



AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

John G. Peate for the degree of Doctor of Education in Learning, Leadership and Community presented on June 30, 2020.

Title: Fiction and Leadership Potential: An Investigation into Developing Leadership Concepts in Adolescents Using Fictional Characters from a Novel

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to discover whether 7th grade students could learn about leadership traits and show greater confidence in their ability to be leaders through the integration of fictional characters from a novel. Quantitative data were gathered from pre and posttests on leadership given to 38 7<sup>th</sup> graders. All the students received the same instruction, but the experimental group were exposed to additional discussions of the novel *Fahrenheit 451* in terms of the leadership traits of the characters from the novel. Qualitative data were gathered from interviews with 32 of the 38 students. The interview transcripts were analyzed after thematic coding and the results of this process were integrated with the quantitative data to confirm that both groups can describe the traits of a leader. Though there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post- test scores for either the experimental or the control group, the interviews revealed that though the students within the control group could describe the traits of leaders in an academic way, the experimental group demonstrated a more holistic understanding by providing contextual examples from the novel as well as from societal, current and personal experiences.

Key Terms: middle level student leadership, mixed methods, use of fiction

Abstract approved:

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Dr. Kathleen Norris, Dissertation Committee Chair

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Fiction and Leadership Potential: An Investigation into Developing Leadership

Concepts in Adolescents Using Fictional Characters from a Novel

By

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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of  
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John G. Peate, Author

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## Chapter One – Introduction

### Background

The youth of today are rising into leadership roles at local, state, national, and international levels. In Vancouver, Canada, Lindsey Luis ran for a seat on the Vancouver School Board at the age of 18 in her senior year; Malala Yousafzai, co-Winner, Nobel Peace Prize 2014, spoke at the United Nations (UN) to advocate for worldwide access to education and is the youngest-ever Nobel Prize recipient at the age of 17; Emma Gonzales, survivor of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, spoke on CNN to advocate for stricter gun laws in the United States at the age of 18. Youth are taking on major leadership roles and acting as advocates for social, political, and environmental change around issues in areas such as education, gun control, climate change, LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) equality, and anti-racism. These youth are working to make the world a more just and better place, not only for today, but also for future generations.

Every young person has the potential to become a leader, whether they are acting in a minor or major leadership role. More than ever, it is paramount that youth learn to identify themselves as potential leaders now. Everyone has the potential to work towards a better world. “One of the great barriers to cultivating leadership among youth is the treatment of them solely as the ‘next generation.’ As a result, youth often fail to see themselves as actors in decision-making processes today.” (Kress, 2006, p. 54). The future depends on good leaders; what can we do to help all youth see their potential as leaders?

Authors Mortenson, et.al, (2014) and Van Velsor & Wright (2013) advocate for the introduction of leadership during adolescence. “It is critical to involve youth as leaders now rather than waiting until they are adults. Youth have both awareness and a desire to create change” (Mortenson, et al, 2014, p.451). Growing evidence demonstrates leadership concepts and skills need to be introduced during primary and secondary school to help youth understand foundational leadership concepts, well before they enter the workforce. In a survey given by the Center for Creative Leadership aimed to identify leadership development needs in the workplace. Ninety percent of the respondents reported that they believe leadership development should begin before the age of 18 (Van Velsor, E., Wright, J., & Center for Creative Leadership, 2012). In the article, *What Do Next-Generation Leaders Look Like?* Van Velsor, E., & Wright, J. (2013), explain that leadership studies should begin at an age much earlier than when young adults enter the workforce.

Leadership must be taught within our educational system, allowing for students to be exposed to leadership concepts at an early age. The benefit of earlier exposure through our educational system is this provides opportunities for *all* students to be involved, not only select groups of students that may be exposed to leadership concepts through sports, youth groups, school programs, and camps. One way to prepare students for leadership is through formal teaching to a curriculum on leadership. Another method might be to incorporate studies in leadership within an already defined curriculum such as in a Language Arts class. It is my hypothesis that characters from fiction can be used to introduce leadership concepts and develop student leadership potential within students.

While there are many opportunities to incorporate leadership development in extracurricular activities, such as sports, camps, ministry, and youth groups, the concept of using characters in fiction to teach leadership concepts in middle school is not as well established. In the university setting, leadership concepts have been introduced through coursework at the Harvard Business School, for example, and the outcomes have been documented (Badaracco, 1997; Badaracco, 2006; Sucher, 2007).

Today, high schools are offering courses in leadership, schools are restructuring to include leadership curriculum, and large numbers of students are participating in formal youth leadership programming (Conner & Strobel, 2007).

### **Leadership Development Through K-12 Schooling**

Two examples of curriculum that explicitly focused on leadership development in schools are “Linking Leadership to Instruction” published by the Virginia Department of Education (United States, Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education, 2001) and Changing Tomorrow: Leadership Curriculum for High Ability Students (Coxon, S., & Schappe, M. E., 2014).

The Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education (2001) published a Leadership Development Curriculum “Linking Leadership to Instruction” that outlines processes, skills and opportunities to promote leadership in K-12 students. The curriculum provides a framework to integrate leadership into the existing curriculum, and outlines learning objectives in four strands: (1) Developing knowledge of self and others; (2) Defining leadership; (3) Developing leadership skills and practices; and (4) Practicing leadership through service.

Another curriculum offered to schools provides guidance for direct instruction on leadership within the classroom and is tailored to high ability students at the k-12 level. The Changing Tomorrow curriculum provides leadership lessons and activities to introduce students in elementary, middle, and high school levels (Coxon & Schappe, 2014). Geared towards gifted students and students of high-ability, the curriculum provides students the opportunity to answer higher order questions that challenge students' assumptions and thinking about the nature of leadership while students apply what they have learned to their own lives (Coxon & Schappe, 2014). It provides lessons focused on leadership skill development, including an introductory lesson on the concept of leadership, research on seven prominent leaders of various backgrounds, and a lesson analyzing leadership (VanTassel-Baska & Avery, 2013). The lessons in the curriculum are "designed to draw on some of the most powerful ideas associated with the newest paradigm in leadership development" (p. 3).

One example of directly developing leadership through programming is the Leadership Academy at North Montgomery High School in Indiana, where students are exposed to leaders, through guest speaker visits, who promote leadership in school, business, and education (Cox, 2011). Students participate in meetings or seminars to discuss leadership attributes such as focus, vision, servitude, and determination. They gain leadership experience through identifying goals and following through to completion, such as the implementation of a fundraiser to aid local clothing and food pantries. Cox highlights the concept that "ownership translates to affiliation" (p. 15) and supports the notion that students, provided the opportunity, develop leadership skills.

This idea to incorporate leadership theory into my English Literature class started in 2005 and was the result of observations and discussions with adolescents that focused on common literature texts and universal themes found in a typical US curriculum. The concept developed into the model that is presented in this dissertation.

### **The Leadership for the 21st Century Curriculum**

An existing leadership curriculum, “Linking Leadership to Instruction,” was used to teach leadership concepts and traits. Published by The Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education (2001), this curriculum provides a framework for the processes, skills and opportunities that promote leadership in K-12 students. The Leadership Development Committee for the curriculum was chaired by Kirk T. Schroder, President of the Virginia Board of Education. More than 25 leadership experts were seated on this committee, which included college presidents, members of the Virginia Board of Education, directors of leadership programs, leaders in the military and government officials, and leaders in the business world (United States, Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education, 2001, p.1). A portion of this curriculum was used as a guide for leadership concepts that were taught to 7th grade students who participated in this study.

As described earlier in this chapter, the curriculum integrates leadership into the already existing curriculum, and the learning objectives are divided into four strands, which are described in Table 2:



Table 1

*Learning strands in “Leadership for the 21st Century” curriculum*

Strand	Explanation
1 Developing Knowledge of Self and Others	Leadership requires knowledge of self and knowledge of others. Knowledge of self assists students in clarifying their identity, self-image, and roles in a variety of expanding communities. Students are able to assess their present strengths and weaknesses and realize their potential for leadership. Knowledge of others encourages students to consider and understand the way others view and respond to the world at large. Effective leadership rests in the ability to combine knowledge of self and knowledge of others to advance both personal and group goals.
2 Defining Leadership	Leadership is a process rather than an event. As situations change, roles and behaviors of leaders and followers may also change. In defining leadership, students learn that respected leaders act ethically and model responsible behavior. Students work to understand that active leadership may involve personal and public risks and opportunities. While leadership demands no specific age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation, students learn that these elements may influence an individual’s leadership style.
3 Developing Leadership Skills and Practices	Effective leaders use personal skills that can be acquired by all students. These essential skills include developing a vision, motivating others, taking initiative, communicating effectively, setting goals, making decisions, managing resources, and facilitating the development of additional leaders. When practiced within the context of students’ primary social groups, these skills will build competence and confidence that prepare students to assume a variety of leadership roles.
4 Practicing Leadership through Service	Leadership through service creates the opportunity for students to practice and continue to develop leadership skills. It allows them to define community and to assess community needs. Service leadership enables students to understand the concept of stewardship and ownership of their environment. It provides the opportunity to experience citizenship and identify the responsibilities and roles of responsible citizens. Leadership through service also encourages students to become altruistic leaders by providing opportunities for volunteerism.

Source: United States, Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education. (2001).

*Linking Leadership to Instruction*. Richmond, VA: Commonwealth of Virginia.

## **Organization of the Study**

A group of 38 seventh grade students enrolled in a Language and Literature course in an International Baccalaureate school in the midwestern United States participated in this study. Prior to the study, all students in the Language and Literature course read the novel *Fahrenheit 451* (Bradbury, 1967). For the purpose of this study, all students in the Language and Literature course were exposed to the same section of the “Leadership for the 21st Century” curriculum. Nineteen students were exposed to that portion of the leadership curriculum using the novel and the other group of nineteen students enrolled in the same Language and Literature course were exposed to the same leadership curriculum without using the novel. The experimental group was engaged in intentional instruction involving characters from the novel and the control group had the same curriculum, but with no integration or discussion of the novel. The intent of this study was to understand whether or not the introduction/exposure of characters from a novel would improve their understanding of leadership concepts.

## **Definitions of Terms**

Youth: the time of life when one is young, especially the period between childhood and maturity (Youth, 2019).

Adolescent: a young person who is developing into an adult (Adolescent, n.d.).

Leadership: Bennis (2014) states that, “leadership revolves around vision, ideas, direction, and has more to do with inspiring people as to direction and goals than with day to day implementation” (p. 132).

Leaders: As defined by Fertman, C., & van Linden J. (1998), leaders are “individuals (both adults and adolescents) who think for themselves, communicate their thoughts and feelings to others, and help others understand and act on their own beliefs; they influence others in an ethical and socially responsible way” (p. 17).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study had two components. One was to discover whether or not middle school students could learn about leadership traits from fictional characters during a Language and Literature class. And the other was to discover whether or not these students would show greater understanding of leadership concepts and traits and show greater confidence in their own abilities to be leaders than their peers who were not exposed to the integration of fictional characters into a leadership unit.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions framed the analysis of this content:

#### ***Research Question 1***

Will students who are exposed to concepts of leadership theory through the characters in a novel during a Language and Literature class earn higher achievement scores on a post-test on leadership than their peers who did not have equivalent discussions about the novel?

#### ***Research Question 2***

Will the experimental group describe themselves as having increased leadership potential after this instruction?

## **Chapter Two – Review of Literature**

### **Introduction**

Most theories of leadership have focused on adult leadership theory, but in recent years youth leadership has been defined and discussed in the academic literature. (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Conner & Strobel, 2007; Fertman & van Linden, 1998; Kress, 2006; MacNeil, 2006; Roach & Wyman, 1999). However, Dempster & Lizzio (2007) posit that there is “little evidence” that leadership has been adequately described from the point of view of students in grades 7-12. “Leadership development and training for secondary students will only be improved when there is a much more substantial knowledge base and indeed, theoretical explanation about student leadership, than exists at present” (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007, p. 283).

In this chapter, the need to develop youth leadership theory is explored and developed, with examples of ways that adolescents are exposed to leadership theory and practice. This is followed by a look at the ways in which leadership can be taught through secondary education curriculum.

### **Evolution of Leadership**

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Great Man Theory of leadership was prevalent. This theory proposes that a leader is a “great man.” In this theory, leadership qualities were inherited, and individuals followed the man that had “great man qualities.” First proposed by Thomas Carlyle in the mid 1800’s, Lippitt (1969) describes the Great Man Theory as “the great man is responsible for history, rather than history responsible for the great man” (p.2). More than one hundred years later,

leadership philosophies have moved beyond the theory that leaders are focused on the “great man,” and leadership theories continue to be developed.

In his literature review Stogdill (1948) addressed the need to study more than just traits of leaders: “It becomes clear that an adequate analysis of leadership involves a study of leaders, but also of situations” (p. 36). Stogdill believed that people are, or are not, born with the ability to lead. Leaders are born, not developed. In the late 20th century, studies of leadership traits and trait theory looked at personality traits of leaders (Daft, 2005). Theorists of the trait view, Kirkpatrick & Locke (1991), explained that leaders “do need to have the ‘right stuff’ and this stuff is not equally present in all people” (p. 58). Further describing this ‘right stuff,’ Kirkpatrick & Lock (1991) identified six key personality traits that distinguish leaders from non-leaders:

- drive
- desire to lead
- honesty/integrity
- self-confidence
- cognitive ability
- knowledge of the business.

Many current theories expand on the idea that leadership effectiveness is based on the situation in which leadership takes place. A behavior that is effective in one situation may not be effective in another. For example, asking for help might be effective in one culture, while in another, the culture might see that as a weakness in the leader.

Situational Leadership Theory, first developed by Hersey & Blanchard (1981),

focuses on two types of behavior, in relation to the followers: task behavior and relationship behavior.

### ***Task Behavior***

The task behavior is “the extent to which a leader is likely to organize and define the roles of the members of his group (followers); to explain what activities each is to do as well as when, where, and how tasks are to be accomplished” (Hersey & Blanchard, 1981, p.35).

### ***Relationship Behavior***

Relationship behavior is “the extent to which a leader is likely to maintain personal relationships between himself and the members of his group (followers) by opening up channels of communication, delegating responsibility and giving subordinates an opportunity to use your potential” (Hersey & Blanchard, 1981, p. 35). According to this theory, leaders adopt a leadership style (directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating) which is based on the readiness of the followers. The leader changes his style according to the situation rather than the followers adapting to the leader’s style (Hersey & Blanchard, 1981). The fact that the US Army Manual has added situational leadership approaches to the US Army Field Manual, emphasizing that leaders must be able to adjust their leadership style to the situation and to the people being led, indicates the importance of the concept of situational leadership as a leadership style (Yeakey, 2002).

### ***Relational Leadership Styles***

Continuing with the concept of the roles of the leader and follower, leadership styles may focus on how leaders and followers interact and the relation between the

leader and follower. Interpersonal relationships are a key factor in the effectiveness of a leader. Two leadership styles that focus on these relationships are transformational leadership and servant leadership. Transformational leadership is a style which focuses on transforming and changing people, and to do this the leader exerts an influence that moves the follower (Northouse, 2016). Servant leadership was first described by Robert Greenleaf in 1970, and is described by Larry Spears, past CEO & President of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership:

The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. The choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is, do those served grow as persons: do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged: will they benefit, or, at least, not be deprived? (Spears, 2009)

Spears (2009) extracted from Greenleaf's writings 10 characteristics that are central to the development of servant-leaders:

- listening
- empathy
- healing
- awareness
- persuasion
- conceptualization
- foresight
- stewardship

- commitment to the growth of the people
- building community

Current leadership theories have developed from the great man theories, which focus on the ‘one man’ who is born as a leader, to a focus on the traits of a leader, and later developed into theories that focus on the situation and on the leader and the relationship between the leader and the follower. Many leadership styles are humanistic. The style of leadership used in this paper is a relational leadership style.

### **Leadership Definition**

The working definition of leadership in this paper will include the humanistic concepts of relationship and emotion, and the competencies described by the well-known scholar on leadership, Warren G. Bennis. From his work in the 1970’s, Bennis was a pioneer in the field of leadership education; “with his vision of what might be possible by developing human potential through an integrated approach to leader development, he broke new ground” (Cashman, 2014, para. 1). Author of more than 30 books on leadership, and past chairman of the advisory board of the Center for Public Leadership at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, Warren Bennis is described as the “father of leadership” (p. B8) by William George, a professor at Harvard Business School (Rifkin, 2014). Professor Bennis taught Organizational Studies at Harvard, Boston University, and the M.I.T. Sloan School of Management, and was a consultant to business leaders such as Mr. Schultz, CEO of Starbucks. Bennis advocated for a leader that has “a very particular passion for a vocation, a profession, a course of action” (p.B8). “The leader wonders about everything, wants to learn as much as he can, is willing to take risks, experiment, try



new things. He does not worry about failure but embraces the errors, knowing he will learn from them” (p. B8). Bennis’ brand of leadership may well be characterized by “respect, not just tolerance” (p. B8). Bennis focuses on a definition of a leadership that would include passion, inspiration, and hope.

The meaning of leadership that I continue to draw attention to in my studies is a definition by Bennis in his text, *Becoming a Leader*. Bennis (2014) states that “leadership revolves around vision, ideas, direction, and has more to do with inspiring people as to direction and goals than with day to day implementation” (p. 132). Great leaders will have vision, bring out the talents of others, have “superb curatorial and coaching skills” (p.xxiii), facilitate communication, and obtain trust through authenticity and integrity (Bennis, 2014).

### **Youth Leadership**

Concepts of leadership have focused on adult leadership theory, and it has only been in the recent past that youth leadership is being defined and discussed in the academic literature. (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Conner & Strobel, 2007; Fertman & van Linden, 1998; Kress, 2006; MacNeil, 2006; Roach & Wyman, 1999). It is evident that leadership is described extensively at an adult level, and that the concept of *youth* leadership is relatively new. Furthermore, research needs to be done to develop an understanding of leadership from the youth perspective for the concept of youth leadership to evolve and develop as an independent field of study.

Klau (2006) argues that a definition of youth leadership is unclear, and not consistent among various leadership groups. Klau (2006) outlines examples of leadership and compares their definitions, with the hope that it will advance the

understanding of youth leadership practices in future studies. Current understanding of youth leadership is based on traditional youth leadership practices, which have included positions in student government, youth groups, clubs, and athletics.

Dempster & Lizzio (2007) reveal that there is “little evidence” that leadership has been adequately described from the point of view of secondary students, and they argue that knowledge of how students view leadership is necessary to understand “reconceptualizing approaches to student and youth leadership training” (p. 283).

MacNeil (2006) claims the literature on youth leadership focuses on 1) defining the components of youth programs that focus on leadership, or 2) the activities and programs that allow youth to develop leadership skills. MacNeil bridges the gap between adult leadership and youth leadership by arguing that while youth leadership focuses on leadership ability, adult leadership also focuses on “issues of authority” (p. 32). MacNeil redefines leadership as “a relational process combining ability (knowledge, skills, and talents) with authority (voice, influence, and decision-making power) to positively influence and impact diverse individuals, organizations, and communities” (p. 29). MacNeil claims that youth need to “learn leadership” through practice rather than just “learning about leadership” (p. 38).

Burns, Sorenson, & Goethais (2004) describe youth leadership in the *Encyclopedia of Leadership* as a domain, and share that youth are exposed to the leadership processes when they are involved in practices that “challenge them to innovate, take risks, and communicate effectively to work towards a shared vision” (Vol 4, p.1699). They also note the importance of considering the developmental needs of the age group when working in the youth leadership domain. The needs of a

middle school student are going to be different than the needs of a high school student.

Research by Hoyt & Kennedy (2008) investigate youth leadership experiences of adolescent girls in a female leadership program. During this youth summer leadership program offered to five public high school students in New York City, female adolescents who did not consider themselves to be “leaders” were selected based on their commitment to examine and develop their own leadership potential. The aim of the program was to promote leadership through “education, observation, and action” (p. 212). Coursework, mentoring, and service learning provided the adolescents the opportunity for leadership development. At the end of the leadership program, participants viewed leadership as more about character and moved away from viewing it through traditional leadership actions.

Using role models for youth mentorship is a form of leadership education. Bowers, Rosch & Collier (2016) explored factors of the leadership growth process in youth as they transition to adulthood and work with mentors. Youth transitioning to adulthood were interviewed about their perceptions of adult role models influencing leadership development during their transition to adulthood, and the conditions that facilitate this leadership growth process (Bowers, Rosch & Collier, 2016). The study demonstrated that youth role models played an important role in their own awareness of leadership potential, pursuit of opportunities, and level of involvement. The young adult participants in this study outlined several traits that were important characteristics of a role model: professional work ethic, interpersonal skills, and positive character traits. Having a professional work ethic, including hard work and

initiative, was the most common trait identified among participants. Interpersonal skills and character traits such as empathy, charisma, being a good listener, “positive personality,” (p. 107) respect for others, and encouraging were also cited as key characteristics of a good mentor leader. One youth stated, “I don’t personally learn well from people I am not closely connected to...mentors who I have close relationships with have shaped me and influenced my motivation and goals” (p.104). Furthermore, families, teachers, and coaches provide additional mentorship. Bower, Rosch & Collier found that it is the relational aspect and leading by example that is critical for leadership growth.

Mortensen, et al., build on the findings of Dempster & Lizzio (2007) and attempt to answer the following: “How do youth conceptualize leadership and how do these ideas compare and contrast to existing adult theories of leadership?” (p. 452). In their study, the youth answered by including the concepts of guidance, motivation, influence on future generations, and determination. The youth highlight an “achievement for change” and “conviction to strive for change.” The student narratives in their study revealed five themes which expand our knowledge and understanding. Table 2 includes these five themes with example quotes:

Table 2

*Youth Leadership Themes with Supporting Quotes*

Theme	Example Quote
Anyone can be a leader at any time	“Leaders exist in communities everywhere... people who might not even consider themselves leaders are helping others through life.”
Creating change	“What makes you a leader is that you’re taking the time to stand up and make a change.”
Collaborative action	“To me, leadership is people coming together, hand in hand, and addressing the problems in their community.”
Modeling and mentoring	“It’s when someone is a guide. Leaders show people how to do things.”
Strong character	“That is what makes someone a leader; inspiring people, never giving up, going on even if you feel alone, and having the ability to go on even when times are difficult.”

Source: Mortensen, Jennifer, et al. (2014) Leadership through a Youth Lens:

Understanding Youth Conceptualization of Leadership. *Journal of Community*

*Psychology* 42(4), 447-462.

Table 2 demonstrates that youth are focused on humanistic concepts such as leading, creating change, inspiring people, collaborating, mentoring, and character. Discussions of power and control are not seen in this study focused on youth leadership. This is a distinguishing factor from the characteristics and themes in the literature of adult leadership.

## **Models of Youth Leadership**

Conceptual models by Redmond & Dolan (2016) and Fertman & van Linden (1998) describe the components for developing young leaders. Redmond & Dolan (2016) hope that young people will “become influential through their business and community actions.” Redmond & Dolan outline a model for youth leadership that focuses on 1) development of leadership skills and attributes, including social and emotional intelligence, collaboration, communication, and insight/knowledge; 2) the environmental conditions for leadership opportunities (having authentic opportunities and mentor access); and 3) action (motivation and commitment). It is described as “a mountain” with its many steps of climbing to achieve the goal, such as taking action in their community (p. 268).

Fertman & van Linden (1998) present three stages of youth leadership development in their model - *awareness*, *interaction*, and *mastery*. In the first stage of the model, the focus for youth leadership is the awareness of their leadership potential. It is a phase when youth are acquiring a greater understanding of what leadership is, developing communication and decision-making skills, and developing stress management. In stage two, they develop and solidify their understanding of leadership through interaction and participation in activities. During this stage, adolescents put the theory into practice, and learn how to use the support they need. The last stage is described as a stage when adolescents are focused and use the information and skills they have learned to master their practice.

These models highlight how important it is that youth not only develop their awareness and skills of leadership, but then also put those skills into practice.

## **Leadership Education through Experiences**

Situations that provide youth the opportunity to learn about leadership and develop their leadership potential include student council, sports, church, and national and community youth organizations such as National Honor Society, scouts, and Future Farmers of America.

### ***Student Council***

Student councils provide leadership opportunities to students in elected positions. Some schools might offer deliberate leadership training. Hine (2004) described that student leadership programs at schools reveal “elements of transactional leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and distributed leadership,” but those elements are experiential rather than explicitly taught to student leaders. In addition to student council leadership opportunities, student council members may further develop leadership skills through the National Student Council Distinguished Student Leaders Program, supported by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The program is a recognition program for student council leaders in high school where students create a personal leadership portfolio by accomplishing tasks which focus on “building leadership knowledge and improving their skills” (“National Student Council Distinguished Leaders Program,” n.d.).

### ***Sports***

Leadership skills are developed and practiced when youth participate in sports on a team or during participation in physical activity. If structured appropriately, sport can be an excellent way to teach life skills such as leadership (Gould & Voelker, 2012). For example, sports teams can provide the role of team captain, which requires leadership and communication with coaches as well as teammates.

### ***Church Ministry***

Youth leadership is developed within the ministry by providing activities to allow youth to preside over followers (other youth). White (1994) defines leadership within the ministry distinct from youth leadership because the purpose of youth leadership in the ministry is focus on “peer-to-peer evangelism,” (p. 70). The training specifically prepares students for ministry.

### ***National Honor Society***

Also supported by NASSP, the National Honor Society (NHS) allows students to develop their “leadership proficiency” by attending Leadership Experience and Development (LEAD) conferences, taking part in the annual National Student Leadership Week, and attending State Summits which “cultivate” leadership (Leadership Development, n.d.).

### ***Scouting Organizations***

Boy Scouts of America serves youth and provides “character development, citizenship training, and growth in physical, mental, and spiritual fitness, to help create the next generation of leaders” (Crossroads of America, BSA., n.d., para.1). The Girl Scouts program prepares girls for a “lifetime of leadership, success, and



adventure” (Girl Scouts, n.d, para.1) through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. The four areas that form the foundation for the leadership experience are STEM, outdoors, life skills and entrepreneurship.

### ***Future Farmers of America***

Future Farmers of America (FFA) is an organization that was built with leadership development and agriculture-related knowledge as a foundation of the program (Hoover, T.S., Scholl J.F., Dunigan, A.H., & Mamontova, N. (2007). Hoover, et., al, 2007 state that “FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education” (p. 100). This has been the practice since 1928. Currently FFA provides national leadership training conferences and short courses for students and state chapters hold leadership components in their summer camps.

These are existing organizations with a focus on developing youth leaders but not every youth belongs to any one of these organizations. These experiential opportunities focus on one group, such as an athletic group, a specific socio-economic group, a specific gender, or a religious group. The list is not inclusive of all youth. It misses the youth that do not have interest in these roles or access to the national or local programs. Developing leadership potential in youth through a school curriculum potentially promotes leadership across a larger, more inclusive group of students.

## **Developing Leadership Skills for the Workplace**

The business world is advocating for leadership education for young adults. In a chapter titled, “What the Business Community Wants,” Covey (2008) develops the idea that schools should focus on developing traits in students that are desirable for employers: communication skills; honesty/integrity; teamwork skills; interpersonal skills; self-motivation/initiative; strong work ethic; analytical skills; technology skills; organizational skills; and creative minds. Covey also refers to developing characteristics of Emotional Intelligence (EI), with reference to personal competence and social competence. Covey describes what the business community wants as “character and competence” (p. 31), and that businesses claim the lack of character and life skills are affecting the workplace.

Van Velsor & Wright (2012) discuss that leadership studies should begin at an age much earlier than when young adults enter the workforce. With 462 respondents from business, government, nonprofit and educational sectors, a survey given by the Center for Creative Leadership aimed to identify areas of need for leadership for today’s youth. Specifically, 90% of the respondents reported that they believe that leadership education should begin before the age of 18. The study focused on the following key questions:

- (1) The age a young person should commence his or her leadership journey;
- (2) whether leadership development should be part of the regular educational curriculum;
- (3) how widely it should be offered;
- (4) leadership qualities that managers want to see in young people entering the workforce;

and (5) what excites managers and what concerns them about the young people they employ today (p. 2).

The publication defines the most important competencies needed 10 years from now. These competencies are adaptability (29%); communicate effectively (26%); learning agility (24%), multi-cultural awareness (22%), self-motivation/discipline (20%) and collaboration (20%). The study states that effective communication and self-motivation/discipline appear on the competency lists for 20 years ago, today, and also 10 years into the future. Since they appear on all three lists, the authors suggest that these competencies “need to be the focus of development during the high school and college years.” (p.6).

As mentioned in Chapter One, earlier exposure through our educational system provides opportunities for *all* students to be involved, not only select groups of students that may be exposed to leadership concepts through sports, youth groups, scouts, etc. Again, one way to prepare students in leadership and promote their leadership potential in the educational system is through formal teaching to a curriculum on leadership. Another method is to incorporate studies in leadership within an already defined curriculum such as in a Language Arts class. Characters from fiction can be used to introduce leadership concepts and develop student leadership potential within students.

### **Using Literature for Leadership Education**

Using fictional characters from traditional texts provides a forum for discussion and understanding of leadership theory from the roles fictional characters play. Furthermore, studies of characters from fiction provide students with insight

into the leadership skills that are important for their own social development, such as empathy or communication. Fictional characters can also provide insight and discussion on the themes of youth leadership, such as the youth conceptualization of leadership noted by Mortensen (2014).

Using literature to teach leadership skills is justified by Sandra J. Sucher in her book “The Moral Leader,” where she discusses a course at Harvard Business School that teaches moral leadership through fiction. The course, “The Moral Leader” allows students to develop self-awareness and understanding of the broader world they live in.

### **Leadership Styles and Fictional Characters**

Furthermore, character analysis from fiction provides a discussion forum for the thought processes that leaders (and characters) make when approaching a situation. By using literature, readers and students can become immersed in the character and this provides a discussion point for why those characters made the decisions to do what they did. Furthermore, reading texts and immersing oneself in the characters provides a new perspective, such as the different culture, socioeconomic background, and historical time in which characters’ decisions are made. A well-known leader who turns to fiction for understanding of others, former U.S. President Barack Obama states, “Fiction was useful as a reminder of the truths under the surface of what we argue about every day and was a way of seeing and hearing the voices, the multitudes of this country” (Kakutani, M., 2017, para. 33).

Barack Obama suggests that books give him a “sense of perspective,” and in an interview with Michiko Kakutani, a chief book critic for the New York Times,

Obama states, “I think that I have found myself better able to imagine what’s going on in the lives of people ....” (para. 38).

Described earlier in this chapter, the models of youth leadership proposed by Fertman & van Linden (1998) and Redmond & Dolan (2016) outline stages of development, which can be summarized into three stages: awareness and development of leadership skills, participation and opportunities to develop skills; and taking action. The curriculum developed by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education shows a similar progression of youth leadership development but includes developing the understanding of ‘self’ first, in a strand entitled, “Developing Knowledge of Self and Others.” The curriculum provides an excellent framework for developing youth leadership potential within a k-12 school curriculum.

### **Summary**

While leadership theory has developed and evolved, the concept of youth leadership is emerging in the literature. Areas of youth leadership are documented with examples of youth councils, sports, special interest and church programs. Development of leadership concepts should happen during the formative years, such as during secondary school, or even as young as elementary school. Curriculum for formal leadership education at the K-12 level is developing and needs to be further explored and developed. The research also attempts to address the important question that Murphy & Johnson (2011) propose in the conclusion of their research, “Are we doing a good job at early ages developing future generations of leaders?” (Murphy & Johnson, 2011).

## Chapter Three – Methodology

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if students who are exposed to concepts of leadership theory through the characters in a novel during a Language and Literature class earn higher achievement scores on a post-test on leadership than their peers who did not have equivalent discussions about the novel, and if their subsequent interviews would reveal a greater depth of understanding. Thirty-eight students in 7th grade who were enrolled in a Language and Literature course in English participated in the study. The students were in one of two identical Language and Literature course sections. For the purpose of this study, all students in the Language and Literature course were exposed to the same section of the “Leadership for the 21st Century” curriculum, and prior to the study, all students also read the novel, *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury.

Nineteen students (experimental group) were exposed to the leadership curriculum using discussions of *Fahrenheit 451* and the other 19 students (control group) were exposed to the same leadership curriculum without including discussions of the novel. The experimental group received intentional instruction involving characters in the novel and the control group had the same curriculum, but with no integration or discussion of the novel.

### Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions were answered.

***Research Question 1***

Will students who are exposed to concepts of leadership theory through the characters in a novel (experimental group) during a Language and Literature class earn higher achievement scores on a post-test on leadership than their peers who did not have equivalent discussions (control group) about the novel?

***Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>)***

There will be no significant difference between student scores in the control group and the scores in the experimental group.

***Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>)***

Students in the experimental group score significantly higher than students in the control group.

***Research Question 2***

Will the experimental group describe themselves as having increased leadership potential after this instruction?

***Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>)***

There is no significant difference between pre and post test scores and how they describe themselves as leaders.

***Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>)***

Students in the experimental group score significantly higher than students in the control group in how they describe themselves as leaders.

**Research Setting**

A group of 38 seventh graders at a small, private international school in the midwestern United States took part in the research. Some students and teachers in the

school were from the local area and many were from other countries such as Argentina, China, France, New Zealand, Spain, and Sudan. All students at the school fully participated in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. The mission of the IB Program is “to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect” (International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO], 2015).

The IB program and the international school offers a three program sequence at the K-12 level: the Primary Years Program (PYP) is targeted to students in elementary school and focuses on whole-child development; the Middle Years Program (MYP) is targeted towards students in grades 6-10, and is described as a “challenging framework that encourages students to make practical connections between their studies and the real world;” and the Diploma Program (DP) in grades 11-12, which aims to “develop students who have excellent breadth and depth of knowledge - students who flourish physically, intellectually, emotionally, and ethically” (IBO, 2015). In an IB program, learning is based on inquiry. Students are given opportunities to investigate collaboratively and independently (International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO]). “MYP students continually grow in their abilities to form opinions, make decisions, and reason ethically—all key attributes of an IB learner” (IBO). These traits that are developed and assessed in the Language and Literature curriculum.

A unique aspect of the IB program is the commitment to develop student learners who are: “inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective” (Bullock, K., 2011; IBO,



2015). The IB Learner Profile (see Table 3, below) contains 10 attributes that are central to the educational experience for students at schools adhering to the International Baccalaureate curriculum. Throughout the students' education, educators develop these attributes, providing "a foundation for the internationally minded students who can help build a better world" (IBO, 2015). The education focuses on more than just the cognitive development of a student, but also the social, emotional, and physical development of the student, and contributes to the child's respect for others and the world around them.

The IB learner Profile lists the character traits of the IB learner. (See Table 3). It is important to highlight that an understanding of the Character Traits is developed during the PYP and MYP programs, and students have been exposed to all 10 concepts during their schooling in the MYP program. Many of these traits may be viewed as leadership traits. In addition, there is overlap between leadership traits in the Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Curriculum from the State of Virginia and the IB Character Traits. For example, "caring" is one of the Character Traits, and "caring for others" is a leadership trait of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Curriculum.

Table 3

## The IB Learner Profile

Character Trait	Description
Inquirers	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
Knowledgeable	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In doing so, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
Thinkers	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
Principled	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice, and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups, and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Open-minded	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view and are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
Risk-takers	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas, and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
Balanced	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical, and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
Reflective	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Source: International Baccalaureate Organization. (2015). *What is an IB Education?*

(2nd ed.). Geneva, Switzerland: International Baccalaureate Organization.

## **Research Method**

The “Leadership Development Curriculum” published by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education in 1991 was used as a foundation for the curricular expectations in the Language and Literature class unit in this study. The curricular strand from *Leadership for the 21st Century Curriculum* addressed in this study was “Defining Leadership,” or strand 2. The leadership standard addressed was MS.4, “The student will examine the characteristics of leaders.” See Table B.1 in Appendix B for the student expectations (teaching objectives) of standard MS4.

### ***Unit design***

There were two sections to this unit. The first part, the literary unit, was designed and developed by the school English Department prior to 2016 using the Middle Years Program (MYP) curriculum framework. The text included in this unit was *Fahrenheit 451* (Bradbury, 1967). The second part of this unit, for the purposes of this study, incorporated the “Leadership Development Curriculum” published by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education. All 38 students experienced this standard curriculum.

The leadership curriculum from the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education does not include a novel or characters of a novel in the design. The control group did not have the novel integrated into the instruction of the leadership curriculum from the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education. The experimental group had the characters of the novel integrated into the discussions.

### ***Participants***

The random distribution of the students into the English sections was completed by the school administration prior to the 2019-2020 school year. Two sections of students participated in this study. Both groups received the same instruction in both the school curriculum and the unit from the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education. However, the experimental group also had the novel integrated into the discussions. The control group had 19 students (10 females, 9 males) and the experimental group had 19 students (9 females, 10 males).

### ***Lesson design***

Lessons were arranged so that the control and experimental group tasks were administered in parallel. While each lesson focused on a task, ie, brainstorming examples, or discussing a question posed in the Socratic seminar, each lesson required students to investigate: 1) examples from themselves, and 2) persons they know (control group) and persons they know and characters from the novel (experimental group). Each lesson required that both the control and experimental groups used themselves as examples, as well as another person. The difference between control and experimental groups was the application of a character from the novel in the experimental group.

### ***Lesson One***

In lesson one, both the control and experimental groups were given a handout and were instructed on five key points when defining leadership and the characteristics of a leader. The characteristics of a leader were taken from the Leadership Standards of “Linking Leadership to Instruction” (United States,

Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education. 2001). See Appendices J and K for student handouts. The leadership traits presented were tolerance, setting limits, self-reliance, care for others, competence, honesty, initiative, charisma, honesty, care for others, civility, fairness, responsibility, courage, and reliability. Both groups were then asked to brainstorm individually and identify an example(s) where they have overcome an obstacle in their life.

The second task differed between the control and experimental groups. The students in the control group were asked to brainstorm individually to identify examples where persons they know have overcome obstacles. The students in the experimental group were asked to brainstorm individually and to identify examples where persons they know have overcome obstacles and identify examples where characters in the novel *Fahrenheit 451* have overcome obstacles and locate examples within the text.

### ***Lesson Two***

The goal for the lesson was to identify examples where people and/or characters have been exposed to or overcome obstacles. In a large group discussion, both the control and experimental groups reviewed the 5 Key Points when defining leadership, and the characteristics of a leader. A question was then posed to the groups: What do you think would be an example(s) of situations where you have overcome an obstacle(s)? Each student brainstormed their ideas on a large paper and shared their ideas in a small group. Students then summarized their ideas and shared them with class.

The second task differed between the control and experimental groups. The control group responded to the question: What do you think would be an example(s) of situations where a person you know, or a family member has overcome an obstacle(s)? The experimental group responded to the questions: What do you think would be an example of situations where a person you know or a family member has overcome an obstacle(s)? and What do you think would be an example of situations where characters in the text have overcome an obstacle(s)? In their task, they were asked to locate the passage in the text that supports the example from the character.

Each student in both groups brainstormed their ideas on a large paper and then orally shared their ideas between students in the small group and later shared their ideas with the class.

### ***Lesson Three***

The goal of lesson 3 was to discuss and share ideas on leadership traits necessary to overcome the obstacles in a character and/or person's life. The lesson for both groups began with a review of 5 key components of leadership and characteristics of a leader. Student groups then shared their ideas on obstacles that they overcame from lesson 2. After this sharing of ideas, students were posed with the question and task, "To what extent do leadership traits help you overcome the obstacle(s)? Identify 1-3 traits." Students shared their ideas in small groups and then further discussed their ideas with the class.

The second task in this lesson differed between the control and experimental groups. Students in the experimental group were posed these questions: "To what extent do leadership traits help the person you know overcome the obstacle?"

and, “To what extent do leadership traits help the character(s) in *Fahrenheit 451* overcome the obstacle?” Students in the control group were given the question, “To what extent do leadership traits help the person you know overcome the obstacle?” Both groups were given the task of finding one to three character traits for the character and/or person used to overcome that obstacle. Students shared their ideas in small groups and further discussed their ideas with the entire class.

#### ***Lesson Four***

The goal of lesson four was to analyze the effectiveness of the person and/or character according to the traits they demonstrate. The students of the experimental and control group were asked, “To what extent were you effective in your leadership given the traits that were identified?”

In the second task, the experimental group was asked two questions and the control group was asked one question. The experimental group responded to the questions, “To what extent is the person that you know effective in their leadership given the traits that were identified?” and “To what extent is the character(s) in *Fahrenheit 451* effective in their leadership given the traits that were identified?” The control group were asked, “To what extent is the person that you know effective in their leadership given the traits that were identified?” Both groups were given time to discuss their answers in small groups and with the class.

#### ***Lesson Five***

The goal of the lesson was for students to be able to identify two to three characteristics of a leader and relate the traits to situations or scenarios. Both the experimental and control groups were given the task: “Find three leadership

characteristics and indicate examples where those characteristics are illustrated by you in a situation, or possible scenario. Please do this individually.” Students later shared their ideas in small groups and with the class.

In task two, the experimental and control groups were given different tasks. The students of the experimental group were asked to find three leadership characteristics and indicate examples where the individual you know has shown those traits in a situation or scenario. They were also instructed to find three leadership characteristics and indicate examples where those characteristics are illustrated by the character in the text. They were asked to state the quote, the explanation, and the page number. The control group was asked to find three leadership characteristics and indicate examples where the individual you know has shown those traits in a situation or scenario. Both groups worked individually on this task and later shared ideas in a class discussion.

### **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval**

Prior to beginning any research, the Principal Researcher completed the online research training with Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), in order to fulfill the requirements of working with human subjects. After completion of the course, approval from the Plymouth State University Review (IRB) was sought and approved. A copy of the approval letter is provided in Appendix E.

### **Parent Letter**

A letter to the parents was sent home to introduce potential study participants and their parents/guardians to the principal investigator and to explain the purpose of the study. A copy of the parent letter is provided in Appendix F.



**Informed Consent**

Request for parental consent for student information and completion of pre- and post-test in leadership was made through a Parental Consent Letter entitled, “Informed Consent to Participate Voluntarily in a Research Investigation at Plymouth State University.” Both paper copies and email copies were sent home to students and parents. Every parent signed, dated, and returned a paper copy of the consent form prior to the implementation of the study. A copy of the informed consent form is provided in Appendix G.

**Child Assent**

All students received two forms asking for their assent. “Plymouth State University Child Assent Form 1” asked for their assent to complete the pre-test and pre-test (questionnaire). “Plymouth State University Child Assent Form 2” asked for their assent for the interview process. Every student assented to the pre- and post-test and the interviews. A copy of these forms is provided in Appendices H and I.

**Benefits and Risks to Research Subjects**

There were no individual benefits or risks to the students associated with this study.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Only the Principal Investigator reviewed information given by students for the purpose of this study. All responses on the pre-test and post-test were anonymous. No names were asked. No identifying information was provided in the analysis of the interview transcripts. The data (questionnaires and interview transcripts) will be kept

in a password protected digital file for two years and then destroyed. Only the principal researcher has access to the data, questionnaires, and digital files.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The Principal Investigator was the teacher and this could have created a conflict of interest but the outcome of the study did not pose any risks to the teacher.

### **Data Collection**

#### ***Reflective Journaling***

Ortlipp (2008) reports on the process of keeping and using reflective journals during qualitative research and the value of using the journals to create transparency in the research process. Of importance to my research is the notion of making thinking visible in preparation for and during the entire process of data collection. Therefore, a reflective journal was written during the data collection process, which included developing and planning the lessons, working through pre-tests and post-tests with students, delivering lessons, and completing optional interviews. The journal allowed for ideas, thoughts, and feelings to be recorded during the process, with the goal of increased transparency and honesty in the process. In addition, the journal process helped to minimize inherent biases or any potential conflict of interest. For example, journal writing occurred soon after instruction as to accurately document what was shared with students. Before teaching the next lesson, the journal was reread to look for any patterns that suggested a significant difference in how the lesson was delivered, compared to how it was planned. If any discrepancies were noted – such as a potential conflict of interest or bias in teaching – then these discrepancies could be rectified early in the data collection process.

### ***Pre- and Post-tests***

The Pre-test and post-test were given in the form of an electronic survey. In order to understand the participants, students answered questions about their past leadership positions, experience studying leadership, and years in MYP program. Additional questions on examples of their leadership roles and where they might have studied leadership in the past were asked as open-ended questions. The survey (pre-test and post-test) also tested students on their ability to identify leadership character traits and asked students about their perception of their leadership potential. The options for responses on the importance of leadership traits and the student's perception of their leadership potential were categorical and scaled, as suggested by Creswell (2014).

Students completed the pre-test using their own personal computers. The post-test given to students was identical to the pre-test. Students completed the test during class. Student responses were compiled into one spreadsheet for later examination. The pre-test and post-test are available in Appendix A.

### ***Optional Semi-structured Interviews***

Semi-structured interviews were used to provide comparable qualitative data between the experimental group and control group. The interviews were completed with students who volunteered to be pulled out of class during class time to participate. Sixteen students in the experimental group and 16 students in the control group were interviewed. Selection of students participating in interviews on any given day was arranged by the classroom teacher according to convenience and timing within the class.

***Timing***

Interview sessions were arranged to be completed immediately after the teaching unit and they were held during Language and Literature class time. The interviews took place during five consecutive 55-minute class sessions in a two-week period. Fifteen minutes was allotted for each student, allowing for the logistics of the interview process, including time for movement from class to interview table, set up of the recordings, and discussions with students to affirm there would be no negative consequences for not participating. Prior to each recording, the principal investigator reviewed with each student the Parent Consent Form and showed the parent signature. Then the statements on Assent Form 2 were reviewed with the student and the student signed the form giving assent for the interview. Most of the recorded student interviews lasted approximately 3-8 minutes and none were longer than 8 minutes.

***Setting***

All interviews were conducted by the principal investigator and were recorded on an audio recording program, *Audacity*. Because students are minors, interviews were held in a public space - a hallway alongside the school gym. A student desk was placed outside the classroom door in the hallway, with the student seated at the desk, facing the Principal Investigator.

***Recordings***

To maintain confidentiality and avoid using identifying information in the recording, an identification number between 1-16 was assigned to each student according to the order the interviews took place. Experimental group student numbers

were followed with the letter A, and control group student numbers were followed with the letter B. Each audio recording began with the principal investigator calling each student by their number and corresponding letter A or B. When appropriate, the principal investigator strayed from the prepared interview questions to clarify the interview questions for the student and to get clarification or further elaboration in the student's response. Recording stopped when each student completed his or her answer to the final interview question. All interviews were transcribed and coded to determine trends for later analysis. The interview questions were as follows:

1. Tell me about your leadership experiences in your life.
2. What words would you use to describe a leader?
3. What does it mean to be a leader?
4. Describe your potential as a leader.
5. How confident are you as a leader?
6. Describe what you have learned about leadership in school.
7. How do you plan on using what you have learned in the future?
8. Looking back, have you learned anything about leadership now that would have made you a better leader in some role in the past?

### **Timeline for Lessons and Student Interaction**

Students in both the experimental and control groups completed pre-tests during Language and Literature class on September 13, 2019. On this day, the principal investigator spoke with students to explain their own participation in the study. Lessons for both groups were completed during the Language and Literature

class from September 16, 2019 to September 20, 2019. Post-tests were completed during Language and Literature class on September 24, 2019. Interviews took place from October 21 to October 31, 2019.

## Chapter Four – Results

### Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods study, using both qualitative and quantitative data, was to discover whether 7th grade students could learn about leadership traits and show greater confidence in their ability to be leaders through the integration of fictional characters from a novel during Language and Literature class. Quantitative data were gathered from pre- and post-tests on leadership given to 38 7th graders using an experimental design. All the students received the same curriculum and instruction during a Language and Literature unit, but the experimental group (half of the students) were exposed to additional discussions of the novel *Fahrenheit 451* in terms of the leadership traits of the characters from the novel. Qualitative data were gathered from interviews with 32 of the 38 students. The interview transcripts were analyzed after thematic coding and the results of this process were integrated with the quantitative data to confirm that both groups can describe the traits of a leader. Though there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post- test scores for either the experimental or the control group, the interviews revealed that though the students within the control group could describe the traits of leaders in an academic way, the experimental group demonstrated a more holistic understanding by providing contextual examples from the novel as well as from societal, current and personal experiences.

## **Research Questions**

### ***Research Question 1***

Will students who are exposed to concepts of leadership theory through the characters in a novel (experimental group) during a Language and Literature class earn higher achievement scores on a post-test on leadership than their peers who did not have equivalent discussions (control group) about the novel?

#### ***Null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>)***

There will be no significant difference between student scores in the control group and the scores in the experimental group.

#### ***Alternative hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>)***

Students in the experimental group score significantly higher than students in the control group.

### ***Research Question 2***

Will the experimental group describe themselves as having increased leadership potential after this instruction?

#### ***Null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>)***

There is no significant difference between pre and post test scores and how they describe themselves as leaders.



## **Data Analysis**

This mixed methods study used both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data comes from questions 7 and 8 on the pre- and post-tests given to the experimental and control groups. Qualitative data comes from transcripts of the semi-structured interviews.

Question 7 addressed Research Question 1 and the data from the posttest of the control and experimental group was used. Question 8 addressed Research Question 2 and the data from the posttest of the experimental and control groups was used. Transcripts of the semi-structured interviews for both experimental and control groups were also used to address Research Question 2.

## **Quantitative Data**

Questions from the pre- and post-test are quantitative (see Appendix A). Questions 1-6 provide demographic information about the student and gather information on their leadership background. Questions 7 and 8 provide data for analysis.

Question 7 was designed to assess if students could identify eight of the leadership traits taught to both the experimental and control groups. The leadership traits tested in this question were tolerance, setting limits, self-reliance, care for others, competence, honesty, initiative, and charisma. Students were asked to indicate if each of those characteristics of a leader is “not important at all,” “not very important,” “somewhat important,” “very important,” or “I don’t know.” Other leadership traits on the test were ‘distractor’ answers unrelated to the curriculum. For the purpose of this study, the distractor traits were loving, spirituality, stubbornness,

good looks, bossy, and intensity. There was an assumption that students can select 'correct' character traits listed in a series and identify them as "somewhat important" or "very important" if they were leadership traits and "not important at all" or "not very important" if the trait was a 'distractor.' Nineteen students in the experimental group and 19 students in the control group completed the posttest.

Post-test responses for both groups were scored. Each correct response scored one point if the student selected the correct response. A correct response for leadership traits taught in class (tolerance, setting limits, self-reliance, care for others, competence, honesty, initiative, and charisma) was "somewhat important" or "very important." A correct response for leadership traits not taught in class (loving, spirituality, stubbornness, good looks, bossy, and intensity) was "not important at all" or "not very important." Correct answers were added together and converted into a percentage. The average and standard deviation were calculated for the experimental and control groups. Because responses were anonymous, a one-tailed unpaired t test was conducted to compare average scores.

Results were compared in order to address Research Question 1. The 19 students in the experimental group ( $M=75.5$ ,  $SD= 13.4$ ) demonstrated higher test scores than the 19 students in the control group ( $M=72.5$ ,  $SD=11.5$ ). However, the difference in scores between the groups was not significantly significant,  $t(34) = -0.79$ ,  $p=0.21$ . The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between student scores in the control group and the experimental group was accepted.

Question 8 included a five-part question in the pre- and post-tests. Students were asked to select a scaled response to the statements, *I am a leader; I have leadership potential; I have the traits to be a good leader; I want to be a leader; I can overcome obstacles because I have the leadership traits to do so*. For the purposes of this study, it was assumed that the five statements give a holistic view of the student's opinion of their leadership potential. The scaled response options were, "not at all," "not very much," "somewhat," or "a lot."

For purposes of this study, a score of 0 was assigned as the value for "not at all," a value of 1 for "not very much," a value of 2 for "somewhat," and a value of 3 for "a lot." Each student was given scores for their responses to each leadership statement. All scores for all students in the experimental group were added together and averaged and all scores for all students in the control group were added together and averaged. The averages for the control and experimental groups were compared using a one-tailed unpaired t-test.

The average score for leadership potential for the experimental group pretest was 2.12 (SD = 0.88), while the average score for the posttest was 2.23 (SD = 0.85). While the posttest scores were greater, the t test reveals that the difference was not significant,  $t(34) = -0.82$ ,  $p=0.20$ . The null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference between pre and posttest scores and how they describe themselves as leaders was accepted.

The data shows the students in both the experimental and control groups had a solid understanding of the traits of leaders. The data also shows that the students in

the both groups saw themselves as leaders before the unit and they retained that opinion about themselves after the unit of instruction.

## **Qualitative Data**

### ***Coding***

**Pre- and Post-test.** Question 9 on the student pre- and post-test was, “In your opinion, what makes a good leader? Please write as many words as possible to give your opinion.” This qualitative question and student responses were eliminated from data analysis because students had a list of character traits in question 7 that could be referred to for their open-ended response to the question.

**Transcripts.** Sixteen students from the experimental group and 16 students from the control group completed the semi structured interviews. All interviews were transcribed and then coded, using the following process:

***Initial Reading of Transcripts.*** After the 32 recorded interviews were transcribed, transcripts were printed on paper and separated into the control group and experimental group. A first reading of these transcripts was completed to gather a general understanding of the wording used to describe leadership among the control group and experimental group. A subsequent reading of the transcripts revealed that students in both groups use one- and two-word phrases to describe the concept of leadership.

***Organization and Coding.*** Each transcript was then manually reviewed line by line and each one- and two-word phrase stated by the students was highlighted directly onto the transcript. A second round of annotations was completed to confirm that all the one- and two-word phrases used to describe leadership were highlighted.

The open coding process revealed 38 one- and two-word phrases used to describe leadership in the control group and 43 one- and two-word phrases were used to describe leadership in the experimental group. (See Appendix L).

***Final Coding.*** One- and two-word phrases were reviewed for key concepts. For purposes of this study, a *key concept* is a one- or two-word phrases stated by two or more students within the control group or experimental group. The key concepts were further categorized by whether the key concept was a trait not explicitly presented in class (from the Virginia State curriculum) or a characteristic not explicitly presented to the class. Final coding revealed nine identical key concepts used to describe leadership in both the control group and experimental group. Five of the nine key concepts were leadership traits presented during the unit: care for others, tolerance, honesty, charisma, and reliability. Four additional key concepts were identified in both the control and experimental groups: open-minded, helping others, risk-taker, and confident. These leadership characteristics were not explicitly taught in the unit. In addition, one key concept, self-confidence, was revealed only in the experimental group, and three key concepts, brave, nice, and kind, were revealed only in the control group. Results are shown in Appendix M.

### **Qualitative and Quantitative Data Integration**

To further address Research Question 1 and the purpose of this study, quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to enhance the validity of the analysis. Combining qualitative and quantitative forms of the data occurred at the *interpreting and reporting level*, rather than integrated at the *methods level*. Three approaches to data integration are described by Fetters, Curry, & Creswell (2013):

integrating through narrative, data transformation, and joint displays. For the purposes of this study, the data was integrated through narrative.

Nine of the 10 key concepts used to describe leadership in the experimental group are identical to nine of the 12 key concepts identified in the control group transcripts. These qualitative results revealed that, in open-ended questions, experimental and control groups give reference to many of the same key concepts when describing leadership. The quantitative results indicated that the average scores on the posttest of the control group (72.5%) and experimental group (75.5%) aiming to identify leadership traits were not significantly different. These combined results demonstrate students in both groups show a similar level of mastery of their understanding of leadership. The phrases used to describe leadership are academic in nature. For purposes of this study, *academic* is defined as “very learned but inexperienced in practical matters” (Academic, 2020). To further understand the students’ level of understanding of leadership, another level of coding was completed with the transcripts for both the control and experimental group.

***Additional Coding of Quotes.*** A subsequent reading of the transcripts was completed to reveal in-depth descriptions from students in the control group and experimental group. Each student explanation of leadership or ‘quote’ was highlighted in the experimental and control group.

In a second reading, the quotes were reviewed line by line for in-depth explanation and those in-depth explanations were annotated with a code representing the concept. For the purposes of this study, an *in-depth* explanation was a student

quote that explained leadership beyond listing one- or two-word phrases. For example:

*“...To describe a leader, I would describe them as kind. Because, you know, if you are leading that much people it's important to accept the group for who they are and it's important that you have some sort of connection with people that you lead because you know, you don't wanna just kind of be a stranger at some part that you open up. Especially, it's like open-minded of everyone. And maybe also, like a risk-taker because you have to be very ready, you have to have a lot of, you have to set a lot of risks and you have to sacrifice things to give people or whoever you're leading best that they deserve or have or need.”* [Student 2, experimental group.]

In contrast, quotes identified by the control group lack reference to a specific character, and often it is the reference to the character that allows the students to give the salient descriptions of a leader. For example, Student 10 of the control group: “I have learned a lot from leadership, like all the things that you need to be a leader, like limits, tolerance, confidence, and like, responsibility.” Another example from Student 14, control group, demonstrates a more superficial description of a leader:

*Well, like what is, no, what does it mean to be a leader. Like, I just said that like being the one person everyone expects an answer to help them or once if to be a leader's someone who stands up and helps other people pretty much like you don't always need to be a leader to do that but yeah.*

Student 12, experimental group, when referencing the novel's characters, demonstrates the understanding that anyone can be a leader: “It helped me realize that

not only like, are the main characters leaders but there are other people in the book, they're not the only [inaudible] to one that are leaders." Perhaps it is the connection with the novel that allowed students to retain and recall leadership concepts over time. Noted that several quotes do not give details to the extent of using leadership traits presented in the Virginia State curriculum. For example, Student 4, control group, "I learned some examples of leaders when we were writing things that one with [inaudible] to paper.... I could see how different people lead," and Student 6, control group, "I learned how to identify a leader and how to identify times when I have been a leader and maybe other times when I could be a leader."

The results of the additional coding of quotes revealed three concepts in the control group and ten concepts from the experimental group. The three concepts revealed in the control group were give everyone a chance, listening, and age. The ten concepts in the experimental group were: meanness, participation, keeping group together, why take risks, not amazing, anyone can be a leader, different points of view, followers, behind the scenes, and situational leadership. After the second reading and coding, the coded concepts were combined into themes. For the purpose of this study, a *theme* was a coded concept referenced by two or more students in the control group or experimental group. Three themes emerged from the experimental group and no themes emerged with the control group. The three themes revealed by the experimental group transcripts were: leaders and followers, leadership styles, and moral attributes.

**Leaders and Followers.** The first theme revealed in the coding of quotes is leaders and followers. When asked to describe what it means to be a leader, Student 1



of the experimental group describes how both a character in the novel (Faber) and the student themselves act as teachers: “Faber helps Montag find important lessons in books. I taught my friend a little bit of origami and now they know a lot of origami stuff.”

Student 13 of the experimental group uses the concept of leaders and followers in their description of leadership: “Well they were addressing it but not as a group, but if there is to be leadership, there has to be a group in which you are leading them honestly.” Student 1 of experimental group also uses the concept of leaders and followers to describe leadership:

*A good leader is a person who cares for their followers and takes initiative. They lead their followers to overcome any obstacle. A good leader shows respect to all people including anyone who opposes them. A good leader also shows honesty to their followers and tries to do what is best for their followers even if it requires for somebody to be lied to.*

The experimental group is making connections that support contemporary and modern theories in leadership. The quotes demonstrate a focus on the situation and the relationship between the leader and follower, a concept described in servant leadership by Robert Greenleaf in 1970 (Spears, 2009).

**Leadership Styles.** One leadership style that was outlined in the literature review was transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a style which focuses on transforming and changing people, and to do this the leader exerts an influence that moves the follower (Northouse, 2016). Student 6 in the experimental group gives reference to transformational leadership concepts and states:

*I think that Clarisse's charisma was effective because she interested Montag enough that she was able to show him how the world really was and how he needed to change it. I think being charismatic was helpful for my friends because in less than day they forgot what they were mad about.*

Student 6 refers to the leadership trait charisma and how it is used to transform others, including the character in the novel, Montag, and well as using it to have influence over their friend and change their friend so they are no longer 'mad.'

Another leadership style described in the literature is situational leadership. This style focuses on two types of behavior: task behavior and relationship behavior. In relationship behavior, the leader changes his style according to the situation rather than the followers adapting to the leader's style (Hersey & Blanchard, 1981). In the following quote by Student 16 of the experimental group, they give reference to situational leadership: "Like Captain Beatty...He was being pretty easy and free when -- if Montag was caught he would have gone straight to jail. In the future, I can use what I learned to help me become a leader in many different situations...." Student 16 refers to both a character in the text, Montag, and himself, and both focus on the situation in which leadership is applied.

Leadership behavior is when leaders adopt a leadership style (directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating) that is based on the readiness of the followers (Hersey & Blanchard, 1981). This concept is demonstrated by Student 15, experimental group: "I kind of learned like that-- that people have different ideas and different ways of thinking to find their ways."

***Moral Attributes.*** Students in the experimental group use a contextual reference from the novel to guide their explanation using a moral inference. Student 16 of the experimental group describes a leader in the novel *Fahrenheit 451* as ‘mean’ but still refers to him as a leader: “Like Captain Beatty his leadership wasn't amazing. He was still really mean, but he still kept his group together.” Student 2 in the experimental group refers what she has learned about leadership during the unit and refers to a leader being ‘good’ and ‘bad’:

*I learned how you can kind of, like see a leader. Like, I learned that you know, not every leader is good and not every leader is bad. And I also think I learned a lot of new attributes that, you know, can -- I guess qualify you to be a leader or a better leader for people.*

Student 3 of the experimental group:

*Well, I think that even though Beatty may have been a bad leader, I wouldn't obviously follow what he did. When I was leading [?] work. But some things are, well, one thing that Beatty did was he put himself in the actual position to be a leader.*

The literature review referenced the course, “The Moral Leader” which allows students to develop self-awareness and understand the broader world they live in. The experimental group made connections that support a contemporary and modern understanding of leadership. The quotes demonstrate a focus on using moral attributes to describe leadership.

## Conclusion

Both the control groups and experimental groups described leadership in an academic way. Yet, with the integration of fictional characters, the students in the experimental group, at times, made subconscious, unintentional connections with leadership traits such as situational leadership and transformational leadership. In addition, the students in the experimental group referred to leadership within the context of both leaders and followers. As a result, students began to learn more about leadership styles and behaviors during their seventh-grade year. Essentially, the *Fahrenheit 451* characters - and their obstacles or situations - were a tool for a better understanding of leadership. By using fictitious characters to understand leadership traits the students went beyond listing and describing leadership academically, and instead, applied and demonstrated the traits as expressed in theories of adult literature.

This study suggested that fiction can be a tool that students can use to be better leaders. Fiction not only gave the students meaningful literary connections, but through characters, fiction established leadership scenarios that helped students understand obstacles in their life. Student 1 in the experimental group shared their leadership scenario and stated, “Montag had the courage to have books which were illegal..., the courage to learn about the world outside of ‘the city.’ Kind of like me. I have the courage to move here, we need to be brave when we do something new.” In many cases, students made relevant connections to their own lives that encompassed a larger understanding of leadership theory. Student 6 in the experimental group unknowingly described concepts associated with situational leadership and went on to

compare the similarity to their own experiences, “I think that Faber was a leader when Montag asked him to help him understand books. His obstacle was the Law of reading books. I think, like this, is the same for me when not really getting to know other people.”

This study suggested that, for the youth, fiction could be the needed bridge between leadership theory and its application. Is there a possibility that youth leadership is not more developed because there are few opportunities for youth to incorporate fiction in their formal education? Student 10 in the experimental group shared their insight and stated, “I guess you taught us many ways to be a leader and how to be a leader and you used people and people’s mistakes to help us to learn from their mistakes so we don’t make those mistakes and so we can make better choices.” At the least, leadership must be contextualized when encouraging leadership with the youth in the hope to, “reconceptualize approaches to student and leadership training” (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007, p.283).

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## Appendix A

### Pre and Post Test

Because you are a student in 7th grade at the [omitted] School and enrolled in a Language and Literature course in English, I am inviting you to participate by addressing the statements in this questionnaire. You may stop participating in this survey at any point by selecting the “I wish to not participate” box and your responses will not be recorded.

If you chose to participate in this questionnaire, please answer all questions honestly, and then select “submit” on form.

Your responses to these questions will not affect your grade. You may ask Mr. Peate questions at any time.

---

Would you like to participate?

- A. I do not wish to participate.
- B. I am willing to participate.

---

Please respond to Questions 1-9 to the best of your ability.

- 
1. What group are you in?
    - A. 7A
    - B. 7B
  
  2. How many years have you participated in the MYP program, including this year?
    - A. up to one year (this year only)
    - B. up to two years (6th and 7th grades)
  
  3. Write down if you have acted as a leader. Examples might be: I was a captain on my soccer team; I am the president in our student council; leader of the club; I am a Peer Leader at school. Write down your answer even if you are not sure if it is a leadership position.
  
  4. Which is true about you?
    - A. I have held no leadership positions.
    - B. I have held one leadership position.
    - C. I have held two leadership positions.
    - D. I have held three or more leadership positions.

5. Which is true?
- A. I have never studied about leadership.  
B. I have studied about leadership.
6. Write down examples of where you might have studied about leadership. Examples might be leadership course during student council meetings; leadership courses during Scouts; leadership training for team captain.

---

**Directions: Please indicate your answer to the questions below by circling a number or set of letters which best describes the ranking for your response.**

---

7. To what extent are the following characteristics of a leader important:

Trait	Not important at all	Not very important	Somewhat important	Very important	I don't know
tolerance	1	2	3	4	0
setting limits	1	2	3	4	0
self-reliance	1	2	3	4	0
loving	1	2	3	4	0
spirituality	1	2	3	4	0
stubbornness	1	2	3	4	0
good looks	1	2	3	4	0
bossy	1	2	3	4	0
intensity	1	2	3	4	0
care for others	1	2	3	4	0
competence	1	2	3	4	0
honesty	1	2	3	4	0
initiative	1	2	3	4	0
charisma	1	2	3	4	0

8. Do you agree:

---

Statement	Not at all	Not very much	Somewhat	A lot	I don't know
I am a leader.	1	2	3	4	0
I have leadership potential.	1	2	3	4	0
I have the traits to be a good leader.	1	2	3	4	0
I want to be a leader.	1	2	3	4	0
I can overcome obstacles because I have the leadership traits to do so.	1	2	3	4	0

---

9. In your opinion, what makes a good leader? Please write as many words as possible to give your opinion.



## Appendix B

Table B.1

*Standards and Strands, Leadership for the 21st Century Curriculum*

Standard	Strand	Student Expectation
MS.1	1	The student will explain elements of his or her own self-image
MS.2	1	The student will evaluate his or her own behaviors
MS.3	1	The student will identify ways in which his or her behaviors influence others.
MS.4	2	The student will examine the characteristics of leaders.
MS.5	2	The student will understand that the roles and actions of the follower will fluctuate.
MS.6	2	The student will analyze the role of context in the process of leadership.
MS.7	3	The student will communicate effectively in pairs, small groups, teams, and large groups.
MS.8	3	The student will transfer decision-making skills to new tasks.
MS.9	3	The student will express a personal vision.
MS.10	4	The student will differentiate among communities and community needs.
MS.11	4	The student will compare and contrast the role of citizens in different communities.
MS.12	4	The student will apply the concept of stewardship.
MS.13	4	The student will practice leadership through service in a variety of communities.

## Appendix C

Table C.1

*Student Expectations for Defining Leadership*

---

MS.4. The student will analyze the characteristics of leaders.

---

- a. Identify and discuss effective leadership qualities, such as setting of limits, tolerance, self-reliance, initiative, charisma, honesty, care for others, and competence (in addition to civility, fairness, responsibility, courage, and reliability).
  - b. Analyse the effectiveness of leaders according to the traits they demonstrate.
- 

**Source:** United States, Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education. (2001).

*Linking Leadership to Instruction.* Richmond, VA: Commonwealth of Virginia.

## Appendix D

Table D.1

### *Comparison of IB Learner Profile and Learning Strands*

	Inquir-ers	Know-ledge-able	Think-ers	Com-muni-ciators	Prin-cipled	Open-minded	Caring	Risk-taker	Bal-anced	Reflec-tive
MS.1: The student will explain elements of his or her own self-image										
Investigate ways in which peers can influence self-image, such as through fashion and social activities	●						●		●	●
Explore personal interests, values, and skills.	●								●	●
Examine effects of positive or negative self-image on relationships with others									●	
MS 2: The student will identify ways in which his or her behaviors influence others.										
Identify influences on one's own ideas and behaviors, such as family, friends, and media.			●		●	●				
Identify one's own attitudes and biases toward others, such as admiration or jealousy.			●			●				

*Comparison of IB Learner Profile and Learning Strands (continued)*

MS 3: The student will identify the interests, values, styles, and behaviors of others.										
	Inquir-ers	Know-ledge-able	Think-ers	Com-muni-ciators	Prin-cipled	Open-minded	Caring	Risk-taker	Bal-anced	Reflec-tive
Consider the effects of gender, ethnicity, customs, and traditions on the interests, values, styles, and behaviors of others.							•			
Recognize contributions of people from different backgrounds and experiences						•			•	
Create strategies to integrate new members into a group.							•		•	

## Appendix E

### Approval letter

Plymouth State University Institutional Review Board

August 23, 2019

Dear Geoffrey Peate:

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Plymouth State University, your project entitled: Fiction and Leadership Potential: An Investigation into Whether Fiction Can Develop Personal Leadership Traits in Adolescents has been granted approval for one year, ending August 23, 2020. Be sure to complete the Final Report Form when your research is finished.

If, during the course of your project you intend to make changes that may significantly affect the human subjects involved (particularly methodological changes), you must obtain IRB approval prior to implementing these changes. Any unanticipated problems related to your use of human subjects must be promptly reported to the IRB. The IRB may be contacted through Dr. RYANNE CARMICHAEL, Chair of the IRB. This is required so that the IRB can update or revise protective measures for human subjects as may be necessary.

You are expected to maintain as an essential part of your project records, any records pertaining to the use of humans as subjects in your research. This includes any information or materials conveyed to and received from the subjects as well as any executed forms, data and analysis results. If this is a funded project (federal, state, private, other organization), you should be aware that these records are subject to inspection and review by authorized representatives of the University, State of New Hampshire, and/or the federal government.

Please note that IRB approval cannot exceed one year. If you expect your project to continue beyond this approval period, you must submit a request for continuance to the IRB for renewal of IRB approval. IRB approval must be obtained and maintained for the entire term of your project or award.

Please notify the IRB in writing when the project is completed. We may ask that you provide information regarding your experiences with human subjects and with the IRB review process. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your project. Any subsequent reactivation of the project will require a new IRB application. I have attached the Project Completion Form for your convenience.

Please do not hesitate to contact the IRB if you have any questions or require assistance. We will be happy to assist you in any way we can. Thank you for your cooperation and efforts throughout this review process. We wish you success in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Ryanne Carmichael,  
PhD Institutional Review Board , [rcarmichael@plymouth.edu](mailto:rcarmichael@plymouth.edu)

## Appendix F

### Parent Letter

September 4, 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am a Doctoral Student Researcher at Plymouth State University (PSU), in New Hampshire and I am conducting a research project. The project explores the integration of leadership theory into a grade 7 Language and Literature class at [name of school].

I am writing to invite your child to participate in two 15-30-minute questionnaires that will be given before and after the integration of leadership theory into a grade 7 Language and Literature class. I also invite students to volunteer to take part in an interview lasting up to 30 minutes consisting of questions at the end of the project. The project will begin Friday, September 13, 2019. The “Informed Consent Form” provides details on this study with reference to consent.

This research contributes to a growing body of knowledge of leadership education for youth, with the goal of integrating leadership into secondary school curriculum in any school. Through your participation in this study, I hope to identify if a student has an increased understanding of leadership theory and increased understanding of their potential as a leader.

If you have further questions about this study, please contact me, John Geoffrey Peate, at [gpeate@\[Name of School\]](mailto:gpeate@[Name of School]). I have enclosed two copies of the “Informed Consent Form.” Please sign the second page on one copy, indicating your choice and return in the envelope to your Language Arts teacher by Tuesday, September 10, 2019. The other copy is for your records.

I will also be sending this letter and attached documents home by email. An additional form (“Assent Form 1”) for your viewing will be emailed as well; the form explains the study directly to students using language at the 7th grade level. Students with parental consent to participate will sign that form. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



John Geoffrey Peate

## Appendix G

### Informed Consent

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

#### PARENT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE VOLUNTARILY IN A RESEARCH INVESTIGATION

#### PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY

**INVESTIGATOR(S) NAME:** John Geoffrey Peate, Student Researcher

**STUDY TITLE:** Fiction and Leadership Potential: An Investigation into Whether Fiction Can Develop Personal Leadership Traits in Adolescents.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the integration of leadership theory into a grade 7 Language and Literature class and determine if students who are exposed to concepts of leadership theory describe themselves as having increased leadership potential.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The student will answer questions in the form of a 15-30-minute questionnaire before and after a group of lessons is complete. Also, students will be asked to voluntarily participate in a semi-structured conversation / interview for up to 30 minutes, consisting of several questions. These optional interviews may be audio recorded. There are no known costs to participate in this study.

#### RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The risk is considered minimal, as there are no known risks or anticipated discomforts to participants in this study.

#### BENEFITS

Through your participation in this study, I hope to identify if a student has an increased understanding of leadership theory and increased understanding of their potential as a leader. This research may be of value to current students and future students. This study contributes to a growing body of knowledge of leadership education for youth, with the hope of understanding more about potentially integrating leadership into secondary school curriculum in any school.

#### ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES

The alternative would be to not participate in the questionnaires and interviews.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

All documents and information pertaining to this research study will be kept confidential in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. I understand that data generated by the study may be reviewed by Plymouth State University's Institutional Review Board, which is the committee responsible for ensuring my welfare and rights as a research participant, to assure proper conduct of the study and compliance with university regulations. If any presentations or publication result from this research, students will not be identified by name. The information collected during my participation in this study will be kept for three years and then destroyed. Student names are not recorded in the questionnaire. There will be no names attached to questionnaire responses, and other identifying information such as gender and age will not be asked, so that the student's identity is not revealed. During interviews, there will be no names attached to interview responses; gender, age and other identifying information will not be asked, so that the student's identity is not revealed in the data collected. Students will therefore remain anonymous throughout the entire written documentation

**Informed Consent, Continued**

process. If quoted directly from student responses, a reference will appear, for example, as Student #12 or Student #17.

**TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION**

Participants may choose to withdraw from this study questionnaires at any time and for any reason. Participation is voluntary. Participants that withdraw will not be penalized in their grade, nor will other consequences occur. Withdrawing still maintains your protection of confidentiality.

**COMPENSATION**

Students will not receive payment for being in this study. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. There will be no cost to me for participating in this research.

**INJURY COMPENSATION**

Neither Plymouth State University nor any government or other agency funding this research project will provide special services, free care, or compensation for any injuries resulting from this research. I understand that treatment for such injuries will be at my expense and/or paid through a medical plan.

**QUESTIONS**

All questions have been answered to my satisfaction and if I have further questions about this study, I may contact John Geoffrey Peate, at [jgpeate@plymouth.edu](mailto:jgpeate@plymouth.edu) or [gpeate@\[Name of School\]](mailto:gpeate@[Name of School]). If I have any questions about the rights of research participants, I may call the Chairperson of the Plymouth State University's Institutional Review Board at 603-535-3114.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to me. I am free to withdraw or refuse consent, or to discontinue my participation in this study at any time without penalty or consequence. There are no negative consequences, such as grade reductions, for choosing to not participate in interviews.

I voluntarily give my consent for my child to participate in this research study. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form.

.....

Signatures:

Yes, I, \_\_\_\_\_ consent/allow my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in this research project.

No, I, \_\_\_\_\_ do not consent/allow my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in this research project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Informed Consent, continued**

I, the undersigned, certify that to the best of my knowledge, the subject signing this consent form has had the study fully and carefully explained by me and have been given an opportunity to ask any questions regarding the nature, risks, and benefits of participation in this research study.

John Geoffrey Peate



September 4, 2019

---

Investigator's Signature

---

Date

The IRB has approved the solicitation of participants for the study.

Plymouth State University's IRB has approved the solicitation of participants for the study until  
October 30, 2019.

## Appendix H

### Assent Form 1

#### ASSENT FORM

#### STUDENT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE VOLUNTARILY IN A RESEARCH INVESTIGATION

#### PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY

**INVESTIGATOR(S) NAME:** John Geoffrey Peate, Student Researcher

**STUDY TITLE:** Fiction and Leadership Potential: An Investigation into Whether Fiction Can Develop Personal Leadership Traits in Adolescents.

**1. What will happen to me in this study?**

The reason for this research is to study "what is a leader" and "what is your leadership potential" during a unit in your grade 7 Language and Literature class. It is to help you and other students learn more about leadership traits. Because you are a student in 7th grade at the [Name of School], and enrolled in a Language and Literature course in English, **you can participate by answering questions in a questionnaire.** The questionnaire is also called a "pre-test" and is given again as a "post-test." You may stop participating in the questionnaires when or if you want to. You will also be given a chance to take part in interviews, if you wish.

**2. Can anything bad happen to me?**

If for any reason you feel uncomfortable with the questionnaires, you should inform your parents. You may stop doing in the questionnaire if you want to. There are no negative consequences, such as grade reductions, for stopping work on the questionnaires. You may stop answering questions during the interviews if you wish.

**3. Can anything good happen to me?**

This study will help teachers and school leaders understand if students can learn about leadership while in Language and Literature class. It may also help you understand more about yourself as a leader.

**4. Do I have other choices?**

If you wish to not participate in the questionnaires, you will check the box that says you do not wish to take part in the study and that form will be destroyed. You are free to read the questions, or even answer them, but if you check the "non-participation" box, none of your answers (responses) will be recorded.

**5. Will anyone know I am in the study?**

Your participation in this study will be kept secret, but personal information asked is: number of years' experience in IB and MYP programs, past studies in leadership, and leadership positions held. Your name, age, and gender will not be asked or used. Information on the test will be viewed by Mr. Peate (also called the Principal Investigator) only.

**6. What happens if I get hurt?**

There is no compensation (for example, money) for participation. In the highly unlikely case that you may get an injury, you will follow school [Name of School} policy.

## Assent Form 1, Continued

### 7. Who can I talk to about the study?

If you have questions or problems in this study, you can call or text Mr. Peate at XXX.XXX.XXX or email him at gpeate@[Name of School]. If you have questions about the study but want to talk to someone else who part of the study is not, you can call the Plymouth State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (603)-535-3114.

### 8. What if I do not want to do this?

You may stop participating in the questionnaires and/or interviews at any point. You will not get in trouble.

### SIGNATURE

If you agree to be in this study, please sign and date below.

-----  
Signature of Child

-----  
Date

-----  
Printed Name of Child

\* Plymouth State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved the solicitation of participants for the study.

## Appendix I

### Assent Form 2

Plymouth State University

Institutional Review Board

#### Application approval date:

**Study Title:** Fiction and Leadership Potential: An Investigation into How Fiction Can Develop Personal Leadership Traits in Adolescents

#### 1. What will happen to me in this study?

##### Description of the study:

The reason for this research is to study "what is a leader" and "what is your leadership potential" during a unit in your Language and Literature class. It is to help you and other students learn more about leadership traits in leaders.

Because you are a student in 7th grade at the [Name of School] and enrolled in a Language and Literature course in English, **you can participate by answering questions in the form of a conversation / interview.** The interview consists of 8 questions to be answered orally. You may stop participating in the conversation / interview at any point. There are no negative consequences, such as grade reductions, for choosing to not participate.

The conversation will be recorded by an audio device, which will be pointed out to you before the conversation / interview starts.

If you chose to do participate in the interview, answer all questions as honestly as possible, and as much detail as possible.

#### 2. Can anything bad happen to me?

##### Risks or Discomforts of Participating:

If for any reason you feel uncomfortable with the interview, you should inform your parents. You may stop doing in the questionnaire if you want to. There are no negative consequences, such as grade reductions, for choosing to not participate in interviews.

#### 3. Can anything good happen to me?

##### Benefits of Participating:

This study will help teachers and school leaders understand if students can learn about leadership while in Language and Literature class. It may also help you understand more about yourself as a leader. Any benefits learned from the study will be shared with all students, regardless of their participation.

#### 4. Do I have other choices?

**Appropriate Alternatives:** You are asked to volunteer to participate in interviews. You are volunteering to interview and during this interview, you can stop participating at any time.

## Assent Form 2, Continued

### 5. Will anyone know I am in the study?

#### Confidentiality:

Your participation in this study will be kept secret. Your name will not be used. Information on the test will be viewed by the teacher researcher and the classroom teacher.

### 6. What happens if I get hurt?

#### Compensation for Participation/Medical Treatment:

There is no compensation (for example, money) for participation. In the highly unlikely case that you may get an injury, you will follow school policy.

### 7. Who can I talk to about the study?

#### Contact Information:

If you have questions or problems in this study, you can call or text Mr. Peate at XXX.XXX.XXXX or email him at gpeate@[Name of School].

If you have questions about the study but want to talk to someone else who is not part of the study, you can call the Plymouth State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (603)-535-3114 (Valid until July 1, 2021).

### 8. What if I do not want to do this?

#### Voluntary Participation:

**YOU MAY STOP PARTICIPATING IN THIS AT ANY POINT. YOU WILL NOT GET IN TROUBLE IF YOU CHOOSE TO STOP PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY. THERE ARE NO NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES, SUCH AS GRADE REDUCTIONS, FOR CHOOSING TO NOT PARTICIPATE.**

If you agree to be in this study, please sign below.

---

Signature of Child

Date

---

Printed name of Child

The IRB has approved the solicitation of participants for the study.

## Appendix J

### Student Handout, Experimental Group

#### Defining Leadership

##### 5 Key Points When Defining Leadership:

1. Leadership is a process of doing, rather than one event that takes place at one time.
2. As situations change in groups of people, roles and behaviors of leaders and followers may also change.
3. Respected leaders act ethically and model responsible behavior.
4. Leadership may involve risks and opportunities.
5. Leadership demands no specific age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation.

##### Characteristics of a Leader

(Defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary):

**Limits** (setting of) – something that bounds, restrains or confines.

**Tolerance** – capacity to endure pain or hardship, the act of allowing something

**Self-reliance** – reliance on one's own efforts and abilities

**Initiative** – an introductory step, at one's own discretion: independently of outside influence.

**Charisma** – a special magnetic charm or appeal

**Competence** – the quality or state of having sufficient knowledge, judgment, skill or strength.

**Honesty** – without cheating; to tell the truth.

**Care** (for others) – painstaking or watchful attention; person or thing that is an object of attention.

**Civility** – a polite act or expression

**Fairness** – the quality or state of being fair; lack of favoritism towards one side.

**Responsibility** – the quality or state of being responsible.

**Courage** – Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere and withstand danger, fear or difficulty.

**Reliability** – the extent to which an experiment, test or measuring procedure yields the same results

## Appendix K

### Student Handout, Control Group

#### Defining Leadership

##### 5 Key Points When Defining Leadership:

1. Leadership is a process of doing, rather than one event that takes place at one time.
2. As situations change in groups of people, roles and behaviors of leaders and followers may also change.
3. Respected leaders act ethically and model responsible behavior.
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**Initiative** – an introductory step, at one’s own discretion: independently of outside influence.

**Charisma** – a special magnetic charm or appeal

**Competence** – the quality or state of having sufficient knowledge, judgment, skill or strength.

**Honesty** – without cheating; to tell the truth.

**Care** (for others) – painstaking or watchful attention; person or thing that is an object of attention.

**Civility** – a polite act or expression

**Fairness** – the quality or state of being fair; lack of favoritism towards one side.

**Responsibility** – the quality or state of being responsible.

**Courage** – Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere and withstand danger, fear or difficulty.

**Reliability** – the extent to which an experiment, test or measuring procedure yields the same results.

## Appendix L

### One- and Two Word Phrases

#### Control Group

- |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Sharing                 | 20. Risktaker         |
| 2. Optimistic              | 21. Selfless          |
| 3. Contribute ideas        | 22. Nice              |
| 4. Open-minded             | 23. Mature            |
| 5. Caring                  | 24. Role model        |
| 6. Experienced             | 25. Make change       |
| 7. Helping others          | 26. Take action       |
| 8. Strong                  | 27. Confidential      |
| 9. Courage                 | 28. Communicating     |
| 10. Take Charge            | 29. Thoughtful        |
| 11. Kind                   | 30. Daring            |
| 12. Tolerant               | 31. Brave             |
| 13. Understand others      | 32. Potential         |
| 14. Guide                  | 33. Charisma          |
| 15. Don't boss             | 34. Civil             |
| 16. Constructive criticism | 35. Planner           |
| 17. Authority              | 36. Loud              |
| 18. Honesty                | 37. Smart/intelligent |
| 19. Responsible            | 38. Fun               |

#### Experimental Group

- |                   |                     |                   |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Caring         | 17. Strong          | 33. Mean          |
| 2. Patient        | 18. Creative        | 34. Charismatic   |
| 3. Helping        | 19. Nice            | 35. Kind          |
| 4. Positive       | 20. Knowledgeable   | 36. Accepting     |
| 5. Best effort    | 21. Honest          | 37. Calm          |
| 6. Brave          | 22. Responsible     | 38. Sacrifice     |
| 7. Dependable     | 23. Others first    | 39. Tolerance     |
| 8. Logical        | 24. Focused         | 40. Stubborn      |
| 9. Realistic      | 25. Self-confident  | 41. Confident     |
| 10. Risk taking   | 26. Honorable       | 42. Firm          |
| 11. Intelligent   | 27. Communicator    | 43. Understanding |
| 12. Confident     | 28. Perseverance    |                   |
| 13. Open minded   | 29. Selfless        |                   |
| 14. Keep together | 30. Think of others |                   |
| 15. Participate   | 31. Patience        |                   |
| 16. Passion       | 32. Listen          |                   |



