

Teacher Attitudes Toward Teacher Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

Teacher evaluations have always been a part of school leaders' jobs (Hornig, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010). Teacher evaluation is used as a factor in determining whether or not a teacher receives a continuing contract in Virginia, and it has also been a part of the process in determining if a teacher is labeled as highly effective. In some school divisions, the rating a teacher receives may be tied to their merit-based compensation. In 2012, the Virginia Department of Education released the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*, which provides school divisions a structure for their teacher evaluation instrument (Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], 2012). This document requires that Virginia school divisions include a quantifiable measure of student performance as a component of their teacher evaluation instrument. When teachers transfer from one school to another within the same school division many aspects of their job change. For example, the school leader who performs the teacher's evaluation changes and the student population changes as well. The presence of these variables may have an effect on a teacher's evaluation, but they are not controlled by the teacher being evaluated. The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to determine teachers' attitudes toward teacher evaluation when the teacher has transferred schools within the same school division. Eight teachers were interviewed regarding their attitude toward teacher evaluation. The data indicate that the change in evaluator when a teacher transfers work sites has a stronger impact than any other variable in the transfer process. The data also indicate that a change in the context for the teacher being evaluated does not affect their attitude towards evaluation.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

A significant part of a school leaders' job is to evaluate the teachers that work at the school. The evaluation can be used as part of the decision making process surrounding whether the teacher receives a continuing contract. There are school divisions that tie their salary compensation for teachers to their performance, often measured by teacher evaluation. The Virginia Department of Education provided guidance for Virginia school divisions on the criteria for evaluating teachers in 2012. The criteria requires that school divisions in Virginia include a quantifiable measure of student performance as 40% of the total evaluation for teachers. When teachers transfer from one school to another within the same school division many aspects of their job change. For example, the school leader who performs the teacher's evaluation changes and the student population where they teach changes as well. These different changes may have an effect on a teacher's evaluation, but are not controlled by the teacher being evaluated. Teacher attitudes towards the evaluation process may be affected by the transferring process. The purpose of this study is to determine teachers' attitudes towards teacher evaluation when the teacher has transferred schools within the same school division. Eight teachers were interviewed regarding their attitude towards teacher evaluation as a result of transferring schools. The results of the study indicate that the change in evaluator has a stronger impact than other variables and the context of where a teacher teaches does not play a large role in their attitude towards evaluation.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The United States Department of Education celebrated Delaware and Tennessee as the first recipients of the Race to the Top grants in 2010 (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The press release that celebrated the award noted that, "Delaware and Tennessee also have aggressive plans to improve teacher and principal evaluation, use data to inform instructional decisions, and turn around their lowest-performing schools" (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Race to the Top, a federal grant that included language on how school divisions evaluated teachers, demonstrated the way in which the federal government had attempted to define and standardize teacher evaluation (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). While evaluating teachers had always been a process that local school divisions had some freedom within which they could operate (Huber & Skedsmo, 2016), a trend towards standardization of the evaluation practices and some federal control in the process strengthened in the 2000's (Huber & Skedsmo, 2016). While the federal government may not have had the power to mandate that states change their system for teacher evaluation, it did exert the power of incentive by offering financial awards (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Those who have worked to standardize the teacher evaluation process desire that states and school divisions include student performance data as part of their teacher evaluation systems (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The desire to include student performance data came without the definition of exactly how that might look. Part of the award to states offered by Race to the Top was related to the state's ability to define how they would create the teacher evaluation system to include student performance data (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

The Virginia Department of Education wrote a policy regarding teacher evaluation in 2012 entitled *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals*. The guidelines required that 40% of a teacher's evaluation in Virginia must be tied to student performance (Virginia Department of Education, 2012), with the other 60% focused on areas such as professionalism, lesson planning, and instructional delivery. In theory, a teacher's evaluation should be able to focus on a teacher's performance and not be influenced by variables outside of the teacher's control (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). The recent inclusion of student

performance in teacher evaluations has shown to increase the number of variables outside of the teacher's control as part of their teacher evaluation (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009).

One variable outside of the teacher's control that does not influence teacher evaluations is context (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009), meaning that a teacher's evaluation would be just as accurate in a low performing classroom as it might be in a high performing classroom (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). The stability of teacher evaluations in varying contexts only considered the impact of context for teachers who stayed in one particular building (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). A teacher who transferred work sites would have the variable of context in two different buildings and leadership scenarios. A variable outside of a teacher's control that does have an effect on a teacher evaluation is the ability level of the evaluator (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). When teachers decide to change schools, they often change both the variable of context and the variable of the evaluator's ability level. These variables may impact one another, providing different effects than when isolated in a study of teacher evaluation.

The increased focus on quantifying student performance as a part of teacher evaluation, and the understanding that external variables can affect teacher evaluation, may impact teachers' attitudes towards the evaluation. The attitude of a teacher has been tied to job performance, attendance, and retention (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2014; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005). If teacher evaluation negatively affects a teacher's attitude, it can contribute to the teacher leaving the profession or performing poorly. If an evaluation positively affects a teacher's attitude, then it can help school divisions retain staff who are performing at a higher level (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2014). This research seeks to understand teacher attitudes towards teacher evaluation when they have transferred from one school to another within a school division.

Overview of the Study

The tie between teacher attitude and job performance, attendance, and retention provides the background of this study (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2014; Loeb et al., 2005). Changes in the way teachers are evaluated have added new variables to the evaluation process (VDOE, 2012). When teachers transfer schools, they increase the number of variables that impact the teacher evaluation process. Therefore, this qualitative study looked at the perception teachers who have transferred have regarding the teacher evaluation process. Eight teachers who have transferred from one school to another within the same school division were

identified and interviewed as part of the study. The teachers were all from the same urban school division in southeast Virginia and taught the same content, or grade level, at both their previous school and their current school. The interviewees were asked specific questions about their perception of the teacher evaluation process. These questions focused on the perception teachers have regarding the consistency of their teacher evaluation. Teachers were asked how the change in specific variables that accompanied their transfers may have affected their evaluations. Teacher responses were studied for common themes as well as potential relationships between teachers' transfer experiences and teachers' attitudes towards their own teacher evaluations.

Historical Perspective

For as long as teachers have been hired to teach, supervisors have needed a system to evaluate the teachers who work for them. In that sense, teacher evaluations have been in place since the late 19th century in America (Lavigne, 2014). In its very early stages, the evaluation process attempted to quantify the work that happened at a particular school, but there was no unifying structure or expectation about how this quantification would occur (Lavigne, 2014).

The federal government got involved in the teacher evaluation process beginning with a report titled *A Nation at Risk*, which was printed in 1983. This report did not set up a specific system for evaluation, but it spoke to its importance as schools sought to identify which teachers were superior in their jobs and which teachers were poor at their jobs (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). No Child Left Behind in 2001 and Race to the TOP in 2012 were federal mandates that shifted the language regarding teachers from "highly qualified" to "highly effective." In order to identify teachers who were "highly effective," the federal government required states to examine how they approached their teacher evaluations. The widespread practice of quantifying student performance as part of the teacher evaluation began in earnest after these mandates (Darling-Hammond, 2009).

Politically, the issue of quantifying student performance as part of a teacher's evaluation has been a major platform for those who are interested in seeing the process of teacher tenure overhauled, as well as for those advocating a system of merit-based pay (Dee & Keys, 2004; Goldhaber, DeArmond, Player, & Choi, 2008; Goldin, 1998). While neither teacher tenure nor merit-based pay are mandated in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the issues have made the quantification of teacher performance a significant issue in the national discussion of teacher evaluation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Dee & Keys, 2004).

In 2015 the Federal Government passed the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). The ESSA takes much of the language regarding teacher evaluation out of the federal government's oversight (U.S. Congress, 2015). The ESSA no longer labels teachers as "Highly Effective" and does not require states to include quantifiable student outcomes as part of the teacher evaluation. Instead, states can choose whether or not they will continue to include the measurement of student performance in the teacher evaluation (U.S. Congress, 2015). State compliance with the ESSA is still being developed in Virginia.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of teacher evaluation is to identify the teachers who are successful in educating students (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009), but the definition of what it means to educate students successfully has inspired some debate as to how success is measured. Debaters have discussed whether success means growth in student performance or if it merely indicates a high percentage of students who can perform at a minimum proficiency rate, and whether success should be measured in some other manner (Borman & Kimball, 2005; Heck, 2007; Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). Regardless of their definition of success, researchers have considered an evaluation to be valid if it demonstrates that a teacher labeled as “strong” is also successful (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). If a district identifies measurable student academic growth as its definition of success, then a valid teacher evaluation instrument would be able to show that teachers who produce student growth are evaluated as strong and vice versa (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009)

In the search for valid teacher evaluations, a variety of variables have been identified as influential. The evaluator, the teacher evaluation instrument, and the context of the school where the evaluation is conducted have all been studied to see their influences on the validity of teacher evaluation (Borman & Kimball, 2005; Holtzapple, 2005; Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). The study of context demonstrated that an evaluation conducted in a high poverty, low performing school has the same ability to predict the performance of the teacher as an evaluation conducted in a high performing school (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). A variable that did change the validity of the evaluation was the consistency of the evaluator performing the teacher evaluation (Borman & Kimball, 2005). The evaluator’s degree of compliance with a defined rubric played a role in whether or not the evaluation was able to determine which teachers were successful and which teachers were not (Borman & Kimball, 2005).

When a teacher transfers from one school to another, the evaluator, i.e., the school leader, changes, as does the context in which the evaluation is completed. The presence of these variables can impact if the teacher evaluation instrument measures what it says that it measures. The increased presence of external variables when a teacher transfers from one location to another may affect their attitude regarding teacher evaluation. A teacher's attitude can result in a correlating rise or fall in teacher performance and retention (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2014; Loeb et al., 2005).

Significance of the Study

The federal government pushed for teacher evaluations to include quantifiable measures of student performance in their 2012 policy *Race to the Top* (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Under this policy, states would be awarded with grant money if they restructured their teacher evaluation instrument to include a focus on student performance. Additionally, this inclusion of student performance in the teacher evaluation could be tied to merit-based compensation. When the ESSA was passed in 2015 (U.S. Congress, 2015) some of the trends towards the inclusion of student performance in teacher evaluation were reversed. While the ESSA did not prohibit the usage, it did explicitly state that the federal government would not advocate for student performance data as part of the teacher evaluation, and the decisions regarding teacher evaluation would be made at the state level.

In Virginia there is no mandate for merit-based pay for teachers, nor is teacher tenure tied to the teacher evaluation (VDOE, 2012). The VDOE did require, however, that each local division include quantifiable student academic performance as 40% of their total teacher evaluation for the year (VDOE, 2012). The VDOE has discussed the need to adhere to the implementation of the ESSA, but has not changed the current recommendations for teacher evaluation (VDOE, 2016).

School divisions in southeast Virginia are complying with the mandate from the VDOE and each division includes student performance as at least 40% of the total teacher evaluation (Garrow, 2012; Norfolk Public Schools, 2013/2014; Virginia Beach City Public Schools, n.d.). The method of goal setting in each school division does have some variability. In one urban division in southeastern Virginia, Domain Seven of the teacher evaluation aligns with the 40% that is tied to student performance by the state. Domain Seven is broken up into two pieces for any teacher of math and reading (Norfolk Public Schools, 2013/2014). Those teachers

supporting math and reading instruction must align half of Domain Seven to student growth scores on the state assessment. The other half of Domain Seven should be tied to a student performance goal, set by the teacher, that demonstrates growth on valid measurable assessments. For teachers who do not support math and reading instruction, Domain Seven in its entirety should be tied to this alternate measure of growth (Norfolk Public Schools, 2013). It is expected that this evaluation structure will remain in place until any changes are made with the Virginia Department of Education guidelines for teacher evaluation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative research study was to describe the attitudes regarding teacher evaluation for teachers who have transferred from one school to another in an urban school division in southeastern Virginia. Teacher attitudes have been shown to influence their job performance and desire to continue working in the profession (Grissom, Loeb, & Nakashima, 2014; Loeb et al., 2005). The experience of the teacher evaluation process was generally defined as a teacher's belief that the evaluation process is consistent regardless of the teacher placement.

Justification

The teacher evaluation is used in many states as part of the decision-making process regarding teacher tenure. States can also use teacher evaluation as part of the decision process when determining a pay scale that is based on performance. While Virginia does not allow for teacher tenure, it does allow for a continuing contract. A teacher, when hired by a school division in Virginia, must work under a probationary licensure for at least three years (Virginia Department of Education, 2013). During the probationary period a teacher must be evaluated annually and, if the teacher is not meeting satisfactory performance, the teacher contract can be non-renewed (Code of Virginia, § 22.1-303, 1948). At the completion of the probationary period, a teacher is offered a continuing contract. A teacher with a continuing contract is still evaluated, but the frequency of teacher evaluation is reduced. A teacher with a continuing contract may be terminated for, among other things, incompetence (Code of Virginia, § 22.1-307, 1948). The teacher evaluation is a primary way that a school division determines that a teacher is incompetent. In order to remove staff, the teacher evaluation is often used as a component of the removal process. Because teacher evaluation is so closely tied to significant staffing decisions, an increased scrutiny of its ability to measure what it claims to measure, the

effectiveness of a teacher, is needed. If teachers perceive that their evaluations would improve or weaken based on the locations where they teach, then they would have reason to question if the instrument truly measures their performance. If a teacher perceives that an evaluation fluctuates based on their location, it also may impact their job performance and desire to remain in the profession (Grissom, Loeb, & Nakashima, 2014; Loeb et al., 2005).

Research Questions

The research questions that were addressed through this qualitative study are:

1. How do teachers perceive that transferring worksites within the same school division affects the teacher evaluation process?
2. How do teachers perceive the consistency of the teacher evaluation process when a teacher transfers from one school to another?
3. What variables do teachers perceive affect their evaluation when a teacher transfers to a new school?

Conceptual Framework

Validity refers to the extent to which a measurement device measures what it sets out to measure (Newton, 2012). The conceptual framework for this study surrounds the idea that teacher evaluation is most accurate when variables outside of the teacher's control are limited (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). As more variables influence the evaluation, the teacher may perceive that the evaluation is less valid. The literature review will look at teacher evaluation as a product of the United States' educational system and the role of the educational leader in this system. Then, the review of literature narrows to specifically examine the role of teacher evaluation in Virginia. Teacher evaluation includes the presence of many variables that may impact the evaluation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Dee & Keys, 2004; Holtzapple, 2005). In Figure 1 below, the red arrows point to some of the variables present when a teacher transfers from one school to another. The red arrows are outside of the control of the teacher and could potentially impact the teacher's perception of the evaluation's validity. This study examined the perception of teachers who have transferred of the impact the red variables have on their teacher evaluation.

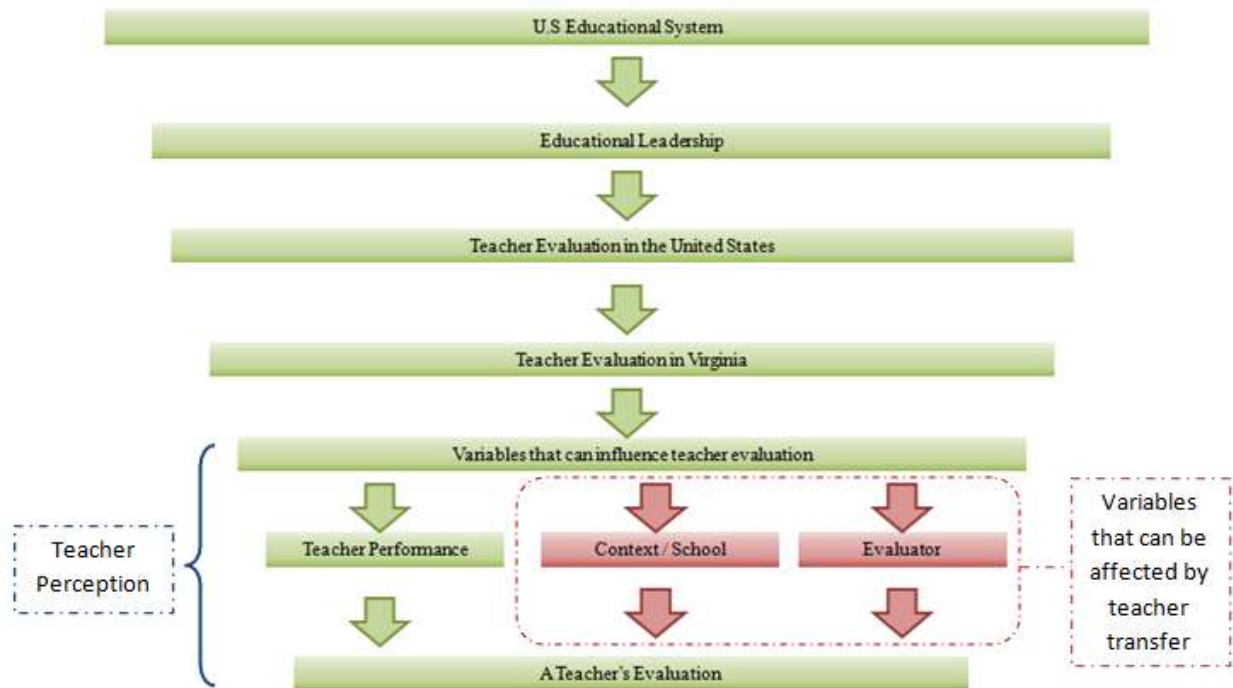


Figure 1. Variables present when a teacher transfers from one school to another.

Definition of Terms

Domain Seven. Domain Seven refers to the seventh domain of seven domains that are to be included in teacher evaluations in Virginia. Domain Seven is to be counted as 40% of the overall evaluation. Domain Seven is where evaluators quantify the teacher's work through measurable student outcomes (VDOE, 2012).

Involuntary Transfer. An involuntary transfer occurs when a teacher is moved from one site to another site within the school division at the direction of a district administrator. The transfer can be made for any reason, but the request to change work site was not initiated by the teacher (Public Schools, 2015).

Teacher Evaluation. Teacher evaluation is both the process and product of evaluating a teacher's instructional quality and professional standards. Teacher evaluation involves observation, feedback, and written summative evaluation (VDOE, 2012).

Voluntary Transfer. A voluntary transfer is a move from one job site to another job site within the school division requested by the teacher. In such a case, the teacher would request to

move between job sites and the move would be granted by the Department of Human Resources (Public Schools, 2015).

Validity. Validity is the extent to which a measurement device is able to measure what it sets out to measure (Newton, 2012).

Limitations

Not every instance in which a teacher transfers from one school to another is the same. The extent to which external variables are involved may vary. In some cases, a transfer of schools will involve a change in the content or grade level a teacher is asked to teach, and in other cases the transfer will have the teacher teach the same content or grade level. It is also possible that the evaluator will not be a variable when a teacher transfers, as there are instances in which a principal and teacher transfer schools at the same time.

The reason behind a teacher transfer could also impact their perception of their teacher evaluation. Each school division has a different process for handling teacher transfers. The transfer process takes place on a division level because teacher contracts are between the teacher and the school division rather than between the teacher and a specific school. Most school divisions have a process for voluntary teacher transfer that allows a teacher who would prefer a different worksite to have that option. There are also procedures for involuntary teacher transfer where a school division has the ability to assign a teacher to a different worksite. If a teacher is involuntarily transferred it may have an effect on their opinion of the teacher evaluation process. Similarly, if a teacher voluntarily transfers, the transfer may have a positive impact on his or her view of evaluation, as long as the transfer occurred to exit a teaching assignment that the teacher believed was not a good professional fit. The researcher will not be able to control the reasons why the teacher transferred schools.

Delimitations

Choosing one school division within which the study was conducted may have had an impact. There might have been aspects to the teacher evaluation process and the teacher transfer process that were unique to that particular school division. The existence of these potentially unique aspects is the why the researcher chose to conduct the study within only one school division. Any variation or commonality in the perception teachers have regarding teacher

evaluation should not have been influenced by the potential of having differing experiences due to unique divisional characteristics.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 2 will begin by looking at the literature behind teacher evaluation and its growing importance in the education system. Research that speaks to each part of the conceptual framework will also be reviewed. Chapter 3 will outline the method of the study. Chapter 4 will report on the results of the study and will organize and analyze those results. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings and will conclude with some suggestions for future studies.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This chapter will analyze extant literature relating to teacher evaluation and begins with a review of the place teacher evaluation holds in the broader context of the history of education in the United States. The role of the school leader, both as a building and an instructional leader, will be discussed, followed by a history of teacher evaluation and its changing role over time. Teacher evaluations have been used to determine teacher tenure and make decisions about merit-based pay; literature pertaining to these two aspects will be discussed, followed by an examination of whether the implementation of teacher evaluation models has demonstrated validity. Two aspects of the purpose of teacher evaluation will be reviewed as they relate to teacher tenure and merit-based pay. Literature regarding the various models for teacher evaluation will be followed with an examination of whether teacher evaluation has shown validity in its implementation.

Search Process

The literature reviewed was comprised of peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, government reports, and books. A variety of educational databases was used to obtain the identified literature and included, but was not limited to, ERIC, ProQuest, Sagepub, and other libraries of academic research in education. Key search terms included teacher evaluation, validity, teacher tenure, value added, and assessment.

Historical Background

Public schools in America began in the late 18th century when local towns in New England built schools. Attendance was not compulsory, and the intent was to supplement education that was provided in the home, church, and community (Small, 1902; Vinovskis, 1987). The role of the teacher, or schoolmaster, was to instruct on subjects to prepare students for university study.

States began enacting laws that required the compulsory education for all children in the mid- to late-19th century. These laws led to a significant growth in the percentage of children attending school through high school grades in the early to mid-20th century (Goldin, 1998; Lleras-Muney, 2002). The purpose behind the boom in school attendance was primarily financial, as the industrial revolution demanded a more educated workforce (Stephens & Yang,

2014). As the initial design for education gained specificity in its purpose, there was a corresponding need for each teacher to have the ability to prepare students with the material they needed to be able to enter the new workforce.

In 1965, the federal government became deeply involved in education with the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Up to that point, education had primarily been a state endeavor and, consequently, had significant variation from one state to another. It was evident that the level of education provided to students across all backgrounds was not the same. Students in poverty, students with disabilities, and minority students were showing significant gaps in achievement with their peer counterparts. The ESEA attempted to address these gaps by providing extra support for schools to support all students, specifically those students in poverty (Jennings, 2015). The ESEA structured the federal government's role in creating education policy and set the groundwork for oversight in the hiring and evaluation of teachers. The ESEA was required to be reauthorized every seven years, and with each reauthorization a new look at its implications on teachers was necessary.

The reauthorization of ESEA in 2001, entitled No Child Left Behind, provided specific updates about how schools would be held accountable for the education of all students. The federal government would put more money towards education, but that money would come with the caveat that state and local school divisions must include quantifiable measures of teachers and schools in their evaluations (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). The most significant piece of these required performance evaluations was the advent of a system for assessment that would result in a major increase in standardized testing. States began adopting tests that significantly affected the outlook of their schools. It was mandated that assessments occur in grades three through eight and at least one in high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). No Child Left Behind emphasized uniformity in its standards for teachers and schools, and these standards changed the ways in which people inside and outside of schools determined who was an effective teacher.

This was not the only change that resulted from No Child Left Behind, however. As the role of the teacher adapted over time to match the purpose of public schooling, a corresponding change also happened in the role of the school leader over the same period of time.

History of School Leadership

The role of the school leader has changed as the role of the school has changed over time. The original public schools were small enough that they operated by naming one teacher as a principal teacher (Kafka, 2009). Society did not expect a school to have one distinct building leader until the late 19th and early 20th century (Hallinger, 1992; Kafka, 2009; Rousmaniere, 2007). The increasing presence of the building principal coincided with the same timeframe when many of the compulsory education laws came into effect.

The advent of the principal's presence in schools came with an understanding that the principals were essentially independent. Kafka pointed to the principal's independence as they wrote:

The notion that principals were independent was essential. Principals were able to lead their schools, and to gain authority through doing so, in part because they were granted independence and autonomy by their superintendents. (Kafka, 2009, p. 322)

Principals began to network with one another through professional associations such as National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) (Kafka, 2009). As the 20th century provided an atmosphere of increasing urbanization, the independence of school principals started to wane. Increasingly, principals saw their role become less independent and more connected to one another underneath the auspices of a larger school district.

During that time, the school leader was impacted by the increased federalization. The demographics of who held the role of principal in different schools changed dramatically. There was a marked decrease in both the number of women and the number of African Americans who were assigned as building principals (Kafka, 2009; Rousmaniere, 2007). The decrease in African Americans in the role of principal can be tied to desegregation and *Brown v. The Board of Educ.* (1954), as well as the desire of many schools to have a white principal if there were going to be any white students in the school (Kafka, 2009). The cause of the decrease in the number of females as building leaders is harder to pinpoint and may be related to a variety of factors that caused more men to ascend into the role (Kafka, 2009).

With the adoption of the ESEA in the middle of the 20th century, an increased focus on accountability, especially in the area of academics, arose. The role of the principal as a building

manager continued, but principals were increasingly asked to be leaders in academic instruction (Hallinger, 1992; Kafka, 2009). The new accountability structures meant that principals' job performance ratings were also tied to student performance on standardized assessments. In Virginia, the current job description and evaluation of building leaders hold the leader accountable for student performance and test scores (VDOE, 2012).

Principal as Instructional Leader

An expansion of the principal's role as an instructional leader brought a corresponding increase in research about effective instructional leadership (Murphy, 1988). There are various components to instructional leadership that have been identified by research, such as instructional walk-throughs, professional development, instructional coaching and teacher evaluation (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Murphy, 1988).

Each of the strategies that principals have adopted as part of their instructional leadership have resulted in different levels of effectiveness (Grissom et al., 2013; Protheroe, 2009). The ability to identify one activity that is the most effective has proven difficult for researchers, however (Neumerski, 2013). It is apparent that the difference between the perception of the activity and the activity itself by both teacher and principal has a large impact on the activity's effectiveness (Grissom et al., 2013). Researchers have found that if the teacher perceives the activity to be part of professional development, it has a stronger impact on increasing student performance than if the activity is conducted in isolation as part of a larger instructional leadership effort by the administration (Grissom et al., 2013). Instructional walkthroughs are one such strategy that principals employ with varied results (Protheroe, 2009). When the principal walks through classrooms doing a brief overview and they do not tie it to professional development or coaching, for example, researchers found that teachers do not respond well or improve their instruction (Grissom et al., 2013).

Additional research demonstrates that time spent on instructional leadership is not the ultimate source of improved student results (Grissom et al., 2013; Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010). Principals must seek to choose the strategies and activities that will yield the best results in order to be effective as leaders. Researchers have seen that organizational management has a significant impact on students' results (Grissom et al., 2013; Horng et al., 2010). Organizational leadership is defined as the retention and hiring of teachers. When effective, this process of retaining certain teachers while letting other teachers go is tied to the principal's ability to

identify the effective teacher (Horng et al., 2010). This marriage between the instructional strategy of evaluating teachers to the organizational strategy of staffing a school yields effective results.

History of Teacher Evaluation

The teacher evaluation instrument has traditionally been locally designed and has had a wide variety of components that varied by locality. The most significant, and often most controversial, aspect of teacher evaluation was the desire to quantify teacher performance by looking at student performance data (Lavigne & Leah, 2014). The quantification of performance has been a part of evaluating schools since the late 19th century (Lavigne & Leah, 2014). While quantifying performance was a part of many teacher evaluation instruments, there was great variation among states in regards to how they approached teacher evaluation throughout the 20th century. The focus on teacher accountability increased with 1983's *A Nation at Risk* report, as the report encouraged evaluation as a means to ensure rewards for superior teachers and removal for poor teachers (Lavigne & Leah, 2014; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

The role of student results as part of teacher evaluation and staffing decisions grew with the advent of No Child Left Behind in 2001 and heightened with the 2012 initiative Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). During this time, the wording surrounding the evaluation of teacher performance changed from "highly qualified" to "highly effective" (Darling-Hammond, 2009). Highly qualified teachers were those who had met standards that included their course of study, a state proficiency assessment, and their full teacher licensure. No Child Left Behind federally mandated that individual states account for the number of highly qualified teachers that they had in place. In particular, the federal government wanted to track the number of highly qualified teachers at schools that were servicing minority and disadvantaged students (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Labeling some teachers as highly effective allowed evaluators to quantify teacher performance and link teacher effectiveness to student outputs.

The ESEA was reauthorized in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (U.S. Congress, 2015). The ESSA marks a change in the federal government's role in teacher evaluation. Much of the decision-making regarding the structure and purpose of teacher evaluation moved away from the federal government back to the states. The ESSA no longer

requires that states include quantifiable student outcomes as part of their teacher evaluation instrument, though many states will continue to include that measure of teacher effectiveness for the initial transition. Still, it is not clear as to whether it will always be included. The ESSA also reduced the language requiring states to report on the number of teachers deemed highly qualified (U.S. Congress, 2015).

The look of teacher evaluation changes over time, but its purposes have been fairly consistent. Staffing decisions, specifically as they relate to teacher tenure, are a primary purpose of teacher evaluation.

Teacher Tenure

Teacher evaluation has been used primarily to make staffing decisions (Jones, 2015). The primary protection for the teacher regarding staffing decisions is teacher tenure (Jones, 2015). The tie between teacher tenure and teacher evaluation is in the role the evaluation plays in the process of documenting the teacher's performance per the steps lined out in teacher tenure structures (Jones, 2015).

Teacher tenure has its origins in the turn of the 20th century America, when labor unions across the United States organized to protect the rights of workers. Education organizations, and specifically the National Educator's Association (NEA), began similar organization and used the rally cry of teacher tenure as the focal point of their first organizational meetings (Stephey, 2008). The NEA hosted a conference in 1887, of which the topic of tenure comprised a significant portion (Stephey, 2008). About 25 years later, the first laws concerning tenure were put in place in New Jersey in 1910 (Stephey, 2008).

Originally, the laws concerning tenure only included university-level faculty (Jones, 2015). The belief was that there was a need to protect the professor's academic freedom and prevent professors from worrying about whether their political views or lesson topics would subject them to unwarranted firing. As the years passed, there were an increasing number of states that included public grade school teachers under the protection of teacher tenure. The justification of the early teacher tenure laws centered on a belief that providing for a continuity of instruction was in the best interest of students (Jones, 2015). It was a feeling that a stable workforce of teachers would serve children's best interest. Decision makers prioritized academic freedom and secure positions for teachers.

While each state handles tenure differently, there are some universal things that tenure entails. Usually, there is a set probationary time before a teacher is eligible for tenure, a criteria required to earn tenure, a process for receiving tenure, and a variety of protections that are provided as a result of getting tenure (Jones, 2015). In virtually all cases of states that offer teacher tenure, the ultimate protection is the requirement of extensive due process when a school or district seeks to fire a teacher.

In recent years, the issue of tenure has come under increased scrutiny. The origin of tenure was to protect the teacher from politically motivated firings. Either a school would feel the pressure to protect its interests and seek to fire an employee who spoke against its policies, or the community would bring political pressure regarding curricular decisions and the lifestyle choices of a teacher (Garden, 2011). There were time periods in the past when teachers could be fired for choices as personal as the clothes that they wore or the dating choices that they made (Garden, 2011). In order to protect the teachers against such practices, the rules for firing a tenured teacher were fairly restrictive.

Original discussions of tenure assumed that it was in the student's best interest to have consistent teachers. In order to guarantee that consistency, tenure safeguards were enacted (Jones, 2015). Those who are currently challenging teacher tenure point to the fact that the rate at which districts fire teachers is far below the rate that is seen in the private sector; this discrepancy leads some to wonder if the practice of tenure is helpful to students (Garden, 2011). The thought is that, statistically, there is probably a higher number of underperforming teachers than the number of teachers who are fired, as a result of tenure protections.

Merit-based Pay

In 2009, the federal government pushed the issue of merit-based pay with the adoption of Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Race to the Top was a competitive grant offered by the Federal Government as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. When states applied for this grant, they were given a score that was based on their adoption of a variety of different education policies (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The policies included the adoption of rigorous standards like Common Core, the opening of opportunity to charter schools, and the inclusion of pay incentives that were tied to teacher performance.

Currently, about 32 states have adopted some form of performance-based pay. While not all state adoption of performance-based pay is tied to corresponding applications to Race to the

Top, the amount of states that are looking at merit-based teacher compensation structures has increased rapidly in the last 10 years (Dee & Keys, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2008). The adoption of merit pay hasn't come without considerable public debate. A center of much of the debate is the ability for school districts to accurately measure teacher performance in a quantifiable way (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Dee & Keys, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2008).

The effort to measure teacher performance in a quantifiable way pre-dates the advent of standardized state testing as part of No Child Left Behind (Murnane & Cohen, 1986). The critics of merit-based pay systems, however, argue that in most of these systems the definition of merit is quantified solely by student test scores (Dee & Keys, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2008; Murnane & Cohen, 1986). A teacher evaluation instrument may seek to evaluate multiple different areas of performance. Professionalism, content knowledge, and instructional planning are all common areas upon which a teacher is evaluated. In most merit-based pay structures, the decision of whether a teacher meets performance expectations is most often tied solely to student performance on assessment exams. It is this disconnect between a pay structure claiming to reward “effective” teachers and defining effective-based solely on assessment scores that raises alarm for critics (Dee & Keys, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2008; Murnane & Cohen, 1986).

Proponents of a merit pay system are very often the same groups that promote change in the way teacher tenure structures are currently constructed. One area of contention is that there is no tie between a teacher's educational attainment and the students' performance on assessments (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010; Vagi, 2014). Many pay structures reward educational attainment and many teacher evaluation instruments favor new degrees for teachers. The issue that this attainment of degrees does not produce stronger student outcomes on assessment is cited by those who claim that there is a need to base a pay scale solely on those things that do produce student performance outcomes (Vagi, 2014). While many states have enacted some form of merit pay in their policies, there are still relatively few localities that use a performance-based pay structure (Goldhaber et al., 2008; Podgursky & Springer, 2011). The proponents of merit pay systems are still building a base of data that shows its effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Goldhaber et al., 2008; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010).

The ESSA has taken much of the focus off of performance-based teacher evaluation (U.S. Congress, 2015). The federal government has backtracked from the Race to the Top's provision that awarded points for using performance-based pay structures as part of a state's

application for grant funding. The ESSA expressly does not tie the federal government to promoting performance-based pay in any way, but this does not prohibit localities from the practice. As with teacher tenure, the teacher evaluation instrument plays a prominent role in states and areas that do offer performance-based incentives. Each teacher evaluation attempts to quantify a teacher's performance; tying a quantified performance to a teacher's financial compensation only heightens the impact of evaluation instruments.

Evaluation Process

The way in which teacher evaluation is conducted is not universal, but there are some common practices across a variety of districts (Young, Range, Hvidston, & Mette, 2015). Usually, a principal or other administrator spends time in a teacher's classroom and evaluates what he or she sees as it relates to a multitude of specific standards (Taylor & Tyler, 2012; Young et al., 2015). This model has been labeled by some as the clinical supervision model, because it often includes a pre-conference before the actual observation, as well as a post-observation conference (Young et al., 2015).

The single, long formal observation process has had a variety of critics, but it is still the predominant method employed by districts (Calabrese, Sherwood, Fast, & Womack, 2004; Young et al., 2015). Critics of the longer formal observation wonder whether the evaluator can observe all aspects of a broad rubric adequately, and also whether there is enough feedback provided to impact future classroom instruction (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). The issue with the rubric is the reality that most principals and teachers have noted that the identified areas for growth are broad. Most observation models that include single, longer classroom visits have a hard time accounting for the variety of focal points (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). The observer's inability to focus on all the various topics in the one observation has been shown to be less helpful to both administrator and teacher than more frequent, shorter, more informal observations (Calabrese et al., 2004; Taylor & Tyler, 2012; Young et al., 2015).

As previously noted, two major reasons behind teacher evaluation are its use in making teacher tenure decisions and its possible role in compensation. When given a choice, however, most administrators and teachers desire for the observation and evaluation process to be one that leads towards growth (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). These growth-oriented observations are commonly referred to as formative evaluations. The infrequency of the longer, one-time evaluation has limited its ability to be formatively effective (Young et al., 2015).

For these reasons, many districts are trying to find models that would allow for more frequent opportunities for administrators to be in a teacher's classroom. Some districts are even allowing the process of teacher evaluation to be handled by a team of leaders instead of just one leader. The team would design goals together with the teacher, and these goals would be tied to the various areas of teacher evaluation that are part of a broader rubric (Young et al., 2015). The ability to tie the more frequent informal observations or other alternative style to the teacher evaluation process has been viewed most positively by administrators and teachers, but the lack of definition has prevented broader implementation (Taylor & Tyler, 2012; Young et al., 2015). Due to the ties between teacher evaluation and tenure and to possible merit-based pay, the need for a defined process that can hold up to the scrutiny of courts and stakeholders is paramount. The formal observation with a defined rubric continues to be the most utilized format for conducting teacher evaluations (Calabrese et al., 2004; Young et al., 2015).

Measuring Performance

In addition to the developments in classroom observation, there has been increased emphasis on quantifiable data as part of the teacher evaluation process. Race to the Top allowed a district to tie compensation to student results as part of the equation for determining the amount of money paid to teachers using a merit-based matrix (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). How districts quantify student performance has varied somewhat from one state to another. Some areas have used a system based on absolute standardized test scores. This type of system works on the assumption that all students should be able to perform at a certain competency level for each grade or subject (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Goldhaber, 2015). While it is usually easier to understand in its calculation, some argue that it is less useful as a tool for measuring a teacher's effectiveness. In looking only at the number of students that meet a minimum expectation, the absolute standardized model has been less successful identifying teachers who perform well in multiple different placements (Goldhaber, 2015; Hill, Kapitula, & Umland, 2011). Studies have shown that with the absolute standard model, the quantifiable measure used in the teacher evaluation is more dependent on the students who are enrolled in a class than on the teacher's ability to provide effective instruction (Goldhaber, 2015; Hill et al., 2011).

A value-added model for quantifying teacher performance is more broadly used across the country. Value-added models are not uniform in their implementation, but their general tenet is that they seek to award a teacher for providing instruction that causes a student to grow

beyond what they knew the previous year (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Goldhaber et al., 2008). Most value-added models take the results from a student's assessment in the previous year and compare them to the student's results in the current year to provide a level of growth for that student. This growth level is then compared with other students who achieved at a similar level the previous year, as well as other students receiving the same instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Goldhaber, 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2008). The actual formula for this model is harder to understand with the different variables that are included, but it is seen as more consistent in its evaluation of teachers (Goldhaber, 2015; Hill et al., 2011). The formula used in this equation accounts for the various starting points for students in ways that the absolute standard model cannot. The absolute standard model places all students at the same starting point, regardless of previous performance, while the value-added model takes into account the ability of a teacher to help students grow from their particular starting point the previous year (Goldhaber, 2015).

There is a difference between the theory of value-added and its actual implementation (Darling-Hammond, 2015). There are assumptions that are made regarding the ability to quantify student performance that have not yet been solved. One such issue with the current methods of quantifying performance is that the assessments the evaluations are built on are required to stay on grade level. The static grade level starting point means that teachers aren't evaluated as much on growth as they are on the student's ability to meet a minimum baseline (Darling-Hammond, 2015). To evaluate the true impact of a teacher, it may be helpful to tie the teacher evaluation to the subjective measures of growth that provide a broader picture of teacher performance than student assessment scores can contribute. Incorporating parent and administrator reflections on the teacher's performance would yield a more accurate picture of teacher performance (Darling-Hammond, 2015). This usage of other measures of teacher effectiveness that are not simply assessment scores on a standardized assessment is commonly referred to as standards-based performance or standards-based assessment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012)

Standards-based performance is an alternative to the value-added performance that has been seen to be more reliable (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). A standards-based evaluation would concentrate on assessments as one part of an overall evaluation. The issue with standards-based assessment comes in two areas. Standards-based assessment was not emphasized in the

equation put forward as part of Race to the Top (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Race to the Top spoke in language specifically reflecting the quantifiable output found in standardized assessment results (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The inclusion of other qualitative data, such as parent evaluation, would not tie the teacher evaluation tightly enough to the standardized assessment performance. A second area of concern is the legal ramifications of tying teacher evaluation to decisions regarding tenure and merit-based pay. The inclusion of parent and administrator reflection introduces additional variables into the process that may unfairly affect decisions regarding staffing (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012).

The advent of the ESSA may open the door for states to look at models that are more like the standards-based performance measure. Currently, the predominant model remains value-added when quantifying student performance. Virginia's model for quantifying student performance has a broad definition that may allow for either a value-added framework or an absolute standard model.

Teacher Evaluation in Virginia

The current outline for teacher evaluation in Virginia was established in 2012 and was revised in 2015. The VDOE has established criteria for teacher evaluation that provide structure for two specific mandates by the governing body in Virginia, the Virginia General Assembly (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). The first mandate is simply that teacher evaluation must occur based on the standards set forth by the Virginia Board of Education. The second mandate is that the evaluation process takes into account student academic progress (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). In this way, the Virginia evaluation process is both a standards-based model and a model that relies on quantifiable student assessment results. How this balance is determined is outlined in the Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards that are published by the Virginia Department of Education (2012).

The Virginia system is set to evaluate six standards that are each worth 10% of the total evaluation score. The six standards that are worth 10% are: professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional delivery, assessment of and for student learning, learning environment, and professionalism (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). Localities are given the freedom to decide where to focus within these standards. The VDOE does provide a rubric that might be utilized to determine proficiency. The rubric does have subjective

statements regarding each of the standards. As such, this part of the teacher evaluation allows for variation depending on who is using the instrument.

The guidelines set forth by the VDOE state that the remaining 40% of a teacher's evaluation is to be tied to student academic results (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). This percent is further subdivided into two recommended categories. The first category is structured around student growth percentiles. These student growth percentiles are derived using a formula set forth by the VDOE; however, the growth percentiles are only available for some classrooms in which the students have used a Standards of Learning Assessment in both the current academic year and the previous academic year. The growth percentile takes a student and assigns him or her to a cohort of other students across the state who scored the same on the Standards of Learning Assessment for the previous year. The scores for this cohort of students are recorded for the current academic year and ranked based on how students performed in comparison to their cohorts from the previous year. This ranking became the student's growth percentile. An administrator is then asked to find the median of these growth percentiles for a teacher's class and use this median score to determine the score for Domain Seven in the teacher evaluation instrument (Virginia Department of Education, 2012).

The VDOE notes that less than 30% of teachers will be able to measure growth using the student growth percentile that is provided from the VDOE (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). If provided, this growth percentage could be seen as a value-added model of looking at teacher evaluation data.

The second part of the scoring for standard seven can be an alternative method of showing student performance. The guidelines state that this alternative should be validated, quantitative, and objective in its ability to show student growth (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). Each locality is able to choose from methods already available as to how it wishes to quantify student growth.

The school division in this study follows the framework set forth by the VDOE. In doing so, the teacher evaluation is both value-added and standards-based in its ability to establish a measure of performance for a teacher.

Teacher Evaluation Validity

With such high stakes involved in the teacher evaluation process, it is understandable that the question would arise as to whether the teacher evaluation actually performs the function that

it sets out to perform. There is no complete consensus as to whether the process of evaluating teachers is able to determine effectively which teachers are most successful (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009, Reddy, Dudek, Kettler, Kurz, & Peters, 2016, Young et al., 2015). One issue in question is whether it is possible to predict strong measurable results from teachers who are evaluated positively (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009, Taylor & Tyler, 2012). A second issue is whether the evaluation process is consistent (Reddy et al, 2016, Young et al., 2015). If one person evaluates a teacher as strong, will he or she be seen as strong by all evaluation instruments and all evaluators? Each of these issues, the predictive nature of the teacher evaluation and the consistency of evaluation, are integral factors in determining the usefulness of teacher evaluation for tenure decisions and potential merit-based pay programs (Taylor & Tyler, 2012).

The process matters when determining whether there is correlation between teacher evaluation and student results. It has been shown that a value-added style of teacher evaluation does show some connection between student scores and the teacher evaluation (Hill et al., 2011; Holtzapple, 2005). If a district were committed to using student growth measures from standardized assessments as part of the evaluation process, it would stand to reason that there would be a connection to the result of the teacher evaluation. Without the use of standards-based or value-added evaluation process, there is not as much of a connection between the results on student assessments and the evaluation of the teacher (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). One noticeable gap that exists, even with the use of value-added evaluation, is in predicting the effectiveness of teachers in closing achievement gaps (Borman & Kimball, 2005). A teacher's ability to show strength on a value-added assessment often did not mean that the particular teacher was able to close the gaps that existed in the performance of white students and the performance of African American students. Similarly, some teachers who were identified as lower performing were able to close the gap that existed between the performance of white students and African American students (Borman & Kimball, 2005).

There were studies that investigated whether a teacher's evaluation did, in fact, predict positive student outcomes on standardized assessments. In Cincinnati, teacher evaluation was connected to student results (Holtzapple, 2005) and they found that teachers who had been evaluated as lower performing produced assessment results that were some of the lowest in the area (Holtzapple, 2005). The evaluation process was value-added, so the test results were part of

the process to define a particular teacher as low performing. There is some circuitous reasoning here that asks whether the lower student results made the evaluation low or whether the teacher's performance was identified as low, and therefore the result was lower assessment scores. In a similar way, there is connection between the educational and professional qualifications of a teacher and the student assessment results in his or her classroom (Heck, 2007). There are many questions about whether the qualification level of the teacher has a causal relationship to the student assessment results. Some wonder if lower student assessment results merely come from an environment where higher qualified teachers are less likely to teach. In each case, studies continue to look for ways to isolate the variable of teacher evaluation and determine whether it has a significant impact on student performance (Borman & Kimball, 2005; Heck, 2007; Hill et al., 2011; Holtzapple, 2005).

Two of the variables that affect the effectiveness of teacher evaluation relate to the evaluators themselves and the context of the evaluation. The qualifications of the evaluator and whether he or she has skill and motive in the evaluation process, and the ways context affects evaluation validity, may both affect evaluation outcomes. However, the variation in evaluators has been noted to have a direct effect on the usefulness of the teacher evaluation (Heck, 2007; Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). It has been shown that evaluators who were consistent with their use of a tight rubric had results that were more valid in predicting student performance (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). Evaluators have self-assessed their own motivation in conducting teacher evaluation. Acceptance of the importance of teacher evaluation and the consistency in its implementation have not played large roles in predicting the validity of the teacher evaluation itself (Hill et al., 2011; Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). While it is clear that the usage of consistent processes and rubrics is more predictive in determining whether a teacher evaluation will be effective, it is not as clear as to how to determine whether an administrator will be consistent in rubric usage (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009).

The variable of context does not seem to have as strong a connection to whether a teacher evaluation is valid or not. It has been found that when determining whether certain teacher evaluations were invalid in their ability to predict effectiveness, as measured by student assessment results, the location of the evaluation did not come into play (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). Two schools with a lower socio-economic student population had an equal number of invalid teacher evaluations as two schools that served a student population with a higher socio-

economic base (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). While this study determined that teacher evaluations are no more valid at a lower socio-economic school than at a school with a higher socio-economic level, it does not determine whether the actual context that a school is in plays a role in the teacher evaluation (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009).

The most valid teacher evaluations have come when each of the variables are accounted for, and a combination of evaluator's skill, will, and context of the evaluation all play a role in whether the actual teacher evaluation will be valid (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). It is noted that the variation in validity with teacher evaluation is enough that it should be considered whether these evaluations are effective tools in determining whether a teacher is eligible for tenure or some form of merit-based pay (Borman & Kimball, 2005; Heck, 2007; Kimball & Milanowski, 2009).

Demonstrating that context does not have a significant impact on the validity of a teacher evaluation has been isolated to whether a teacher's surrounding context negatively or positively influences his or her evaluation. Context can also be examined as it pertains to the impact changing schools may have on a teacher's evaluation. The impact that can be made by context may be seen more in the reliability of teacher evaluation than in the validity of teacher evaluation.

Teacher Evaluation Reliability

While the validity of teacher evaluation speaks to its ability to predict teacher performance, the reliability of the teacher evaluation speaks towards its ability to be consistent (Reddy et al., 2016). A teacher's evaluation may have the same ability to predict performance in a low performing school as the evaluation has at a high performing school (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). The validity of the instrument does not mean that the teacher evaluation at the lower performing school will be the same as it is at a high performing school.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has stated that, "A meaningful evaluation focuses on instructional quality and professional standards, and through this focus and timely feedback, enables teachers and leaders to recognize, appreciate, value, and develop excellent teaching" (VDOE, 2012, p. 1). Teacher evaluation reliability would state that if instructional quality and professional standards are consistent, then the teacher evaluation should demonstrate the same consistency.

The VDOE continues to outline the purpose of teacher evaluations as follows:

The primary purposes of a quality teacher evaluation system are to:

- contribute to the successful achievement of the goals and objectives defined in the school division's educational plan;
- improve the quality of instruction by ensuring accountability for classroom performance and teacher effectiveness;
- implement a performance evaluation system that promotes a positive working environment and continuous communication between the teacher and the evaluator that promotes continuous professional growth and improved student outcomes;
- promote self-growth, instructional effectiveness, and improvement of overall professional performance; and, ultimately
- optimize student learning and growth. (VDOE, 2013, p. 3)

The third bullet point in this definition includes the evaluator as a variable in teacher evaluation. Reliability would maintain that the potential change in evaluator may allow for a corresponding change in evaluation (Reddy et al., 2016). None of the bullet points put forth in the purpose of teacher evaluation in Virginia are context dependent.

Teacher Attitudes

A teacher's attitude about their work environment has been connected to both job performance and attendance (Currivan, 1999; Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2014). As with other professions, it has been shown that employees with low morale are more prone to come late to work, for example (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2014). Different factors play a role in the overall attitude a teacher has about their work environment, and teacher evaluation is one of those factors (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012).

Teacher attitude has also been tied to job retention (Loeb et al., 2005). California teachers were found to leave the profession at a higher rate when their attitude about the job was negative (Loeb et al., 2005). The factors that lead to the low attitude were varied, but school climate, school leadership, and the evaluation process were all found to be factors that contributed to teacher attitudes (Loeb et al., 2005).

Teacher Mobility

Teachers transfer schools within a division in a process that is either voluntary or involuntary. There can be multiple reasons that a teacher may transfer, including a teacher's length of commute, their perception of school climate, or a reduction in force in the larger school division (Nunn, 2014). It was found that variables such as the percentage of students that are African American or the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch can both increase the number of teachers who transfer out of a school (Feng, 2009). It was found that, in multiple states, as the number of African American students increased, so did the number of teachers who desired to leave a school (Feng, 2009). There was an exception in the study for teachers who were African American. Feng found that the decision to leave a school, for minority teachers, decreased as the number of African American students increased (Feng, 2009). Lastly, the educational attainment of a teacher had no effect on their desire to leave a particular school, but their potential for higher wages did increase the likelihood that they would leave a school (Feng, 2009)

The experience of transferring from one school to another has had different attitudes from teachers. Some teachers have responded in a positive way to moving schools while others have found transferring to be a negative experience (Nunn, 2014). Many factors went into whether the teacher perceived the process of transferring as a positive or negative experience with the culture of the receiving building being the one that most influenced a teacher's perception of the process. Even if the transfer process included the learning of a new grade level curriculum, that stress could be combated with the enjoyment of the climate in the new building (Nunn, 2014). Teachers reported that regardless of whether the transfer was voluntary or involuntary, the climate of the new building could affect whether their transfer experience was a positive or a negative experience (Nunn, 2014).

The effect of transferring on a teacher's evaluation can be hard to quantify fully. A study was done in Miami after there was a large-scale transfer of teachers. Teachers who were low performing on standardized assessments and, subsequently, on their teacher evaluations, were involuntarily transferred out of low performing schools (Grissom, Loeb, & Nakashima, 2014). Many of the teachers who were moved were relocated to higher performing schools in Miami, and they were replaced by new teachers at their previous school (Grissom, Loeb, & Nakashima, 2014). The Miami study showed that when a poorly rated teacher was involuntarily transferred

from a low performing school to one that was higher performing, there were positive gains for both the teacher who was transferred as well as the sending school (Grissom, Loeb, & Nakashima, 2014). There is some question as to the cause of the positive results. Miami used the value-added model of assessing student growth, and the gains showed by the teacher who had transferred may be impacted from having peers who were higher performing (Grissom, Loeb, & Nakashima, 2014). If the peers were performing at a higher level, they may, in turn, affect student results in the transferring teacher's classroom (Grissom, Loeb, & Nakashima, 2014). The teacher who filled the open spot at the lower performing school almost always had a value-added score on their teacher evaluation that was higher than the teacher who had departed the previous year (Grissom, Loeb, & Nakashima, 2014).

Teacher mobility has been shown to have an impact on the schools involved in the transfer as well as on the teachers themselves. Whether the variation in teacher evaluation is due to the different leadership, the different colleagues, the different student base, or some combination of the three, is yet to be identified.

Summary

In the history of the American educational system, the focus on teacher evaluation is a relatively recent development. Teacher evaluation has been a part of the system from the beginning, but its usefulness in making decisions wasn't examined as carefully until the last twenty years. As the issues of teacher tenure and, more recently, merit-based pay have grown, so too has the need for an effective way to determine whether a particular teacher evaluation is valid or not. The role of teacher evaluation has always been to determine whether a teacher is effective at educating students. What has changed has been the inclusion of quantifiable data that are used in determining whether the label of effectiveness placed on a teacher from their evaluation correlates to the outcomes produced in the classroom.

It has been established that the inclusion of student assessment results in a value-added or standards-based evaluation has increased the validity of the teacher evaluation. Whether the addition of this criteria caused certain evaluations to be more valid or whether the evaluations became better at predicting student achievement results on their own, the connection has been seen to be strengthening. The validity of evaluation is increasing with the inclusion of assessment results, but it is still significantly affected by fluctuations in other variables that play a role in the process.

The evaluator's will and prowess with utilizing a consistent rubric plays a significant part in the validity of an evaluation. It has also been shown that context plays a role in the validity of a teacher evaluation. One instance that combines both the variable of evaluator and context is the effect transferring schools might have on a teacher and his or her evaluation. If the variables in question do not play a role in the evaluation process, teachers who utilize the same instructional method in one school that they use in the other should have the same evaluation in one school that they have in the other. If a teacher evaluation differs, it would be fair to say that the variables of the evaluator and the context played a larger role in the teacher evaluation than the actual teacher and his or her instructional decision-making and delivery.

Chapter 3

Method

Purpose

Teacher evaluation is a critical aspect of the school leader's responsibility. The evaluation is a component to decision making regarding the staffing of an individual school and the potential for a teacher to receive a continuing contract with a school division (VDOE, 2012). The evaluation has additional pressure, as merit-based pay structures have been considered by states as an outflow of the Race to the Top initiative (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). With the increasing importance of the teacher evaluation comes a commensurate increase in the importance for teachers to perceive their evaluations as valid and reliable.

The increased usage of student performance data as a significant part of the teacher evaluation instrument may bring about the perception that variables outside of the teacher's control have a significant impact on the teacher evaluation. If teachers feel that their teacher evaluation is influenced by variables outside of their control, this feeling may affect teacher morale. Negative morale with teachers has been tied to poor job performance and poor job retention (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2014; Loeb et al., 2005). This study seeks to determine how teachers who transfer from one location to another within the same urban school division in southeast Virginia perceive the teacher evaluation system and its ability to measure their performance accurately and consistently.

Research Design

The belief that meaning is often derived from people's perceptions of their experiences is a significant tenet of a constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2014). This study followed a constructivist worldview as people's perception of the validity of their teacher evaluations informs the choices that they will make professionally. If a teacher believes the evaluation process will yield different results depending on the context in which they teach, that belief will impact any decisions they make regarding their placement. The meaning of the evaluation, as it relates to the teacher, rests in his or her perception of the experience.

A constructivist worldview acknowledges that the meanings of something may be varied and multiple (Creswell, 2014). It is possible that two different teachers could transfer from one school to another but have vastly different opinions on how the transfer affected their teacher

evaluations. This constructivist study looked for patterns within those varied experiences and attempts to determine whether or not teachers think their teacher evaluations are independent of the context where they teach.

One research design that flows out of a constructivist worldview is a basic qualitative design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Basic qualitative design has a base in constructivism as a primary aspect of basic qualitative research as people construct reality through interaction in their surrounding world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). People's interpretation of their experience is also core to basic qualitative design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This study centers on the common experience that teachers who transfer have regarding their teacher evaluations. Through interviews, I tell the stories of teachers who have transferred. Through the stories of this common experience, I determined patterns in the experience that are shared.

Research Questions

Through the synthesis of common experiences of teachers, the researcher addressed research questions. Through interviews, there was an attempt to identify patterns that assisted me in answering the following research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive that transferring worksites within the same school division affects the teacher evaluation process?
2. How do teachers perceive the consistency of the teacher evaluation process when a teacher transfers from one school to another?
3. What variables do teachers perceive affect their evaluation when a teacher transfers to a new school?

Site Selection

An urban school division in southeast Virginia was the site for this study. The division consisted of 45 schools that serve about 32,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through the 12th grade (Public Schools, 2016). In 2016, the school division employed about 3,000 teachers (Public Schools, 2016). The school division's student population was approximately 61% African American, 22% white, 8% Hispanic, and 2% Asian (VDOE, 2002/2016).

This study was looking at the attitudes teachers have towards teacher evaluation. The identified school division in southeast Virginia did allow for both voluntary and involuntary

teacher transfers (Public Schools, 2015). The majority of the teacher transfers occurred during the spring before teachers sign their teaching contracts in June.

The Commonwealth of Virginia does not have teacher tenure and there is no state-mandated system to pay for performance. The specific site identified for this study, as a school division in Virginia, does not offer teacher tenure or any state mandated pay for performance. The school division does offer a continuing contract to teachers who have three years of consecutive teaching experience in the school division (Public Schools, 2015). The teacher evaluation is one component used as a factor when terminating a teacher from a continuing contract (Public Schools, 2015).

Sample Selection

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that a basic qualitative research design should include between three and 10 interviews with the goal being saturation. This qualitative study will consist of eight interviews conducted with teachers who have transferred from one school to another within the same school division.

A list of all teachers who have transferred in the last three years was obtained from the Department of Human Resources. This list was placed into a spreadsheet that used a random selector to identify 20 teachers. These 20 teachers were approached through e-mail about participating in the study. (see Appendix A). The first eight teachers who responded positively were selected for interviews. If the 20 names had not generated eight positive responses, then a second list of 20 names was identified from the list of teachers who have transferred. The selected teachers completed the research consent form that was attached. (see Appendix B).

The only variables that were intentionally maintained for all teachers who participated are that they worked in the same school division and that they transferred within the school division either voluntarily or involuntarily within the last three years. Any other similarities or differences among the teachers in the selected group was unintentional.

Data Collection

Data was gathered through interviewing teachers in a school division in southeast Virginia regarding their experience of teacher evaluation. Each of these teachers was identified as having transferred schools within the same school division by reviewing the school division's personnel docket. Each teacher was asked 13 questions regarding his or her experiences. The

interviewees signed an acknowledgement that each interview would be audio recorded using a phone application. The audio recording of the interview was typed into a transcript and reviewed for accuracy by the researcher. The transcripts were printed and stored in a file in a locked office for three to five years after the publication of this study.

The total number of interviewees was 8 and the goal was saturation. Saturation is the point at which no additional information is gained from additional interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Saturation occurred when the broad themes of teacher perception of the teacher evaluation process were gained and no additional insight into their perception was gained from further interviews.

Instrument Design

The interview questions were designed to allow teachers the opportunity to share their attitudes without any bias of the researcher or past research findings (Creswell, 2014). The questions were developed to align with the research questions. Questions one through six addressed the first research question. Questions seven, eight, and nine addressed research question number two, and questions 10 to 14 addressed research question number three. Question 15 addressed all three research questions and the overall purpose of this study.

The interview questions were initially designed using those found in Coulter's (2013) study of teacher attitudes towards evaluation in Washington State. Ten teachers who fit the target audience of the study, having transferred schools within the same school division, were solicited for feedback regarding the questions. Six of the teachers responded and helped refine the questions to provide more clarity. None of the 10 teachers who were approached to review the questions were used as part of the study. Additionally, a panel of three experts was asked to review the questions for validity. The panel's responses helped to refine the questions to ensure they would have the intended intent and the answers addressed the research questions in the study. The interview questions are found in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

As a qualitative study, the analysis of the data was inductive. The meaning of the data came through the observations of teacher attitudes. Data were analyzed while they were being obtained (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). After the first interview was conducted, it was transcribed and the transcript was analyzed for significant themes that arose. These small themes in the data

were noted and given a code based on their relevance. The transcript of the second interview was analyzed in a similar fashion as small themes in the data were noted and labeled (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The themes found in each subsequent transcript were compared to those found previously. As similar themes were found, they were sorted into overarching categories that suggested the broad connection of each of the pieces of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this way, the analysis remained inductive with the categories being defined by the data pieces that were found in the study of each transcript. Eventually, the data analysis became a bit deductive as categories became more defined. When enough data connections occurred that called for the creation of a category, future transcripts were read for how the data points fit into the previously defined categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). After the interviews provided enough similar data points and well-defined categories were defined, the categories were organized according to the research question they addressed. Each research question has categories that provide organization to the various answers given by those being interviewed. Those categories were the basis upon which responses to the research questions were drafted.

Timeline

The researcher received Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in December of 2016 (see Appendix D). The school division approval for research was also obtained in December of 2016 (see Appendix E). A list of all teachers who had transferred schools within the identified school division was obtained as soon as IRB and school division approvals were obtained. Teacher interviews were conducted in January of 2017. Data were collected and analyzed in January and February of 2017. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations for future study were compiled in February of 2017.

Summary

This study examined teacher attitudes toward teacher evaluation for teachers who have transferred between schools in one southeastern Virginia school division. The study used a basic qualitative design and focused on the experiences shared by teachers through interviews. The teachers identified had a common thread of having transferred from one school to another within the same school division. The study looked for themes that are consistent in teacher attitudes toward evaluation.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Purpose

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to determine how teacher evaluations are perceived by teachers who have transferred from one location to another within the same school division. A teacher's morale can influence his or her job performance and job retention (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2014; Loeb et al., 2005). Eight teachers from one school division in southeast Virginia were interviewed to determine their attitudes toward the teacher evaluation process. The interview data were examined for common themes as the researcher sought to answer three research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive that transferring worksites within the same school division affects the teacher evaluation process?
2. How do teachers perceive the consistency of the teacher evaluation process when a teacher transfers from one school to another?
3. What variables do teachers perceive affect their evaluation when a teacher transfers to a new school?

Participants

A randomly selected group of teachers was invited to participate in an interview. Each of the invited teachers had transferred schools within the school division at some point during the last three years. Eight teachers responded affirmatively to the request for an interview. The eight teachers who responded affirmatively were the participants in this study and were referred to as Participant 1 through Participant 8. All participants were asked 15 questions related to their attitudes toward teacher evaluation.

The participants' backgrounds are displayed in Table 1. All eight participants were female, and all participants worked within the same school division. Seven of the eight participants taught the same course or grade level at their new schools as they did at their previous schools. The remaining participant, Participant 4, taught first grade in her new school and taught kindergarten at her previous school. Participant 6 taught in a high school, Participant 1 and Participant 3 taught in a middle school, and the remaining five participants taught in an elementary school. None of the participants were in their first five years of teaching. Five of the

participants had between five and 10 years of teaching experience. Participant 8 has over 25 years of teaching experience.

Table 1

Participants

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Female	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Same Grade Level	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Elementary School		X		X	X		X	X
Middle School	X		X					
High School						X		
5-10 Years' Experience	X	X	X	X			X	
10+ Years' Experience					X	X		X

Transcripts of each interview were created and common themes were identified as they related to each research question.

Research Question One: How do teachers perceive that transferring worksites within the same school division affects the teacher evaluation process?

Interview questions one through six referenced the first research question. Participants were asked to describe their experience with teacher evaluation at their previous school in questions one and two. Questions three and four asked participants about their experience with teacher evaluation at their current school. Questions five and six asked participants to consider whether their attitudes about teacher evaluation changed as a result of transferring schools.

Previous school. Six of the eight participants had negative experiences with evaluation at their previous schools. Two participants felt that teacher performance was tied too closely to student performance. Participant 1 and Participant 2 felt that their evaluation would have been higher if not for the inclusion of student data. Participant 2 stated:

The example that sticks out most in my mind is that on one of my evaluations, I was on summative, I had scored meets or exceeds on everything. At the very end I ended up barely proficient with my overall score based on one criteria, and it was data. (P2, 17–9)

This sentiment was mirrored by Participant 1, who remarked, "There was one evaluation I had where [my principal] had said that the only reason that I wouldn't score a higher evaluation was because of my SOL scores" (P1, *l* 6–8).

Five of the participants remarked that the evaluations at their previous schools were too rigid. These participants felt that their performance was only evaluated as to how it related to some focus, or goal, of the school. The participants perceived that this narrow emphasis did not leave room for evaluations to focus on individual teaching performance. Participant 5 shared this frustration when she remarked, "I would say that in my previous school the thinking was very rigid. You would have to be teaching in one particular way for your evaluation to be judged a certain way. I think it was very judgmental" (P5, *l* 10–12). Participant 4 also commented on a school's specific focus having an effect on her evaluation, but she remarked that the accreditation status of the school may have played a role in that focus. She explained:

That was one of the things. They had specific look fors that they would want to see as people were observing. I felt like they were a little bit more focused, and stressful, at my former school due to the status of the school. (P4, *l* 13–16)

One participant, Participant 7, remarked that the rigid focus was tied more to the evaluator than it was to something specific about a particular school:

The person who was evaluating me, who was the Assistant Principal at that time, we had different styles. I guess because she didn't agree with my style it just seemed as if she came off pretty critical. It seemed like it was something always negative. (P7, *l* 3–7)

Participant 8 spoke about rigid evaluation as it related to both the classroom observation and the end of the year summative evaluation. Participant 8 originally remarked, "The individual teacher evaluations were done consistently. Fortunately, I received very good evaluations" (P8, *l* 2–5). Later, in Participant 8's reflection, there was frustration that the process was too intense as she prepared for her summative evaluation. She was asked to follow strict guidelines and noted, "The first year we had to do our evaluation binder, I felt that it was very cumbersome. There was a lot of repetitive/redundant work that we had to do. And it put a lot of stress on the teachers to collect that data" (P8, *l* 14–18).

Participant 3 also acknowledged a rigid process at her previous school. Participant 3 spoke about the rigid process in a positive manner when she remarked, "Previously I was a continuing contract year one [teacher] and I think it followed straight protocol. I think he [evaluator] came in the regular amount of times and met with me within the three-day window. It was good" (P3, l 2–4). This participant had a positive attitude toward teacher evaluation at her previous school because the process was rigid. Those who reported negative experiences with teacher evaluation at their previous schools spoke about the evaluation itself as being rigid.

While Participant 6 did not speak positively or negatively about the experience of teacher evaluation at her previous school, six of the eight participants did have negative attitudes toward their evaluation at their previous school. Participant attitudes toward teacher evaluation are displayed in Table 2. Negative attitudes were the result of either the inclusion of data as part of the evaluation or the rigidity of the evaluation.

Table 2

Teacher Attitudes toward Teacher Evaluation at Previous School

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Negative								
<i>Inclusion of data</i>	X	X						
<i>Too rigid</i>	X			X	X		X	X
Positive								
<i>Rigid</i>			X					

Current school. Six of the eight teachers reported positive experiences with the teacher evaluation process at their current school. Two participants tied their positive experience to a more relaxed evaluation process at their new schools. Participant 4 stated:

Last year, understanding my principal, she was a very relaxed person in general. Walkthroughs and evaluations with her were a little more relaxed. She was more personal with the staff. I feel like I felt a little less stressed with those situations. (P4, l 30–33)

Participant 5 also commented on the relaxed feel of the process when she remarked, "Overall I think it has been less intense. More relaxed" (P5, l 25–26).

Two participants remarked that their positive attitude toward evaluation was a result of the evaluation being tightly focused on the participant's instruction. Participant 1 stated, "Teacher evaluation is more lesson based instead of student score based. We don't really look at data that heavily. It is more of the lesson delivery in the classroom, student feedback in the classroom, instead of student scores" (P1, *l* 9–11). Participant 3 commented, "They stick to protocol. I have been informally observed at least once a month. Casual walkthroughs with visitors where they comment on the content alignment" (P3, *l* 27–29).

The use of feedback as part of the evaluation in the new school was cited as a reason for a positive feel toward evaluation. Participant 7 noted:

Positive feedback, that's always good, because the other way can be more discouraging. Especially when you are doing your best. You know, if I mess up I can really own up to it and I can say I dropped the ball. But if I know I'm doing my best it's not good to have somebody just constantly on me. (P7, *l* 29–32)

Participant 1 expanded on the idea of positive feedback. Positive feedback did not mean that the evaluator only said positive things about the teacher. Instead, positive feedback was referencing the positive process for providing feedback. Participant 1 praised the interactive nature of the feedback when she said, "I feel very involved in the process. They include us in decision making. They actively let us know what is happening with evaluation. Everything is constructive" (P2, *l* 30–34). These two participants believed the use of feedback was helpful when the process was perceived to be more of a dialogue between participant and evaluator.

Two participants had negative attitudes toward teacher evaluation at their new schools. The negative attitudes were associated with the goals that were set for them by the evaluator. Participant 6 remarked:

My principal is saying that my evaluation will be tied to how the class performs on the SOL. I am just the co-teacher and I don't feel it's fair to evaluate me on how the entire class performs. I don't teach all of the students directly. (P6, *l* 42–46)

Participant 8 also commented on the goal set for evaluations at her new school when she stated:

Last year as a grade level we were all given the same [goal]. And that was to be more warm and fuzzy in kindergarten. Because no one knows who I am, and who the principal is, and who the school is, I found that to be very insulting. (P8, *l* 36–41)

Participant 8's attitude toward evaluation at the new building was negative because it was perceived that the evaluator was setting goals that were unattainable.

The teachers' attitudes toward evaluation in their new locations focused more on the evaluators and their understanding of teacher evaluations, than on characteristics that are specific to a location. Teachers' positive reflections were focused on the feedback provided by the evaluator, the emphasis on instruction over data, and the relaxed tone of the process. The participants who had negative attitudes toward teacher evaluation were similarly focused on the actions of the evaluator rather than on a factor unique to a specific school.

Transferring. Interview questions five and six asked if a participant's attitude toward teacher evaluation changed as a result of transferring schools and how participants perceived their evaluations were affected by that transfer. The data were equally split in the response to these questions. Four of the participants remarked that they did not feel their attitude toward teacher evaluation changed as a result of transferring. Participant 7 referenced this consistency when she talked about her attitude toward teacher evaluation after transferring, saying, "It's the same. You know it's just part of, I expect, that it's a part of what I have to do" (P7, *l* 33–34). Participant 6 and Participant 8 had similar opinions that their positive, or negative, attitudes toward teacher evaluation were about the broader process and not related to something particular to the experience of transferring schools.

Participant 3 had a unique experience of working for the same evaluator at both her previous and her current school. Participant 3 noted that working for the same evaluator meant that transferring schools did not have a big impact on her attitude toward teacher evaluation, commenting:

One of the reasons that I agreed to transfer here was because I knew the boss. I probably would have never left my comfort zone but it made it much easier to come here knowing what his expectations were and that I could follow them. (P3, *l* 38–40)

Participant 3 had a positive attitude toward evaluation at both schools at which she worked. Participants who did not change their attitude toward evaluation were not all positive

about teacher evaluation. Some participants had negative attitudes about teacher evaluation at both schools. The four participants who said their attitudes did not change toward teacher evaluation felt their views of evaluation were independent of the process of transferring.

The four participants (P1, P2, P4, P5) who reported a change in their attitude toward teacher evaluation after transferring referenced stress surrounding the teacher evaluation as a factor. Participant 4 remarked:

The level of stress. The status of the school was greatly affected. It's not like the [current] principal doesn't take it seriously. I feel like there isn't so much stress to get that 70% pass rate, and all of that. I felt it is just a lot more relaxed. (P4, *l* 52–54, 56, 58)

Participant 1 also remarked that the stress level changed with the transfer when she said:

I am not as stressed about [students'] SOL scores or their benchmark scores. I know that I am trusted in how to teach my students and the best way to teach my students to get them to receive good SOL scores. It is just a lot less pressure. (P1, *l* 23–25)

In this response, Participant 1 referenced both the change in stress surrounding student performance data as well as the impact of a new evaluator and the trust they put in her.

Two participants referenced the process of evaluation when remarking that their attitudes had changed. Participant 2 stated, "You know at my old school I wasn't involved. I was not invested. Especially my last year, I'll say I checked out. And then here, I know it's not something that negatively affected me. It's a tool for growth" (P2, *l* 42–46). Participant 2 did not see the location as the reason for a more interactive evaluation, but she referenced the change in evaluator as being the factor that changed the evaluation process to be more interactive.

Participant 5 shared that her attitude toward teacher evaluation had changed as a result of transferring schools. She referenced having a negative experience at her previous school when she stated:

This school went deeper with what each domain was about and gave specific examples. I had an experience at my previous school where I had to write up my own evaluation. I had to look at my principal and say, 'I know what's in there because I wrote it.' To have to say that to an administrator is kind of gutsy, ballsy, and that took a lot of energy out of me. (P5, *l* 43–45, 56–59)

Participant 5 stated that the act of transferring did impact her attitude toward teacher evaluation and tied the process of teacher evaluation at each school to the attitude she held toward teacher evaluation. The negative experience Participant 5 experienced at her previous school was compared to her positive experience of teacher evaluation in her new school. The comparison provided the basis for saying that her attitude toward teacher evaluation had changed when she transferred.

Participants varied in their views about the ways transferring schools had affected their attitudes concerning teacher evaluation. Half of the participants thought that transferring schools did not impact their attitudes toward teacher evaluation, and the other half felt that their attitudes toward teacher evaluation were positively impacted.

Table 3

Impact of Transferring on Participant's Attitudes toward Evaluation

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
No Impact			X			X	X	X
Positive Impact	X	X		X	X			

Themes. The participants' answers to questions one through six were examined to find some common themes in how the experience of transferring schools had affected participants' attitudes toward teacher evaluation. The themes are displayed in Table 4. The themes are an organization of the data and not an evaluation of the data.

The emergent themes included a feeling of high-pressure evaluations, rigid evaluations, relaxed evaluations and feedback. Each of these themes contributed to teachers' attitudes toward teacher evaluation. The seemingly contradictory themes of rigid and relaxed could be present in the responses from the same participant when referring to the difference between a former and current school.

Table 4

Teacher Attitudes toward Teacher Evaluation by Participant

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
High Pressure	X	X		X		X	X	
Rigid	X		X		X	X		X
Relaxed				X	X		X	
Feedback		X			X		X	X

Research Question Two: How do teachers perceive the consistency of the teacher evaluation process when a teacher transfers from one school to another?

Research question two centers on the perception that participants have regarding the consistency of their teacher evaluations when they transfer schools. Consistency is defined as whether the evaluation returned the same conclusions regarding teacher performance at the previous and current school (Reddy et al., 2016). Interview questions seven, eight, and nine addressed this research question. Participants were asked whether they felt their teacher evaluations were consistent. Participants were also asked which areas, or domains, of their evaluation had the most and the least variation as a result of transferring schools.

Consistency. Three participants responded that their teacher evaluations at their current school came to the same conclusions as the teacher evaluations at their previous schools. Participant 3 and Participant 7 were succinct in their response. When asked whether she perceived that her evaluation was consistent, Participant 7 replied, "I would say so. Yes" (P7, l 48). Similarly, Participant 3 stated, "Again, I'll tell you that both of my bosses are looking for the same thing. I feel like they have both been consistent" (P3, l 54, 56).

Participant 6 spoke to her experience in multiple schools and responded, "I think my evaluation is always the same. Always meets standards. I have been in four schools in the division and each time I meet standards" (P6, l 46–48). Participant 6 noted that each school was significantly different in nature, as some were middle schools and some were high schools. Participant 6 perceived that her evaluation had the same conclusions in each school.

The participants who responded that the teacher evaluation was inconsistent spoke both to process and to outcomes. Participant 5 explained this mix of process and outcomes when she stated:

I would definitely say that it was inconsistent. It was inconsistent because of the feedback. The feedback was more general at my previous school. And by general I mean, not specific. It was more like job well done. I mean job well done in both schools. But with this school I actually get feedback, I get criticism, I get areas I can grow in. (P5, l 62–66)

Participant 5 felt that the conclusions were the same at both schools, making the evaluation consistent. Participant 5 also felt that the way those conclusions were communicated was significantly different at each school, which provided a very different feel to the evaluation and caused her to claim that it was inconsistent. While the evaluations had the same conclusions, Participant 5 did not perceive them as the same.

Participant 4 also shared that the differing processes for teacher evaluation at each school lead to inconsistency. Participant 4 shared:

I think they were looking for different things. Both schools had focuses. That is what they expect to see. So post evaluation conferences are kind of centered around that. Post conferences at my previous school were centered around one thing and post conference at this school were centered around something else. (P4, l 70, 73–75)

Participant 4 had not received a formal summative evaluation that would allow her to compare the ultimate conclusions. Participant 4 did respond that the observation feedback was different due to the varying focuses emphasized at each school.

Participant 1 and Participant 2 were clear in their attitude that teacher evaluation was not consistent after transferring schools. Participant 2 remarked:

The ultimate evaluation has not been consistent. If you look at my previous school I was at meets or exceeds. Then, when they included the data, I did the math on that and it came up one point into the proficiency range. In my mind, that is barely proficient and this is not where I should be. Whereas here, I'm confident, based off the evaluations I've seen, and the video I've seen, that I would score higher than proficient. (P2, l 71–77)

Participant 2 had an experience where the inclusion of data as part of her evaluation occurred in the final meeting with the evaluator and affected the ultimate conclusions of the evaluation. Participant 1 had similar concerns about the effect of including data as part of her

end-of-the-year summative evaluation. Participant 1 stated, "At my previous school the administrator would come into the classroom and, in the end the observation, would end by looking at my scores" (P1, l 26–28). Participant 1 felt that her evaluation is much higher at her new school as the scores are improved and the evaluator looks at scores differently.

Three participants felt that their evaluations were consistent between their previous and current schools. Five participants' attitudes are that their evaluations were inconsistent. The inconsistency referenced by the participants was either in the process of teacher evaluation or in the conclusions of the teacher evaluation. Some participants felt inconsistency in both process and conclusions. The participants' attitudes toward the consistency of their teacher evaluation are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Teacher Attitudes toward Teacher Evaluation Consistency

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Consistent			X			X	X	
Inconsistent								
<i>Process</i>		X		X	X			X
<i>Conclusions</i>	X	X		X	X			

Professionalism. Three teachers specifically mentioned professionalism as the evaluation domain that was the most consistent between their former and their current school. Participant 5 stated, "I would say the professionalism domain. There is a standard and the standard should be the same for every teacher no matter your credentials" (P5, l 88–89). Participant 1 made a similar comment when she responded, "The professionalism. Working with, co-working with, teachers and co-working with department chairs" (P1, l 46–47).

Participant 8 mentioned that the evaluation of her professionalism did not change much between the schools when she said, "I think my professionalism that has never been in question. Knowing what I'm teaching. That has always been high" (P8, l 122–123). Participant 8 expressed the term professionalism but defined it quite differently than Participant 1. Participant 1 referred to professionalism as the way in which she interacted with co-workers, while Participant 8 defined professionalism as her content knowledge. Participant 8 demonstrated that

teachers may consider content knowledge, instructional planning, and how a teacher works with others under the larger category of professionalism.

Participant 2 said that the evaluation of her professional knowledge was the most consistent when she said, "The standards in Virginia have not changed too terribly. I have been in third grade so I have been fortunate and gotten very comfortable with that. So I say that my professional knowledge has remained relatively similar" (P2, *l* 95–99). Participant 2 and Participant 8 had very similar answers regarding the evaluation of their professional knowledge. Both participants believed professional knowledge was being evaluated consistently. Participant 8 defined this professional knowledge as professionalism, while Participant 2 defined it as professional knowledge.

Participant 3 and Participant 7 commented that their entire evaluations were consistent, and they were not able to identify one area as being the most consistent. The two participants did not speak specifically to professionalism, though their statements about the overall evaluation would acknowledge professionalism as a consistent area of evaluation when a teacher transfers. Six teachers either explicitly (P1, P2, P5, P8) or implicitly (P3, P7) believed professionalism, or professional knowledge, was a consistent domain in their teacher evaluation.

Data. Five participants claimed that the domain that referenced data and student growth had the most variation between their two schools. Participant 6 considered her overall evaluation as consistent between her previous school and her current school. When asked question eight regarding the domain that the participant felt varied the most, Participant 6 mentioned data evaluation as the area with more variation than any other. Participant 1 referenced data and student scores on the state assessment when she answered question eight by saying, "I can definitely say scores. SOL scores. I know that" (P1, *l* 36–37).

Participant 2 expanded on the impact she felt data had on her teacher evaluation. Participant 2 recognized that the school demographics are different, but she claimed that the data difference was more significant than what could be explained with demographic differences. More specifically, Participant 2 commented:

I would definitely say the data. You know I am who I am and I teach in the way that I teach. My demographics are far different in this school than at my previous school but I don't think [the data] is 100% tied to demographics. Data is the biggest difference, and, I

think it plays the biggest impact on our evaluations. Not necessarily for the best reasons. For me, data is a tool to help my students grow. It's not an end result. (P2, l 80–89)

Participant 2 made the connection that data had the most variation in her evaluation and the largest impact on the overall evaluation. Participant 5 also directly commented on what she called the “data piece” when she answered question eight:

I would say, definitely the data piece and how to interpret it has changed. It's not just one assessment tool that they are looking at. But I've noticed that the assessment itself. It's actually the same. It's not different. So that the data is, I don't know what the word is, more valid? No matter if [a student] is SPED, gifted, whatever, [the assessment] is the same. (P5, l 77–79, 83–85)

Participant 5 referenced more than just the state assessment when discussing the impact data had on her teacher evaluation. Participant 5 referenced local, division-level assessments and the change in the way the assessments are evaluated from her previous school to her current school.

In speaking about data, Participant 8 referenced the impact of measuring growth. Participant 8 noted, "I think the thing that changed the most would be that growth component. I just feel we had an interventionist that worked with kindergarten at my other school. Those babies that were low had intervention the entire year" (P8, l 138–140). Participant 8, similar to Participant 2, noted that it wasn't just the new group of students but also the distribution of resources that caused the measurement of student growth to vary the most between her previous and her current school.

Themes. The participants referenced different aspects of teacher evaluation that contributed to whether the evaluations were consistent. The aspects mentioned were grouped together into similar themes and recorded in Table 6. Teachers who referenced the theme of inconsistency were referring to the process of teacher evaluation sometimes, and at other times they were referencing the actual conclusions of the teacher evaluation. These two different aspects of inconsistency were coded differently. A code of professionalism was noted when a teacher spoke to his or her ability to work with co-workers and for references to instructional planning. It was evident in the responses of Participant 8 and Participant 2 that they considered the two areas connected.

Table 6

Teacher Attitudes towards Teacher Evaluation Consistency by Participant

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Consistent								
<i>Conclusions</i>			X			X	X	
<i>Professionalism</i>	X	X			X			X
Inconsistent								
<i>Process</i>		X		X	X			X
<i>Conclusions</i>	X	X		X	X			
<i>Data/Student Growth</i>	X	X			X	X		X

Research Question Three: What variables do teachers perceive affect their evaluation when a teacher transfers to a new school?

Questions 10 through 14 reference research question three. Transferring schools often includes a change in multiple variables that may affect teacher evaluation. Two variables that may change with a teacher transfer were referenced in questions 10 and 11. Participants were asked to identify how the change in evaluator (question 10) and the change in student population (question 11) affected the consistency of their teacher evaluation. In question 12, participants were asked to identify if there were other variables that they felt had an impact on the consistency of their teacher evaluation. Questions 13 and 14 asked participants to reflect on the way changing schools affected the measure of student growth, which is domain seven of their teacher evaluation.

Evaluator. Six of the eight participants referenced the person doing their teacher evaluation as having an effect on their attitude toward teacher evaluation. The perception of the evaluator's influence was not always in reference to the final summative evaluation's findings. Some participants referenced the evaluator's influence as it related to the process of teacher evaluation.

Participant 7, for example, claimed that the process put in place by the evaluator affected her attitude toward teacher evaluation. She stated that in her current school:

Because I don't have to deal with the same kind of things that I had to deal with at my previous school. I feel like evaluation runs a lot smoother. I don't have to put out any fires or anything. (P7, l 55–57)

A follow-up question was offered to clarify whether she attributed the smoother evaluation process to her evaluator, to which she answered that she perceived that her new evaluator affected the change in process and it was not the result of other factors that had changed as a result of working in her new building.

Participant 4 shared thoughts that were similar to the thoughts of Participant 7 related to the tone of the evaluator. Participant 4 mentioned:

I feel like my previous evaluator was very type A. She had her expectations. I think she was very fair. My observation here was, you know, he's pretty laid back. I mean he didn't really go into any depth. He may have been more laid back I guess. (P4, l 104–106, 109, 110)

Participant 4 did not claim that the evaluator being more relaxed was positive or negative, but noted that it affected her attitude toward teacher evaluation.

More than one participant referenced the way in which an evaluator provided feedback as influencing their attitude toward teacher evaluation. Participant 5 mentioned:

This current administrator actually takes the time to discuss what they saw. I know when you come in and observe you are not supposed to make inferences. They actually write down observations and not inferences. They listen and then we problem solve together. (P5, l 97–102)

Participant 5's attitudes about the interactive nature of the current observation process was in contrast to the experience when she had to write her own observation at her previous school. Participant 1 mentioned the interactive nature of teacher evaluation with her current evaluator. Participant 1 commented, "I'm trusted more here with what I can do in my classroom. I felt it was very scripted at my previous school. The evaluator trusts me and that is part of the evaluation" (P1, l 47–49). Participant 2 also mentioned that the process followed by the evaluator at her new school affected her view of teacher evaluation. Participant 2 remarked:

I feel like my evaluation, currently, is much more consistent. There is a process in place and that process is followed. I'm included in it. Where at my [previous] school there was only one person in the leadership position. She came in and saw something. Great. And then she would devote maybe 20 minutes to evaluating me, maybe it was five. It wasn't consistent there. (P2, l 97–102)

Participant 6 mentioned the evaluator being a variable that affected her teacher evaluation. Participant 6 found that her evaluation had been consistent between schools as it ultimately came to the same conclusions. Participant 6 did feel that the attitude of the evaluator in her new building affected her teacher evaluation. Participant 6 stated, "My evaluator is very harsh. The meetings are short and the evaluator seems to want to pick on just the negative pieces of my job" (P6, l 63–64). Six participants spoke of the evaluator being a variable that affected their teacher evaluation. Five participants spoke of the evaluator as having a positive impact on their teacher evaluation. Participant 6 was the only participant who spoke of the evaluator in the current school as having a negative impact. Participant 6 does feel that ultimately her teacher evaluation has been consistent, though she does cite the negative impact of the evaluator.

Participant 3 and Participant 8 did not feel the evaluator had an impact on the consistency of their teacher evaluations. Participant 3 had worked for the same evaluator previously and cited that circumstance as one of the reasons that she had agreed to transfer schools. Participant 3 did not believe her evaluation was affected by who the evaluator was.

Student population. Six participants did not feel like the student population of their new schools affected their teacher evaluations. Participants 4, 5, 6, and 8 all felt that there was no significant change in the student population from their previous school to their current school. With no perceived change in student population, they made no connection about that variable affecting their teacher evaluations.

Participant 2 responded to question 12, about student population, by saying:

Our demographics here are a little bit more diverse. A lot more diverse. And our students are willing to put in a little bit more effort. They are invested in being here. But as far as my personal evaluation. I would not say that student demographics have a massive impact on it. (P2, l 116–120)

Participant 2 and Participant 3 noticed that student population was a variable. The students in their new school had significant differences from the group of students in their previous schools. The differences noted were socio-economic as well as cultural between the students in each school. Both Participant 2 and Participant 3 thought that this difference had no effect on their personal teacher evaluation.

Two participants did reference the change in student population as having an effect on their teacher evaluations. Participant 1 stated:

Students are more eager to learn here. They ask a lot more questions. They are a lot more involved. They learn more, which reflects better on me teaching them. Whereas when students are not engaged, and they don't care, then when it comes down to SOL and test time they really don't do their best, and that reflects on my evaluation. (P1, l 54–58)

Participant 1 referenced the connection between the student population change and the measure of student growth on her teacher evaluation. Participant 7 also referenced the change in student population affecting her teacher evaluation when she commented:

The kids here are exposed to a little more. The kids there, the kids are just contained in this one little bubble. They don't know anything more than their surroundings. So, I feel like I am able to do a lot more. I think that would affect my evaluation. (P7, l 62–66)

Participant 7 had expressed earlier in the interview that her teacher evaluation was consistent, but at this point in the interview she pointed to the change in student population as having the potential to affect her teacher evaluation.

Student performance data (domain seven). In the teacher evaluation instrument used in this school division, domain seven is the area in which a teacher is evaluated based on student performance data. Questions 13 and 14 of the interview asked participants whether it was easier or more difficult to demonstrate success in domain seven as a result of transferring schools. Participants were asked to identify variables that may have caused domain seven to be a more difficult or easier place to demonstrate success.

Five participants did not feel that domain seven was affected by transferring schools. Participant 3 remarked:

I still think from one school to the next. These kids are little robots. They still have that SOL brain and all of [the] sudden they seem to work harder on an assessment than they do on a day to day basis. (P3, *l* 121–124)

Participant 3 was one who recognized that student populations were different between the two schools. Participant 3 did not see this difference as having any effect on her ability to meet standards on domain seven of her teacher evaluation.

Participant 5 and Participant 6 both attributed their attitudes toward domain seven to their beliefs that the student demographics are the same between the two schools. Participant 5 stated, "I would say that it is equal, because the demographics are the same. It's similar. The only thing different about this school is that they are coming from lots of different areas of the city" (P5, *l* 148–152). Participants 1 and 7 did state that their student populations changed, but the participants did not have a summative evaluation at the time of the interview and could not say that domain seven would change in a significant way.

Participant 8 felt that it would be harder to demonstrate success on domain seven at her new school. In a response similar to one of her previous responses, Participant 8 felt that it was the presence of outside assistance in her classroom at her previous school that did not occur in her current school. Participant 8 stated, "Oh it [has] worked much better for me at my other school. I'm going to cite back to the intervention that was provided because that really helped those little kids" (P8, *l* 268–270). Participant 8 did state that the interventionist existed as a teaching position in both her previous and her current building. Participant 8 would say the difference in domain seven wasn't due to the building itself, but instead it was due to decisions about resources, like the interventionist, that were made differently in the two buildings.

Participant 4 felt that it was easier to demonstrate success in domain seven at her previous school. Participant 4 stated:

I felt like I experienced more success at my previous school. I don't know if it's because when you move up in grades you see more of a disparity in the [kids'] academics. I moved up with my class in kindergarten. That group was sitting pretty. (P4, *l* 158–161)

Participants' attitudes toward domain seven were not tied to the demographic changes in the students from one school to the next. Participant 4 had an experience at her previous school that she did not have at her current school. Participant 4 attributed the change in domain seven

to this unique experience of moving up with a class from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten. Like Participant 8's response, Participant 4's response was not about something unique to the experience of transferring schools, but instead was associated with different leadership choices within a school.

Participant 2 tied the change in student population and community to a feeling that it would be easier to have success on domain seven. Participant 2 stated:

Domain seven was much easier. Again looking at the students, the demographic, the students want to learn and for the most part, if I ask them to do something they put in their best effort. So I feel education has more of a value here. Whereas, at my previous school I think the community just gets stuck in a rut and everybody's just content with whatever is there. So achieving proficient data, or data that exceeds where we are as a district. It's difficult. (P2, 1141–145)

Participant 2 connected domain seven success with transferring schools, tying the perceived uniqueness of the communities surrounding each school with the teacher's ability to be successful in that domain.

Themes. Participants spoke about the impact of a variety of variables on their teacher evaluations. Some variables were noted by individual participants but were not repeated in other responses and were not included as themes. Changes in student discipline and tangible resources were two variables that were mentioned only one time each in participant responses. Other variables were referenced by two or more participants and became a theme when the data were coded. A reference to a variable did not always mean that the teacher felt the variable had a positive effect on her teacher evaluation. Table 7 lists the variables that were referenced by at least two different participants as having an effect on their teacher evaluations.

Table 7

Variables That Affected Teacher Evaluation by Participant

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Evaluator	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Student Population	X						X	
Domain Seven		X		X				X

Summary

Participants in this qualitative study were asked a variety of questions concerning their attitudes toward teacher evaluation. Each participant had transferred schools within the last three years, and participants were asked about the impact that certain aspects of transferring schools had on their attitude toward teacher evaluation. The transcripts of their interviews were examined for common themes or experiences. These themes were tied to specific research questions in Table 4, Table 6, and Table 7.

The themes were organized according to their impact on the teachers' attitudes towards teacher evaluation. The themes were categorized as having a positive impact, a negative impact, or no impact on participants' attitudes towards teacher evaluation. The themes are displayed according to their impact type in Table 8.

Table 8

Impact on Teacher Attitudes towards Teacher Evaluation

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact
Evaluator in New School	Evaluator in Previous School	Change in Student Population
Consistent Process for Evaluation	Inconsistent Process for Evaluation	Domain Seven of Teacher Evaluation
Relaxed Evaluations	Inconsistent Conclusions for Evaluation	Evaluation of Teacher Professionalism
Feedback solicited by teacher and evaluator	Inconsistent Use of Data	
	High Pressure Evaluations	
	Lack of Feedback from Evaluator	
	Rigid Evaluation Process	

Chapter 5 will review the purpose of the study and list the findings that arise out of the themes identified in Chapter 4. These findings will be followed by an analysis of implications that will include suggestions for future study.

Chapter 5

Findings, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to discover and describe attitudes regarding teacher evaluation for teachers who have transferred from one school to another within an urban school division in southeastern Virginia. The study addressed teachers' beliefs about the consistency of their evaluations and the variables outside teacher control that may affect their evaluation. The study used a basic qualitative design and focused on three research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive that transferring worksites within the same school division affects the teacher evaluation process?
2. How do teachers perceive the consistency of the teacher evaluation process when a teacher transfers from one school to another?
3. What variables do teachers perceive affect their evaluation when a teacher transfers to a new school?

Chapter 4 presented the data obtained from eight participants and identified common themes apparent in participant responses. Chapter 5 includes findings that arise from the data and presents implications associated with the findings, then it concludes with recommendations for future research and reflections on this study.

Findings

Finding one: Teachers who had transferred schools either had no change or a positive change in their attitudes about teacher evaluation. Two participants in the study cited the decrease in stress surrounding teacher evaluation as an important factor in their attitudes toward teacher evaluation (P1, P4). This change in their attitudes was supported by two other participants who also reported positive changes in their attitudes toward teacher evaluation (P2, P5). In total, four of the eight participants stated that the act of transferring gave them a more positive attitude toward teacher evaluation.

Four participants shared that transferring buildings did not change their teacher evaluations. These participants did not say they had a positive attitude towards evaluation, but instead, whatever attitude they had toward teacher evaluation did not change. The fact that no

participant said that transferring schools negatively affected her attitude toward teacher evaluation supports this finding.

This study only used participants who transferred schools voluntarily, and a factor in their decisions to transfer to specific schools may have been school climate. Research has shown that building climate is a variable that has a positive impact on teacher attitudes (Nunn, 2014). A change in building climate would affect teacher attitudes towards evaluation (Nunn, 2014).

The neutral or positive attitudes of teachers toward evaluations are supported by the research on teachers who moved from lower to higher performing schools in Miami. The change in performance levels resulted in positive impacts on their teacher evaluations (Grissom, Loeb, & Nakashima, 2014). Not all participants transferred from lower to higher performing buildings, but the Miami study supports the attitude change for those making such a transfer.

Finding two: Teachers' attitudes toward evaluation were positive when the process of evaluation included feedback. Teachers referenced a variety of different factors when they were asked about the change in their attitudes toward teacher evaluation. Two participants referenced the contrast between a rigid evaluation process and one that is open to feedback (P5, P8). These participants felt that their new schools provided opportunities for teachers to discuss the conclusions of the evaluations and provide feedback in ways that their previous rigid experiences did not.

Two other participants expressed a desire for feedback but did not reference a rigid experience in their previous school (P2, P7). These participants did view the opportunity to include feedback as a positive aspect of their evaluation process. Interview questions did not include an opportunity for feedback as a variable that would influence teacher attitudes towards teacher evaluation. Without prompting, four of eight participants referenced feedback as an explanation for their attitudes toward evaluation.

Extant research has supported the finding that teachers' attitudes toward evaluation were positive when the process of evaluation included feedback; it has recommended moving away from the longer formal evaluation in order to build a model that supports more opportunity for feedback between the evaluator and the teachers (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). Research also has found that school divisions can improve the process of teacher evaluation by having a team develop goals in a collaborative fashion as part of the evaluation process (Young et al., 2015).

Finding three: Teachers perceived that the student growth component of their evaluations showed the most inconsistency. Five participants referenced the data, or student growth, component of their teacher evaluations as the section with the most inconsistency. One participant believes that her overall teacher evaluation is consistent between schools, but she referenced data when she was asked to name an area in the evaluation that changed the most (P6). Three participants believe their evaluations have not been consistent and went on to cite data as the area that was the most inconsistent (P1, P2, P5). Participant 8 referenced inconsistent data but was the only person to reference its positive impact on her evaluation at her previous school.

The inclusion of data is measured in domain seven of a teacher's evaluation in the school division studied. Domain seven is, proportionally, the most important piece of a teacher evaluation, as it accounts for 40% of the total evaluation. This supports the findings of this study, as three out of four of those who reported inconsistency in their evaluation believed data were the most varied aspect.

Finding Three is supported by research that states that a quantifiable measure of student performance as part of the teacher evaluation is more dependent on the students in the classroom than it is on the teacher's ability to provide effective instruction (Goldhaber, 2015; Hill et al., 2011). The variable of student population is perhaps more influential than a teacher's instructional ability. This circumstance could explain the variance in domain seven.

Finding four: A change in evaluator had the greatest effect on teacher attitudes about evaluation when transferring schools. Six of the eight participants referenced the evaluator as a variable that affected their attitudes toward teacher evaluation. The impact of the evaluator was not always viewed positively, as Participant 6 mentioned that the change in evaluator negatively affected her opinion of teacher evaluation. Five participants directly referenced the evaluator as having a positive influence on their attitudes toward teacher evaluation (P1, P2, P4, P5, P7). Of the two participants who did not reference the evaluator as having an impact on their teacher evaluations, Participant 3 did not have a change in evaluator between her former and current school.

The impact of the evaluator was broad. Participants described the way in which an evaluator would affect the process of teacher evaluation and its conclusions, and referenced active solicitation of feedback as a characteristic that affected the conclusions of the evaluation.

Participants also believed that the way an evaluator outlined the focus and goals of the evaluation impacted the evaluation.

The importance of the evaluator in teacher evaluation is supported by research. Some studies have stated that the qualifications of an evaluator and their skill in the evaluation process affect the validity of the evaluation (Heck, 2007; Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). Research also supports the idea that it is not just the evaluator, but his or her commitment to a consistent process that is predictive of teacher evaluation effectiveness (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009).

Finding five: A change in student population did not impact teacher attitudes about evaluation as strongly as other variables. There were four participants who claimed that a change in schools did not really come with a change in student population (P4, P5, P6, P8). These teachers would not tie the transferring process to a significant change in student population. If a teacher did not believe a change in student population occurred, then it follows that she would not have seen it as a variable in the consistency of her teacher evaluation.

Participant 2 and Participant 3 each noted changes in the student population between their former and current schools, but they did not see the change as affecting their teacher evaluation. Participant 3 mentioned that the change in student culture was surprising to her, but claimed that the change was independent of any impact on the teacher evaluation (P3, 177–84).

Participant 1 and Participant 7 were the only two participants who felt that the change in student population had a significant impact on their teacher evaluations. Both Participant 1 and Participant 7 transferred from low performing to high performing schools, and that contrast may have had a larger impact on their teacher evaluations than just the act of transferring school sites.

Finding Five may be in contrast with the research that states that teacher evaluations are more dependent on students in the classroom than they are on the instruction (Goldhaber, 2015; Hill et al., 2011). Finding Five is supported, however, by the research that context does not play a role in the consistency of teacher evaluation (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). As noted by participants, the act of transferring does not always indicate a change in student population. This demonstrates that research is in support of the finding that a change in student population does not impact teacher attitudes about evaluation as strongly as other variables.

Implications

Implication one: Divisions should identify teacher evaluation processes in schools that attract a lot of transfers. This implication is tied to Findings One, Two, and Four. A

teacher's attitude impacts his or her job performance and attendance (Currivan, 1999; Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2014). Transferring schools can have a positive impact on teacher attitudes, as noted in Findings One, Two, and Four. A school division should identify the teacher evaluation practices in buildings that attract a large amount of teacher transfers.

Leaders in schools with a large amount of teachers transferring in should be asked about the evaluation process. The division should build a list of effective practices in schools that are attractive to transferring teachers. These practices can then be replicated in all buildings to positively affect teacher attitudes.

Implication two: School leaders should incorporate time to include teacher feedback as part of the teacher evaluation. This implication is associated with Finding Two and Finding Four. Participants responded positively when evaluators allowed for feedback between teachers and their evaluators. School leaders should include this feedback as a regular part of all evaluation processes. School leaders can involve the teacher in the setting of annual goals, the conversation before and after classroom observations, and the conclusions reached in the summative evaluation.

Implication three: Divisions should clarify how student growth is measured in a more consistent way across all teacher evaluations. This implication is associated with Finding Three. The inclusion of student growth as a part of the teacher evaluation can be defined more specifically. Current practice has allowed for the inclusion of both a measure of growth and a measure of proficiency in teacher evaluation. A school division would benefit from standardizing the practice to measure either growth or proficiency. A school division should also script the assessment that is utilized to measure the student growth on teacher evaluations. A student growth domain that is very scripted should lead to less inconsistency in teacher evaluations when a teacher transfers.

Implication four: School divisions should provide training for evaluators to encourage consistency in teacher evaluation. This implication is associated with Findings Three and Four. The evaluator had the greatest effect on whether a teacher perceived her evaluation as consistent when she transferred schools. School divisions need to train evaluators in the best practices for teacher evaluation that were identified in Implication One. Divisions should provide evaluators with experience in teacher evaluation as part of regular training

meetings. Evaluators can practice using the instrument with one another to provide some inter-rater reliability with the evaluation instrument.

Implication five: School divisions should include language about teacher evaluation in the documentation surrounding the transfer process. This implication is associated with Finding Five. There are different variables that may affect the decision a teacher makes when he or she decides to transfer schools. It would be helpful to communicate the impact, or lack of impact, of a transfer between school sites in literature surrounding the transfer process. A teacher may include a particular school as a possible future destination if it is communicated that evaluation processes and conclusions are consistent regardless of school location.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was only able to interview teachers who had voluntarily transferred worksites. Future research could benefit from studying the attitude of teachers who had been involuntarily transferred toward teacher evaluation. There may be a different attitude regarding the context of a school when it is not voluntarily chosen.

Additionally, it is recommended to also identify the role of teacher evaluation in teacher decision-making about voluntary school transfers. This study focused on the teacher's attitude toward teacher evaluation after they had transferred schools. As school divisions attempt to retain staff it is beneficial to know the factors that contribute to the decision to transfer schools. Understanding whether teacher's attitudes towards teacher evaluation is a factor in their decision regarding the transferring would be beneficial.

Finding Four and Finding Five state that the change in evaluator has a greater impact on teacher attitudes towards evaluation than a change in context. The final recommendation for future research is to identify the impact when an evaluator transfers schools. Teacher attitudes towards evaluation at the evaluators previous school and current school can be compared to see if context plays a role in teacher's view of an evaluator

Conclusion

Ultimately, this study allowed me to see that the variable of who is doing the evaluation is a more significant factor in teacher attitudes towards teacher evaluation than the context of the school where the evaluation is conducted. This conclusion allows me to reflect that a teacher's attitude toward teacher evaluation may be influenced by a change in evaluator at his or her

current school in the same way that it is affected by transferring schools. My personal experience led me to a similar conclusion, as I had experiences with both transferring schools and changing evaluators within the same school.

Reflection

Reflecting on the study, I would make some changes if I were to conduct the study a second time. The decision to include teachers who had recently transferred included teachers in the study who did receive a formal summative evaluation at the end of the year. Attitudes toward teacher evaluation may have varied based on whether that formal summative evaluation had been conducted at the teacher's new school. I would use formal summative evaluation at both schools as part of the criteria for teachers to take part in the study.

I was not able to obtain a list of teachers who were involuntarily transferred. I would suggest doing this study in a school division that would provide a list of teachers who had been involuntarily transferred.

I would include a mixed methods component to the study if I were to do this study again. I would like to quantify the attitudes toward teacher evaluation using a broader base. I feel that this quantification would establish a stronger base to Findings Four and Five regarding the role of evaluator and context in teachers attitudes toward teacher evaluation.

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Appendix A
Letter to Prospective Interviewees

Dear XXXXX Teacher,

My name is Bart Irwin and I am currently working on my Doctorate in Education from Virginia Tech. As part of my degree I am doing research on teacher perceptions toward teacher evaluations. Specifically, I am interested in the perspectives of teachers who have transferred from one school to another within the same school division, and what their perceptions of teacher evaluations are.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. I am asking you to allow me to interview you regarding your attitudes towards teacher evaluation and the impact that transferring schools has had on that attitude. The interview will be concerned with your attitudes toward the process and will not ask you to reveal anything about your personal teacher evaluation. The interview would last about 45 minutes and will be audio recorded. I can come to your classroom to conduct the interview at a time that is best for you.

If you would be willing to participate in this study, please respond to this e-mail and let me know of your interest. I will follow up to schedule a time that is best for the interview.

Sincerely,

Bart Irwin

Appendix B
Research Consent Form

Virginia Polytechnic University
Blacksburg, Virginia

Title: Teachers' Perception of Teacher Evaluation

Researcher: Bartholomew Irwin

Participant: Teacher

I would like to ask your permission to participate in a research study carried out by me, Bart Irwin. This study is in partial fulfillment for the Doctor of Education degree at Virginia Tech. This form explains the research study and your part in it if you agree to participate. Please read the form carefully, taking as much time as you need. If you agree to participate in this study, you can change your mind later and withdraw at any time. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. The purpose of this study is to understand the attitudes of teachers who have transferred schools toward the teacher evaluation process.

This study has been approved for human subject participation by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board. If you agree to participate, I will ask you to take part in one interview consisting of 15 questions and which should last no longer than 45 minutes. The interview questions will not ask you to describe your individual teacher evaluation, but they will focus primarily on the topic of your attitude toward the teacher evaluation process. You have the option to decline to answer any of the 15 questions.

The results of this study are to help fulfill the requirements of a doctoral dissertation. Your identity and that of all participants and study locations will be kept anonymous. No actual names of individuals, schools, or school divisions will be used. There is no direct benefit to you being in this study. However, if you take part in this study, you may help others understand the impact that transferring has on the teacher evaluation process. There are no outstanding risks for either taking part or not taking part in the study. If in the unlikely event you find discomfort or stress arising from specific interview questions, you may choose not to answer them.

The data for this study will be kept confidential. All data in this study will be kept in a locked drawer in my office and password protected on my computer. With the exception of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and my committee chair, I will be the only one with access to the data. Furthermore, all data from this study will be destroyed approximately three years after its completion. No information you share will be communicated to other participants in the study.

There are no additional sponsors, researchers, or agencies involved in this study. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous. There is no cost to you for taking part in this study. You will not receive compensation, monetary or otherwise, for taking part in this study. If you have questions about this study or the information in this form, please contact me at birwin@nps.k12.va.us and/ or (757) 406-1442.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, or would like to report a concern or complaint about this study, please contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board at , or by e-mail , or regular mail at:

Your signature on this form means that:

1. You understand the information given to you in this form.
2. You have been able to ask the researcher questions and state any concerns.
3. The researcher has responded to your questions and concerns.
4. You believe you understand the research study and the potential benefits and risks that are involved.

Statement of Consent

I give my voluntary consent to take part in this study. I will be given a copy of this consent document for my records.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your experience of teacher evaluation at your previous school?
2. What factors or experiences made you answer question one the way you did?
3. How would you describe your experience of teacher evaluation at your current school?
4. What factors or experiences made you answer question three the way you did?
5. Did your attitudes toward teacher evaluation change because you transferred to a new school?
6. How do you perceive that transferring schools affected your teacher evaluation?
7. How would you describe the consistency of your teacher evaluation from your previous school to your current school? By consistency, I mean did the evaluation at your previous school have the same conclusions as your current school?
8. What domains or areas of your teacher evaluation varied the most between your evaluation at your previous school and the evaluation at your current school?
9. What domains or areas of your teacher evaluation varied the least between your evaluation at your previous school and the evaluation at your current school?
10. How did the change in evaluator, the principal, affect the consistency in your teacher evaluation?
11. How did the change in student population affect the consistency in your teacher evaluation?
12. What other factors made a difference in your experience of teacher evaluation at your current school as compared to your previous school?
13. Was it easier, or more difficult, to demonstrate success in domain seven of your evaluation in your new school or your previous school?
14. What factors contributed to making domain seven easier or more difficult?
15. Do you feel that the teacher evaluation process is able to reflect your teaching ability accurately, regardless of where you teach?

Appendix D IRB Approval



Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4806 Fax 540/231-0959
email irb@vt.edu
website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 6, 2016
TO: Michael D Kelly, Bartholomew Irwin
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)
PROTOCOL TITLE: Teachers' Perception Of Teacher Evaluation
IRB NUMBER: 16-1064

Effective December 5, 2016, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at: <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5,6,7
Protocol Approval Date: December 5, 2016
Protocol Expiration Date: December 4, 2017
Continuing Review Due Date*: November 20, 2017

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Invent the Future

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An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution

Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

Appendix E

School Division Approval

December 20, 2016

Bart Irwin
Doctoral Candidate,
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
birwin@nps.k12.va.us

Permission is granted to conduct the proposed study, *Teachers' Perception Of Teacher Evaluation*, in fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The proposed study meets the technical criteria following the [REDACTED] Research and Survey Policy [REDACTED] and must follow the stipulations below:

- Voluntary participation allows each participant—principal to decide individually whether to participate or withdraw at any time, without question, consequence, or follow-up.
- All participants and schools will remain anonymous in data and survey collection, and reporting results. Identifiable characteristics or linkage to the identity of any individual or school is prohibited.
- Approval does not constitute commitment of resources or the endorsement of the study or its findings by the school district or the School Board.
- Data collected and results will not become part of any principal, school, or district record. All research records must be locked in a secured location.
- Each teacher interviewed will be provided a copy of their audio recording transcript.
- The researcher will email a copy of the final report for the school district, and report any changes or problems while conducting the study, to [REDACTED]

We look forward to your findings and contribution to instructional practice, program services, and achievement for *ALL* students.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Accountability & Information Officer
Assessment, Research & Accountability