain and maintain the leadership role for 150-200 middle to high school students, this is a unique challenge to say the least. Any help in that regard would have been graciously accepted. For then, it was all about trial and error. As I recall the various settings which I was called upon to lead, there is an equal amount of time which I had to follow.

First year teachers rightfully need mentors within the school for guidance. I have found that colleagues are very important in the formation of good classroom instructors. I had the good fortune to teach middle school earth science in Hawaii my very first year of teaching, and with a few seasoned educators. Although I had professional disagreements with some, their calm, cool attitudes proved their wisdom sound. Back in the mainland USA the following year, I was introduced to high school settings which were notably different than the younger grades I was familiar with on the island.

As a teacher working in a high school setting it was here where I learned how the administration's role was important to the overall school environment. With that awareness, I was further introduced to other educational settings such as professional development and departmental leadership. My experience seemed very much like the middle managers within business organizations. As the instructional leader of my classroom my role was to balance being an instructional leader and being a department member dealing with bigger picture

obligations of the school. I began to see myself as leader of my small group and follower in the larger school community simultaneously.

It is interesting to think about, that ten years prior as a high school student myself, how oblivious I was to the world outside my own narrow perceptions. And at this moment, I was seeing the other side of education, as a leader of classes, not just a semi-active participant. My reflection made me wonder how my experiences as a beginning teacher would have been different if I have been able to exercise leadership roles in a classroom as a secondary student. Would experience with classroom leadership as a high school student have helped me have less professional disagreements with my initial colleagues? Charlotte Danielson (1996) expressed a notion of “a framework” to enhance the professional experience between novice teachers and their mentors (p.7). Further contemplation revealed the notion of being able to lead and follow as an important aspect in everyone’s education no matter what the environment or what you are learning. All the while having someone maintain an authoritative leadership role in the classroom, like a coach with a whistle.

### **Coaching**

Another aspect I was introduced to during my first few years as a teacher was coaching the Junior Varsity (JV) Girls ice hockey team. This time my only mentor was the head coach of the varsity squad, so I was relatively on my own. Fortunately I had a bit of experience coaching hockey in college which was a tremendous help. But, without guidance or real assistants, it became more and more challenging. For instance, I had to find a better way of communicating with the goalies. Usually there is an assistant to coordinate their rotation and practice sessions. Also, adequately dividing my attention between the offense and defense is inherently challenging

in such fast paced sports. Play development and line matching demand a high level of synchronization and timing that is difficult for a single conductor to orchestrate.

One factor that helped was the use of my captains. These assigned subordinate leadership roles formed the cohesive small units of the lines. Instead of addressing the entire team on plans, I told the captains, who then informed their line. Using my hockey captains in this manner and carefully maintaining a coach's leadership role on and off the ice became easier to manage. That structure was my only saving grace that season, and one I would not see again until army platoon leadership training. Shortly after I hung up my whistle, I embarked on my next educational endeavor. It was training that would break the constraints of gravity itself.

### **Flight Instruction**

Becoming a pilot was always a dream of mine. To soar in and above the clouds using planning and decision making processes made my imagination spark. It was now the turn of the millennium and anything was possible. So I set my sights toward the sky, and explored a new career in aviation. Little did I know my background in education was a perfect match for flight training. It was all about benchmarks, regulations, safety, and maneuvers. All the while I had to become familiar to a new language, acronyms, and the new dimension of altitude. But it was the one-on-one instruction that was glaringly obvious, and the assigned leadership role of pilot in command (PIC) as the authority. At first, it was the instructor who was in charge for obvious safety and demonstration reasons. But soon after, the student takes the responsibility of commanding the vehicle, with the instructor as the backup. This relationship leads itself well to the very systematic approach to flying.

What I observed during pilot training was that in order to gain the skills necessary to pilot the craft, the lessons have to be rigidly organized. The instruction being given must be clear to all participants. This was best accomplished through the use of my pre-flight briefings. Once open lines of communication were established between instructor and student, information can flow more smoothly despite the rigidity, witnessed by the use of in-flight checklists. Repetition of these positive behaviors is also necessary for me to hone this skill. Not only the checklists, but the language used between pilots and air traffic control, and the maneuvers to show positive control are repeated over and over again until it became second nature. The very systematic way to critique my pilot's performance presented itself in the form of standardization of the skill sets. Stall recovery, short field takeoffs and landings are all governed by a strict set of standards which every pilot must demonstrate during practical exams. Even the use of online written testing was employed as a systematic way to ensure my airman knowledge. With that overall approach in mind, a series of notable accomplishments were achieved as a way to track my progress as a pilot.

After the initial instruction and first solo, I gain the flight status of Private Pilot. This FAA licensed privilege allows one to fly in most air space, under certain conditions. Other ratings I received with more training included an Instrument, Complex aircraft, and Multiengine. Further flight training elevated me to the level of Commercial Pilot, which lead me to become a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI). It is at this level where through pedagogical preparation, I began to truly to recognize the abilities of professional pilots. Being able to develop flight lesson plans and teach someone else the skills I myself have learned not too long ago empowered me with the confidence of the leadership needed to convey your authority of the subject. There is a

clear leadership structure on the flight deck of any aircraft, which includes a Captain and a First Officer. Both positions are equally important to the safe operation of that vehicle. In my experience, there is no clearer use of leadership structure than the US Military.

### **Army Training**

The old phrase of to be an effective leader you must be a good follower is an obvious testament to the chain of command. Even the top generals take orders from the President, who in turn must consider the will of the people in all decision making. In all branches of service, the subordinate command structure spans four key groups listed as ranks: Officers, Warrant Officers, Non Commissioned Officers (NCO's), and Enlisted personnel. These are the planners, technicians, executors, and doers respectively. So how do these various rank structures convey and disseminate orders and information efficiently?

Being in the military helped me to understand a hidden aspect of leadership related to leadership styles. The leadership styles used in the armed forces revolves around the fact that any one leader has only a few subordinates, generally only one to six at any given time. So any pertinent information or orders to be carried out can quickly be distributed down the ranks, and acknowledgement or results can be pushed back up. For instance, a Battalion Commander (BC) may have a few Companies to direct, let's say four. So that Colonel gives the orders to each Company Commander (CC) and the second in command of the Battalion. The BC only has to give the information to five individuals not the 500 or so soldiers in total. The necessary instructions will then pass from the CC's to the Platoon Leaders (PL's) who pass it on to the Squad Leaders, who in turn share with Team Leads which generally consist of five people.



Another interesting nuance is that it works in reverse just as effectively. The whole process demands a level of professional communication reducing the amount for personal misunderstandings. In order to achieve that level of respect and authority, a good amount of positive and negative reinforcement is often used. In short, praise for well-executed tasks and lessons learned go a long way for repeated success. By the same token, highlighting deficiencies and needed improvements point out areas where attention should be paid. This attention can be unpleasant until corrections are made. Once a group is in synch, the priority shifts to keeping it that way.

A way to keep units of any size together is by the use of symbols, slogans, and acronyms. Sports teams, business, and schools also use these methods of attachment through brands, logos, theme songs, and jargon which the uniformed services pronounce with great efficiency. Memorized military creeds help focus or refocus attention to where one is and what you are supposed to be doing. The use of motivational cadence's are designed to get you through more physical activities like building shelters or company runs. Not only the songs sung but the language used bounds the group together by common terminology. Effective leaders use those techniques to guide and drive the organization toward their objectives.

Where the unit shines as a learning entity is seen by the use of After Action Reviews (AAR's). After a training event, exercise, or mission the leader will conduct a review as a summary and evaluation tool. The AAR has a particular process of asking three general questions to open dialog with participants. First, what was supposed to happen? This question leads back to the beginning of the event or mission objectives. Followed by, what did happen? This can be where accomplishments and deficiencies become apparent and distracting to the

review. It is important to concentrate on actual occurrences and resist suggestions of what should have done until the next question. How to improve for next time concludes the AAR with all participants' satisfaction of having the opportunity to contribute.

Between 2007 and 2017 I was able to participate in all these aspects of Army training and deployments. I have had a high learning curve through the mentorship of cadre and commanders with their ability to maintain authoritative leadership roles, which I have been able to emulate. I must admit, being a little older and experienced in other occupations helped me be aware of teachable and learnable educational moments. The combination of life experiences does not have to take years to acquire, they just need to be shared.

### **Significance of Capstone to the Profession**

Taking into account many lessons learned across the careers I've participated in, I offer several ways this capstone is significant to the Education profession. Notable not only in secondary education, but in corporate settings and training courses as well. By creating the opportunity for participants to become actively involved in their learning environment sparks new ways to instill knowledge or skills. Active participation can build the confidence needed for assertive communication styles allowing expression of thoughts and feelings.

Having student leadership roles could assist the instructor with those administrative and classroom management duties that can occupy far too much of the limited time available for instruction. The contributions of many supersede the efforts of the few, or the one single benefactor. With increases in class sizes and limited teachers, the collaborative student learning has become a necessity.

The leadership skills students learn in the classroom will be taken into the next environment they become involved in. Whether it be the next level of educational facility, the work force, the playing fields, or even the home front. What was gained in previous setting will be carried to the next. By the time a student graduates, they would have gained a solid foundation of leadership leaving a positive reputation for the institution from which they have emerged.

### **Summary**

With my background in education, aviation, and military I have been able to identify patterns of similarity in leadership style among these enterprises. When these patterns are combined, the potential leadership aspects can be reinforced and better utilized by those in charge. In order to operate, each of these three industries are surrounded by group and individual classroom instruction, with or without walls. The way learning is accomplished is by means of effective leadership roles. Identifying the strengths and weakness of each form can be used to enhance the experience and improve the organization.

The capstone question “How do a diverse group of educators react to the idea of assigning secondary students leadership roles in teaching their peers and communicating information in the classroom environment?” This chapter has described the main points: the journey of where the capstone question came from, and how it has developed all come to be related to form the basis of this inquiry. Chapter Two will provide a summary of the review of the research literature completed for this capstone. Chapter Three is a description of the research design for this capstone including the use of a qualitative fixed format survey, who was recruited to complete the survey, and limitations of the research design. Chapter Four is a summary of the

analyses of my survey results, and Chapter Five describes my major learnings, connections to the review of the research literature, and recommendations for future research. It is through active involvement in which learning and growth blossom in nurturing environments.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Search and Research**

#### **Literature Review**

This chapter focuses on a literary review of subject matter revolving around the main research question “How do a diverse group of educators react to the idea of assigning secondary students leadership roles in teaching their peers and communicating information in the classroom environment?” Hooks (1994) surmises that “engaged pedagogy is really the only type of teaching that truly generates excitement in classrooms, that enables students and professors to feel the joy of learning” (p. 204).

Scholarly research has come a long way in the past few years. The key word searches for student leadership and classroom organization were easier to investigate digitally than previous collegiate writings using encyclopedias and card catalogs. My library and online search for topics relevant to my capstone question yielded approximately forty readings pertinent to my capstone exploration. The more useful writings resulted from search descriptors such as training, instruction, and management. In order to compile the information in a coherent method, I organized the resources located during the review of the research literature into the categories of leadership defined, styles of leadership, and relations to followers. Within each category, I found the subdivisions of education, military, and other (mainly aviation and business). It is my intention to compare and contrast how leadership styles are utilized in other organizational and instructional venues in order to be translated into a secondary educational setting.

As I reviewed the literature, I noticed some patterns of order to resources identified as a result of my searches. First, most books, journals, and articles I found articulated some form of a

definition of leadership. They also seemed to denote a description of leadership styles within the various settings. Finally, most of the articles and books identified in my review of the research literature had a comparison of the relationship between leadership and followership. In keeping with scholarly writing, I will retain this arrangement for the sake of consistency.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the experiences and lessons learned from my past occupations within three industries involving instruction, as part of the function of the organization, will be the bases for literacy review in this chapter. I have noticed that the secondary and postsecondary education fields generally do not incorporate student leadership roles when compared to the military (including academies) and business environments. Although the educational administration has a relative chain of command (superintendent to department chairs), the classroom group of students do not.

My assumption is that if formal student leadership roles were a part of the secondary education classroom it would build a sense of community on the smaller scale of a class sized group of individuals. Darling-Hammond, L. (2010) emphasizes “the importance of small size to the schools’ success” (p. 245). The sense of community and belongingness might then generate a strong motivation to contribute and claim responsibility of group success. Freire, P. (2000) wrote that teachers “must be partners of the students” to build trust and engage critical thinking (p. 75). Formal student leadership roles could result in students assisting with the decision making that affect themselves that contribute to their learning. Formal student leadership roles might also increase students taking ownership to improve the environment and processes in the learning experience.

The major categories of research reviewed in Chapter Two include: leadership theories in general and related to classroom, leadership roles, responsible ownership, and responsible participation. The review starts with the educational writings.

### **Leadership Defined**

Green, R. L. (2013) defined leadership as a process that those in charge use “to give purpose to the collective efforts of members of the organization while influencing them to work collaboratively in an environment of mutual respect and trust” (p. 26). This collaboration results and/or produces products toward common goals and according to Green (2013) illustrates the necessity of shared leadership roles. Combining Green’s (2013) notion with the understanding of the classroom as a micro organization reveals a scale independence that allows for leadership opportunities to thrive. His description of an environment of mutual respect and trust puts an emotional aspect highlighting the need for safe and secure surroundings to ensure participation. Although Green’s (2013) contentions are broad based implying a group mentality, it could be applied to a few key leadership roles within the smaller community.

Continuing the train of thought about singled out roles, an article written by Rosch, D. M., & Kusel M. L. (2010) defined leadership as “an individual’s influence on a group in order to reach a goal” (p. 29), and that this definition maybe too vague to introduce in a classroom. “Without a concise definition of leadership to provide boundaries, it is unlikely that we, as educators, will be able to effectively instruct students how to best practice leadership” (Rosch & Kusel, 2010, p. 29). They go on to say “As a community of educators who care about the leadership development of our students, we should focus efforts toward more multi-institutional agreement around the construct of leadership practice” (Rosch & Kusel, 2010, p. 31). An

outcome of having this agreement is that the institution of secondary education itself can serve as a model for how leadership can be constructed which could influence how other organizations function. This is important because having a common frame of reference may lessen the assimilation time when changing position or organization. It also gives familiarization to the small community with new participants and situations. Moreover, this organizational approach can be a demonstration of how cooperative effort is applied in the so called real world.

Organizational functions can also be seen as styles. Howard (2005) defined leadership as “the process of communication that involves coaching, motivating/ inspiring, directing/ guiding, and supporting/ counseling others” (p. 385). He believed that common in all effective leaders is the ability to mentor others. In addition Howard (2005) notes that effective leaders provide direction, are people of action, calculated risk takers, and finally are communicators of hope. Howard (2005) thinks leadership is an expression of a learning relationship, one that engenders cooperation and trust. The context in which he is dealing centers around an experienced person in a company, college, or school who trains and counsels new employees or students. Similar to Howard’s (2005) ideals, Farr, S., Kamras, J., & Kopp, W. (2010) “Teaching As Leadership” denotes six principles that embody any successful leader.

Those six principles include “set goals, invest in their students and families, plan purposefully, execute effectively, continuously increase effectiveness, and work relentlessly past obstacles” (Farr et al., 2010, p. 5). The context is set in the more traditional K-12 environment, however his thoughts are broad enough to apply in other educational settings. Howard (2005) and Farr, Kamras, & Kopp (2010) all agreed that those auspicious individuals in charge come to that position with an exercised approach of authority, or at least an awareness of being an



authoritative figure with a commanding presence. Having a command of the environment and subject matter are at the heart of the matter. One industry that stands out in terms of utilizing command structure to accomplish set goals is the U.S. military.

The Army defines leadership in its Field Manual (FM) 6-22 as “the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization” (Dept. of the Army, 2006, p. 1-2). Not too many other organizations have a dedicated publication to the art of leadership. The military field manuals are evolving documents reflecting continued lessons learned and are able to be reconciled with other accounts on the topics. Taking from the introduction of the Army field manual on leadership (Dept. of the Army, 2006, p. viii).

An ideal Army leader has strong intellect, physical presence, professional competence, high moral character, and serves as a role model. An Army leader is able and willing to act decisively, within the intent and purpose of superior leader, and in the best interest of the organization. Army leaders recognize that organizations built on mutual trust and confidence, successfully accomplish peacetime and wartime missions.

Taking the Army textbook definition further, Garner (2009) incorporates empathy into the equation. He states that empathy is a developed leadership skill that builds trust, improves communication, and fosters relationships within the organization and with others outside of it. Although the Lieutenant Colonel (ret.) Garner (2009) presents a broad perspective, another military article by Peterson (2012) shows how the U.S. military can inspire leadership within business entities.

Garner (2009) defines leadership traits and principles suggesting what a person in charge does and how they are supposed to act balances into an effective performance. For example, the Marine Corp lists judgment, decisiveness, dependability, and integrity as a few of their taught traits. The traits then reflect in the principles and guide leader behavior. The Army describes a few principles such as self-improvement, soldier care, and task understanding/ supervision/ and evaluation. This demonstration of competence and responsibility is tailored to the mission statements and business models of successful organizations.

The Hoover Institution's' Policy Review published an article by Bering (2011) entitled "The Perfect Officer." In it Bering (2011) describes several key elements which define strong leaders across nationalities. The emphasis on "all around personality. . . and intelligence is important, but even more important is character"(p. 59) To summarize the article further, the author compares the officers from Britain, Germany, America, and Israel each with varying styles but similar character attributes. Determination, willingness to assume responsibility, ability to handle adversity in a calm manner proved to be the marks of quality leadership that can also be practiced within educational settings. Hajjar (2005) also comments on this "multiracial uniculture, which is best sum up . . . as a unique feature of both military and parochial schools and systems" (p. 45). He defines leadership as "an authentic influence" (p. 51).

In a paper by The International Journal of Aviation Psychology, a group of writers (Prince, C., Salas, E., Brannick, M., & Prince, A., 2010) defined leadership as a truism, important in a wide range of endeavors. In aviation, having a pilot in command is particularly critical because "the cockpit leader has the sole responsibility for decisions made and for the safety of flight" (p. 376). Since flying is an amazing feat in itself, this notion demands courage. Like how Foglesong

(2004) described the essence of leadership, as the “getting ordinary people to do extraordinary things” (p. 5). This brings back Dr. Howard's (2005) point of how leadership styles help propel extraordinary behaviors.

### **Leadership Styles**

Next, a review of other organizational leadership styles in a more general sense. This perspective is significant to show the necessity for leadership education before entering into a profession. Pilots in command and managers, much like classroom teachers, usually learn their leadership style during the formative first or second year of being in that position. One of the main points that stand out the literacy review conducted for this capstone is that managers are more successful when they have an established leadership style, or an awareness of how they define it, before taking charge.

Howard's (2005) analysis of leadership styles resulted into four types. He describes a Fact Based style for those more comfortable with logic and quantitative analysis. They rarely show emotions while thinking through problems before attempting to solve them (Howard, 2005). On the other hand, the Creative Based style “prefers problem solving techniques that involve artistic, flexible, and imaginative” (p. 367). This style is more casual and relaxed but still very thoughtful. The Feeling Based style “makes decisions about how one feels often ignoring research and facts” (p. 388). This faster paced style tends to be uncomfortable with data and seeks the approval of others. Polar opposite to that is the Control Based approach. This style wants to use power over people, tasks, and environments in inflexible, unimaginative ways. I would imagine accountants would have a good grasp of this last approach, where scientists would not.

A group of scientists (Patrick, J. S., Scrase, G., Ahmed, A., & Tombs, M., 2009) from The British Psychological Society conveyed similar styles of leadership in their study in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. They recognized leadership taxonomy in the form of task-related and people-related categories, which were based on the well-researched transformative and transactional approaches to leadership. They also had similar conclusions to Dr. Howard (2005) in terms of how the best propagators of persuasion effectively utilized multiple styles to achieve desired outcomes.

On the contrary, Lieutenant Colonel Garner (2009) talks about expertise and empathy as leadership traits, without the application of punishments. At the same time in the following quote he highlights the concept of tough empathy solidifying the style. Garner (2009) states the importance of “Giving the people what they need, not what they want,” (p. 86) by balancing the respect for the individuals and concern for the tasks at hand. This more compassionate military style “has broad implications for the potential of the power of public military schools,” (p. 44) as talked about in Hajjar’s (2005) paper. He contends that “this type of leadership experience enhances confidence and competence, communication skills, teaching ability, role modeling dynamics, and other social skills” (Hajjar, 2005, p. 51). Where he calls for the creation of new schools, I applaud the efforts of already existing foundations of our public schools and hope for the evolution of the classroom structure to include the advantageous teaching styles of the U.S. military. Bridging the gap between what we are doing well in current classrooms with what’s possible in the future will have a direct correlation to institutional improvements that will stretch beyond the school year. When practiced, leadership will flow into the industrious and business portions of our society, strengthening our resolve and productivity.

This strong leadership style is “very much personality driven,” (Foglesong, 2004, p. 6) as written by the General in the Air and Space Power Journal. Like his definitions, he views styles as unique to the individual as described in the following quote “Somewhere between a consensus leader and a directive leader lays an optimum combination of the two” (Foglesong, 2004, p. 7). He further contends that with varying personality, one can see common characteristics. For Foglesong (2004) the common characteristics required for successful leadership are Preparation, Respect, Integrity, Discipline, Enthusiasm, Morality, and Courage. Introducing, understanding, and practicing these traits can and should be done in classroom settings.

Perpetuating styles a bit further, Dr. Marlow Ediger (2008) of Truman State University proposed that leadership in the school setting can be enhanced by hiring executives from the business world and officers from the military as school administrators. These experienced leaders know how to give and take guidance. Ediger (2008) explains that each of these executives brings something to K-12 leadership. For example, business minded individuals are efficient with money and time. Executives also tend to have an excellent grasp of measuring results and making data driven decisions. Likewise, military officers offer focused goal setting and mentorship style relationship building. Both styles know the value of a strong presence and organizational integrity. But perhaps more importantly, executives, officers, and administrators know they have to answer to a higher boss.

However you look at it, top down, bottom up, inwardly, or outwardly, leadership is dependent on followership. Not just in the obvious view of the one in charge, but in the paradigm changer of the leader as a follower. Even the captain of the team has a coach, who in turn has a manager, and so on. The Generals answer to the President, who drives by the will of

the people. In several articles I reviewed, the main ingredient to the answer of that questions is the understanding an application of followership.

### **Leaders as Followers**

One of the most important aspects of leadership that tends to be overlooked and underappreciated is the role of followership. I have found we must practice our followership skills in order to improve our ownership of learning in classrooms. Empowering participants with the shared understanding of the importance of their individual involvement satisfies the need to belong and encourages personal growth. Learning is often defined as a change in behavior due to an experience. Active involvement in a group is an experience. Whether by leading or by following, the members of a class will learn because they will be involved. Studying and highlighting the relations between leaders and followers presents more opportunity to learn. Sronce & Arendt (2009) describes how “Students deserve a realistic preview of their likely dominate role in organizations, and how they as followers will have both opportunity and responsibility to affect organizational outcomes” (p. 700). This is a strong argument by Sronce & Arendt (2009) authors of *Demonstrating the Interplay of Leaders and Followers* for the *Journal of Management Education*. They further suggest that “students may not want to acknowledge their role as followers” (p. 701). If the authors are correct then the more opportunities to get involved as followers could lead individuals to be more comfortable with classmates when assuming different roles within a group. Sronce & Arendt (2009) sum up their notions with “being a good leader may first require the ability to be a good follower” (p. 705) and “how they carry out this role could make the difference in their personal satisfaction and contributions to organizational outcomes” (p. 718). These authors considerations provide support for the

necessity of involved participants, and also allude to the relationship between the roles. The importance of clear communication in relation building and maintaining is also noted by Patrick et al. (2009).

Patrick et al. (2009) the authors of Effectiveness of instructor behaviors and their relationship to leadership by highlight the importance of communication between leaders and followers. The authors states that “issues are often interrelated and illustrated by the frustration of the following trainee who wanted feedback (guidance) concerning how to improve his behavior rather than being punished” (p. 503). This sentiment matches the thoughts of the authors from The International Journal of Aviation Psychology. Prince, C. et al. (2010) “Leader and follower attitudes have been studied and used in Crew Resource Management training” (p. 376) By the same derivative, “followers are seen to empower and influence the leader in such a way as to be responsible for the results of the relationship between them” (p. 378).

With all the interaction between individuals toward common goals, it is plain to see that “leadership is about people.” Stated by Gen Foglesong (2004) successful groups “build and sustain effective relationships with members of their team” (p. 6). Reflecting on General Foglesong (2004) ideas Elmore (2011) in her article in Women In Business stating “elements of teamwork . . . include nine clear attributes. Clear goals, Defined roles, Open and clear communication, Effective decision making, Balanced participation, Cooperative relationships, and Participative leadership” (p. 26). As the leader of her flight attendant team, she demonstrates how dynamic the relationships can be between her leaders, followers, and customers to ensure safety and service.

Garner (2009) “Humans desire supportive relationships, and empathy is the foundation that builds trusting relationships” (p. 84). Although LTC Garner focuses more on the leaders, I suggest empathy goes both ways. “The empathic behavior of the strong leader encourages followers, instilling a high level for affiliation” (p. 87). The LTC might have hinted at my vice versa contentions when he wrote “the central characteristic of tough empathy is the devotion of a leader to his/her followers and the desire to assist them professionally and personally” (p. 86).

After comparing and contrasting leadership in the literature of education, military, and business a case has been made for blending the best of each into classroom settings. In all the literature presented, it is agreed that leadership is an important concept to any organizational construct, including schools. To take advantage of this ideology and include it into the essence of the structure of our classrooms, as the military and business training venues have, is not only genius but evolutionary for secondary education. The nebulous concept of leadership can now take on new applied meaning and be defined across industries, cultures, and fields of study. The literature reviewed shows differing definitions (Green, 2013; Foglesong, 2004), but similar needs to be taught and exercised (Howard, 2005; Farr et al., 2010). Many articles presented multiple styles of leadership, and yet demonstrated how important having a style is to achieving the individual and organizational goals (Garner, 2009; Haijar, 2005). Finally, the need to understand the relationship between leadership and followership was presented (Sronce & Arendt, 2009; Elmore, 2011). In many cases, if not all, a leader also acts as a follower to the next higher authority. Even a King is subject to the will of the land, nature, and the people.



## **Synopsis**

When all is taken into account; how leadership is defined, style displayed, and relation to followership, it adds up to an exciting educational experience which can promote ownership and participation within instructional environments. Chapter Three describes the research design for this capstone. It includes a discussion of the research paradigm, the design and analyses of the qualitative survey, the participants and how they were recruited, and limitations of the research design.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Research Design**

#### **Methods Overview**

Chapter three applies some of the knowledge learned from the literature review in the previous chapter for the development of the research design. After reviewing what others have wrote about the subject of leadership education in classrooms, it was apparent to gain an understanding of “How do a diverse group of educators react to the idea of assigning secondary students leadership roles in teaching their peers and communicating information in the classroom environment?” To do so, an explanation of the research paradigm that can best explore this question is addressed. Conducting the actual qualitative research survey comes next with a description of the research method, and how an analysis method will be applied. Knowing how to do it needs to correlate with who is doing it. A discussion about the participants involved constitutes a great deal of information presented in this chapter. It is finalized with an account of the limitations of this research design and its implications to the results. The research model that was used revealed a consistent attitude of the participating educational professionals.

#### **Research Paradigm**

The research method for this capstone is a qualitative one. This paradigm of qualitative inquiry employs different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiry; and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell 2009, p. 173). This study aims to explore how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings, and how their meaning influences their behavior. It emphasizes the qualities of entities, processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined.

### **Research Method - Qualitative Survey**

A survey method of gathering information was chosen due to the ease of access and efficiency of time management. Using an online survey fit the completion timeline and increased the number of participants needed for an adequate pool to draw from. Other forms of data collection, such as focus groups or interviews, could be used for future means of examination, and hereby held in reserve for potential expansion of the idea and implementation within classrooms. Further investigations could also come from direct observations of learning environments employing student leadership roles comparing them to those that do not in a more scientific fashion. This type of data collection would demand a level of attention not feasible for this capstone. The option of a closed-end survey became the best type of questions, which allowed the ability to extract only data that are related to the purpose of the inquiry.

The selection of a fixed format response survey rather than have participants respond to open-ended questions was chosen mainly because very few recruits would have time to write responses to the questions. Although participants can respond to open-ended questions exactly as how they would like, it would have been overwhelming to examine so many varying opinions which ran the risk of losing sight of the intent of the survey. The intent being a focused attempt to gain the collective wisdom of a diverse group of educators regarding [how do a diverse group of educators react to the idea of assigning secondary students leadership roles in teaching their peers and communicating information in the classroom environment]. To utilize the most efficient way of gathering information was the best course of action for the limited amount of time to complete the capstone.

The goal of the researcher in developing the fixed format survey was to capture the multi-perspective opinion of a cross section of disciplines. At first there was fifteen questions drafted asking participants if they employed or would be interested in implementing student leadership roles in their classrooms. During the proposal meeting my capstone committee reviewed and provided feedback on the initial survey draft committee members reviewed and provided feedback. Using the feedback provided at my proposal meeting the survey was revised and ready for the distribution. The final version of the survey contained twenty questions designed to be completed by the participant in less than ten minutes.

The survey was created using the computer software package. SurveyMonkey will score each question on a percentage of each participant's degree of agreement to each question. An additional score for each participant on a scale of 4-1 for each of their answers will be provided. SurveyMonkey allowed for the overall scores can be analyzed based on both individual level and occupational group level. A lower score would indicate less agreement to the idea of student leadership roles. Upon reaching out to potential survey takers by email, social media, phone calls, and in person, they indicated their willingness to participate and how to send the survey link. No further contact was necessary including reminders of completion date.

Utilizing the website SurveyMonkey.com, the researcher was afforded several features. It allowed for secure permissions and identity authorizations, meaning only those who received the weblink were able to contribute. Participants were also able to automatically communicate with the system via a web link and able to complete the survey in a short amount of time. The surveys were sent out on August 20, 2017 and the data collected was ended on October 2, 2017. A paper survey would have needed to be distributed evenly to all, and collected on a rigid

schedule to be viable. Such limitations would have decreased the amount of recruits and in turn diminished the results. The electronic version broadened the knowledge with the availability to many, made question generation streamlined, and increased ease of analysis. The survey questions are shared below.

### **Survey Questions**

1. Which describes your relationship to students (chose all that apply)?
  - a. Teacher/ Administration
  - b. Flight Instructor
  - c. Military Officer
  - d. Corporate Trainer
  - e. Sport Coach
  
2. What age group do you think students can take on increased classroom responsibilities?
  - a. adults
  - b. young adults
  - c. teens
  - d. pre teens

Directions: Rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.

- a. strongly agree
  - b. agree
  - c. disagree
  - d. strongly disagree
3. Increased student participation enhances student learning.
  4. I would find it easy to have students in my class be in charge.
  5. Assigning leadership roles to students does not create an instructional challenge.
  6. It is essential that students have a way to intuitively communicate with each other regarding new materials introduced in class.
  7. It is essential that students have a way to intuitively communicate with each other regarding tasks and assignments introduced in class.
  8. One of my primary goals as a teacher is to have my student(s) to take on leadership position(s) in your educational settings

9. One of my primary goals as a teacher is to never allow a student to make mistakes or even fail just so they could have the experience.
10. It would not be hard (difficult) to setup up or structure my learning environment to encourage student leadership.
11. As a teacher, I think it is essential to teach leadership skills to my students.
12. As a teacher, I think it is essential to provide my students with multiple opportunities to practice leadership skills in my classroom.
13. As a teacher, all my students need opportunities to be in the role of a follower.
14. A goal of my teaching is to witness the students demonstrate comprehension of the material I presented.
15. A goal of my teaching is to witness the students pass on what they have learned through cooperative leadership.
16. As a teacher, it would be of benefit to allow students to lead peers, plan, and present course material.
17. Empowering students in classroom leadership would present discipline problems.
18. It would assist me as a classroom teacher to delegate management responsibilities (e.g. attendance, tardy report, daily announcements, setting up technology, collection of work) to a selected student leader.
19. Empowering students would degrade instruction, in terms of comprehension and mastery of course material.
20. Allowing students to function as leaders would inspirer and mentally develop them in the motivational desire to grasp course material.

### **Analyses Method for Qualitative Survey**

Using the analytical tools provided in the survey monkey products, the general acceptability of the idea and whether consensus was achieved were able to be derived. Collected survey responses, can be filtered, compared, and displayed showing results to see trends and patterns in the data.

A filter tool was available that could focus on a particular subset of the data based on certain criteria, like question and answer, respondent metadata, or collector. Multiple filters can be applied by property (including time period, completed vs. partially completed responses, and one custom data field) to narrow down the results.

A compare tool is also available by means of multiple selection and cross tab features. By selecting two or more answer choices for a given question, a side-by-side comparison of how people who selected those answer choices answered the rest of the survey can be analyzed. Cross tabs can be used to compare results by respondent group (e.g. military officer, corporate trainers, etc.) or how the timing of collected responses affected results. Cross tabbed results can show trends based on how respondents answered (i.e. see how opinions differ between those who say they agree vs disagree to particular questions).

A display tool can show only the results from certain questions of the survey. This tool also generates a variety of graphical displays like interactive graphs, including pie, bar, area, line or column to visually recognize patterns. It can create more advanced charts and graphs by exporting data to Excel. This can download data into a variety of formats: CSV, HTML, XML, or PDF. The website also allows custom views to be built based on specified criteria, and

include only the questions you want. Finally, the service offers a variety of survey types, views of survey examples, and research tips to improve survey response rates.

Furthermore, beyond the tools provided, I have analyzed the results according to the grading criteria assigned to the questions. For example, strongly agreement generates a score of 4, where strong disagreement is worth 1. By adding up the twenty questions scores, an affirmative or pessimistic viewpoint of the participants was revealed.

### **Participants**

The goal was to recruit between twenty five and sixty participants. The participants will represent different types of educational professions such as; secondary school teachers/administrators, flight instructors, instructors of military courses, corporate trainers, and coaches/activity directors. The addition of coaches and activity directors is meant to represent a well-rounded foundation of instructional perspectives. The recruitment efforts started in summer 2017. It focused on individuals for whom I have had a professional relationship or simply knowing them in a professional capacity. I was involved in several educational arenas and have access to all the participants I wish to enquire. In total eighty survey invitations were electronically sent to individuals from all five educational environments mentioned. Many of the respondents cross pollinated their points of view by selecting one or more professions within the survey. For instance, several teachers were also sport/ activities coaches. In the next few descriptions of each category, the words "primary profession" represents the respondents who only chose one professional perspective. There were forty two respondents over the six week collection period from August 20, 2017 to October 2, 2017.



During the recruitment phase of this capstone project I had two teenaged children attending a local high school. In conversing with their teachers, they seem open to share about the learning environments they develop. I hoped to get good responses from a few teachers from each of my children, to add to the pool of respondents. Furthermore I am on good terms with former educators and administrators from when I was teaching secondary science. Having former colleagues participate also lead to a healthier set of responses. A few administrative points of view also benefited the research. In total I invited forty current and former secondary education teachers and administrators to participate in the survey. Twenty eight responses were collected which indicated the teacher/admin point of view. Twenty of which selected this perspective as their primary profession.

For the category of flight instructors, I requested a few of my pilot peers for their take on my thesis. In total I invited ten current and former flight instructors to participate in the survey. Six responses were collected which indicated the aviation education point of view. One of which selected this as their primary profession.

At the time of this research (Summer 2017) I was also an Officer in the MN Army National Guard on reserve status. Having been through and conducted many military training events, I knew I could count on several soldiers who would participate in the research. They were Officers and Noncommissioned Officers (NCO's) that have been directly responsible for conveying military curriculum to various units and commands. Some of the most notable were instructors whom I have had the privilege of being a student in their course. In total I invited ten current and former Officers to participate in the survey. All ten responses were collected which

indicated the military instructor point of view. Five of which selected this as their primary profession.

At the start of this research project (Spring 2017) I held a civilian daytime position with a regional airline. Although I did not stay in the position long, I served as a ground instructor for the company's newly hired pilots. This is a corporate training environment, but blends adult education and aviation perfectly. These ground instructors were a good benchmark due to the fact that they do not use identified leader roles in the classrooms which is different from the previously mentioned group. The leadership roles do come into the training for these students when they begin flying the simulator as Crew Resource Management being an important aspect of the job. These trainers along with a few friends in the corporate world were solicited for their participation. In total I invited ten current and former corporate trainers to participate in the survey. Seven responses were collected which indicated the business learning environment point of view. Three of which selected this as their primary profession.

The final group was coaches and activity directors. Again, at the time of this research my high school aged children are involved with various activities and sports. I solicited the opinions of their coaches, band directors, and notably my fifteen-year old's Taekwondo Master and his cadre of instructors. In especially the latter, I noticed the leadership teachings are embedded with positive empowerment strategies. In total I invited ten current and former coaches/ activity directors to participate in the survey. Eight responses were collected from the playing field learning environment point of view. None of which selected this perspective as their primary profession. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the target groups and the number of participants.

Target Group	Expected Number of Participants	Number of Individuals Sent the Survey	Number Who Completed Survey (Primary Profession)
Flight Instructors	5-10	10	6 (1)
High School Teachers/ Admin	5-10	40	28 (20)
Instructors of Military Courses	5-10	10	10 (5)
Corporate Trainers	5-10	10	7 (3)
Coaches/ Activity Directors	5-10	10	8 (0)

Table 1. Different Educator Groups Recruited to Participate

### **Limitations of the Research Design**

A condition that was placed on this design is that the survey was all online through one source over a short period of time. The participants had to access and utilize modern computing technologies to access this web based application in order to contribute, whereas other survey techniques (interviews, focus groups) and applications could have allowed for a deeper discussion of the questions. This consequently could have opened the communication lines resulting in a more clear understanding of each respondent's position.

Another factor is that everyone taking the survey was adult educators. I believe this is a limitation due to the fact that this idea involves more than just the classroom designers. The students themselves could add another dimension to the cooperative exploration of these possibilities. Without this limit the amount of data that could be captured would gain a more well-rounded perspective. The absence of the parental point of view limits the research in the very same way. Quality educational experiences have contributions from instructors, students,

and supporters of the process. Gaining the opinions of all three sides would have enhanced this research design exponentially.

### **Chapter Three Recap**

The goal of the research design described in Chapter Three was to obtain the opinions of the practitioners and probationers answering the question of “How do a diverse group of educators react to the idea of assigning secondary students leadership roles in teaching their peers and communicating information in the classroom environment?” This was accomplished by describing the qualitative research paradigm which lead to the development of the survey that became the research method. An analysis method of this qualitative survey showed the tools that the surveymonkey website offered which enabled a scoring system to be calculated. Knowing the participants and how they answered certain questions became the driver of the data collection. Finally, chapter three addressed the limitations of the research design in an attempt to bridge the knowledge gap between planning and execution. Chapter Four will describe the results of this capstone project and what it actually produced.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Survey Analysis - The Results are In**

#### **Chapter Overview**

The propose of the survey was to get a sense of “How do a diverse group of educators react to the idea of assigning secondary students leadership roles in teaching their peers and communicating information in the classroom environment?” Eighty requests to participate in the survey via the surveymonkey website were sent out. Of the eighty, forty were secondary education teachers and administrators (TA), ten were flight instructors (FI), ten were military officers (MO), ten were corporate trainers (CT), and ten were sport/activity directors (SA). Forty two individuals completed the survey. Two of these were eliminated from the analysis. One of those eliminated was because they skipped many of the survey questions, and the other because it was my test run. So, forty completed surveys were analyzed. The preliminary scoring revealed an overall agreement of the benefit to having student leadership roles.

In this chapter I will summarize the results in a five key ways. First by calculations using a graded score in each group. Second, by percentage of questions overall and score in each professional group for each question. Third, by comparing Teachers to Non-Teachers. Fourth, by comparing Primary Profession Teachers to All Others. Finally, by comparing One Primary Profession to Multi-Professions.

#### **Graded Score**

I scored each participant according to the grading criteria assigned to the response. For example, strongly agreement generates a score of four, where strong disagreement is worth one. By adding up the twenty questions scores, an affirmative or pessimistic viewpoint of the

participants was revealed. If someone had indicated strongly agreement for all the questions then a score of 71 would be the highest possible score. This includes the three reverse polarity questions 9, 17, 19, where disagreement was agreement to the overall theme. In this case then, the higher the score the more agreeable to the overall premise. Also, any score above 35 reveals an agreeable attitude, and below 35 a disagreeable point of view. Considering the scoring matrix overall, the highest score of all the respondents was 65. The lowest score was 40. The Mean, Median, and Mode all fell at 54.

The survey did allow for singular and multiple profession perspectives. Question one asked for the relationship to the students allowing for more than one answer. This gave the option for multiple perspectives to be introduced. For instance, many of the secondary education teachers were also involved in extracurricular activities. Twenty six individuals responded as involved with TA (teaching/admin), and twenty seven identified as being involved in the other occupations. This diverse distribution allowed for the multiple ways to analyze the data.

### **SubGroup Analyses**

The twenty six TA respondents all had a mean score of 53. Not only were they the most requested profession to participate in the survey (half actually), they also were over half the responders. I was glad to see this high turn out because this is the group I hope to influence the most with my idea of having student leadership roles in secondary ed classrooms. This group has a lower than the overall mean score and the lowest 4 scores of all the respondents. Since all the groups and participants scores were above the 35 agreeable threshold, I would interpret the TA's as being the lowest optimistic group. Further analysis leads me to believe it was their sheer numbers that granted them this honor over the next group of lower scoring flight instructors.

The five FI's had a mean score of 51. Even though this is the lowest of the agreeable means scores, I assess that they are the runner up to the lowest optimistic group of the TA's because they had three of the lowest scores, which does not include the two lowest actual scores. From my interpretations of the results the FI's also have a unique teaching environment and generally have more one-on-one time with their students. When they have ground school, the class sizes are usually less than ten individuals. This would ultimately mean fewer student leaders needed as well.

The nine MO's had a mean score of 55. Although this group did not have the highest mean score, I interpret them as the most optimistic group due to the fact that they have the two highest scores of all the respondents. Also the nature of the educational environments in which they operate give them an advantage over the other groups in that this leadership style is patterned after the military. A platoon sized unit, generally between 30-50 individuals, is often the typical class sizes for most educational events. I expected this group to be accepting of having leadership roles in their instructional venues, again due to the inherent leadership focus within the culture. The civilian training environments of corporate America may not be as inherent.

The six CT had mean score of 54. This was the surprise optimistic group due to the notion of adult learners having "set in their way" attitudes toward new procedures and policies. I was intrigued to see the higher scores in this group, giving me a sense that increased responsibility amongst the audience would be a welcome relief to the corporate trainers. This may also stems from the fact that the CT's are typically among the same peer group as the trainees. Often times the trainers are even teaching the bosses new systems and format that are

new to the organization. The helpful consistent style of classroom leadership roles could enhance the awareness of who is in charge at that moment, much like the conductor of a band.

The seven SA's had a mean score of 56. They attained the highest mean score of all the groups, but I still assess them as runner up to the military officers' expertise. The coaches and activity directors do include established student leadership roles within their enterprises, which gave me no surprise to their high score. Another factor worth mentioning is that this is the only group that does not have any primary profession representatives. All the respondents also identified with being in one or more of the other groups as well. I was hoping for a few sole activity participants, but alas it was not to be. Other than the identified groups, the data can also be analysed by scrutinizing the individual questions themselves.

### **Percentage (analysis) by Question**

SurveyMonkey web site provided an overall percentage of how all participants responded to questions as a whole and presented the data in a graphical format that is exportable as a visual reference. Beyond the overall scores for each group of educational professionals in the previous section, it is interesting to see how each group of participants responded to each question as well. In this section I include those exported tables and graphs with the interpretation from this collector's lens. I will also mention each of the professional groups tabulated score for each question. Of special note, the first couple of questions ask for a specific type of answer, where the rest are a measure of the respondents' agreeability.

Question one asked for the participant's professional affiliations in the broad context of educational settings. This is where the five groups were established. Figure 1 makes it clear that the survey respondents were fairly even split twenty six TA's and twenty seven other fields. For



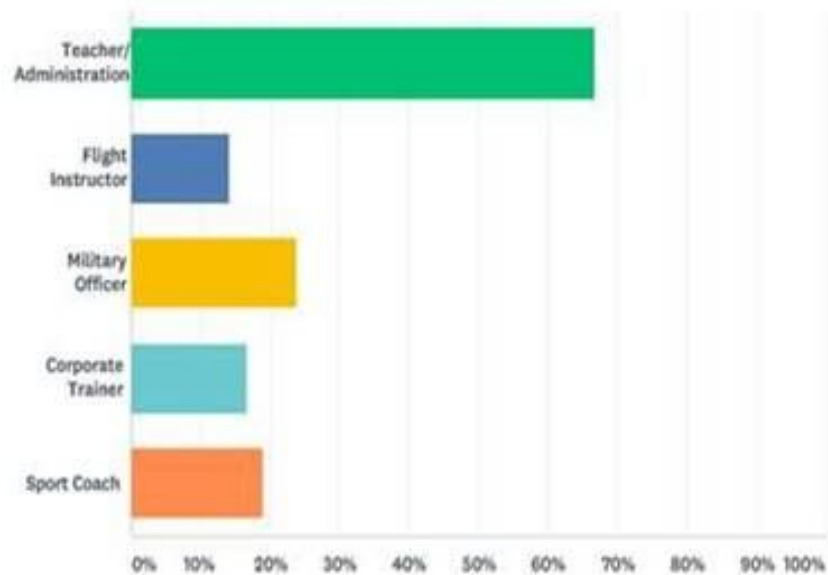
the record, the numbers did add up to twenty eight and thirty one respectively before the adjustment of the eliminated participants mentioned earlier.

Instructing Leadership

SurveyMonkey

### Q1 Which describes your relationship to students (chose all that apply)?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Teacher/ Administration	66.67%	28
Flight Instructor	14.29%	6
Military Officer	23.81%	10
Corporate Trainer	16.67%	7
Sport Coach	19.05%	8
Total Respondents: 42		

Figure 1. Represents the occupations of the participants with in educational fields.

Question two was a curiosity question designed to spark the respondents' mindset and give more insight to the students they had in mind for potential implementation of this classroom style. Participant response to this question shows the diverse opinions of which maturity levels could bear the burdens of responsibility within a classroom. Like the first question, this one could have multiple selections accounting for the higher number of responses. All the age groups had higher percentages suggesting that preteen and above would benefit from more responsibilities in the classrooms (Figure 2).

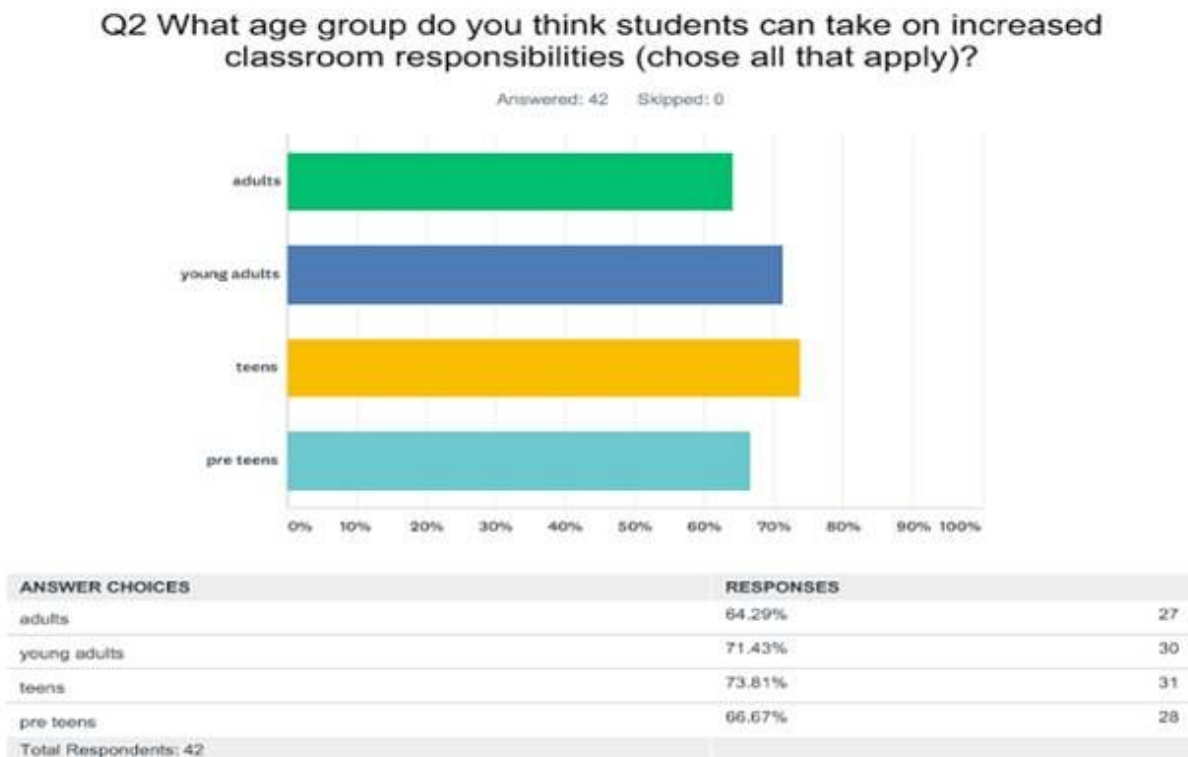


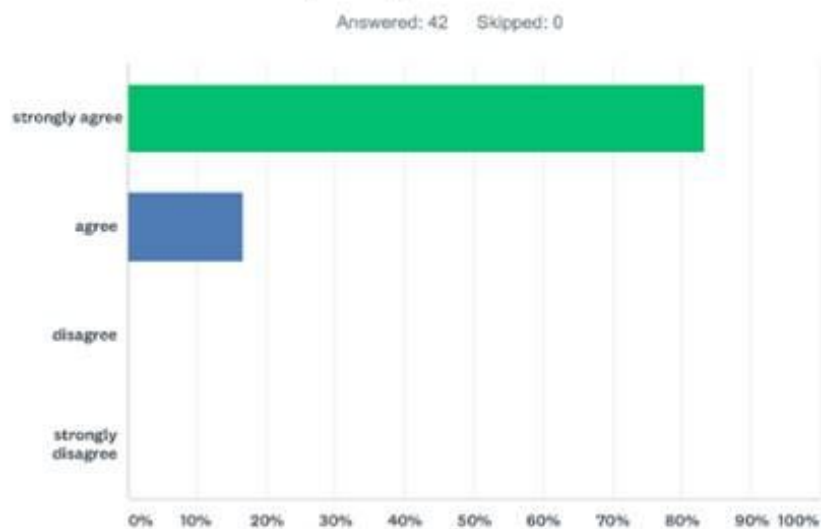
Figure 2. Reflects the attitude of cooperation in most learning environments.

Question three began the agreeability type inquiry which enabled the scoring matrix to be in place to analysis the responses. Participant response to this question shows no one had any

disagreement to this statement suggesting an openness to the premises of student leadership roles as the means to enhance learning.

Another way to analyze the data is to view it from each representative groups perspective. The participants who identified as TA's, MO's, and CT's had an average score of 3.8 for this statement using the same scoring matrix which calculated the mean totals from the previous section. The FI's were slightly lower with a mean score of 3.6. Leaving the SA's with the highest average of 4.0 who all strongly agreed to this statement (see Figure 3).

### Q3 Increased student participation enhances student learning.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	83.33%	35
agree	16.67%	7
disagree	0.00%	0
strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		42

Figure 3. Shows a strong professional philosophy for student involvement.

Question four tested the willingness of the instructors to relinquish some control to the students. With about 20% strong agreement the analysis suggest a more conservative attitude toward student leadership, possibly cautionary in nature. The CT's and the SA's scores remained relatively high, 3.2 and 3.1 respectively which could reflect shorter term of contact they have with the students. Where the TA's, MO's, 2.9's, and FI's 2.8 have typically longer duration of pupil time. Figure 4 is a graphical representation of the analysis to question four.

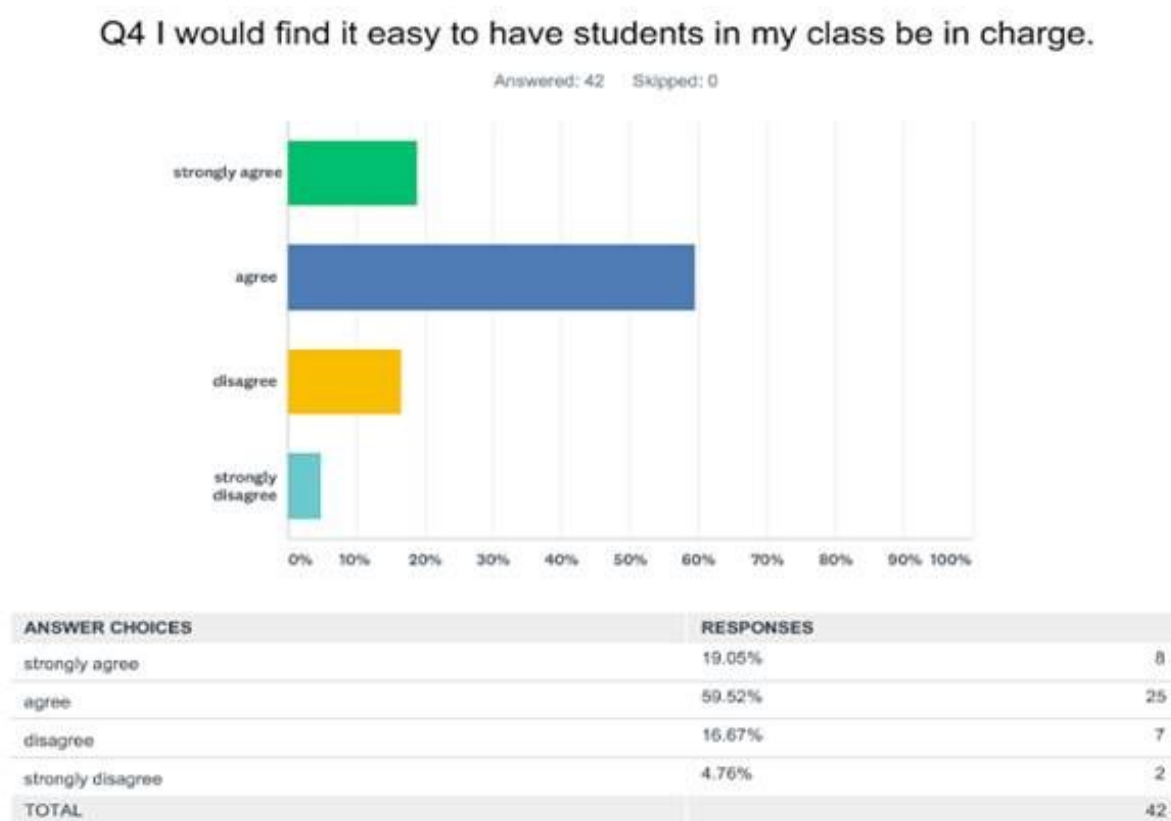


Figure 4. Shows the balancing of agreement.

So to not overwhelm this section with data, the following responses started falling into a relativistic pattern of agreeability that is included in Appendix A rather than the body of this chapter.

Question five had a favorable response rate of more than 60% to the statement of “Assigning leadership roles to students with whom I work would not create an instructional challenge.” However, the over 30% disagreeing indicates the level resistance to change in the overall sentiment. This is also the highest level of disagreement in the survey, other than the reverse polarity statements. Breaking the data down by profession shows the MO’s with the highest average approval of 3.1, most likely due to the fact that assigning leader roles is inherent in the military. The TA’s and CT’s come in at 2.8 & 2.7 respectively, falling below the line of agreeability. One interpretation of this result is likely due to the challenges of administrative and departmental constraints. FI’s and SA’s come in with 2.4, I assess this is due to the higher stress environments which they operate.

Question six begins to show a split in the overall agreeability with 56% agreed and 42% strongly agreed to the statement of “It is essential that students have a way to intuitively communicate with each other regarding new materials introduced in class.” This shows the need for clear communications with in all educational fields, especially among students. The CT’s saw this as a very high need with the mean score of 3.8. In the business world the notion of time is money resonates. The better and faster the new information is applied, the sooner the profits can be seen. SA’s (3.4), and TA’s & MO’s (3.3) are consistently bringing new materials to their students reflecting their agreeable scores. The FI’s showing the lower score of 3.0, possibility due to the smaller class sizes and need for repetition to hone the piloting skills.

Question seven being very similar to the previous I was expecting similar results; however the subtle difference in wording showed some variation in opinion. “It is essential that students have a way to intuitively communicate with each other regarding tasks and assignments

introduced in class.” The overall percentages evened out 49% strongly agreeing and 46% agreeing. The other 5% went to two who strongly disagreed probably due to the nature of their classrooms where student vocalizations can escalate to off task behaviors. The distribution of how each group responded remained relatively the same as question 6, with the exception of the FI’s showing a more agreeable average score of 3.2, likely due to the necessity of completing tasks during flight training. The MO’s showed decrease in score from the previous to 3.0 probably due to the individual efforts needed to complete tasks.

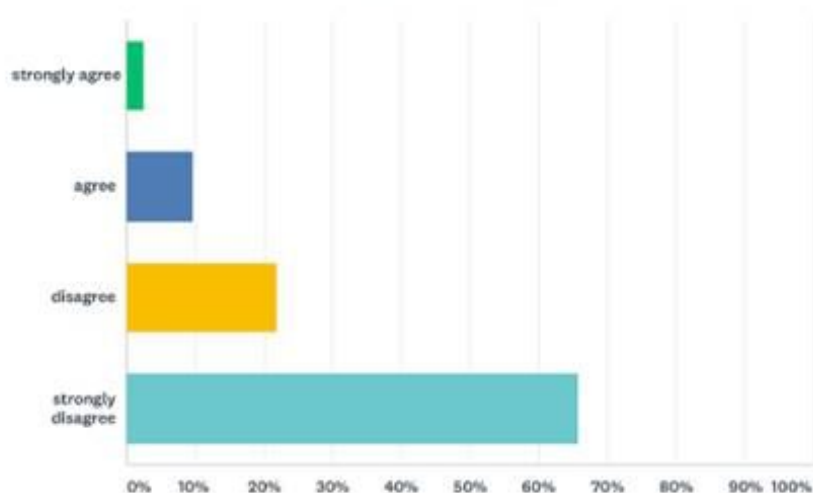
Question eight brought in a new instructor focused statement highlighting the willingness to delegate. ”One of my primary goals as a teacher is to have my student(s) to take on leadership position(s) in your educational settings.” The analyses for this question revealed that 50% of the participants scored were in agreement, and 29% strong agreement. The 21% of disagrees were likely objectionable to the word “primary.” When considering each profession, the SA’s and MO’s agreed the most with 3.4 and 3.2 for scores. This makes sense for their environments and the effectiveness of leadership in the ranks. Both TA’s and CT’s had low agreeability at 3.0, and the FI’s mostly disagreeable at 2.8. These are due to the primary aim for them being subject matter and skillsets, leaving leadership as a secondary goal.

Question nine was the first of three of what I called reverse polarity statements, and interesting to see graphically (Figure 5). Like I mentioned before, disagreement to these types of statements is actually agreement to the overall theme. In this case it is similar to the previous just negatively charged. It is fairly clear with an 88% disapproval rating that most respondents understand the needs of students to learn from their own experiences. The other 12% may have been more agreeable for safety concerns or acknowledged that the benefits of failure are not their

primary goal. Within the groups SA's ranked the highest disagreement of 1.3 (3.7 agreement), signifying the learning through mistakes attitude. The other groups followed suit, MO's 1.4 (3.6), CT's and TA's 1.5 (3.5), and the FI's not so high 1.8 (3.2) due to the unforgivingness of flight mistakes.

**Q9 One of my primary goals as a teacher is to never allow a student to make mistakes or even fail just so they could have the experience.**

Answered: 41 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	2.44%	1
agree	9.76%	4
disagree	21.95%	9
strongly disagree	65.85%	27
TOTAL		41

Figure 5. Shows how the reverse polarity is represented graphically.

Question ten suggestions that the actual physical makeup of the classroom environment can be setup to enhance leadership skills. "It would not be hard (difficult) to setup up or structure my learning environment to encourage student leadership." The data shows the similar pattern of 53% agreement with ~20% of either side of that strongly agreeing and disagreeing.

Here we see the SA's come in on the strong side of agreement with an average score of 3.1. This group does this for the next few statements as well, most likely due to the nontraditional class environments they utilize. Along similar lines, the FI's and CT's scored 3.0's reflecting their unique spaces and smaller class sizes which may be more flexible to setup. It's the MO's at 2.9 and the TA's at 2.8 that have more restrictions on space and time revealing a more disagreeable score.

Question eleven continues the line of questioning that encompasses all who lead groups to convey the intended information in memorable ways, present company of respondent groups included. "As a teacher, I think it is essential to teach leadership skills to my students." The results came in as the third highest strongly agree responses of 60%, and 35% agree. This shows the positive potential motivation to have more leadership training embedded in class culture. SA's lead the way with the high average score of 3.9. This certainly demonstrates the need to have highly encouraged students in their activities. The TA's and FI's also show high agreeability (3.6) to the essential nature of leadership skills. In the FI's case, taking charge of the aerial vehicle traveling at amazing speeds is most essential for the wellbeing of all involved. The lower agreeable scores of the MO's and CT's (3.4 & 3.3) still ring with positivity, yet may be curbed by the shortness of time their events might be.

Questions twelve and thirteen show very similar results being similar premised. The difference between them is in the words "leader" and "follower." The analyses for this question revealed that 50% of the participants surveyed strongly agreed to both the opportunity to lead and the need to follow. The bit of disagreement came from the CT's with the notion of followership scoring 2.8 on question thirteen, compared to the others who scored 3.3 and higher.



The slight dissention could be attributed to relaxed superior/subordinate rank with corporate training events. Everyone despite their position need the new training when it comes out.

Questions fourteen and fifteen also share similar regard to the importance of passing on knowledge and having students comprehend what has been shared. We see an 80% approval rating for both these statements with more strongly toward the importance of student learning. For the MO's in particular (3.7), the notion of mentorship is engrained in the culture. To improve from previous efforts is held in very high regard within the military.

Question sixteen stretches the leadership skill further to include student teaching. "it would be of benefit to allow students to lead peers, plan, and present course material." The findings show a 45% split between agreeables, and 5% split in the disagreeables. The highest agreeable scores coming from the SA's (3.7) where peer translations are essential. Having the players that can demonstrate a skill allows the possibilities to be seen by the others. The other groups show a little less with scores of 3.3 and 3.2, consequentially a factor of legality which may restrict the uncertified instruction of some material. The FAA for example prohibits unlicensed pilots from acting as a crew member (FAR 61.1).

Question seventeen is another reverse polarity statement concerning potential behavior problems. "Empowering students in classroom leadership would present discipline problems." With 82% disagreeing that this would be problem shows a healthy trust/respect for the student/teacher relationship. The 16% who agreed this would insight behavior challenges are exercising a good degree of caution most likely for the safety and security of a group. TA's, FI's, and SA's scored a 2.0 (3.0) indicating the higher level of trust, whereas the MO's and CT's were a bit more cautious with 2.2' (2.8's).

Question eighteen demonstrates more rationale for student involvement in terms of helping the instructors with administrative duties. “It would assist me as a classroom teacher to delegate management responsibilities (e.g. attendance, tardy report, daily announcements, setting up technology, and collection of work) to a selected student leader.” The analyses for this question revealed that 80% of the respondents agreed to the positive outcomes of such involvement. MO’s with an average score of 3.7 shows a system that is already in place, delegation is a way of life in uniform. Officers make the plans, NCO’s direct the enlisted personnel to carry them out. CT’s, on the other hand, scored a 3.0 representing a lower desire to have help during the class. Plus the fact that the business environment is more professional and far less assignment focused, any excessive tardiness might lead to termination.

Question nineteen had a not surprising result of 90% disapproval with its statement of encouragement negatively affecting student performance. “Empowering students would degrade my instruction, in terms of comprehension and mastery of course material.” Also not surprising was the FI’s having the most disagreement score of 1.6 (3.4 reversed). Flight students have to be empowered to take the controls and perform the maneuvers necessary to control the craft.

Finally, question twenty wraps it up with a very high approval rating of 95%. “Allowing students to function as leaders would inspire and mentally develop them in the motivational desire to grasp course material.” The 5% disagreement were mostly the CT’s whose abbreviated course time hinders the opportunity to adequately measure student motivation and levels of inspiration. I took the analysis further by grouping the participants differently into two and comparing them against one another.

### **Comparing Teachers to Non-Teachers**

Another way to look at the data is by comparing those individuals who identified as TA to the perspectives of those who identified as Non-Teachers/Administrators (NTA). Twenty six respondents claimed to be TA's and fourteen claimed to be NTA's. The TA's had a mean overall score of 53.5, where as the the NTA's had a 55.1. Although both groups have high approval scores, I attribute the higher score of the NTA's to the statistical advantage that comes with a smaller pool of responses. Having the highest score of 65 in the calculation no doubt had an effect on the score as well. A factor that I cannot include is the influence of the separate professions since some of the TA's were involved in the other professions. So reversing that and viewing how TA's only responded might lead to more results.

### **Comparing Primary Profession Teachers to All Other**

Another way to look at the data is by comparing those individuals who identified as being Primary Profession Teachers to all the other respondents combined. There were nineteen TA's who were primary profession, responded, meaning they were not involved in any other profession. They had a mean score of 52.8, a slight decrease from the data of all TA's. The rest of the field had the twenty one participants from all the other professions and combination of TA's included. This variation had a very slight increase to the mean score of 55.2 from the previous calculation of NTA's. The influence of another professional point of view does have an effect on the score, even though it is a slight one. This notion leads to the last comparison, viewing the data from how sole professions respond versus multi-professions perspective.

### **Comparing One Primary Profession to Multi-Professions**

When analyzing the data from how those with single professions responded to those with multi-profession points of view a familiar pattern emerged. Twenty eight single profession participants had a mean score of 53.6, compared to the twelve multi- professional mean score of 55.2. This slight variation from the TA's vs NTA's comparison indicate a strong correlation between the two. Upon further scrutiny I found there really us only a two person shift from multi to solely perceptions. What I originally thought could be a dramatic new way to visualize the data turned out to be just a slight adjustment with no new revelations. With this concluding the analysis of the data, I see the high level of the good measure of agreement to be a positive sign to redirect the focus from the "so what" to the "now what" phase of the capstone.

### **Recap**

All in all the analysis has pointed to a single affirmation of the value of cooperative learning environments. The survey revealed "How do a diverse group of educators react to the idea of assigning secondary students leadership roles in teaching their peers and communicating information in the classroom environment?" My summary of the results in a five categorically distinctive ways organized the analysis by professional perspective. First by calculations using a graded score in each group. Second, by percentage of questions overall and score in each professional group for each question. Third, by comparing Teachers to Non-Teachers. Fourth, by comparing Primary Profession Teachers to All Others. Finally, by comparing One Primary Profession to Multi-Professions. Each category revealed information relating to how they were grouped. The information is the "so what" to the premises of the capstone. The next, final chapter will provide the overall summary of the capstone and provide the "now what" aspect moving forward.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **When all said and done, it begins anew**

#### **Capstone Overview**

To conclude this capstone my intention is to look back at how it began. As a military officer and a teacher my idea of starting each K-12 class with student leader involvement is to ensure that students' know their assigned roles and that this knowledge can be used to foster participation and ownership. In order to gain an appreciation of this concept I had to get an understanding of how educational instructors viewed the assigning of student leadership roles as an integral part of their classroom structure and daily operation and therefore explored the capstone question - insert your capstone question.

This final chapter of the capstone will bring the story full circle with a review of the previous chapters (from inception to results). The discussion will be followed by a look into some aspects of philosophy and theory pertaining to the ideas of student leadership. This leads to the how the structures of the roles can be implemented into any classroom learning environment. Next, a look at the future research that could be done. Followed by a self-reflection about my emerging sense of self as a researcher and scholar. Concluding the capstone with the final thoughts of how this paper can turn theory into practice building the nexus to the future. Information flow from the source to every member of the class can be the catalyst of community awareness.

#### **Review of Previous Chapters**

The capstone began by thinking about the positive learning arrangement of the military can be integrated into other class environments begins the end of this capstone. Chapter One

introduced how this idea was conceived during the final army training event of the Victory Ruck March, and how the notion developed into the Capstone Question “How do a diverse group of educators react to the idea of assigning secondary students leadership roles in teaching their peers and communicating information in the classroom environment?” The chapter examines how the development of my capstone question was also informed by my engagement in the extracurricular activities of coaching, flight instruction, corporate trainings, and soldiering all aided in the development of bringing these experiences together.

This is who this research and structure is for; the teachers and administrators who deal with the incredible demands placed on secondary education every day. I believe the students can start taking responsibility of the classroom duties to relieve the pressures on the instructors. This potential class arrangement could involve the students in remarkable ways, and allow for greater family participation by opening communication and care.

Increasing student leadership roles can also have implications for coaches and activities directors who welcome the involvement of the members and have them participate in influential ways. It is for the flight instructors who ensure the skills and knowledge is passed to future aviators. For them safety is paramount, which must be taught in the ground schools, and practiced in the air. Leadership skills are imperative in aviation. It is for the corporate trainers and trainees to have the opportunities to experience and practice leadership, while exercising the value of teamwork. The final participants are the military officers and noncommissioned officers (NCO's) whose job it is to train the next wave of service member on a wide variety of technical and physical labors. Service and sacrifice are cornerstones to both the very diverse military and educational professions. We've all been involved with some form of educational environment

and can all have a valuable opinion on how to make them better for the next generations. An examination of the literature on the subject matter of educational leadership fertilizes the soil of knowledge to serve as a basis for further investigation.

Chapter Two provides a review of literature which builds a foundation toward a polling of professionals. When researching the topic of educational leadership it dawned on me to explore the various aspects of leadership within each profession and look for comparisons and contrasting evidence. The main points involved where the various definitions of leadership, differing leadership styles, and how followership plays its part in the dynamic of hegemony. Within each of these main points, I found the subdivisions of education, military, and other (mainly aviation and business). It was an interesting find that within each subdivision cooperative and opposing perspectives about the main points presented themselves signifying how a similar topic can be interpreted similarly and differently depending on the contexts. The overall benefits to having student leadership within the arenas of education edged out the non-inclusive sentiments within the writings. Those lead to the next chapter of obtaining the opinions of a diverse community of professional educators.

Chapter Three describes the methods of obtaining the various viewpoints of a diverse pool of instructors. The main points of Research Paradigm, Research Method (a qualitative survey), Survey questions, Analysis method, and Limitations of the Research Design became the body of this chapter. It became apparent that a cross pollination of educational perspective would yield a bounty of opinions on the subject in question. I therefore took advantage of my associations within the fields of secondary education, flight instruction, military, and corporate environments to request professional participation. Although I received a little over half the of

the requests who actually participated, the forty respondents was a plentiful enough input to draw good data from. The SurveyMonkey website was an invaluable tool which made this inquiry possible. The electronic ease of access, also with its analytical tools available, shows clear results.

Chapter Four is all about the results from the qualitative survey. The main points of the Graded Score, In each Group, Percentage by Question, Comparing TA's to NTA's, Comparing TA's only to All others, and Comparing one profession respondents to multiple profession respondents are all conveyed. The overall opinion from across the participants is one of acceptance and appreciation for the notion of having the students take on responsible roles within the classrooms. The results of the survey seem to match the overall impression of the literary research which holds the concept in high regard, yet stops short of suggesting an immediate implementation of the structure in every class environment, as I envisioned in the body of Chapter One. From inception to results, this capstone on student leadership has been an interesting journey of thought and conversation. Sharing these contemplations stretch into philosophical discussions, especially with how to improve our very good educational systems.

### **Philosophy and Theory**

The philosophical overtones and the underlying educational theories weave together the foundation of leadership inclusion in educational environments. There are many excellent philosophical statements that have been made through the centuries concerning how we educate. Abbreviating what John Dewey (1916) once said, "Give the pupils something to do, and learning naturally results" (p. 160). From my professional experience, for teachers to do what Dewey suggests, teachers need a clear understanding of their own personal educational philosophy. For



me Dewey's means that not only do the students need to exercise the skills, but also the instructors need to set the stage, encourage, and demonstrate their use. One way I can demonstrate my understanding of Dewey's words is by highlighting the collaboration with other instructors.

For example, for me this means being involved with others in the departments and respectful toward those in higher leadership positions demonstrates positive teamwork that will reflect in your students. Showing them how to be good followers will help them follow you. Along with that is to allow your pupils to emulate in their own way. Each individual will develop their own leadership style. This leads to my secondary philosophy, empowerment through involvement. Beyond the feelings of safety and trust that can come from belongingness and inclusion incorporating these powerful positive emotions bonds the group into a unit. At the lowest levels, everybody should have at least one other person to partner with. Whether it is a dynamic dual, or a terrific trio, someone has your back. These opportunities generally lead to friendships that may extend outside the classroom. When that inevitably happens the classroom becomes more than just a meeting place, it grows into a micro community.

Beyond the overarching philosophy, which is the reasonable expectations, the foundations are rooted in underlying educational theories of societal fellowship. The most evident of these is the formation of mini communities with members engaging in the enterprise of learning. In such a group, mutual goals can be set and shared, accomplished, and celebrated. The journey towards these goals will bond the members together in memorable ways.

From my perspective this educational theory of community building can be taught through the use of large and small group projects. The instructor will have to guide the leaders

to direct the groups toward the desired end state. Another theory that is clearly visible is the productive relationships of peer collaboration. The larger goals could be broken down into manageable squad and team projects. These in turn would rely on individual partnerships between peers. The theories and philosophies being part of the foundation, the structure of assigned leader role can be built.

### **Structure of the Roles**

Based on my professional experience I can envision how any course can have leadership education embedded within the day-to-day operations of the class. The keystones of implementing it are the descriptions of the leader function, their roles and arrangement, and how they will be rotated. It's all about exponential information flow; you tell two, they tell two, and so on.

The leader primarily is in charge of the group, responsible for decisions, actions, and inactions. Second, the leader is also the one passing on the information or instruction to the next level. This can be in the form of whole group announcements and/or addressing the next line leaders. A third descriptor of a leader is that of the voice. When information or acknowledgments need to be verbalized, the leader shall be required to speak up. These three actions define the leader and solidify their role. For the sake of ease of understanding, the description of each leader role will be based on a regular secondary education class size of thirty two students.

The roles will be assigned at the discretion of the instructor, and may do so after a few days of the start of a course to get the feel for the dynamics of personalities. See the diagrams of the positions needing to be assigned, which include, but removable due to class size, a class

leader (CL), an assistant class leader (ACL), two section leaders (SL) (for small group work), four squad leaders (SQL), and eight team leaders (TL) (two per squad, A & B). Here is where the 1 x 2 fractal like model shows its strength. The teacher, who is getting their information from the department heads and/or peer collaborations, conveys the days instructions/ information to the class leader and assistant (1x2). The CL's role is to take the information from the instructor and ensure understanding before passing on the instructions to either the section leads, or the first and second SQL's (1x2). The ACL will either be responsible for passing on the info to the third and fourth SQL's, or, if SL's are in use, the ACL will carry out other administrative duties. The SL's take charge of their respective halves of the class during small group activities, and will pass necessary information to the two SQL's in their group (1x2). The whole class is broken down further into four 7-8 member squads (see Figure 6). This size unit proves useful to many class activities such as skits, reading and study groups, etc. The SQL's passes instructions on to two TL's within it (1x2).

Special note, The CL and ACL will join squads 2 and 4 respectively when involved with squad activities, with the SQL still in charge. The SL's will join squads 1 and 3 in the same manner. These four individuals would also join a subordinate team within the squad. CL, ACL, and SL's would fall into the B teams, while the SQL's would fall into the A teams of their assigned squads (see Figure 7 and Figure 8).

INFORMATION  
FLOW  
1x2

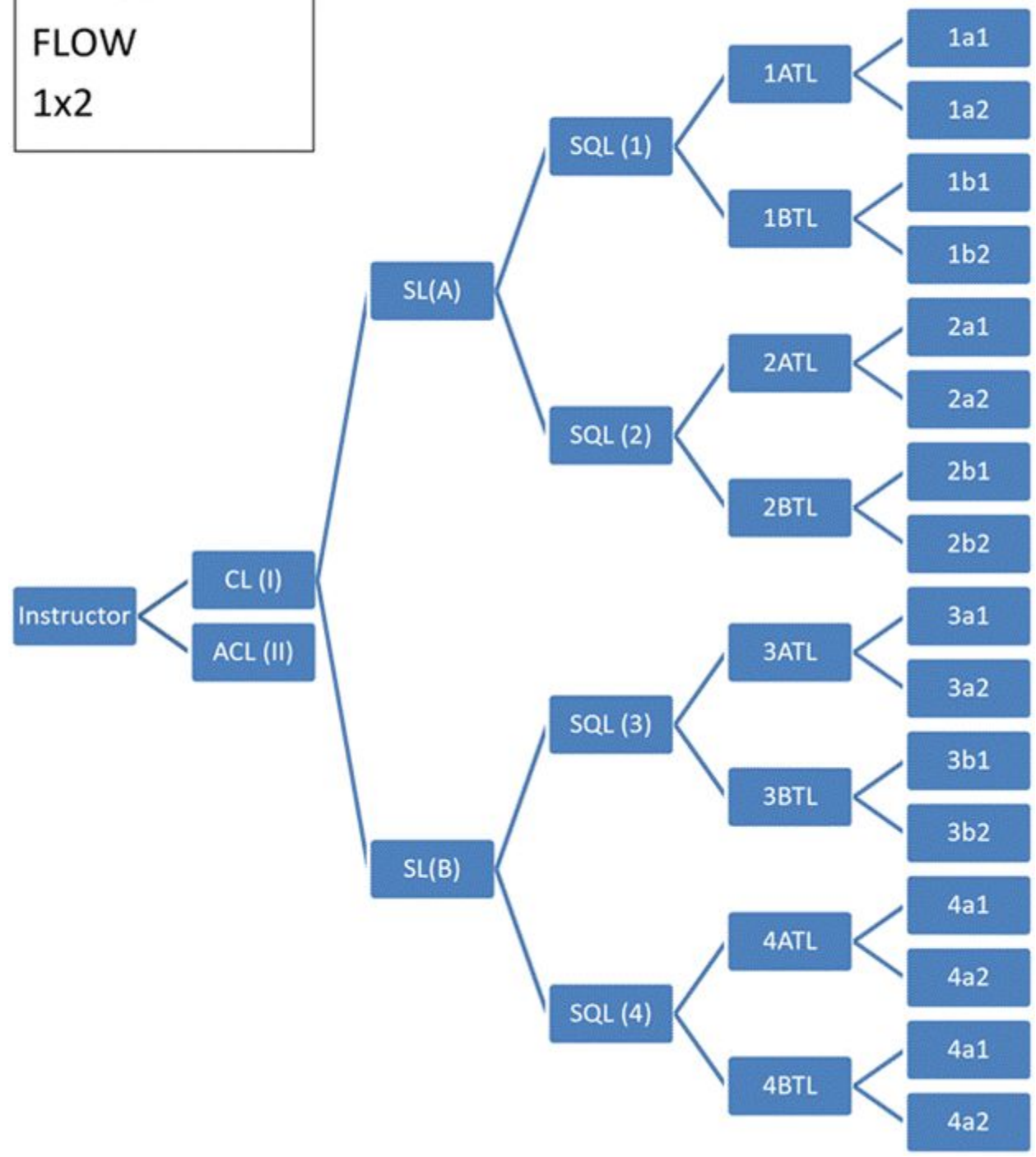


Figure 6. Visual describes the one tells two repetition info flow which also works in reverse.

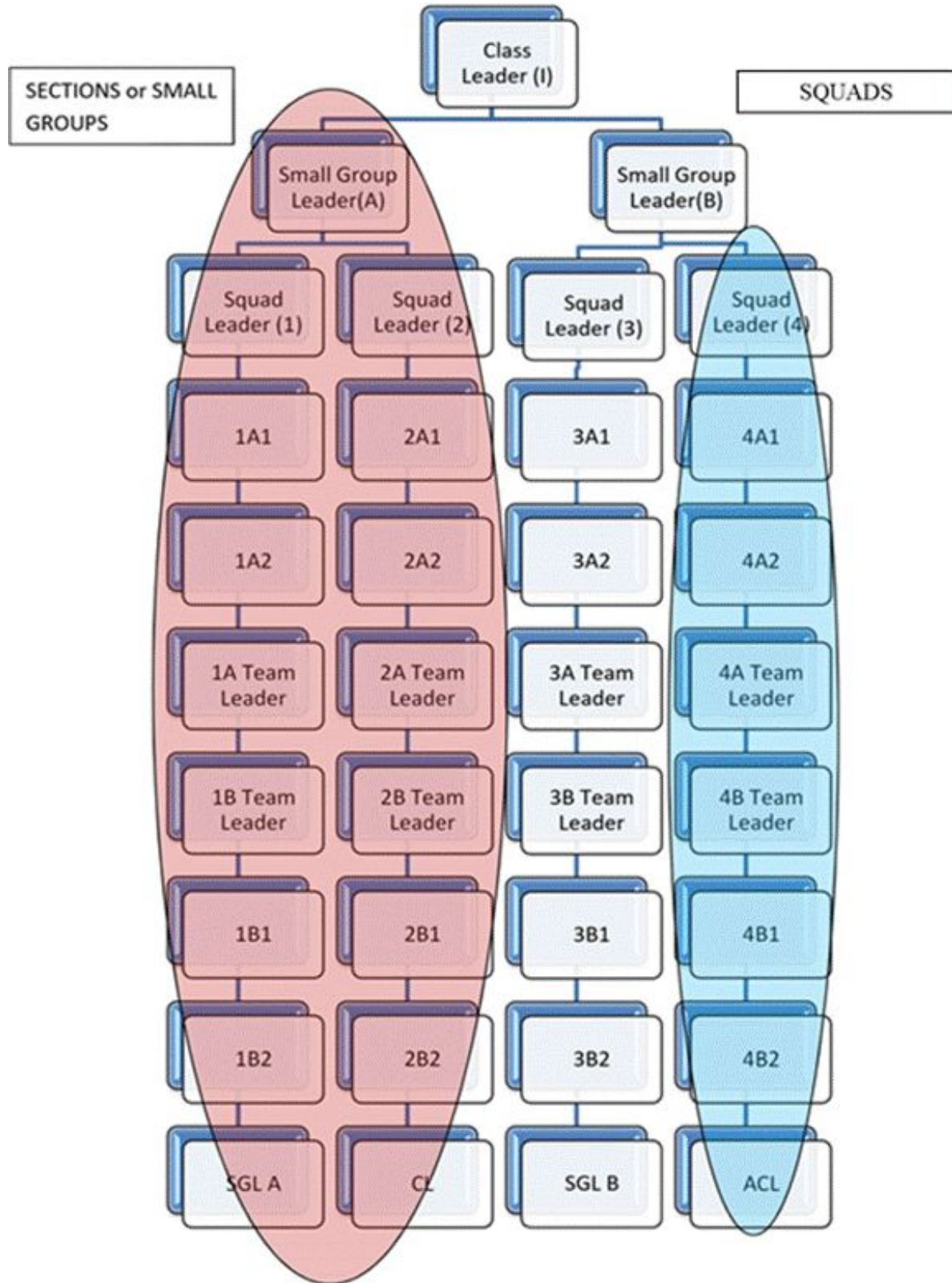


Figure 7. Visual describes the small group and squad sized elements.

The team sized groups are perfect for quiz bowls and lab assignments, to small building projects. This smallest of groups typically form the tightest of bonds, which also strengthens the squad when paired up with the kindred team. Also, at this level, peer relations have a chance to flourish and express themselves. Many students who may not be comfortable in larger groups will be able to receive attention otherwise missed. This includes one on one peer contact. Last but not least of the size elements is the buddy pair. The TL's will pass information to the buddy lead (1x2), see diagram to view pairing (which can be 3 in odd numbered groups).

When a class is organized in this manner, everyone has a buddy to rely on, including the CL. Notice all the leadership positions are paired off with someone not in an assigned leadership role. Rotating the positions will happen on a normal transition time, which will be discussed in subsequent sections. Here is where a bit of leadership can be experienced by an otherwise follower. The buddy not in an assigned role will assume the lead of the pair. Very much like pilots of aircraft, one person must be the pilot in command (PIC). All the leaders will have to take a follower role when in the different configurations. For instance, a SQL would fall in with the A (alpha) team with the ATL in the lead. This can be best seen when used with an organized seating arrangement (see Figure 8).

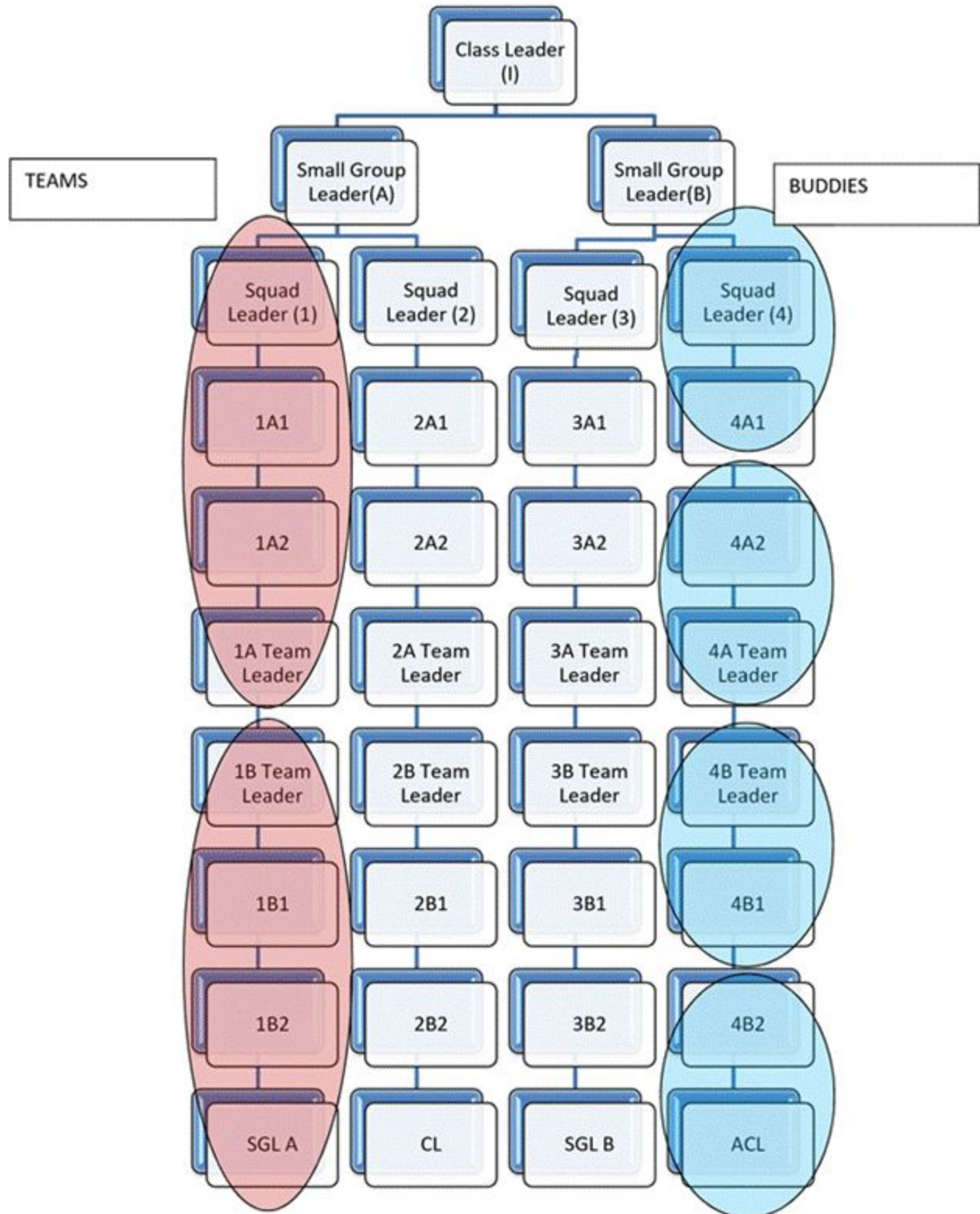


Figure 8. Visual describes the team and buddy sized elements.

Even if the classroom has a unique seating style, how the groups are arranged can affect how well they perform. For the sake of ease, 4x8 rows will be used with each seat outlined with an alphanumeric designator. Of course other configurations can be used as long as there is squad integrity. Seating by squad is useful in many ways, such as for accountability and information flow. But most of all, it keep the consistency of the smaller teams together.

Each team can function as a unit, addressing any issues that may arise (curricular, or personal). They can then share with the other team in their squad and grow from the comparison. This also puts buddies close by one another, for instant consults and/or behavior checks. Another interesting aspect of a good seating arrangement is that the higher leadership positions would become embedded within the smaller groups. As mentioned before, the CL and ACL would be assigned a buddy leader to ensure no one is without a buddy. Also with each of the higher four positions, small group leaders included, information degradation would be mitigated. Other important reasons for keeping the groups close in proximity include allowing trust to develop, which in turn builds into a sense of security. Satisfying these basic needs allows for ease of learning by encouraging communication.

This style of seating arrangement also allows for easier rotation of the leadership roles. It will be up to each individual instructor to decide the when, why, and the how to rotate, but here are some ideas. Depending on the length of the class, whether it is one standalone course, or divided into semesters or trimesters, it is recommended that the rotation be done at the midway point. If the course is less than one month an exchange of all the positions would be impractical. A good rotation of leadership positions will allow for each individual to have an experience,



which takes time. It also demonstrates that occupations do not last forever. At this point, the instructor exercises some power and authority as well.

One way to rotate the seats is to utilize the 4x8 configuration and do three simple steps. Not including the CL, ACL, and SL's, the first step is to have the odd rows (1, 3, 5, and 7) move one place to the right (4<sup>th</sup> squad members move to 1<sup>st</sup>). Second, have each new squad move two places toward the front (first two seats moving to the back). This puts everyone in new positions and mixing up the squads, and exchanges leaders with non leaders (except for the b2's). Third step, the b2's are to be the new CL, ACL, and SL's at the discretion of the instructor. Using these assigned leadership roles in an organized fashion will aid in the learning of the subject matter and gain valuable peer relation skills. This secondary curriculum can be studied in advance through the use of hypothetical / imagination experiments and by sharing personal experiences from different perspectives.

### **Future Research and Emerging Sense of Self as a Researcher and Scholar**

I recommend further inquiry to other researchers to do related to the capstone question be along the lines of gaining the opinions of those who would be directly engaged in the leadership roles. A revision of the survey adapting it for the students within the highlighted groups would have to be made with appropriate permissions obtained. This would be similar to the hypothetical questioning that was asked of the professional instructors but now posed to their students. Questions like how much do you agree with having assigned leadership role to enhance class communication and the learning experience. The survey would have to include representation from the five professions; secondary education, flight instruction, military courses, corporate training, and extracurricular activity participants.

After a student opinion focused survey, the next step could be finding a group of individuals positive to this idea, working with them to implement it. This would be a test group to explore the learner reaction and identify skills that teachers require to do this. In secondary education classrooms a blend of influences from teacher, students, administration, and parents need to be balanced and reconciled in order to have fair successful results. The buy in from the village will fortify the efforts. Once the benefits are seen in action, this new way of cooperative learning could spread leading to further scholarly research.

Through this process of capstone writing and study I have come to notice an emerging sense of self as researcher and scholar. The thinking and reading about educational topics from various sources has broadened my intellectual horizons to a point where I can see far beyond the separation of the different educational settings. I see commonality between them and patterns of positive communication approaches which connects us as a species. I have proven to myself that I can take an idea, find likeminded notions through research, and communicate it contextually to the world. Our ability to express ourselves through literary means defines us as intellectuals.

I hope to pass on some of knowledge I've gained through this graduate level study in ways which benefits others and improves the quality of their learning experience. Becoming a scholar has shown me a way to do just that. To take an idea, research what other have expressed about it, and convey the finding in writing. Going further will involve articulating this exploration with other educational professionals and possibly building the metaphoric bridge to connect the words into actions. Actions ultimately leading to positive learning.

### **The Nexus**

Using the structure in previous sections and the information flow presented, a leadership based style of classroom environment can become the bridge to an enhanced educational experience. The high turnover rate of qualified teachers as highlighted in an article from the Learning Policy Institute (2017) is evidence enough that a change in how classrooms are structured is needed. The instructors are carrying too heavy of a societal burden where administrators and parents try to assist, but is not consistent enough to effect change. The way to do that is in a fundamental shift in granting the students the responsibility in developing a participatory voice within the micro community of a class. Now that the foundations and structure to this secondary curriculum have been presented in the previous section of this chapter, the next step can be taken. The ultimate goal of this capstone is the nexus between theory and practice, to influence a change in the classrooms (secondary education in particular) by instituting systemic parameters.

As a summary and final thought to this capstone, it is our obligation as educators to lead by example to improve the organizations that we are a part of. By voicing and acting on the contributions we can make, not only will we improve our educational environments, we also become part of that environment. All of those influencers on my endeavors, from former teachers to colleagues, flight instructors to drill sergeants, and coaches to mentors, have granted me the vision of a better classroom learning experience. The literature research also pointed out paradigm shifts are not only useful, but necessary to keep our educational systems enduring. The survey of “How do a diverse group of educators react to the idea of assigning secondary students leadership roles in teaching their peers and communicating information in the classroom

environment?” proves a willingness to explore the possibilities of students as leaders within their classrooms. A way to accomplish this is through a cross sectional survey of possible practitioners and practitioners. In order to do an imaginative research study, a description of the settings and participants was presented. Now is the time to let the journey begin as this capstone comes to a close. With mindful aspirations and care for others comes positive learning and discovery. Be the leader that breeds leaders.

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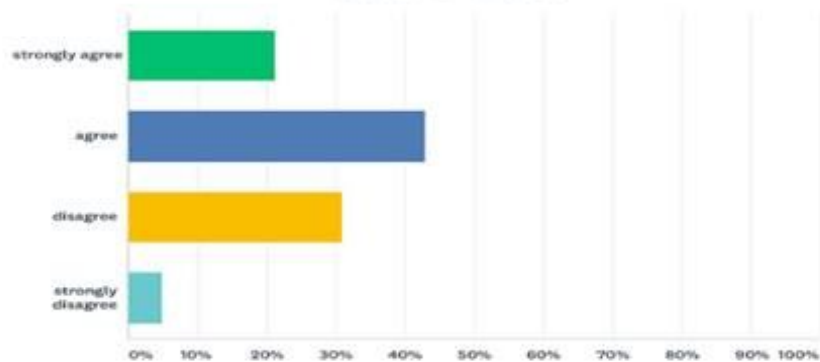
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## Appendix A

Q5 Assigning leadership roles to students with whom I work would not create an instructional challenge.

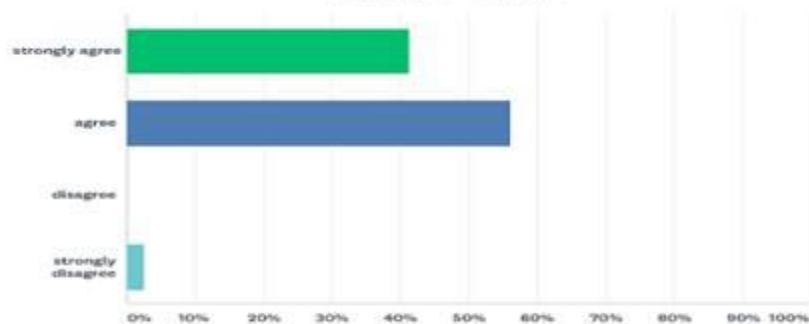
Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	21.43%	9
agree	42.86%	18
disagree	30.95%	13
strongly disagree	4.76%	2
TOTAL		42

Q6 It is essential that students have a way to intuitively communicate with each other regarding new materials introduced in class.

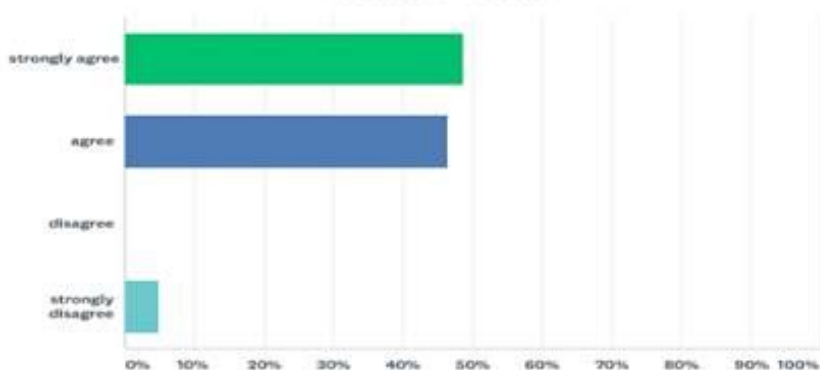
Answered: 41 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	41.46%	17
agree	56.10%	23
disagree	0.00%	0
strongly disagree	2.44%	1
TOTAL		41

Q7 It is essential that students have a way to intuitively communicate with each other regarding tasks and assignments introduced in class.

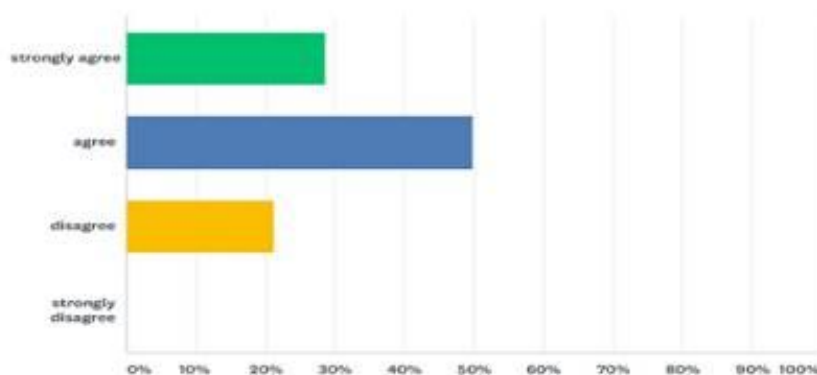
Answered: 41 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	48.78%	20
agree	46.34%	19
disagree	0.00%	0
strongly disagree	4.88%	2
TOTAL		41

Q8 One of my primary goals as a teacher is to have my student(s) to take on leadership position(s) in your educational settings.

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0

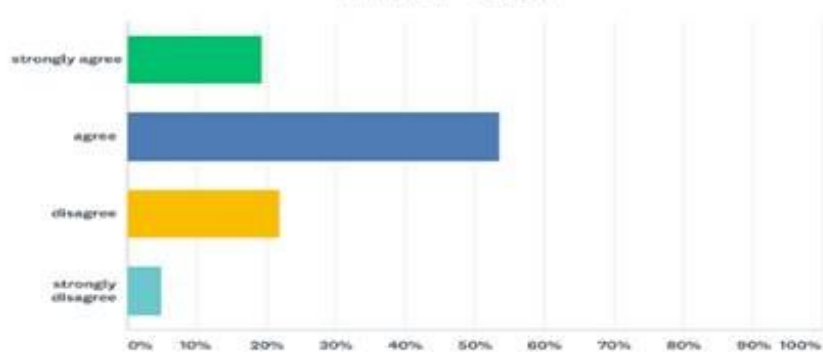


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	28.57%	12
agree	50.00%	21
disagree	21.43%	9
strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		42



Q10 It would not be hard (difficult) to setup up or structure my learning environment to encourage student leadership.

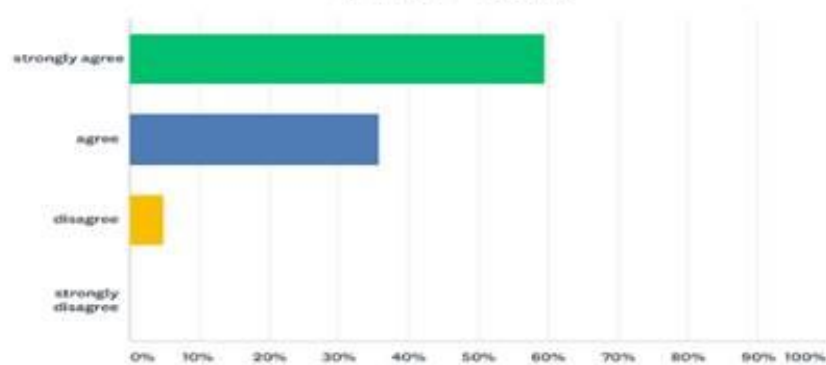
Answered: 41 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	19.51%	8
agree	53.66%	22
disagree	21.95%	9
strongly disagree	4.88%	2
TOTAL		41

Q11 As a teacher, I think it is essential to teach leadership skills to my students.

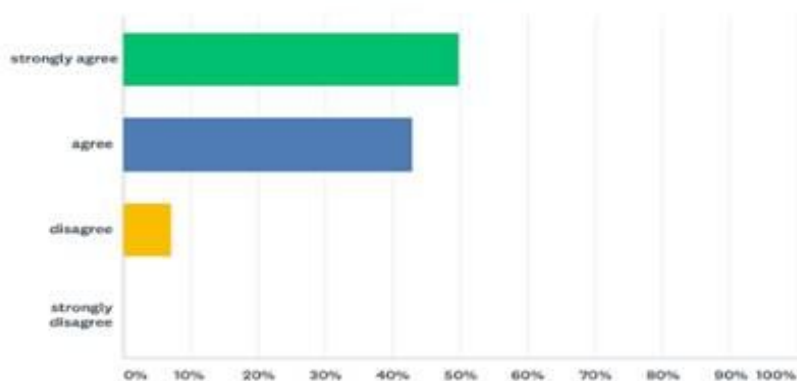
Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	59.52%	25
agree	35.71%	15
disagree	4.76%	2
strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		42

Q12 As a teacher, I think it is essential to provide my students with multiple opportunities to practice leadership skills in my classroom.

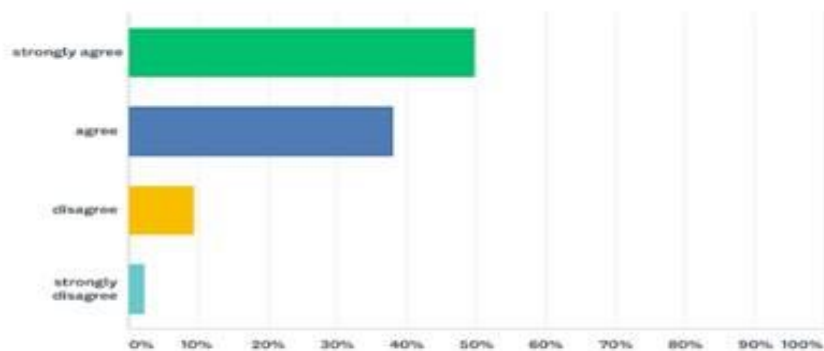
Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	50.00%	21
agree	42.86%	18
disagree	7.14%	3
strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		42

Q13 As a teacher, all my students need opportunities to be in the role of a follower.

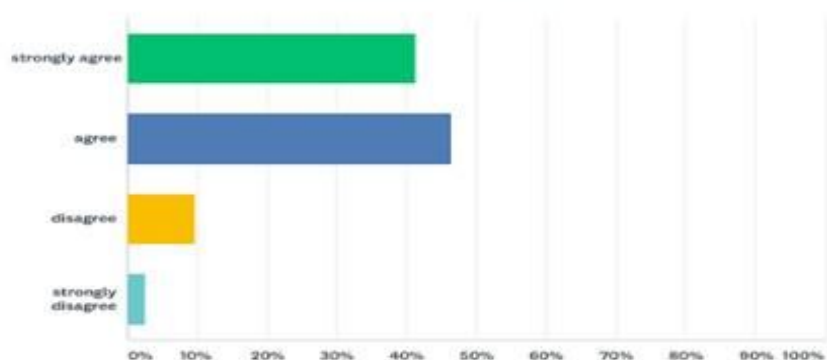
Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	50.00%	21
agree	38.10%	16
disagree	9.52%	4
strongly disagree	2.38%	1
TOTAL		42

Q14 The ultimate goal of my teaching is to witness the students demonstrate comprehension of the material I presented.

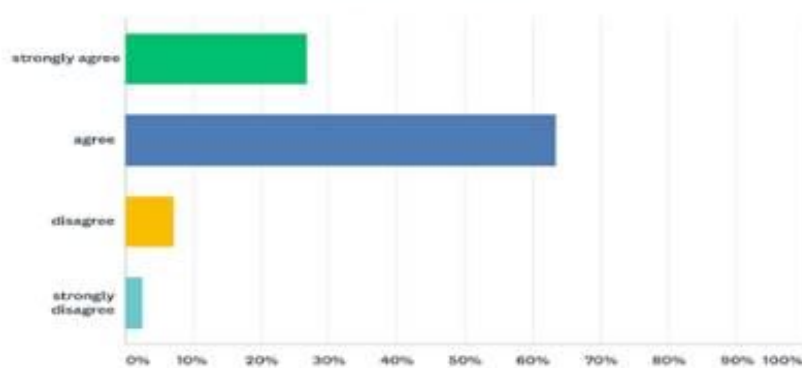
Answered: 41 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	41.46%	17
agree	46.34%	19
disagree	9.76%	4
strongly disagree	2.44%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>41</b>

Q15 (Along with #14) And to pass on what they have learned through cooperative leadership.

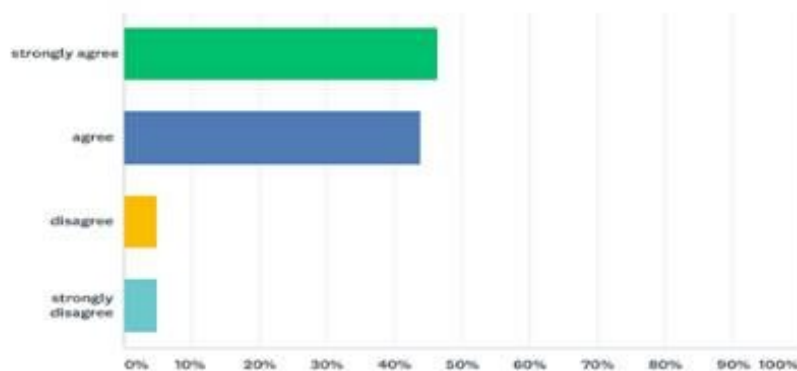
Answered: 41 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	26.83%	11
agree	63.41%	26
disagree	7.32%	3
strongly disagree	2.44%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>41</b>

Q16 As a teacher, it would be of benefit to allow students to lead peers, plan, and present course material.

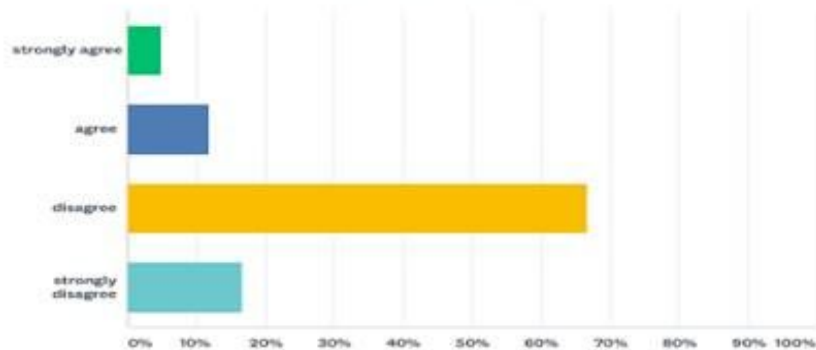
Answered: 41 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	46.34%	19
agree	43.00%	18
disagree	4.68%	2
strongly disagree	4.68%	2
TOTAL		41

Q17 Empowering students in classroom leadership would present discipline problems.

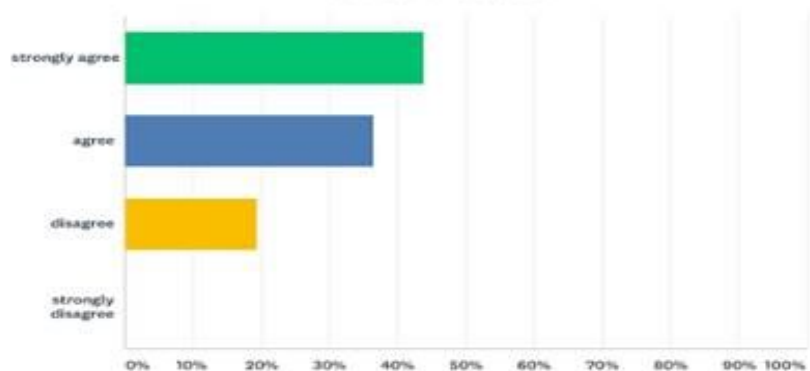
Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	4.76%	2
agree	11.90%	5
disagree	66.67%	28
strongly disagree	16.67%	7
TOTAL		42

Q18 It would assist me as a classroom teacher to delegate management responsibilities (e.g. attendance, tardy report, daily announcements, setting up technology, collection of work) to a selected student leader.

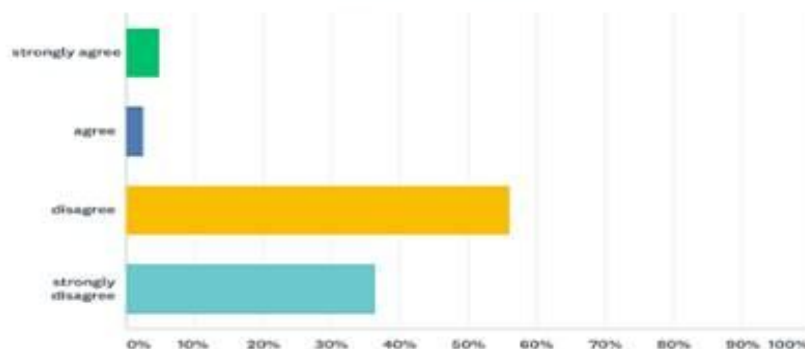
Answered: 41 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	43.90%	18
agree	36.59%	15
disagree	19.51%	8
strongly disagree	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>41</b>

Q19 Empowering students would degrade my instruction, in terms of comprehension and mastery of course material.

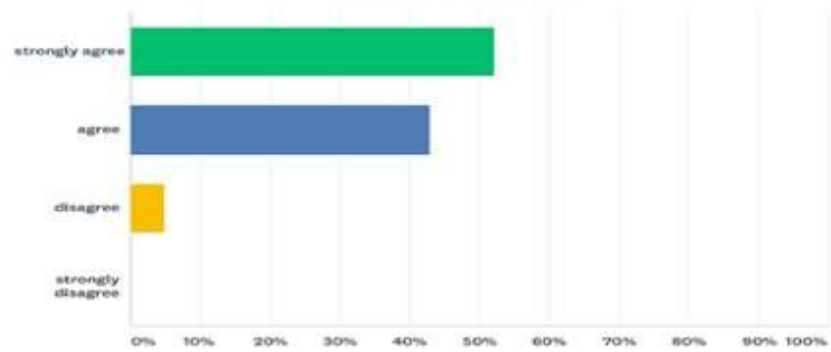
Answered: 41 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	4.88%	2
agree	2.44%	1
disagree	56.10%	23
strongly disagree	36.59%	15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>41</b>

Q20 Allowing students to function as leaders would inspire and mentally develop them in the motivational desire to grasp course material.

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
strongly agree	52.38%	22
agree	42.86%	18
disagree	4.76%	2
strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		42