**Using the Voice of Educators to Strengthen Teacher Evaluation:
Implications for Improved Practice**

by

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Abstract

Our nation's leaders view the quality of teaching as important; however, how they have

influenced the effectiveness of teachers is in debate. The nation's focus on legislating teaching

quality has been ineffective and has misconstrued the public's view of the quality of education.

Literature focused on teacher evaluation is largely negative which undermines the hard work of

administrators and teachers. That hard work often goes unnoticed. Additionally, there is very

little research on exemplary principals and the positive aspects of the teacher evaluation process.

Instructional leaders should approach teacher evaluation from multiple avenues if they seek to

improve teaching, learning, and perceptions thereof.

The purpose of this study was to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by

exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators, teachers, and

district office administrators. The central research question for this study was what instructional

leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher

evaluation? After a double-nomination process, I utilized a multiple-case study approach with

triads of three principals, three teachers, and three district office administrators in the state of

Alabama, each representing a different school and school system (three systems total). Data

collection included face-to-face interviews, school and classroom observations, and teacher

evaluation artifacts.

Guided by the study's research questions, I discovered themes related to principals,

teachers, and district-office members through within-case and cross-case analyses. After

comparison and contrast, each participant group and case produced individual themes to answer the question, "How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators?" According to the participants, two out of the three schools positively influenced teacher evaluation in ways such as leadership style, a focus on growth, and a focus on students. The last case, however, did not report the same information. Teacher evaluation in Alabama has the potential to impact student and teacher growth. Building relationships should be a focus of instructional leaders before they walk into classrooms to observe. Additionally, reporting the progress and growth of schools in a more clear way should illuminate the hard work principals and teachers put into the success of each relationship.

Dedication

In hopes of passing on a life-long love of learning
and service to others,
I dedicate this research
to my first-born,
sweet Adalyn.
Pour out love, change the world, and never give up.

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First, I must give all credit to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Without Him, all success in life is impossible. Through His guidance, I grew despite being met with the difficulties of life and the dissertation process. During my PhD program, I got married, became an administrator, changed schools twice, had a beautiful baby daughter, and dealt with family medical emergencies and deaths. Ultimately, I have learned how to grow as a person and researcher focused on the lives of other people.

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dedication to my success as a scholar. Your legacy will continue to live on through this piece of work.

To my dissertation committee. Thank you for your support, encouragement, and constructive feedback. I have taken ownership of your written and verbal feedback and I appreciate the difference your expertise has made on the quality of my work. Your knowledge, attention to detail, and constructive criticism have made this project possible. Dr. Reames, I am whole-heartedly thankful for you recruiting me into Auburn University's leadership program. My outlook on leadership in public education has changed because of my experience here and that is largely because of you. Dr. Baggett, your teaching style, extensive knowledge, and great recommendations have contributed to my desire to be a researcher. I now feel prepared to continue my qualitative inquiry as an educational scholar. Dr. Bryant, I have known you since the beginning of my career. You have observed me, have given me feedback, and have encouraged me for the past seven years. I value your knowledge and advice and I am glad you were able to serve on my committee.

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ACTD	Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development
ALSDE	Alabama State Department of Education
AMSTI	Alabama Math Science and Technology Initiative
AQTS	Alabama Quality Teaching Standards
ARI	Alabama Reading Initiative
ARMT	Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test
ARRA	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
ATRIP	Alabama Teacher Recruitment and Incentive Program
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
CLAS	Council for Leaders in Alabama
CSR	Collaborative Summary Report
ELEOT	Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
INTASC	Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
MET	Measures of Effective Teaching
NCES	National Center for Educational Statistics
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NCTAF	National Commission on Teaching America's Future

NCTQ   National Council on Teacher Quality

NGA   National Governor's Association

PD   Professional Development

PEPE   Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program

PREP   Preparing and Rewarding Educational Professionals

PDSTA   Professional Development System for Teacher Appraisal

RTT   Race to the Top

SLT   School Leadership Team

USDOE   United States Department of Education

VAM   Value-Added Models

Chapter I: Introduction

After nearly two-hundred years of focus on teacher evaluation, legislators have yet to discover that they are unable to legislate teacher effectiveness. Overshadowed by the daily requirements and difficulty of public education, the excitement of the first day of school dwindles quickly. Demands and pressure from a top-down approach can affect every aspect of teaching such as: curriculum and instruction demands, test scores, and evaluation (all of which can affect the effectiveness of teachers). With hopes of professional growth, educators across the country desire effective feedback, meaningful professional development, and collaboration with other educators.

Found within a recent report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2014), "51 percent of public school teachers who left teaching reported that the manageability of their work load was better in their current position than in teaching" (para. 4). As compared to other occupations, the field of education "suffers from chronic and relatively high annual turnover" (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, p. 2). Turnover is a problem created by numerous personal and professional reasons such as poor salary, student discipline, and class size; however, one large component of teacher dissatisfaction is poor administrative support (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, p. 4). Administrative support, affected by two important areas, supervision and evaluation, is essential to teacher effectiveness. Kim Marshall (2013) stated, "When done right, supervision and evaluation can be major players in improving the quality of teaching and learning" (p. 21). She continued to outline five core functions of instructional leadership strategies related to teacher supervision and evaluation. These core functions appear in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Core Functions of Instructional Supervision and Evaluation

Core Function	Description
1. Appraisal	Gauging the quality and level of instruction in all classrooms then placing each teacher on a proficiency scale.
2. Affirmation	Retaining and developing effective teachers and providing opportunities for leadership roles throughout the year.
3. Improvement	Coaching and supporting mediocre and ineffective teachers while also providing opportunities for effective teachers who would like to do better.
4. Housecleaning	Dismissing teachers, after providing support, who are still not effective.
5. Quality Assurance	Being able to inform parents and stakeholders that every child will receive good teaching in every classroom.

Adapted from Marshall, K. (2013). Rethinking teacher supervision and evaluation: How to work smart, build collaboration, and close the achievement gap (pgs. 21-22).

Teacher and school success, flowing from number one, is dependent upon the ability of the instructional leader to carry out the five core functions. Instructional leadership and support through the five core functions above are affected by regulations and policies related to accountability in public education. In recent years, the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] of 1965* placed pressure on the states to "establish challenging standards, develop aligned assessments, and build accountability systems for districts and schools that are based on educational results" (ESEA, 1965). Accountability policies such as *ESEA* have contributed to increased awareness of teacher effectiveness. With a federal push for growth in student achievement, accountability has contributed to many policy changes and professional development in hopes of increasing the expertise of teachers.

Teacher evaluation, a big component of the policy changes, has received much attention and criticism that has contributed to teacher stress and caused teachers to leave the profession all together. (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Research has documented that teachers are skeptical of evaluations and often see evaluation as not credible or relevant (Makkonen, Tejwani,

Venkateswaran, 2016). To address statistics related to teacher turnover and job satisfaction, Darling-Hammond (2013) stated, "good [evaluation] systems must be designed so that teachers are not discouraged" (p. 87). The investigation of evaluation procedures used by administrators is essential since teachers are discouraged and research has documented the need of well-designed evaluation systems. Evaluation procedures vary from school to school, district to district, and state to state. Ultimately, the states are able to decide upon the teacher evaluation process; however, the federal government puts guidelines in place.

Many leaders and schools use classroom observations as a sole basis for teacher effectiveness ratings. Scriven (1981) documented several problems with classroom observations. Those problems consisted of:

1. Change in the usual teaching practice caused by the visit itself

2. Unreliable number of samples

3. Personal biases of the evaluator

4. Adult raters who do not think like students

5. Style preferences of the evaluator

6. Costs in time of lengthy classroom visits (p. 61).

The six problems listed above supplement other researchers' views of multiple sources of teacher evaluation data. Darling-Hammond (2013), an expert on teacher evaluation, cited that "the greatest benefits will be secured when multiple measures of learning are combined with evidence of practice" (p. 149). She continued to say, "Evaluations should include multifaceted evidence of teacher practice, student learning, and professional contributions" (p. 153). To support the need for effective evaluation strategies, a recent study cited findings related to the correlation of principal leadership and satisfaction with their experience with the teacher

evaluation process (NCES, 2014). According to the study, teachers who received high proficiency ratings through evaluation expressed more satisfaction with the evaluation process than teachers rated at lower levels. Additionally, teachers whose evaluation included student achievement data were less likely to be pleased with teacher evaluation than teachers whose evaluation did not contain student achievement data (NCES 2014).

Research and practitioners have negatively discussed standardized assessment, the focus of student achievement data, for a long time. A focus on student achievement data placed unneeded pressure on teachers and students, especially during the days of *No Child Left Behind [NCLB] Act of 2001*. While student achievement data provides some data about student learning, it does not provide a comprehensive picture (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Student achievement, though, was not the only contributing factor to teachers' dissatisfaction.

While much research detailed teachers' dissatisfaction with the evaluation process, research also provided information related to administrators' views of teacher evaluation and support. For example, Kim Marshall (2013) outlined reasons principals are unable to give attention to the teacher evaluation process. She stated that principals were unsuccessful at getting into classrooms on a regular basis because of the following reasons:

1. The principal cannot leave the office due to daily occurrences and frequent crisis;

2. Each day is full of interruptions, which affects the ability to focus on deeper issues;

3. Principals often travel the hallways with systematic agendas;

4. Evaluation visits happen only when they are required and are not accurate pictures of what takes place every day;

5. Teachers rarely engage in authentic conversations with administrators about feedback;

6. Teachers get used to working in isolation, which produces mediocrity in many situations (p. 45).

Discussing teacher and administrator satisfaction related to teacher evaluation is important to the success of teaching and learning within each school. Further research is important in order to understand (in detail) how effective principals use instructional leadership strategies to affect teaching in a positive way. Perceptions related to teacher evaluation are examined through this study in order to understand how instructional leaders use strategies to develop and support teacher growth. Since much research is devoted to how principals and teachers are unsatisfied with teacher evaluation, it is important to illuminate successful principal, teacher, and district-level administrator triads in relation to positive teacher evaluation and support procedures.

Statement of the Problem

According to Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009), spending on public education surpassed 400 billion dollars in the early 2000s (p. 7). Despite the spending, "the fact that other nations are outperforming the United States in education is a threat" (p. 7). Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009) also pointed out that international competition was also an opportunity; hence, the federal regulations and policies brought forth.

As described in the next chapter, federal regulations related to teacher evaluation, recently implemented, have affected the states' revision of teacher evaluation and student achievement regulations. From the beginning of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* in 1965 (1965) to the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (2002), teaching and learning has been the focus of much attention related to the pursuit of student achievement. President Obama reauthorized ESEA with the passage of the *Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA]* in 2015. The

Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) proposed college and career readiness standards, statewide assessments, performance targets, and teacher and leader evaluations to include student-learning gains.

Because of the federal regulations listed above, Alabama has changed some policies related to teacher effectiveness ratings. As of 2012, Alabama implemented *Plan 2020*; a plan with visions of helping each student become a graduate or prepared for the workforce (Alabama State Board of Education [ASBOE], 2012). The plan places priorities on Alabama's learners, support systems, professionals, and school systems. Emphasized in *Plan 2020* is a focus on strategies for Alabama's teaching professionals. The Alabama State Board of Education's website outlined the following strategies that affect Alabama's teaching professionals:

1. Provide a comprehensive induction and mentoring program for new teachers;

2. Develop and implement a professional growth evaluation system for teachers and leaders that includes multiple measures of student growth and achievement; and,

3. Provide research-based professional growth opportunities for Alabama's teachers and leaders based on their individual and collective professional learning plans. (p. 17).

Schools and students will not improve unless more time is devoted to developing our workforce. "You cannot get teachers working like this without leaders at all levels guiding and supporting the process" (Fullan, 2003, p. 5). When leaders guide teacher development, producing gains in teacher expertise is possible, and in turn, may produce instrumental gains in student learning. (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). With *Plan 2020*, Alabama's plan for professional growth aligns with the strategies research suggests (ASBOE, 2012).

Fullan (2003) described a "moral imperative" in one of his books on school leadership and declared that the principal's role must be "restructured to effectively change the context in

which teachers and students learn" (p. 11). As a basis for my research study, teacher growth should be the primary focus of an instructional leader. Without teacher growth, student growth may not happen.

Teacher evaluation could be a tool to help teachers, students, and schools improve. In fact, teacher evaluation has recently received a great deal of attention in literature as a promising level for increasing teacher effectiveness (Donaldson, 2013); however, there is a gap in research that leaves us with no descriptions of how instructional leaders increase teacher expertise within schools in Alabama.

Specifically, recent changes in the evaluation policies within Alabama have left many instructional leaders and teachers with flexibility related to teacher evaluation. Alabama, like other states, has changed evaluation programs and policies as they try to keep up with federal regulations of the United States. Alabama has recently transferred from *The Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program* [*PEPE]* to *Educate Alabama* as a foundation for the development of teachers (Alabama State Department of Education [ALSDE], 2009). *Educate Alabama*, discussed later in detail, is a "formative system designed to provide information about an educator's current level of practice" in relation to the *Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development [ACTD]* (ALSDE, 2009). The *ACTD*, based upon the *Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS)*, aligns professional learning with improving the academic achievement of students (ALSDE, 2009). Now, with accountability in the hands of the Alabama legislature, Alabama is bracing for other changes related to teacher evaluation that could influence teacher effectiveness ratings. In an overhaul bill supported by Senator Del Marsh, *The Preparing and Rewarding Education Professionals [PREP] Act*, tied 25% of a teacher's

evaluation to student growth (Cason, 2016). This bill, however, was "shelved" and no longer discussed as of 2016.

Regardless of policy and programs, effective instructional leaders are able to lead and support teachers amidst continual change. Research documents several strategies instructional leaders should use to support and develop teacher expertise; however, specific experiences of principals and teachers received little attention. Teachers and administrators must possess a shared definition of what quality teaching looks like before the evaluation process begins (Danielson, 2001). When documenting teacher effectiveness, multiple forms of ongoing assessment are necessary (Darling-Hammond, 2013) in order to document comprehensive evidence of teaching and learning. Additionally, effective and meaningful feedback should focus on specific classroom strategies and learning targets (Marzano et al., 2011). Finally, rich professional development based upon individual and collective ratings of teacher proficiency (Marzano & Toth, 2013) should follow observations and evaluations. Using a multiple case study design, this study will investigate how Alabama's instructional leaders use instructional leadership and strategies identified in research to impact teacher growth.

Purpose of the Study

There is evidence that "schools are social systems that improve as people grow and develop" (Norton, 2015, p. 3). However, research about how instructional leaders help teachers improve their teaching is limited and has not been produced as fast as policy on teacher evaluation and accountability has changed. The purpose of this study was to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators, teachers, and district office administrators. Understanding how exemplar

principals use strategies for teacher evaluation addresses a gap in literature that could improve the practice and implementation of teacher evaluation.

The present study used semi-structured interviews and semi-structured observations of the teacher evaluation process within each of three schools. Participants consisted of triads within these Alabama schools; triads consisted of an administrator, teacher, and district office administrator. Each respondent answered open-ended questions related to areas such as: personal and education background, evaluation procedures, growth-based evaluations, and response to evaluations. The data, collected from individual interviews with all nine participants, gave a detailed account of perceptions of administrators and teachers. Also conducted, semi-structured observations provided observational data related to the culture and climate of the school and classroom. Additionally, the classroom observation helped confirm the level of principals and teachers' focus on teacher growth.

Research Questions

In hopes of understanding successful implementation of teacher evaluation practices, the following research questions guided the path of this study.

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?
2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?
3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?
4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators?

Significance of the Study

Achieving student growth depends on skillful school leadership based upon excellent instructional leaders and influential teachers. Teacher evaluation and support is one tool used to achieve student growth. Student learning, an indicator of professional growth, can be achieved by implementing effective evaluation systems. As Darling-Hammond (2013) stated, "Planning continued growth and targeting new areas in which to promote student learning is exactly what an effective evaluation system should accomplish" (p. 49).

The study of teacher evaluation has been around for almost two hundred years; however, teacher evaluation is still a topic of current interest in the world of education today. A good portion of the teacher evaluation literature involves coaching and mentoring teachers throughout their career, but the inconsistency of implementing best practices has limited the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation process (Kersten & Israel, 2005). Factors such as time, school culture, and evaluation process constraints hinder the teacher evaluation and development process.

The improvement of the teacher evaluation process is more than a state issue; it is a national issue (Lash, Makkonen, Tran, & Huang, 2016). If legislators and educators do not change how we implement and respond to teacher evaluation, teacher evaluation will continue to cause preventable stress and job dissatisfaction and, in turn, will not increase the effectiveness of the classroom teacher. Data from research suggest that "building-level administrators perceive their present teacher evaluation processes and practices as having minimal impact on improving teaching and learning" (Kersten & Israel, 2005, p. 59). This study seeks to fill a gap in research by documenting what effective leaders do to increase the expertise of teachers, which, in turn, can affect teacher growth and student achievement.

Other studies have found that observation and evaluation is not currently doing the job (Darling-Hammond, 2013), which contributes to the many problems of teaching practice we face today. The limited amount of research documenting successful practices of administrators displayed the need for this study. This study could influence teacher evaluation by informing educators and legislatures with strategies that actually inform the improvement of teaching. Researchers have heavily documented effective teacher evaluation practices such as increased communication, staff development, coaching and mentoring, and modeling (Kersten & Israel, 2005). Nevertheless, a gap in research exists in relation to how principals within Alabama use instructional leadership strategies during the evaluation process to increase teacher and student growth. In light of the recent push for accountability, specific examples of instructional leadership practices in Alabama will contribute to the literature about successful teacher evaluation practices across the nation.

Delimitations

This study took place in hopes of illuminating the evaluative practices of exceptional principals within Alabama. Several boundaries were set for the study that included a short time span, ranging from July 2017 until December 2017. Principals interviewed in this study make up a very small sample of principals in Alabama. It did not include all of the administrators in the selected districts or schools. Additionally, only three schools in Alabama participated in this study and those three schools do not represent all schools within the state.

Assumptions

Several assumptions were significant in this study.

1. The inclusion criteria of the sample were appropriate because all participants had more than one year of experience as an administrator and had more than one year of

experience evaluating teachers in Alabama. These participants represent

administrators and teachers in Alabama. Chapter three details more information about

the inclusion criteria for this study.

2. Furthermore, I assumed that all participants answered all of the interview questions

truthfully and openly without any leading questions from myself.

3. Finally, I accurately reported the information shared by the participants.

Definitions of Terms

- Accountability. An all-inclusive process of quantitative and qualitative data used to

  monitor the results of education and school improvement effectively and efficiently

  (Milligan, 2015).

- Affirmation. "Retaining and further developing teachers in the top two categories and

  giving them the opportunity to take on leadership roles" (Marshall, 2013, p. 21).

- Appraisal. "Getting an accurate sense of the quality of instruction in all classrooms

  and placing each teacher on a scale of proficiency" (Marshall, 2013, p. 21).

- Competent Teaching Force. Teachers in numbers, working together for the

  continuous betterment of schools (Fullan, 2003).

- Feedback. Focused conversations that develop teacher expertise based on a focus on

  specific classroom strategies and behaviors (Marzano et al., 2011).

- Formative Assessment. Activities used to provide information used as feedback to

  modify teaching and learning (Dixson & Worrell, 2016).

- Growth Models. "Measures used to determine whether, or not, positive value is added

  to an individual student's or group of students' academic performance by using

statistical approaches to create a prediction of student scores that measure or estimate such an effect" (Anderman, Gimbert, O'Connell, and Riegel, 2015, p. 8).

- Housecleaning. "Dismissing teachers who are still not effective after a reasonable chance to improve" (Marshall, 2013, p. 21).

- Improvement. "Coaching and supporting the development of teachers in the bottom two categories – and effective teachers who want to do even better" (Marshall, 2013, p. 21).

- Instructional Leadership. A process which involves "making student and adult learning a priority, setting high expectations for performance, gearing content and instruction to standards, creating a culture of continuous learning, using multiple sources of data to assess learning, and involving the community's support for school success" (Lashway, 2002, p. 2).

- Quality Assurance. "Being able to tell parents and other stakeholders that every child will have good teaching in every classroom every year" (Marshall, 2013, p. 22).

- Standardized Assessments. Large-scale educational tests aimed to measure students' performance and compare to other students across the nation (Roehl, 2015).

- Summative Assessment. Cumulative assessments intended to describe the learning or quality of learning by judging performance (Dixson & Worrell, 2016).

- Teacher Attrition. The process of leaving the teaching profession within the first five years of teaching (Schaefer, Downey, & Clandinin, 2014).

- Teacher Evaluation. A comprehensive system for the assessment, development, and support of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

- Teacher Quality. The bundle of personal traits, skills, and understandings an individual brings to teaching, including dispositions to behave in certain ways (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

- Teacher Resistance. The affective, cognitive, and behavioral response aimed at maintaining the status quo, with hope of stopping, delaying, or altering the proposed change (Berkovich, 2011).

- Teacher Self-Efficacy. The self-perception of teachers resulting from observations throughout the educational period or their opinions about their own competence (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2016).

- Teacher Supervision. A process of instructional leaders that can be instrumental in producing gains in teacher expertise and student achievement (Marzano et al., 2011).

- Teacher Turnover. An important problem facing schools that consists of replacing teachers year after year due to transfers to other schools and/or leaving the profession altogether (Harris & Adams, 2007).

- Teachers' Union. Organizations representing teachers commonly credited with blocking reforms in teacher evaluation (Marzano et al., 2011).

- Teaching Quality. Refers to strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

- Tenure. A practice in some states that grants due process rights to teachers to eliminate the use of unfair dismissal of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

- Value Added Models (or Measures). Using measures such as standardized test scores to attribute influences on student learning over time (Marzano & Toth, 2013).

- Walk-Throughs. Observations, conducted often in teams, used to identify exceptionalities and deficiencies in classroom practice while relying primarily on anecdotal feedback (Marzano et al., 2011).

Organization of the Study

The present study focused on the effective strategies used by instructional leaders within Alabama. Five chapters make up the study and references and appendices are at the end. Chapter one, an introduction to the study, provides an overview of the literature related to teacher evaluation and an overview of my study. Chapter two details a review of teacher evaluation literature and Alabama's teacher evaluation policy. Chapter three details the design of research and the methodology used. This includes the purpose of the study, significance, and research procedures. Chapter four provides details on the analysis of the interview and observation. Chapter five summarizes the study, discusses the findings, and implications for other instructional leaders and dyad partnerships. Finally, appendices and references conclude the document.

Chapter II: Literature Review

"Every principal's most important job is getting good teaching in every classroom."
– Kim Marshall (2013, p. 3).

When the bell rings and the classroom door is closed, teachers often experience numerous challenges throughout the day. One common challenge faced by teachers of today is that teaching has developed into a major focus of policy makers (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Teaching and policies related to teaching are constantly moving backward and forward; however, how each school provides support for teachers' practice is vastly different. It is very common to see a range of teaching styles and abilities throughout a school, with each teacher at a different place in terms of professional growth. How instructional leaders respond to each teacher's ability level can determine how successful students and teachers become as the year progresses. "As teaching has become a major focus of policy makers, teacher evaluation is currently the primary tool being promoted to improve teaching practice" (Darling-Hammond, 2013, p. 2).

Reviewing significant and related empirical literature provided context for this research study. This chapter documents the literature pertaining to the history of teacher evaluation, federal government initiatives, the importance of teachers and instructional leaders, and perceptions related to teacher evaluation. For many years, the United States has searched for ways to keep up with other nations in student achievement, economic growth, and general prosperity of the nation's citizens. Investing in the development of educators could quite possibly be the answer government officials are looking for (Desimone, 2009). There is a distinct

connection between evaluation and development. According to Darling-Hammond (2013), a

high-quality teacher evaluation system should create a "coherent, well-grounded approach to

developing teaching" (p. 14). She supported her claim by outlining five elements operating

within a system to support teachers and student learning. Those five elements, outlined in Table

2 below, are crucial in developing and sustaining teacher effectiveness. When used

simultaneously, the five elements increase the likelihood of the developing teachers and their

practice.

Table 2

Five Elements of Developing and Sustaining Teacher Effectiveness

Elements	Description
1. Common statewide standards	Standards for teaching that are related to student learning
2. Performance-based assessments	Standards guiding state functions such as teacher preparation and licensure
3. Local evaluation systems tied to standards	Systems for evaluating on-the-job teaching based on multiple measures of teaching practice and student learning
4. Support structures	Structures ensuring properly trained evaluators, support for teachers who need assistance, and fair decisions about personnel actions
5. Aligned professional learning	Professional learning opportunities that support the improvement of teachers and teaching quality

Adapted from Darling-Hammond, L. (2013). Getting teacher evaluation right: What really matters for effectiveness and improvement (pgs. 14-15).

The nation has come a long way in the public education arena and a focus on teacher

growth could help the United States compete globally. The following timeline gives a historical

perspective of key factors, initiatives, and policies influencing our view of public education,

teacher evaluation, and student achievement today. An understanding of where the nation has

been will help readers understand policy and proposals of today. Commentary separates each

century below and emphasizes the big ideas of each period.

Historical Timeline

The 18th century, focused on land grants and federal policies relating to schooling, was when public education was born. As the next four entries will emphasize, the 1700s was a time of building and development of formal education. At the time, clear guidelines for teaching and learning were not established but education was clearly important to the writers of the Constitution.

- 1709 – Reports of the Record of Commissions of the City of Boston: A report that described a "committee of inspectors" which visited schools to inform leaders on the proficiency of classroom instruction. The purpose of the visits was to advise for the advancement of learning (Marzano et al., 2011).

- 1785 – The Land Ordinance of 1785: The first federal legislation to provide land for public education. It reserved lot number sixteen for the maintenance of public schools (Center on Education Policy, 2011, 7).

- 1789 – United States Constitution: Listed under Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress had the power to provide for the general welfare of the United States. The Constitution did not specifically mention a system of public education (US Constitution, 1789).

- 1791 – The 10th Amendment: The Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution described the relationship between federal and state governments. It gave rights, not given to the federal government, to the states. Since the Constitution did not discuss public education, states had the responsibility of providing public education (US Constitution. amend. X).

With land reserved for public schooling and power given to the states, public education was on its way to increasing the potential of citizens in the United States of America. The 1800s was a time of rapid growth for the education system that included a realization of how current practices were not developing achieving students. Because of that, teaching became a complex profession that included supervision and improvement of practice. By the mid-1800s, a growing population demanded public education reform.

- 1800s – Investigations of Public Education Began: The Federal Office of Education issued a report that described education in the early 1880s (Stallings, 2002). In Volume I of their work, they described an education system with little focus to guide student achievement. According to the report, not even one-half of four to sixteen-year olds attended school on a regular basis. Furthermore, the commissioners described the conditions of the schools as "satisfactory to nobody" (Stallings, 2002, p. 840). During this time, teachers did not have evaluations conducted, schools did not report progress to the states, and teachers' pay correlated to his/her gender.

- 1840s – A Complex Profession: Teaching started to become a complex profession in the 1840s when supervisors saw that teaching required developed specific pedagogical expertise. As teachers desired professional growth, constructive feedback to improve teachers' practice was underprovided (Marzano et al., 2011).

- 1852 – *The Common School Journal:* An early educational journal written by Horace Mann. This journal's purpose was to provide recommendations for educational reform. Through this journal, Mann described the inadequacies of public education around the nation. He advocated for a better curriculum and for teachers described as professionals (Mann, 1852).

- 1870 – Growth of the Population and School Systems: An 1867 Act required the US Department of Education to collect and report the progress of education to Congress. By the year 1870, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), nearly seven million students attended elementary schools, 80,000 attended secondary schools, and nearly 9,000 students obtained college degrees. In addition, the US population grew one-third each decade. This, caused by the increases in immigration and the amount of women at childbearing age, led to an increase in the growth of public schools (NCES, 1993, p. 5).

Arriving with the twentieth century, federal legislation documented the vast difference in socio-economic statuses and the need for greater educational support in areas of low-socioeconomic statuses. During the late 1900s, teacher evaluation was also widely identified as an art and science to improve teacher and student achievement.

- 1910 – City vs. Rural Schools*:* According to Cubberely (1927), by 1910, residents and educators saw a distinction between urban and rural schools. With the growth of cities around the country, city education became more advanced unlike the education of rural areas. Cubberely (1927) gave credit to the city education systems for advancement in the grading of schools, schools for delinquents, compulsory education, vocational education, and free textbook and supplies.

- 1965 – *The Elementary and Secondary Education Act:* Once signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, achievement gaps among low socio-economic students and their peers became a focus. This Act gave grants to school systems who served low-income students. Furthermore, it provided grants to systems and states that made the quality of educational improvement a priority.

- 1980s – A RAND group study (*Teacher Evaluation, A Study of Effective Practices*):
  A study conducted by a panel of individuals from educational organizations. This
  study examined instruments and procedures related to teacher evaluation, the
  implementation processes of such systems, and how teacher evaluation results guided
  the organization. Based on results from the study, the panel advocated for the
  elimination of "highly prescriptive" teacher evaluation requirements, adequate time
  for evaluation, multiple evaluators, training for evaluators, and the involvement of
  expert teachers in the evaluation process (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, &
  Bernstein, 1984).

- 1983 – A *Nation at Risk:* A federal report published by the National Commission of
  Excellence in Education. The thirty-seven page report reported on the current quality
  of education in the United States and proposed many ideas for change. As other
  countries soared beyond America's student achievement rates, *A Nation at Risk*
  brought teacher quality and student achievement to the forefront of government
  officials' and citizens' minds. (National Commission on Excellence in Education
  [NCEE], 1983).

- 1998 – *A Nation Still at Risk:* Fifteen years after the initial release of 1983's "A
  Nation at Risk," policy makers, educators, and foundations met to discuss the state of
  America's reforms for public education. Writers of this document proclaimed that
  students and teachers in America are still at risk. They offered suggestions for "break-
  through changes" to impact our future as a leader in education. (Thomas B. Fordham
  Foundation, 1998).

The twenty-first century, guided by much attention on the effectiveness of teachers, saw numerous policies and regulations related to the advancement of student growth and the reporting of that growth. With studies and reauthorizations of legislation, the public became widely aware of the status of student success and teacher effectiveness.

- 2001 – *No Child Left Behind Act:* According to a bill summary published by the US Education and Workforce Committee, *The No Child Left Behind Act* focused on closing the achievement gap in America's public schools (House Education and the Workforce Committee [HEWC], 2002). One of the many highlights of *NCLB* focused on improving teacher quality and supporting teachers. The bill supported teacher quality by calling for highly qualified teachers in every classroom by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. The committee's summary also cited the NCLB Act as providing funding to help "train, recruit, and retain quality teachers." (NEWC, 2002, para. 7).

- 2009 – Gates Foundation (*Measures of Effective Teaching [MET Project]):* In response to educators' perceptions of teacher evaluation, the MET project was created to "find out how evaluation methods could best be used to tell teachers more about skills that make them most effective and to help districts identify and develop great teaching" (Gates Foundation, 2013, para. 1). This research study answered the following question: Is it possible to identify and measure effective teaching?

- 2009 – Race to the Top [RTT] *(funded by The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act):* A federal program which awards grants to states that are "leading the way" in educational reform. Each applicant must focus on the following four areas: adopting college and career standards, building systems to measure student growth, recruit,

reward, and retain effective teachers, and turning around low-achieving schools (United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2009).

- 2009 – *The Widget Effect:* A large-scale study that focused on our nation's problem of producing accurate information on instructional performance to affect teacher evaluation within the United States. Their recommendations focused on improving instructional effectiveness in order to increase student learning (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern & Keeling, 2009).

- 2015 – *Every Student Succeeds Act:* Signed into law on December 10, 2015 by President Obama, the *ESSA* reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act,* which gave equal opportunity for all students to succeed. Included in this law were proposals in reference to college and career readiness standards, statewide assessments to measure student learning, student performance targets, teacher and leader evaluations including student learning and observations, and competitive programs to evaluate and reward effective educators (ESSA, 2015).

Public education, a two-hundred-year journey, shifted from supervision to evaluation as well as from teacher behavior to student achievement (Marzano et al., 2011). The previous timeline was a snapshot of important dates related to education; however, a more detailed analysis of history follows this section so readers can better understand where we came from and how public education has developed into what it is today. The following section lists, in detail, our journey from the 1700s to current times.

The History of Teacher Evaluation

A brief summary of history follows to summarize the timeline above and to provide insight for following sections. Still true today, education in the United States has experienced

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numerous challenges. The history of the public education system is largely representative of the vision of many educators, researchers, and government officials of early time. The importance of teachers and teaching practices has evolved over the years. Furthermore, teacher evaluation, in regards to this vision of effectiveness, has changed drastically.

Teacher evaluation and accountability are two words often discussed simultaneously. As accountability for student learning gains has become popular over the past few years, pressure on teacher accountability and evaluation has also increased. States have reexamined their teacher evaluation policies and procedures as pressure influences teachers to increase gains in student achievement. This pressure has given some educators shifting views of teacher evaluation's purpose, procedures, and outcomes. Prior research conducted by Robert Marzano (2012) described two concerns about our nation's experience with teacher evaluation. In his article on teacher evaluation, he described that our former teacher evaluation procedures failed to classify characteristics of effective and ineffective teachers. He also noted that teacher evaluation of the past has not assisted in developing a highly skilled teacher workforce.

A historical view of education and teacher supervision since the 1700s is important because it helps us understand how teacher evaluation has evolved into what it is today. Prior research helps us understand that the focus of teacher evaluation has changed over time and the focus is often dependent on the views and beliefs of the time period discussed. While Ellett and Teddlie (2003) reported that teacher evaluation beliefs over time might seem "inextricably interrelated," the development of teacher evaluation since the 1700s is vastly important, as leaders exist to help teachers develop today.

In Marzano et al.'s (2011) book on supporting teachers, the authors gave a brief account of the history of teacher supervision and evaluation. The proceeding information came from the

outline of supervision and evaluation provided in chapter two of their book: *Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching*.

The Origin of Teacher Evaluation

Public education traces back to the early influences of the 1787 draft of the *U.S. Constitution* (Marzano et al., 2011). Originally, our country's governing document made no specific mention of public education; however, intellect remained important in the lives of American citizens. While intellect was important, intelligence by means of a public education delivered by a teacher was not widely available at the time. In the 1700s, according to Marzano et al. (2011), teaching was not an actual profession. They described teaching as a service to the community supervised by the local government and members of clergy. The history of supervision has always included supporting, evaluating, and providing feedback to employees. Due to a lack of expertise, feedback given by the clergy in regards to teacher effectiveness was vague and was highly varied. Unfortunately, that feedback had very little impact on the professional growth of teachers at the time (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 12). A free and appropriate education for students in America was still a new thought at this point in history and a valuable education for students was not visible until the nineteenth century.

A Need for Reform

In 1837, a lawyer and superintendent by the name of Horace Mann saw inadequacies with education and chose to reform Massachusetts's schools. At this time, he put his law practice behind him and focused on education (Mann, 1852). He was a reputable leader who was largely responsible for laying the foundation for public education in America. As mentioned in the timeline above, *The Common School Journal* (1852), published by Mann, provided recommendations for public school reform. Mann, like others, was unhappy with the state of

education at the time and focused on teachers as professionals to help initiate this change. Throughout his quest for a free and appropriate education, he developed grade levels and mandatory attendance policies for America's schoolchildren (Fuller, 1868, as cited in Marzano, 2012).

The career of an educator developed into a more complex profession that required more feedback and instructional knowledge after the mid-1800s. In 1845, the superintendent of New York schools issued his annual report, which detailed the role of supervisors in schools. In this report, he referred to himself, the superintendent, being the person responsible for examining and licensing teachers as well as the person responsible for revoking teachers' licenses (Marzano et al, 2011, p. 7). While he mentioned his supervisory role in public education, he notated little about supporting teachers throughout their career. Throughout the document, he detailed a reason for revoking a teacher's certificate by saying that a teacher's certificate could be revoked "whenever the teacher holding such certificate shall be found deficient, and generally, by all the means in his power to promote sound education" (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 8). At this point in history, the pedagogical foundation for great teaching was not present and little discussion took place related to the true meaning of a sound education.

With very little mention of the supervision of education, Marzano et al. (2011) gave credit to the teachers for assuming administrator duties at this time while teaching. The "principal teacher" (as they called him/her) eventually evolved into the role of the building principal (p. 13). This shift, caused by the creation of tax-supported elementary schools by 1870, increased awareness of the importance of public education. As more money poured into education, communities began to grow and, as a result, the public had more access to a free education. This change stimulated the need for an expertise in school leadership.

The Birth of Educational Leadership

Respect for the teaching profession came with the beginning of the twentieth century. As the 1900s arrived, public education, influenced by more factors than previously known, became a focus of the public (Marzano et al., 2011). As teachers' unions appeared, rights and respect for teachers became a well-known aspect of improving schools. In a document outlining the past success of the United Federation of Teachers, their organization detailed the progress of the union since the early 1900s (Marzano et al., 2011). Offering us a glimpse of how teachers were then viewed, this 1913 document, despairs over how "teachers today have no responsibility; they have only burdens, imposed by the petty requirement of bosses" (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 8). Teachers needed an instructional leader and were obviously weary about the way leaders managed. Supporting this statement, the organization described a board of education as wanting "silent, obedient teachers." At this time, when teachers spoke up about their feelings, some ended up suspended without pay (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 8).

Budget constraints and the public's negative view of education were prevalent in the early 1900s. Like today, government officials of the early 1900s also fueled teacher burnout and stress. In hopes of strengthening the public education system after a financial crisis in 1915, New York City leaders "froze school budgets, reduced the teaching force, lengthened the school day, and only gave promotions based on merit" (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 8).

Despite the public's opposition to public education, numerous individuals fought to improve public education. The work of Ellwood Patterson Cubberely (1927), "the father of educational leadership," also became widely known at that time. As a leader in education, he grew up in an era without formal textbooks in reference to successfully leading schools. In his day, school administrators could only learn from experience. Through that experience, Cubberely

published a book entitled *Public School Administration* (1927). The book provided much insight into the view of public education, supervision, and evaluation from the 1870s until the late 1920s. His work gives current readers a historical look at the formation of public education and educational supervision.

Within this book, Cubberely (1927) focused on the relationship of three individuals; the classroom teacher, principal, and superintendent. At this point in history, the superintendent's role was a new position. Cubberely charged the superintendent with possessing enthusiasm and looked down upon superior power. He also proclaimed that the "superintendent should see clear goals for the school system and possess the knowledge to reach those goals" (1927, p. 188). While Cubberely described the superintendent as a supervisor, he did not discuss much about the requirements or responsibilities of that role. He went on to say that supervision is the responsibility of the individual school.

He introduced a powerful quote as he started the principal section of the book. "As is the principal, so is the school" (Cubberely, 1927, p. 190). The quote supports the idea that instructional leaders lay the foundation of a school and everything is dependent upon the foundation that the leader lays. Like the twenties, this still rings true today. He continued to support his quote by saying that a weak and inefficient principal could not improve a school.

His book also gave suggestions for the removal of ineffective teachers. Before giving his recommendations, he noted that without notification of deficiencies and assistance to improve deficiencies, teachers should not be terminated (Cubberely, 1927, p. 217). By making this claim, it seems as if Cubberely valued the importance of using teacher evaluation for professional growth. His work, however, focused heavily on the supervision of teachers, a theme of early education.

Although this top-down approach to public education worked for a while, teachers and principals found themselves covered in bureaucracy and started to move toward a more democratic environment (Snow-Gerono, 2008). As multiple models of supervision were in existence at the time, the democratic turn of teacher supervision led to the evolvement of additional models; however, the top-down approach to teacher evaluation will continue to disappear and reappear many times ahead.

A Turn of Events

The democratic turn of teacher supervision did not really make a lasting change until the 1940s. Snow-Gerono (2008) described the 1940s as a time that "supervisors-as-raters" disappeared and a strong democratic presence took over. Marzano et al. (2011) also described a change in focus post World War II. In 1945, researchers began to focus on "teachers as individuals" (p. 16). Elsie Coleman, author of *The Supervisory Visit* (1945) described a supervisor in the forties as a person who "understood the complexity of classroom visits and utilized every possibility to make visits satisfying and worthwhile experiences" (p. 164). At this point in history, she believed the days of using observation for teacher supervision were long gone. While she did not agree with abolishing observations completely, she felt observations should take on new meaning, which would place the tool as merely a "segment of the whole supervisory plan" (Coleman, 1945, p. 164). Clearly, by the use of certain descriptors in her article, teacher evaluation was a function of supervision in the forties.

Time devoted to the research of teacher evaluation has increased since the 1980s. The 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative of Educational Reform* increased the public's awareness of educational practices and teacher effectiveness (NCEE, 1983). The National Commission on Excellence in Education presented this report to communicate the

quality of education to the American people. As one of the first educational reforms in the United States, its authors sought to achieve six goals. Those goals focused on the necessity of accurately measuring teaching quality in the nation's schools in order to achieve distinction in education. At this time, the 1983 report documented low student achievement and struggling to keep up with other nations. This risk caused a push for higher standards, parental support, and a dedication to life-long learning for all learners regardless of socioeconomic status.

From a historical perspective, the recommendations listed for teacher support and evaluation in *A Nation at Risk* were a foundation for future initiatives in the United States. While public education has been under scrutiny for many years, *A Nation at Risk* made the public aware of the disparities in public education and fueled the public's future angst with the state of education as a whole. With the onset of the 1990s, for example, concerned parents criticized public education (NCEE, 1983).

Because of the state of education in the 90s, the public's outcry for a better public education system accompanied an increase in citizens' access to different forms of education. Parents have the option to consider alternatives to public education such as charter schools, magnet schools, private schools, or home schools. School choice, documented since the 1960s, became widely used in the 1990s (NCES, 2014). Their findings showed a decrease in public school enrollment and cited the parents' satisfaction level within their study. The authors stated, "Students attending chosen schools were more likely to have parents that were very satisfied with the schools" (NCES, 2014, p. 32). Nevertheless, the importance of teacher quality remained a focus of policies related to the implementation and effectiveness of teacher evaluation practices around the nation.

Teacher Evaluation after 2001

Up until 2001, much went into developing effective strategies for effective teaching and student growth. Since the passage of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, the United States Department of Education spent nearly 200 billion dollars on public education (NCLB, 2002); however, achievement gaps still existed and many children were "left behind." President George W. Bush made education a priority of his administration and wanted to help improve the elementary and secondary schools in the United States. To do this, he framed a reauthorization of *ESEA* named *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB, 2002). *No Child Left Behind* created a public awareness of educational accountability and reform, which prompted research projects such as the Measures of Effective Teaching project (Gates Foundation 2013), and further federal legislation such as Race to the Top (USDOE, 2009). Reform, a common theme in public education, gave a lot of attention to teacher effectiveness and student achievement after 2001.

The No Child Left Behind Act

The focus on improving student learning became widely known in 2001 with the popular revision of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*. *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* prompted revision to many policies regarding student assessment and teacher certification. As cited by Hazi and Rucinski (2009), evaluation should be a resource used for instructional improvement (p. 3). They published a review of our nation's statutes and regulations in response to the passage of *NCLB*. This study, highly influenced by the National Governor's Association (NGA), focused on six policy strategies to categorize and compare states (Hazi and Rucinski, 2009). To increase student achievement, the NGA believed we must understand teacher quality, focus policy on improving practice, incorporate student learning into

the evaluation of teachers, be held accountable, train evaluators, and increase the participation in evaluation (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009).

In response to the six strategies given by the NGA, Hazi and Rucinski (2009) analyzed each state's statutes and policies using the preceding strategies. Their findings showed NGA's impact on teacher evaluation practices around the country. All but nine states adopted at least one of the NGA strategies. While some strategies appeared more than others did, all states seemed to understand the importance of teacher quality. In their study, defining teacher quality was one of the most commonly used strategies along with training evaluators and broadening participation in evaluation (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009, p. 8).

Although a lot of research supported the benefits of *NCLB* at the time, an abundance of literature focuses on inadequacies of the legislation. In an effort to control public schools and their work toward student achievement, legislators encouraged the use of a top-down approach once more (Snow-Gerono, 2008, p. 1506). This bureaucratic view of public education placed stipulations and burdens on schools it was attempting to help. Meier, Kohl, Darling-Hammond, Sizer, and Wood's (2004) critique of *NCLB* legislation portrays the legislation as a mistake of measuring schools in order to fix them.

To support their research, the authors found two negative effects of *NCLB* legislation. First, the legislation reduced the low-scoring school's ability to attract and keep qualified teachers (Meier et al., 2004, p. 13). To support their claim, the authors cited the fact that experienced teachers left Florida schools quickly and teachers without experience filled the vacant positions. Secondly, it was now possible for schools to lose federal funding if they did not meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) standards. Unfortunately, the schools at risk of not making AYP were the same schools who needed the funding the most which would, in turn,

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"reduce access to education for the most vulnerable students, rather than increasing it" (Meier et al., 2004, p. 18).

Placing the demand of high stakes testing and accountability does not encourage higher levels of learning. Only good teaching, a strong curriculum, and adequate resources will help schools move towards the goal of student achievement (Meier et al., 2004). The authors concluded with a suggestion of investing in teaching instead of investing in the punishment of schools.

The Measures of Effective Teaching Project

The Gates Foundation, created by Bill and Melinda Gates, launched a three-year study to identify and offer solutions for effective teaching. The foundation hoped to assess how systems measured teacher efficacy as well as hoped to provide states with useful information to build successful teacher effectiveness programs. Their study consisted of 3000 teachers within six urban school districts across the United States. Researchers suggested measuring effective teaching by classroom observations, student surveys, and student achievement gains. According to their final report, the study had three major findings, which influenced teacher effectiveness and the future of teacher evaluation (Gates Foundation, 2013).

Is it possible to identify great teaching? According to the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project, the answer is a resounding yes. The authors cite themselves as "the first large-scale study to demonstrate that it is possible to identify great teaching" (Gates Foundation, 2013, para. 4). The second finding suggested that evaluation of teachers should consist of using multiple measures such as: classroom observations, student achievement gains, and students' perceptions. The researchers believe that when multiple measures are used, results will be less likely to fluctuate over time. Finally, the authors suggested that one observer should no longer

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observe teachers. Multiple observations by multiple observers promote teacher growth by giving multiple perspectives and suggestions over time.

Race to the Top

As a recognizable trend throughout history, reform has consistently been one of the top priorities of the American government. On November 4, 2009, President Barack Obama issued an echoing declaration related to the literature previously presented through this document. "It's time to stop just talking about education reform and start actually doing it. It's time to make education America's national mission" (USDOE, 2009, p. 2). Shortly before that statement, the President signed the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act [ARRA] of 2009*. According to the Race to the Top Executive Summary (USDOE, 2009), the *ARRA* supported "investments in innovative strategies that are most likely to lead to improved results for students, long-term gains in school and school system capacity, and increased productivity and effectiveness" (USDOE, 2009, p. 2). With a vision of "better standards, better teaching, and better schools" many states raced to impact student achievement through a reform of teaching and learning.

The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* gave 4.35 billion dollars to Race to the Top. Race to the Top was a competitive grant program accessible to all states by means of an application process. The purpose of the grant was to reward states for innovation and reform in public education systems. With many goals in mind, the government created the grant to close achievement gaps, increase the graduation rate, recruit, reward, and retain effective teachers, and to turn around low-achieving schools. The grant was composed of multiple phases and had a criterion of six areas: state success, standards and assessments, data systems to support instruction, great teachers and leaders, turn around schools, and other general aspects. The success of the program prompted President Obama to request an additional 1.35 billion dollars to

continue the reform movement in 2010. By 2015, the Department of Education released the final Race to the Top report. This report documented the success of the 12 states chosen to participate. On average, a higher rate of students graduated and every state made progress in the area of criteria listed previously (USDOE, 2016, p. 14). Even if states did not participate, the impact the grant made on the nation through the work each state conducted had a lasting effect on teaching and learning within the United States (2016).

Race to the Top specifically mentioned "great teachers and leaders" in section D of the executive summary (USDOE, 2016, p. 9). In that section, the federal government detailed the need for rigorous and fair evaluation systems, which used student achievement data, methods of developing teachers, and compensating teachers for effective teaching. Additionally, the section outlined reasons for dismissing ineffective tenured or untenured teachers after given opportunities to improve.

The Current State of Teacher Evaluation

In response to federal guidelines and state legislators, many states have revisited their teacher evaluation procedures. Regardless of the reform in state legislatures, most teachers' evaluations consist of one or two observations a year. This meant a year of hard work, or lack thereof, consisted of about twenty or thirty minutes of an administrator in the classroom. Research shows a need for a differentiated approach to teacher evaluation; however, the differentiated approaches are already taking place in some states (Danielson, 2001). Differentiated systems of teacher evaluation are systems that rely on different activities and procedures for different groups of teachers. Further discussion of individualized teacher evaluation goals appear later in this document.

In response to guidelines outlined in *NCLB* (2002), different status models of student achievement have been widely used around the country as an indicator for teacher effectiveness (Marzano & Toth, 2013). In their book on teacher evaluation, Marzano and Toth document six growth models to measure the achievement of students. The authors cite "wide agreement" that student growth is an important aspect of teacher effectiveness, but continued to say that there is no agreement in reference to which growth measures are best (Marzano & Toth, 2013, p. 19). Many states around the country are using at least one of the growth models cited by Marzano and Toth. Whether states use status models, cohort models, growth models, value-added measures, student learning objectives, or school wide attribution, the use of student growth is an emphasis of teacher and principal evaluation. In addition, there is considerable argument about the interpretation of value-added measures when being related to teacher effectiveness (David, 2010).

Value-added models have become very popular over the past few years. Through value-added models, pressure placed upon educators seeks to improve student performance in a year's worth of time. Value-added models are models that use student achievement scores or student growth models to help judge teacher effectiveness. As of 2017, documented in Table 3 below, 39 states now require student growth data to be included in teacher evaluations according to the National Council on Teaching Quality (NCTQ, 2017). While many states are using student achievement data in evaluations, Alabama's evaluation system includes data on "student engagement from observations and student growth data from various assessments" (NCTQ, 2017, para 1).

Table 3

States Currently Using Student Achievement Data in Teacher Evaluations (NCTQ, 2017).

Alabama	Indiana	New Mexico	Utah
Arizona	Louisiana	Nevada	Virginia
Colorado	Massachusetts	New York	Washington
Connecticut	Maryland	Ohio	Wisconsin
District of Columbia	Maine	Oregon	West Virginia
Delaware	Michigan	Pennsylvania	Wyoming
Florida	Minnesota	Rhode Island	
Georgia	Missouri	South Carolina	
Hawaii	Mississippi	South Dakota	
Idaho	North Dakota	Tennessee	
Illinois	New Jersey	Texas	

Alabama has not started using value added models; however, discussions about using summative student data have recently taken place. The introduction of *The Preparing and Rewarding of Education Professionals [PREP] Act* (2016) in Alabama almost required Alabama to use value added models in teacher evaluations (Cason, 2016). The *PREP Act* suggested the mandate of teacher and administrator evaluations should include student growth as twenty-five percent of each educator's effectiveness ratings (Cason 2016). The *PREP Act* did not pass through Alabama legislature and a new bill, the *Raise Act*, came forth (Cason 2016).

Nolan and Hoover (2008) stated, "Student performance is not a direct measure of teacher performance" (p. 190). Several factors determine student performance and/or student achievement. For example, Nolan and Hoover (2008) suggested that, "students make the final decision about how much effort they will put into learning" (p. 190). As such, factors beyond the teachers control can influence student performance. When Value Added Models (VAMs) are used, student performance has the potential to make teachers' ratings negative. Marzano and Toth (2013) referenced a quote in their book on teacher evaluation by Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, and Rothstein (2012). It stated,

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Using VAMs for individual teacher evaluation is based on the belief that measured achievement gains for a specific teacher's students reflect that teacher's 'effectiveness.' That attribution, however, assumes that student learning is measured well by a given test, is influenced by the teacher alone, and is independent from the growth of classmates and other aspects of the classroom context. None of these assumptions is well supported by current evidence. (p. 6)

Furthermore, the authors provided three criticisms of using student achievement data when rating teachers. First, the authors stated that VAMs of teacher effectiveness are inconsistent. They cited a recent study that examined VAM data across five school districts. They stated,

The researchers found that of the teachers who scored in the bottom 20 percent of rankings one year, only 20 to 30 percent scored in the bottom 20 percent the next year while 25 to 45 percent moved to the top part of the distribution (Marzano & Toth, 2013, p. 6).

As such, changes in student achievement data provide little documentation of an increase in teacher effectiveness or growth.

Secondly, VAM scores differ significantly when different methods of computing scores and different tests are used. Since all systems across the nation do not use the same equation or test to measure teacher effectiveness, results also vary. Many causes of student achievement are beyond a teacher's control. Marzano and Toth (2013) also cited a study by Darling-Hammond that described how a teacher with high student achievement results switched classes with a teacher whose class had low student achievement results. Results of that study did not produce desired results. Instead, the teachers had nothing to do with the results of students. The authors cited a quote from the study and said,

This example of two teachers whose value-added ratings flip-flopped when they exchanged assignments is an example of a phenomenon found in other studies that

document a larger association between the class taught and value-added ratings than the individual teacher effect itself (Marzano & Toth, 2013, p. 12).

Authors suggest several alternatives to solely basing evaluative decisions on student performance. Nolan and Hoover (2008) suggested combining other data sources with student data such as observations, materials, and videos of the teachers' lessons. Additionally, they suggested looking at students as a group instead of individually and analyzing learning over time instead of a single year. Value-added measures cloud results related to teacher effectiveness ratings because of the various factors outside of an educators' control. With high hopes, legislators hoped to increase student achievement by a certain date but the *NCLB* policy often caused more harm than good (Meier et al., 2004). Value-added measures cause the same harm because of the misinformation they provide.

The Every Student Succeeds Act

The nation currently is under provisions made by *The Every Student Succeeds Act*, signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. This act made revisions to and reauthorized President Lyndon B. Johnson's *Elementary and Secondary Act* of 1965 (ESSA, 2015). After the government discovered that the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 became "unworkable" for U.S. educators, the 391-page *ESSA* document outlined strategies for the improvement of public education in the United States (ESSA, 2015). The Act focuses on multiple measures for student performance and school ratings, dedicates funding for the lowest performing schools, and the rewarding of effective educators. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD] (2015) issued a comparison of the former *No Child Left Behind Act* and the current *Every Student Succeeds Act*. The comparison below discusses ASCD's breakdown of the differences between the two laws.

Probably the most prevalent aspect of the *No Child Left Behind Act* was the unrealistic

expectation of proficiency by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. *No Child Left Behind* hoped

for 100% of students to be proficient in a short amount of time (ASCD, 2015). *The Every Student*

Succeeds Act eliminated adequate yearly progress and the proficiency requirement (ASCD, 2015,

p. 4). Instead of AYP, *ESSA* required the following state-developed accountability systems:

performance goals for each subgroup, state assessments, yearly measuring of graduation rates,

and yearly measuring of student growth. *ESSA* also extended the publicly available annual state

report card to include more aspects than *NCLB*'s requirements (ASCD, 2015).

President Bush's and President Obama's Acts both recognized the importance of teacher

and leader effectiveness. While *NCLB* required highly qualified status for 100% of educators,

ESSA eliminated that requirement; however, states are still required to assure that educators

working in programs supported by Title I funds meet state requirements (ASCD, 2015, p. 6).

Instead of calling out-of-field, inexperienced teachers, and unqualified teachers "unqualified,"

ESSA refers to those teachers as "ineffective" (ASCD, 2015, p. 6). The term ineffective carries

more weight than qualifications. Ineffective should describe the ability of the teacher to carry out

instructional duties, not whether or not they meet certification requirements.

A Nation Still at Risk

A little more than three decades later, our nation remains at risk (Thomas B. Fordham

Foundation, 1998). Like the 1983 document stated, "Our once unchallenged preeminence in

commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors

throughout the world" (NCEE, 1983, p. 1). Even though the preceding words are the same as in

1983, the strides in education have improved education somewhat, but many of the indicators

described in the 1983 document still describe public education of today. This risk places

uncertainty on the future of our students' and country's future (Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1998).

Table 4

Indicators That Place Our Nation at Risk: A Comparison of 1983 and Today

Themes	1983 Indicators of Risk	2000's Indicators of Risk
Global Competition	Americans placed lower than other nations. 23 million Americans described as functionally illiterate.	The US ranks 12th in college completion (WhiteHouse.gov)
Minorities & Low-Income Families	40% of minority youth were functionally illiterate.	Students from low-income families complete college at one-seventh the rate of those from high-income families (Ed.gov)
Standardized Tests	Achievement is lower than 26 years ago. Scores dramatically declined.	The US is below the global average of math proficiency according to the PISA (NCES, 2014).
College	Between 1975 and 1980, remedial math courses increased by 72%	42% of freshman at 2-year colleges enrolled in remedial courses while 12-24% of freshman at other types of institutions enrolled in remedial courses (Parsad & Lewis, 2003).

Many indicators have prompted much needed attention toward the quality of education in the United States. Table 4, above, compares the indicators of 1983 to indicators of today. Globally, the United States is still behind other nations. Struggles within the nation are also at the forefront of policy as the United States attempts to keep up with other nations. One internal struggle documented in 1983 and today is low socioeconomic status. Poverty influences public education and post-secondary education. That has prompted policy makers to enact important legislation and programs such as Title I funding to support schools and students in low-socioeconomic areas of the nation.

Despite the nation's attempt at regulating school change by means of accountability, research tells us, according to Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon, that we cannot improve education by "legislating higher standards and higher stakes" (2014, p. 31). They continue to

describe that none of the reforms listed above improve the school culture so many of the problems with the management and supervision of schools remain unaddressed.

To combat the fact that we are still described as being behind other nations, instructional leaders devote a lot of time to assess the quality of teaching and learning, to compare schools, and to assess how socioeconomic factors influences student achievement. Unfortunately, not all administrators use effective teacher evaluation strategies. Previous research has criticized the reporting of some teacher evaluation practices. A 2008 study by Toch and Rothman showed 22 out of 600 schools (87%) did not give at least one unsatisfactory rating between 2003 and 2006 (p. 97). Even though 69 of those schools were "failing," evaluators were confident that each teacher was effective. Furthermore, Marzano et al. (2011) also pointed out that "93 percent of that city's 25,000 teachers received excellent or superior ratings" (p. 97).

Comparing Toch and Rothman's data from 2008 to *The Widget Effect* (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009) also presented similar data about the generosity of evaluators when evaluating the greatest impact on student achievement, teachers. This study was conducted over four states, twelve districts, 1,300 principals, and 40,000 evaluation records. With a research purpose of giving policy makers and school leaders recommendations for evaluation, the researchers discovered astounding data. The report documented five flaws of the implementation and practice of teacher evaluation (Table 5). The flaws listed below depict the inadequacies still prevalent in public education today. Without an emphasis on effectiveness of teaching, improving the skills of individual teachers will not take place. As Darling-Hammond (2013) stated, "We need to create and sustain productive, collegial working conditions that allow teachers to work collectively in an environment that supports learning for them and their students" (p. 3).

Table 5

The Five Flaws of Teacher Evaluation

Flaw	Description
1. All teachers are rated good or great	More than 99 percent of teachers received a satisfactory rating.
2. Excellence goes unrecognized	59 percent of teachers and 63 percent of administrators say their district is not doing enough to promote and retain effective teachers
3. Inadequate professional development	73 percent of teachers stated their most recent evaluation did not identify any areas of improvement. 45 percent of teachers who did have areas of improvement said they received useful support to improve.
4. No special attention to novices	41 percent of administrators have never non-renewed a probationary teacher and 66 percent of novice teachers received a greater than satisfactory rating
5. Poor performance goes unaddressed	81 percent of administrators and 43 percent of teachers said there is a tenured teacher who should be dismissed for poor performance. At least half of the districts in the study did not dismiss a tenured teacher during the timeframe of the study.

Adapted from Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling. (2009). The widget effect (pgs. 4-5).

In summary of Table 5, the study's authors identified an alarming fact related to teacher evaluation. The authors stated, "A teacher's effectiveness-the most important factor for schools in improving student achievement-is not measured, recorded, or used to inform decision making in any meaningful way" (Weisberg et al., 2009, p. 1). Additional research, below, also documented the inadequacies of teacher evaluation which has a detrimental effect on professional growth, school success, and student achievement.

Marzano et al. (2011) documented evaluation data from two school districts. Within two districts, collectively totaling 35,951 teachers, evaluators gave 68% of teachers (24,624 people) nothing less than "superior" or "outstanding" which was the highest rating; however, only .4% of teachers (143 people) received unsatisfactory ratings. What is tremendously alarming is that

those 143 people came from only one of the districts. The other district did not have any unsatisfactory ratings. Additionally, almost 75% of teachers did not receive any specific feedback on improving performance. Summarizing the results of the systems' evaluation data, the authors stated that half of the participating districts did not dismiss a single tenured teacher for poor performance within the past five years. This data should point research in the direction of describing effective evaluation practices. That description should include how instructional leaders can influence change by means of teacher evaluation.

Marshall (2013) described the current state of instructional leadership in her book on teacher supervision and evaluation. In her recollection of literature and personal experience, she stated many administrators are unable to get into classrooms on a regular basis due to many unpredictable factors that could happen on a day-to-day basis. While an instructional leader's main role should be improving teacher and student achievement, factors outside of their control limit their instructional effectiveness. Her list of forces distracting leaders in today's schools compile into three categories that are highly dependent on each other.

First, instructional leaders are often victim to interruptions. Factors outside of their control consume their time and keep them away from the classrooms. As the author stated, instructional leaders, frequently found in the office or around the school, spend a great deal of time putting out one fire after another. Because of this, instructional leaders spend more time managing when they fall victim to the daily interruptions taking precedence on a daily basis.

A lack of focus takes place when administrators spend more time managing the school. This third category of distraction has the largest impact on teacher and student growth. Teachers and students suffer when the instructional leader's vision consists only of the managerial functions of running a school. As a result of the lack of focus on improving achievement,

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Marshall (2013) points out that evaluation rarely takes place, teachers rarely get feedback, and

teacher mediocrity "flourishes because teachers are on their own for a majority of the time" (p.

46). Additionally, Marzano & Toth (2013) stated that teacher observations are not an accurate

representation of the classroom because "so few observations are performed" (p. 11).

The National Council on Teacher Quality (2016) found the following:

> Evaluations of teacher effectiveness grounded in student outcomes provide states with
> opportunities to improve teacher policy and teacher practice. Teachers should not be able
> to receive satisfactory evaluation ratings if they are not effective in the classroom.
> Without high-quality teacher evaluations as a strong foundation, states are unable to
> connect the dots and use results in meaningful ways to inform policy and practice. (p. 2)

Figure 1 summarizes the literature discussed and highlights the negative forces

influencing effective teacher evaluation practices. The force field analysis, below, is a tool used

for analyzing the various forces for and against an area of focus. Change could have a better

chance of taking place when instructional leaders are aware of the progressive and adverse

forces. Starting on the left side of Figure 1, negative forces often outweigh positive forces. As

stated earlier, an administrator (often in a leadership position alone) has a difficult time

managing the school, the staff, while promoting staff development based on evaluation. When an

administrator struggles with time management, the quality of feedback lessens and the

administrator's impact on the school dwindles.

Negative Forces		Positive Forces
Time		Teacher efficacy
Expertise		Multiple measures
Quality of feedback	**Factors Affecting Teacher**	A desire for feedback
Administrator turnover	**Evaluation**	Professional growth
Teacher turnover		Increase in achievement
Teacher resistance		
Management of the school		

Figure 1. Force Field Analysis: Factors Influencing Teacher Evaluation Today

The current state of teacher evaluation largely focuses on the documentation of teacher competency. One may view evaluative documentation as a drawing. It merely provides a picture of what the inspector is trying to evaluate. Effective evaluation will not take place unless leaders use the picture to influence practice. Leaders must understand the purpose of evaluation. Much like the purpose of supervision, the ultimate purpose of teacher evaluation should be the enrichment of educators' skillfulness.

Supervision of Teachers

Throughout many decades of history as described above, researchers have consistently documented flaws with the evaluation of public teachers. One important theme documented in literature relates to the responsibility of building principals analyzing his/her own teachers' practices. We are currently in an era where building principals are battling outside forces such as legislators, policy, and the public's view. A principal may ask, "How am I supposed to continually encourage and building the culture of my school while at the same time I'm required to critique and rate my teachers effective or ineffective?"

The confusion of roles described in Snow-Gerono's work on teacher development (2008). The author discusses words associated with supervision such as "surveillance, regulation, and administration" but also uses words such as "guidance, instruction, and leadership" (p. 1508). A building principal will be able to describe those words as antonyms. How may one define supervision using surveillance and guidance in the same description? Tensions arise when administrators assume both the procedural and conceptual roles of instructional leadership. Documented by Range, Young, and Hvidston (2013), "policy-makers and teachers view teacher supervision and evaluation as the same despite each being distinct processes with different outcomes" (p. 62). They continued to describe the difference in the two stances on instructional

leadership by stating that "teacher supervision is concerned with improving teachers' practice through professional development while evaluation's convergence is rating teachers' job performance to determine their employment status" (Range et al., 2013, p. 62).

As described above, many school systems and legislators across the country and Alabama place the burden of supervision and evaluation on the building principals. These expectations place a heavy burden on principals and vary rarely impact teacher growth in a positive way. For example, Range et al. (2013) discussed a study that stated that teachers may only make improvements in a non-threatening environment; however, when teachers view administrators as evaluators, the evaluation process may seem hostile. To avoid this, administrators must reflect on the prior use of top-down approaches and move toward a more collaborative role. As Snow-Gerono described (2008), in order to create a more collegial atmosphere for collaborative and teacher-directed ventures, supervisors should re-evaluate power relationships and dialogic supervision. To do this, building level administrators should "become the facilitator of a community of practice that uses collaborative inquiry, reflection, and dialogue to develop a collective vision of what it wants teaching and learning to look like. They should also explore ways of moving toward that vision and assess its progress for the purpose of continuous improvement" (Glickman et al., 2014, p. 10-11).

Additionally Range et al. (2013) cite one other explanation for the confusion between supervision and evaluation. Managerial duties associated with being a building-level principal often unbalance the amount of time spent on instructional leadership. Regardless of how an administrator may seek to budget his/her time throughout the day, unexpected interruptions and events can "derail" efforts to routinely visit a teachers classroom (p. 63). Without time inside the classroom, a principal vary rarely can implement strategies to lead instructionally.

The Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

History documented the need for effective teaching practices and effective strategies to monitor those practices; thus, the purpose of teacher evaluation is important for discussion. Rather than solely monitoring teaching practices, teacher evaluation should be used to "document and help teachers develop greater effectiveness" (Darling-Hammond, 2013, p. 27). The purpose of teacher evaluation, outlined in Darling-Hammond's work (2013) should capture teaching in action, observe and assess aspects of teaching related to teachers' effectiveness, examine teachers' intentions and strategies, and look at teaching relating to student learning (p. 26). Prior legislation has discussed these aspects of teacher evaluation as they relate to accountability.

The passage of *NCLB* (2002) created an era focused on accountability. In terms of accountability, this important policy focused on student growth as the main goal of public education. Since 2001, legislators have forced educators and the community to question what is important in public education, test scores or learning experiences. With pressure to produce high-test scores and student growth, lawmakers have initiated urgency for organizational change to achieve student growth (NCLB, 2002).

The increase of educational accountability has triggered an increase of awareness, dialogue, and reflection concerning student achievement. Through accountability reports, the state monitors and reports each student's level of mastery to the public. Also reported are mastery levels through school-generated report cards. Indicators of achievement such as these exist to convey to students, parents, and the community about how well or poorly the students have performed (Kamber & Biggs, 2004).

Standardized assessments have been part of the United States educational system for many decades now and numerous people view the assessments in a negative way. For example, authors of *Many Children Left Behind* disagree with testing mandates (Meier et al, 2004). The authors cited research that claimed "up to 70% of change in standardized test scores could be caused by random fluctuation such as transient student population or statistical error" (Meier et al, 2004, p. 56). They continued to say, the reporting of standardized test scores could not show the difference between a learning gain and "random noise." (p. 56). Originally, the educational system's lack of accountability led to the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. *No Child Left Behind* fueled the creation of learning standards that led to the testing and mastery of those standards While some may view accountability by means of testing as undesirable (Meier et al., 2004), Sarah Vyrostek (2009) stated educators must accept that "frequent testing is the current reality" (p. 128). Additionally, educators have a responsibility to determine whether students are learning the standards and must hold themselves and their practices accountable if not. This obligation insures that every student is receiving differentiation at the level he/she deserves.

The present state of accountability, however, does not mean that students are learning the skills necessary to succeed in the classroom and throughout life. Many barriers still exist in public education such as attendance, socioeconomic status, and peer pressure. Educators must identify ways to better their practice regardless of the barriers. Standardized assessments do not lessen the responsibility of educators to evaluate the performance of students and to report the results (Guskey, 2001).

Regardless of the burden that accompanies accountability, the core values found in our nation's schools remain the same. According to Patterson (2003), schools value an increase in student achievement, a supportive environment for student growth, and high expectations that all

students will achieve at or above the standard our educators set. In the midst of policy changes and the effects of accountability, the most important quality of a successful school should be honorable teaching.

As public education changes, schools are forced to keep up with population growth and individual diversity. According to the latest projections from the United States Census Bureau [USCB] (Colby & Ortman, 2014), the amount of students under the age of 18 will grow, on average, approximately two million every ten years. "Projections expect the student population to rise from 74 million to 82 million by 2060" (USCB, 2014, p. 5). The key purpose of the public education system of the United States will remain to help students develop skills necessary to remain successful throughout their lives.

Numerous factors such as parental involvement, student motivation, and socioeconomic status contribute to student growth; however, teachers have the most significant influence on student learning (Donaldson, 2013). Nothing more is important to refining schools than improving the teaching of everyday in the classroom (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). As schools are becoming more diverse, teachers often face difficult situations: impoverished students, lack of parental support, decreased funding, and an absence of effective leadership. With that difficulty comes the importance of continuously seeking ways to better support teachers. Whether the forgetfulness is intentional or not, the lasting implications of failing to support teachers can easily influence staff morale and longevity. Through research, we know that school leaders must provide support for teachers if professional development exists as the chief focus of teacher evaluation (Marzano & Toth, 2013).

Professional development, a well-known topic in previous research, can have long-term effects on teachers' careers and students' academic achievement; however, the professional

development given to teachers each year is inadequate (Borko, 2009). "Effective staff development is not a single event but a human resource process" (Norton, 2015). Each member of the staff should receive ongoing professional development throughout the year tied to their individual needs and growth plan. When each staff member receives individual opportunities, the effectiveness of the school may be successful (Norton, 2015, p. 65).

Teachers: The Greatest Influences on Student Achievement

As innovative school facilities are built and more money is poured into instructional technology, researchers continue to document the single most important factor responsible for an increase in student achievement, the teacher (Stronge et al, 2011; Wayne & Youngs, 2010). Research on teacher effectiveness has also highlighted that "without good teachers, no educational reforms will succeed at helping all students learn to their full potential" (Stronge et al., 2011). While effectiveness is a term used to describe a capability to accomplish results, teaching effectiveness is essentially more complex. In the era of accountability, increasing student achievement is at the forefront of the minds of instructional leaders, colleges of education, and policy makers (Munoz, Scoski, & French, 2013). In order for more instructional leaders, colleges of educations, and policy makers to make effective teachers, they each must know what makes a teacher effective and how to support ineffective teachers.

Importance of High Quality Teachers

A great deal of time devoted to research has attempted to understand the attributes of effective teaching. In discussing teacher effectiveness, Stronge et al. (2011) noted, "effective teachers focus students on the central reason for schools to exist – learning (p. 341). Moreover, many states measure the effectiveness of teachers by their success at improving student learning (Donaldson, 2013).

A conceptual framework of effective teaching presents the importance of instructional planning, instructional delivery, and monitoring of student learning. Figure 2 gives an overview of the possible effects of effective teacher based on key contributions described in literature.
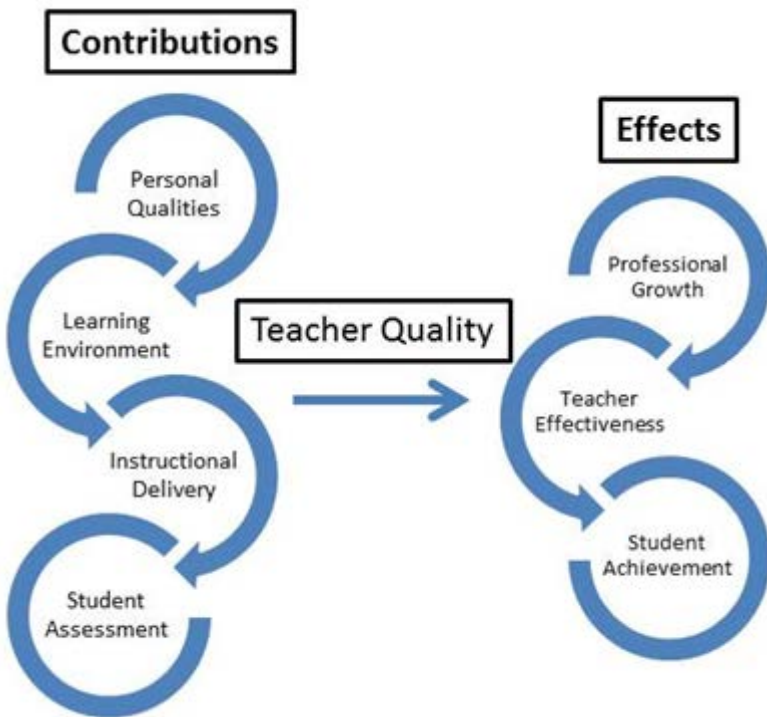
Figure 2. Framework for Teacher Effectiveness. Note. Adapted from Stronge, J., Ward, T., & Grant, L. (2011). What makes good teachers good? A cross-case analysis of the connection between teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Ineffective teachers may have a detrimental effect on students' academic lives. Several consecutive ineffective teachers have lower student achievement gains compared to students who have consecutive years of effective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Marshall, 2013). Kim Marshall (2013) summed up a vast amount of literature on teacher effectiveness by describing four key statements. "Teaching really matters, not all teaching is equally effective, teaching quality is unevenly distributed by class and race, there is an inexorable, day-by-day widening of the achievement gap across the nation" (Marshall, 2013, p. 2).

The inability to adequately staff schools with high quality educators has been an issue due to a combination of teacher retirement, increases in student enrollment, and overall teacher satisfaction. Although retirements and an increase in the student population causes teacher shortages, shortages are primarily caused by teachers leaving schools and the profession as a whole (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher 2010). The greatest concern is the loss of high-quality teachers who have the potential to provide remarkably higher quality classroom education to students. Furthermore, research documents problems with teacher retention as having an excessively negative impact on students that are at-risk, as well as on schools classified as low performing (Watlington et al., 2010).

Furthermore, retaining effective teachers in high poverty schools is an overwhelming challenge and instructional leaders must fix the problem immediately to reach students at-risk. Teachers in high-needs settings are a central element for school improvement; however, some research describes teachers as resistant to school improvement efforts (Thornburg & Mungai, 2011, p. 205). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) pointed out that teacher retention issues cost the United States in excess of seven billion dollars each year. More than money also goes toward recruiting, hiring, and professional development (Perrachione, Rosser, & Petersen, 2008). Turnover negatively influences time, effort, and resources of public education. Changing the implementation of teacher evaluation practices in schools could help teachers advance their practice, which could in turn, increase student achievement and the availability of resources.

Components of Teacher Evaluation

Considerable debate has been evident in literature in reference to what constitutes worthwhile teacher supervision and evaluation and if they are separate elements or interrelated

(Nolan & Hoover, 2008). The authors cited supervision and evaluation as two separate functions but complementary (Nlan & Hoover, 2008, p. 7). For example, evaluation may help employees function at an appropriate level whereas supervision may offer opportunities for growth.

Teacher evaluation has been around for quite some time and carries a great deal of influence when determining tenure, year-to-year employment, or lack thereof. In hopes of increasing teacher performance and student achievement, formal supervisory models and clinical supervision methods have been around since the 1950s (Marzano et al, 2011). Teacher evaluation, when used appropriately, should be a tool used to increase student achievement. When used effectively, teacher evaluation can help teachers and students become more knowledgeable. Teachers, according to research, are "the most important school-based determinant of student achievement" (Morgan, Hodge, Trepinski, & Anderson, 2014, p. 3). This statement helped Alabama adopt a resolution that required the evaluation of certified educators through a state-developed or district-developed evaluation system (Morton, Johnson, & Walters, 2008).

Research suggests two purposes of teacher evaluation. As Ovando and Ramirez (2007) point out, teacher evaluation can assist in making yearly summative decisions about teachers by holding teachers accountable or it can have a lasting impact by encouraging professional growth through formative evaluation.

Summative assessment and formative assessment are two important aspects of the K-12 classroom. Multiple forms of ongoing assessment throughout a student's education are vital to reaching and exceeding learning targets. Formative assessments should document teacher effectiveness instead of solely basing decisions based upon summative assessments. Moss and Brookhart (2009) describe formative assessment as a windmill. The formative assessment

process helps teachers and students grasp the workings of their own minds and their team to generate an internal motivation to learn (Moss & Brookhart, 2009, p. 5).

Lasting growth takes place when a teacher is motivated to learn. Moss and Brookhart (2009) also documented six elements of formative assessment. These important elements are shared learning targets and criteria for success, feedback that feeds forward, goal setting, self-assessment, strategic questioning, and engagement (Moss & Brookhart, 2009, p. 6). Ultimately, formative assessment lends itself to capacity building by providing frequent informal feedback, suggestions for growth, and opportunities for collaboration. Norton (2015) views staff development as a "self-development process that centers on personal interests and needs of the individual employee as well as the needs of the school" (p. 64-65).

The teacher evaluation process is composed of many separate parts; however, each part should be used together to help the educator grow. Presentation of the following five stages of teacher evaluation appears in the proceeding section: self-assessments, pre-observation conferences, observations, and feedback. While some schools and states stray away from some of the components of teacher evaluation, many of the components remain popular.

The Six Catalysts of Effective Evaluation

The six catalysts of effective teacher evaluation, alongside other change agents, have the potential to impact professional growth. Figure 3, my synthesis of related literature, illustrates how the systematic implementation of best practices identified in research can synergistically affect positive outcomes for teacher and school effectiveness. Table 6, also below, provides the research-base for the Figure 3.

Table 6

Conceptual Framework: Components of Effective Evaluation According to Literature

Best Practices	Literature Base
1. Unannounced and frequent observations	Marshall (2013)
2. Face-to-face detailed and encouraging feedback	Marshall (2013), Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston (2011)
3. Professional development tied to evaluations	Darling-Hammond (2013), Marzano & Toth (2013)
4. Structures that enable fair & effective evaluation	Danielson (2011), Darling-Hammond (2013), Marzano & Toth (2013)
5. Evaluate teacher effectiveness based on multiple measures	Darling-Hammond (2013)
6. Engage teachers in growth plans with targets	Marzano & Toth (2013)
7. A shared understanding of the definition of good teaching	Danielson (2011)
8. Opportunities to observe and discuss expertise	Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston (2011)
9. Have clear criteria and a plan for success from the beginning	Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston (2011)
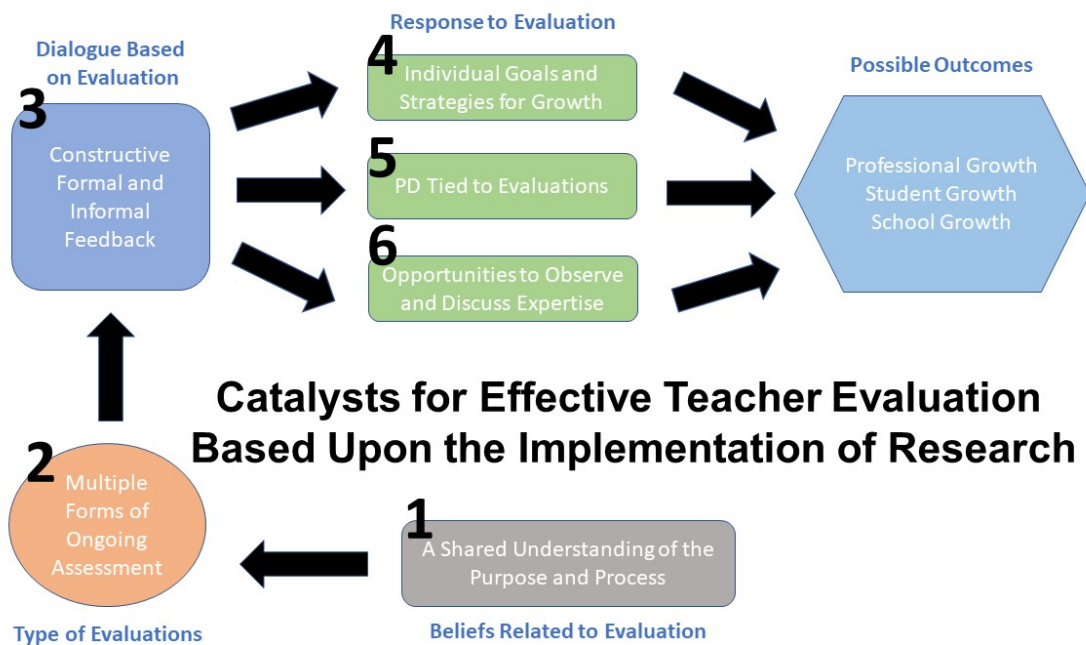
Figure 3. Catalysts for Effective Teacher Evaluation

Shared understanding. Effective teacher evaluation begins with a shared understanding of the purpose and potential of teaching and the teacher evaluation process. Danielson (2011) stated that it is imperative to define teaching quality before one may assess the quality of teaching. In her work, she referenced *The Framework for Teaching* (Danielson Group, 2013) and how quality teaching encompasses more than what is taking place during delivery of instruction. Quality teaching is dependent upon the "behind-the-scenes" work such as planning and communication with stakeholders (p. 36). *The Framework of Teaching*, according to the Danielson Group (2013), is a "research-based set of components aligned to the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards grounded in a constructivist view of learning." The document divided the complex profession of teaching into 22 components clustered into four domains related to teaching aspects. In reference to a shared understanding of teaching quality, the Danielson Group (2013) suggested that *The Framework for Teaching* provides opportunities for professional conversations needed to improve the skill of teaching. Centered on an approach much like standards in an evaluation program, *The Framework of Teaching* is an extensive resource educators and administrators could use to build their building-level evaluation program to collect evidence of teaching practice (Danielson Group, 2013). Whichever method schools use, a shared understanding of teaching quality and the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation will benefit the process of evaluating and developing teachers.

Multiple forms of ongoing assessment. Another catalyst needed for effectiveness, as cited in research, is multiple forms of ongoing assessment (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Teacher ratings are not accurate when based upon one or two twenty-minute observations per year. Multiple forms of continuous assessment throughout the year could best measure a teacher's

effectiveness. With various data sources available to educators of today, it would be beneficial

for administrators to base their assessment of teaching effectiveness upon observations,

conversations, student data, portfolios, and evidence of professional learning. Darling-Hammond

(2013) discusses the multiple forms of ongoing assessment in her book *Getting Teacher*

Evaluation Right.

Portfolios, standards-based evaluations, and evidence of student learning make up a few

of the suggestions from Darling-Hammond (2013). If used correctly, portfolios can document

evidence of instruction. Evidence of instruction can come from videos, lesson plans, student

work, and commentary from the teacher, assessments, and feedback to students (Darling-

Hammond, 2013, p. 27). Darling-Hammond stated, when portfolios "are used to guide teaching

and provide teachers with feedback, researchers have found that teachers are able to improve

their skill" (2013, p. 27). She continued to say that portfolios could help teachers document and

improve their effectiveness.

Standards-based evaluations, on the other hand, use research-based indicators to improve

instruction. As adopted by most state departments of education, standards-based evaluations can

be used to rate teachers on several indicators associated with daily instruction. Commonly used

in schools, standards-based evaluations give educators a clear picture of detailed aspects of the

classroom and can help pinpoint certain areas to improve upon.

Finally, evidence of student learning could provide a glimpse of teacher effectiveness.

While not always the case, the most common form of student learning gains used by evaluators

is standardized data. As Darling-Hammond pointed out (2013), the many influences on student

learning may cause unstable results from value-added ratings of teacher effectiveness (p. 79).

Whether schools and states use value-added measures or not, teachers and administrators should

still look at local data to determine teaching effectiveness. Although many factors outside of a teacher's control may affect student performance, the documentation of student learning could quite possibly be a reliable indicator of teacher performance.

        Effective and meaningful feedback. Charlotte Danielson (2013) along with other authors document the importance for the next catalyst of teacher evaluation, the need for effective and meaningful feedback. Marshall (2013) cited the goal of feedback being "to nurture that supervisory voice in teachers' heads and foster an acute consciousness of whether students are learning what's being taught" (p. 80). Unfortunately, the busy lives of instructional leaders allow the importance of teacher evaluation and development gradually slip away. Year after year, teachers remain isolated without support and encouragement from effective feedback. Providing effective feedback and participating in professional dialogue offers a "rich opportunity for professional growth (Danielson Group, 2013, p. 39). When teachers own the feedback, they become active, reflective participants (Marshall, 2013).

        Marshall disagrees with written feedback from mini-observation because of the level of anxiety that accompanies the observation. Because of this, she suggests having face-to-face conversations about the observation instead of providing a "snippet" of information on a sticky note. She describes the type of data from mini observations as "one-way, superficial, bureaucratic, and highly unlikely to make a difference" (2013. p. 65). Instead, the author suggested informal and low-stakes conversations. Through these discussions, the principal would be able to gauge if the teacher is prepared to receive constructive criticism or not. Additionally, Marshall (2013) stated that the probability of change is more likely to occur after a face-to-face conversation rather than criticism received in written form.

Marzano et al. (2011) also discuss what effective feedback should look like. In their book, the authors cite Ericsson and others with the following quote: "In the absence of feedback, efficient learning is impossible and improvement only minimal even for highly motivated subjects" (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 6). Additionally, according to the authors, feedback must be timely and focused on specific classroom strategies. Later in their book, the authors discussed their opposition to numeric ratings as feedback. Instead, the authors suggested using anecdotal records, which would provide more data to a teacher rather than a numeric rating. If numerical ratings are used, Marzano et al. (2011) suggest asking teachers to rate themselves on aspects of the lesson and then compare their ratings with the evaluators' ratings. If different, a discussion would take place to support each person's rating.

Opportunities to observe and discuss expertise. Teachers and administrators must know what effective teaching looks like in order to change practice. Although not all teachers will score at the highest level, it is reasonable to expect all teachers to increase their expertise from year to year (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 2). One way teachers can grow is through the next indicator for effective teacher evaluation. Pre-service and emerging teachers, as characterized by the Alabama Continuum, need opportunities to discuss and observe proficiency. Marzano et al. (2011) pointed out that these opportunities are not common in public schools but teachers desire these experiences (p. 7). Supporting this statement, the authors cited a study from 1984 that stated approximately three fourths of 1,350 teachers said that they would like to observe other teachers. Furthermore, they referenced a study from 2009 by Jackson and Bruegmann that stated teacher peer quality is indeed important (Marzano et al., 2011). The study showed that over a course of three years, student achievement rose on average 0.075 standard deviations for students that had teachers who observed and communicated with other teachers compared to students

with teachers who did not collaborate with peers. While they suggested that the results from the study could have been influenced from other aspects of education, the authors still supported their findings by saying the teachers learned "directly from peers or peer induced learning" (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 71).

      Following up evaluation with professional development. Public education has become data rich; however, many schools are action poor. In other words, we have numerous resources and data sources for teacher evaluation at our fingertips, but without action after evaluation, those resources may become powerless. According to Darling-Hammond (2013), "evaluation alone will not improve practice" (p. 99). She continued to say that evaluation "must be accompanied by opportunities to learn" (p. 99). Professional development tied to evaluations, as cited by Darling-Hammond (2013) and Marzano & Toth (2013), is a vital part to the continuous learning and teacher evaluation process. Darling-Hammond gave an account of teacher evaluation and development in Singapore on pages 113-114 of her book entitled: *Getting Teacher Evaluation Right* (2013). She opened the section with a quote from the dean of teacher education in Singapore. The dean stated that the current US focus on teacher evaluation "may unwittingly obscure the need for a holistic teacher development and evaluation process" (Darling-Hammond, 2013, p. 113). She continued by describing their education system and devotion to the growth of teachers. In Singapore, according to Darling-Hammond, the government pays for professional development on top of the many hours each week the teachers have to collaborate. Through collaboration, master teachers join with other educators to carry out research projects through the classrooms so mastery of teaching can take place. Darling-Hammond cited another recent study which found that "students achieved higher in math and

reading when they attended schools characterized by higher levels of teacher collaboration" (2013, p. 60).

Individual goals and targets for growth. As discussed previously, educators' levels of expertise vary and teachers are in need of different skill sets. In regards to the Alabama Continuum based on the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (ALSDE, 2009), not every teacher will be rated the same. Because of this, each teacher is in need of his or her own professional development plan. "Having teachers planning their continued growth and targeting new areas in which to promote student learning is exactly what an effective evaluation system should accomplish" (Darling-Hammond, 2013, p. 49). Marzano and Toth (2013) provided a recommendation for using different rating criteria based on years of experience. For example, teachers with one to three years of experience receive ratings on different standards than teachers with four to ten years of service. This method, according to the authors, would counteract score inflation.

Although providing individual goals is "best-practice," the reality of providing support for each individual goal is often unrealistic. In a school of forty teachers, each with different individual goals, the administrator could quite possibly have a difficult time supporting each need; however, Alabama does a good job at supporting individual goals through a resource used for professional development. A web-based program is available and free for all Alabama educators. E-Learning for Educators is an online, professional development opportunity based on Alabama's Continuum for educators. According to the E-Learning website, the web-based model "leads to gains in teachers' content knowledge and improvements in their teaching practices and increases in the achievement of their students." When signing up for classes, the educator can search based on each standard or indicator in their professional growth plan. Once

selected, the educator may choose from a list of professional development courses related to his/her area of need.

Teacher Evaluation in Alabama

With the recent onset and pressure of teacher accountability, schools are full of administrators and walk-through teams traveling from class to class with the sole purpose of documenting teacher effectiveness. Regardless of who evaluates or observes teachers, what takes place after the teacher evaluation is of utmost importance. State and school systems must implement strong teacher evaluation systems and respond to those evaluations if student and teacher growth is expected. Schools are able to progress when individuals within an organization progress (Norton, 2015). One way Alabama has decided to impact teacher growth is by first, identifying what effective teaching looks like.

Alabama Quality Teaching Standards. While research has documented what effective teaching looks and sounds like, Alabama also has developed a clear picture of effective instruction. Effective instruction, according to the state of Alabama, may take place through the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (ALSDE, 2009). The purpose of the AQTS was to improve the academic achievement of all students (ALSDE, 2009). According to the AQTS document, teachers should "align their practice and professional learning to the five standards" (ALSDE, 2009, p. 1) The following information about the AQTS came from the Alabama State Department of Education's website.

The standards focus on five professional themes dedicated to the betterment of education within the state. For the purpose of this study, only principles and indicators related to teacher growth appear (ALSDE, 2009). The key indicators require knowledge and ability to carry out each of the standards. Standard Two, of the AQTS focuses on teaching and learning. Indicators

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such as human development, organization and management, the learning environment, instructional strategies, and assessment are included under the standard (ALSDE, 2009). These five indicators are commonly associated with the components of a teacher's evaluation. While "research suggests that there is no model of teaching that is universally effective, certain teaching behaviors may be effective across contexts and students" (Nolan & Hoover, 2008, p. 181). Aligning practice with the AQTS, a facilitator of effectiveness, could increase student achievement.

Standard Five of the AQTS addresses the need of continuous learning and self-improvement to achieve "ongoing classroom and school improvement" (ALSDE, 2009, p. 7). In order for teachers to meet this standard, they must engage in continuous professional learning and collaborate with their colleagues by using research-based practices. As mentioned earlier, teachers are important to the growth of the student and the school. Because of this, the constant development of teachers is fundamental for an increase in student achievement (Lambert, et. al., 2002). A lot of empirical attention provides information related to common aspects of professional development in regards to organizational growth, professional growth and satisfaction, and individualized professional development (Borko, 2009; Clark & Hollingsworth, 2002; Guskey, 2010). Although many evaluation systems have not been designed this way, current implementation practices appear to stop development once an acceptable level of performance takes place (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 9). Professional development should be an ongoing process. Like differentiated learning for students, all teachers could grow in some area and a high rating on an evaluation does not mean the teacher has no room to improve. One of the most important factors to keep employees satisfied, according to Norton (2015), is the increase

of knowledge and skill levels throughout career development (p. 64). As cited by Darling-Hammond (2013),

> There is increasing consensus that the most effective forms of professional development are those that are directly related to teachers' instructional practice, intensive and sustained, integrated with school-reform efforts, and that actively engage teachers in collaborative professional communities. (p. 99).

Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development. According to the AQTS, teachers must progress throughout the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development in order to receive an effective rating (ALSDE, 2009). This document addresses the five standards in the AQTS. According to the Alabama State Department of Education (2009), the Continuum "articulates a shared vision and common language of teaching excellence to guide an individual's career-long development within an environment of collegial support" (ALSDE, 2009, p. 4). Throughout the implementation of the Continuum, educators receive ratings on the five AQTS standards. Ratings range from "pre-service and beginning" to "innovating." The Continuum, much like the literature previously discussed, assumes that growth in teacher practice comes from engagement in meaningful professional development opportunities (ALSDE, 2009).

Even though the Continuum does not reference a numbered rating system, educators may view the scale in terms of numbered ratings such as pre-service (level one) and innovating (level five). The pre-service level includes application of what the educator learned about teaching in college or pre-service coursework. To emerge from the pre-service category to emerging, the educator learns from mentors and colleagues to "expand his or her knowledge and skill" (ALSDE, 2009, p. 8). As soon as the teacher applied what he or she has learned about effective teaching and demonstrated autonomy, he or she would rate as "applying." An integrating teacher is able to demonstrate an increase in learning and achievement and an "innovating" teacher is

able to contribute to the learning community by assuming leadership roles through professional development, research, and published articles (ALSDE, 2009, p. 8). First, teachers rate themselves at an appropriate level on the continuum through a self-assessment (discussed later in this section) and after observations, the evaluator may rate the teacher as well.

Alabama's past and present evaluation systems. The state of Alabama, composed of 136 school systems and 1,475 public schools, is behind other states when it comes to public education and proficiency rates (Ladner, 2015). Alabama, like other states, has spent a lot of time on developing systems to address teacher effectiveness. Likewise, Alabama's legislators have also spent a lot of time discussing teacher evaluation and its role in the state's classrooms.

The evaluation system in Alabama seems to be an ever-changing practice that hopes to address teacher growth and student achievement. One of the most recent (but former) evaluation systems, The Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program (PEPE), began during a time in which accountability was not determined by high-stakes testing such as the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) or the ACT Aspire. State department officials developed the previous system to help improve teaching and learning within the state of Alabama.

The PEPE process started with a self-assessment completed by the teacher. The self-assessment form was intended for teacher eyes-only, but could be used throughout the dialogue with the administrator or when developing a professional development plan. The PEPE process used number ratings on a scale of one to four. The scale ranged from one (unsatisfactory) to four (demonstrates excellence). Teachers rated themselves in eight different areas of classroom instruction such as preparation for instruction, presentation of instruction, assessment of student performance, classroom management, positive learning climate, communication, professional

development and leadership, and performance of professional responsibilities. One to five

standards were included under each of the seven areas of the self-assessment form.

The evaluator and teacher (or other certified staff member) would participate in an oral or

written interview. The interview consisted of three question sets. Similar to the self-assessment,

each question set had a scale of one to four, with one being unsatisfactory and four, demonstrates

excellence. The question sets also correlate to the self-assessment categories such as planning,

teaching, assessing, etc. A scripting form provided documentation for each rating.

The PEPE process continued with a pre-observation conference as a precursor to the next

observed lesson. Often overlooked, the teacher frequently filled out the form without first

conferencing with the administrator. Ultimately, the three questions on the pre-observation form

did not give much information to the administrator beforehand. The administrator probably knew

a great deal of the information already if he/she knew the class makeup and the teacher's

teaching style from previous informal observations. During the PEPE observation, the

administrator filled out a scripting form. The scripting form allowed administrators to write

narratively in an open-ended fashion. The administrator would have to rate the employee in

many different areas on the same one to four scale that was previously discussed. After the

observation, a post observation conference occurred. This was the time when the administrator

provided the teacher with constructive criticism and offer encouragement for continued practice.

At the conclusion of the PEPE process, the administrator and teacher would create a

professional development plan to address some of the suggested areas of improvement. This

form included the standard the teacher needed to work on as well as professional development

activities and dates to check the teacher's progress. Throughout the year, the administrator and

teacher would document progress based on professional development for the improvement of practice.

Overview of Educate Alabama. Recently, Alabama adopted the evaluation process for educators called Educate Alabama. In hopes of continued teacher growth, this process hoped to increase the ability of developing educators' practice through dialogue. According to the *Educate Alabama Teacher Orientation Manual*, "the need for a new teacher evaluation system was dictated by the fact that there are state adopted teacher performance standards" (ALSDE, 2015, p. 2). ALSDE created Educate Alabama to be a formative evaluation process to set "expectations, goals, and plans for teacher's professional growth" (2015, p. 2).

Much like PEPE, Educate Alabama starts with a self-assessment completed online by the teacher. Instead of having number ratings, Educate Alabama has categories such as beginning, emerging, applying, integrating, and innovating (ALSDE, 2015). Once the teacher completes the self-assessment, the teacher then selects an indicator from the Continuum to work on throughout the year. Normally, teachers choose one of their lowest scoring indicators from the self-assessment. Many schools choose one goal for the entire staff and allow the educator to pick their other goal(s); however, without each teacher "exercising their individual knowledge, skills, and dispositions in an integrated way to advance the collective work of the school," the school as a whole may not advance (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000, p. 261). As Hawley (2007) points out, "professional development should involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences in which they will be involved" p. 8). Ultimately, the collective achievement of a school lies within the individual knowledge, skills, and dispositions of its staff members (Newmann et al., 2000).

Throughout the year, Educate Alabama requires a minimum of two unannounced observations. Instead of scripted forms like PEPE, the administrator took general notes when they observed classrooms (although there was a form provided to write detailed notes). Throughout the data collection process, Educate Alabama created a Collaborative Summary Report (CSR) that compiled all data collected throughout each educator's evaluation process (ALSDE, 2015, p. 3). The educator may enter evidence in the online portal to provide evidence that they are working towards meeting their goals selected at the beginning of the year. The online portal, much like a portfolio, is a place where administrators and teachers can document self-assessments, professional learning goals, evidence of meeting those goals, and observations.

Authors of the *Educate Alabama Teacher Orientation Manual* stated, "the philosophy and practice of formative evaluation and good professional development is growth over time; expertise over time" (ALSDE, 2015, p. 6). Contrary to this statement, teachers often get offended when they do not score at the highest level on an observation; however, the purpose of teacher evaluation should be to offer suggestions for growth. Ultimately, there is no such thing as a perfect evaluation. Everyone has an area they could improve upon and it is the administrators' responsibility to help provide that support for all educators. Reviewing the Educate Alabama website, information shows the public that school systems are still not complying with the State's intended purpose for Educate Alabama. Pages one through six of Educate Alabama reports show that only 58% of Alabama school systems completed the Educate Alabama process with at least two recorded educator observations. This should be a startling statistic for educators and stakeholders. In order to improve pedagogy in every school, Alabama should research best practices and restructure their evaluation system.

Alabama's ESEA Flexibility Request. Advancing the achievement of students, a nation-wide goal, is a top priority of Alabama leaders. In response to the nation's *ESEA*, Alabama requested specific flexibility on September 5, 2012, which included specific standards, an accountability system, and support for educators. As part of a large-scale reform of public education in the United States, the US government started allowing this flexibility to each state in hopes of improving instruction within America's schools. In order to qualify for the waiver, each state must strategize to meet the following three principles:

1. Adopt college- and career-ready expectations for all students,

2. Use differentiation to recognize schools, support schools, and hold schools accountable, and

3. Support effective instruction and leadership

Resulting from a large push for college and career readiness standards, many states are jumping on board to the vision in order to advance the education of American citizens. Similar to No Child Left Behind (2002), states are responsible for administering annual assessments to measure student growth based on the new college and career readiness standards; however, one of the most influential aspects of the *ESEA* Flexibility Request deals with the support of teachers and evaluators.

Plan 2020. Plan 2020, according to the flexibility request, had four main domains: Alabama's 2020 learners, support systems, professionals, and schools/systems (p. 10). The state's plan listed strategies and resources educators in Alabama would use to achieve goals by the year 2020. While all four domains of Plan 2020 are important, I will only discuss the domain addressing the professionals in Alabama. The effective teachers and leaders section of Plan 2020 declared, "The needs of children now trump the desires of adults" (p. 15); hence, the importance

of quality teachers and leaders is a vast need of the learners in Alabama. Throughout the development process of Plan 2020, the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development and the Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development emerged. These documents largely influenced the creation of Alabama's formative assessment for teacher growth, Educate Alabama.

Page 19 of the flexibility request outlines how Alabama will support the professionals of the state. Through this plan, Alabama committed to:

1. Redesign and reinvest in the Alabama Teacher Recruitment and Incentive Program (ATRIP);

2. Review the admission and certification criteria for Alabama's teacher preparation programs;

3. Provide a comprehensive induction and mentoring program for new teachers;

4. Develop and implement a professional growth evaluation system for teachers and leaders that include multiple measures of student growth and achievement.

5. Provide research-based professional growth opportunities for Alabama's teachers and leaders based on their individual and collective professional learning plans.

In alignment with the research documented above, Alabama has committed to focusing on the teacher growth needed to help improve student achievement. Teacher evaluation, a large portion of the flexibility request and Plan 2020, has received a lot of attention by educators and legislators in Alabama. Legislators, like the public, have their own ideas about teacher effectiveness and are now trying to address educator effectiveness through legislation.

The PREP Act. The draft of the Rewarding Advancement in Instruction and Student Excellence (RAISE) Act of 2016 came from Alabama legislature on December 18, 2015. This

act received public dissatisfaction and another plan quickly took its place. Under this act, public

education in Alabama would have received a drastic change. The Preparing and Rewarding

Educational Professionals (PREP) Act of 2016 was introduced by Senator Marsh on March 1,

2016 after the public's outcry against the RAISE Act. According to the first read of the

document, "this bill would provide a procedure for observing and evaluating teachers, principals,

and assistant principals on performance and student achievement" (p. 1). The document

specifically defined student achievement growth as "the change in achievement for an individual

student between two or more points in time, based on standards-based measures that are valid,

rigorous, and comparable across classrooms of similar content, levels, and status as a state

assessed or non-state assessed subject" (p. 8). If passed, the PREP Act required at least 25

percent of the total evaluation score to be from student achievement growth. The remaining 75

percent of the teacher's evaluation would come from the governing board of education.

Furthermore, the PREP Act listed minimum requirements for the state's evaluation

system. For example, page thirteen of the PREP Act required at minimum, two evaluations per

year, student surveys, and supplementary channels of performance. Unlike prior legislation in

Alabama, this Act detailed the specifics related to personnel actions for ineffective teachers. On

lines 14 through 18 of the document, Senator Marsh outlined when boards of education should

take personnel action. The document reads, "This bill would subject any tenured teacher who

receives two consecutive ratings of below expectations or significantly below expectations

pursuant to this act to personnel action by the governing board" (Cason, 2016, p. 2).

Change is inevitable. Alabama's plan for teacher effectiveness and student achievement

is "comprehensive and focused" (ASBOE, 2012). According to the flexibility request, Plan 2020

will guide the state over a period of eight years. While a selected group of educators and leaders

provided input to Plan 2020, teachers around the country and world have varying opinions on the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation.

The Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators

The impact of teacher evaluation might possibly go unnoticed without teachers and administrators' feedback. Like teacher evaluation in general, researchers have sought to understand the perceptions of teachers and administrators in relation to teacher evaluations impact in school's today. Teachers around the globe spend approximately eight hours a day with students. At almost 1500 hours per year, teachers spend most of their instructional delivery time without observations. This amount of time without administrator feedback could possibly influence the teachers' perceptions of the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation within their school.

Teachers' perceptions. According to a survey of literature composed by Maharaj (2014), teachers frequently perceive teacher evaluation in the United States as a time-consuming and low-quality process. The author also found that teacher evaluation is often used for documentation for the dismissal and non-tenure of educators. To provide evidence for this statement, the author referenced a study that surveyed over 5000 teachers, 1200 principals, and 200 superintendents. As a result of this study, four-fifths of the educators felt that they saw little or no improvement in teaching performance because of teacher evaluation (Maharaj, 2014, p. 15). Similar to this study, Maharaj also referenced another study conducted in 2000, which resulted in an overwhelming agreement that teacher evaluation did not lead to professional growth. Donaldson (2013) described teachers' negative view of evaluation by saying that 26% of teachers in a national survey reported that teacher evaluation was not useful to their instructional practice.

The RAND study also presented startling opinions from America's teachers. Many teachers that participated in the study shared similar perceptions related to the evaluator. For example, many teachers felt that principals "lacked sufficient competence to evaluate effectively" (Marzano et al., 2011, pg. 8). Additionally, teachers were disappointed with the lack of training for evaluators and the lack of uniform evaluation practices.

With hopes of discovering teachers' thoughts associated with teacher evaluation, Ovando (2001) conducted a similar qualitative study using grounded theory. The study had twelve participants and discussed teachers' experience with a specific form of teacher evaluation the Professional Development System for Teacher Appraisal (PDSTA). Results of the study indicated similar perceptions such as: the subjectivity of evaluation, concerns related to the quality of professional development, and the levels of performance that did not reflect the ability of the teachers. Findings of the study suggested further research to explore emerging teacher evaluation programs as compared to existing systems.

Quantitative studies also document teacher perceptions of the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation; however, the results remain unchanged. In a quantitative survey referenced by Darling-Hammond (2013), research identified that "formal observation and evaluation was not doing the job" (pg. 5). Darling-Hammond supported this statement by citing teachers' opinions from a 2008 study by Duffet and colleagues. Researchers surveyed 1,010 teachers and many of those teachers detailed the ineffectiveness of their experience with teacher evaluation. She quoted teachers in the study by saying forty-one percent of teachers thought the evaluation process was a formality while thirty-two percent said the process was "well-intentioned but not particularly helpful" (Darling-Hammond, 2013, p. 5) Disagreeing with those perceptions, one study cited positive perceptions about the teacher evaluation process. In a study

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that used data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2014), 79% of teachers said they were satisfied with the teacher evaluation process from the previous year; however, teachers whose evaluations were based upon some aspect of student achievement were less likely to be satisfied with the evaluation process. While educators' views of evaluation are mostly negative, educators desire feedback and want more from the administrators (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Administrators' perceptions. Instructional leaders also have the responsibility of raising student achievement levels by increasing the effectiveness of the teachers within their building. They are responsible for two separate aspects of instructional leadership, supervision and evaluation. While supervision includes managing the school and processes related to teachers, evaluation is a larger task, which many administrators spend little time on. Because of the amount of time to get in the classrooms, many of the evaluations administrators conduct are inaccurate and unsupportive of teacher and student growth. Supported by Donaldson (2013), a recent study of twelve districts in four states, which said that a "large majority of teachers got the highest rating possible and administrators rarely dismissed teachers" (p. 845). Donaldson's previous research of 2009 and 2010 documented a "culture of nice." This culture is responsible for discouraging low teacher ratings and giving anything other than positive feedback (2013).

Donaldson (2013) used a qualitative research approach to interview thirty principals in two northeastern states. State A is a leader in teacher effectiveness and State B received a Race to the Top Grant. In the findings section of her report she discussed the principals' views of teacher evaluation. The participants in the study saw teacher evaluation as having two purposes, which included improving instruction and identifying poor performing teachers for assistance and sometimes dismissal.

Administrators in the study also discussed the lack of time needed for an effective evaluation system. Of the 30 participants, all 30 documented time as a barrier to carrying out effective evaluation practices. Principals also spoke about having too many teachers to evaluate within a year as well as provide feedback and professional development based on all of the evaluations. Time constraints also contribute to the neglect of non-tenured teachers.

In a 2014-2015 study in Arizona, researchers wanted to find the similarities in reference to teacher evaluation data. Much like Alabama, Arizona's schools were the target of policy changes at the legislature level. Because of the study, district leaders commented on timely observation-based feedback teachers received throughout the process (NCES, 2014). The online system used by the evaluators gave teachers access to feedback in a "timely manner" which promoted transparency and understanding during the post-observation conferences (p. i).

Another important finding of the study documented that the evaluation data in Arizona greatly influenced professional development offered throughout the year. As cited on page four, survey data showed a distinct connection between evaluation and professional development. More than half of the respondents in the study said they engaged in professional development that directly linked to their evaluations. After the evaluations, more than half of the respondents also agreed that they knew what their next step was after the evaluation (NCES, 2014, p. 4). Although the data presented shows positive and negative views of teacher evaluation, most data shows that educators desire more from an evaluation system, as cited above. The combined need for more feedback, more professional development related to evaluation, and for more ways to evaluate teachers leads to implications for future research.

Conclusion

Many teachers and administrators have common views about the preparation and implementation of effective evaluative practices but research has documented that most systems use evaluation for summative reporting and not for professional growth (Brandt, Mathers, Oliva, Brown-Sims, & Hess, 2012). Research presented within this chapter presents readers with the history of teacher evaluation, the importance of teacher evaluation, and best practices related to teacher evaluation. Without the implementation of such research, teacher evaluation and improvement will rarely take place. A review of research suggests that people (not the process) make change.

One of the biggest sources of frustration in schools is the sense that educators cannot control various situations experienced in public education. For example, educators cannot control student socioeconomic levels, school funding, salaries, teaching assignments, increasing class sizes, difficult parents, or a host of other important issues. However, we can control the delivery of instruction, how educators assess, and how administrators affect teacher effectiveness by using strategies for teacher evaluation (Scriffiny, 2008).

As discussed, there are continuing debates about what an effective evaluation program looks like. Furthermore, researchers and educators continue to discuss how teacher evaluation affects student performance and what determines effective teaching and learning. These debates aside, few attempts have been made to understand how effective administrators use instructional leadership strategies throughout the teacher evaluation process which leads us to the present study.

There is an absence of research examining triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators. As such, the current study will offer insight into the minds, thoughts, and

experiences of the triads in Alabama. By uncovering "what works" related to teacher evaluation in Alabama, educators around the nation may benefit from the implications resulted from this research study. In turn, the nation's history of regulating teacher performance could benefit from a change in the current state of teacher evaluation.

Chapter III: Methods

Research has documented that an individual classroom teacher can have a large effect on the achievement of his or her students (Marzano & Toth, 2013). Thus, teacher effectiveness, evaluation, and development is vastly important to student success. Previously, I summarized the research conducted on the importance of teacher evaluation. Problems with teacher evaluation, as addressed by federal and state regulations and policies, have increased the amount of attention given to teacher effectiveness. Although legislators have given a vast amount of attention to teacher effectiveness, demands placed on administrators in public schools today have interfered with time spent on teacher evaluation and development (Kersten & Israel, 2005).

Furthermore, teacher attitudes toward evaluation influence the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation process. As described by Peterson (2004), teachers believe that current evaluation practices do not accurately depict their performance, which causes the teachers to gain very little from the evaluation process. The author continued to describe present evaluation practices as doing "more to interfere with quality teaching than to nurture it" (Peterson, 2004, p. 73).

Previous research has clearly described inadequacies with teacher evaluation practices as well as policies and regulations designed to influence the inadequacies. Even so, there is still a gap in research related to specific strategies instructional leaders use within Alabama to increase the effectiveness of teachers. I chose strategies in this study to understand the emic (insider's perspective) related to teacher evaluation. This chapter outlines, in detail, the research methodology used in this qualitative study.

Significance of the Study

There is a wealth of knowledge that documents best practices related to teacher evaluation; however, there is little research regarding specific examples documenting how effective administrators successfully use instructional leadership strategies to improve teacher evaluation. To understand how instructional leaders use leadership strategies and policy, qualitative inquiry was used in order to explore the phenomenon behind the evaluative practices of exceptional leaders.

I used qualitative research approaches during the inquiry to explore the unique characteristics related to the practice of teacher evaluation within Alabama. During that inquiry, an understanding of contexts, settings, and participants was illuminated. Ultimately, qualitative methodologies give researchers insights into the lives of the participants. While researchers may use various techniques, Jacob and Furgerson (2012) describe the heart of qualitative research as exposing the human part of a story. Characteristics of qualitative research include natural settings, the researcher as the key instrument, multiple methods, participants' meanings, and emergent design. When used effectively, these characteristics help the researcher understand in detail, the context and culture of the problem.

Emergent design, as defined by Schwandt (2007), can be described as a strategy researchers use to adapt their research plan and strategies in response to what they are learning as their study progresses. Before the study began, I had a detailed knowledge of teacher evaluation based upon my experience with teacher evaluation and the literature related to teacher evaluation. Nevertheless, emergent design played an important role in my study.

Research Design

I used a case study approach to understand vivid descriptions of the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation in Alabama as explained by Alabama's principals and teachers. This study explored how teacher evaluation practices and beliefs influenced professional growth within each participant's school. Using a multiple case study design, I sought to understand triad partnerships between principals, teachers, and district-level administrators in regards to the evaluation practices employed at each school. Qualitative research practices helped me understand the detailed experiences and perceptions of each participant. Clifford Geertz (1973), an anthropologist, emphasized the use of thick description to interpret meaning derived from heavy detail. Thick description, as defined by Merriam (1998), "means the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated" (p. 29-30). Thick description derived from each participant's story will help understand the context behind each participant's experience.

To answer the research questions below, I used a case study protocol to understand the phenomenon behind the cases. A case study, according to Merriam (1998), "resonates with our experiences because it is more vivid, concrete, and sensory than abstract." She also described that it "reveals knowledge about a phenomenon we would not otherwise have access to" (p. 31-33). Also according to Merriam (2016), A case-study is an "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 37). The intent of the study was to describe, in-depth, how each participant perceives the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation based upon individual experiences. Furthermore, Merriam describes this type of case study as a more compelling (1987, p. 40) and stated, "cases are essential for understanding the range or variety of

human experience" (p. 33). The case study allows for a "level of understanding and explanation not possible through conventional experimental or survey designs" (Merriam, 1987, p. 204).

The following research questions apply to case study research as teacher evaluation through the explorations of real-life context. In addition to in-depth dialogue, the study consisted of observations and the exploration of artifacts. A multiple case study design gave me information about the phenomenon related to the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation as described by administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators. Finally, the multiple case study design provided opportunity for a cross-case analysis and produced a stronger effect.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators, teachers, and district office administrators. The goal of the multiple case study was to discover patterns related to teacher evaluation that emerge from the multiple cases. Exploration of the cases will take place to determine if some, all, or all and more of the a-priori codes appeared within each case. I also looked for emergent themes that arose during time spent in the field. I sought to understand each case by analyzing the breadth and depth of each participant's experience.

Research Questions

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators?

Role of the Researcher

Placed at the center of qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection procedures. Humans are best for qualitative inquiry because "interviewing, observing, and analyzing are activities essential to qualitative research" (Merriam, 2016, p. 2). According to Merriam (1987), "the researcher is left to rely on his or her own instincts and abilities throughout much of the research" (p. 42).

Before and during the research study, I worked in a public school system as an assistant principal. To mitigate risk for participants involved, I did not conduct the research study in the same school district or school where I work. Because of my experience with teacher evaluation, I took measures to bracket as much bias as possible. As an experienced teacher and administrator, I have experienced successes and failures with teacher evaluation. Because of the successes and failures, I gave close attention to my own evaluative practices through bracketing to manage the bias effectively. Bracketing, as described by Tufford and Newman (2010), is "a method used by some researchers to mitigate the potential effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to research" (p. 81).

Before the study, I went through a bracketing interview (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), which allowed me to answer my own research questions before I interviewed the participants in this study. It allowed me the chance to analyze the transcript of my own interview and to understand my own themes and biases about teacher evaluation. This self-awareness allowed me to analyze data from the study having knowledge of my own understanding of teacher evaluation.

In accordance with guidelines set forth by Auburn University, I completed the IRB process. Before the study began, I created a case study protocol. That protocol consisted of: (a) the background related to my topic, (b) the design of the study, (c) how data would be collected, (d) the analysis of the data, (e) how I would insure trustworthiness, and (f) a specific timeline and calendar of the data collection process. Once the case study protocol was developed, I tested the research procedures by conducting a pilot study. The pilot study consisted of selection procedures, interview, and observation procedures. Merriam described pilot studies as being "crucial for trying out questioning" (1987, p. 75). The pilot study consisted of one principal and one teacher from the system where I work. Their experience was not included in the results or interpretation of my study. After the pilot study ended, I reviewed the interview and observation protocols and made changes as needed to remain focused on the research questions.

Participants

After the pilot study was completed, I used purposeful sampling (criterion-based sampling) to select the participants for the study. Developing the selection plan consisted of outlining characteristics of whom I would like to study. I sought to interact with triads of principals, teachers, and district-level administrators. Each principal had to meet specific criteria to be included within the study. Ultimately, the participants consisted of administrators who were directly responsible for the teacher evaluation process at their individual schools. To be included in the study, the participants had to be:

1. Experienced administrators with at least three years of experience in public education;

2. Principals and/or assistant principals with evaluative experience in Alabama;

3. Principals and/or assistant principals that have a reputation as an effective instructional leader capable of facilitating professional growth (supported by Educate Alabama evidence or informant recommendation);

4. Principals and/or assistant principals with experience using multiple forms of assessment for teacher evaluation.

These selection criteria were important because experience with teacher evaluation and evaluative practices in Alabama is needed to portray thick description related to the struggles and successes administrators and teachers have faced in light of former and recent policy changes related to teacher evaluation within our state.

Since a purposeful sampling process guided the selection process, I had to be careful about who recommended candidates for the study. Because of this, I used a specific strategy to find the nominators that recommended participants. The research began by exploring various avenues to select participants by talking with leaders at the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and the Alabama Math and Science Technology Initiative (AMSTI). I chose these organizations as nominators because of their daily interaction with school leaders and teachers. The ARI and AMSTI organizations, divided into regions in Alabama, provide in-service training to teachers and administrators in need of support. Their direct involvement with schools and classrooms could help identify exemplary instructional leaders needed for this study. They have direct access to insight related to administrator and teacher effectiveness. ARI and AMSTI leaders meet the following criteria needed to be nominators for this study:

1. The nominator must have knowledge of the characteristics of effective leaders/teachers;

2. The nominator must have knowledge about professional development, teacher evaluation, and professional growth;

3. The nominator must have experience in teaching and some form of leadership; and

4. The nominator must know what effective teaching looks like.

I contacted ARI and AMSTI leaders in person, by phone, and email and gave details about the purpose of the study and details related to the participants I would like to study. Out of sixteen possible nominators, four AMSTI or ARI leaders responded or agreed to participate in the study. I used a double-nomination process and selected participants that appeared on both ARI's and AMSTI's list of exemplary leaders. Next, I obtained permission from the three boards of education and I provided each participant with information related to informed consent.

Out of the four responses I received from AMSTI and ARI, three principals appeared on three of the four lists. After the principals were selected, I searched for successful triad partnerships consisting of one administrator, one teacher, and one district office administrator. Those triads must have had: (a) experience working together for more than one-year; and (b) documented teacher and student growth as described by teacher evaluation documents, observations, and Educate Alabama. Participants could come from any K-12 public school and a specific grade span was not required for this study.

There were several limitations to this study. For example, the study was set up based on nominator (expert) recommendations by using a double-nomination approach to finding participants. Each nominator received the selection criteria and nominated participants who met that criteria. Three principals in Alabama appeared on each informants list. After each case was completed, I noticed that each case was not exemplar. The case displaying less than exemplar

qualities of instructional leadership was from a system that is well known and prestigious in Alabama.

The public's view of this school system is above average and that perception did not align with the findings of this study. This, unfortunately, shows that an outsider's perspective and interpretations differ. An outsider's view does not always exemplify what really goes on within each school. Without working with the principal and teachers on a day-to-day basis, it is hard to decipher the culture, quality, and level of support each principal provides teachers within the building.

ARI and AMSTI nominators were all women. The one male nominator from AMSTI did not reply to my request. Additionally, even though ARI and AMSTI nominators recommended all participants, all principal participants ended up being men and all teacher participants ended up being women. The district-level administrators, however, ended up being two men and one woman. Additionally, assistant principals did not participate in the study. These characteristics align with the broader demographics of administrators and teachers in public schools today.

Table 7 below, profiles each principal participating in my study. Dr. Lewis and Mr. Wescott (pseudonyms) had the most experience in the field of education and had been at each school for more than ten years. Mr. Butler was in a new role as principal and did not have as much experience as an assistant principal either. Regardless, each participant met the selection criteria and each had worked with the teacher in each case for more than one year.

Table 7

Summary of Principals' Educational Experience

Principal	Teaching Experience	Content Expertise	Assistant Principal Experience	Principal Experience	Highest Degree Held
Dr. Lewis	5 years	6-12 Science & ELA	5 years	10 years	PhD
Mr. Butler	4 years	6-12 ELA	2 years	2 years	EdS
Mr. Wescott	4 years	ELA & SS	3 years	10 years	EdS

Description of the Setting

The data collection process started within each school in September of 2017. Each case (school), located throughout the state of Alabama, had one principal, one teacher, and one district-level administrator. During the nominator recommendation process, AMSTI and ARI did not recommend any assistant principals for the study. Schools selected for the study involved a wide span of grade levels and each case consisted of either elementary teachers or high school teachers. District office administrators ranged from curriculum coordinators, directors of personnel, or superintendents.

Table 8 below, details the demographics of each case or school. Case 1, a larger school than the rest, also had the highest percentage of poverty. From my background in public education and Title I schools, I prepared questions in advance that would bring out each participants perceptions related to accountability and the pressure that places on the teacher evaluation process. An understanding of teacher evaluation is schools of poverty could lead to greater understanding of helping teachers grow despite encountering challenges educators cannot control.

Table 8

Summary of School Demographics

Case	Grades Served	Population	African-American	Caucasian	Other Races	% of Poverty
1	9-12	1,300	63%	33%	3%	62%
2	K-2	350	50%	50%	0%	30%
3	3-5	573	27%	60%	13%	24%

Data Collection Procedures

After the nominators recommended certain principals for the purpose of this study, I contacted participants by phone and email. Before the interviews took place, I visited each school more than once to introduce myself and to observe the culture of the school. I conducted each participant's interview at a time that benefited his or her individual schedule. Each interview was recorded using a tape recorder and was transcribed. Each administrator, teacher, and district level administrator interview was conducted individually and not as a group or triad. Each interview lasted from approximately forty-five minutes to an hour.

I used data from interviews with participants and observations of the school and classroom climate and culture to gain insight on the following aspects of the teacher evaluation process: (1) the pre-observation conference, (2) the evaluation, and (3) the post-observation conference. Secondary data consisted of artifacts such as: (1) evaluation instruments and (2) written and verbal feedback given to teachers. I spent a substantial amount of time in the field (or natural setting) as recommended by Merriam (2016). Time in the field produced 254 pages of interview transcription, six hours of observational data, and twenty-five pages of artifacts.

Each principal, teacher, and district office administrator participated in interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol. Topics in the interview protocol (Appendixes A, B, and C) included strategies such as: (a) the culture of evaluation at the school; (b) time devoted to

evaluation; (c) types of evaluation measures; (d) the look-fors of observations; (e) feedback; (f)

professional conversations about evaluation; and (g) professional development.

Description of the Instrument

The protocol outlined participant details, the purpose of my study, themes derived from

previous research, and the interview questions for the teachers and administrators. Questions in

the interview protocol ranged from each participant's experience with education to detailed

questions related to his/her individual positive and/or negative experience with the teacher

evaluation process.

A great deal of the literature on teacher evaluation described successes and failures with

teacher evaluation. Through semi-structured observations, I sought to uncover information

related to administrator and teacher discussion, teachers' responses to feedback, positive

feedback, negative feedback, how feedback related to teacher and student growth, as well as

comments related to professional development or a teacher's individual growth plan.

Observations, according to Merriam (2016), "triangulate emergent findings; that is, they are used

in conjunction with interviewing and document analysis to substantiate the findings" (p. 139). I

looked for those themes as well as emergent themes particular to each individual school

experience during the observations.

Throughout the time spent at each school, I was able to examine artifacts related to

teacher evaluation. The data consisted of evaluation documents, written feedback, professional

development plans, and professional development agendas. I analyzed the data after I received

the transcribed interviews from www.rev.com. During the data analysis process, I made multiple

reads and re-reads through the data. I used Atlas Ti, a qualitative analysis computer program, to

analyze and code the interviews, observations, and artifacts based on a-priori and emergent

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themes. The use of multiple sources of data addresses construct validity as described by Yin (2014, p. 45).

In addition to Atlas Ti, I also coded and looked for themes by hand. After listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts several times, I started analyzing the data to look for strategies used by the principals related to teacher evaluation. I coded each principal's instructional leadership strategy when it appeared in the data. Next, I looked for themes related to the teachers' perceptions of the teacher evaluation process. Finally, another read through the data resulted in codes relating to teacher growth. I then placed each code in the code book and case study database. I applied the a-priori framework throughout the coding process. As I coded, I analyzed the data while looking for evidence of the six catalysts for effective evaluation as previously outlined in Figure 3.

Trustworthiness

As summarized in Table 9 below, I employed multiple techniques throughout the study to promote trustworthiness and credibility. Before the study began, I thought about the people I wanted to study. I then had to think about how to select participants through purposeful sampling aligning with strong qualitative research practices. The most important part of this process was to find the nominators (the experts that showed me who I should talk to). Next, the development of research questions and the interview protocol aligned with research on teacher evaluation. Finally, I conducted a pilot study with an administrator and teacher within my district to test my interview and observation protocols. This stage of the study resulted to refining my interview questions.

Participant validation (member checking) was also employed for internal trustworthiness. Merriam (2016) summarized this process as a tool used to "solicit feedback from some of the

people you interviewed" (p. 246). She described that as one of the most important ways a researcher can avoid misinterpreting data. At the conclusion of the data analysis portion of the study, I provided participants with transcripts of their interviews and asked the participants if the transcription accurately depicted his/her experience with teacher evaluation (member checking).

I used triangulation across data sources to interpret and report accurate and meaningful results. Before the study began, I piloted the interview and observation protocols. Additionally, I analyzed interviews amongst all of the participants (principals, teachers, and district-level administrators) individually and collectively. Then, I compared the data from the interviews to the school and classroom observations as well as artifacts from each school. Comparing data across sources provided rich description, interpretation, and meaning behind each participant's experience with the teacher evaluation process. Ultimately, it allowed me to see the effectiveness of instructional leadership in regards to the teacher evaluation process.

Summary

The purpose of the multiple case study was to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators, teachers, and district office administrators. I used a qualitative multiple-case study design and key nominators/officials in the state of Alabama recommended a purposeful sample of principals, teachers, and district office members. Once I selected the triads, I observed and interviewed at each individual school. A within-case and cross-cases analysis of each case was completed and analyzed. Throughout the study, I used validation and reliability strategies for accuracy of the collected data.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to understand and document positive and successful experiences related to the teacher evaluation process as described by triads of principals, teachers, and district-level administrators. To understand each participant's experience, I conducted multiple in-depth interviews and observations as well as analyzed artifacts to determine how each instructional leader used instructional leadership strategies to influence teacher growth. The process of teacher evaluation at each school made up the case and the unit of analysis, or focus of each case, was the triads' experience with teacher evaluation.

I selected a purposeful sample of participants to understand effective teacher evaluation practices. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) suggested that purposeful sampling discovers, understands, and provides insight; therefore, the researcher must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 96). Leaders from the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) recommended participants for the study. Because of their daily interaction with administrators, teachers, and classrooms, the leaders from both organizations have first-hand knowledge of which schools positively influence teacher growth. Following a double-nomination process, each participant was selected based upon being on both ARI's and AMSTI's list of recommended participants.

The participants in the study worked in Alabama public school systems. Two of the systems were located in urban districts and the third system was located in a rural area of Alabama. One primary school, one elementary school, and one high school from Alabama were

included in the study. The multiple-case study answered the main research question: What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation? The following sub-questions also guided the study:

1. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

2. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

3. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators?

I conducted in-depth interviews to determine the experience and perception related to teacher evaluation in Alabama's public schools. I selected principals for this study because of their daily interaction with teacher evaluation, school culture, and teacher growth. In addition, I selected teachers for the study because they are the focus of teacher evaluation and are largely responsible for student growth. District-level administrators were selected for the study because of their influence on system decisions related to teacher evaluation and are frequently involved in the teacher evaluation process within their system.

Before the study began, I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board of Auburn University. I conducted a pilot study to test my research questions, interview questions, and observation protocol. I revised the questions and protocol at the conclusion of the pilot study. Once revisions were complete, I contacted each prospective participant by phone and/or email to invite him/her to participate in the study. After the initial contact, I visited each school to meet the principal and observe the culture and climate to the school. I interviewed three principals, three teachers, and three district-level administrators. I also chose to conduct classroom observations to perceive the level of growth the teacher has made based on her

evaluation results and feedback from the principal at her school. Additionally, I chose to conduct document analysis to understand specific observation forms, feedback, and other documents related to teacher evaluation within each school.

Once each transcript was processed, I analyzed the transcripts and observations by coding a-priori themes and emergent themes. I then counted how often each code or theme appeared in the data. Coding consists of organizing analyzed data into sets of information and assigning labels to the code. Merriam (2016) described coding as the "process of making notations next to bits of data that strike you as potentially relevant for answering research questions" (p. 204). She continued to say, "Coding is nothing more than assigning some sort of short hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data" (p. 199). During my data exploration, I asked questions and made comments about the codes and themes. I then revisited the literature on teacher evaluation and compared my themes and codes to those already discovered through literature. The ongoing within case and cross-case analyses of the multiple case study produced detailed codes and themes and, in turn, adequately answered the research questions.

Each participant was eager to participate and offered insight into the teacher evaluation experience within the state of Alabama. Table 9 provides an overview of each case's participants.

Table 9

Multiple Case Study Participants (n=9)

Case	Name	Title	System/School	Type of School	Years of Experience	Years in Current Position	Years with Current Triad
1	Dr. Lewis	Principal	River Valley BOE	9-12 High	20	10	2
	Ms. Daniels	Teacher	/Waypark High	School	20	2	2
	Dr. Kirk	Superintendent	School		33	10	2
2	Mr. Butler	Principal	Grand Mountain		8	2	2
	Ms. Foster	Teacher	BOE/Canyon	K-2	4	4	2
	Ms. Lynn	Curriculum Coordinator	Primary School	Primary School	20	4	2
3	Mr. Wescott	Principal	Copper Cove	3-5	19	10	6
	Ms. Evans	Teacher	BOE/Cypress	Elementary	14	6	6
	Dr. Clark	Personnel Director	Elementary School	School	20	5	6

Principals are largely responsible for creating a positive school culture while determining the effectiveness and/or ineffectiveness of teachers within their building. How principals balance these two separate functions of instructional leadership is dependent upon the practices they employ on a day-to-day basis. To understand strategies used by principals within Alabama schools, each principal had the opportunity to describe his perception related to teacher evaluation while describing the strategies he perceives as important for teacher and student growth.

Teachers, at the center of the teacher evaluation process, are largely impacted by the principals' skills and strategies used while evaluating teachers. Regardless of policy and

procedure impacted by the state of Alabama, the teacher evaluation process is largely dependent upon the leaders implementing the process within each school.

There is little research on the involvement of the district-office (or board of education) with the teacher evaluation process. Before this study began, I had no intentions on interviewing district office personnel because very little, if any, research mentioned the involvement of superintendents, directors of personnel, or directors of curriculum having an active role in the process. As I completed interviews at each school, a great deal of conversation came up in reference to the involvement of district office members in the teacher evaluation process. I submitted an IRB modification request to interview district-level administrators as those details emerged through interviews with principals and teachers. That modification provided rich accounts describing each system's focus on the teacher evaluation process.

As outlined below, a profile of each school provides insight to the history of each triad's experience with teacher evaluation. I will present each case's story below and specifically provide answers to research questions in the cross case analysis. Organized by themes unique to each case, the individual cases present illustrations of the teacher evaluation process within each school.

Findings by Case

Case 1: Waypark High School. Waypark High School (pseudonym) is an urban high school located in Alabama. As a whole, the school serves approximately 1,300 students with the following demographics: sixty-three percent African American, thirty-three percent Caucasian, two percent Hispanic, and one percent from other races. Typical of the state average, sixty-two percent of the students at Waypark High School live in poverty. Regardless of the high poverty level at Waypark High School, the principal describes the school as student-centered.

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Additionally, he describes a culture of hard-working teachers focused on moving students in learning every day.

Because of the hardworking teachers and student-centeredness, Waypark High School recently received the CLAS Banner School award (an award given by the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools). As the front door of the school opened, smiling students and helpful individuals pointed me in the right direction as they welcomed visitors. In each hallway, teachers and administrators conversed with students during class change and encouragement rang loud as class change was almost over. Upon entering the office, eager staff members promptly welcomed visitors to the school and made them feel at home. Waypark High School's participants (n=3) were eager to participate in the study and presented a great deal of useful information. An introduction to each participant follows and helps illustrate his or her experience with the teacher evaluation process. The participants' descriptions reflected positive perceptions of the purpose and implementation of the teacher evaluation process.

Principal #1. Dr. Lewis, an experienced teacher and administrator, has been at Waypark High School for many years. His legacy is known throughout the community and influences much of the students' and teachers' success.

Teacher #1. Ms. Daniels, now a master teacher at Waypark High School, does not live in the school district where she works. For reasons later described in this section, Ms. Daniels feels heavily supported by her administrators and attributes much of her success to the teacher evaluation process at Waypark. This process, largely focused on teacher growth, has influenced her former negative view of teacher evaluation and, in turn, has affected the students within her classroom. Several themes came out of the multiple interviews with Ms. Daniels and many of them related to positive experiences over the last three years at Waypark High School. Ms.

Daniels drives a long way to work each day just to be part of the positive atmosphere at the school.

   District-Office Administrator #1. Waypark High School's superintendent, Dr. Kirk, participated in the district-level interview for the River Valley Board of Education. He taught for four years, was an assistant principal for seven years and principal for twelve years. He has currently been superintendent for approximately ten years. Dr. Kirk's experience in public education has vastly influenced his guidance over the system he leads. That guidance focuses on the success of students.

   The detailed account of Waypark High School's within-case analysis provides documentation that supports Table 10. Comparing and contrasting codes and themes from each interview, observation, and artifact led to the development of the Case's themes. Prevalent within the case was an established culture of collaboration between district-level and school-level educators as well as the use of strategic planning for hiring, expectations, and teacher support.

Table 10

Themes from Case 1's Within-Case Analysis

Theme	
1	An administrator is a teacher first
2	Relationships matter
3	Visibility contributes to the perception of support
4	The importance of clear expectations

   As documented by research findings, Case 1 has established a culture of excellence. Results from each individual interview and observation within the case align and demonstrate instructional leadership strategies that benefit teachers and students. The nontenured teacher in this study has benefited from working with the principal. With no variance in descriptions, the interviews, observations, and document analysis have demonstrated the fact that the

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implementation of the teacher evaluation process at Waypark High School is effective and influences teacher growth and buy-in.

The district-level administrator in Case 1 was the superintendent of the school system. His views aligned with the principal and teacher's view in this study as well. It was clear that his vision of teacher evaluation, focused on dialogue and support instead of documentation, transferred to the building-level administrator and teacher. District-level visibility within the school also had influence on the principal and teacher's perspective. Both participants viewed district-level involvement as important and influential in the success of teachers and learners at Waypark High School. His view on placing a numbered-rating on teacher evaluation also influenced the quality of feedback and dialogue within the building. Instead of focusing on the documentation of teacher performance, system-level and school-level administrators influence teacher growth by face-to-face and informal feedback.

The teacher evaluation experience at Waypark High School I entered Waypark High School for the first time as the dismissal bell rang and students and teachers swarmed the hallway. Principals, teachers, and students mingled with each other, which presented a positive perception of the environment at Waypark. Upon entering the office, student workers and staff members greeted me and immediately notified the principal that I had arrived. After meeting the principal face-to-face and shaking hands, I could tell why the expert informants recommended this principal for this study. In fact, he was the most recommended principal by all of the AMSTI and ARI informants. His positivity and eagerness lasted throughout the multiple interviews.

As the interview began, the principal conveyed a love of teaching, teachers, and students. That love was evident through all of his descriptions of the purpose and implementation of the teacher evaluation process at Waypark High School. Stemming from a clear focus on teacher and

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student growth, the example he set as a leader transferred to the teachers and their classrooms. Answering the central research question for the study, Dr. Lewis, was clearly an instructional leader instead of just a school administrator.

At the beginning of the case study, Dr. Lewis was asked to choose a teacher that he has worked with and has experienced professional growth to be part of the triad. A large part of the principal's interviews dealt with contributing to the growth of teachers and more specifically the growth of the teacher. Ms. Daniels, an experienced teacher, is now a master teacher. This teacher, according to the principal, shows initiative, hard work, and follow-through based on the use of teacher evaluation strategies. Previous research, however, focuses on ineffective teaching and contributing to the growth of new teachers or ineffective teachers but very few studies discuss how master teachers continue to grow by using teacher evaluation. The principal at Waypark High School, even though the teacher is a master teacher, still spends time contributing to her growth as a professional.

The case of Waypark High School was indeed an exemplar illustration of the teacher evaluation process. With very little mention of "managing the school," Dr. Lewis remained focused on his role as the instructional leader throughout his interviews. The principal's focus on his instructional leadership role also resonated throughout Ms. Daniels and Dr. Kirk's interviews. Ms. Daniels, an experienced teacher with multiple school experiences, described her thoughts of teacher evaluation as a pleasant experience centered on the principal's instructional leadership style. Additionally, Dr. Kirk described instructional leadership as the main job of an administrator. Several components of effective instructional leadership strategies appeared within Case 1 and appear within the themes below.

Theme 1: An administrator is a teacher first. The instructional leadership style of Dr. Lewis centers on his view of being a teacher in addition to being an administrator. Imagine a principal who takes on the role of a teacher on a daily basis. Dr. Lewis, based on his interview, could fit that description. Serving only five years in the classroom, he described his passion for the classroom by saying "my heart is teaching" [Line 47]. Remaining plugged into instruction not only satisfies his passion but also impacts teachers and students each day. Remaining plugged into instruction as the instructional leader, the most prevalent theme from his interview, is the highlight of his career and daily schedule.

As part of that daily schedule, mentoring teachers and students allows the administrators at Waypark High School to affect the school culture while remaining "plugged in" to the classrooms. During the "Academic Opportunity" class taught by administrators and teachers, the whole community of learners participate in lessons such as learning the school song. "Academic Opportunity is part of who we are because it ties us together and that creates a culture of school pride" [Lines 234-235].

Another way Dr. Lewis remains instructionally minded is his focus on coaching teachers, co-teaching classes with teachers, and modeling effective instructional strategies [Lines 448-454]. Even though the school has an instructional coach, Dr. Lewis does not mind co-teaching and modeling effective lessons. This speaks volumes in reference to his focus on instructional involvement.

Theme 2: Relationships matter. One of the most important roles of an instructional leader, according to Dr. Lewis, is building relationships. His attention to relationships started after he discovered that they were not valued as much by the former principal. Now, he makes it

"very much a priority to try to value and build relationships with the teachers" [Lines 101-104]. One way he does this is by being visible and visiting the classrooms a priority.

Even though teachers have bad days, Dr. Lewis believes his teachers are very confident and strong; he believes in them and supports what they do [Lines 101, 110-111]. This example of relationship building leads to the fact that teachers at Waypark High School are confident in the school's leadership team and are open to the continual dialogue that flows back and forth between the administration and faculty. The principal discussed teacher-led discussions frequently.

Many of the school and classroom improvement initiatives came from teacher-led discussions. Teachers, because of the example set forth by the principal, are also very welcoming and open to collaborating with their peers. They also have the opportunity to plan vertically with elementary and middle schools. As a result, the level of student engagement has increased.

Beginning with the first day of school, Ms. Daniels described a family-like atmosphere at Waypark High School. She stated,

> That's just been my experience, coming from a small school to a school that is bigger. The faculty is twice the size of the faculty at my other school. But it's still, our departments are very close and assist each other and are willing to work together and kind of help each other so I think it's a real family environment. [Lines 46-54]

> She continued to say, "Every time I see an administrator, they always ask the question 'What can I do for you?'" [Lines 344-356]. According to the teacher, the principal's focus on instructional leadership makes her feel important, valued, and shows her that teachers' needs are a priority in the school. She continued to describe the principal's instructional leadership skills as she described how the principal makes himself "personable and approachable" [Lines 384-385].

Dr. Kirk, the superintendent, also discussed the importance of relationships by describing the system's focus on formative over summative evaluations. When describing that focus, he stated,

> I think our experience with teacher evaluation is positive. We do not do a lot of formal observations. Our walkthroughs are informal. We do not write anything down. I do not allow anybody to go into a room and write something down, positive or negative because trust is a tremendous variable. If people don't trust what's going on and they don't feel like they're there to be supported and helped, that doesn't mean we keep everybody we hire, we don't, but most people tend to dismiss themselves. It's not always the quality of teaching. That plays a part of it, but most all of our experiences, because of the focus on informal data, have been positive, that I can see" [Lines 69-81].

That trust is a theme echoed by his comments relating to Dr. Lewis' skill at building relationships with the faculty and staff at Waypark High School. He stated, "Good relationships bring trust, trust brings stability, and a lot of good things after that, so I think he (Dr. Lewis) has been very supportive and very collaborative" [Lines 302-306]. Those relationships have a foundation built upon visibility, formative dialogue, and feedback instead of top-down pressure related to achieving desirable standardized results.

Indeed, the superintendent frequently spoke against the use of standardized assessment data and how the use of that data can negatively affect faculty and staff relationships. As the Alabama State Department of Education has been in much turmoil lately, Dr. Kirk's comments reflected his confidence in formative methods to gauge teacher effectiveness. Formative approaches, according to Dr. Kirk, increases morale, collaboration, and a focus on students.

Theme 3: Visibility contributes to the perception of support. When not teaching a class, he is still very visible in the hallways and within each teacher's classroom. He described the

importance of visibility by saying, "It's so big to get in classrooms every day. I try to block off at least an hour or more each day just to walk through the classes" [Lines 537-540].

Additionally, he makes an effort to familiarize himself with content when he encounters unfamiliar topics in classrooms. "I believe, number one, I am the instructional leader of the school. I assume that responsibility, I want that responsibility, and I don't want to share that responsibility necessarily" [Lines 552-556]. Further explanation of the previous quote described that the principal wants to be the main instructional leader and depends on the assistant principals to handle discipline and managing the school as an organization.

Frequent classroom visits helps Dr. Lewis know what is taking place in the class instructionally but also allows him to gauge how each part of the team is working to achieve the organization's goal. When he is in the classroom regularly, he is able to "provide that feedback and see how they're doing." He continued to say, "Part of it is they just need someone to listen to. I always ask 'How can I help you? What can I do? Is there anything you need?' He described being a mentor and listener as a primary role of his [Lines 743-753]. As he continued to describe his opinion of building relationships, he stated, "I believe very strongly that happy teachers are better teachers" [Lines 104-106].

The principal's administrator duties, according to Ms. Daniels, do not negatively influence his involvement within each classroom. She stated, "They are busy but they make time" and continued to say, "I think teachers are a priority here" [Lines 223-228]. Ms. Daniels' description related to the consistency of evaluation supported her statement about teaching priority. She stated,

> I mean it's consistent and I feel like that from, this is my third year, and I feel like it's been consistent. It's not always the same administrator doing a walkthrough. They have a variety of people come all different times of the day. It's not like the same person coming

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to see you at the same block of every time. They get a sampling of how you do and how things are going all throughout the day [Lines 191-201].

Another vital part of dialogue involves the frequency and quality of feedback related to teacher evaluation. Dedicated to supporting teachers, Dr. Lewis values honest, clear, and quick feedback. Referenced by the principal, "I think it's fair to the professional that I am as clear as I can be about, 'This is what I want you to do. This is what you did great. Build on this. Keep it up. Share it with other people. This side you need to work, you can improve in this area.' Those kinds of things" [Lines 359-364]. Additionally, he is devoted to providing feedback and having dialogue in various different forms. Using an informal and formal approach, Dr. Lewis uses dialogue, post-observation conferences, feedback related to growth throughout the year, and end of the year meetings. He chooses not to write during informal observations and/or walkthroughs. He explained his reasoning for this by saying,

> If I were to have a checkbox of this, and let's say I didn't see a student summarizing activity in there…if I didn't put that down or if I left it blank, that teacher (a good professional), is going to beat herself up on, "I didn't do that now they think worse of me" [Lines 399-406].

After informal observations and walkthroughs, he chooses to provide quick and informal feedback. After formal evaluations, however, he uses formal methods of feedback such as post-observation conferences. The benefit of this, as described by the principal, is the "one-on-one" dialogue [Line 700]. By using the informal and formal methods of dialogue, the principal makes an effort to provide feedback on growth throughout the year. The principal and teacher have dialogue one last time at the end of the year. End-of-the-year meetings, as described by Dr. Lewis, are a time to "take what we've learned from our evaluation pieces and other things; departmental goals, and develop our professional development plan with each teacher" [Lines 681-688].

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Gleaming from the quotes above, the principal heavily focuses on growth when providing

feedback. Whether informal or formal, the principal regularly remains focused on teacher and

student growth. "The post observation conference," according to Dr. Lewis, "is constructive

enough to give them some dialogue on how to improve" [Lines 757-759]. Although he provides

suggestions for individual growth, he also influences growth as a whole by encouraging teachers

to collaborate and share expertise. His conversation with teachers about sharing expertise sounds

like "What you do is great! You need to share what you do with other people because that is the

next step for you. It's working!" [Lines 782-790]. Even if he does not share those exact

comments with teachers, his feedback generally takes a tone of encouragement and is

constructive in nature.

"While documentation may be good for that [evaluations], it's about relationships and I

need to be able to go to that teacher and say 'Look man. You're doing great or keep it up!'" and

continued to say, "'We've got to step it up just a bit.' I'm more concerned about the relationship

with me and the teacher relative to evaluation than some written form" [Lines 418-423].

Something special happens when teachers fail and get "picked up" by an administrator instead of

ridiculed and forced to improve. They need to know, according to the principal, that "I care

about you. That's disappointing but we'll try to work through it" [Lines 579-582].

Finally, in relation to dialogue, how the teachers take ownership of the feedback is

positive as well. Building upon observation after observation, the principal expects to see growth

after each evaluation. He described this expectation by stating, "I want to see that they've

listened to the recommendations. That tells me a bit of the maturity level of the teacher and if

they truly want to get better" [Lines 351-354].

In fact, the observation I conducted in Ms. Daniel's classroom for this study showed that she closely listened to Dr. Lewis' feedback and grew as an instructional leader herself. I was able to experience, first-hand, how Ms. Daniels has implemented the strategies for teacher growth within her classroom. Before the classroom observation began, I received information related to the teachers' strengths and weaknesses from the principal, evaluative artifacts, and the teacher interview. As described above, the principal wanted the teacher to work on expanding her leadership influence among students and teachers.

Artifacts included a pre-observation form, the teacher's most recent evaluation, post-observation teacher reflection form, and the post-observation conference form. Data from each form supported the argument that teacher evaluation at Waypark High School focuses on a growth mindset and that focus appears below.

The pre-observation form was the teacher's opportunity to inform the observer about the lesson before it began. This document provided information on the objectives for the lesson, previous lesson information, and activities planned for the students. Merely used for principal understanding, the pre-observation form provided opportunity for the teacher and observer to understand more about the sequence of lessons prior to the planned observation.

The classroom observation instrument documented the teacher's most recent evaluation, completed six days prior to the interview for this study. The teacher, according to the observation, mirrored many of the traits Dr. Lewis values such as greeting students at the door and providing a welcoming environment for the learners. The documentation was evidence-based and provided explicit examples of what took place in the classroom during the scheduled observation. The post-observation conference form was completed a week after the observation and echoed the principal's interview responses. It stated, "No areas noted as areas of

improvement. Your passion for teaching and for your students is evident. Find ways to share and model effective instructional strategies with peers."

I was also able to observe the teacher's classroom the same day as the first interview. She was already (six days after her post-observation conference) implementing the feedback received from the previous observation. One of her peers was in the classroom at the same time as me, observing her instructional strategies. My observation, documented many of the same strengths notated in her most recent evaluation. She was very friendly with the students and student voice resonated throughout the lesson. Students worked well together (mirroring the positive school atmosphere) and the teacher provided individual assistance to the students, much like the principal provides individual assistance and feedback to teachers within the building. The teacher, also like the principal, provided constant praise and encouragement to each student throughout the whole-group lesson and student work session.

Similar to how the teachers are open to feedback provided by the principal, the principal is also open to feedback presented by the teachers. Modeling what he expects, he described listening to teachers by saying, "I listen to their feedback all the time about what we need holistically" [Lines 877-878].

A common word used by Dr. Lewis was support. According to the principal, support "helps generate confidence in the leadership team and confidence in the school" [Lines 119-121]. Support through means of teacher evaluation also came out during Ms. Daniel's interview. "From the very beginning," Ms. Daniels stated, "We're told that they are not out to get you. They are there to help us. Teacher evaluation is used to offer support" [Lines 202-204]. She continued to say, "What used to be is a scary, out to get you feeling. You're going to have to get

all these check marks and you've got to cover all these but now I feel like teacher evaluation is more to nurture and help you" [Lines 504-510]. She concluded by saying,

> I have never felt that someone was out to get me here. They are here to help you. They want to see what you are doing in your classroom. They are not here to condemn you. They want to see the great, fun things that you're doing and if you're having trouble, they want to help you with that [Lines 125-126, 522-529].

The principal also spoke numerous times about the support his team provides the teachers and his ability to recognize his team's strengths and weaknesses. He uses that information when making personnel decisions. Student success, the focus of personnel decisions, influences the support he provides.

Students remain the focus from the beginning of the personnel planning process and lasts throughout each hiring interview. "We want to make sure that student learning is the focus. Not just teacher improvement" [Lines 375-377]. As such, Ms. Daniels shared similar views of student learning at Waypark High School. Her view of teacher evaluation is focused on her ability and the principals' ability to "be better professionally and to be better for my students to help them become successful" [Lines 57-62]. Additionally, Dr. Kirk's statement on "Students first, teachers close second" echoed the principal's and teacher's students-first mindset.

Dr. Lewis spends numerous hours in each classroom and places heavy emphasis on improving the effectiveness of teachers on a day-to-day basis. As stated above, his primary role is being the instructional leader of the school [Lines 552-556]. He would not be able to spend as much time on students and instruction as he does without strategically hiring his leadership team. "I want to share the load, and I want to help others grow, but the management of the school, the nuts and bolts of the running of the school, I trust to the good people I hire" [Lines 556-561].

Particularly with leadership, the principal hires individuals who bring other skills and expertise with them. He explained his expertise being science and English, his instructional resource teacher's expertise as math, and assistant principals have experience in career tech and in history. In addition to their content expertise, the assistant principals also manage the discipline of the school to allow more time for the principal to be in classrooms. This form of teamwork helps make sure the school runs in other areas in addition to instruction. The assistant principals, according to Dr. Lewis, handle most of the discipline within the school and "rely on each other a lot" [Lines 563-565].

Relying on each other a lot appeared many times in the transcript of Dr. Lewis' interviews. He spoke highly of his instructional resource teacher and described her as a leader who can help the administration shoulder the instructional load when the busyness of the job takes over [Lines 470-474]. Earlier in the interview, he also mentioned how closely they work with respect to instruction and curriculum" [Lines 460-463]. Aside from assisting the administrative team, the instructional resource teacher also spends a lot of time contributing to the professional growth of teachers within the building. Her primary job, according to the principal, is to "coach people and get them on board" [Lines 631-633].

Additionally, the administration provides teacher support in a variety of ways. Ms. Daniels described a heavy focus on professional development within the building with individual and whole group opportunities offered to teachers. "From the beginning of the year, we have heavy professional development but they also preserve classroom time. I feel like there is always something offered, even if it's online" [Lines 426-433]. In addition to whole group offerings, Ms. Daniels also spoke frequently about the quantity and quality of individualized professional

development opportunities. She remembered numerous opportunities she has taken part in related to her personal areas of growth.

   Theme 4: The importance of clear expectations. In addition to the time spent in the hallways and classrooms of Waypark High School, Dr. Lewis spent a lot of time over the course of his tenure at the school creating an atmosphere of clear and high expectations.

>   I've been in it long enough to know that I'm very clear about what I expect. I am not hard
>   but I think it is fair to the professionals that I am as clear as I can be about this is what I
>   want you to do. [Lines 357-364].

   The principal has been at the school for six years so he described an experience of spending enough time with the teachers that they "pretty much know what to expect" [Lines 562-563]. Additionally, the focus on effectiveness and expectations begins before the first day of school. Having transparent expectations leaves no room for doubt. Teachers never wonder what to expect, what the principal thinks about an observation, or how he will respond when teachers do not have a good day. The frequency and quality of dialogue he has with the teachers influences the expectations within the building.

   Dr. Lewis, a model of an effective leader, is the teachers' biggest fan. He models leadership, professionalism, and support in many ways. He strays from micromanaging and allows the teachers' needs to guide his decisions. His leadership skills trickle down to his teachers, which, in turn, affect student success. Before his arrival, graduation rates were low as well as morale. Currently in year six of his principalship, he was proud to say that the graduation rates and morale are at an all-time high.

   Dr. Kirk, the superintendent, also has expectations in addition to the principal's expectations of teachers and students. He stated, "In a school that has a few more challenges, it's difficult sometimes as a principal to be engaged at the level we want them in, although they are,

required to be, and expected to be" [Lines 188-192]. In addition to principal expectations, the superintendent also has expectations of the assistant superintendents related to the involvement with the teacher evaluation process. On a constant basis, the superintendent and assistant superintendent are in the schools gauging the progress of student learning. The focus of observations, whether completed by the building-level administrator or district-level administrator is growth. This process "helps teachers get better or helps us with documentation" [Lines 140-141].

The evaluators are strategic when they go in the classrooms; however, before going in, the superintendent's views on teacher evaluation heavily influences the system's use of the process. The superintendent described his discontentment with many evaluation systems of today based on numbered ratings and said,

> I think the death knell of any evaluation is when it has to be, results down to a number. I am opposed to that very strongly. We do not do it here, even if the state kind of pushes us. We refuse to do it because I cannot tell you the negative impact on culture and environment, workplace environment, when you start putting numbers on people. That, to me, is one of the, it's horrendous. [Lines 57-66]

Lastly, clearly defined roles for instructional coaches influence instructional improvement. Largely responsible for supporting teachers after teacher evaluation, the instructional coaches take on the sole role of providing professional development and support for teachers. The superintendent has much confidence in the instructional coaches and spends upwards of 700,000 dollars a year out of local money to provide individualized support for teachers within his system. He described his focus on instructional coaches providing support by saying, "Professional development and curriculum planning is not done by an assistant principal. I do not want anyone that wants to be a principal in the role of instructional coach. I want to focus on instruction and there's nothing worse to communicate to teachers that instruction's not

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important than to have your radio go off and the principal leaves and the meeting stops" [Lines 201-209]. To clarify his point, he stated that he needs dedicated individuals (instructional coaches) focused solely on instruction and supporting teachers. For twenty-five years, he described, the funding of instructional coaches came from the state. Recently, schools have lost their funding for instructional coaches but he still views the position as important.

The superintendent has high expectations but those expectations do not pressure the administrators or teachers. He values relationships, trust, and collaboration between administrators and teachers. Financially and practically focused on instruction provides evidence that the district-level administrators are very much involved with the schools on a day-to-day basis. His instructional leadership strategies influence administrators at Waypark High School, which in turn, affect teachers within the building.

Summary of Case 1. Dr. Lewis, an experienced principal responsible for establishing a positive school culture, used a variety of strategies to influence effectiveness at Waypark High School. These strategies, categorized into four themes, focused heavily on relationships with teachers. His focus on student centeredness, valuing and supporting the teachers, teacher ownership, and feedback increases the morale and work ethic within the building.

As previously described, Dr. Lewis' interviews focused heavily on an environment of student centeredness. He keeps students at the forefront by being in classrooms frequently, teaching his own class, observing and interacting with students during observations, and by focusing on student data. Waypark High School's culture is inviting and welcoming for the community of learners and the principal makes it a priority to connect with students. Through a class titled "Academic Opportunity," the principal gets daily experience instructing and learning

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from students. This not only shows the teachers that he cares for students, but shows the students as well.

Dr. Lewis values and supports his teachers. From the beginning of the year, a focus on team building brings the community of learners together and lasts throughout the whole school year. Through engaging and meaningful professional development sessions, the principal gives meaning to teacher and learner engagement, which transfers from the PD to the classroom. Additionally, his attention to the needs of teachers is valued through small gestures such as a simple, "What can I do for you?" on a daily basis.

By being visible and engaged in instruction, Dr. Lewis places focus on the most influential part of the school, the teachers. The organization of his administrative team and duties allows time for the principal to be the instructional leader, which shows teachers that his main job is to impact instruction and not just to manage the learning organization. Dr. Lewis is the supervisor of the school but teachers view him as an instructional leader instead of a manager. He balances the two by spending a majority of his time informally within the classroom.

He accomplishes this task by using formative assessment more than summative assessment. His focus on informal observations, walkthroughs, and feedback allows the opportunity for constructive and positive feedback to freely flow. The skill at which he implements this informal process produces honest, trust, and teacher buy in across the school. His work toward building a positive school climate has influenced the potential for growth within his building. The teachers' nervousness that once accompanied a principal within the classroom is now no more and Ms. Daniels relates that result on the principal's focus on teachers as individuals.

Table 11 (below) compares the principal and teacher's perceptions related to the instructional leadership strategies used at Waypark High School. Based on participant responses, it is evident that the administrator and teacher are on the same page. Filtering down from the superintendent's expectation of the principal, a positive school culture and climate is present. That culture and climate is largely responsible for the teacher's perceptions of effectiveness.

Table 11

Perceptions Related to School 1's Instructional Leadership Strategies

Strategy	Principal's Perception	Teacher's Perception
Student-Centeredness	The focus is to move students every day. Evaluation is focused on students	Classrooms are a priority
Value & support teachers	Teachers feel supported, Teachers are listened to, Administration encourages faculty	Administrators offer suggestions, Administrators make time, Administrators offer time for collaboration
Relationship building	Teachers view the culture as positive, Administration encourages faculty, Students and teachers are valued	The principal creates a nurturing and family environment, Positive feedback is received, Rapport is built from the beginning of the year, Principals make a scary process more about helping you
Foster teacher ownership	Teachers are harder on themselves, Teachers believe we can move students, Most teachers are positive and receptive to feedback	"I appreciate evaluation," It's not a "gotcha," Admin provides time to share strategies, The faculty uses the strategies admin uses, PD is individualized
Provide honest feedback, praise, post-observation conferences, and continual dialogue	Teachers feel supported, Teachers are valued, Teachers are provided with opportunities to grow, Expectations are clear	Positive feedback is received frequently, Quick and constructive feedback is provided, The principals offer suggestions

The culture of excellence at Waypark High School centers on a students-first mindset. By administrator visibility, the teacher feels as if classrooms are a priority. Additionally, by the use

of suggestions, collaborating, and time spent supporting the teachers, the principal and teacher's perception of support align.

Ms. Daniels, new at Waypark High School, is familiar with a former environment of "gotcha;" however, teacher evaluation takes on a different role at her current school. With similar views on teacher ownership, both participants view teacher evaluation strategies in a positive light and use the process to strengthen the instruction within the classroom.

Relationship building and positive school culture has opened the door for honest feedback and continuous dialogue to take place. Happy with the amount of support received, Ms. Daniels described an environment where she feels open to collaborating with the principal. With no fear of the process, the principal and teacher work well together to create opportunities for growth.

As master teacher, Ms. Daniels has a very good command of curriculum and instruction; however, the principal wanted her to grow by transferring her leadership skills to students and other teachers within the building. Scoring very high on her most recent evaluation resulted in feedback aimed at moving her beyond the four walls of her own classroom. Becoming a teacher leader within the building will allow her to grow as a professional as well as impact teachers and students in the building. The most notable part of this principal and teacher encounter was how she responded to that feedback. Many teachers, despite the recommendation of principals, do not feel comfortable expanding beyond the walls of their classroom and often feel nervous or reluctant to share their expertise with others. Ms. Daniels, however, took that feedback and expanded her leadership potential and the effectiveness of other teachers within the building.

The triad in Case 1 provided a positive and exemplar teacher evaluation experience. This one case in Alabama is representative of many other schools and leaders within our state.

Providing examples of other teacher evaluation experiences will add to the literature base of positive teacher evaluation experiences. Case 2, another encouraging example, will help argue that many systems are doing great things with teacher evaluation in Alabama.

Case 2: Canyon Primary School. Canyon Primary School (pseudonym) is a rural elementary school system also located in Alabama. As a whole, the school served 350 students with the following demographics: fifty percent African-American and fifty percent Caucasian. Additionally, this school has a high military population and the percent of students in poverty currently reaches approximately thirty percent. Canyon Primary School, an older building, was smaller than school one but was still very student-centered. I entered the school close to the end of the school day but still saw eager students and friendly adults in the building. A positive atmosphere beamed in the hallways and supported the information received from the participants at Canyon Primary School.

Principal #2. Mr. Butler, the current principal of Canyon Primary School (a pseudonym), shares many of the same qualities of Dr. Lewis, the principal of Waypark High School. He is currently in his second year of the principalship at Canyon Primary School. Much of his time is spent building relationships with teachers to foster a culture of collaboration. That collaboration opens the door for a focus on teacher and student growth.

Teacher #2. Ms. Foster, a second grade teacher at Canyon Primary School, is currently in her fourth year of teaching. This is her second year with a Mr. Butler and has a negative view of teacher evaluation stemming from her first two years of teaching with the former principal.

District-Office Administrator #2. Ms. Lynn was probably one of the most eager participants throughout this study. She is currently the director of curriculum and instruction for her district and has a wide variety of experience within Alabama public schools. She was a

teacher for five years and has worked for the Alabama State Department of Education. Her love

for teachers and students brought her back to the local school system and she has been there ever

since.

 The teacher evaluation experience at Canyon Primary School. Two office members

greeted me as I ran up the stairs to enter Canyon Primary School on a cold, rainy day. My first

impression of Canyon Primary School, regardless of the weather conditions, consisted of a warm

and welcoming climate. I felt at home as I entered the primary school office. Canyon Primary

School's atmosphere is one that makes kindergarten, first, and second grade students feel safe

and loved. As the principal, Mr. Butler, turned the corner, I was also quickly able to tell why

AMSTI and ARI recommended him for this study. His persona conveyed a pleasant and

engaging tone; one that teachers get to encounter on a daily basis.

 As another positive example of leadership that works, Case 2 is a system working toward

excellence. Responses from the within case analysis led to the development of three major

themes. Derived from interviews, observations, and artifacts, Canyon Primary School has placed

focus on school culture, students, and support. As listed in Table 12 below, the school focuses on

people instead of the process.

Table 12

Themes from Case 2's Within-Case Analysis

Theme	
1	Collaboration encourages professional growth
2	Teachers need quick and evidence-based feedback
3	The focus is on the students, not the teachers

 Themes derived from the time spent at Canyon Primary School were evident of

exemplary leadership focused on growth and students achievement. True instructional leadership

takes place at the school and that is worthy of praise; however, not all schools in Alabama exemplify these characteristics.

After introductions and the first interview question, Mr. Butler quickly described a new style of leadership at Canyon Primary School. As he described his focus on rebuilding the culture of the school after the former principal left, he concentrated heavily on building relationships and trust with his faculty and staff. Mr. Butler, much like Dr. Lewis in the first case, was clearly an instructional leader.

After Mr. Butler completed his interviews, I asked him to choose a teacher for the study. That teacher must have experienced professional growth as a result of the triad's focus on teacher evaluation. Teacher Two, Ms. Foster, is currently growing as an educator. Ms. Foster, much like Ms. Daniels in the first case, shared a positive view of her experience with teacher evaluation; however, she still possesses former negative views of the process. Ms. Foster is currently in a school with a second year principal. Because of this, the rebuilding process of the school's culture influences her position on the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation. Mr. Butler also introduced me to the district-level administrator for the Grand Mountain Board of Education, Ms. Lynn (the district's curriculum coordinator). Each participant's descriptions concentrated on the level of collaboration between the district office, administration, and teaching staff. There details about collaboration contributed to the development of Theme 1.

Theme 1: Collaboration encourages professional growth. Collaboration, according to Mr. Butler, comes from several areas such as clear expectations, mutual ownership, and team building. These areas, largely responsible for the positivity within the building, foster teacher, student, and school improvement. Collaboration, a term widely used in education, frequently describes teachers working with other teachers. Nevertheless, the collaboration described

through Mr. Butler's interviews was in reference to collaboration between the principal and teachers.

As Mr. Butler took over a school with a weak school culture, a focus of his was to encourage teachers on a day-to-day basis. He does this by "Giving them time to sit down and talk with me and letting them know we can both learn from each other. We validate strengths and find areas for opportunities" [Lines 141-144]. Never describing the teacher evaluation process in a negative way, he described an environment of mutually agreed upon goals. Noticeably, he never described teachers in terms of ineffectiveness of weaknesses. He always used the word "opportunities." When discussing opportunities, he described his "major goal." "A big goal of mine is to make sure that we mutually identify areas of opportunity" [Lines 453-455]. As he described this process, he normally has areas in mind but he also provides the teachers with an opportunity to discuss their viewpoints. Then, together, they set objectives for the next walkthrough or observation.

Another example of collaboration, largely responsible for the positivity within the building, centers on analyzing walkthrough and observational data. Straying from the norm of principal to teacher feedback, Mr. Butler shares walkthrough and observation results with the School Leadership Team (SLT). The SLT's approach to analyzing the observational data, allowed the teachers to identify areas of opportunity rather than the principal telling teachers what the areas of opportunities were. This strategy has affected teacher ownership and school culture in a positive way. Having teachers lead an active role in the teacher evaluation process encourages growth and does not make them "worried about their job" [Lines 624-625]. The principal, focused on teachers as individuals, stated, "I can't grow you if I'm cutting you down. Making them have ownership over what it is that needs to be improved is important" [Lines 371-

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374]. He described a focus on having teachers feel trusted, "that has been the key" [Line 637]. Responding to a follow-up question about trust, he described, "I encouraged them to trust me by focusing on team-building and by allowing them to be creative." He continued by saying, "I allow them to have a voice. Created an open-door policy." [Lines 605-606].

As stated, Ms. Foster is recovering from a former negative view of the teacher evaluation process. She is accustomed to teacher evaluation being secretive, a process focused on the teacher instead of the students, and a process resulting in negative feedback. Often experiencing evaluations as a "got you" moment, Ms. Foster is appreciative of the new support received by her current principal. In an effort to rebuild the school culture and gain teacher buy-in, the current principal has employed a number of different strategies (according to Ms. Foster) to help impact that trust and buy-in. Centered around team-building activities, the current principal promotes the benefits of a good atmosphere centered around a positive working relationship. She described this different in atmospheres as a noticeable change.

> Since he has been here, it has been a different environment for us. So we feel like we
> have more creativity. It used to be very restrictive. You do the reading series, do not do
> anything else, you have to go by the book. Since he has been here, he allows us to have
> that creativity to tailor your own classroom. Because not every classroom has the same
> needs based on the series. So I think he's inspired us with that. [Lines 493-501]

Ms. Lynn, the district-level administrator at Canyon Primary School, described the former teacher evaluation process as a "got you" process. Ms. Lynn described this as a former structure by stating, "Now the teachers are disappointed if you don't observe them" [Lines 81-82]. A culture of respect, honesty, and collaboration is evident at Canyon Primary School and teachers embrace the feedback given to them based on observations and evaluations. While the teachers expect honest feedback, they also expect it to be "in love" [Lines 91-92].

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The curriculum director described the change of leadership over the recent years as being largely responsible for this change in feelings. "We had some principals, at first, that were very evaluative. Beat 'em over the head with the result. And we've really worked with our new principals to say, 'No, this is not what it's all about'" [Lines 173-177]. The change in leadership and focus on instructional leadership versus managing the school is largely responsible for the increase in teacher effectiveness and morale at Canyon Primary School.

The curriculum director spent many years serving in low-performing schools. Her time in low-performing schools focused on the teachers, which, in turn, trickled down to a focus on the kids. Loving kids is a topic frequently discussed through her interviews. She even mentions the superintendent's focus on loving kids. Through loving teachers and students, her main job is to "lead the charge" for the teacher evaluation process. By taking her lead, the district defined what quality instruction should look like. In doing this, the district created their own teacher evaluation process with each part strategically lining up to each other. "Everything is cohesive at this point," she described. "Our lesson plan format ties to the teacher evaluation rubric. Everything that we're trying to do, we want it to be cohesive" [Lines 257-261].

At this point, she shared the district's rubric or "cheat sheet" as she described it. This rubric also heavily influenced the change in culture, collaboration, and perception of teacher evaluation. Everything from the lesson plan format to the post-observation form lines up and is even color-coded. "If you see blue, you know that's going to be classroom management," she stated [Lines 275-276]. What was a four-year process, now guides the teacher evaluation process at Canyon Primary School. During this process, teachers had a role in developing it and administrators received training so there would be consistency throughout the district. "So teachers know whatever we do, it is very collaborative. I work with them. Teachers were on the

committee that looked over this and developed this. I think teachers understand that the director, the person sitting up here, is for them. I am for them. I think that's gone a long way to creating that" [Lines 168-173].

The curriculum director also described a change in culture related to district-level visibility within the schools. What used to hinder teacher growth, because of the "got you" mindset, is now possible with the focus on instructional leadership.

> I think we have some fantastic principals right now. A year ago, I could not have said that. We have made some great hires this year. I think we have, most of our principals, have a lot of curriculum knowledge, instruction knowledge. We were weak at that before. It was almost like if the building is not falling down, everything is okay. If the kids are in the classroom, then everything is okay but they were not walking in the classroom to see what the quality of instruction was. Now, we've got great leaders, for the most part, who are very instructional minded, and that even helps with the observations because the teacher feel like the administrators know something. [Lines 365-377]

More specifically, she continued to share detailed information about Mr. Butler. She stated,

> When he goes in there and talks to his teachers, he can talk about the reading program and all of that. That makes sense to them. Before, they had a person in there who had never been an elementary person, so it is just, the respect level was not there. So that's been a big plus for us, is getting the right leadership in place. [Lines 382-388] He loves the kids but he is an instructional leader. He goes in there, and when he observes, he gives them solid, good feedback. He knows the program. He knows the standards, he knows good instruction, and he is able to give them good guidance. They do many data meetings. Quality data meetings, not gripe meetings, but where they really look at data. [Lines 623-629]

Great instructional leadership would not be possible at Canyon Primary School without a great superintendent. Leading the charge for instructional leadership, the curriculum director, described her superintendent as a master instructional leader who really supports teachers.

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I love my superintendent. She is all about this and she really loves and supports teachers, and she's in the schools every day. I used to work with so many districts through school improvement and you never saw a superintendent. These people see our superintendent two or three times a week. She is constantly out there, because she loves the principals and she loves teachers, and that makes me love what I do because I know she is there. Like yesterday, we had a district data meeting. She was here the whole three and a half hours. You do not see many superintendents do that. [Lines 299-310]

After the SLT chooses opportunities for improvement, "We brainstorm what we can do to make this better" [Lines 619-620]. The collaboration between the principal and teacher would not be possible without the inclusion of quality evidence-based feedback. Leading to the creation of theme two, Mr. Butler values the implementation of quick and honest feedback.

It would be difficult to improve the teacher's growth without providing quality support. That is not an issue at Canyon Primary School according to Ms. Foster. The new principal "makes sure you have what you need" [Lines 260-265]. She furthered her discussion of the support offered by pointing out the various methods the principal uses to provide that support. Her view of teacher support and growth has changed because of the use of specific informal and formal feedback, individual and whole group professional development, and specific feedback on rubrics.

Feedback, often received in formal conversations or informal e-mails, presents facts in a formative way. Quite opposite from summative feedback, the teachers are now accustomed to the specific feedback received informally. Ms. Foster, describes that quick contact as being more beneficial than broad comments about classroom strengths and weaknesses. She explained more by saying, "If you specifically tell me these are your strengths, these are your weaknesses, I can work on those things and I can grow. 'Everyone needs to work on rigor' is not as specific" [Lines 418-427].

Individual support, a common theme from her interviews, focuses on non-tenured teachers but he also remains focus on tenured teachers throughout the year. Providing individual support to each teacher is an important value within the school. The school provides professional development on an individual and whole group basis and Ms. Foster described the professional development opportunities as "very beneficial" [Line 408].

Theme 2: Teachers need quick and evidence-based feedback. In addition to the feedback provided by the SLT, Mr. Butler also described a focus on encouraging the staff members by quick and evidence-based feedback. He even described a focus on "looking at ways to do that more quickly this year, even before we have the sit down conversation about the observation" [Lines 124-126]. In order for the principal to provide more feedback, he has made it a goal of his to continue to be visible within the building. Being the only administrator in the building makes it difficult at times, but his constant focus on the classroom shines through the building on a daily basis. "If you can't be visible, you can't give the feedback. How would teachers know that something is not lining up with your expectation or district expectation? You have to inspect what you expect" [Lines 331-336]. Teachers seldom have to worry about expectations, because through visibility and feedback, Mr. Butler is very clear about the expectations of the school.

The creation of opportunity for positive and constructive feedback focused on the students takes place as he makes his presence known throughout the school. That feedback, grounded in evidence, supports the faculty and staff when making instructional decisions. The principal makes a point to "ground whatever I'm talking about in some piece of evidence" [Lines 364-365] instead of making it about "my feelings or emotions" [Line 369].

Quality of feedback, often overshadowed by the timeframe in which feedback is voiced, is not an issue at Canyon Primary School. Mr. Butler values the importance of quick feedback.

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Whether informal or formal, Mr. Butler describes his feedback as "a sit down formal conference or post-observation conference. In addition, I give feedback informally as the teacher has questions. It could be in the hallway as they are walking to lunch. They want to know 'What did you think? How did I do?' They want something immediate so I'll share it with them" [Lines 424-431].

Mr. Butler, as previously discussed, described a focus on "opportunities." While he provides feedback for every faculty and staff member, he does tend to focus more heavily on non-tenured staff members. Providing more feedback for new teachers to the profession or district is required because he would like to see improvement. "The level of feedback you have to offer a non-tenured teacher just because they are still learning is very different from a veteran or tenured teacher unless the tenured teacher is ineffective" [Lines 413-416].

Inspiration, according to Ms. Foster, also comes from the new perception of feedback. For example, the teachers were accustomed to little or no feedback about instruction. Now, teachers receive a lot of positive feedback centered on growth and students as well as public announcement of strengths. "He definitely points out when we work together and do good things" she proclaimed [Lines 309-312]. Working together, a new venture for the faculty at Canyon Primary School is largely responsible for the increase in teacher and student success. This collaboration happened because of the change in atmosphere that so many individuals notice each day. Mr. Butler "is pretty positive and tries to create a positive environment for us" [Lines 28-31].

That positive environment accompanies transparency, visibility, and clear expectations. In attempt to generate change within the building, Ms. Foster, describes the new principal as a leader who "shows you everything. He literally writes down everything you say, everything you

do, so he is very detailed with that. And then when you go in there with him he'll give you a copy and then you celebrate your strengths and discuss opportunities for growth" [Lines 58-66]. Even if the principal has issues related to the management of the school, he still makes it a point to make his presence known within the classroom. That focus on the classroom allows him to provide specific and useful data related to teacher and student achievement.

The purpose of evaluating teachers and providing feedback, according to the curriculum director, is to support the teachers and not just to say what they are doing wrong. That support is given to teachers at Canyon Primary School by means of honest, diplomatic, and quick feedback. "We are very honest with them," she stated. "Even though we see bad things sometimes, we go easy. We do it in a very diplomatic way" [Lines 85-88]. In addition to the honest and diplomatic feedback, the curriculum director also sees the importance of quick and clear feedback. "If you want to be rated high, this is it. This is what the teacher would be doing in the classroom; this is what the students will be doing. In every area, we broke it down. There's no surprises" [Lines 127-130]. "We train the administrators to collect data that supports why they scored a teacher at a certain level because the teacher wants to know why they made the score they did" [Lines 422-424]. Administrators provide the feedback that she spoke of within 48 hours of the observation.

Each teacher, regardless of tenure status, gets a satisfactory amount of feedback. Each observation is required to last at least forty-five minutes and whoever does the observation gives the feedback. She described the importance of this by saying, "We used to try to give the feedback to the principals. It just doesn't go well through a second person so we now give feedback based on what we saw" [Lines 548-551].

The post-observation conference, the most important part of the teacher evaluation process (according to the curriculum coordinator), is a time for the administrator to justify the

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rating while remaining non-judgmental. Post-observation conferences at Canyon Primary School are growth-minded. Instead of observations being individual of themselves, each observation links together from the beginning of the year until the end. "At the end, the teacher will see the three observations next to each other to show how they progressed throughout the year in relation to each quality teaching standard" [Lines 499-503]. The quality of feedback, according to the curriculum coordinator, depends on the personality of the person giving the feedback. "I hate to say it," she stated, "but I'm going 'Man, I love ya' and some of them are going 'here's what you scored' so I think the personality of the person giving the feedback makes a ton of difference" [Lines 527-531]

Teachers receive support for quality teaching through one-on-one support and global professional development. This support allows the system to provide opportunities for individuals to grow and schools to grow collectively. Providing individual support at Canyon Primary School targets individuals' strengths and weaknesses while global professional development targets the system's struggles in terms of demographics and culture.

The curriculum coordinator, excited about her role in the teacher evaluation process, documented several ways she is involved throughout the school year. Her involvement has also provided documentation that teachers' perceptions about evaluation at Canyon Primary School have also changed in recent years.

Teacher buy-in is now prevalent at Canyon Primary School due to the increase in positivity, encouragement, and collaboration from administration. That has led to an increase in positive perception about the teacher evaluation process. Teachers are now open to outside evaluators coming in and the feedback received from those visits. Ms. Foster describes teacher buy-in by saying, "The district office has been more involved and they involve teachers in some

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things. They make sure teachers have input. Especially with evaluations and things like that" [Lines 338-347].

    Theme 3: The focus is on the students, not the teachers. Mr. Butler's focus on students was somewhat discussed above, but student growth was a theme discussed numerously throughout his four interviews. Mr. Butler's main goal is to make sure teachers are moving kids [Lines 279-280]. "I'm trying to do more observations where I'm not taking a notepad in or a clipboard in and I go in and focus on the kids" [Lines 128-131]. This is a process that he takes very seriously and even spends time "conditioning" the kids for these types of observations. Before a formal observation, Mr. Butler spends time in the classrooms to allow kids to "get comfortable with me being in. I let them know that I'm focused on them because if they aren't responding, then our instruction isn't where it needs to be" [Lines 135-139]. A large part of teacher evaluation has to do with the students so he values "getting the kids familiar with someone else being in the classroom" [Lines 236-237].

    Growth is now a focus of Canyon Primary School's evaluation system. Student-centered growth, the focus of teacher evaluations according to Ms. Foster, greatly influences what takes place within the kindergarten through second grade classrooms within the school. Ms. Foster went into detail about growth-based observations and stated, "The focus is to better yourself to make sure you're a better teacher and make sure that the students are getting what they need" [Lines 217-220]. She continued to describe the main goal of teacher evaluation at Canyon Primary School as a process to "better the teacher so she can better the students" [Lines 326-328].

    When developing the previously discussed evaluation system and rubric, a process approved by the state board of education, the district-level administrators focused on the teachers

and students. She described this creation process by stating, "At first, we just started with the teacher. Then when there became so much focus on what the student would be doing, we also added this, but we did not want to lose the teacher part of it because we are looking at the teacher. The teacher and student should mirror each other. If the teacher is doing this, the student should be doing this" [Lines 138-146]. In addition, their system-created evaluation system aligns with the AQTS. Every evaluation analyzes the implementation of the quality-teaching standards and feedback related to those standards is given.

Summary of Case 2. In summary, Mr. Butler is a model of an effective leader. His positivity, encouragement, and focus on teachers as people stimulates student achievement within his building. That focus encourages teachers to take ownership of their growth and career. Constant feedback, instructional reflection, and collaboration influences hard work and the sense of togetherness at Canyon Primary School. The teacher evaluation system at Canyon Primary School has recently undergone several changes. Those changes, all positive, have helped align the principal's, teacher's, and district-level perceptions related to teacher evaluation. Table 13, compares the principal and teacher's perceptions related to the strategies used currently at Canyon Primary School.

Table 13

Perceptions Related to School 2's Instructional Leadership Strategies

Strategy	Principal's Perception	Teacher's Perception
Celebrate strengths	We are a positive school	Positive school, Good atmosphere, Celebrates strengths, Strong team
Frequent classroom visits, walkthroughs, visibility, and inspect what you expect	Teachers know it is ok for someone to see students struggle, Teachers are open to teacher evaluation, Teachers are nervous, Teachers may be concerned about the district coming in	The principal is very transparent, He makes his presence known, Clear expectations, Teachers are open to observations and outside observers
Focus on the students and allow teachers to be creative	We work hard to push the kids, Teachers know how to get students to where they need to be, Observations are based on the students	The different environment has allowed teachers to be more creative, Students are the focus of post-observation conferences and feedback
Giving teachers feedback formally and informally	Quick feedback, Many different forms of feedback, Feedback grounded in evidence, Teachers like immediate feedback	Verbal and written feedback is very detailed, Teachers are open to the feedback, Specific comments
Observations tied to AQTS, ELEOT form, rubrics	Teachers are on the same page, Teachers know how to get students to where they need to be, Teachers work to continually grow, The principal collaborates with the teachers, Teachers understand what the teacher evaluation process is made up of, Teachers may feel overwhelmed	There is a focus on growth at the school, Clear expectations are now in place
Mentor teachers	Teachers are on the same page, Teachers work to continually grow, Teachers are comfortable, Teachers participate in collaborative dialogue	Collaboration has increased between principal and teachers as well as teachers and their peers
Mutually agree on opportunities for growth	Teachers work to continually grow, Teachers have opportunities to sit and talk with the principal, The principal collaborates with the teachers, Teachers participate in collaborative dialogue, Teachers are open to teacher evaluation, The post-observation conference is beneficial, Teachers take ownership	Teachers are open to feedback that will help serve students better, Teachers trust the principal
Use data over time to inform decisions, SLT analyzes walkthrough results to determine PD needs	We use data, Feedback is grounded in evidence	Evaluation is data-driven
Individualized teacher support	Teachers work to continually grow, The principal collaborates with the teachers, The post observation conference is beneficial, Teachers take ownership	The principal provides opportunities for individual support on and off campus, Principal is very supportive, Professional development is beneficial
Team-building	Positive school, On the same page, Comfortable here, Collaborative dialogue	We are a strong team, The principal uses a lot of team building activities, The principal is positive
Open-door policy	Comfortable here, Opportunities to sit and talk with the principal, Principal collaborates with the teachers, Collaborative dialogue	The principal is visible, The principal is supportive, The principal and teachers discuss frequently about how to improve student learning

As one can tell, the restructuring of Canyon Primary School's leadership has positively affected the teacher evaluation process. What was once a "got you" experience has turned into a nurturing environment related to teacher growth focused on students. Analyzing the data across multiple sources helps show that.

A rubric for instructional effectiveness, the focus of the teacher evaluation process, helped create the nurturing environment. The rubric came out of a four-year restructuring process. It outlines the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS) and focuses on teacher and student actions. Formed as a basis for teacher observations, teacher feedback, and professional development, the rubric has divided sections based on each standard in the AQTS. For example, the rubric lists statements such as, "The teacher utilizes a variety of strategies/resources that match the purpose of each part of the lesson" and says, "The student participates in a variety of meaningful activities/strategies that help students achieve learning targets." Statements such as these provide clear expectations and opportunities for evidence-based dialogue between the principal and teacher.

Through frequent classroom visits, evidence-based formal and informal feedback, and individualized support, the rubric provides means to make growth possible. Although it is a "form," the focus is not the process. Instead, the supportive relationship (the focus) is evident between the principal and teacher.

The district-level participant, the curriculum director, had similar perceptions. Her view of teacher evaluation was largely influenced by administrator and teacher input. Successful evaluation at Canyon Primary School, dependent upon the administrator and teacher, has evidence of a focus on teachers and students. That focus, transferred through interview and observational data, is positive in nature and positively perceived by the teachers. The curriculum

director mentioned that the process took several years to complete but the results from the restructuring process has been beneficial to the community of learners at Canyon Primary School.

With clear expectations, specific feedback, and opportunities for individual growth, Ms. Foster enjoys collaborating and learning from the instructional leader at Canyon Primary School. Her positive outlook on her career and growth as a teacher came from Mr. Butler's focus on the teachers and students.

People over process is an important focus of an evaluation system that seeks results. Teachers in System 2 complete tasks in collaboration with the administrator and district office. That collaboration leads to dialogue centered on students and changes the perceptions and strategies used by the teachers. Case 2 provided an additional exemplar example of effective teacher evaluation in Alabama. This case provides more evidence that regardless of state policy and procedure, systems still are using their own instructional leadership strategies to influence teacher effectiveness within their building. Some schools, however, are not doing as well implementing effective teacher evaluation practice, which leads us to Case 3.

Case 3: Cypress Elementary School. Cypress Elementary School (pseudonym) is an urban school system also located in the state of Alabama. As a whole, the school served 573 students with the following demographics: twenty-seven percent African-American, sixty percent Caucasian, and thirteen percent from other races. The school mirrored the other schools in the study and was very welcoming and inviting. Starting with the school secretary, the atmosphere was pleasant and made visitors feel at ease. Cypress Elementary School has the lowest percentage of impoverished students in this study.

Principal #3. Principal Wescott and his assistant principal have been at the same school in the same positions for over a decade. This experience has led to an established atmosphere amongst teachers, students, and the community.

Teacher #3. Ms. Evans, an experience elementary school teacher, has a negative view of the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation. A great deal of the negative emotion came from her prior experience with teacher evaluation before transferring to Cypress Elementary School. That view, however, has not changed since working with Principal Wescott and being at Cypress Elementary School.

District-Office Administrator #3. Dr. Clark, the third district-level participant, currently serves as the personnel director for the school system. The personnel director currently has approximately twenty years in public education. He has been a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and central office administrator. All of his positions have been within the state of Alabama.

The teacher evaluation experience at Cypress Elementary School. Much like my experience visiting other schools for this study, I felt somewhat welcomed at Cypress Elementary School; however, it was a slightly different experience. As a form of security, a request for my driver's license welcomed me to the school as the secretary scanned it and checked my background before I could enter the school. The principal greeted me shortly after my background clearance came back clear, and the interview began.

As the interview process began, Mr. Wescott, principal of Cypress Elementary School, also described his school's culture as one that supports teachers; however, he did not go in as much detail as the other principals did. He described an atmosphere consisting of many years of the same leadership at Cypress Elementary School. The principal and assistant principal have

both been at the school for over a decade; thus, creating the understanding of an engrained and established culture. That culture, described as positive, lacked specific examples of positive or effective strategies in use at Cypress Elementary School. Instead, a heavy focus on the process of teacher evaluation accompanied the principal's description of the culture and climate of Cypress Elementary School.

Ms. Evans, an experienced teacher, had very positive views of her principal and assistant principal but her views related to the teacher evaluation process were not as positive. Her negative feelings come from the implementation of teacher evaluation practices throughout her career. Those feelings, largely developed from experience at other schools, still carry into her current school because of the lack of focus in reference to the opportunity teacher evaluation has to make lasting changes on teacher growth. Capable of so much more potential, teacher evaluation has not been beneficial to her individual growth as a teacher.

Regardless of her perceptions related to the teacher evaluation process, she still described her time at Cypress Elementary School as a great experience. She described an atmosphere of teacher respect and an excitement of coming to work every day. "One way I think our principals are very effective is at school culture. They have done a good job" [Lines 173-174]. She continued to say, "I think our administrators are great!" [Line 353]. These opinions quickly transitioned to negative comments related to the teacher evaluation process. Unfortunately, the implementation of teacher evaluation practices at Cypress Elementary School led into a discussion of how Ms. Evans desired more from the process.

The third district-level participant, Dr. Clark, currently serves as the personnel director for the school system. Initially, the principal of Cypress Elementary School directed me to the curriculum director for the interview. After talking with the curriculum director about the study,

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she directed me to the personnel director because she stated that he had the most involvement with the teacher evaluation process. Dr. Clark, did not appear to have the persona of "administrators are in control;" however, his responses described an atmosphere related to the purpose of evaluation being to document teachers' ineffective practices within the system. This system-level focus clearly filtered down to the schools and classrooms at Cypress Elementary School.

Theme 1: A top-down approach to the teacher evaluation process. Collaboration and building relationships, a theme very visible in the previous two principal interviews, is not as evident in Mr. Wescott's school. Mr. Wescott, one of the most experienced principals in the study, described an environment focused heavily on the observation portion of the teacher evaluation process. His interview described an evaluation and observation program established to rate teachers at least once every three years. Often referred to as "on cycle" and "off cycle," the principal stated, "All new teachers are on full cycle for three years and then it's a three year cycle" [Lines 235-237]. He continued to say, that he only had to do evaluations on ten teachers this year, which is approximately one-third of his total staff.

A focus on documenting teaching observations came forth as he described the process within his school. Experienced with Alabama's PEPE system, he started discussing the negative effects of the former evaluation system used by the state. Expressing the disagreement with a numbered rating system for teacher observations, he stated,

> It was very summative. There was no conversation. It was, 'Here is your score.' There
> was a follow-up conference but that was just for me to give my feedback. It was one-way.
> It was very top-down and evaluator-directed. "This is what you got, this is what I saw.
> Period." It did not take into account the teacher's perspective or much input from the
> teacher. [Lines 119-126]

As the principal attempted to describe a culture of collaboration and encouragement, he described ways he sought to give more feedback to the teachers. The collaboration and encouragement, however, still fell under the documentation of teacher performance category. When describing the observation process, he talked about the forms used to rate the teacher or document the teacher's instruction. That process, according to Mr. Wescott, is composed of two different methods of note taking. The first method he discussed was a "running-record." Using his iPad, he takes notes and writes narratively. Largely focused on students, he discussed writing examples of what the students do and what the teacher says and does.

Secondly, he discussed using the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT). Interestingly, he describes some pleasure in using this form; however, this form uses a numbered rating system, much like Alabama's former PEPE tool, which he described displeasure with because of assigning numbered ratings to a teacher. He likes the ELEOT process because you can write notes in the electronic system and it provides the teacher with immediate feedback; however, a teacher may be rated a "1" (the lowest rating) due to something the principal did not observe.

He described part of the evaluation process as involving a post-observation reflection form. This form, completed by the teacher and observer, has no numbers and focuses on "praises" and "polishes." He described this process in detail by stating, "The teacher and administrator both fill out the same form. There are not any numbers attached to it and the teacher describes the items he or she felt like they deserved praise for, the items that he or she felt like there were questions about, and the areas that he or she felt like needed to be polished. The administrator would do the same thing" [Lines 140-148].

At one point throughout the interviews, Ms. Evans, the teacher, described her experience with the forms used for teacher evaluation, specifically the self-assessment. Her responses to the self-assessment reflected worry related to what the principal thought about her. For example, she stated, "I don't know that my scores change from year to year. Like, I always say I am implementing or aspiring. You do not want to be prideful on one of those and your principal see it and be like, no you're not, That's awkward. Then you don't want to be like I don't know how to do anything because that's going to be a red flag." [Lines 111-114]. A statement such as this provides evidence that the purpose of the teacher evaluation process at Cypress Elementary School is misunderstood.

When an observed lesson or teacher is "ineffective," the principal uses another form to document the teacher's plan for growth. He described this process by stating, "If it's a severe problem, I'll write a professional goal to document that I've had that conversation with the teacher. It is specific. When it is, when we're going to meet back again, and then have a follow up conversation" [Lines 336-340]. He then described the support he gives throughout the process by stating, "Here's how we're going to do this together" [Lines 429-430]. Details of working through improvement "together" did not emerge through the series of interviews and observations.

Even though the major theme in Mr. Wescott's interviews was the documentation of teacher evaluation (a summative approach), he described evaluation at Cypress Elementary School as formative. "As opposed to a summative evaluation," he described, "we have conversations. It's much more formative" [Lines 165-167]. The principal uses less formal-walkthroughs to look for specific aspects of the classroom that gives him opportunity to follow up with a question to start conversation about the walkthrough.

He continued to discuss the use of data for specific feedback related to the walkthroughs. The focus of walkthroughs, according to the principal, is what the student is doing. Contrary to the focus on feedback, the principal described an example of walkthrough feedback as "I noticed that Mike put his head on his desk three separate times" [Lines 205-207].

The principal opened his interview with, "We try to be very supportive of our teachers. Whether they need something instructionally, something with student discipline, or parent support" [Lines 46-50]. Additionally, the constructiveness of feedback had a negative tone. Mr. Wescott offered many examples of feedback during the interview process such as: "Mike's bored, I saw this three times, John was off task, and how can you engage the learners more?" [Lines 208-216]. While this feedback uses specific data about the observation, a teacher may benefit from the use of more constructive comments in reference to student engagement rather than using negative statements about the learning environment.

Contrary to a negative perception of the teacher evaluation process, Ms. Evans, the fourteen-year veteran of the teacher profession, feels like the principals at the school support her. Her comments on support did not detail much about the teacher evaluation process; however, the support came from topics outside of teacher observation and feedback. For example, when asked about how her principals support her, she responded by saying, "Anything I've ever asked for whether it was, like hey I want you to come see this or something financially, it's been met" [Lines 235-238]. Interwoven throughout her multiple interviews, school culture remained positive even though teacher evaluation did not appear prevalent at Cypress Elementary School. A lack of focus of teacher evaluation left Ms. Evans wanting more from the process to affect her teaching practice.

She described the teacher evaluation process by stating, "It's not the most effective way to measure how effective you are as a teacher" [Lines 38-39]. Her reasoning of this involved the amount of time administrators spent in the classroom. For example,

> Every day both of them will come into my classroom and say hello, they will greet my students but I think having the time to come in and truly know what is going on in a lot of the classrooms. The larger we get, there is too many other things for them to do. [Lines 45-52].

Ms. Evans also had negative perceptions related to the quality of feedback received after an evaluation or observation. She described teacher evaluation at her school as providing "no opportunity for authentic feedback" [Lines 59-60]. She then showed several pieces of evaluative documentation related to the absence of feedback and comments related to her area of improvement: parent communication. With little focus on evaluative feedback, Ms. Evans has not grown because of the instructional leadership strategies within her building. Instead, she collaborates with other professionals to influence her growth as a teacher. "If we're interested in something or we think it will be effective in our classroom, we go ask. It kind of creates collaboration. Having someone tell your peers you did a good job is great" [Lines 178-181].

In addition to not benefiting from classroom observations, Ms. Evans also feels like she isn't affected by the instructional leaders' focus on growth over time. Stemming from her negative description of teacher evaluation, she offered discussion in reference to what really helps her grow as a teacher. "I think what's made me a better teacher is having teachers who I teach with do innovative things or effective things they share. Or going through a professional development that I think is meaningful that you can implement in your classroom" [Lines 76-78]. Additionally, she made an alarming statement that effective leadership should address. She

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stated, "I don't know if I have ever sat in a post-observation conference or meeting and then

something in me thought, 'Wow! I really need to implement that'" [Lines 79-80].

Unlike other teachers in this study, Ms. Evans feels like the teacher evaluation focuses on

the teacher instead of the students. Additionally, the focus of the post-observation conferences,

according to Ms. Evans, is the forms. She feels as if the evaluations individual of each other and

not compared to each other in terms of growth. She described her opinion of this by explaining a

little about her history with teacher evaluation. "My principals had a lot more to do than watch

me teach. My observations were very short. 'Hey, great job!'" [Lines 191-193].

She also feels like teacher evaluation has an unrealistic expectation of checking the

boxes. "I don't always use technology in every lesson, I don't always have teamwork, and I

don't always have students reflect on how much they are growing in my classroom. I just don't

think you can do that in one sitting" [Lines 53-56].

In addition to filling out forms, little feedback, and checking the boxes, Ms. Evans

discussed her opinions related to administrator follow-up after professional development

sessions. A day after the professional development, she said, "they" would be in her classroom to

observe the implementation of professional development. She expressed concerns with this

because "We have so much, I don't know, I can't do it all. It is not realistic to think you could

implement all the professional development especially a day after it was presented" [Lines 303-

305]. In another interview, she also discussed professional development and the unrealistic

expectations of developing in so many areas. "We have 920 professional development

opportunities. It is hard to discern what we are truly going to implement and what things were

just doing to check off a box for somebody else. Sometimes you have to sit there in professional

development and think 'How much buy-in do I really need to have for this? Is this going to be

something permanent that were going to truly implement or are we just talking about it?'" [Lines 265-270].

With negative views of the complete teacher evaluation process, from beginning to end, Ms. Evans still desires authentic feedback. In a school with a large population and busy administrators, she described her feelings by stating, "I wish they gave us more things you could do to improve. Maybe more concrete things. I wonder if the longer you teach, the less specific things get. I wonder if it has to do with tenure." [Lines 221-223]. Describing the lack of authentic feedback from administration provided opportunities to discover what really encouraged teacher growth within Ms. Evans, a tenured teacher who wants to grow. In addition to that, she described professional development as a propeller that increases collaboration with peers as opposed to the lack of collaboration she receives from the top-down model of evaluation at Cypress Elementary School.

Mr. Wescott did not list any other specific examples of feedback given but he did speak heavily about the forms of individual support provided for teachers within his building. The instructional coach, an educator centered on supporting teachers, has a major role in the individualized opportunities for support within Cypress Elementary School. Furthermore, Mr. Wescott discussed how he likes to share readings of articles or books with individual teachers throughout the year.

Additionally, he quickly described professional development opportunities as opportunities for "peer observation, watching someone model a lesson, and videotaping of lessons" [Lines 346-349]. Although he spoke many times about individualized support, Mr. Wescott never discussed the types of support he personally gave to the teachers other than when he points out "something they could be strengthened in" [Lines 345]. This top-down and

bureaucratic approach to instructional leadership could send mixed signals to teachers and is not centered on the principles of instructional leadership. The principal's lack of involvement in the teacher growth process is evident by other responses he made. In response to a question focused on how he notifies teachers of growth over time, he stated, "I don't know how they're necessarily notified of their growth besides just feedback or comments that are directed at the teacher" [Lines 390-392].

Teacher evaluation, a system with potential to impact teacher growth, is not a focus at Cypress Elementary School. Mr. Wescott supported this by saying, "I don't know that it's a heavy focus. We just keep a running list from year to year. Like where a teacher is in the evaluation status cycle. PLP, professional learning plan, year one, year two, or evaluation so like three years. You're on" [Lines 222-227]. Furthermore, the response to evaluation is not a detailed process either. Teacher growth may become stagnant when the process of teacher evaluation, described by a principal, is in reference to "on cycle" or "off cycle." It provides opportunity for complacency to emerge; thus, negatively affecting teacher and student growth.

Ms. Evans also continued to describe her perception of teacher evaluation by commenting on her opinion related to the frequency of official evaluations. She described an environment where teacher effectiveness ratings came from observations once every three years. "Every three years one of them evaluates us. So every three years I feel like they know really well how we're doing" [Lines 122-123]. She also expressed her concerns by stating, "I'm going to be evaluated next year so we should probably have this conversation next year" [Lines 86-87].

A top-down approach to leadership also appeared heavily throughout Ms. Evans' interviews. She also commented on her experience with principals' instructional leadership strategies related to teacher evaluation. During the interview, a question requested the teacher to

describe how the principal's instructional leadership strategies have affected her as a teacher. She responded by saying, "I think I make sure I'm doing what I'm supposed to. I make sure that I follow the directions" [Lines 258-261].

Straying from a focus on administrators, Ms. Evans also described whom she really depended upon for teacher growth. Responsible for much growth throughout the school, the instructional coach, "is amazing and is great at saying 'Here's how we need to correct this' and not make it personal. She has a great way of correcting you and guiding you and being a good mentor without totally calling you out'" [Lines 229-233]. Ms. Evans also focused on the professional development offerings at Cypress Elementary School.

The breadth of professional development, according to Ms. Evans, is overwhelming and not tailored to specific goals for teachers. The teacher described "920 offerings" in an exaggerated manner but was serious when she described that the amount of support provided through professional development is hard to implement. Most of the individual support, stemming from the instructional coach's involvement, is beneficial but the teacher would like to see more support provided by the administrative team.

Even though she does not currently rely on the administrators for support, she still sees them as "knowledgeable" [Line 282] and aware of what is going on in the building. For example, she thinks her current principals would not wait until "teacher evaluation" to talk to a teacher about a problem [Lines 378-380]. Unlike her former principal, she believes her current principals are very caring. Her former principal observed her during one of the last days in December and at the beginning of January. When she talked with him about the back-to-back observations and no time to improve he stated, "I have bigger fish to fry. Just teach" [Line 376].

Following in line with previous descriptions of teacher evaluation in Case 3, the personnel director, Dr. Clark, spoke heavily about his broad knowledge of the teacher evaluation process. He, however, did not offer much insight into specific examples of teacher evaluation influencing teacher growth within his system. His hands-off approach to the process of teacher evaluation showed through his comments related to his role as the personnel director. When asked to describe his role in the process, he stated, "I'm our human resources director so really I just kind of make sure that everybody is doing their evaluations" [Lines 112-114]. He does not observe teachers and relies on communication with principals to determine teacher effectiveness; however, his comments documented very little communication with Mr. Wescott.

When asked to provide specific examples of how Mr. Wescott has been successful at improving teacher performance, he stated,

> He never really has to communicate a whole lot with me on what is needed for his teachers. So just in that sense we do not get calls down here about things going on with his school. In some cases, we have gotten calls where parents felt like things needed to improve but he is not one where we have received any of those calls or information like that. When I see his teachers, they have a good relationship with him, I think in the sense that they are not complaining or wanting to get out or transfer out or anything like that, so I think that speaks positively towards his ability as an instructional leader. [Lines 275-288]

To clarify his statement, I asked a follow up question to determine his perception related to Mr. Wescott's role as the instructional leader to affect teacher performance and student achievement within Cypress Elementary School. He responded with,

> I haven't really observed him directly as the instructional leader in terms of leading data meetings or anything like that. But their school does perform at a satisfactory level each year and above. Which can just draw the assumption that he's obviously doing a good job as a leader there. [Lines 292-298].

He also feels that the system "does not put anything else on the principals that would impact or keep them from being an instructional leader" [Lines 158-161].

The personnel director stated that the system does not make teacher evaluation bigger than what it is. Based on the responses from the series of interviews, that is very visible. Even though the director states the evaluations are formative instead of summative, much of his responses are focused around the documentation of teachers.

Growth was not a prevalent theme among the twelve interviews at Cypress Elementary School. Additionally, the teacher even discussed desiring a growth mindset, something she is not familiar with currently. She is an experienced teacher who still desires feedback and support. Wanting to grow professionally, the only recommendations for growth she discussed was in the area of parent communication. Contrary to the principal's description related to the purpose of teacher evaluation, commenting on the teacher's parent communication skills does very little to inhibit instructional effectiveness within her classroom.

A growth mindset, in addition to the comments above, was not a widely discussed topic during Mr. Wescott's interview. Furthermore, Ms. Evans did not have much to say about teacher growth either. Engulfed by a series of comments related to the busyness of administrators, Ms. Evans depends on collaboration with other teachers for growth. That contributes to her view of the ineffectiveness of the teacher evaluation process, documentation for research question three.

Time spent in Ms. Evans classroom provided evidence that she is a very strong teacher. Probably why the principal only offered advice of parent communication, the strategies and effectiveness of the teacher was evident throughout the time I was in the classroom. She was upbeat, positive, and the student/teacher rapport was great. The teacher set the students up for success by providing a rubric, which listed clear expectations. Students were eager and engaged.

Ms. Evans also provided me with a copy of her most recent evaluation. The principal, however, did not complete the observation. Instead, the instructional coach completed it. She stated she has not had a recent evaluation from an administrator. The comments on the form focused heavily on the purpose of the lesson and how Ms. Evans sparked interest in students. The observer also commented on the word wall on display within the classroom. The only feedback provided on the observation form was, "The essential question needs to be visible and referred to at the beginning and end of your lesson." Supporting previous comments on Case 3, the teacher's most recent observation focused heavily on procedure and process rather than constructivism that could inhibit teacher growth.

Summary of Case 3. Perceptions of teacher evaluation varied greatly within Case 3. Mr. Wescott completed the first interview within this case and I had high expectations after I left the first interview. Doubt, however, slipped in my mind after interviewing Ms. Evans. As the Case ended, the district-level interview solidified my view on the variance of perceptions within the district.

The instructional leaders within the study described a process focused on the teacher when the teacher described a focus on student learning. This provides a basis of the negative perceptions at Cypress Elementary School. Discrepancy sets in when mental models vary. Ensuring teachers are effective is not an adequate way to build relationships, provide support, and increase teacher buy-in. That definition, from the district-level participant, clearly contributes to the misunderstanding of the process. Table 14, clearly presents the variance of perceptions at Cypress Elementary School. Each strategy listed below impacts teacher evaluation at the school and came from responses to interview questions.

Table 14

Perceptions of School 3's Instructional Leadership Strategies

Strategy	Principal's Perception	Teacher's Perception
Student-centered	Evaluations are very much focused on the students, We don't watch you we watch the kids	Observations are focused on the teacher instead of students
Building relationships, open door policy, and collaboration	We have a lot of collaboration and teacher buy-in, Relationships are very important, We have an open door policy, Teacher-led post observation conferences	Good culture, Principals respect teachers, Happy to come to work, Feels classroom needs are supported (financially), Growth comes from collaboration with other teachers, Teacher admires the administrators, Teacher evaluation forces you to collaborate
Informal and formal observations and feedback	Feedback that improves instruction is a challenge, Evaluations and feedback are more formative and makes it a positive experience, Immediate feedback is good, Less formal walkthroughs are beneficial, Teachers are open to feedback	Not effective at measuring the effectiveness of a teacher, Teacher effectiveness is about the intangibles of teaching, Evaluation is about checking off all the boxes, No opportunity for authentic feedback, Frequency of observations doesn't provide an accurate rating, Instructional Coach provides feedback on sticky notes
Management of the learning organization	One administrator will be in the office while one is in the classrooms, There's always something that comes up, The size of the school limits the time in classrooms	They have too many other things to do, Principal spends time in rooms where more time is needed, Teacher makes sure she is following the rules
The use of data over time	Use data to help teacher's see what is going on, Use data to paint a picture, Use Global Scholar, No focus on growth	Teacher hasn't benefited from teacher evaluation, No observational or dialogue focus on growth
Individualized support	We are supportive of our teachers, Teachers work with the instructional coach, Professional Plans to document conversations, Fully supportive role, Peer teaching and observing	The instructional coach provides good support, Teacher wishes there were more suggestions for individual improvement, A lot of PD opportunities but many are not beneficial
A focus on forms	Use of reflection forms, Running list of on and off cycle employees, ELEOT form	Filling out the forms is the focus of observation and post-observation conferences

Contrary to findings outlined in Case 1 and Case 2, Case 3 is composed of ideas and

thoughts related to successful implementation of the teacher evaluation process; however, there

is a clear culture of "us vs. them" established. With very distinct views, the principal and teacher view the process of teacher evaluation at Cypress Elementary School very differently. The top-down approach to teacher evaluation at Cypress Elementary School has left the teacher with negative thoughts of teacher evaluation; however, she still values and admires the current administration. Outside of the teacher evaluation process, the administrators do a good job of building the school's culture.

If the administrators want to improve the school culture even more, they should work towards aligning the teachers and administrators perceptions of teacher evaluation. The case focuses heavily on the process of teacher evaluation rather than the people that process affects. Having a misconstrued view of the process can lead to a decrease in teacher buy-in, work ethic, and leave students as the unintended target of the process.

Cross-Case Analysis

As explained in each within-case analysis above, there is a clear distinction between cases. Each, possessing a different focus, teachers within this research study have experienced strategies ranging from full support to top-down approaches related to achieving desired results. Using data in the case-study database allowed me to discover codes and themes relating to the use of teacher evaluation across each case as they pertain to the study's research questions.

Central question. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

Sub questions.

1. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

2. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

3. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators?

Instructional leadership strategies. Table 15, below, outlines specific instructional leadership strategies used by the principals within the study. Dr. Lewis (P1) and Mr. Butler (P2) used a wide variety of instructional leadership strategies as compared to Mr. Wescott (P3). The use of effective and multiple strategies contributed to the success and perceptions of participants at Waypark High School and Canyon Primary School. A summary of each principal's instructional leadership strategies appeared in each within case analysis.

Table 15

Summary of Instructional Leadership Strategies Used by Principals

STRATEGY	P1	P2	P3
1. Student-Centered	X	X	X
2. Value teachers	X	X	
3. Build relationships/team building	X	X	X
4. Support teachers	X	X	
5. Foster teacher ownership	X	X	
6. Inviting and Welcoming School	X	X	
7. Connect with students	X	X	
8. Provide quick and honest feedback	X	X	X
9. Provide opportunities to grow	X		
10. Foster collaboration	X	X	X
11. Continual dialogue	X		
12. System-created evaluation tool	X	X	
13. Focus on growth	X	X	
14. Formative observations	X	X	X
15. Praise	X	X	X
16. Strategically hire administrative team	X		
17. Management of the learning organization	X		X
18. Post-observation conferences	X	X	
19. Vertical planning and PD	X		
20. District-Office involvement	X	X	
21. Frequent classroom visits/visibility	X	X	
22. Visit classrooms without writing		X	
23. Tie observations to AQTS		X	
24. Rubrics		X	
25. Walkthroughs	X	X	
26. AdvancEd ELEOT		X	
27. Training on the process	X	X	
28. Assign mentor teachers		X	
29. Use data over time		X	X
30. More feedback to non-tenured teachers		X	
31. Mutually agree on opportunities for growth		X	
32. Individualized teacher support		X	X
33. Allow room for creativity		X	
34. Open-door policy		X	X
35. SLT analyzes evaluation results for PD		X	
36. Teacher-led post observation conferences		X	X

Cross-case themes. The first two cases produced the four themes in Table 16 (below)

and provided answers to the study's research questions. Case 3 validated the themes because

Cypress Elementary School did not display the same characteristics that produced negative

perceptions of the teacher evaluation process. That shows, when used effectively like Case 1 and

Case 2, effective teacher evaluation has the potential to produce positive perceptions.

Table 16

Themes from Cross-case Analysis

Theme	Teacher evaluation has the potential to be successful when
Theme 1	a culture of building relationships and respect permeates
Theme 2	administrators and teachers have a mutual understanding of the purpose of teacher evaluation
Theme 3	collaboration between district officials, administrators, and teachers takes place
Theme 4	it is focused on students rather than documenting teacher performance

Theme 1 – Teacher evaluation has the potential to be successful when a culture of

building relationships and respect permeates. All schools in the study mentioned building

relationships and respect. Every teacher participating in the study had positive views of their

principals and felt like the principal supported them; however, each teacher did not have a

positive perception of the teacher evaluation process. What still remains, is the focus on building

relationships. Teachers are more apt to trust an administrator when they feel the principal cares,

which makes the teacher evaluation process more comfortable for educators.

Case 1 and 2, similar cases, discussed relationships and community building in a way that

provided a foundation for the rest of the teacher evaluation process that followed. Without the

focus on trust, relationship building, and collaboration, effective teacher evaluation would have

been harder to achieve and would be similar to the results in Case 3.

Table 17

Perceptions Related to Theme One

Theme: Teacher evaluation has the potential to be successful when a culture of building relationships and respect is created		
Principals	**Teachers**	**District-Level Personnel**
• Value and build relationships with teachers • Celebrate successes • Value relationships over the process of teacher evaluation • Are supportive of teachers	• Value collaboration • Appreciate personable and approachable administrators • Thrive in a nurturing environment	• Sets the tone for trust, support, and stability • Love and support teachers • Value diplomatic feedback

Table 17 summarizes how the triads described the level of relationships within their building. Most school's experience with teacher evaluation was positively impacted by the culture and climate created by the administration. Without a positive culture and climate, teachers will have a hard time trusting administrators and responding to feedback based on teacher evaluation. The educators' perceptions, above, align and provide a strong foundation for constructive feedback to improve student learning.

Additionally, administrators in Case 1 talked a great deal about building relationships with teachers. The district-level administrator in Case 2; however, discussed relationships more vividly. When discussing relationships and feedback, she talked a great deal about love and loving the teachers. This difference in description may stem from the participants' genders. As the only female administrator in the study, she described loving face-to-face feedback even when having to deliver negative news.

Theme 2 – Teacher evaluation has the potential to be successful when administrators and teachers have a mutual understanding of the purpose of teacher evaluation. This study largely focused on the perceptions of teacher evaluation, so starting with definitions of the

purpose of teacher evaluation is important as I describe the context behind each school's experience with the process. Table 18 describes each participants mental model related to the teacher evaluation process. According to the data collected from the three cases within this study, most of the respondents had a mental model related to growth. Whether that growth related to teachers or students, each individual viewed the process as something that causes educators to refine their practice or the practice of others. Having this mental model related to teacher evaluation probably is responsible for the openness educators had about the teacher evaluation process within each school.

Table 18

The Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

Case	Participant	Purpose	Summary
1	P1	To better people, Continually refine and grow, To effectively reach kids, To continually adapt, To apply it, Continual dialogue	Growth/ Students
	T1	To be better, To improve, Be better for students, To reach students, To make students successful	
	DO1	To improve student learning	
2	P2	To celebrate strengths, To improve, To continually grow	Growth
	T2	To grow as a teacher	
	DO2	To provide support	
3	P3	To improve teacher performance, To focus on the student, Make changes to increase student learning	Student Learning
	T3	To affect student learning	
	DO3	To ensure teachers are effective	

Relationships laid the foundation for free flowing dialogue between administrators and teachers. Once the culture of relationships was established, Waypark High School and Canyon Primary School provided extensive training on the evaluation process at the beginning of the year. Starting with this training, principals outline the purpose of teacher evaluation so teachers will understand specifics and expectations. That purpose, as described previously in Table 18,

focuses on growth. Sharing mental models related to the purpose of teacher evaluation will leave very little room for misunderstanding and miscommunication. When principals and teachers have differing views or a misunderstanding of each other's views, the teacher evaluation process can seem as a process of "gotcha" which results in a negative perception of the process and a hindrance to collaboration. The top-down approach in Case 3 contributed to the teacher's perception of not feeling supported.

Theme 3 – Teacher evaluation has the potential to be successful when collaboration between principals, teachers, and district-level administrators takes place. Case 1 and 2, largely dependent upon district-level collaboration shared positive experiences related to collaboration across the district's schools and grade levels. Additionally, the teachers and principals spoke highly of the district-level participants in the teacher evaluation process. The superintendent of Waypark High School and the curriculum coordinator of Canyon Primary School spoke highly of teachers and administrators and each participant had similar mental models of the teacher evaluation process and purpose; however, the personnel director in Case 3 did not discuss similar views. Table 19, below, summarizes the participants' views of district-level collaboration.

Table 19

Perceptions Related to Theme Three

Theme: Teacher evaluation has the potential to be successful when collaboration between district officials, administrators, and teachers takes place		
Principals	**Teachers**	**District-Level Personnel**
• should have an active role in teacher support • should value support provided by the district	• feel supported when they are valued and are made a district-level priority	• should set the tone for trust, support, and stability • should value district-level collaboration with schools • influence perceptions of collaboration by being visible in the classrooms everyday

Case 1 and Case 2 provided positive experiences related to the districts' level of collaboration with schools and teachers. The teacher and principal in school three, unfortunately, did not speak of the same level of collaboration. Even more so, participants at Cypress Elementary School demonstrated some level of confusion related to the district's role in the teacher evaluation process. For example, Mr. Wescott discussed information related to the curriculum coordinator being involved in the teacher evaluation process, whereas the curriculum coordinator referred me to the personnel director for an interview instead. This confusion aligned with the perceptions of Teacher 3. She desired more from the process as she described teacher evaluation as a minor tool for influencing teacher performance within her building.

With Case 3's perceptions aside, the other two cases provide exemplar examples of district-level support. A focus on students and teacher buy-in was prevalent as that focus stemmed from a district-wide focus on visibility, formative observations, and district-created evaluation tools. Case 1 and Case 2 documented heavy influence of collaboration with administrators and teachers, thus creating the atmosphere of administrator/teacher trust.

As Figure 4 describes, some systems have high district office involvement while others have very little involvement in the teacher evaluation process. The figure lists each part of the teacher evaluation process from the creation of the evaluation system to providing feedback based on teacher evaluation. Figure 4 is color coded in a way which describes high involvement in the process (green), medium involvement in the process (yellow), and low involvement in the process (red).
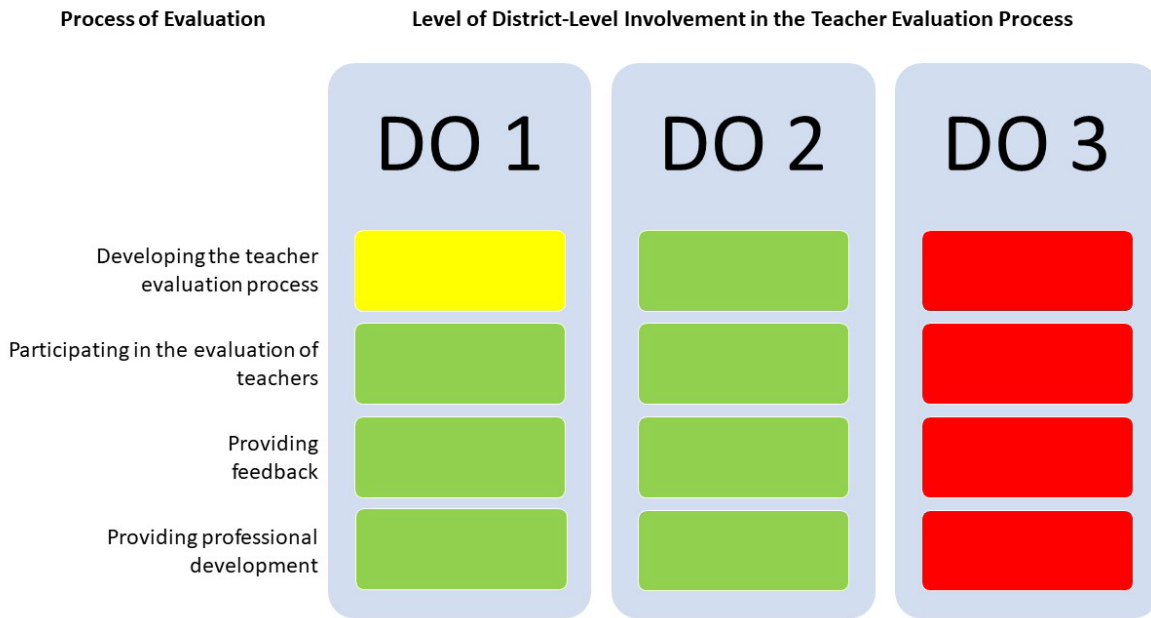
Figure 4. District-Level Involvement in Teacher Evaluation

Table 20 outlines district involvement in the teacher evaluation process in each system. The data, discussed in detail later, provides more information for Figure 4. As described in each within-case analysis below and illustrated in Figure 4 above, Case 1 and Case 2 had much higher involvement of the district-office when discussing the strategies and implementation of teacher evaluation practices within each school. In addition to analyzing each district office interview for involvement, I analyzed the data for codes and themes related to specific examples of district-level involvement.

Table 20

District-Level Involvement

Case	Part	District-level administrators were involved in the teacher evaluation process by
1	*Pre-Evaluation*	establishing the vision for teacher evaluation
	Evaluation	being visible within the schools and also evaluating teachers
	Post-Observation	providing feedback and opportunities for professional development
2	*Pre-Evaluation*	developing rubrics focused on students and teachers in collaboration with principals and teachers across the district
	Evaluation	observing and evaluating teachers informally and formally
	Post-Observation	providing feedback "in love" and by providing individual and global professional development opportunities
3	*Pre-Evaluation*	making sure evaluators are evaluating
	Evaluation	NO INVOLVEMENT DISCUSSED
	Post-Observation	NO INVOLVEMENT DISCUSSED

Theme 4 - Teacher evaluation has the potential to be successful when students are the focus rather than documenting teacher performance. Even though the information from Case 3 was not as positive, data from the Case was very useful. Each participant in Case 3 focused on the process of evaluation. With a heavy focus on forms and documentation, the use of collaborative dialogue was absent from the participant's responses. Furthermore, the topic of support provided by the principal was absent as well. Ultimately, the absence of collaboration and dialogue contributed to the teacher's negative perception of the teacher evaluation process.

Nevertheless, Case 1 and Case 2 had a positive focus on students instead of the process. Although both schools discussed the use of forms, the participants described the real purpose of the teacher evaluation process by discussing the importance of dialogue, collaboration, and a focus on student growth.

A student focus, detailed in Table 21, guided district and school-level decisions related to the process of teacher evaluation. Participants in Case 1 and Case 2 shared a student-driven understanding of the purpose of teacher evaluation. Case 3, however, described more of a focus

on the rights and wrongs of teaching practices. This led to the teacher's negative perceptions of

how teacher evaluation did not encourage growth as a teacher. This focus on students, however,

does not include using student achievement data through Value Added Models (VAMs)

previously discussed.

Table 21

Perceptions Related to Theme Four

Theme: Teacher evaluation has the potential to be successful when it is focused on students rather than documenting teacher performance		
Principals	**Teachers**	**District-Level Personnel**
• should focus on moving students in learning every day • should help insure instruction meets the needs of students • should center evaluation on student learning	• value administrator engagement during the observation • are more comfortable with evaluation focused on students rather than teachers	• should put students first, teachers second • should understand the importance of teacher evaluation being tied to student learning

Figure 5 below, illustrates common themes among all cases. The themes, color-coded

in nature, describe the degree at which the theme had positive influence within each case. The

color green describes a strong positive experience, yellow, a slight positive and/or negative

influence, and red, a negative influence. Each case's theme was color-coded according to each

participant's perceptions and comments related to teacher evaluation.

Waypark High School (School 1) scoring positive in all areas, is a progressive school.

Observed in all aspects of the data collection process, Dr. Lewis has positively influenced the

culture of excellence within his building. Canyon Primary School (School 2) also scored positive

in all areas, which speaks volumes of Mr. Butler's leadership skills considering he came into an

environment that was less than favorable according to Case 2's teacher participant. Cypress

Elementary School (School 3) did not have as positive of an experience as the other schools

within this study. This was largely because of the inconsistency among participants' perceptions

related to teacher evaluation within the school. Revisiting the school's culture and climate as well as the system's focus on improving student learning should happen if the system hopes to change the perceptions of teachers.
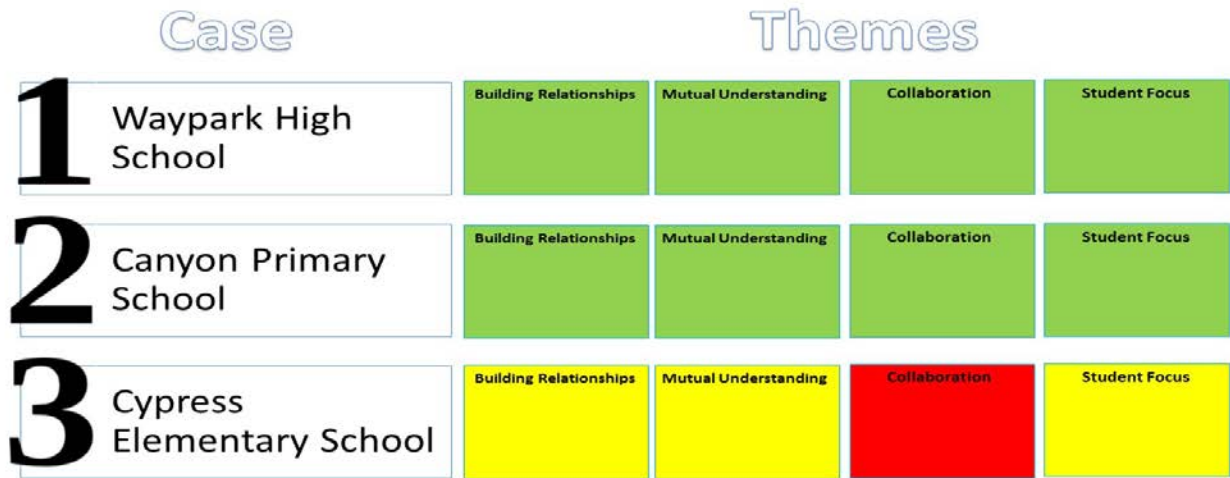

Figure 5. Level of Theme Influence Within Each Case

Table 22 provides a summary that illustrates the results of the cross-case analysis for the research questions. Teacher Evaluation has the potential to be a tool used to monitor and improve teacher and student growth. By using the strategies below, other systems can benefit from the same approaches.

Table 22

Summary of Cross-Case Perceptions for Research Questions 1-4

Teacher evaluation has the potential to be successful when		
Principals	**Teachers**	**District-Level Personnel**
• value and build relationships with teachers • celebrate successes • value relationships over the process of teacher evaluation • are supportive of teachers • have an active role in teacher support • feel supported by the district • focus on moving students in learning everyday • help insure instruction meets the needs of students • center evaluation on student learning	• value collaboration • are supported by personable and approachable administrators • are part of a nurturing environment • feel supported, valued, and as a district-level priority • see administrator engagement during the observation • have student-focused observations	• set the tone for trust, support, and stability • love and support teachers • offer diplomatic feedback • provide district-level collaboration with schools • are visible in the classrooms everyday • put students first, teachers second • tie teacher evaluation to student learning (not VAMs)

Chapter V: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators, teachers, and district office members. The central research question for the study was what instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

I used a qualitative research approach with the goal of richly describing each participant's perception of the teacher evaluation process within each school. Qualitative methods were appropriate for this study because I sought to report each participant's perception related to effective teacher evaluation strategies so teacher evaluation across the state of Alabama could possibly improve. I analyzed data from the multiple case study's nine participants within three cases (three participants per case). Data consisted of a series of interviews for each participant, observations at each school, and artifact analysis. Semi-structured interview protocols were used which allowed for open-ended questions and follow up questions. Additionally, I used semi-structured observation protocols based on themes from the literature and the study's research questions. The use of semi-structured protocols allowed me to consider previous themes in research and allowed room for emergent themes as I interviewed and observed the participants.

I read and re-read the transcriptions as well as listened to the recordings several times for accuracy after transcription and member checking of the interviews. I then began coding and analyzing the data for themes. Throughout the process, I used a case-study database to store all of the codes and participant data related to each theme. Chapter 5 discusses how the findings

compare to the previous findings in literature. Additionally, Chapter 5 revisits the themes emerging from the case, interpretation of the findings, implications and recommendations, and the significance for future research.

Previous Research Surrounding the Study

Teacher evaluation, a historical focus of legislatures, continues to receive a lot of attention by the government and policy makers; however, how instructional leaders place a focus on the teacher evaluation within each school is hard to find. As outlined by Darling-Hammond (2013), Alabama has created a framework of the teacher evaluation process that gives systems a good start. With statewide standards, performance-based assessments for teacher certification, local evaluation systems tied to the standards, support structures, and aligned professional learning, the state of Alabama has the potential to influence teacher growth. However, history in the United States has also influenced the judgement of administrators.

Since the 1800s, administrators, policy makers, and the public have made teacher and student achievement increasingly difficult for the nation's community of learners. Engrossed in a never-ending cycle of inspecting performance, educators are at the mercy of factors they have no control over. As the legislators and state departments of education make the public aware through inadequate and negative means, teachers and administrators find it progressively challenging to come to work each day. Because of this, many teachers love teaching but hate their job. Regulating teacher performance has been in existence for many years now and it has shown little benefit and has contributed to the self-dismissal of teachers from the teaching profession.

This study, however, has placed emphasis on the great things principals and teachers are doing as they work toward fostering student achievement. The public is often unaware of the

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small victories that take place within schools each day only receive testing information related to one high-stakes test given on one day out of the school year. Illuminating the hard work administrators put into teacher growth is necessary for the public to see so the skewed view of public education's performance does not continue.

Overview of Teacher Evaluation and Findings

Teacher evaluation, according to research, is a detailed process of documenting teacher performance; however, two cases within the study showed that teacher evaluation is composed of much more than that. Case 1, an exemplar case, provided rich description of collaboration. Case 2, another exemplar case, was composed of a new outlook on the teacher evaluation process. Case 3, conversely, was not as successful with the teacher evaluation process and left teachers with a feeling of desolation related to the teacher evaluation process.

Central Research Question: What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?
Principal 1 and Principal 2, employing the most instructional leadership strategies, focused heavily on the relationships between administrators and teachers. It was evident that the focus on community contributed to the teachers' work ethic and buy-in within the two schools. That feeling of supportiveness gave teachers the ability to be creative within the classrooms without the daunting fear of receiving negative correction. A sense of family and belonging emerged from their description of the school and district as they recounted their experience with each principal.

Principal 1 and 2, each focusing on people instead of the process, recognized that teachers need more than written feedback and a couple of insincere comments related to what they could try next. Principal 3, however, spoke more about the process than people. His view of

teacher evaluation, influenced by the district's perception, commented rarely on specific instructional leadership strategies. This focus on process rather than strategies left his teacher participant with a negative view of the teacher evaluation process. The outline in Chapter 2 presented by Kim Marshall (2013) accurately reflects the results from Case 3. Principals at Cypress Elementary School are busy, spend time in the classroom based on systematic agendas, and rarely engage in authentic conversations with teachers. Additionally, the forcefield analysis (Figure 1) accurately mirrors Case 3.

Question Two: How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers? Another contributing factor to perceptions related to the teacher evaluation process is the emphasis, or lack thereof, on professional growth. Research debates the use of teacher evaluation by principals; however, a large focus of research documents the responsibility of principals as instructional leaders. That instructional leadership, related to teacher support, is dependent upon using strategies to influence collaboration and growth among educators.

Principal 1 and Principal 2 used evaluation focused on students to foster conversations and support among teachers within their building. That conversation and support, heavily concentrated on evidence-based data, led to an increase in collaboration among the principals and teachers as well as among the teaching faculty. Providing global and individual professional development opportunities, principals and teachers alike felt as if the amount and quality of professional development was enough to meet the needs of teachers and students.

Teacher 3, however, felt that the feedback she received was superficial did not correlate to her individual observations or documentation of growth from the beginning of the year to the end. Inundated with a surplus of professional development opportunities, her outlook on

professional development and growth was negative because of the impossibility of implementing

so many ideas from professional development.

Question Three: How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and

professional growth? Professional growth is largely dependent upon teachers' willingness to

implement feedback within their classrooms. Furthermore, that implementation is dependent

upon the trust and respect between the administrator and teacher. Most cases within the study

described an openness to receiving feedback from the principal; however, the teacher in Case 3

did not have much experience with administrator feedback and spoke somewhat negatively about

the feedback she has previously received. Teachers value feedback and opportunities for

individualized and global professional development.

Question Four: How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across

triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators? Details, dispersed

throughout the previous three questions, answer of research question four. Educators in Case 3

could benefit from focusing more on the relationships and collaboration between leaders and

teacher within Cypress Elementary School. The perceptions varied greatly and were only

positive in Case 1 and 2, the schools with a high level of collaboration and team building.

Interpretation of the Findings

Based on results from the study, changes were made to the original conceptual

framework to include aspects from literature as well as aspects from the current study. The

original framework, consisting of a useful components of the teacher evaluation, spoke heavily

of the process of teacher evaluation. New administrators could use the conceptual framework to

walk into a position and know what evaluation should look like according to a wide literature

base. Nevertheless, this study adds other useful components to the framework that are needed to help the teacher buy-in and implementation of successful teacher evaluation practices.

The Conceptual Framework Revisisted

Teacher evaluation is much more than a process. It is based on a foundation of collaboration and relationships between administrators and teachers. When used effectively, teacher evaluation has the potential to influence growth within the administrator and teacher. During the process, the administrator grows as an instructional leader and the teacher grows as an effective educator. Growth can not happen when educators merely focus on the structure of teacher evaluation; however, growth may happen when educators focus on the structure of relationships.
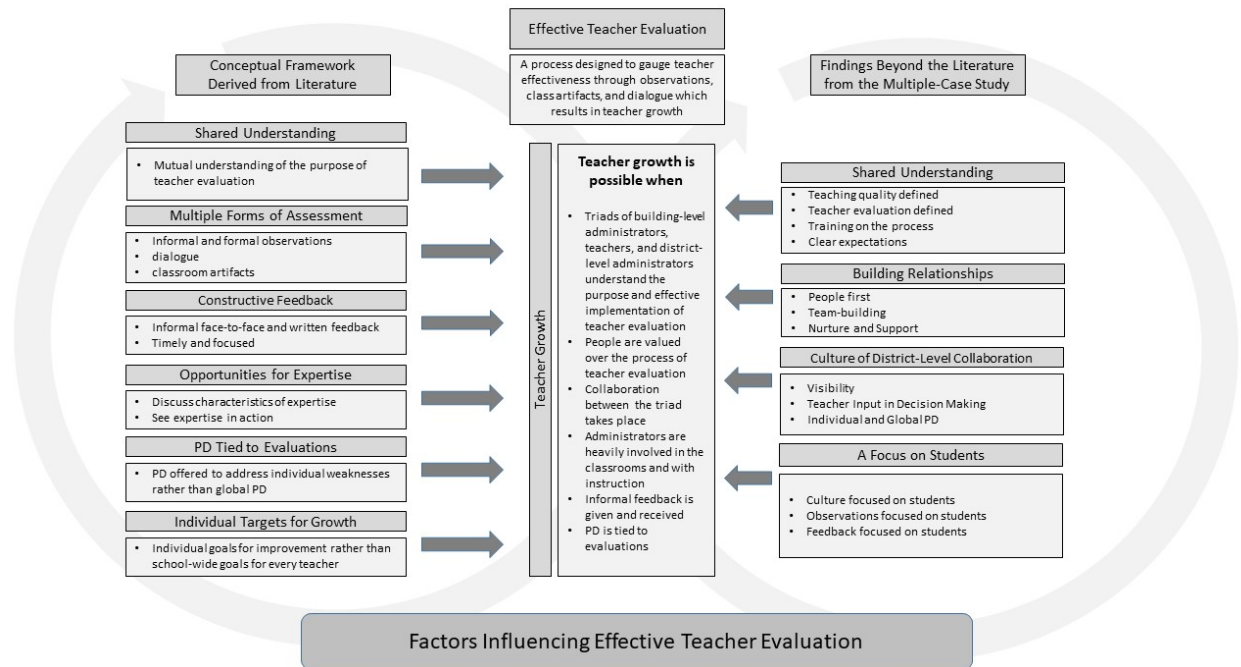
Figure 6. Updated Conceptual Framework of Effective Teacher Evaluation

Figure 6 illustrates the combination of research and practical evidence found within the multiple case study. The literature's perception of teacher evaluation, on the left, focuses on the structure of the process whereas the multiple-case student focuses on the people involved in the

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process. The right side of Figure 6 was created by using the positive perceptions from Case 1 and Case 2 as well as the negative perceptions in Case 3.

Furthermore, the multiple case study presents new information not previously discovered through a review of literature. Training in instructional leadership, especially related to teacher evaluation, is procedure and process based. The importance of relationships and trust is evident after documenting the success and mishaps of the study's participants. For Case 1 and Case 2, teacher evaluation was successful because of the "people-first" mindset. This mindset, absent from Case 3's data, was still desired by Teacher 3. Her descriptions related to the negative perceptions of the teacher evaluation process hindered her perception of growth.

Based on the multiple case study, triads of building administrators must share an understanding of the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation. A shared understanding helps everyone align the personal and organization expectations with outcomes associated with the teacher evaluation process. Additionally, as presented in Case 1 and Case 2, teacher growth is possible when people are valued over the process of teacher evaluation. Teacher growth is more likely to increase when administrators spend time building relationships. There has been no research to document teacher growth based on filling out forms related to teacher evaluation; however, this study discussed in detail how relationships contribute to teachers' perceptions of their growth and the teacher evaluation process. When relationships are in place, collaboration between triads is more likely to happen.

Those relationships and levels of collaborations are largely dependent upon the administrators' involvement within the classroom. The focus on instruction over supervision is evident when administrators make a choice to stay out of the office (when possible) and collaborate with teachers and students within the classroom. Collaboration focused on instruction

builds trust and respect among the teaching faculty within the building. That trust and respect provides the opportunity for teachers to respond positively to constructive criticism and feedback.

Finally, professional development is an important factor related to teacher growth. While whole-group PD is required, administrators will see widespread growth when each teacher participates in individualized PD based upon individual needs. This presents a challenge for administrators because of the variance of needs among large teaching faculties. When individualized PD is not possible, I suggest small group professional development sessions much like the small group instruction with provide for our students.

Additionally, I present an iceberg model as an analogy of what is observable within the multiple-case study and what is deeply rooted. As you can tell, only one-fourth of the iceberg relates to the effects of the teacher evaluation process. Deeply engrained within the culture of the school lies the mental models, underlying structures, and patterns related to teacher evaluation. In order for the teacher evaluation process to improve in Case 3, instructional leaders must address the underlying factors causing the negative perceptions within the building.
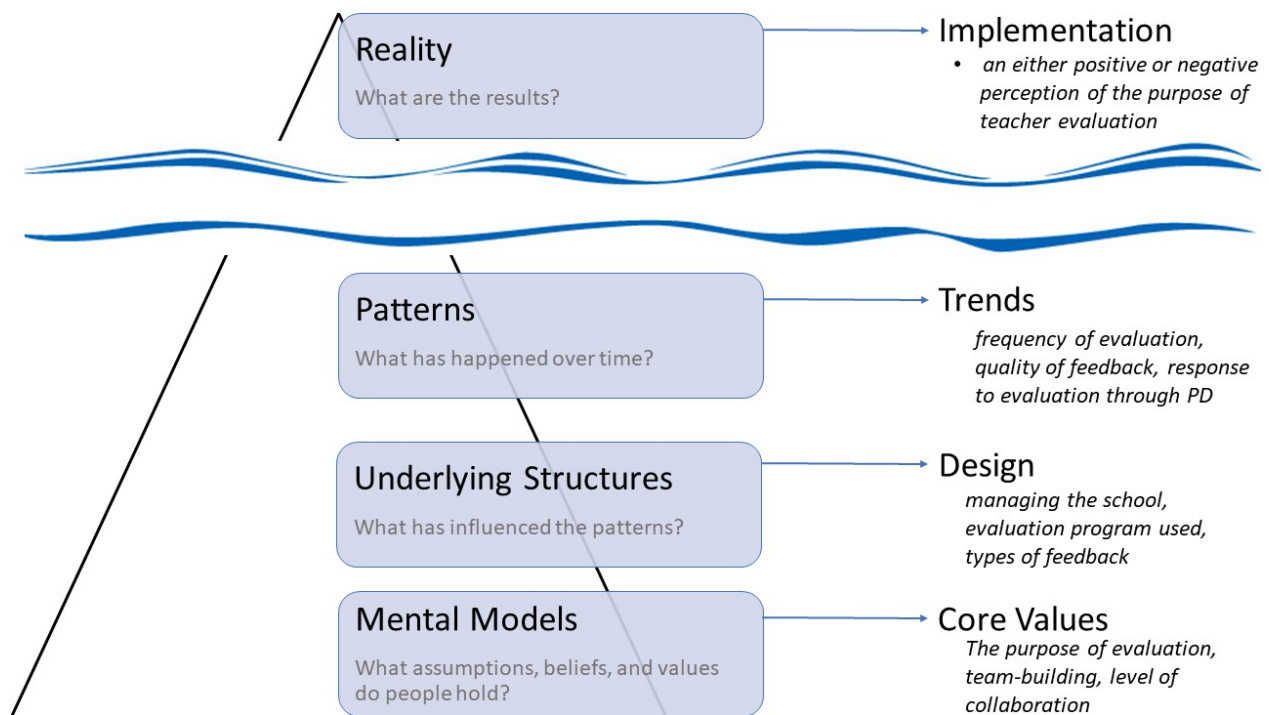
Figure 7. An Iceberg Model Presenting the Underlying Influences of the Multiple Case Study

Implications and Recommendations

I entered this study with a working knowledge of teacher evaluation in Alabama. I have experienced first-hand, the benefits and negative aspects of managing a school and contributing to the support of teachers simultaneously. My negative perceptions of teacher evaluation influenced my devotion to the area but did not interfere with the interpretation of results found within this study. I am new to administration and have not been out of the classroom that long. I can sympathize with administrators and teachers in the study; they are not alone.

As my devotion to bettering the teacher evaluation process grew, it became evident that very little (if any) research has been completed that described what exemplar principals are doing with teacher evaluation practices. Researchers have conducted a great deal of research related to the public's view of public education and the negative perceptions related to teacher evaluation but there was hardly any research on effective practices within Alabama public schools. This

research positively affects teacher evaluation and provides numerous recommendations for principals in Alabama, teachers in Alabama, school systems in Alabama, the Alabama State Department of Education, and other public schools in the nation.

Implications for all educators. Educators (composed of administrators, principals, and district-level administrators) each have the potential to influence student achievement. Educator growth and student growth could take place as they work together as a team. The presentation of results first displayed each participant's perception related to the purpose of teacher evaluation. Table 18 outlined each participant's response. For the most part, each participant described teacher evaluation as a tool for teacher and student growth. Aligning with research, this shared understanding of the teacher evaluation process is responsible for some of the success and positive feelings within each school building. As teachers remain the subjects of evaluation, whether good or bad, discussion of the teacher evaluation purpose and process is vital in terms of professional, student, and school growth. As schools become data rich, all educators must realize evaluation alone will not improve practice.

Implications for principals. Furthermore, implications specific to building-level administrators also came from this study's findings. Principals, as discussed in literature and within this multiple-case study, spend a lot of time providing professional growth opportunities for teachers; however, their own professional development often goes to the way side. If principals in Alabama hope to become better evaluators, better instructional leaders, and better support systems for teachers, they must participate in ongoing professional development as well. Like teachers, principals need opportunities for professional development to develop their craft as well.

Chapter 4 outlined a cross-case analysis. As such, Mr. Wescott and Mr. Butler described a more people-oriented process rather than Principal 3's strategies related to the process of teacher evaluation. Gleaming from positive results in the first two cases, principals in Alabama and around the country should focus on the people over the process. When administrators spend time building relationships with their teachers, the rest will fall into place. If principals want to regain the trust of teachers, they should stray away from the top-down approaches to leadership and supervision and provide teachers with a more active opportunity in the teacher evaluation process.

Ms. Daniels and Ms. Foster both described positive perceptions related to teacher evaluation centered on the quality and frequency of support received from each principal. Ms. Evans, however, had a negative view of the purpose and implementation of teacher evaluation based on the administrators being too busy to make the process work effectively. Building relationships may foster trust of feedback, open collaboration, and positive reception of constructive criticism. Building relationships is easier when administrators spend more time working alongside the teachers in the classroom. Ultimately, every principal's most important job is recognizing, encouraging, and modeling positive teaching experiences in every class.

Relationships open the door to many other opportunities for teacher growth. Principals should provide teachers with opportunities outside of the classroom to grow professionally. The depth of that professional development opposed to breadth is important. Providing teachers with focused in-depth training allows teachers to view the training as important and they are much more apt to implement the training within the classroom over short and frequent PDs covering numerous topics.

Finally, as the principal of Waypark High School pointed out, strategic hiring is very important. Once the principal is aware of his qualities and leadership style, he will be able to hire people for his leadership team to supplement what he can offer. Strategic hiring allows for expertise support and trustworthiness in several areas. Stemming from the results in Case 1, the principal was able to quickly name the area of expertise of each person on his leadership team. This knowledge showed that the principal knows who to direct teachers to for help in various areas around the school. Having several areas of expertise within a leadership team helps build confidence in the team among the teachers.

Implications for teachers. Teachers, the focus point of evaluative practices in public schools, are at the mercy of instructional leaders and the State Department's perception of teacher evaluation practices. Teachers with fears aside, should voice their concerns related to the teacher evaluation process and the inadequacy of what is taking place within their building. Teachers, in number, make up the vast majority of public education. Their perceptions are extremely important. Without teachers, public education cannot excel.

Discovered within this study, teachers have the potential to have their voice heard. Teachers, whether happy or unhappy with teacher evaluation, should become active participants in the teacher evaluation process as opposed to the process being a leader directed event. This study and previous research has discovered that a single observation cannot accurately speak for what is taking place in the classrooms on a day-to-day basis. Teachers, obviously focused on student achievement, should continue to document teacher and student growth in a variety of ways. For example, to prove that the classroom is composed of more than one evaluation, teachers should compile professional development documentation, student work samples, data, and other portfolio-like documentation to start leading their own post-observation

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conferences. Reflection and administrator understanding may take place when teachers take control of their post-observation conferences; however, if faculty meetings and the post-observation conference is the only time principals and teachers converse about instruction, trust will be a major factor affecting desired results.

Implications for district office personnel. The multiple-case study gave two effective examples of district-level participation within the teacher evaluation process. Case 1 and 2, composed of a superintendent and curriculum coordinator, were heavily involved in the process and teachers appreciated their willingness to provide support. Case 3's district-level participant (the personnel director); however, was not as involved which led to negative perceptions related to a top-down approach to teacher evaluation. District-level administrators should reorganize their agendas and spend more time within the schools. Collaboration will increase and teachers will trust district-level administrators more when district level administrators are visible in the schools. Visibility within the schools should lead to more classroom involvement rather than hallway or office presence. Spending more time within each classroom could paint a different picture instead of continuing some models of top-down leadership.

Results from this study documented the importance of relationships and people over the process of teacher evaluation. This supports that district-level administrators should re-evaluate teacher evaluation expectations and allow for someone other than the building-level administrator to evaluate his/her own teachers. Largely responsible for building the morale in the school, building-level administrators are set up for failure when required to evaluate and report feedback related to less than stellar observations (especially in under performing schools). Outside evaluators would provide teachers with outside visits, feedback, and suggestions for improvement. In turn, the building-level administrator would then be able to collaborate with

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that teacher through professional development. Many times, teachers and administrators are stuck inside the four walls of their classroom. Having outside observers would allow the observer to share strategies that work in other schools as well.

Implication for the Alabama State Department of Education. The current state of accountability in Alabama is at an all-time low. Recently, the State Department of Education released letter grades for public schools to the public. These letter grades, in compliance with ESSA, undermine the hard work that goes into each classroom within Alabama. Upon release of the letter grades in January of 2018, each system scrambled for ways to increase the public's perception of individual schools. In addition, I believe the ALSDE will be scrambling to find new educators as our current teaching force continues to be discouraged by means of accountability.

Specifics from this study suggest that the Alabama State Department of Education should re-evaluate teacher evaluation expectations and focus on more formative instead of summative evaluations. While the state gives flexibility to districts, the State Department of Education should provide more guidelines based on research. Those guidelines should include strategies such as formative assessment and a focus on students. That focus on students, however, should not be confused with using standardized student achievement data to rate teacher effectiveness. Much like the rubric in Case 2, the state should paint a picture for evaluators of what an effective classroom looks like, what teachers are doing in an effective classroom, and what students are doing in an effective classroom.

Implications reach far beyond the Alabama State Department of Education. As accountability has taken over public education, accreditation organizations such as AdvancED now focus on what students are doing inside each classroom. A focus on students is good;

however, the learning environment is much more than a numbered rating. The ambiguity of assigning numbered ratings to teachers across the nation leaves much room for error. Inconsistency in assigning numbers to teachers is still possible even after training on the Effective Learning Observation Tool (ELEOT). Instead of numbered ratings, I suggest, evaluators should use detailed description such as narratives, videoing, and portfolios to document teacher and student performance. A portfolio developed over the year would be much more beneficial than a numbered rating from a twenty-minute observation.

Overall Significance

I am surprised to see such a positive view of the administrators at Cypress Elementary School considering the amount of negative perceptions described by the teacher. If these perceptions continue to go unnoticed, the teacher's future perceptions of administrators may be in danger. Unfortunately, the district-level personnel director in Case 3 shared similar views of the teacher evaluation process. With a large focus on the process and documentation of teachers throughout the process, the personnel director has the potential to affect teacher buy-in in a negative way without a change of mindset. Participants from Case 3 may benefit from exposure to data from other cases within this study.

This study contributes to an extensive body of literature on teacher evaluation. Research presented a process-based view of teacher evaluation, where this study presents a people-based view of teacher evaluation. Without focusing on value-added models, policy, or procedure, the themes derived from the multiple-case study are beneficial to the state department, principals, teachers, and district-level leaders. The principals, teachers, and district-level personnel members within this study valued relationships and collaboration even though one system in the study had very little experience with those interactions. Lack of relationship building and collaboration

hindered perceptions of support at Cypress Elementary School and the exemplar cases within this study showed that when used effectively, relationships and collaboration greatly influences perceptions of the teacher evaluation process.

Suggestions for Future Research

The results of the study presented several factors related to the importance of collaboration and relationships between administrators and teachers. Additionally, the findings of the study provides insight related to future possibilities for research. As participants shared from their heart throughout the process, each case developed into an expressive account of each person's view of the teacher evaluation process. Several topics emerged as indicators for future research.

First, the limitation listed above created opportunity for future research. This process, started by using double-nomination purposeful sampling, provided useful but unintended results related to exemplar participants. Further research could illuminate the practice of exemplar principals within Alabama by conducting more case studies. A larger population in Alabama may present more findings related to the broad process of teacher evaluation across the state.

Additionally, research should examine the extent to which prospective and experienced instructional leaders in Alabama go through training to carry out the process of teacher evaluation. Understanding the frequency and quality of that training may provide insight into the reasons and effectiveness of specific strategies used by Alabama's instructional leaders.

Currently, Alabama allows system-level flexibility in regards to specific teacher evaluation programs. That system-level flexibility allows systems to use strategies and programs other systems are not required to use. Research should examine how each system uses teacher evaluation and how those systems vary in providing support for their teachers.

Finally, the present research study included triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators. Since the Alabama State Department of Education gives a great deal of direction, it would be beneficial to include a state level administrator or representative in future studies.

Closing Statement

The nation has recently increased the public's awareness of student achievement. One way the nation shows determination in improving student performance is by increasing the accountability on teaching practices within American classrooms. Accountability, as previously discussed, has undermined successful experiences and opportunities in Alabama's public schools. A focus on teacher effectiveness in terms of accountability has done nothing besides pushing top-down approaches to instructional leadership. Reflecting on previous history, a top-down approach has not worked well and should not be a practice of public school leaders today. Instead, this study recommends a people-first mindset as opposed to a focus on the process and forms related to teacher evaluation. By directing attention to building relationships, school and district level administrators can provide meaningful opportunities for teacher growth.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol for Administrators

Interview Protocol for Administrators
"Using the Voice of Educators to Strengthen Teacher Evaluation: Implications for Improved Practice"

Interview Topic: <u>Personal & School Background/Overview of Teacher Evaluation</u>

Participant (circle one): <u>P1</u>   P2   P3

Date: _____   Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this interview is to determine background information related to your experience with evaluation. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You may also choose to skip a question if desired. I will not reveal your name, school, or district when reporting this data. If you do not understand a question, please ask for clarification. Also, please elaborate honestly when answering each question.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators and teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads?

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

1. Describe your experience in education.
2. Describe your school in terms of demographics, characteristics, and culture.
3. What is the purpose of teacher evaluation?
4. When thinking of teacher evaluation, what is the biggest challenge you face at your school?
5. What experience (positive and/or negative) do you have with teacher evaluation?
6. How has former policy and procedure related to teacher evaluation affected your practical view and use of teacher evaluation?

Interview Protocol for Administrators
"Using the Voice of Educators to Strengthen Teacher Evaluation: Implications for Improved Practice"
Interview Topic: Evaluation Procedures

Participant (circle one): P1   P2   P3

Date: _____   Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this interview is to determine perceptions related to specific evaluation strategies. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You may also choose to skip a question if desired. I will not reveal your name, school, or district when reporting this data. If you do not understand a question, please ask for clarification. Also, please elaborate honestly when answering each question.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators and teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators?

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

1. Describe the current evaluation system you use (strengths and weaknesses). Is this mandated by your current school system?
2. Describe the focus or emphasis placed on evaluation at your school from the beginning of school until the end of the school year.
3. (If not answered in previous question) - What types of data do you use to determine if a teacher is effective or ineffective?
4. If applicable, how does management of the school affect your role as an evaluator and instructional leader?
5. What do you do in response to teacher evaluations that are not satisfactory?
6. The tenure law in Alabama has affected teacher evaluation. If applicable, how does the evaluation of non-tenured teachers differ from the evaluation of tenured teachers within your school?

Interview Protocol for Administrators
"Using the Voice of Educators to Strengthen Teacher Evaluation: Implications for Improved Practice"
Interview Topic: <u>Response to Evaluation</u>

Participant (circle one): <u>P1</u>   <u>P2</u>   <u>P3</u>

Date: _____   Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this interview is to determine perceptions related to what happens after an evaluation. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You may also choose to skip a question if desired. I will not reveal your name, school, or district when reporting this data. If you do not understand a question, please ask for clarification. Also, please elaborate honestly when answering each question.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators and teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads?

RESPONSE TO EVALUATION

1. How do you deliver feedback? How often?
2. How are teachers notified of their growth over time?
3. What is the focus of post-observation conferences and feedback?
4. How do teachers respond to evaluations?
5. How do you respond to the individual needs of teachers with professional development?

Interview Protocol for Administrators
"Using the Voice of Educators to Strengthen Teacher Evaluation: Implications for Improved Practice"
Interview Topic: Teacher Growth / Wrap Up

Participant (circle one): P1   P2   P3

Date: _____   Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this interview is to determine perceptions related to teacher growth. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You may also choose to skip a question if desired. I will not reveal your name, school, or district when reporting this data. If you do not understand a question, please ask for clarification. Also, please elaborate honestly when answering each question.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators and teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators?

TEACHER GROWTH

1.   Thinking about the teacher you selected for this study, how has teacher evaluation affected him/her as a teacher?
2.   Thinking about the teacher you selected for your dyad and this study, how has teacher evaluation affected students assigned to the teacher?

WRAP UP

3.   What have you done, in relation to evaluation, that you feel has been particularly successful and beneficial to improving teacher performance within your school?
4.   What else would you like to share that we have not covered?

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol for Teachers

Interview Protocol for Teachers
"Using the Voice of Educators to Strengthen Teacher Evaluation: Implications for Improved Practice"

Interview Topic: Personal & School Background/Overview of Teacher Evaluation

Participant (circle one): <u>T1</u>   T2   T3

Date: _____   Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this interview is to determine background information related to your experience with evaluation. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You may also choose to skip a question if desired. I will not reveal your name, school, or district when reporting this data. If you do not understand a question, please ask for clarification. Also, please elaborate honestly when answering each question.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators and teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads?

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

1.   Describe your experience in education.
2.   Describe your school in terms of demographics, characteristics, and culture.
3.   What is the purpose of teacher evaluation?
4. When thinking of teacher evaluation, what is the biggest challenge you face at your school?
5. What experience (positive and/or negative) do you have with teacher evaluation?
6. How has former policy and procedure related to teacher evaluation affected your practical view and use of teacher evaluation?

Interview Protocol for Teachers
"Using the Voice of Educators to Strengthen Teacher Evaluation: Implications for Improved Practice"
Interview Topic: Evaluation Procedures

Participant (circle one): T1   T2   T3

Date: _____   Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this interview is to determine perceptions related to specific evaluation strategies. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You may also choose to skip a question if desired. I will not reveal your name, school, or district when reporting this data. If you do not understand a question, please ask for clarification. Also, please elaborate honestly when answering each question.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators and teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators?

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

1. Describe the current evaluation system at your school (strengths and weaknesses).
2. Describe the focus or emphasis placed on evaluation at your school from the beginning of school until the end of the school year.
3. (If not answered in previous question) - What types of data is used to rate teachers?
4. If applicable, how does management of the school affect administrators' time focusing on instruction?
5. How do administrators respond to less than acceptable teacher evaluations?
6. The tenure law in Alabama has affected teacher evaluation. If applicable, how does the evaluation of non-tenured teachers differ from the evaluation of tenured teachers within your school?

Interview Protocol for Teachers
"Using the Voice of Educators to Strengthen Teacher Evaluation: Implications for Improved Practice"
Interview Topic: <u>Response to Evaluation</u>

Participant (circle one): <u>T1</u>   T2   T3

Date: _____   Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this interview is to determine perceptions related to what happens after an evaluation. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You may also choose to skip a question if desired. I will not reveal your name, school, or district when reporting this data. If you do not understand a question, please ask for clarification. Also, please elaborate honestly when answering each question.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators and teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads?

RESPONSE TO EVALUATION

1. How do you get feedback? How often?
2. How are teachers notified of their growth over time?
3. What is the focus of post-observation conferences and feedback?
4. How do you respond to evaluations?
5. What attention (after an evaluation) is given to the individual needs of teachers? How does the administrator support you?

Interview Protocol for Teachers
"Using the Voice of Educators to Strengthen Teacher Evaluation: Implications for Improved Practice"
Interview Topic: <u>Teacher Growth / Wrap Up</u>

Participant (circle one): <u>T1   T2   T3</u>

Date: _____   Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this interview is to determine perceptions related to teacher growth. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You may also choose to skip a question if desired. I will not reveal your name, school, or district when reporting this data. If you do not understand a question, please ask for clarification. Also, please elaborate honestly when answering each question.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators and teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators?

TEACHER GROWTH

1. Thinking about the administrator in this dyad, how have the strategies he/she used affected you as a teacher?
2. Describe professional development offerings at your school.
3. What experience do you have with individualized professional development?
4. Describe how professional development is implemented within your classroom and/or school.
5. How does the professional development offered enhance teacher growth?

WRAP UP

6. What have you done, in relation to evaluation, that you feel has been particularly successful and beneficial to improving your teacher performance?
7. What else would you like to share that we have not covered?

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol for District Level Administrators

Interview Protocol for District Level Administrators
"Using the Voice of Educators to Strengthen Teacher Evaluation: Implications for Improved Practice"

Participant (circle one): <u>DO1</u>   DO2   DO3

Date: _____   Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this interview is to determine perceptions related to teacher growth. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You may also choose to skip a question if desired. I will not reveal your name, school, or district when reporting this data. If you do not understand a question, please ask for clarification. Also, please elaborate honestly when answering each question.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand effective teacher evaluation practices by exploring perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by triads of administrators and teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What instructional leadership strategies do administrators report as informing their individual approach to teacher evaluation?

2. How do administrators contribute to the professional growth of teachers?

3. How do teachers respond to strategies for teacher evaluation and strategies for professional growth?

4. How do perceptions of teacher evaluation vary within and across triads of administrators, teachers, and district-level administrators?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe your experience in education.

2. Describe your system in terms of demographics, characteristics, and culture.

3. What is the purpose of teacher evaluation?

4. When thinking of teacher evaluation, what is the biggest challenge faced in the school district?

5. What experience (positive/negative) do you have with teacher evaluation?

6. What is the most important component of the teacher evaluation process?

7. How has former policy and procedure related to teacher evaluation affected your practical view and use of teacher evaluation?

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

1. Describe the system's current evaluation system (strengths and weaknesses). Is this process mandated by your school system?

2. What is the system level administrator's role in the teacher evaluation process?

3. What is the building level administrator's role in the teacher evaluation process?

4. Describe the focus or emphasis placed on evaluation in your schools from the beginning of the year until the end of the school year.

5. What types of data does the system use to rate teachers effective or ineffective?

6. How does the management of the school or system affect your role in the teacher evaluation process?

7. How do instructional leaders in your system respond to less than satisfactory teacher evaluation ratings?

8. The tenure law in Alabama has affected teacher evaluation. How does the evaluation of non-tenured teachers differ from the evaluation of tenured teachers within your school system?

RESPONSE TO EVALUATION

1. How does the system deliver feedback? How often?

2. How are teachers notified of growth over time?

3. What is the focus of post-observation conferences and feedback?

4. How do teachers typically respond to evaluations and feedback?

TEACHER GROWTH/WRAP UP

1. How does the system respond to the individual needs of teachers?

2. Thinking about the principal chosen for this study, what has he/she done that has been particularly successful and beneficial to improving teacher performance within the school?

3. Thinking about the principal chosen for this study, how has the principal's qualities affected student achievement within the building?

APPENDIX D

Semi-Structured Observation Protocol

Semi-Structured Observation Protocol
Date of Observation: _____   Time In: _____Time Out: _____

General Descriptive Notes	General Reflective Notes
Sketch of the Classroom	

1. **How does the description of the teacher's practice align with their observed practice?**
(the areas below; the look-fors, will be identified after interviewing the teacher at least once)

Area 1: Response to Eval	Area 2: Teacher Growth

2. **Notes about practices such as routines, actions, and interactions among participants.**

3. **Other Jottings**

4. **Observational Data related to Figure 2.2: Framework for Teacher Effectiveness (in literature review)**

Contributions	Notes			Effects	Notes
Personal Qualities				**Professional Growth**	
Learning Environment			Teacher Quality	**Student Achievement(**)**	
Instructional Delivery				**Teacher Effectiveness**	
Student Assessment(**)					

**NOTE: This study will not involve research of students. During the observation, I will only make notes about how teacher's formatively assess, summatively assess, and how they use that information to guide their teaching practice. I will not look at any student data or interview students.

APPENDIX E

Institutional Review Board Approval

RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM
FULL BOARD or EXPEDITED

For Information or help contact **THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC)**, 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University
Phone: 334-844-5966   e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm

Revised 2.1.2014   Submit completed form to **IRBsubmit@auburn.edu** or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY: 08/01/2017

PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one): ☐ FULL BOARD   ☑ EXPEDITED

SUBMISSION STATUS (Check one):   ☑ NEW   ☐ REVISIONS (to address IRB Review Comments)

2. PROJECT TITLE: Using the voices of educators to strengthen teacher evaluation: Implications for improved practice

3. Adam Kilcrease	PhD candidate	EFLT	atk0007@auburn.edu
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	**TITLE**	**DEPT**	**AU E-MAIL**
1927 Westminster Drive, Phenix City, AL 36870		706-566-8095	334-520-9811
MAILING ADDRESS		**PHONE**	**ALTERNATE E-MAIL**

4. FUNDING SUPPORT: ☑ N/A ☐ Internal ☐ External Agency: _____   ☐ Pending ☐ Received

For federal funding, list agency and grant number (if available). _____

5a. List any contractors, sub-contractors, other entities associated with this project:

N/A

b. List any other IRBs associated with this project (including Reviewed, Deferred, Determination, etc.):

N/A

PROTOCOL PACKET CHECKLIST

All protocols must include the following items:

☑ Research Protocol Review Form (All signatures included and all sections completed)
(Examples of appended documents are found on the OHSR website: http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm)

☑ CITI Training Certificates for all Key Personnel.

☑ Consent Form or Information Letter and any Releases (audio, video or photo) that the participant will sign.

☑ Appendix A, "Reference List"

☑ Appendix B if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., are used to recruit participants.

☑ Appendix C if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Be sure to attach them in the order in which they are listed in # 13c.

☐ Appendix D if you will be using a debriefing form or include emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists (A referral list may be attached to the consent document).

☐ Appendix E if research is being conducted at sites other than Auburn University or in cooperation with other entities. A permission letter from the site / program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project. NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of IRB approval from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.

☐ Appendix F - Written evidence of acceptance by the host country if research is conducted outside the United States.

FOR ORC OFFICE USE

DATE RECEIVED IN ORC: _____ by _____	PROTOCOL #	
DATE OF IRB REVIEW: _____ by _____	APPROVAL C	
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: _____ by _____	INTERVAL FO	
COMMENTS:		

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from 08/13/2017 to 08/12/2018
Protocol # 17-266 EP 1708

6. **GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS**

6A. Research Methodology

Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology.

Data Source(s): ☑ New Data ☐ Existing Data	Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants? ☑ Yes ☐ No

Data collection will involve the use of:

- Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.)
- ✓ Interview
- ✓ Observation
- Location or Tracking Measures
- Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.)
- Surveys / Questionnaires

- Internet / Electronic
- ✓ Audio
- Video
- Photos
- Digital images
- ✓ Private records or files

✓ Other: Artifacts to include the following: PD agendas, informal and formal feedback related to teacher evaluation to include email feedback, hand-written feedback, and evaluation forms.

6B. Participant Information

Please check all descriptors that apply to the target population.
☑ Males   ☑ Females   ☐ AU students

Vulnerable Populations
☐ Pregnant Women/Fetuses   ☐ Prisoners   ☐ Institutionalized
☐ Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL)

Persons with:

☐ Economic Disadvantages   ☐ Physical Disabilities

☐ Educational Disadvantages   ☐ Intellectual Disabilities

Do you plan to compensate your participants? ☐ Yes ☑ No

6C. Risks to Participants

Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.

☑ Breach of Confidentiality*   ☐ Coercion
☐ Deception   ☐ Physical
☐ Psychological   ☐ Social
☐ None
☐ Other:

*Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

6D. Corresponding Approval/Oversight

- Do you need IBC Approval for this study?
  ☐ Yes   ☑ No

  If yes, BUA #_____ Expiration date _____

- Do you need IACUC Approval for this study?
  ☐ Yes   ☑ No

  If yes, PRN #_____ Expiration date _____

- Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?
  ☐ Yes   ☑ No

  Which MRI(s) will be used for this project? (Check all that apply)
  ☐ 3T   ☐ 7T

  Does any portion of this project require review by the MRI Safety Advisory Council?
  ☐ Yes   ☑ No

  Signature of MRI Center Representative: _____
  Required for all projects involving the AU MRI Center

  Appropriate MRI Center Representatives:
      Dr. Thomas S. Denney, Director AU MRI Center
      Dr. Ron Beyers, MR Safety Officer

7. PROJECT ASSURANCES Using the voices of educators to strengthen teacher evaluation: Implications for improved practice

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCES

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
    a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
    b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance
    c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
    d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Research Compliance in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise ORC, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Research Compliance before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Adam Kilcrease	Adam Kilcrease	07/17/17
Printed name of Principal Investigator	Principal Investigator's Signature	Date

B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES

1. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology.
2. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
4. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant incidents and/or adverse events and/or effects to the ORC in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the ORC by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.

Dr. Lisa Kensler		7-21-2017
Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor	Faculty Advisor's Signature	Date

C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSURANCE

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

Sherida Downer	Sherida Downer	7/21/2017
Printed name of Department Head	Department Head's Signature	Date

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
R E Q U E S T   f o r   M O D I F I C A T I O N

For help, contact: **THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC)**, 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University
Phone: 334-844-5966   e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu   Web Address: http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs

Revised 2.1.2014 Submit completed form to IRBsubmit@auburn.edu or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

1. Protocol Number: 17-266 EP 1708

2. Current IRB Approval Dates: From: 08/13/2017 To: 08/12/2018

3. Project Title: "Using the voice of educators to strengthen teacher evaluation: Implications for improved practice."

4.

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5. Current External Funding Agency and Grant number: _____

6. a. List any contractors, sub-contractors, other entities associated with this project:

_____

b. List any other IRBs associated with this project:_____

7. Nature of change in protocol: (Mark all that apply)

☐ Change in Key Personnel (attach CITI forms for new personnel)
☐ Change in Sites (attach permission forms for new sites)
☐ Change in methods for data storage/protection or location of data/consent documents
☑ Change in project purpose or questions
☐ Change in population or recruitment (attach new or revised recruitment materials as needed)
☑ Change in consent procedures (attach new or revised consent documents as needed)
☑ Change in data collection methods or procedures (attach new data collection forms as needed)
☐ Other (explain): _____

_____

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DATE RECEIVED IN ORC: _____ by _____	MODIFIC	**The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from**
DATE OF IRB REVIEW: _____ by _____	PROTOC	
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: _____ by _____	MODIFIC	11/01/2017 to 08/12/2018
	INTERV	Protocol # 16-408 EP 1610
COMMENTS:		

1 of 2

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8. Briefly list *(numbered or bulleted)* the activities that have occurred up to this point, particularly those that involved participants.

At this point, I have interviewed the principal and teacher at school #1 and I've completed the classroom observation at that school as well. I have interviewed the principal of school #2.

9. For each item marked in Question #7, describe the requested changes to your research protocol, with an explanation and/or rationale for each. *(Additional pages may be attached if needed to provide a complete response.)*

After interviewing two principals and a teacher, I have noticied that the superintendent or other district office personnel members are heavily involved in the teacher evaluation process at each school. Because of this, I would like to change the following and interview district personnel involved with evaluation at each school.
7d. Change purpose statement from "dyad" to "triad." "The purpose of this study was to better understand perceptions of teacher evaluation as described by three triads of district personnel, administrators, and teachers.
7f. Change "dyad" to "triad" on the informed consent and Appendix E (Site Authorization letter)
7g. Change "dyad" to "triad" on each set of interview questions on Appendix C as well as add interview questions for district personnel to Appendix C.

10. Identify any changes in the anticipated risks and / or benefits to the participants.

The same risks apply to the district personnel participants. No changes.

11. Identify any changes in the safeguards or precautions that will be used to address anticipated risks.

The same safeguards and precautions apply to the district personnel participants. No changes.

12. Attach a copy of all "stamped" IRB-approved documents you are currently using. *(information letters, consents, flyers, etc.)*