Teachers’ Perceptions of Principal Classroom Observational Feedback and its Impact on Instructional Practices

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Keywords: Teacher Evaluation, Feedback, Instructional Practices
The purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. This study analyzed interviews of elementary teachers to determine their definition of effective feedback, the role of principal observational feedback, and the extent to which they utilize the principal’s feedback to adjust their instructional practices. The research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What do teachers identify as timely, effective feedback?
2. What do teachers indicate is the role or purpose of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
3. What do teachers indicate is the potential impact of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
4. What do teachers indicate would compel them to change (or not to change) their instructional practice based on administrative feedback?

The participants in this study included nine elementary teachers in one school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Data were collected to determine the teachers’ perception of timely, effective feedback; the delivery or communication of the administrative observational feedback; and what factors determine if the teacher changes (or does not change) their instructional practice as a result of the feedback. The intended result of classroom observations is to understand what goes on in the classroom and the links to student achievement as well as to provide feedback for teacher improvement (Martinez, Taut, & Schaaf, 2016; Reform Support Network, 2015).

Findings indicated that elementary teachers desired immediate feedback following an observation and dialogue from their administrator within one to two weeks of the observation in the form of a post observation conference to improve their instructional practices. Additionally, teachers desired clarity about the process for evaluations and observations, their feedback, and how to improve their instructional practices from administrators with strong instructional backgrounds and experiences. The participating teachers described the need for more
administrators and therefore more administrative support, emphasized the importance of the relationship between the administrator and the teachers, and indicated that three observations, and observations alone, were not enough to adequately assess the quality of their instruction or their effectiveness.
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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if the feedback that administrators provided elementary teachers following a classroom observation caused them to change the way they instruct their students. This researcher interviewed nine elementary teachers to obtain their definition of effective observation feedback, the role of the principal’s observational feedback, and what prompts teachers to utilize the principal’s feedback to adjust their instructional practices. The research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What do teachers identify as timely, effective feedback?
2. What do teachers indicate is the role or purpose of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
3. What do teachers indicate is the potential impact of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
4. What do teachers indicate would compel them to change (or not to change) their instructional practice based on administrative feedback?

Nine elementary teachers from one school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in interviews. The researcher collected the data to determine the teachers’ perception of timely, effective feedback; their preferred delivery of the feedback following the observation from a principal; and what caused the teacher to change (or not change) their instructional delivery as a result of the feedback they received. The purpose of classroom observations is to understand what occurs in the classroom, how student achievement increases, and how the observation feedback helps teachers improve (Martinez et al., 2016; Reform Support Network, 2015). The research found that elementary teachers wanted feedback directly following an observation and the ability to participate in a post observation conference with their administrator within one to two weeks following the observation to improve their instruction. Additionally, teachers wanted to clearly understand the process for evaluations and observations, to obtain feedback, and to receive suggestions to improve the art of teaching from administrators. The teachers described the need for support from more administrators, emphasized the importance of their relationship
with the administrators, and indicated that three observations, and observations alone, were not enough to adequately assess them.
Dedications

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# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii  
General Audience Abstract .................................................................................................................. iv  
Dedications ......................................................................................................................................... vi  
Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................................. viii  
List of Figures ..................................................................................................................................... xiv  
List of Tables ....................................................................................................................................... xv  

## Chapter One The Problem ........................................................................................................... 1  
Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 1  
Overview of the Study ......................................................................................................................... 1  
Historical Perspective ......................................................................................................................... 2  
  * Providing specific feedback. .............................................................................................................. 3  
  * Evolution of evaluation systems and teacher observations. ......................................................... 4  
  * New federal and state requirements. ............................................................................................. 6  
Statement of the Problem .................................................................................................................... 6  
Significance of the Study ..................................................................................................................... 7  
  * Global perspective .......................................................................................................................... 7  
  * State perspective. .......................................................................................................................... 7  
Purpose of the Study ............................................................................................................................ 8  
Justification of the Study ..................................................................................................................... 8  
Research Questions .............................................................................................................................. 10  
Conceptual Framework ....................................................................................................................... 10  
Definition of Terms ............................................................................................................................. 12  
Limitations .......................................................................................................................................... 13  
Delimitations ....................................................................................................................................... 14  
Organization of the Study .................................................................................................................... 14  

## Chapter Two A Review of Literature ......................................................................................... 16  
Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 16  
Search Procedures ............................................................................................................................... 16  
Significant Studies, Findings, and Analysis ........................................................................................ 17  
  * Defining effective teachers ............................................................................................................. 18  
  * Purpose of teacher observation and feedback ............................................................................. 19  
  * Teacher concerns with evaluation systems .................................................................................. 21  
  * Improving teacher evaluation systems ....................................................................................... 22  
  * Defining quality feedback. ............................................................................................................... 23
**Chapter Three Methodology** ................................................................. 27

- Introduction ......................................................................................... 27
- Purpose of the Study ........................................................................... 27
- Research Questions ........................................................................... 28
- Research Design/Methodology .......................................................... 28
- Research Design Justification ............................................................. 29
  - Qualitative research ......................................................................... 29
  - Interview methodology ..................................................................... 29
- Site/Sample Selection .......................................................................... 30
  - Site selection .................................................................................... 30
  - Sample selection .............................................................................. 30
- Data Collection and Gathering Procedures ......................................... 31
  - Data treatment and management ...................................................... 32
- Instrument Design and Validation ...................................................... 33
  - Interview protocol ............................................................................ 33
  - Interview questions .......................................................................... 33
  - Reliability and validity ..................................................................... 35
- Data Analysis Techniques .................................................................... 36
  - Transcription and coding ................................................................. 36
  - Triangulation .................................................................................... 36
- Methodology Summary .......................................................................... 37

**Chapter Four Results of the Analysis of the Data** ............................. 38

- Introduction ......................................................................................... 38
  - Interview questions and alignment ................................................. 38
  - Reliability and validity ..................................................................... 39
- Report Data/Findings ........................................................................... 40
- Demographic Data ............................................................................... 41
- Teacher Expectations Regarding Formal Classroom Observations ........ 43
- Data for Research Question 1: What do teachers identify as timely, effective feedback? .... 45
- Data for Research Question 2: What do teachers indicate is the role or purpose of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice? ... 47
  - Set expectations ............................................................................... 48
  - Provide feedback/modeling ............................................................. 49
  - Relationship with teachers ............................................................. 50
Chapter Five Findings, Implications, Summary and Conclusions

Introduction .......................................................... 59
Finding 1. ................................................................... 59
Finding 2. ................................................................... 60
Finding 3. ................................................................... 61
Finding 4. ................................................................... 61
Finding 5. ................................................................... 62
Finding 6. ................................................................... 63
Finding 7. ................................................................... 63
Discussion and Implications of Findings ......................... 63
Implication 1. ............................................................. 64
Implication 2. ............................................................. 64
Implication 3. ............................................................. 65
Implication 4. ............................................................. 65
Implication 5. ............................................................. 66
Implication 6. ............................................................. 66
Implication 7. ............................................................. 66
Implication 8. ............................................................. 67
Suggestions for Future Studies ......................................... 67
Findings Summary ........................................................ 68
Conclusions/Reflections .................................................. 68
References ........................................................................................................................................ 71
Appendix A Training in Human Subjects Protection ........................................................................ 76
Appendix B IRB Approval Letter .................................................................................................... 77
Appendix C School District Approval Letter ................................................................................... 78
Appendix D Request for Participation- Principal ............................................................................ 79
Appendix E School Selected ............................................................................................................ 80
Appendix F School Not Selected .................................................................................................... 81
Appendix G Request for Participation- Teacher ............................................................................... 82
Appendix H Interview Scheduling Letter ....................................................................................... 83
Appendix I Interview Protocol ....................................................................................................... 84
Appendix J Informed Consent ......................................................................................................... 86
Appendix K Member Check Letter ................................................................................................ 90
List of Figures

Figure 1. Conceptual framework ........................................................................................................... 11
List of Tables

Table 3.1 Research Question and Interview Question Alignment .................................................. 35

Table 4.1 Research Question and Interview Question Alignment .................................................. 39

Table 4.2 Teacher Participant Representation .................................................................................. 40

Table 4.3 Interview Question 1: Tell me a little bit about yourself professionally including how long you have been teaching and what grades you have taught. ................................................. 41

Table 4.4 Interview Question 1: Tell me a little bit about yourself professionally including how long you have been teaching and what grades you have taught. ................................................. 42

Table 4.5 Interview Question 2: In your opinion, how clear are you about the expectations for classroom observations? ....................................................................................................................... 43

Table 4.6 Interview Question 4: What do you believe constitutes timely, effective feedback? ... 45

Table 4.7 Interview Question 4: What do you believe constitutes timely, effective feedback? ... 46

Table 4.8 Interview Question 3: How do you perceive that the administrators help you meet the expectations set forth in classroom observations throughout the observation year? ................. 47

Table 4.9 Interview Question 5: What skills or characteristics do you think administrators need in order to conduct effective classroom observations? ................................................................. 49

Table 4.10 Interview Question 6: What do you perceive administrators need in order to provide timely, effective feedback for improving instructional practices, pedagogy, and/or strategies? .. 53

Table 4.11 Interview Question 7: What determines if you change your instructional practices as a result of the classroom observation feedback you receive? ................................................... 55

Table 4.12 Interview Question 7: What determines if you do not change your instructional practices as a result of the classroom observation feedback you receive? ........................................... 57
Chapter One
The Problem

Introduction

Based on the requirements of Virginia’s revised standards, there is a growing need for educators and legislators to improve teacher evaluation models to meet the requirements of those revised standards (Virginia Department of Education [VDOE] website, 2011). School boards are instructed to,

Develop a procedure for use by division superintendents and administrators in evaluating instructional personnel that is appropriate to the tasks performed and addresses, among other things, student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of instructional personnel, including, but not limited to, instructional methodology, classroom management, and subject matter knowledge. (VDOE, 2011, p. 5)

However, there are researchers and practitioners in the field of education who believe that current teacher evaluation models in many states and localities do little, if anything, to assist in the professional growth of teachers and thus impact student achievement (Stiggins & Nickel, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 2014). The research of Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, and Rothstein (2012) stated that very few evaluations are designed with the intention and purpose of helping teachers improve. Additionally, their research indicated a need to define quality, timely feedback and determine its impact on a teacher’s instructional practice, thereby increasing student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012).

Overview of the Study

Educational leaders and administrators should embody the role of the instructional leader through frequent, regular classroom observations of teachers (Zatynski, 2012). Following classroom observations, administrators should promptly schedule post observation conferences with the teacher to discuss strengths and opportunities for growth (Boyd, 1989; Stearns, Morgan, Capraro, & Capraro, 2012). Additionally, by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of teachers in regards to their instruction, administrators can improve the instruction in their schools (Praetorius, Lenske, & Helmke, 2012). During this conversation, feedback must be shared in ways that are understandable and impactful for student achievement (Hellrung & Hartig, 2013).
Furthermore, “improvements in student achievement require adapted teaching in the classroom” (Hellrun & Hartig, 2013, p. 178). According to Kane, Taylor, Tyler, and Wooten (2011), improvement in overall classroom practices were the strongest indicators of increasing student achievement. Through discussions with administrators, many felt that “the conversation following an observation is the best opportunity to engage teachers in thinking through how they could strengthen their practice” (Danielson, 2012, p. 36). In response to researchers, teachers have expressed several reasons classroom observations and evaluations were not productive to include the opinion that the evaluation is not based on teacher development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012), feedback was vague and not useful to the teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2014), teachers were not invited to set goals and given feedback on those goals (Darling-Hammond, 2014), and evaluation systems do not focus heavily on instruction (Khachatryan, 2015). This study sought to add to the body of research on classroom observation feedback and determine to what extent administrative classroom observational feedback improved a teacher’s instructional practice and thus student achievement and to what extent teachers changed or did not change their instructional practices based on classroom observation feedback.

**Historical Perspective**

The *Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act* of 1999 determined the evaluation of teachers ought to be completed by administrators with a primary focus on student achievement while enhancing high quality classroom instruction (Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], 2000). This Act stated that

School boards shall develop a procedure for use by division superintendents and principals in evaluating instructional personnel that is appropriate to the tasks performed and addresses, among other things, student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of instructional personnel, including, but not limited to, instructional methodology, classroom management, and subject matter knowledge. (§22.1-295) (VDOE, 2000, p. 5-6)

This state document outlined the framework for which divisions would revamp their evaluation models.

The Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation (2011) referred to providing context for discussions with teachers to provide feedback about the observation with the teacher in the form of a conference. The VDOE
guidelines (2011) stated that administrators, evaluators, and the evaluation system should, “provide for a context for improving employee performance (e.g., opportunity to describe and discuss performance with supervisors, peers, mentors, and other experienced educators)” (p. 6). Providing feedback in a post-observation conference was suggested as an acceptable practice; it was clearly articulated in the state guidelines, referred to as a review conference, and the guidelines contained sample post-observation questions (VDOE, 2011).

**Providing specific feedback.** Khachatryan (2015) focused on not only the feedback teachers received following classroom observations but how they interpreted and adjusted for that feedback. The research of Darling-Hammond (2013) noted that the art of teaching is connected to the assessment of teaching. The Reform Support Network (2015) agreed and stated that the most important objective of teacher evaluations was to help teachers improve their instructional quality, help them understand what effective teaching is, and help them all reach those expectations by way of high-quality observer feedback and support. Darling-Hammond (2013) supported the need for quality, actionable feedback allowing teachers an opportunity to discuss the feedback with their evaluator. The Reform Support Network emphasized this point as well and stated that classroom observations “give teachers the opportunity to receive meaningful and direct feedback about their practice” (Reform Support Network, 2015, p. 1).

Khachatryan’s (2015) study used Feedback Intervention Theory to analyze the feedback provided to four high school teachers. In his research, Khachatryan (2015) determined that several teacher evaluation systems lacked quality feedback; the feedback given was not meaningful and rarely changed a teacher’s practice. According to Khachatryan (2015), teachers sought what is called “process-feedback” (p. 170), which compelled teachers to consider changes in their instructional practices. Khachatryan (2015) defined it as feedback that turns the focal point toward how well the students learned and the processes involved in arriving at the finished product as opposed to how well the teacher instructed.

There is a need for effective classroom observation practices in evaluations systems. The research of Hill and Grossman (2013) surveyed 15,000 teachers in 12 school districts to investigate the effectiveness of evaluation systems. In order to be effective, evaluations systems ought to “support teachers in improving instructional practice, they must…provide information that is both accurate and useful for teachers” (Hill & Grossman, 2013, p. 371). One finding of the research indicated that teacher feedback is most beneficial when teachers are given specific
feedback they could use immediately (Hill & Grossman, 2013). Additionally, the research recognized a flaw in the evaluation system; even when feedback was provided to teachers, the follow up and support after was lacking (Hill & Grossman, 2013).

**Evolution of evaluation systems and teacher observations.** When public schools were established in 1647 the goal was to instruct students in the areas of reading, religion, and laws of the country (Jewell, 2017). Schools were organized by number of homes served and teachers instructed “in a single classroom of students ranging from the primary grades to the upper grades” (Jewell, 2017, p. 371). The focus of instruction in the early years of public education was on curriculum and morality and less in regards to the quality of teaching. In the early colonies, the process of evaluating teachers centered upon inspection and ensuring the desired curriculum was taught, surveying if the class was in order, and determining if the teacher adequately maintained the school building (Jewell, 2017).

With the emergence of the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s schools adopted a more administrative model (Jewell, 2017) to address the concerns of an illiterate citizenry, teachers who lacked qualifications, and the need for a more academic based subject matter. With this shift arose a realization of the importance of training for teachers, specifically measuring the ability of teachers and administrators in handling the subject matter, and training their colleagues. School districts began to organize with superintendents to lead the district and principals to lead the schools; thus defining administrative roles and responsibilities, of which were “observing the quality of teaching and helping teachers improve both their skill level and knowledge of varied academic subject matter” (Jewell, 2017, p. 374) with a focus on helping teachers become experts, not teacher dismissal.

During the turn of the century student population continued to grow, compulsory attendance policies were written, and there were limited jobs. Thus high schools began adjusting their focus on preparing students for jobs and careers which caused curriculum to change again and reemphasized the development of teaching methods and evaluation of teachers (Jewell, 2017). Teacher evaluation continued to shift away from inspection toward actual observation and developing objective means to measure teacher performance with supervisors and principals as the primary evaluators. Teachers were expected to perform well, teachers and administrators were expected to collaborate to improve teacher skills, and the goal became to improve rather than dismiss poor performing teachers (Jewell, 2017). Utilizing the Hawthorne model, teachers
were viewed as partners to create objective criteria for evaluation and focused on assisting teachers. During this time, teacher professional growth was emphasized (Jewell, 2017).

In the 1960s, the evaluation process shifted back to “an objective model that emphasized the use of quantitative research to determine the best way to improve instruction” (Jewell, 2017, p. 382). Multiple data points were used in an attempt to measure educational quality and standardized test scores became the way to assess instructional quality (Jewell, 2017). It was during this time that the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act (ESEA) was passed. The goal of this act was to increase the quality of education and instruction for disadvantaged children (Paul, 2016).

In the 1970s, evaluation systems adopted a “clinical supervision” model which required the teacher and supervisor “to plan, observe, analyze, and discuss the teacher’s professional practice…requiring pre-observation, observation, and post-observation meetings where teachers and administrators work together to improve overall teaching quality and classroom management” (Jewell, 2017, p. 383). By the 1980s this system of evaluation was used in most schools. It was during this time that the U.S. Department of Education was founded with its focus to create educational quality for all students. In the 1980s A Nation at Risk was published highlighting the fact that the education system in the U.S. was not adequately preparing students and brought to light the need for improvements in academic standards and training and retaining teachers (Jewell, 2017; Gardner and Others, 1983). It was during this time that evaluation systems adjusted to focus on predetermined goals with teachers participating in the development of the evaluation standards and providing feedback (Jewell, 2017). Around the same time, Madeline Hunter’s mastery learning model morphed into a teacher evaluation system used in several states; this model had student achievement as the focus and determining factor for proper implementation (Jewell, 2017).

In 1996 Charlotte Danielson created The Danielson Model of evaluating teachers in the areas of “planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities” (Danielson, 2007, p. 1). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 sought to hold schools accountable for student achievement, or lack thereof (Jewell, 2017). Jewell (2017) surmised that the main flaw in NCLB was the further disparity among subgroups, specifically minority students and those deemed socioeconomically disadvantaged. Under President Obama’s administration, NCLB could be replaced with educational goals described in
Race to the Top which included reforms in teacher evaluation processes and increased student growth as part of the evaluation processes (Jewell, 2017).

**New federal and state requirements.** In regards to teacher evaluation systems and measures of teacher effectiveness, there is greater emphasis on the teacher’s accountability for student learning. In the past, constituents were satisfied with the evaluation forms; however, there is an increase in the desire to see improvement for students on standardized tests (Jewell, 2017). Therefore, “teacher evaluation systems have evolved to measure teacher performance in a variety of ways, including connecting student exam performance to teacher effectiveness” (Jewell, 2017, p. 363). Additionally, “just as teachers are being held increasingly accountable for student achievement, so too must principals and administrators be held accountable for their ability to assess teacher performance accurately and provide feedback” (Jewell, 2017, p. 417). The Measures of Effective Teaching project of 2013 sought to provide balance to the degree of the impact of student achievement on a teacher’s evaluation and weight this portion between 33 and 50 percent of the teacher’s overall evaluation (Jewell, 2017). Regardless of the method, many prescribed that teachers must receive timely evaluation feedback in order to make adjustments to their instructional practices (Boyd, 1989; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Hill & Grossman, 2013; Jewell, 2017; Khachatryan, 2015; Reform Support Network, 2015; Van der Lans, Van de Grift, Van Veen, & Fokkens-Bruinsma, 2016).

**Statement of the Problem**

Teachers have often underestimated the value of the work they do and the impact that work has on their students (Haep, Behnke, & Steins, 2016). According to Hattie (2009) a student’s achievement can be most improved by the instructional quality of the teacher. One of the most powerful ways to do that is to assist teachers in developing their instructional practices and strategies. Administrators have opportunities to observe and evaluate teachers yearly and provide feedback in a variety of areas; one such opportunity is that of instructional delivery and the instructional strategies the teachers employ to this end. Identifying how administrators can ensure that they are providing teachers with valuable feedback would be beneficial to teachers’ growth and increased repertoire of instructional practices and strategies that would have positive effects on student achievement. Data were gathered and analyzed to determine what support teachers required in order to improve their instructional delivery and therefore positively affect student achievement.
**Significance of the Study**

One of the most efficient ways to improve student achievement is to assist teachers in improving their instructional practice. The research of Marzano (2012) summarized that teacher evaluation should identify underperforming teachers and provide teachers with a plan for improving their instructional practices.

**Global perspective.** Education systems around the world are changing. In the introduction to their research Taut and Rakoczy (2016) stated that “any existing school evaluation and inspection system faces the challenges of assessing school and instructional quality in a valid and reliable manner” (p. 45). In order to gain a more holistic view Martinez, Taut, and Schaaf (2016) conducted a study and analyzed 16 classroom observation systems in six countries including Australia, Chile, Germany, Japan, Singapore, and the United States. One of the findings suggested important questions that teacher evaluation systems, specifically components of classroom observations, include, “what is observed? by whom? when? and how? and equally important, how the information is used for formative and summative purposes” (Martinez et al., 2016, p. 27). The research of Martinez et al. (2016) supported the conclusion that the biggest component that educational policy can change as it relates to student achievement is the instructional quality of teachers (Hattie, 2009). The goal of teacher evaluation systems in the United States is

To improve the instructional quality of instruction by clarifying expectations for effective teaching and helping teachers meet those expectations through high-quality feedback and support. Classroom observations give teachers the opportunity to receive meaningful and direct feedback about their practice. (Reform Support Network, 2015, p. 1)

**State perspective.** The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) updated and published its guidelines and criteria for teacher evaluations in 2011. In this document, the VDOE stated that, “teachers are so fundamentally important to school improvement and student success” (VDOE website, 2011, p. 1). Additionally, the organizations responsible for this publication 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 website, 2011, p.1). A collaborative effort of organizations, researchers, and the VDOE established the evaluation system focused on professional standards and criteria. In it, seven performance standards are defined as follows:
“professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional delivery, assessment of and for student learning, learning environment, professionalism, and student academic progress with performance indicators associated with each standard” (VDOE, 2011, p. 8-9). As per the opinion of researchers such as Darling-Hammond et al., (2012) and Mathers, Oliva, and Laine (2008), the guidelines and criteria for teacher evaluations outlined examples of suggested sources of documentation and evidence of teacher performance to include formal observations, informal observations, student surveys, portfolio/document logs, and self-evaluation documents (VDOE, 2011). Additionally, the VDOE (2011) felt it important to include and connect a teacher’s performance to the academic progress of their students and establish goal setting protocols for measuring student achievement. At the conclusion of a teacher’s formal observation year, a summative evaluation is completed with ratings of “exemplary, proficient, needs improvement, and unacceptable…with proficient being the expected level of performance” (VDOE, 2011, p. 58-59). This rating is comprised of scores from each of the seven performance standards with standards one through six weighed at 10% each and standard seven weighted at 40%.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. Teachers who consistently and effectively apply research-based strategies increase the likelihood that students will be able to retain, recall and apply what they have been taught; teachers who don’t decrease the likelihood that students will be able to retain, recall and apply what they have been taught. It’s that simple. (Fox, 2014, p. 28)

Justification of the Study

Teacher evaluation is a vital tool for principals and administrators to improve teacher performance (Zatynski, 2012) and evaluations should provide teachers with the feedback needed to help them evolve in their profession (The New Teacher Project [TNTP], 2010). The New Teacher Project (TNTP) identified six guiding principles they adhere to. All are directly or indirectly related to teacher evaluation:

1. All children can master academically rigorous material, regardless of their socioeconomic status.
2. A teacher’s primary professional responsibility is to ensure that students learn.
3. Teachers contribute to student learning in ways that can largely be observed and measured.
4. Evaluation results should form the foundation of teacher development.
5. Evaluations should play a major role in important employment decisions.
6. No evaluation system can be perfect— in teaching or in any other profession (TNTP, 2010, p. 2).

Previous research found weaknesses and downfalls with teacher and administrative evaluation systems (Arneson, 2015; Boyd, 1989; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Mathers, Oliva, & Laine, 2008; Rigby et al., 2017; Whitehurst, Chingos, & Lindquist, 2015); however, the research has also identified solutions that can improve current evaluation systems. As stated by TNTP (2010), no evaluation system for any profession will ever be perfect or free of errors or criticism from practitioners. However, researchers agreed that classroom observations are one of the primary ways to make sure teachers use instructional strategies that have been proven to be effective for students (Fox, 2014; Hattie, 2009; Reform Support Network, 2015). Classroom observations are one of those tasks that building administrators must make time for. Researchers concluded that some of the benefits of regularly conducting classroom observations include ensuring students receive high-quality instruction (Fox, 2014), aiding in identifying effective or ineffective teachers (Danielson, 2015; Fox, 2014), using evaluations to develop strong instructional teams (TNTP, 2010), engaging in frequent conversations with teachers regarding classroom performance and student achievement (Danielson, 2010; TNTP, 2010), and making administrators feel more like instructional leaders than building managers (Zatynski, 2012).

This study, conducted in a school district in Virginia, added to the body of knowledge that exists about the impact administrators have through their classroom observation feedback upon a teacher’s instructional practice and student achievement. The research provided the district with feedback regarding the perceptions of teachers as it related to the classroom observation feedback they receive from their administrators. The processes used in this study can be recreated in other districts to determine if the same trends revealed in this study hold true in other districts.
Research Questions

Understanding the connection between administrative classroom observation feedback and instructional practice—including its connection to student achievement—provides education leaders with insight into the importance of evaluation systems and timely, effective classroom observation feedback for teachers. This study sought to answer the following questions to assist leaders in examining the relationship between elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices and student achievement.

1. What do teachers identify as timely, effective feedback?
2. What do teachers indicate is the role or purpose of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
3. What do teachers indicate is the potential impact of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
4. What do teachers indicate would compel them to change (or not to change) their instructional practice based on administrative feedback?

The primary focus of this study was the teachers’ perception of administrator’s classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices.

Conceptual Framework

For several decades, teachers have been evaluated; however, recent legislation has placed a greater emphasis on evaluations and student achievement (VDOE, 2000, VDOE website, 2011). TNTP (2010) stated that teachers should be evaluated frequently and the observer should have frequent conversations with the teacher to “discuss overall classroom performance and student progress” (p. 8). Furthermore, the research conducted by TNTP (2010) stated that “districts should hold instructional managers accountable for the quality of the feedback and the support the teachers receive, not just the quantity” (p. 8). This responsibility falls on administrators and instructional leaders in school districts to observe teachers and provide the quality feedback that will make an impact on a teacher’s instructional practices and therefore positively affect student achievement (Hill & Grossman, 2013, p. 379-380). Figure 1 represents the conceptual framework connecting classroom observations and the timely feedback provided.
to teachers, which can positively impact a teacher’s instructional practice and affect student achievement.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Melton, Mallory, and Chance (2013) conducted a global, exploratory study and data were collected to determine connections between student achievement and leadership style. The researchers identified six leadership characteristics and conducted a correlation study between student achievement scores and the identified leadership styles. Melton et al. (2013) used the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) to measure student achievement. The leadership styles were determined using the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) survey. The ANOVA results and researchers’ findings determined that the leadership styles of:

- charisma/value-based showed a negative correlation with PISA-Reading scores and a significant difference between groups on TIMSS and PISA Reading,
- participative showed a positive correlation with the PISA-Reading scores and a significant difference between groups on both PISA-Reading and PISA-Math,
- autonomous showed a negative correlation with PISA-Reading, PISA-Math, and TIMSS and a significant difference between groups on TIMSS, PISA-Reading, and PISA-Math,
self-group protection showed a significant difference between groups on PISA-Reading and PISA-Math. (Melton, Mallory, & Chance, 2013, p. 3058)

Howell (2017) defined a correlation as a relationship between variables. The strength of the relationship is measured by degree or strength; the number assigned to that degree or strength is the correlation coefficient ranging between 1 and -1 (Howell, 2017). An analysis of the study indicated that these leadership styles are predictors and inspirers of student achievement.

As an instructional leader, building administrators have the responsibility to regularly observe their teachers, provide quality feedback, and support teachers as they improve and tweak their instructional practices. Administrators who were able to spend more time observing teachers, discussing those classroom observations, and providing feedback were able to more adequately fulfill that role and spend less time as a building manager; administrators were able to keep track of the climate, level of instruction, and overall pacing of teachers in the building (Zatynski, 2012). If all these elements are in place, student achievement should increase as a result. This study analyzed the perceptions of elementary teachers on the quality of feedback they received following classroom observations, the adjustments made to their instructional practice, and the effect those adjustments had on student achievement.

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1 guided this study. The study focused on the shaded components of the conceptual framework: administrative classroom observations of teachers, administrative feedback to teachers, and the teachers’ instructional practice. If classroom observations of elementary teachers do not occur, then there are decreased opportunities to provide feedback to teachers to modify and make improvements in their instructional practices that may increase student achievement.

**Definition of Terms**

In education several terms are used that can have multiple or varying meanings. For the purpose of this study, the following terms were identified and defined.

**Classroom observation.** Formal or informal observations occur in a classroom or other learning environment. Classroom observations are usually conducted by administrators, instructional specialists, or peer teachers to provide teachers with timely, effective feedback. The feedback is intended to assist the teacher in providing suggestions for improved instructional practice or classroom management. As part of their task to evaluate faculty and staff, school administrators regularly observe teachers (Hidden Curriculum, 2014).
Effective teacher. These instructors are defined as those whose students experience high levels of academic growth in a school year as opposed to ineffective teachers whose students experience low levels of academic growth. Effective instructors provide high-quality instruction for their students and consistently utilize research-based instructional practices daily (Fox, 2014).

Feedback. “Information provided by an agent regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding” (Harks, Rakoczy, Hattie, Besser, & Klieme, 2014, p. 269). Furthermore, Hattie (2009) stated that feedback has a powerful impact on the process for learning. Danielson (2010) defined classroom observation feedback as “professional conversations between teachers and colleagues who observe in their classrooms and between teachers and supervisors following formal and informal observations” (p. 37).

Teacher Evaluation System. Teacher evaluation systems are recognized as successful when they “use multiple classroom observations, expert evaluators, multiple sources of data, are timely, and provide meaning feedback to the teacher” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012, p. 14). According to the VDOE (2011) “teacher evaluation matters because teaching matters…evaluation systems must be of high quality if we are to discern whether our teachers are of high quality” (p.1).

Limitations

Limitations are prospective weaknesses in a study that cannot be controlled by the researcher (Roberts, 2010). This study has the following limitations:

1. The sample size for this study was limited and therefore limits the generalizability of the study; the study focused on one school district in Virginia.
2. Interviews, like classroom observations, are designed to uncover information related to the research questions as designed by the researcher.
3. The teachers who were interviewed may not have shared their real feelings with the interviewer; this could be due to a lack of trust or familiarity with the interviewer (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

For the purpose of sampling, nonprobability, purposeful, convenience sampling was selected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), nonprobability sampling should be selected in order for the researcher to take a purposeful sample of the population from which it was taken in a convenient way due to time, location, and availability.
Delimitations

Delimitations are characteristics of the research study that limit the scope and set the boundaries for the study; they are within the control of the researcher (Roberts, 2010). This study has the following delimitations:

1. Only one school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia was selected for this study, thus the findings may not apply to other school districts.
2. The interviewed participants in this study consisted of elementary teachers working in school settings classified as elementary level (K-2, K-3, 3-5, 4-5, and K-5) within the school district. The perceptions of secondary teachers or school administrators were not sought.

Organization of the Study

Conducting classroom observations and providing timely, effective feedback that impacts a teacher’s instructional practice and student academic achievement is a relevant topic for educational research (Mathers et al., 2008; Rigby et al., 2017; Whitehurst et al., 2015). This study analyzed literature and investigated the potential relationship between the timely, effective feedback that elementary teachers received following a classroom observation and the potential impact that may have on the teacher’s instructional practice. This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the study, including: an overview of the study, historical perspective, statement of the problem, significance of the study, purpose of the study, justification of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, definition of terms, limitations, delimitations, and organization of the study. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature relating to the topic of this study—examining elementary teacher’s perceptions of administrator’s classroom observational feedback and the impact on instructional practices. Additionally, this chapter includes search procedures; significant studies, findings, and analysis; defines effective teachers; states the purpose of teacher observation and feedback; addresses teacher concerns with evaluation systems; defines quality feedback; addresses the role of professional development in instructional practice; and provides a summary of the research and reviewed literature. Chapter Three explains the methodology that was used for this study. Included in the methodology are the purpose of the study, research questions, research design methodology, research design justification, site and sample selection, data collection and
gathering procedures, instrument design and validation, data analysis techniques, and a methodology summary. Chapter Four summarizes the results of the study and the analysis of the data. The sections in this chapter include alignment of the research questions and interview questions, reports the data and the findings, describes the demographic data of the research participants, explains the teachers’ expectations regarding formal observations, shares the interview data in conjunction with each research question, and provides an analysis and summary of the data. Chapter Five discusses the findings in the study and presents conclusions drawn from the data. This chapter utilized the data collected to detail seven findings, discusses eight identified implications based on those findings, makes suggestions for five potential future studies, provides a summary of the findings, and offers conclusions and reflections.
Chapter Two  
A Review of Literature

Introduction

The purpose of the literature review was to highlight research that examined the elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrator’s classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. The importance of strong educational leadership continues to play a role in successful school districts, schools, teachers and students. As such, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) (National Policy Board of Educational Administrators, 2015) updated standards to provide guidance on the competencies school leaders need. According to PSEL Standard 4, an education leader is one who will “develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (PSEL, 2015, p. 12).

The reviewed literature explored the administrator’s impact on student achievement through timely, effective classroom observation feedback provided to teachers targeting improving instructional practices. The review provided connections to classroom observations, feedback, and instructional practices. The topics of research examined included: defining effective teachers, stating the purpose of teacher observation and feedback, addressing teacher concerns with evaluation systems, discussing ways to improve teacher evaluation systems, defining quality feedback, and addressing the role of professional development in instructional practice. This review of literature sought to reinforce the need for continued research in providing elementary teachers with timely, effective feedback that targets improved instructional practices following administrative classroom observations.

Search Procedures

In seeking to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature on the teacher’s perception of administrative classroom observational feedback including the impact on instructional strategies and student achievement, numerous search strategies were employed. An online database keyword search was the primary method used for identifying scholarly research in the area of effective classroom observation feedback and improved instructional practices, which included: classroom observation of teachers; student achievement; classroom observation feedback; and instructional practices. The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
(Virginia Tech) library search engine generated approximately 450,000 books, dissertations, journal articles, and other sources when using the aforementioned terms. That number was reduced considerably by refining the search and setting parameters for articles published in or after the year 2000. Focusing on research studies conducted in the last 20 years ensured that recent research results were used to determine areas where data are limited or areas where new studies could assist in adding to the field of research on these topics. Some foundational research was included to provide the history and background from authorities in the field to support ongoing research in the area of classroom observation of elementary teachers, the feedback provided to elementary teachers, and the suggested instructional strategies to improve teacher instructional practice.

Using the search terms, “teacher observation and student achievement;” “teacher observation and teacher feedback;” and “teacher observation feedback and student achievement;” and limiting the search to articles from scholarly publications, the Ebscohost search returned approximately 330,000 results. Searching “teacher observation feedback and instructional practices” produced 133,211 scholarly articles and journals, which were reduced to 9,966 by limiting the search to education. The reference lists and works cited in the reviewed literature were also examined for inclusion in the review for this study.

**Significant Studies, Findings, and Analysis**

As legislation increased the requirements of states to improve their teacher evaluation models (US Department of Education (USDOE), 2009; VDOE, 2011), researchers such as Strong, Gargani, and Hacifazlioğlu (2011) noted that the greatest impact on student achievement is an effective teacher. The research defined “educational effectiveness narrowly as the value a teacher adds to gains in student learning as measured by standardized test scores” (Strong, Gargani, & Hacifazlioğlu, 2011, p. 379). Additionally, there was a focused interest in attracting, retaining, and supporting effective teachers (Van der Lans et al., 2016). However, many researchers and educational practitioners believed that current teacher evaluation models in many states and localities do little if anything to assist teachers in their professional growth and their impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Stiggins & Nickel, 1988). Many researchers sought to determine the purpose of classroom observations and define and provide quality, timely feedback that impacts a teacher’s instructional practice (Boyd, 1989; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Hellrun & Hartig, 2013; Hill & Grossman, 2013).
**Defining effective teachers.** Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) conducted a two phase study with the purpose of redefining teacher effectiveness in light of changes in education, means of assessment, and databases of student achievement data. In the initial phase of the study, Stronge et al. (2011) reviewed two years of reading and mathematics test scores from nearly 380 fifth-grade teachers from three public school divisions. This translated to assessment data for more than 4,600 fifth-grade students. The data were organized by classroom teacher. The study compared assessment data to the grade-level expectations of that state’s curriculum standards. For the purposes of this study Stronge et al. (2011) utilized reading and mathematics data which “measured student performance on the grade-level competencies specified in the state’s curriculum standards, and, thus, were criterion-referenced assessments” (p. 342) to create achievement indices for students. The teachers sampled for this study were categorized by years teaching, gender, ethnicity, and level of education. Additionally, in order to be sampled in the study, the teacher had to have “data on 10 or more of their students and who had two years of data” (Stronge et al., 2011, p. 342). Using these achievement indices and the selected characteristics from the teacher sample, the teachers were divided into two groups based on their student achievement data; effective and ineffective teachers. Stronge et al. (2011) defined effective teachers as ones that had students experience high levels of academic growth in a school year as opposed to ineffective teachers whose students experienced low levels of academic growth. Using a regression-based methodology, hierarchical linear model, Stronge et al. (2011) found that there were no significant differences on the end-of-course fourth-grade skills. However, when Stronge et al. (2011) considered end-of-course fifth-grade reading assessments they discovered that students taught by

Bottom-quartile teachers could expect to score, on average, at the 21\textsuperscript{st} percentile on the state’s reading assessment, whereas students taught by the top-quartile teachers could expect to score at approximately the 54\textsuperscript{th} percentile. [They] found similar results for mathematics, with a difference in gain scores of 0.45 standard deviations. When translated into percentile scores, the students in the bottom-quartile teachers’ classrooms scored on average at the 38\textsuperscript{th} percentile; students in the top-quartile teachers’ classrooms scored at the 70\textsuperscript{th} percentile. (p. 62-63)

These results showed a more than 30 percentile difference in achievement between students in the bottom-quartile teachers’ classrooms as opposed to the top-quartile teachers’ classrooms.
Phase two of the study examined the impact of a teacher on student achievement and learning. The researchers investigated the teaching practices and student achievement of effective and less effective teachers by conducting a cross-case analysis. Stronge et al. (2011) identified 15 less effective teachers and 17 effective teachers. Utilizing a Teacher Effectiveness Summary Rating Form the researchers “rated the effectiveness of the teachers in the broad areas of instructional skills, assessment skills, classroom management, and personal qualities” (p.347). Stronge et al. (2011) concluded that when compared to ineffective teachers, effective teachers had fewer disruptions in class, better classroom management skills, and better relationships with their students. The results of phase two of the study indicated

- that there was no significant difference in the questioning techniques of teachers in either group;
- no significant difference (0.05) between disengaged students in either group;
- the classrooms of less effective teachers had three times as many disruptive events when compared to the classrooms of more effective teachers;
- more effective teachers demonstrated higher ratings of establishing routines, monitoring student behavior, and using time more efficiently and effectively; and
- more effective teachers demonstrated higher ratings in classroom organization.

(Stronge et al., 2011)

Their research gave support to what educators and educational leaders already knew—that effective teachers produce students with high levels of achievement (Stronge et al., 2011). This leads administrators to wonder if classroom observations and the feedback provided to teachers following the classroom observation encouraged effective teachers to continue improving and provided ineffective teachers the feedback they needed to improve their instructional practices. It also caused administrators to reflect upon the feedback they provide teachers following a classroom observation.

**Purpose of teacher observation and feedback.** Classroom observations of teachers and feedback have served a variety of purposes. According to Stonewater (1996), some states and localities utilized classroom observations and feedback to determine if teacher instructional practices met the criteria of newly adopted standards. Stonewater (1996) developed a classroom observation instrument, the Standards Observation Form, which determined “the degree to which teaching performance is consistent with the criteria of the National Council of Teachers of
Mathematics Standards” (p. 290). In this study, the Standards Observation Form was developed and utilized to observe excellent, average, and poor teacher implementation of these new mathematics standards. In the examples provided in the study, the researcher described the value of this instrument in demonstrating the adherence to the new criteria as well as the student reaction to the content. Stonewater (1996) indicated that this instrument can be used by administrators evaluating teachers and can also be used to self-evaluate or peer evaluate. This instrument was designed so that educators could measure their teaching practices against the new standards and adjust their teaching practices to reflect them (Stonewater, 1996).

Researchers such as Mathers et al. (2008) have determined additional uses for classroom observations and feedback. The aim of their study was to consider the purpose of teacher evaluations to “identify and measure instructional strategies, professional behaviors, and delivery of content knowledge that affect student learning” (p. 1). The researchers discussed the purposes of formative and summative evaluations. The former are utilized to provide teachers with suggestions to improve their instructional practices while the latter are utilized as evidence for building leaders to justify educators remaining in their current assignment and in some states, to be recognized for their performance. Mathers et al. (2008) made a connection between types of evaluations and the need for professional development. They surmised that in order for teachers to improve their instructional practices, classroom observation feedback must be related to professional development directed by the division, the school, or the individual teacher. In a study of several teacher evaluation tools, Mathers et al. (2008) suggested several implications to improve the use of evaluation processes. One focus is utilizing the feedback and discussion following classroom observations to provide professional development options and packages that could be designed by the division, the school, or the individual teacher (Mathers et al., 2008).

Administrators and teachers alike have felt that the evaluation process is an exercise in futility, but it does not have to be that way. Boyd (1989) described an effective teacher evaluation system as one that, “gives teachers useful feedback on classroom needs, the opportunity to learn new teaching techniques, and counsel from administrators and other teachers on how to make changes in their classrooms” (p. 1). Post-observation conferences between the observer and the teacher are an effective way to share and discuss a teacher’s strengths and weaknesses. These conferences can yield feedback that is timely and useful. Boyd (1989) recognized that it can be difficult for all involved to make a connection between evaluations and
professional development but doing so in an effective way can have a positive influence on the teacher’s instructional practice and student performance. Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) stated that the connection between classroom observation findings and continuous professional growth must be made and discussed after each classroom observation. In fact, the researchers stated that very few evaluation systems are designed to help teachers set goals and receive feedback or support effective personnel decisions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012).

**Teacher concerns with evaluation systems.** In light of the variety of purposes that classroom observations have served, experienced teachers tend to be unsatisfied with evaluations and do not see the value they have (Boyd, 1989). In speaking with teachers, Boyd (1989) reported that unlike other professions such as lawyers, doctors, or engineers, teachers do not have any input into the criteria or standards by which they are evaluated. Teachers stated that typically they are evaluated according to standards their state department of education or division deemed are important measures. Moreover, evaluators are not well trained and do not spend enough time on the evaluation itself; evaluations happen infrequently after the teachers’ probationary years. Teachers further expressed concern that their administrators are either too far removed from the classroom, have little experience in the classroom, or lack proper training on conducting classroom observations. An additional finding indicated that teachers were dissatisfied with the amount of time administrators spent conducting classroom observations or were not evaluated by their administrators often enough. Furthermore, teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of rewards for their performance (raises, promotions) or productive professional development as a result of evaluations as in other professions (Boyd, 1989).

Stiggins and Nickel (1988) noted the same concerns; their research concluded that teachers rarely receive professional improvement plans following the evaluation process. During the course of a sequential three-part study, Stiggins and Nickel (1988) developed the Teacher Evaluation Profile. In the first study of four different school divisions, the researchers sought to address the stated concerns with current evaluation systems and to determine barriers to a teacher’s growth. In the second study, the researchers identified 30 teachers who experienced positive evaluation programs and received professional growth following their evaluations. A comparative analysis was conducted since the barriers to teacher growth could not be removed and studied further. The research sought to develop theories based on these case studies that would aid in the creation of effective evaluation systems and eliminate the barriers found in the
first study. “Attributes of five components were identified as keys to effective, growth-
producing teacher evaluation: the teacher, the evaluator, data collection procedures, the
feedback, and the evaluation context” (Stiggins & Nickel, 1988, p. 153). In the third study, a
questionnaire was developed that asked teachers about their evaluation experiences, instructional
strengths and weaknesses as educators, perceptions of those conducting their evaluations, and the
evaluation process itself. This questionnaire served as the origin of the Teacher Evaluation
Profile, which has been used by other researchers to assess teacher evaluation systems (Stiggins
& Nickel, 1988). Several researchers have developed tools and instruments to assist in observing
teachers in the classroom and providing high quality feedback. Through their studies,
researchers have determined that there is a need to improve teacher evaluation systems or
broaden the systems to include more than classroom observation and timely feedback (Hill &
Grossman, 2013; Mathers et al., 2008; Reform Support Network, 2015).

**Improving teacher evaluation systems.** Researchers agreed that walking through the
evaluation process alone does not help teachers improve and that there are multiple ways to
make positive gains in regard to student achievement; however, teacher effectiveness is an
important factor (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). School systems that boasted successful
teacher evaluation systems used multiple data points, to include multiple classroom observations,
expert evaluators, reviews of lesson plans, peer evaluations, and mentoring (Darling-Hammond
et al., 2012). Mathers et al. (2008) would add teacher portfolio assessments, student
performance data, student work samples, and teacher self-assessments to that list. One
suggestion offered by Boyd (1989) was to include other supervisors such as department
supervisors or directors in the classroom observation rotation or process. Another suggestion
Boyd (1989) offered is to consider self, peer, and student evaluations to provide administrators
with a broader picture of the teacher and the instructional practices within the classroom.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) stated that a weakness of teacher evaluation systems is
the building administrators serving as the sole evaluators. Administrators in large schools do not
have time to adequately observe all the teachers in their building, nor do they possess the content
expertise needed to provide the instructional support that all the teachers in their building need
(Reform Support Network, 2015). Furthermore, administrators need professional development
and training to become great instructional leaders and teacher evaluators (Darling-Hammond et
al., 2012).
**Defining quality feedback.** In an eight year longitudinal study in four large urban school districts, researchers Rigby et al. (2017) conducted a mixed methods study and determined that according to teachers, administrative feedback following classroom observations was not targeted toward content-specific instructional practices; rather they focused on general instructional practices, classroom management strategies, or organizational comments. The research of Rigby et al. (2017) addressed the shift in an administrator’s role from a building manager to an instructional leader and recognized that many administrators may need training and support to fulfill these roles successfully. Furthermore, the research sought to add data, analysis, and findings to an area where research is limited, which includes determining the role that classroom observation feedback has on improving instruction. It is stated in their study that building administrators can use ongoing classroom observation feedback for a number of reasons to include sharing goals for classroom instruction, encouraging teachers to seek out professional development opportunities, encouraging teacher collaboration, and promoting administrative reflection on instructional practice in the building. Due to the demands placed on building administrators, Rigby et al. (2017) suggested that teachers may receive instructional support and feedback from instructional coaches and professional development from central office personnel. The review of literature conducted by Rigby et al. (2017) suggested that teachers are more likely to improve instructional practices if specific feedback is given; classroom observation feedback is essential to improved instructional practices and therefore higher levels of student achievement. The researchers hypothesized that if teachers have an opportunity to receive feedback and discuss their strengths and weakness, they would be more inclined to seek professional development opportunities, hold discussions with peers, and seek out feedback from colleagues to address their goals for professional growth (Rigby et al., 2017).

Research conducted by Khachatryan (2015) was focused on the feedback teachers received following classroom observations and how they interpreted and adjusted for the feedback they received. In his study, Khachatryan (2015) used Feedback Intervention Theory to analyze the feedback provided to four teachers. Darling-Hammond (2013) stated that teachers must receive timely feedback following a classroom observation and receive an opportunity to reflect on the feedback they are given in order for their instructional practices to improve. Several teacher evaluation systems lacked quality feedback; the feedback given was not meaningful and will not change a teacher’s practice (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Teachers need
and want what Khachatryan (2015) called “process-feedback,” timely feedback which has an impact on a teacher’s instructional practice and therefore increases student achievement; this type of feedback compels teachers to be more likely to change their instructional practices and directs the teacher’s attention to the learning process of the students. A few questions left unanswered in the literature include 1) why do teachers choose to make improvements in certain areas?; 2) why do teachers determine not to make improvements in certain areas?; and 3) why do teachers choose to address certain areas over others (Khachatryan, 2015)? As administrators reflect upon classroom observations they must ask themselves to determine the appropriate balance of critique and commendation and be sure not to include too many areas for a teacher to focus and improve upon. Is it expected that teachers change their practices as a result of feedback from outside observers?

Hill and Grossman (2013) stated that classroom observations and the feedback provided to teachers following classroom observations would be more useful to teachers if the instruments were subject-specific. However, they also recognized the huge undertaking this would be for schools and localities to accomplish. They found in their research that teachers are more inclined to improve instructional practices if the feedback given is also actionable. Another finding surmised that if there is follow up between the teacher and the administrator in addition to school or division professional development based on the classroom observation feedback, a teacher may be even more apt to make instructional improvements provided support or professional development opportunities. As a result of discussions about feedback provided after classroom observations, the integration of professional development in the evaluation process has become a topic of consideration (Hill & Grossman, 2013).

**Role of professional development in instructional practice.** According to Hill and Grossman (2013), one potential finding and implication for improving teacher feedback was the use of “feedback bundles,” which are described as skills and practices that are needed in classrooms and may be predetermined by building administrators. Administrators would define those skills and practices, conduct classroom observations to see if these skills and practices are utilized, and then provide feedback to the teachers regarding the skills and practices. These feedback bundles would offer resources, curriculum, mentorship opportunities, and professional development offerings for teachers to take advantage of immediately. In a study conducted by Stearns, Morgan, Capraro, and Capraro (2012) professional development was at the heart of
effective change. The researchers used other literature sources to articulate that without ongoing professional development, teachers will not improve their practices. The research stated that during post observation conferences where feedback is shared, a plan for professional development should be made and discussed (Stearns et al., 2012). Professional development could be school based or sought out by the individual teacher.

The tools used to evaluate teachers were most effective when professional development was available (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). Researchers such as Mathers et al. (2008) concluded that when evaluation results are shared, the next logical step in improving instructional practice was developing a professional development plan. If teacher reflection and discussion with evaluators does not occur, then teachers will cease growing and improving. Teacher instructional growth will occur when professional development goals are created based on classroom observation feedback. As building administrators and school division leaders considered the needs of teachers in their schools and divisions, professional development plans could be created to address instructional needs on a more holistic level. In a field example at Vaughn Elementary School in Los Angeles, teachers stated that their evaluation system focused on increasing student achievement through a focus on improving instructional practice and helping teachers develop professionally (Mathers et al., 2008).

The literature revealed many questions and opportunities for future study including further defining effective teaching and what quality feedback consists of and looks like (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Hellrun & Hartig, 2013; Mathers et al., 2008; Rigby et al., 2017; Stiggins & Nickel, 1988). It may be that some evaluation systems were more effective than other systems and perhaps a study comparing evaluation systems is needed. Are school districts that include classroom observations by instructional coaches or department supervisors experiencing better results when it comes to improving instructional practices than those that just involve building administrators? Most school districts make use of classroom observations for a variety of purposes; there is a need to research why teachers determine to make instructional improvements (or not) that may positively impact student achievement based on classroom observation feedback (Hellrun & Hartig, 2013; Rigby et al., 2017; Van der Lans et al., 2016). Furthermore, studies are needed to determine if school districts provide the resources and opportunities needed for professional development so that teachers can improve; are there districts that do that well? Another research question could help determine what feedback is necessary for teachers to want
to grow professionally. Educational leaders need to ensure that their systems of classroom observation has an impact on instructional practice and student achievement; otherwise, classroom observations are simply an exercise in futility (Boyd, 1989).

**Summary of Research**

The purpose of the literature review was to highlight research that examined the elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. This chapter discussed some significant studies including the analysis, findings, and implications of those studies; defined effective teachers; discussed the purpose of classroom observation and feedback; shared some concerns teachers have with evaluation systems; cited ways evaluation systems could be improved; defined quality feedback; and acknowledged the role of professional development in a teacher’s instructional practice.
Chapter Three
Methodology

Introduction

Using qualitative methods, this study explored elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. A primary use of classroom observation results is to provide reason and data for a school or teacher’s instructional improvement (Taut & Rakoczy, 2016). When considering instructional quality Taut and Rakoczy (2016) identified four dimensions: classroom management, cognitive activation, student orientation, and classroom assessment. Teachers that employed effective instructional strategies engaged students in higher-level thinking and a deeper foundation for future content (Taut & Rakoczy, 2016). The research of Praetorius, Lenske, and Helmke (2012) aligned with the research of Taut and Rakoczy (2016) articulated three basic components of instructional quality: classroom management, cognitive activation, and personal learning support. Instructional quality is dependent upon the classroom teacher; when considering school evaluation, the instructional quality of all the teachers must be considered (Praetorius et al., 2012; Taut & Rakoczy, 2016).

Conducting classroom observations is the primary way to ensure that teachers are embedding instructional strategies that are proven to be engaging and effective (Fox, 2014). Discussing classroom observation feedback with the teacher is one of the most efficient ways to impact and improve the teacher’s instructional practices (Danielson, 2012; Martinez et al., 2016). Enriching and expanding a teacher’s instructional practices is an effective way to positively impact student academic progress (Stronge, et al., 2011). This qualitative research study intended to investigate the potential connection between suggested feedback given by an administrator following a classroom observation and the adjusted instructional practices of the teacher. As a result, based on the conceptual framework, improved instructional practices will have a positive effect upon student achievement in the teacher’s classroom.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. A qualitative method was used in order to interpret the meaning and use of classroom
observation feedback and how teachers make sense of and use this feedback in their work (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Interview data revealed the teacher’s value and use of administrative classroom observation feedback to improve instructional practices which should positively impact student achievement.

**Research Questions**

According to McMillan and Wergin (2010), educational research poses questions that, when answered, can be investigated empirically to provide benefits to practice or an existing body of knowledge. This study collected, analyzed, interpreted, and reported data to answer the following research questions:

1. What do teachers identify as timely, effective feedback?
2. What do teachers indicate is the role or purpose of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
3. What do teachers indicate is the potential impact of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
4. What do teachers indicate would compel them to change (or not to change) their instructional practice based on administrative feedback?

**Research Design/Methodology**

Educational research is defined as a process by which researchers investigate a construct utilizing data analysis to answer a question or add to the body of knowledge for a particular educational theory or practice (McMillan & Wergin, 2010). This basic qualitative study applied the interpretation of interview data from a purposeful sample of elementary teachers (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). An interview method was employed to collect data and develop findings based on themes/categories (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Interview data were coded in an inductive manner to examine nine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Additionally, the interview responses determined how teachers defined timely, effective feedback; the role, purpose, and potential impact of administrative classroom observation feedback on instructional practice; and the decisions made by the teachers based on classroom observation feedback, specifically how the feedback impacts the teachers’ instructional practices and potential increases in student achievement.
Research Design Justification

Qualitative research. Qualitative research was used to explore the meaning that individuals have developed, how they view the world, and their experiences within the world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study, the researcher sought to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrator’s classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices and student achievement. A qualitative approach provided research stemming from interview questions, data analysis, and data interpretation as stated in research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Overall, the interview data in this basic qualitative study allowed the researcher to generate findings and make interpretations from the study population of elementary teachers in one Virginia school district (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Interview methodology. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative interviews offer an opportunity to engage with subjects in face-to-face interview settings. “Interviews allow the researcher control over the line of questioning and allow the participants to provide historical information” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 188). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) posited that interviews become a necessary form of data collection when the data researchers are interested in involve past events that cannot be replicated or when the desired data cannot be observed.

This study utilized an interview method allowing the researcher to obtain responses from elementary teachers to gather data and analyze participant responses of the collected data. The interview data collected by the researcher from nine elementary teachers in one Virginia school district provided sample data on their perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. The interview data were collected by the researcher from elementary teachers from three different elementary schools during the 2019-2020 school year.

Advantages of interview methods. According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019) interviews can provide information in a study that cannot be obtained solely through classroom observation. Additionally, interview methods permit participants to provide more in depth detail than could be attained in a classroom observation or through reviewing documents, such as lesson plans, and artifacts (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Interviews also allow the researcher to craft specific questions designed to elicit the desired information and use probing questions to
provide more detail or explanation when it is needed (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Disadvantages of interview methods. According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019) one disadvantage of interviews is the potential for the information gleaned from interviewers to be filtered or summarized in the findings. Additionally, like classroom observations, interviews have the potential to reveal only the information that interviewers want to gather or what the interviewee wants to share (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). And lastly, Creswell and Guetterman (2019) acknowledged that interviewees may not share their real feelings with the interviewer. This may be due to lack of trust with the interviewer or a fear of sharing the whole truth with the interviewer.

Site/Sample Selection

Site selection. The population selected for this study consisted of 28 elementary schools in a Virginia school district serving approximately 13,500 students. The selected school district’s elementary school serves students within the following grade-level groupings: K-2, K-3, 3-5, 4-5, and K-5. All 28 elementary school principals were invited to participate in the study via letter. As principals responded favorably, the names of their schools were assigned a number. The researcher randomly selected three elementary schools from among those that indicated a willingness to participate within the selected Virginia school district.

Sample selection. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), purposeful sampling is the method researchers use to provide insight for their study from those that can yield the most information and from which the most can be learned. The researcher sent a letter asking the building principal of each aforementioned elementary school for permission to interview three teachers from the school and requested the principals select up to five teachers to interview in the event that one or two teachers did not wish to participate in the study. The criterion for teacher selection was as follows:

- a teacher whom the principal is very confident in their use of administrative classroom observational feedback;
- a teacher whom the principal is somewhat confident in their use of administrative classroom observational feedback; and
• a teacher whom the principal is least confident in their use of administrative classroom observational feedback.

The data collected from these nine interviews (three teachers from each of the selected schools) were coded by the researcher to determine categories, themes, and topics (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) used the term convenience sampling to refer to selecting a study sample that is convenient to the researcher due to factors such as location and availability. While the selection of the teachers was purposeful, the selection of the school district was a matter of convenience for the researcher based on the aforementioned definition of convenience sampling. Additionally, the research can be utilized by the school district to provide insights to the school district and school administrators.

Data Collection and Gathering Procedures

As part of the requirements to conduct this study, the researcher submitted a proposal to an institutional review board (IRB) in order to conduct research (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Roberts, 2010). The purpose of the IRB is to ensure the researcher established procedures and designed a study that will protect the identity of those participating in the study, received informed consent, and ensured confidentiality (Roberts, 2010). Therefore, the researcher submitted the proposal in order to interview human subjects. This process and approval was completed prior to interviewing teachers (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Roberts, 2010). As required in the IRB process a certificate of completion for training in human subjects protection (see Appendix A) was submitted along with the IRB application and all necessary attachments as shown in the appendices. Once IRB approval was received from the university (see Appendix B), the researcher pursued approval from the school district that was invited to participate in the study. The researcher followed the guidelines of the school district to obtain permission to conduct the study and provided a copy of the Certificate of Completion, an outline of the research proposal, the Virginia Tech IRB approval letter, the interview protocol, and the interview questions to the school district’s Director of Strategic Initiatives. Upon receiving permission from the school district to conduct the research, a copy of the approval letter was provided (see Appendix C) for this study.

Once the researcher obtained permission from the Virginia Tech IRB and school district, the principals of the 28 elementary schools received a letter (see Appendix D) to inquire if they
would like their school and teachers to participate in the study. This participation letter introduced the principal to the researcher and the study, asked for the participation of the principal, and if selected solicited the names of five teachers to interview. From the positive responses, three schools were randomly selected. The principal of the selected schools received a letter (see Appendix E) from the researcher indicating that their school was randomly selected for participation in the research study. The principal of the schools that were not randomly selected received a letter (see Appendix F) from the researcher thanking them for their willingness to participate, but indicated that their school was not selected for participation. The principal of each of the three selected schools was asked by the researcher for up to five names of teachers to potentially interview and was provided with a copy of a letter sent to the selected teachers (see Appendix G). The request for teacher participation letter introduced the researcher and the study and asked for the participation of the teacher. Once the teachers were selected by their principals and responded favorably, they received a letter to schedule an interview with the researcher at a date, time, and location of the teacher’s choosing (see Appendix H).

**Data treatment and management.** Data collection occurred during the fall 2019 and spring 2020 semesters. Face-to-face interviews were scheduled with each of the nine teachers at a location of their choosing, which may have been a public place or a location within the school building, such as a classroom, office, or media center, according to the preferences of the building principal. Each interviewee received the interview protocol (see Appendix I) which detailed the setting of the interview, described the purpose of the study and the interviewee’s role within the study, included the pre-determined questions that were utilized, and included a closing statement thanking the teacher for their participation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). All teachers interviewed were assured that their personal identity and school identity would remain confidential. The interviews were audio recorded for transcription; notes were taken during the interview as well (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). By the beginning of the spring 2020 semester, all nine interviews were completed, transcribed, and ready for coding.

**Informed Consent.** Part of the application process involved considering informed consent for participants. Some elements of informed consent involve:

- explanation of the study including purpose and research questions;
- statement of voluntary participation;
- statement of risk or no risk for participation;
• benefits of participation; and
• signature of participant (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

The letter of informed consent (see Appendix J) was given to the three teachers from the three elementary schools. Each letter was signed and collected, and will be stored for three years after the study has been closed.

Confidentiality. Assuring confidentiality is a vital part of informed consent, participation in the interview, and the process of research (Roberts, 2010). The interviewees were assured that measures of confidentiality were taken throughout the data collection and analysis processes, the write up, and the findings of the research. Individual names will not be used in the published work of the study (Roberts, 2010). Once completed, interviews were recorded and stored on the researcher’s password protected computer (Roberts, 2010). All transcriptions and coding were completed by the researcher. Transcriptions, coding documents, and other means of data analysis were kept secure in private files, locked in a cabinet owned by the researcher. Reflexive journals were kept on the researcher’s password protected computer. All documents from interviews, transcription, and data analysis will be destroyed upon successful defense of the dissertation and the possible publication of the research.

Instrument Design and Validation

Interview protocol. Prior to the interview, the researcher designed an interview protocol. The interview protocol was used consistently for all interviews. In addition to the audio recording, the researcher made written notes during the interview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The interview protocol contained:

• the name, date, and location of the interview;
• an opening statement describing the purpose of the study, means of data collection, confidentiality assurances, and duration of the interview;
• a statement regarding the review and signature of the informed consent document;
• the established interview questions and potential probes; and
• a statement of thanks and conclusion (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Interview questions. Interview questions were created by the researcher to solicit responses related to the research questions. The following interview questions were asked in this study:
1. Tell me a little bit about yourself professionally including how long you have been teaching and what grades you have taught.
2. How clear are the expectations for classroom observations? Please be specific.
3. How do you perceive that the administrators help you meet the expectations set forth in classroom observations?
4. What constitutes timely, effective feedback?
5. What do you feel administrators need in order to conduct effective classroom observations?
6. What do you perceive administrators need in order to provide timely, effective feedback for improving instructional practices?
7. What determines if you change (or do not change) your instructional practices as a result of the classroom observation feedback you receive?
8. Is there any further information that you would like to share that I did not cover or ask?

The initial questions asked in the interview were icebreaker type questions, intended to commence the interview and put the teacher at ease (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This study collected, analyzed, interpreted, and reported data to answer the following research questions:

1. What do teachers identify as timely, effective feedback?
2. What do teachers indicate is the role or purpose of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
3. What do teachers indicate is the potential impact of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
4. What do teachers indicate would compel them to change (or not to change) their instructional practice based on administrative feedback?

Each research question correlated to one or more interview questions as shown in Table 3.1.
Reliability and validity. In an effort to ensure the reliability of the research questions, the researcher solicited the input of two elementary teachers and a selection of administrators who supervise elementary teachers to provide feedback regarding the interview questions. The primary purpose was to ensure that the interview questions aligned with the research questions as intended and ensured that the interview questions were clear (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Once the interview questions were vetted through peer review, pilot testing was another method the researcher utilized to test the validity and reliability (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This process allowed the researcher to practice interviewing elementary teachers to ensure the questions were clear, determined which questions may need rewording, or which questions ought to be eliminated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Since these individuals provided feedback on the interview questions, their responses were not included in the data collection, data analysis, or findings and implications (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Another measure of reliability the researcher employed was conducting member checks. Member checks were conducted to solicit feedback from the individuals who were interviewed to ensure the interpretation and transcription were accurate and captured the intended response to the interview questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Each teacher who was selected by their building principal for an interview had an opportunity to complete this response validation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Each teacher received a member check letter (see Appendix K) once the transcription of the interview was completed by the researcher and ready for their review. As interviewees responded to the member check email, anything they wished to add to their responses was included with their response to question eight.
The researcher also kept a reflexive journal, wrote an entry following each interview, and made entries throughout the data analysis process (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This provided the researcher with an opportunity to reflect on biases, the process of data collection, and the analysis of the data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

**Data Analysis Techniques**

The data for the study were analyzed as the data were collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Additionally, a reflexive journal was used by the researcher throughout the process of interviewing teachers and analyzing data. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) defined data analysis as the process the researcher utilizes to make sense of the data that have been collected; it is the process used to answer the research questions.

**Transcription and coding.** After conducting the interviews, each was transcribed by the researcher. This involvement with the data assisted the researcher in identifying the overall meaning of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the margins of the transcription, notes or codes were assigned so that themes and categories emerged using a combination of letters or phrases; the researcher maintained a list of all codes used in a spreadsheet and transferred to tables (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The process of coding and identifying data and grouping them together defined the categories or themes of analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The themes led to major findings and implications of the research and were articulated in chapters four and five. The themes emerged into a conceptual map to help display the analysis of the collected data, illustrating the interrelatedness of the data to the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

**Triangulation.** One of the validity strategies that were employed is triangulation; the process of using multiple sources to build a justification for themes and findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). In this study, the researcher utilized member checks, reflexive journal entries, interview statements that support one another, and peer review. Peer review is an external audit conducted by an individual—a peer of the researcher—who is not familiar with the research to review the connection between the themes, the findings, and the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Finally, codes and themes were reviewed and confirmed by two qualitative researchers and graduates of Virginia Tech.

**Timeline**
The interviews were completed during the spring 2020 semester, along with the process of transcription and coding. At that time, the researcher coded the transcriptions to identify themes and categories. Ultimately, the researcher intended to present the results of the study and defend the dissertation with the dissertation committee during the spring 2020 semester.

**Methodology Summary**

The purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. The methodology outlined the research design, sample selection, data collection, instrument design and validation, and analysis processes to address the research questions of this study. The goals of the data collection and analysis were as follows: (a) determine the teacher’s definition of timely, effective classroom observation feedback; (b) determine the role or purpose of administrative classroom observational feedback on the teacher’s instructional practice; (c) determine the potential impact of the administrative classroom observational feedback on the teacher’s instructional practice; and (d) ascertain what compels the teacher to change, or not to change, their instructional practice based on administrative feedback.
Chapter Four

Results of the Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observation feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. Interview data were collected from face to face interviews with nine elementary teachers from one Virginia school district. This study collected and reported data to answer the following research questions:

1. What do teachers identify as timely, effective feedback?
2. What do teachers indicate is the role or purpose of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
3. What do teachers indicate is the potential impact of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
4. What do teachers indicate would compel them to change (or not to change) their instructional practice based on administrative feedback?

**Interview questions and alignment.** This basic qualitative study applied the interpretation of interview data from a purposeful sample of elementary teachers (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). An interview method was employed to collect data and develop findings based on themes/categories (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The interview questions were created by the researcher to solicit responses related to the research questions. The following interview questions were asked of each teacher in this study:

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself professionally including how long you have been teaching and what grades you have taught.
2. How clear are the expectations for classroom observations? Please be specific.
3. How do you perceive that the administrators help you meet the expectations set forth in classroom observations?
4. What constitutes timely, effective feedback?
5. What do you feel administrators need in order to conduct effective classroom observations?
6. What do you perceive administrators need in order to provide timely, effective feedback for improving instructional practices?

7. What determines if you change (or do not change) your instructional practices as a result of the classroom observation feedback you receive?

8. Is there any further information that you would like to share that I did not cover or ask?

Each interview question connected to one or more research question as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

*Research Question and Interview Question Alignment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5, 6, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5, 6, 7, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7, 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability and validity. As described in chapter three, the researcher sought to ensure reliability of the research questions used in this study by soliciting input from two elementary teachers and a selection of administrators who supervise elementary teachers to provide feedback regarding the interview questions. The primary purpose of this peer review process was to ensure that the interview questions aligned with the research questions as intended and that the interview questions were clear (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The researcher also used pilot testing to test the validity and reliability (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Pilot testing allowed the researcher to practice interviewing elementary teachers to determine question clarity, potential need for rewording or rephrasing of questions, and whether a question should be eliminated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015); their responses were not included in the data collection, data analysis, or findings and implications (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Following each interview, the researcher conducted member checks to solicit feedback from the interviewees to confirm the interpretation and transcription were accurate and captured the intended response to the interview questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). A few interviewees wished to add to their responses and their comments were included along with their response to
question eight. Following transcription and coding to identify themes, the researcher utilized peer review, an external audit conducted by an individual who was not familiar with the research, to review the connection between the themes, the findings, and the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The external auditor concluded that appropriate connections existed between the themes, findings, and research questions in the study.

**Report Data/Findings**

The interviews were conducted over a five week period at a time, location, and place selected by each teacher at their convenience. The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and the researcher’s cellular device as a backup. The teachers were given a copy of the interview questions for reference during the interview. Interviews were conducted in no particular order. Teachers were issued a code based on the school they represented and the order in which the interview was conducted; as such, S1T1 to stand for school 1 teacher 1 and continuing to S3T3 for school 3 teacher 3. Following the transcription and coding of each interview, teachers were coded in a more simplistic manner and assigned representation in tables as follows as displayed in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2**

*Teacher Participant Representation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Shortened Code for Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1T1</td>
<td>T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1T2</td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1T3</td>
<td>T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2T1</td>
<td>T4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2T2</td>
<td>T5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2T3</td>
<td>T6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3T1</td>
<td>T7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3T2</td>
<td>T8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40
Demographic Data

Participants in the study responded to the initial question, which served as an icebreaker type question intended to commence the interview and put the interviewee at ease (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Table 4.3 displays the participants’ years of experience in response to question number one, indicating approximately how long they have been teaching.

Table 4.3

*Interview Question 1: Tell me a little bit about yourself professionally including how long you have been teaching and what grades you have taught.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the teachers who participated in the study have been teaching a minimum of six years. Three of the teachers were seasoned teachers who have taught for 21 or more years.

Table 4.4 displays the participants’ response to question one indicating grade levels taught during their years of service. All of the participating teachers have spent a majority of their career in the elementary setting.
Table 4.4

*Interview Question 1: Tell me a little bit about yourself professionally including how long you have been teaching and what grades you have taught.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Kindergarten</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Position</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When combined, all of the participating teachers have taught each grade level represented in the elementary setting, traditionally Kindergarten through grade five. Each teacher has spent a portion of their teaching career teaching students in the intermediate grades, which traditionally is third through fifth grades. Overall, five of the nine teachers who participated have spent a portion of their teaching career teaching students in the primary grades, which traditionally includes Kindergarten and/or Pre-Kindergarten through second grade. Of those who participated, three teachers have served or are serving in a support position capacity to include Reading Specialists, Reading Coaches, Technology Integration Specialists, and Title 1 Coaches. Two of the teachers who participated in the study have taught special education students either in the public school setting or a regional program for students with special needs. Finally, three teachers have taught students in a middle school setting, which traditionally includes sixth through eighth grades.
Teacher Expectations Regarding Formal Classroom Observations

Participants in this study were asked a question to gain an understanding of their clarity, or lack thereof, regarding the expectations for formal classroom observations. Table 4.5 displays the teachers’ responses by common themes that were identified by the researcher.

Table 4.5
Interview Question 2: In your opinion, how clear are you about the expectations for classroom observations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear about process and expectations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations change</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No checklist or look-fors provided/ unsure of forms</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided forms in advance</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know look-fors</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhere to SOLs or pacing guide</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review lesson plan(s)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of classroom management</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of students making progress/ assessment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher working with small groups</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher circulate classroom</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher displays professionalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide clear follow up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evident use of “I Can” statements</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All of the participants in this study verbalized that expectations have been clear at some point in their career, although that is not always the case; there have been years under some administrations that expectations were not clear. T5 and T6 both shared that either expectations changed or there were inconsistencies among the administrators in regards to communicating with individual teachers. T1 elaborated by saying,

When the principals come in to observe us, I have not been given any checklist per say of things they are looking for, and I really don’t know what they look at and what those forms look like until I come back into their office as a follow up. (T1, l12-16)

T8 explained that the reason why expectations are unclear now is because “this is a brand new position that was just created so I have no idea what the expectations are” (l30-31). The position that T8 referred to was newly implemented for the 2019-2020 school year; observation and evaluation criteria for this position have yet to be clearly shared with the teacher at the time of the interview. Thus T8 went on to say that “I don’t really know how they are going to assess my performance this year. Cause this is all uncharted territory in this position” (l37-39). T5 summarized the teacher evaluation experience by commenting that in the past the evaluation process was very specific; however, with the change in administration in the building, it is not specific and things change without notice. T5 explained further that, “it puts everyone on edge, not knowing what’s being expected, what will be judged, or what will be written regardless of when [administrators] come in” (T5, l32-34).

Each teacher that participated in the study indicated that at different times during their teaching career they felt that their building administration had been clear in stating the processes and expectations for classroom observations. Many teachers commented on the evolution of the teacher evaluation system and the observation process during their career. T4 states that "I notice a huge difference from 10 years ago" (T4, l21). T4 further summarized that now there are clear procedures such as a pre-observation meeting, consistent observation forms, and a post-observation meeting to give feedback. T9 states that, "I pretty much know what they are looking for; there are no surprises" (T9, l43-45).

Many of the teachers that participated identified and shared that evidence of similar components were expected during classroom observations. Over half, five of the nine teachers, indicated that they expected administrators to review lesson plans; and three added that they knew adherence to the revised Standards of Learning (SOLs) or the district’s pacing guide were
considered during observations. Additionally, three teachers commented that being able to use data to show that students were making progress was noted in observations. These data articulate that all teachers responded that at some point in their careers, expectations were clear. These data also illustrated that expectations were not clear every year; across the district or within the building under the leadership of different administrations, the intricacies of the expectations differed.

**Data for Research Question 1: What do teachers identify as timely, effective feedback?**

During the interview, teachers were asked to define feedback. Table 4.6 displays the teachers’ response as to the timeliness of administrative observation feedback.

Table 4.6

*Interview Question 4: What do you believe constitutes timely, effective feedback?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leave note immediately</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 1-2 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 2-3 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within a week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within a couple weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those that participated, three of the six teachers indicated that they preferred when the observing administrator left a note immediately after the observation. A majority of the teachers, five of the nine, indicated that they felt receiving feedback within a week or so was acceptable. T1 indicated that observation feedback is preferred “the sooner the better” (T1, l60). T2 agreed and further added
I would feel like within a week. I just think teaching, you move so fast and if there are things that need to be tweaked or changed, they are kind of imminent; I feel like that feedback should be given pretty quickly. (T2, l63-67)

T3 agreed that feedback should be delivered within a week stating

If you wait past a week, I've already forgotten what I did three days ago because I'm already on to a new SOL. If you go past a week, I think that's unfair to the teacher, because if you need clarification, they're not going to know, because I'm already planning for next week. (T3, l139-148)

While it is important for feedback to be provided to the teacher in a timely manner, it must also be effective for the teacher’s practice. Table 4.7 displays the teachers’ responses related to the effectiveness of administrative observation feedback.

Table 4.7

*Interview Question 4: What do you believe constitutes timely, effective feedback?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leave note for teacher</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave note for students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet face to face</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific, direct, clear, accurate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer suggestions or examples to improve</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More positive than negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than just reading observation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly half of the participants, four of the nine, indicated that effective feedback was also timely; they appreciated the notes that administrators left immediately following the observation indicating the strengths of that teacher or elements of that particular lesson or activity. T6 included that one of the administrators would also leave a note of feedback for the students. The participants indicated they preferred to meet face to face in a post-observation conference that
was meaningful, not just reading over the evaluation together. Additionally, four of the nine teachers noted in their responses that they wanted suggestions or examples from the administrator on how they can improve.

That’s feedback to me. Give me what I need to improve on and then give me suggestions as to how to improve upon it. Handing me the observation and just going over it and just having me sign it is not effective for me. (T5, l64-67)

T3 agreed and stated that the post observation conference is most effective when it begins with self-reflection on the part of the teacher and then the administrator continues by adding, “this is what I saw, these are the expectations for the observation, strengths, and weaknesses of where I [the teacher] can improve” (T3, l79-81). Furthermore, four of the nine teachers described effective feedback as specific, direct, clear, or accurate. This is illustrated by T2 who stated, "effective feedback is to point out specifically what I did wrong, what I need to do, how they want me to correct it, or what they want to see" (T2, l62-64).

Data for Research Question 2: What do teachers indicate is the role or purpose of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?

During the interviews, teachers were asked about the role or purpose of administrative classroom observation feedback on their instructional practice. In order to gauge teachers’ feelings about the role or purpose of observation feedback, it was important to determine how teachers perceived that administrators supported them in meeting the expectations for observations. Table 4.8 displays teachers’ responses to the assistance administrators provided regarding the evaluation process during the observation year.

Table 4.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They don't/ not their job</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No feedback/ not timely</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continue)
Table 4.8 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide professional development, books, supplies,</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide feedback/ modeling</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer expert/ peer observe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional coach/ team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know teachers and build relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide discipline advice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observe again/ utilize informal observations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observe evidence of “I Can” statements</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check pacing guides</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set expectations (beginning of year)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the nine teachers who participated in this study, five of them mentioned how vital engaging in dialogue with the principal or receiving communication from the principal was in understanding the evaluation process and thus observation feedback. In regards to the dialogue following the observation, T4 commented, "I think that more dialogue after the official observation probably helped me a little more than the official observation [itself]" (T4, l45-47). According to those five teachers, the dialogue or communication could take place one on one in a face to face manner, via email, or with the evaluator during a meeting.

**Set expectations.** T6 commented that expectations for observations during the observation year were reviewed sometimes step-by-step, but sometimes they were not. Nearly half, four of the nine teachers, responded that the feedback could result in professional development in the form of in-services or training, access to books, or other resources to improve
instructional practice such as guided reading, managing rotations during student independent tasks, and so forth.

**Provide feedback/modeling.** Additionally, four teachers indicated that feedback could result in collaboration with a teacher expert, peer observer, or a member of the school-based instructional coaching team, which in this particular district could include personnel such as reading specialists, reading coaches, math coaches, or instructional coaches. T8 commented that,

If it was an instructional issue, the principal may have been the one to bring it to my attention, but I would seek out the people that I felt were the experts in that area to kind of help me and guide me. (T8, 157-60)

Two teachers mentioned that additional observations by the administration could potentially be a result of feedback and suggestions for enhancing instructional practices. Additionally, two teachers mentioned that building administration would have the opportunity to observe and provide feedback in regards to a teacher’s adherence to the district’s pacing guides, use of “I Can” statements, or instruction during the guided reading component and literacy centers of the balanced literacy block specifically.

The teachers indicated that similar to feedback, not all classroom observations are done effectively. Table 4.9 displays teachers’ responses to the perceived skills or characteristics administrators need in order to conduct effective classroom observations.

Table 4.9

**Interview Question 5: What skills or characteristics do you think administrators need in order to conduct effective classroom observations?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taught that grade level</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught an SOL grade</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong instructional background</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar with SOLs/ content</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how students learn best</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

(continue)
Table 4.9 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding/ supportive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand student background</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with teachers</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair/ consistent</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allow teacher to self-reflect</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Positive comments before negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approachable/ not intimidating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follows up/ reliable</td>
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<td>Visible in classrooms/ engages with students</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value teacher's time</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model/ good example</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worthy of respect</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific/ objective</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable/ uses technology</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers desire more frequent observations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliver feedback gracefully</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relationship with teachers.** Over half, five of the nine teachers, discussed the importance of the administrators having good relationships with the teachers. T1 said, “I think relationships are important. It is important for the teacher and the students. It is also important for the administration and the staff” (T1, l102-104).

**Familiar with SOLs, content, strong instructional background.** Over half, five of the teachers also indicated that the administrators should have taught elementary grades or an SOL.
grade during their tenure as a classroom teacher. T2 stated that, "I think every building, if you’re in a 3-5 building, or a K-5 building, one of the administrators have better have taught an SOL grade" (T2, l79-81). In their responses, five interviewed teachers further emphasized that administrators should be familiar with SOL content or have a strong instructional background.

**Know how students learn best.** Three teachers mentioned the administrators should know how students learn best. Four also mentioned that they should understand the background of the students in their schools.

I think sometimes they [administrators] come in with a preconceived notion of how all the children should be acting and what they expect when they come in. And sometimes they don’t have the background knowledge of the child and what might be going on in the classroom at that time. (T1, l83-88)

T4 mentioned specifically that this knowledge of students comes through pre-observation meetings and discussions with the teacher. Three teachers mentioned the importance of the administrator delivering feedback specifically, yet objectively; two other teachers added that the feedback should always be delivered in a graceful manner.

**Characteristics.** In addition to skills, the participating teachers indicated that there were certain characteristics that administrators needed in order to conduct effective classroom observations. A third of the teachers, three of the nine, mentioned the importance of being fair and consistent in delivering feedback and talking with teachers. T7 commented specifically that clear expectations are very important. Five teachers expressed that having a principal who was supportive and understanding was an important characteristic; three teachers added the importance of having a principal who was approachable and not intimidating.

**Teachers desired more frequent observations.** Interestingly, two teachers questioned if three observations were sufficient to adequately judge a teacher’s performance and would like more frequent observations. T1 commented,

I didn’t really know if I had thought that observations really gave principals a true look as to what was really going on in the classrooms when they come in three times a year because there is so much more. (T1, l203-206)

T4 agreed stating there should be more observations or informal pop-ins, thus validating the teachers. Additionally, observing teachers and spending time in the classrooms can be "life giving" for the administrator (T4, l151).
Data for Research Question 3: What do teachers indicate is the potential impact of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?

During the interviews, teachers responded to the potential impact administrative classroom observational feedback has on their instructional practice. Selected responses from Table 7 (as shown above in Data for Research Question 1) indicate that effective administrative feedback following observations may have an impact on a teacher’s practice. Nearly half, four out of the nine teachers, defined effective feedback as feedback which provided examples or suggestions for improving instructional practice. Teacher 4 responded, “give me what I need to improve on and then give me suggestions as to how to improve upon it” (T4, l64-66). Three teachers added that specific, direct, clear, and accurate feedback is effective and thus worthy to consider. T2 desired the administrator to “point out specifically what I did wrong, what I need to do, and how they want me to correct it” (T2, l62-64).

Offering specific suggestions or examples. Selected responses from Table 11 (as shown below in Data for Research Question 4) indicated that the feedback teachers receive from administrators could change their instructional practices. Almost half, four out of the nine teachers, mentioned in their responses that offering suggestions or examples of strategies or techniques to improve or implement would compel them to change their practices; four teachers also said if the suggested changes would help promote student achievement they would be willing to implement them. When considering what instructional practices to change or implement, T4 said, "I think what determines [if I change] is if I feel like this [suggested change] is really going to help my students or not” (T4, l134-135) and T7 said, “I'll try anything that's a best practice that helps the kids get it” (T7, l274-275).

The participating teachers had suggestions for administrators regarding the feedback they provided following a classroom observation. Table 4.10 displays the teachers’ responses about the potential needs of administrators in order to provide timely, effective feedback for improving instructional practices, pedagogy, and/or strategies.
Table 4.10

*Interview Question 6: What do you perceive administrators need in order to provide timely, effective feedback for improving instructional practices, pedagogy, and/or strategies?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable/ uses technology</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient/ timely</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable of teachers’ strengths/builds relationships/trust</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest instructional practices</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective communicator</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide support/ professional development/ materials, resources</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open door policy</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systematic</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visible in classrooms</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honest/ specific, genuine, constructive comments</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aware of childhood development</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build cohesive admin team, consistent</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-plan how to deliver feedback</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow teachers to self-reflect first</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers desire more feedback</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More administrators</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Need for more administrators to increase feedback.** Of the teachers that participated in this study, two of them stated that they desired more feedback than they currently receive. T4 indicated that the feedback could be delivered as a result of formal and informal pop-ins, not only formal observation. One of these teachers indicated that in order to receive more feedback, and receive it in a timely, effective manner, more administrators were needed on the elementary
level. This is reflective of comments made by two teachers regarding the desire for administrators to be more visible in classrooms. T1 articulated and connected these statements by saying,

   I think [administrators] could get into the classrooms more often … they could mentor better; they could meet with the teachers and develop relationships. There are just so many more things that could happen if there was more of a support staff. (T1, l127-131)

Teachers desire efficient, timely feedback, as stated by six of the nine teachers who participated. T1 explains by stating,

   My principal is so busy during the day meeting with parents and the business of the school, that [he or she] doesn’t have time to get the things done sometimes, to get the feedback to us, because [he or she] has been so busy with parents all day long, whereas if [he or she] had more of a support team in place…an assistant principal for each grade level like middle school does, maybe that would free up your principal…I think that would help to provide timely, effective feedback. (T1, l113-124)

**Know your staff/relationships.** Knowing your staff means that administrators understand each teacher’s strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge of and relationship with your staff, combined with effective feedback, provides a teacher with the advice they need to hone their instructional practices. Additionally, five of the nine teachers stated that they desired administrators that were knowledgeable of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as administrators who developed trusting relationships with the faculty. T3 stated that following an observation the discussion about the personalized smart goals and the student academic progress goals was important. T3 noted that during post observation discussions and feedback the administrator encouraged an adjustment of a goal if the students are struggling or creation of a new goal if the students have met teacher identified student progress goals quickly. T4 said this happens as a result of building and maintaining “a relationship with the teacher and just really being involved helps that feedback, to not take it personally, and to feel like they really want what’s best for you and your students” (T4, l115-118).

**Knowledge of instructional practices by administrators.** In order to provide effective feedback, administrators need knowledge of instructional practices that they can suggest to teachers as indicated by six of the nine participating teachers. T5 expressed a desire that in the event “the administrator observes something that needs to be changed, then perhaps give an
example of how that change is to be made” (T5, l111-113) and T8 summarized this same notion by commenting that “in order to be effective you have to learn the instruction that you are seeking to see” (T8, l136-138). According to four study participants, as administrators are recommending instructional practices for the teacher to employ, they also need to be able to provide the support, professional development, materials, and resources in order to improve their practices. In their responses, four teachers also addressed the manner in which the administrator delivers feedback indicating they desired positive, specific, honest, genuine, constructive comments to improve their instructional practices.

**Data for Research Question 4: What do teachers indicate would compel them to change (or not to change) their instructional practice based on administrative feedback?**

Research question four was framed to determine what teachers indicated would compel them to change (or not to change) their instructional practice based on administrative feedback. Table 4.11 displays the teachers’ response as to the determining factors for the change in their instructional practices as a result of the classroom observation feedback they receive.

Table 4.11

*Interview Question 7: What determines if you change your instructional practices as a result of the classroom observation feedback you receive?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principal’s directive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of noncompliance or being written-up</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good advice/ something I can improve or do better</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect principal’s authority/ teaching experience</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotes student achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open communication with principal</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Related to my student progress goal</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust/ respect</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respect for the principal. Of the teachers who participated in the study, four of the nine participants indicated that the reason they would change their instructional practices is due to the directive of the principal, the trust or respect that exists between teachers and administrators, or the respect for the principal’s authority or teaching experience. T1 captured this sentiment by saying, "my principal determines [if I change or not] because [he or she] is the authority figure in the school" (T1, l198-199).

Improved instructional practice or improved student achievement. Additionally, four of the nine teachers articulated that if the feedback was an instructional practice that was based on best practices, something that teachers could improve upon, or a suggestion that would help the teacher improve their instructional delivery, it would be well received and more likely to be implemented. One teacher said, “I'll try anything that's a best practice that helps the kids get it" (T7, l274-275) while another said, "I think what determines [if I change] is if I feel like this [feedback] is really going to help my students or not" (T4, l134-135). T2 elaborated and further explained by saying that he or she will try what the administrator suggests. If it doesn't work, he or she will meet with the administrator, ask the administrator to observe again, and offer suggestions as to why this strategy isn't working or suggest another strategy. Almost half, four of the nine teachers indicated that if the suggested feedback will increase student progress, they will implement the strategy. T5 took a slightly different angle to changing practices by saying, “when I do make changes, I do not look at the [administrative] feedback. I look at the students I am teaching and their needs” (T5, l132-134).

The participating teachers provided several reasons why they determine to change, or not to change, their instructional practices based on feedback. Table 4.12 displays the teachers’ responses regarding the determining factors for the decision not to change their instructional practices as a result of the classroom observation feedback they receive.
Table 4.12

*Interview Question 7: What determines if you do not change your instructional practices as a result of the classroom observation feedback you receive?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Responses</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
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<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
<th>T7</th>
<th>T8</th>
<th>T9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unethical/ unjust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not best practice for students</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of trust in principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear about the change or method of change</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of follow up by principal</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

According to the responses of the teachers, one of the main reasons that teachers do not change their practices based on the observation feedback they receive is because the suggested practice is not what they deem is best for the students. T4 articulated that, “I think what determines [if I change my practices] is if I feel like this is really going to help my students or not” (T4, l134-135). Sometimes the feedback is due to a difference of opinion between the teacher and the administrator. T9 said “I’ve had principals observe and not like something that I did, and I didn’t necessarily agree with what they said, so I didn’t do it anymore, but I didn’t change it” (T9, l147-149). T8 agreed and provided an example of the difference between not repeating a practice verses changing a practice. T8 explained that upon observation, if a principal misunderstands why a particular practice is utilized or implemented and asks the teacher for an explanation, then there may not be a need to change. T1 gave another reason not to change instructional practices based on administrative feedback; “I didn't change [my practice] … it [the feedback] went against what I thought would be beneficial to the children” (T1, l163-165).
Data Analysis Summary

This study sought to answer the four research questions for this study which relate to elementary teachers’ definition of timely, effective feedback; the role and purpose of administrative observation feedback; the impact of the observation feedback; and what compels the teacher to change, or not change, their instructional practices as a result of the observation feedback. In this chapter, the responses to the interview questions were presented to address the research questions. The data analysis included coding the teachers’ responses, identifying themes that emerged, and determining what the teachers perceived about observation feedback. In Chapter Five, the findings, implications of the findings, and suggestions for further study and research will be discussed.
Chapter Five
Findings, Implications, Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

Chapter 5 contains a review of the research questions guiding the study. This is followed by a summary of the findings, discussion and implications for practice, and suggestions for further research relating to this study. The chapter concludes with the researcher’s summary, reflection of the process, and experiences gained while conducting this study.

The purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observation feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. This study sought to investigate the following research questions:

1. What do teachers identify as timely, effective feedback?
2. What do teachers indicate is the role or purpose of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
3. What do teachers indicate is the potential impact of administrative classroom observational feedback on a teacher’s instructional practice?
4. What do teachers indicate would compel them to change (or not to change) their instructional practice based on administrative feedback?

Summary of Findings

The data were analyzed according to the research questions guiding this study. Several findings were determined from the analyses conducted. The findings are identified, supported by interview data, and connected to prior research as presented in the following paragraphs.

Finding 1. Elementary teachers desired immediate feedback following an observation. Specifically, teachers desired observation feedback and dialogue from their administrator within one to two weeks of the observation in the form of a post observation conference. One of the interview question asked participants to respond to the question, “What constitutes timely, effective feedback?” Five teachers responded that they preferred to receive observation feedback within a week or two of the observation. A specific comment made by T4 indicated that, “I would like the feedback within a week” (T4, l63-64) and another teacher said, “I think within a week. If you wait past a week, I’ve already forgotten what I did” (T5, l140-141). Teachers also desired dialogue as evidenced by T4, “I think that more dialogue after the
official observation probably helped me a little more than the official observation” (T4, l145-147). Furthermore, T5 indicated that, “handing me the observation and just going over it and… having me sign it is not effective for me” (T5, l66-67).

Additionally in response to the interview question about timely, effective feedback, four teachers responded that they preferred immediate feedback from the observing administrator. This is articulated in the following statement by T6, “the administrator would always leave a note” (T6, l97). Other teachers indicated that in addition to leaving a note for the teacher, one administrator left a note for the students as well. This was viewed by the teacher as an effective means of communication after the administrator’s observation of the lesson.

This finding is supported by previous research (Boyd, 1989; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Hill & Grossman, 2013; Jewell, 2017; Khachatryan, 2015; Reform Support Network, 2015; van der Lans et al., 2016); these researchers indicated that regardless of the method, teachers must receive timely evaluation feedback in order to make adjustments to their instructional practices. According to Darling-Hammond (2013), teachers must receive timely feedback following a classroom observation and receive an opportunity to reflect on the feedback they are given in order for their instructional practices to improve.

Finding 2. Teachers desired feedback to improve their instructional practices, pedagogy, or strategies that could improve student achievement from instructional experts or from administrators with strong instructional backgrounds. When asked about the feedback teachers need and want, four teachers indicated that they desire effective feedback with suggestions or examples to improve. Many teachers made supporting comments, including T4 who stated, “that’s feedback to me, give me what I need to improve on and then give me suggestions as to how to improve upon it” (T4, l64-66); “effective feedback is to point out specifically what I did wrong, what I need to do, how they [administrators] want me to correct it, or what they want to see” (T2, l62-64). Moreover, four teachers also said if the changes suggested by their administrators would promote student achievement they would be willing to implement them, and two teachers indicated that they desired more feedback than they currently receive. Overall, teachers are receptive to any suggestion that will help their students. T4 said, “I think what determines [if I change] is if I feel like this is really going to help my students or not” (T4, l134-135); “I’ll try anything that’s a best practice that helps my kids get it” (T7, l274-275). This finding is supported by the research of Rigby et al. (2017) in their summary that
teachers are more likely to improve instructional practices if specific feedback is given; classroom observation feedback is essential to improved instructional practices and therefore higher levels of student achievement.

**Finding 3. Teachers desired clarity about the process for evaluations and observations, their feedback, and how to improve their instructional practices.** When asked about how clear the teacher participants were regarding the process for teacher evaluations, all nine teachers stated that whether in the present or in years past, they have all been clear about the process and expectations for classroom observations at some point in their careers. As several of them explained, that could change from building to building, from principal to principal within in the building, or from year to year. A third of the teachers (three out of nine) noted that their administrators set clear expectations at the beginning of the school year and over half of them, (five out of nine teachers), commented that the administrators provided information or a variety of types of communication in order to understand the evaluation process and the delivery of feedback as a result of observations. T3 indicated, “I think expectations need to be set from the beginning, what [the expectations] look like, what [administrators] are looking for, even scenarios, like do’s and don’ts of an observation” (T3, l 96-98) and also expressing a desire for transparency and for the administrator to set expectations. T6 commented that sometimes expectations were reviewed by the administrator step-by-step and sometimes they were not. T7 and others indicated that clear expectations were very important.

When considering clarity of the feedback and process for delivering feedback, four teachers noted that their administrators provided feedback and sometimes modeling of instructional strategies. T4 said, “I think that more dialogue after the official observation probably helped me a little more than the official observation” (T4, l 145-147). Teachers were open to changing their practices if it would benefit the students but were less apt to change if the expectations or practices suggested were unclear. This is supported by the research of Boyd (1989) in the description of an effective teacher evaluation system as one that, “gives teachers useful feedback on classroom needs, the opportunity to learn new teaching techniques, and counsel from administrators and other teachers on how to make changes in their classrooms” (p. 1).

**Finding 4. Teachers saw and expressed the need for more administrators and therefore more administrative support.** One of the interview question asked participants to respond to the question “What do you perceive administrators need in order to provide timely,
effective feedback for improving instructional practices?” Six of the teachers indicated that administrators need time to provide effective feedback following classroom observations. T1 suggested that elementary schools need more administrators. More administrators could mean that they can “get in the classrooms more often. I think they could mentor better; they could meet with the teachers, and develop relationships. There are just so many more things that could happen if there was more of a support staff” (T1, l127-131). This teacher noticed that

My principal is so busy during the day meeting with parents and the business of the school, that [he or she doesn’t] have time to get the things done sometimes, to get the feedback to us, because [he or she has] been so busy with parents all day long. Whereas if [the principal] had an assistant principal for each grade level like middle school does, maybe that would free up your principal…I think that would help to provide timely, effective feedback. (T1, l113-124)

This is supported by the research of Reform Support Network (2015) when they reported that administrators in large schools do not have time to adequately observe all the teachers in their building. Adding additional administrators would allow for more manageable numbers of teachers to evaluate, formally and informally.

**Finding 5. Teachers indicated that three observations, and observations alone, were not enough to adequately assess the quality of the instruction in the classroom or the effectiveness of the teachers.** Two teachers mentioned that three observations were insufficient to adequately judge a teachers’ performance and would like more frequent observations. T4 agreed and stated that there should be more than three observations and that informal observations, or walk-throughs, should be utilized to evaluate teachers as well. T1 commented that, “I [don’t] really know if I had thought that observations really gave principals a true look as to what is going on in the classrooms when they come in three times a year because there is so much more” (T1, l203-206). In the research of Boyd (1989), teachers indicated that evaluations happen infrequently after their probationary years and they were dissatisfied with the amount of time administrators spent conducting classroom observations or were not evaluated by their administrators often enough. Researchers have determined that there is a need to improve teacher evaluation systems or broaden the systems to include more than classroom observation and timely feedback (Mathers et al., 2008; Hill & Grossman, 2013; Reform Support Network, 2015).
Finding 6. Teachers indicated that relationships between administrators and teachers are important. In answering questions regarding what administrators need in order to conduct classroom observations and deliver effective feedback, teachers indicated that the impact of trusting relationships with their administrators was significant. Five teachers mentioned that a good relationship with administration is important; and three teachers mentioned the importance of trust and respect for the administrator. T1 emphasized that “relationships are important. It is important for the teachers and the students. It is also important for the administration and the staff” (T1, l102-104). A study by Melton et al. (2013) supported this finding indicating that building leadership characterized as participative showed a positive correlation with the PISA-Reading scores and a significant difference between groups on both PISA-Reading and PISA-Math. Principals need more time to be visible in classrooms, approachable, and available for teachers.

Finding 7. Teachers wanted administrators who have strong instructional backgrounds having taught an SOL grade or a grade level represented at the school. Over half of the participants (five out of nine teachers) indicated that they wanted an administrator that had experience teaching an elementary grade or taught an SOL grade in the middle or high school level. T2 stated strongly that, “I think every building; if you’re in a 3-5 building or a K-5 building, one of the administrators have better have taught an SOL grade” (T2, l79-81). T8 agreed emphasizing,

When you take someone who’s been an elementary teacher their whole career and put them in high school as an administrator, those teachers aren’t going to look at them as someone who knows high school instruction. Cause guess what, they don’t. (T8, l90-94) T8 further added, “I think you need to have walked the walk if you want teachers to listen to your talk” (T8, l97-98). This is supported by the Reform Support Network (2015) in their finding that administrators in large schools do not possess the content expertise needed to provide the instructional support that all the teachers in their building need.

Discussion and Implications of Findings

The results of this study have implications for school administrators, district leaders, and various departments within the district. Education leaders can use the findings in this study to help improve the administrator’s classroom observation feedback and the impact feedback can
have on elementary teachers’ instructional practices, pedagogy, or strategies, as well as student achievement. The following provides implications for leadership practices.

**Implication 1.** **Principals should consider providing teachers immediate feedback following an observation; possible ways to provide the immediate feedback include a written note from the administrator or a read only draft of the observation write up.**

Administrators should make every effort to meet with teachers for a post observation conference to deliver feedback within one to two weeks of the observation; the sooner the better. During the post observation conference, principals should consider formatting it as follows: allow the teacher to self-reflect, discuss student academic progress, and then share strengths and weaknesses (glows and grows). Human resource departments may want to create some suggested timelines for meeting with teachers following observations to ensure timeliness.

These implications are supported by the research of Boyd (1989) and Stearns et al. (2012) in their opinion that following classroom observations, administrators should promptly schedule post observation conferences with the teacher to discuss strengths and opportunities for growth. Khachatryan (2015) agreed and surmised that teachers need and want what he called “process-feedback,” timely feedback which has an impact on a teacher’s instructional practice and therefore increases student achievement; this type of feedback compels teachers to be more likely to change their instructional practices and directs the teacher’s attention to the learning process of the students. This implication is associated with finding number one.

**Implication 2.** **Staff development personnel should consider training administrators in specific instructional practices, pedagogy, or strategies according to elementary, middle, and high school levels, specifically including those instructional practices or strategies that are shown to improve student achievement.** Boyd’s (1989) research found that teachers expressed concern that their administrators are either too far removed from the classroom, have little experience in the classroom, or lack proper training on conducting classroom observations. When possible, principals should consider incorporating building instructional team members in post observation conferences. The principal could direct a member of the instructional team to set up a coaching meeting with the teacher or follow up with the teacher after the post observation conference with some suggestions. This suggestion is directly related to the interview with T8 who commented that if the issue raised during the post observation conference “was an instructional issue, the principal may have been the one to bring it to my attention, but I
would seek out the people that I felt were experts in that area to kind of help me and guide me” (T8, l57-60). Therefore, human resource departments should consider staffing schools with more instructional personnel, which may include additional reading specialists, mathematics coaches, reading coaches, and/or other instructional coaches to join the administrators in making up an instructional team. This is connected to the research of Boyd (1989) in the suggestion to include other supervisors such as department supervisors or directors in the classroom observation rotation or process. This could be a viable solution to the perception among teachers that administrative feedback following classroom observations was not targeted toward content-specific instructional practices; rather they focused on general instructional practices, classroom management strategies, or organizational comments (Rigby et al., 2017). This implication is associated with finding number two.

Implication 3. Principals should consider developing their evaluation procedures and holding meetings at the beginning of the school year to review expectations with those being formally observed. This is connected to the core principles as stated in TNTP (2010); no evaluation system is perfect, in education or any other profession. However, the evaluation system should be explained and clear to all who use it to get the maximum benefits from it. In order to accomplish this, principals should consider developing a coherent plan with their administrative team prior to the beginning of the year so there is consistency among observers. Additionally, they should share the details of the plan with the teachers who will be formally observed that year. This implication is associated with finding three.

Implication 4. Staff development and human resources personnel should consider providing professional development for administrators on the topic of providing and delivering observation feedback to teachers at elementary, middle, or high school levels. This is supported by the research of Mathers et al. (2008) who determined that classroom observation feedback must be related to professional development directed by the district, the school, or the individual teacher. By utilizing the feedback and discussion following classroom observations, administrators should consider providing professional development options and packages that could be designed by the district, the school, or the individual teacher. When these staff development packages are followed by instructional support and feedback from instructional coaches and professional development from central office personnel, the feedback can be quite meaningful (Rigby et al., 2017). This implication is associated with finding three.
Implication 5. Human resources personnel should consider re-evaluating how they staff instructional personnel at elementary schools; elementary teachers perceive that there are not enough instructional staff to support most elementary schools. Another solution to consider is perhaps adding additional members to the instructional team, perhaps content or instructional coaches or lead teachers, to provide more instructional support to building administrators. This is supported by the research of Hill and Grossman (2013) who surmised that if there is follow-up between the teacher and the administrator in addition to school or district professional development based on the classroom observation feedback, a teacher may be even more apt to make instructional improvements with the provided support. This implication is associated with finding four.

Implication 6. Building leader, human resources personnel, and staff development department personnel should consider entering into conversations regarding how to expand the system of teacher evaluation. Principals should consider conducting more observations, not just three formal observations, and consider including informal or walk-through observations as well. It should be noted that three formal observations is recommended by current state guidelines (VDOE website, 2011). Human resources should encourage and develop processes for dialogue, student progress monitoring, classroom management, and other aspects of the evaluation process that should be considered during the evaluation year. Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) pointed out that school systems that boast successful teacher evaluation systems use multiple data points to include multiple classroom observations, expert evaluators, reviews of lesson plans, peer evaluations, and mentoring. The research of Mathers et al. (2008) would argue for considering teacher portfolio assessments, student performance data, student work samples, and teacher self-assessments. This implication is associated with finding five.

Implication 7. Human resources personnel should consider adjusting the administrative staffing formula for elementary schools to allow for more administrators to redistribute tasks, be more available to teachers, and have additional time to visit classrooms and teachers. Establishing and maintaining relationships with teachers happens with time. This is connected to the research of Darling-Hammond (2013), who supported the need for quality, actionable feedback allowing teachers an opportunity to discuss the feedback with their evaluator. Providing time for this feedback aids in the development of trusting relationships between administrators and teachers. TNTP (2010) affirms this claim stating that
the observer should have frequent conversations with the teacher to “discuss overall classroom performance and student progress” (p. 8). This implication is associated with finding six.

Implication 8. When making administrative placements, human resources personnel should consider the teaching experience of each administrator. Research supports that as an instructional leader, building administrators have the responsibility to regularly observe their teachers, provide quality feedback, and support teachers as they improve and tweak their instructional practices (Zatynski, 2012). This is difficult to accomplish if the building administrators do not have experience teaching on an elementary level or do not understand the pressures of teaching SOL grades. However, regardless of their instructional background, Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) surmised that administrators need professional development and training to become great instructional leaders and teacher evaluators. This implication is associated with finding seven.

Suggestions for Future Studies

The results of this study point toward the indication that administrative classroom observation feedback can positively impact elementary teachers’ instructional practices. Future research could expand on these findings and might include some of the following possible research studies.

1. Conduct a study to measure the amount and effectiveness of feedback between different elementary schools. This research study analyzed interview data that considered elementary schools as a whole. Future research should attempt to determine if there is a difference between the amount and the effectiveness of observation feedback teachers in Title 1 schools receive as opposed to teachers in non-Title 1 schools. Future research should attempt to determine if there is a difference between the amount and effectiveness of feedback between primary schools and elementary or intermediate schools.

2. Increase the sample of the study. This research represented participants from elementary schools in one public-school district. The same research methodology could be applied in a study that includes secondary teachers.

3. Expand the setting of the study. This research study represented participants from one public school district in Virginia. Future research could include elementary schools from multiple school districts.
4. **Consider a study that includes measuring how many teachers change their instructional practices, pedagogy, or strategies following observation feedback.** This research study focused upon teacher self-reported interview responses. Future research could include measures that quantify how many teachers actually make changes to their instructional practices, pedagogy, or strategies as a result of observation feedback.

5. **Consider a study related to assessing administrators’ ability to provide effective feedback following observations.** This research study focused on teacher interview responses. Future studies should assess administrators’ ability to craft observation feedback and delivering the feedback in effective ways. Districts could consider focusing on principal preparation programs and follow-up in-service opportunities for district leadership as they work to prepare and support principals to deliver effective feedback.

**Findings Summary**

Based on experience and previous research, the researcher anticipated that there would be a connection between the degree of effectiveness of administrative observation feedback and the response of the teacher. The researcher also pondered why some teachers change their instructional practices or strategies due to administrative classroom observation feedback while others do not. Additionally, considering that classroom observations and the teacher evaluation process is such an important and large responsibility of building administrators as instructional leaders, the researcher could not help but wonder if the effort, or lack thereof, placed in this process makes any difference or if it really is just a task to complete or a process to utilize if there is an ineffective teacher. The interview data collected in this study showed that generally speaking, elementary teachers desired more observations; timely, effective feedback; suggestions or strategies to improve their practices and increase student achievement; support from instructional personnel to carry out the specific suggestions or strategies; and trusting relationships with their administrators to foster these conversations and potential changes.

**Conclusions/Reflections**

The purpose of this study was to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. While the research in this study focused on elementary teachers and administrators, it begs the question how secondary teachers define feedback, what they perceive is the role or purpose of
administrative observation feedback, what they perceive is the potential impact of that feedback, and what determines if they change or do not change their practices or strategies as a result of the feedback they receive.

In reflecting on this process, the researcher would make or suggest the following adjustments:

1. Expand the research collection to include interviewing the principal of the school as well as the teachers.
2. Conduct the interviews during a different time of the year, December and January were difficult months with school breaks, mid-year testing, and teacher availability.
3. Ask an additional interview question to gain further clarity on the impact of the relationship between the teachers and the administrators. If considering a mixed methods approach, perhaps a climate survey could be added for the teachers in the buildings that were selected.

On the day I defended this dissertation, Monday March 23, 2020, the Governor of Virginia announced that schools would be closed for the remainder of the school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of this news, we are left with the realization that the school year has just stopped. Everything is suspended and unfinished. As with all school tasks and responsibilities, school administrators will not be able to complete the evaluation cycle with those teachers who are being formally evaluated. The goals we had to informally observe each teacher are also left unfinished. For the next several weeks and as part of the fallout, many questions will need to be answered. Will informal observations be considered to complete this process? What will the feedback or follow-up feedback for teachers look like? Do we continue this year’s professional development plans next year? These and many other questions remain unanswered. The timeliness of this announcement of schools closing is not lost in regards to my study and research and the effect it will have on teachers in the current observation cycle.

This journey has provided me an opportunity to grow as an educational leader. Through this cohort I have learned how to read, understand, and interpret research. I have strengthened my ability to write for a variety of purposes both scholarly and descriptively. Reading literature and conducting research have given me a greater understanding of the impact of classroom observations and feedback and increased my appreciation and love for this facet of my job as an instructional leader and principal. Additionally I have learned how to conduct qualitative
research, a valuable skill in educational leadership. I look forward to utilizing the knowledge I have gained to increase my job performance and inform district leaders of the findings and implication of my research. I have learned a lot about myself through this experience and honed my ability to prioritize, set goals, and develop a stronger sense of resolve. The members of my cohort have become lifelong friends and professional colleagues I will seek out throughout my career. I have a great appreciation for the Virginia Tech faculty, my cohort, and my dissertation committee members.
References


http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022487111404241


https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2016.08.001


Appendix A
Training in Human Subjects Protection

Certificate of Completion
This certifies that
Tracy Ann Cioppa Mrs
Has completed
Training in Human Subjects Protection
On the following topics:
   Historical Basis for Regulating Human Subjects Research
   The Belmont Report
   Federal and Virginia Tech Regulatory Entities, Policies and Procedures
   on
June 25, 2018
Appendix B
IRB Approval Letter

MEMORANDUM
DATE: December 9, 2019
TO: Carol S Cash, Tracy Ann Cioppa Ms
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires October 29, 2024)

PROTOCOL TITLE: The Role of Classroom Observational Feedback by Elementary Principals Impacting Instructional Practices

IRB NUMBER: IRB 19-940

Effective December 9, 2019, the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category(ies) 1,2(ii).

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

This exempt determination does not apply to any collaborating institution(s). The Virginia Tech HRPP and IRB cannot provide an exemption that overrides the jurisdiction of a local IRB or other institutional mechanism for determining exemptions.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at: https://secure.research.vt.edu/external/irb responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before beginning your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Determined As: Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category(ies) 1,2(ii)

Protocol Determination Date: December 9, 2019

ASSOCIATED FUNDING:
The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this protocol, if required.
Appendix C
School District Approval Letter

December 9, 2019

Tracy Cioppa
Doctoral Student, Virginia Tech

Dear Mrs. Cioppa:

Your request to conduct research for your doctoral degree at Virginia Tech is approved. Specifically, you are approved to contact those in your target audience regarding your study – *The Role of Classroom Observational Feedback by Elementary Administrators Impacting Instructional Practices*. The approval is granted with the understanding that the following conditions will apply:

- Participation of school personnel is strictly voluntary. Approval to contact specific groups does not guarantee participation.

- Parent permission must be obtained for student participation (if applicable).

- Names of individuals, school names or the name of the school division cannot be used in the reporting of the results of your findings without prior permission from the Department of Strategic Planning and Partnerships.

- All copies, distribution, retrieval of materials and arrangement of interviews/collections will be your responsibility.

- Questions/procedures must be limited to those detailed in your prospectus.

You may use this letter as a cover letter when contacting administrators and teachers. However, please be advised that all contact and distribution will be your responsibility. Should you have further questions, please feel free to contact me at. Best wishes with your research study and continued pursuit of your educational goals.

Sincerely,

(Research Approval)
Appendix D

Request for Participation- Principal

Dear Elementary Principal,

My name is Tracy Cioppa, and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech. I am requesting your help in my doctoral dissertation research by allowing me to interview 3 of your elementary teachers. My study aims to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrative classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. The population for participation in my study is elementary school teachers in one Virginia school district. I have completed my application and received my approval letter from the IRB for my research study IRB 19-940.

All 28 Elementary principals will receive this invitation to participate in my study. As principals respond favorably, each school will be assigned a number, and I will utilize random sampling to select 3 schools for participation who give their consent to be considered for participation. If your school is selected, I will ask you to submit the names of 5 of your teachers to interview. As you consider the teachers for me to interview, please select teachers who you feel have varying responses to administrative feedback following classroom observations. A copy of the letter I will send to the teachers is attached for your review. I will interview the first 3 teachers who respond affirmatively that they wish to be interviewed. Interviews will be 45-60 minutes long and will be audio recorded for the purposes of transcription. The interview will take place on a date and time convenient for the participant and in a location of their choice, which may be at your school.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary, and all responses will be anonymous. The interview will be audio recorded. Participants will be identified by their initials on transcription sheets and notes and will be given a unique identifier as they are quoted or referred to within the research. My university chair, as the primary researcher, and I will be the only researchers and collectors of data. For more information or to volunteer for the study please contact me at 757-572-2016 or via email at tracyac@vt.edu or tracyacioppa@gmail.com. This research will be used in my dissertation and possible publication when completed. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact VT HRPP at 540-231-3732 or irb@vt.edu. The decision to participate will not have any effect on employment within the school district.

Thank you in advance for your support and assistance in completing my dissertation study.

Sincerely,

Tracy A. Cioppa
Phone: (757) 572-2016
Email: tracyac@vt.edu or tracyacioppa@gmail.com
Good Day Elementary Principal (Insert Name),

Congratulations on your school’s selection for voluntary participation in my research study which aims to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. Please provide me the names of 5 teachers with varying responses to your administrative feedback following classroom observations such as: a teacher whom you are very confident in their use of administrative classroom observational feedback; a teacher whom you are somewhat confident in their use of administrative classroom observational feedback; and a teacher whom you are least confident in their use of administrative classroom observational feedback. I will interview the first 3 teachers who respond affirmatively that they wish to be interviewed. Interviews will be 45-60 minutes long and will be audio recorded for the purposes of transcription. The interview will take place on a date and time convenient for the participant and in a location of their choice, which may be at your school. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact VT HRPP at 540-231-3732 or irb@vt.edu.

Thank you,

Tracy A. Cioppa
Phone: (757) 572-2016
Email: tracyac@vt.edu or tracyacioppa@gmail.com
Good day Elementary Principal (Insert Name),

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research study which aims to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on their instructional practices. Unfortunately, your school was not randomly selected for participation in the research study. However, I do want to thank you for volunteering and for considering teachers to nominate for a potential interview. Thank you for your support of me.

Sincerely,
Tracy A. Cioppa
Phone: (757) 572-2016
Email: tracyac@vt.edu or tracyacioppa@gmail.com
Appendix G
Request for Participation - Teacher

Dear Elementary Teacher,

My name is Tracy Cioppa, and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech. The population for participation in my study is elementary school teachers in one Virginia school district. All 28 Elementary principals received an invitation to participate in my study. As principals responded favorably, each school was assigned a number, and I utilize random sampling to select 3 schools for participation who give their consent to be considered for participation. Under the recommendation and permission of your principal, I am requesting your help in my doctoral dissertation research by allowing me to interview you. Interviews will be 45-60 minutes long and will be audio recorded for the purposes of transcription. The interview will take place on a date and time convenient for the participant and in a location of their choice, which may be at your school.

My study aims to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on your instructional practices. I have completed my application and received my approval letter from the IRB for my research study IRB 19-940. Please respond within a week of receiving this letter to provide your acceptance or declination of this opportunity. The decision to participate will not have any effect on employment within the school district.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary, and all responses will be anonymous. The interview will be audio recorded. Participants will be identified by their initials on transcription sheets and notes and will be given a unique identifier as they are quoted or referred to within the research. My university chair, as the primary researcher, and I will be the only researchers and collectors of data. For more information or to participate in this study please contact me at 757-572-2016 or via email at tracyac@vt.edu or tracyacioppa@gmail.com. This research will be used in my dissertation and possible publication when completed. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study’s conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact VT HRPP at 540-231-3732 or irb@vt.edu.

Should you choose to participate, I will contact you to set up a convenient time and place to conduct the interview. Depending on the length of your responses to my 8 questions, our interview should not exceed an hour.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and assistance in completing my dissertation study. Sincerely,

Tracy A. Cioppa
Phone: (757) 572-2016
Email: tracyac@vt.edu or tracyacioppa@gmail.com
Appendix H
Interview Scheduling Letter

Good day Elementary Teacher (Insert Name),

Thank you for being interested in participating in this research study which aims to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on your instructional practices. Please remember that the decision to participate will not have any effect on employment within the school district. The interview will be 45-60 minutes long and will be audio recorded for the purposes of transcription. The interview will take place on a date and time convenient for you and in a location of your choice, which may be at your school. Please provide for me a minimum of 3 dates and times that are convenient for me to conduct the interview. You will be identified by your initials on transcription sheets and notes and will be given a unique identifier as you are quoted or referred to within the research. I will be the sole researcher and collector of data. This research will be used in my dissertation and possible publication when completed. Attached to this email is the interview protocol containing another brief summary of my research and the 8 interview questions you will be asked.

Thank you again for your participation in my study. I look forward to scheduling an interview with you in the very near future.

Sincerely,
Tracy A. Cioppa
Phone: (757) 572-2016
Email: tracyac@vt.edu or tracyacioppa@gmail.com
Appendix I
Interview Protocol

Project Title: The Role of Classroom Observational Feedback by Elementary Administrators Impacting Instructional Practices

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Tracy Cioppa

Interviewee:

Position of the Interviewee: Elementary Teacher

This study aims to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrator’s classroom observation feedback and its impact on your instructional practices and student achievement. The population for participation in my study is elementary school teachers in one Virginia school district. The decision to participate will not have any effect on employment within the school district. Participation in this research is completely voluntary, and all responses will be anonymous. The interview data I receive will have no identifiers attached to it. This research will be used in my dissertation and possible publication when completed.

(Present the consent form)

(Turn on the recorder.)

(Say:)

Thank you for consenting to participate in an interview for this study. The purpose of this study is to examine elementary teacher’s perceptions of administrator’s classroom observation feedback and its impact on their instructional practices, pedagogy, or strategies and student achievement.

Questions:

1) Tell me a little bit about yourself professionally including how long you have been teaching and what grades you have taught.

2) In your opinion, how clear are you about the expectations for classroom observations? Please be specific.
3) How do you perceive that the administrators help you meet the expectations set forth in classroom observations throughout the observation year?

4) What do you believe constitutes timely, effective feedback?

5) What skills or characteristics do you think administrators need in order to conduct effective classroom observations?

6) What do you perceive administrators need in order to provide timely, effective feedback for improving instructional practices, pedagogy, and/or strategies?

7) What determines if you change (or do not change) your instructional practices as a result of the classroom observation feedback you receive?

8) Is there any further information that you would like to share that I did not cover or ask?

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this interview. I will maintain the confidentiality of your responses.
Appendix J
Informed Consent

Title of research study: The Role of Classroom Observational Feedback by Elementary Principals Impacting Instructional Practices

Principal Investigator: Dr. Carol Cash 804-836-3611 OR ccash48@vt.edu

Other study contact(s): Tracy Cioppa 757-572-2016 OR tracyac@vt.edu

Key Information: The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether or not to be a part of this study. More detailed information is listed later on in this form. (This is a required section according to the revised Common Rule. Use plain language and short sentences to keep all sections at the reading level of the intended study population. Please include only a brief summary in this key information section. This information can be formatted in different ways depending on the complexity of the activities and the number of subject populations. Please see Examples of Key Information for three examples.)

Detailed Information: The following is more detailed information about this study in addition to the information listed above.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team at Tracy Cioppa 757-572-2016 OR tracyac@vt.edu OR Dr. Carol Cash 804-836-3611 OR ccash48@vt.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may communicate with them at 540-231-3732 or irb@vt.edu if:

- You have questions about your rights as a research subject
- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team
- You cannot reach the research team
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team to provide feedback about this research

How many people will be studied?

We plan to include about 9 people in this research study.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?
(Tell the subject what to expect using plain language. Whenever appropriate include the following items:)

- You will be invited to set up an interview with the co-investigator at a date, time, and location of your choosing.
- The interview should take no more than one hour to complete depending on the length and depth of your responses.
- As the subject being interviewed you will only react with the interviewer.
- The interviews will be scheduled at the convenience of each subject within the fall 2019 semester.
- The research data will be gathered and collected in the fall 2019 and early spring 2020 semesters. Research data will be transcribed, coded, analyzed, and compiled during the spring 2020 semesters.
- The subject will not participate in any experimental procedures or therapies.
- The interviewer will audio record the interviews for transcription and coding; handwritten notes will be made during the interview.
- Once the interview is completed, the subject will not be contacted for any further reason.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You can leave the research at any time, for any reason, and it will not be held against you.

If you decide to leave the research, another subject will be asked to participate.

If you decide to leave the research, contact the investigator so that the investigator can contact another subject to participate in the interview process.

Interview data collected and notes taken during the interview will be destroyed upon notice of the subject’s withdrawal. No explanation is necessary.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me? (Detailed Risks)

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Taking part in this research study will not lead to added costs to you.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

We will make every effort to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study and medical records, only to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete confidentiality. Organizations that may inspect
and copy your information include the IRB, Human Research Protection Program, and other authorized representatives of Virginia Tech.

No organizations will have access to the subject’s records. There are no limitations on confidentiality based on legal issues as there are none. No specimens will be taken during this study. No identifiable information will taken from the subject to be included in the research summary.

(Please describe the planned uses for the research results. Revise the following statement as appropriate.) The results of this research study may be presented in summary form in a defense of a dissertation and as part of a dissertation and potential presentations and publications.
Signature Block for Capable Adult *(contact HRPP for questions about adults not capable of providing consent)*

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research. We will provide you with a signed copy of this form for your records.

____________________________  ______________________
Signature of subject               Date

____________________________
Printed name of subject

____________________________  ______________________
Signature of person obtaining consent               Date

____________________________
Printed name of person obtaining consent
Appendix K
Member Check Letter

Good Day Elementary Teacher (Insert Name)

Thank you again for participating in my research study which aims to examine elementary teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ classroom observational feedback and its impact on your instructional practices. I have completed the transcription of your interview and have attached it to this email. Please review the transcript for accuracy and intent. If I have not heard from you within 72 hours of this email, I will interpret that to mean that the interpretation and transcription of the interview are accurate and captured the intended response to the interview questions.

Sincerely,

Tracy A. Cioppa
Phone: (757) 572-2016
Email: tracyac@vt.edu or tracyacioppa@gmail.com