

TITLE: Applying Kegan's Constructive-Developmental Theory of the Evolving Self and the Role of Experience to The Leadership Effectiveness of Teacher Leaders

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OBJECTIVE: To discover relationships between where teachers are in their own mental growth and their effectiveness as leaders, including the impact of age and experience on these relationships.

METHODOLOGY: Twelve female teacher leaders who participated in the teacher enhancement project for teaching mathematics between 1993-1997 and who were in positions as teacher leaders to directly influence their peers. They ranged in age from 30 to 56, had completed 6 to 27 years of teaching and had engaged in 100-400 hours of direct professional and leadership development experiences. Four variables were addressed. The first was each teacher leader's critical order of consciousness position, or adult growth stage, on Kegan's developmental continuum (Kegan, 1994). The other variables were leadership effectiveness, experience and age. The first variable was assessed using the Subject-Object Interview and the second through the LPI (completed by both the principals and three each of their peer teachers). Supplemental data was provided through journals and activity logs kept by the teachers.

KEY FINDINGS: No significant relationship was found between the teachers' LPI scores and their stage of conceptual development (as in Kegan's stages). Similarly, no significant relationship was found between these two variables when either level of experience and/or age were added to the regression equation. Experience alone nor age alone and leadership were also not significantly correlated. A moderately significant relationship was found between the LPI scores of principals and those from peer teachers for the teacher leaders. These findings were not affected by considering all five leadership practices together or separately.