How Teacher Evaluations and Feedback Impact Teacher Professional Growth in a Large Suburban School District in Virginia

Autumn N. Nabors

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Abstract

Teacher evaluation systems were developed and implemented to increase accountability but also to increase teacher effectiveness. A review of the research and findings of previous teacher evaluation studies demonstrated the need to further examine the feedback in evaluation systems and their role in teacher professional growth. The purpose of the study was to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process, how they perceive the impact of feedback on teacher growth, and what professional development has been offered because of the feedback.

This descriptive study used qualitative data and quantitative data derived from a modified version of the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) survey. The findings from this study indicated that teachers perceive the quality of feedback they received to be lower than administrators perceived the quality of the feedback they gave, specifically in regards to the frequency of the feedback and quality of the information contained in the feedback. In addition, there was a significant difference in the perceptions of the quality of feedback between elementary teachers and administrators and secondary teachers and administrators. Though teachers and administrators both perceived the working relationships as positive, few teachers reported making adjustments to their teaching practices in response to the feedback received. Teachers did not perceive teacher professional growth from adjustments made in their teaching practice in response to the feedback. Teachers also noted few opportunities for professional development suggested in feedback. As suggested by the findings, professional development needs to be specific in regards to providing effective feedback. Finally, teachers, with the help of administrators, need to focus on creating goals and growth plans with specific professional opportunities to help teachers grow professionally and positively impact student outcomes.

Dedication

My journey toward the completion of my dissertation was not alone. I had many individuals to support me along the way. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and dedicate this dissertation to the following indispensable people who have traveled along with me these past few years to offer a helping hand, to give an understanding heart, and to continue to love me even at times when I may not have been very lovable.

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I thank my parents for instilling in me a strong work ethic and the belief that if you put your mind to it and work, you can achieve anything. I cannot thank them enough for their on-going support.

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Chapter I

Introduction

A number of education reform policies have been implemented in the past few years, showing that education reform has increasingly become a national focus (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009; Taylor & Tyler, 2012). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2002) was passed and implemented to increase student and teacher effectiveness in order to close the achievement gaps. In a more recent reform, President Obama reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) stating, "We are calling on states and districts to develop and implement systems of teacher and principal evaluation and support, and to identify effective and highly effective teachers and principals on the basis of student growth and other factors" (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p.3). This act advocated revising the current system of evaluations to connect teacher professional growth to teacher evaluations in order to improve student learning. In addition, to receive funding through the Race to the Top Initiatives or flexibility waivers under NCLB, states were required to make these evaluation revisions. The political pressures that stemmed from the federal initiatives and policies have influenced many states to invest in and devise higher-stakes, standards-based teacher evaluation systems because of the potential impact on student success. Because educational reform policies seek to connect professional development to the evaluation system in order to improve student achievement, states' newly revised evaluation systems should be examined to determine which aspects are accomplishing this goal.

Researchers, educators, and politicians agreed that an overhaul of the teacher evaluation system was needed in the United States. Linda Darling-Hammond (2014), who has been researching teacher evaluations for thirty years, stated,

> Existing systems rarely help teachers improve or clearly distinguish those who are succeeding from those who are struggling. The tools that are used do not always represent the important features of good teaching . . . And many principals have not had access to the professional development and support they need to become expert instructional leaders and evaluators of teaching. (p. 4)

The Consortium on Chicago School Research (2011) agreed. Based on their pilot in Chicago Public Schools, they stated, "If two primary objectives of evaluations are to provide teachers

with information that they can use to improve teaching practices and to provide teachers with evaluation ratings that accurately capture their classroom performance, then research confirms that traditional evaluation systems are broken"(p.3). With the new evaluation systems being implemented across the nation, additional components became part of the process. In addition to the routine observations that have been part of the evaluation system for decades, many states were utilizing portfolios and student outcomes or value-added models. Combining these components to analyze multiple data sources in order to evaluate teachers might help to create a more well-rounded portrayal of a teacher for the purpose of accountability, satisfying the summative assessment of the evaluation process. Teacher evaluation systems can also play a key role in improving teacher competency, by stimulating the professional development of teachers and having an indirect influence on student achievement (Delvaux, E., Vanhoof, M., Tuytens, M., Vekeman, E., Devos, G., & Van Petegerm, P., 2013). To achieve this objective, the aspects of evaluations, addressing the formative assessment, should be identified, helping teachers to grow and potentially increasing their effectiveness in order to improve student achievement.

Historical Overview

Teacher evaluations were defined in the early twentieth century from a moralistic and ethical perspective (Ellet & Teddlie, 2003). Teachers were, therefore, expected to be good, upstanding moral citizens who conducted themselves with proper ethical standards. With these expectations, teachers were typically evaluated on personal characteristics rather than skills of effective teaching. In the late 1950's, Goldhammer studied the clinical supervision model and adapted the clinical supervision framework to education to include observations of teachers and conferencing. By the 1980's with reports such as *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, the American public and educational researchers began to re-evaluate some educational practices, including teacher evaluation models, as a way to improve teacher quality and student outcomes.

The passing and implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2002) sought to increase student and teacher effectiveness in order to close the achievement gaps, which again had policy makers and educators turn to teacher evaluation systems as one possible mode to increase teacher effectiveness. Race to the Top funding and waivers to the No Child Left

Behind Act of 2001 increased the speed of these revisions of evaluations as states competed for these funds, knowing that part of the criteria for receiving the funds would be including performance-based standards for both teachers and administrators. The Race to the Top (RTTT) was a substantial competitive grant program sponsored by the federal government. The grant was designed to motivate states and districts to create plans for improving their education system (US Department of Education, 2009). In the grant evaluation criteria, grants proposed systems to evaluate teachers using multiple measures and including student performance as a measure weighed heavily in the evaluation of the grants. In 2011, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility or No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waivers also were designed to include states' education reform by providing relief to some key requirements of NCLB in exchange for new expectations (US Department of Education, 2012). One element of the waiver was to implement teacher and principal evaluation systems to support student achievement. All of these federal programs have caused states and local school divisions to re-examine and revise their teacher evaluation practices.

Statement of the Problem

Accurate and effective evaluations serve as a basis for guiding improvements in teaching skills. Teaching effectiveness has increasingly become a national focus with a series of education reform policies, which have impacted the way we teach today. Education reform has exposed the traditional teacher evaluation system as inadequate both for differentiating between more and less effective teachers (The New Teacher Project, 2009). Tucker, Stronge, and Gareis (2002) summarized the importance of teacher evaluation:

> The role of a teacher requires a performance evaluation system that acknowledges the complexities of the job. Teachers have a challenging task in meeting the educational needs of an educationally diverse student population, and good evaluation is necessary to provide the teachers with the support, recognition, and guidance they need to sustain and improve their efforts. (p. 1)

Researchers, educators, and politicians agreed that an overhaul of the teacher evaluation system was needed in the United States.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) shared some surprising statistics that after five years 30% of beginning teachers leave the profession, and we can expect to lose as many as a million and a half veteran teachers to retirement during the next eight years (Carroll & Foster, 2010). In addition, the new evaluation systems are designed to increase accountability by using it as a summative assessment to identify and remove poor teachers. The void created by these two factors could cause a crisis in the teaching profession. According to Darling-Hammond (2014), "We will not improve the quality of the profession if we do not also cultivate an excellent supply of good teachers who are well prepared and committed to career-long learning. And teachers' ongoing learning, in turn, depends on the construction of a strong professional development system . . ." (p. 5). With the rapidly changing teacher population and increase in accountability, focusing attention on professional learning will be essential to develop effectiveness in new teachers as well as to continue to develop the veteran teachers to adapt to the ever-changing profession in order to close the achievement gaps and increase student achievement.

New evaluation systems added additional components to show the value of the process of measuring the effectiveness of teachers. In addition to the routine observations that have been part of the evaluation system for decades, many states have begun utilizing portfolios and student outcomes or value-added models. Combining new components in addition to multiple data sources to evaluate teachers might help to create a more well-rounded portrayal of a teacher for the purpose of accountability, but the remaining questions are, what are the aspects of this process that help teachers to increase their effectiveness. The teacher evaluation system can be used as a formative assessment in targeting areas of growth and providing feedback for professional development to continue to increase teacher effectiveness. Evaluation systems of the past were failing to give teachers meaningful feedback on their teaching practices or guidance about expectations in the classroom (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2011). Hattie and Timperley (2007) documented that feedback can be the single most powerful element in improving performance. Darling-Hammond stresses that this is what teachers truly desire, "They crave useful feedback and the challenge and counsel that would enable them to improve" (p. 5). Ultimately, teacher evaluations should provide regular feedback that help teachers grow as professionals, no matter how long they have been in the classroom. New evaluation systems that include feedback routines provide new information to teachers, but

there is little information on how the experience of being evaluated might change a teacher's practices (Taylor & Tyler, 2011). This study intended to analyze the perceptions of this feedback from both administrators and teachers in learning about the quality of the feedback and how the feedback impacts teacher professional growth.

Overview of the Study

Teacher evaluations can serve the purpose of accountability by identifying low performing teachers; teacher evaluations also can serve the purpose of increase teacher effectiveness through professional growth by providing teachers with strengths and weakness and insights on ways to improve through quality feedback (The New Teacher Project, 2010; Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2011). Teachers can learn areas of weakness through feedback, which could lead to professional growth and improved instruction. The mixed-methods study described the perceptions of both administrators and teachers regarding the feedback and how it impacted professional growth.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process, how they perceive the impact of feedback on teacher growth, and what professional development has been offered as a result of the feedback.

Research Questions

Teacher evaluations could be one effective method for teachers to use to improve classroom instruction and increase student achievement; therefore, the answers to the following questions could benefit school leaders.

1. What are the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the quality of the feedback as part of the Virginia teacher evaluation process:
2. What adjustments in teaching practices do teachers and administrators indicate have been made based on feedback from teacher evaluations:
3. What perceptions do teachers and administrators have about how adjustments made to instructional practices affected teacher growth:

4. What professional development opportunities were made available to teachers based on the feedback given as part of the evaluation system?

Significance of the Study

In an effort to improve student achievement across the Unites States, educational leaders and policy makers continue to examine how we assess teacher performance, but, more critically, how it leads to teacher professional growth that is focused on improving student achievement. According to The New Teacher Project (2009), the many districts the researchers studied in the extensive report showed overwhelmingly that evaluations did not give teachers useful feedback on their performance. The New Teacher Project (TNTP) (2010) report recommended ways to have effective evaluation systems and commented, "Evaluations should provide all teachers with regular feedback that helps them grow as professionals, no matter how long they have been in the classroom" (p.1). There is little empirical attention to the teacher evaluations and its effects on teacher skill development (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). In addition, few studies have measured how teachers understand the feedback, how to use it, and how it affects student achievement (Hellrung & Hartig, 2013). Analyzing the perceptions of feedback and how the feedback impacted teaching practices in a revised teacher evaluation system can help to inform educational leaders about the extent to which strategies regarding feedback are perceived to aid teacher growth, which can lead to improved instruction. With the national, state, and local focus on improved student academic performance, examining feedback can help identify what aspects of these newly revised teacher evaluations are accomplishing the goal sought by the educational reform policies to connect professional development to the evaluation system in order to improve student learning.

Conceptual Framework

Teacher evaluations have been in place for decades, yet the increase in accountability and reform for schools due to Race to the Top legislation and No Child Left Behind Waivers has demanded a change in these evaluations to be more rigorous and connected to teacher quality and student outcomes (Herlihy, Karger, Pollard, Hill, Kraft, Williams, & Howard, 2014). The thought behind these revised teacher evaluation is that teacher effectiveness may be the single most important factor in improving student achievement (The New Teacher Project,

2009). A Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation report (2013) showed that teachers that had been previously identified as effective did cause students to learn more, concluding that teacher effectiveness does matter in terms of student achievement. The teacher evaluation process is one tool used to identify and develop teachers' effectiveness, and this tool has been shown to improve instruction (Taylor & Tyler, 2011).

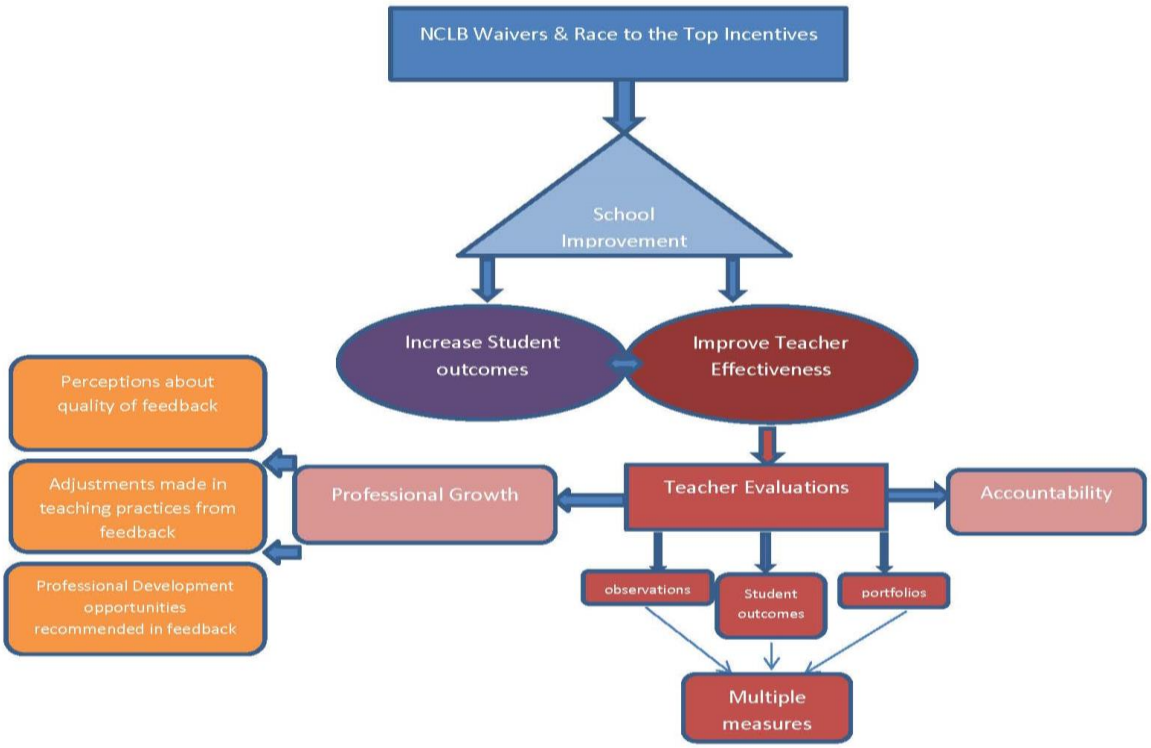

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

With states designing new evaluation systems, The New Teacher Project (2010) sought to provide guiding principle for the evaluation system to be effective. The six areas included 1.) an annual process of evaluation for teachers, 2.) clear and rigorous expectations based on standards, 3.) multiple measures of evaluation, 4.) multiple ratings to describe differences in teacher effectiveness, 5.) regular constructive feedback based on frequent observations, and 6.) significance of the evaluation process (TNTP, 2010). The focus on feedback in the new evaluation systems suggested that the design of new teacher evaluation systems should include feedback that is both accurate and useful in helping teachers improve instruction (Hill &

Grossman, 2013; Ovando, 2005). Evaluation systems of the past were failing to give teachers meaningful feedback on their teaching practices or guidance about expectations in the classroom (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2011).

The newly designed teacher evaluations systems were revised to promote professional growth and improve instruction in order to increase student achievement. The focus of evidence-based feedback included in these evaluation models and the perception of the feedback are key components related to changes in teacher practices and professional growth. This study analyzed the perception of administrators and teachers on the quality of the feedback and feedback's connection to teacher professional growth.

Definition of Terms

Division. The term division describes a school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Feedback. Feedback is information provided by a source regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Quality of feedback. The quality of the feedback was defined as objective evidence-based feedback as recommended by research on quality teacher evaluations and feedback that has specific strategies for improvement (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2011; Kimball & Milanowski, 2009).

Professional growth. Professional growth was defined as a change in teacher behavior that can result in increased student growth (Stronge, et al., 2011).

Formative. Teacher evaluations can be formative in nature, where teachers receive non-evaluative feedback in order to stimulate professional development and improve practice. The purpose of a formative evaluation system is improving teaching and learning.

Summative. Teacher evaluations can be used in a summative manner in order to hold teachers accountable for their performance. The purpose of a summative evaluation is to assess the outcome of the teacher's performance and determine if the teacher has met the minimum expectations.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). NCLB is an act by Congress which was a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The act emphasized

standards-based education with focus on high standards and establishing measurable goals to increase student achievement.

Methodology

The researcher conducted a mixed-methods descriptive study gathering data from teachers and administrators in a large suburban school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia. By collecting data from both teachers' and administrators' perceptions, the researcher analyzed the data and the connection to the research questions. The data gathered on the administrators and teachers perceptions were collected through a modified portion of the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) survey. The survey consisted of one demographic question identifying school level (elementary, middle, or high). Eleven five-point Likert scale questions were asked about the quality of feedback and three open-ended response questions were added to have participants respond to perceived adjustments in teaching practices, teacher professional growth, and professional development opportunities. The results were analyzed, coded, and interpreted to identify similarities and differences between teachers and administrators in relation to the research questions.

Limitations

A limitation to the study is the concept of perception versus reality. This researcher asked teachers and administrators their perceptions of quality of feedback, adjustments made from feedback received, and teacher professional growth, but the research had no control over the accuracy of those perceptions. Another limitation was that the researcher conducting the study worked in the district used in the study, which could lead to biases toward reviewing results. A final limitation was that the participation in this study did not meet the threshold for generalizability to the larger population. The low response rate may have been due to timing of the distribution of the survey.

Delimitations

One delimitation was the narrow focus on only one school division. This study was conducted in the Commonwealth of Virginia in Chesterfield County Public Schools, a large suburban school division in the Richmond Metropolitan area. Though the study was with only one evaluation system in one specific school division, the findings from this study have broad

implications for how other Virginia districts use the new recommended Virginia Department of Education evaluation systems to improve instruction and help teachers grow. Also, other states could benefit from the findings in the study in analyzing their own evaluation system.

Organization of the Study

With the increase of newly revised teacher evaluation systems, examining feedback can give insight to how these new evaluation systems are impacting teaching practices and are accomplishing the goal of helping teachers grow professionally in order to improve student learning. This descriptive study will analyze the literature regarding teacher evaluations and the feedback embedded in the evaluation systems. The purpose of the study is to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process and how the feedback impacts teacher growth. Chapter One of the study introduces the reasoning behind the rise of new evaluation systems, the purpose of these systems, and how these new systems intend to lead to teacher growth in order to increase teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Chapter Two presents the literature review focusing on the connection of teacher evaluations to the role of instructional leadership, the history of teacher evaluations, the different modes of the evaluations, the problems and perceptions of teacher evaluations and the importance of feedback in evaluations. Chapter Three explains the methodology used in the study, including specifics on the survey instrument to be used, structure of the data analysis, how the data was collected, and how the data was analyzed and interpreted. Chapter Four presents the data analysis and results suggested from the survey. Chapter Five provides findings and implications from the study and offers suggestions and recommendations for practice and further research**.**

Chapter II

Literature Review

There is a growing interest by policy makers and educators in understanding the connection between teaching and learning and what constitutes teacher effectiveness (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008). Efforts to strengthen teaching effectiveness have been increasing, resulting in more energy devoted to teacher evaluations--ways to accurately measure teaching and areas of improvement. Teacher evaluations have been in place for decades, yet the increase in accountability and reform for schools due to Race to the Top legislation and No Child Left Behind Waivers has demanded a change in these evaluations (Herlihy et al., 2014). Some have argued that these changes were needed because of our school system's lack of ability to accurately assess instructional performance, to act upon it, and to not treat all teachers essentially the same (The New Teacher Project, 2009). These changes were intended to make teacher evaluations more rigorous and connected to both teacher quality and student outcomes (Herlihy et al., 2014). With many states making these recent changes to teacher evaluations, there has not been an extensive amount of research conducted examining the standards-based evaluation system and its effect on teacher effectiveness and professional growth (Hill & Grossman, 2013). Even with some of these changes, experts such as Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) still argue, "Practitioners, researchers, and policy makers agree that most current teacher evaluation systems do little to help teachers improve or to support personnel decision making" (p.8). A good teacher evaluation system is a critical force for school improvement with the inclusion of valid assessment scores, but "it is being driven by popular, time-gobbling, anxiety-inducing evaluation 'frameworks'" (Schmoker, 2012 p. 70). Measures and definitions have changed over time, but the general consensus is that teacher effectiveness may be the single most important factor in improving student achievement and creating better schools (The New Teacher Project, 2009). What aspects of evaluation can help continue a teacher's growth and efficacy, thereby improving student achievement: Can we measure teacher effectiveness to identify those teachers that help students learn more and increase student achievement: How are leaders accountable to the evaluation process and evaluating teacher effectiveness?

Instructional Leadership

Historically, principals' roles in school leadership involved managing staff and operating a building, but a shift began in the mid-1990's demanding a new expectation for principals to provide instructional leadership (Wallace Foundation, 2010). The principals now had to ensure the school focused on high achievement and a culture oriented toward learning for both teachers and students (Wallace Foundation). The researchers stated, "This presumes that the principal is capable of providing constructive feedback to improve teaching, or that she or he can design a system in which others provide support" (p.40). The new role of instructional leadership for principals poses the question of what defines instructional leadership and what aspects of instructional leadership truly impacts teacher growth and student achievement.

In The Wallace Foundation study (2010), researchers conducted numerous studies to define the qualities of leadership that impact student achievement. In one of the investigations, they surveyed both administrators and teachers about perceptions of what specific leadership practices helped to improve instruction. From the results, two key components were suggested -- 1.) "keeping track of teachers' professional development needs," which 100% of principals and 84% of teachers noted, and 2.) "monitoring teachers' work in the classroom," which 83.3% of principals and 37.7% of teachers reported (Wallace Foundation). The study looked into other ways principals support instruction other than classroom observations, since teachers had a low percentage in indicating classroom observations as key in improving instruction. The researchers recommended, "Principals must include careful attention to classroom instructional practices, but should not neglect many other issues that are critical to the ongoing health and welfare of school organization" (Wallace Foundation, p. 76). The results from this study still stressed the importance of principals as instructional leaders.

Another study as part of the Wallace Foundation (2010) research explored the theory that high-quality instructional leadership and high quality instruction are linked and result in increased student achievement. The researchers focused on two components of instructional leadership – instructional climate and instructional action. Those principals scoring high in instructional climate had established a clear instructional vision for their school and focused on the climate to support it, and those principals scoring high in instructional action engaged in direct instructional support to carry through the goal. The high scoring principals overall did

both. An interesting difference arose from the research that elementary principals scored high in both categories where secondary principals scored low in instructional action (Wallace Foundation).

The new teacher evaluation systems called for an increase in demand for school leaders as well, who now had the increase expectation to improve teaching and learning (Ovando, 2005). The Consortium on Chicago School Research (2011) shared why leaders were at the center of the new evaluation system revisions, " Because principals control all aspect of teacher evaluation, the engagement and buy-in of principals is critical to successful implementation of any reform or initiative" (p.38). Ovando agreed that principals are in key positions to influence the teaching and learning process and feedback is an important part of that influence.

Another study looked at the role of administrators in the new teacher evaluations. Kimball and Milanowski (2009) reported through their study that administrators role in teacher evaluations is formative and related to teacher growth. In the study, the administrators perceived the goals in the evaluation process were to help teachers improve, foster teacher reflection, and give specific feedback as part of the evaluation process (Kimball & Milanowski). From these findings, the researchers recommended extensive training to create consistency with these three goals and build a common conception of these goals. The training is important ensure administrators do not to fall back into to old approaches that do not align to these goals. It is important to both understand the role of principals as instructional leaders and how this role affects the effectiveness of new evaluation systems in improving teacher effectiveness.

Problems with Measuring Teaching

Debate remains on how to measure such a complex profession such as teaching. On one hand teaching can be viewed as a science, where teachers follow prescribed methods, such as research-based strategies and professional standards, to achieve practical ends, measured by test scores (Wise, Darling-Hammond, MacLaughlin, & Bernstein, 1985). On the other hand, the science that teachers use requires an "artistry – the use of judgment, intuition, and insight in handling the unpredicted; knowledge of when and when not to apply the laws and generalizations; and the ability to make clinical assessments of how multiple variables affect

the solution of a problem" (Wise et al., 1985, p.67). The art of teaching makes evaluating the profession complicated when trying to determine the effectiveness of the teacher due to the unpredictability of the classroom and lack of environmental control (Wise, et al, 1985; Marzano, 2007). Yet even with the complexity of the profession, the *Measures of Effective Teaching Project (MET Project)* (2013) sought to determine if we can identify groups of teachers who are comparatively more effective than their peers in helping students learn. The researchers produced estimates of teaching effectiveness from previous years' data and randomly assigned students to teachers, and they found that those previously identified as effective did cause students to learn more (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). They concluded that teacher effectiveness does matter, and it is measureable.

This conclusion leads to another question with evaluation systems. How do we define teacher effectiveness: Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011) stated that it is difficult to define teacher effectiveness with complex tasks and a variety of contexts in which teachers work. In the broad sense, teaching is effective when it enables student learning (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). More specifically, some define it as the output of a teacher's work that can be measured by student test scores. Others define it as the input that can be measured through teacher qualification and observations of instructional practices. Goe et al. (2008) argued in their report that there needs to be a comprehensive definition of teacher effectiveness. Further, they indicate that it should include both the input and output, including having high expectations, helping students learn, contributing to a positive environment, using diverse resources, and collaborating with colleagues. Stronge et al. (2011) studied teacher effectiveness by examining the impact individual teachers have on student achievement and by studying the instructional practices and behaviors of effective teachers. The findings show effective teachers, which were classified as the top-quartile of teachers from student achievement gain scores residuals, had fewer classroom disruptions, better classroom management, and stronger relationships than the teachers classified as ineffective, and they concluded, "Teachers have a measurable impact on student learning" (Stronge, et al.). This statement reinforces the importance of evaluating teachers because of the strong connection to student achievement and ensuring the evaluation process is aligned with the definition of teacher effectiveness.

Even if teacher effectiveness can be defined, another issue is the reliability and validity of the evaluation scores. For teacher evaluations, validity refers to whether the measures used to evaluate a teacher truly capture the quality of the teaching; reliability refers to whether these measures produce consistent scores. Reliability is essential because without it an inaccurate portrayal of a teacher's practice could be depicted (Kane & Staiger, 2012). With observations being a main mode in the evaluation system, Strong, Gargani, and Hacifazlioglu (2011) expressed concerns related to reliability and validity in observations due to number of sample sizes needed, the analysis of data, and generalizations frequently made across grades and content areas. "Yet in spite of many years of effort by researchers to construct observational instruments for evaluating teaching, they are not though of very highly as measures of accountability, for the most part because they are perceived as having low validity and are considered too cumbersome for routine use by busy principals," argued Strong et al. (p. 368). Herlihy et al. (2014) conducted a number of interviews with officials in twelve different states to investigate the validity and reliability of high-quality observation scores in the area of observation instrument, rater training, certification, and number of lessons evaluated. The researchers found rater certification and monitoring were absent from most states' guidelines and most did not use multiple raters per teacher (Herlihy et al., 2014). Murphy, Hallinger, and Heck (2013) supported the concern with the issue of rater reliability, noting that many are not qualified to do the work, frequently avoid interfering with the work of teachers, and have little time to complete the work.

Kimball and Milanowski (2009) were also concerned with validity and conducted a study to learn if the differences in motivation, knowledge, skill, and context explained why some evaluators' rating had a stronger relationship to the achievement of the teachers' students than other evaluators' rating. Through a mixed-method study of a large school division in the western United States, the researchers found a wide variation among evaluators between their ratings and the student achievement of the students of the teachers being evaluated, yet the study did not show any clear pattern of behavior explaining why some evaluator scores were more closely related to student achievement than others (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). They did note that leniency by administrators showed a weaker relationship with student achievement, and this might be due to long-term working relationships with teachers and concern to protect collegiality, which hinder the administrators' ability to make unbiased

ratings. Herlihy et al. concluded that states could optimize more practices to increase rater reliability in their newly implemented teacher evaluation systems and include multiple measures to ensure validity of evaluation, which would be critical in improving school and student outcomes.

Finally, even the purpose of teacher evaluations has been under debate (Goe et al., 2008). Previous models, developed primarily to show others that the teachers were competent, held accountability as the primary purpose for teacher evaluations. These models provided little assistance on how to improve instruction (Hill & Grossman, 2013). These models failed because most teachers did not receive credible and accurate information about performance, since most teachers were treated and rated the same, a phenomenon which has been referred to as the Widget Effect (The New Teacher Project, 2009). In the analysis of the evaluation of teachers in 12 school districts across four states, The New Teacher Project (2009) noted that, in districts using binary ratings to assess teacher performance, "more than 99% receive the satisfactory rating [while] the number receiving an unsatisfactory rating amounts to a fraction of a percent" (p. 11). Although more stratification of teacher performance exists in districts utilizing multiple ratings for performance, the researchers found that 96% of tenured teachers received the highest two ratings. In addition, The New Teacher Project (2011) noted that while 98% of Denver's tenured teachers received the highest evaluation rating of satisfactory, the school division did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) under NCLB. The Consortium on Chicago School Research (2011) found in their pilot that 93% of teachers were rated as either Superior or Excellent while 66% of the Chicago Public Schools were failing to meet state standards. These statistics suggest a possible disconnect between teacher evaluations and student outcomes. Delvaux et al. (2013) suggests that the teacher evaluation system should balance the purposes; they should be formative by stimulating teachers' professional development but also be summative by holding teachers accountable for their performance.

In recent years, we have seen the value and importance of evaluation models used to increase teacher effectiveness. With different purposes, the structure of the evaluation model must be different (Hill & Grossman, 2013). For accountability purposes, the evaluation process should give objective and standardized information about the teacher, but for teacher growth purposes, the information should be descriptive (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, & Bernstein, 1985). Also, there must be attention to reliability and validity of scores in order to

focus this professional development in correctly identifying areas of teacher growth (Herlihy et al., 2014). Untargeted professional development has little impact on improving teaching practice (Kane & Staiger, 2012). Hill and Grossman (2013) suggested that the design of new teacher evaluation systems should include feedback that is both accurate and useful in helping teachers improve instruction. Through a study of mid-career teachers in Cincinnati Public Schools, Taylor and Tyler (2011) examined the new evaluation system which focused on frequent observations and feedback, instead of a tool in rewards and punishment, and found teachers were more productive during the year being evaluated and even more productive the following year. Their research suggested the powerful impact that teacher evaluations can have on teacher growth.

With a focus on school improvement and student achievement, school and district leaders need to grapple with the questions surrounding teacher evaluations, including how to measure it accurately, how to define teacher effectiveness, and how to achieve both purposes within the evaluation process (Strong et al., 2011; Goe et al., 2008). Evaluators need to be sure that they are accurately measuring the strengths and weaknesses of teachers, that they get the feedback in a timely fashion in order to improve instruction, and that schools use this information to best allocate resources and support (The New Teacher Project, 2009).

History of Teacher Evaluations

As noted earlier, moralistic and ethical perspectives defined teacher evaluations in the early twentieth century (Ellet & Teddlie, 2003). Teachers were, therefore, expected to be good, upstanding moral citizens who conducted themselves with proper ethical standards. With these expectations, teachers were typically evaluated on personal characteristics rather than skills of effective teaching.

In the late 1950's, Goldhammer examined the clinical supervision model and adapted the clinical supervision framework to education with his publication of *Clinical Supervision: Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers* in 1969. The five-step process described in Goldhammer's work included pre-observation conference, observation, analysis and strategy, post-observation conference, and post-conference analysis. Goldhammer (1980) argued that the emphasis should not be placed on going through the steps of the evaluation process but instead on building the relationship between supervisor and teacher with a genuine concern for

improvement. The five-step process quickly became the model for many teacher evaluation programs around the country. Reavis (1978) reviewed three studies in order to gain knowledge about the acceptance of the clinical supervision model that had been adopted and found that teachers favored the clinical supervision model over the traditional supervisory process typically practiced.

By the 1980's with reports such as *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, the American public and educational researchers began to re-evaluate some educational practices, including teacher evaluation models. *A Nation at Risk* was a call to focus on teacher quality. Wise, et al. (1985) designed a study to assess teacher evaluation models and learn how to improve them in order to make personnel decisions and improve staff development. After surveying thirty-two school districts and conducting a case study in four districts on teacher evaluation practices, they concluded that effective evaluation systems should suit the values of the school district, have more commitment than just checking boxes, have a clear purpose that the process should match, use sources effectively, and involve teachers (Wise, et al., 1985).

Wise and Darling-Hammond (1985) described two approaches to teacher evaluation – bureaucratic and professional – and argued that the bureaucratic model utilizes a singular design by an administrator with generic criteria, expects a fixed set of outcomes, and treats all teachers alike; while the professional model involves teacher input, is based on professional standards, recognizes multiple strategies and outcomes, and differentiates based on teaching assignment. Historically, teacher evaluations usually fell in the bureaucratic model, primarily for ease of process, in an attempt to treat all employees fairly and to monitor the adequacy of work. Wise and Darling-Hammond in 1985 argued for change to a professional model in order to improve teacher practice because the "most highly valued rewards in teaching are the intrinsic satisfactions that derive from teachers' sense of efficacy – the sense that they are contributing to student growth and development" (p. 31). A professional model would relate to this sense of efficacy and could improve a teacher's growth and development.

In the mid to late 1980s, counties such as Calvert County, Maryland began to look at a differentiated teacher evaluation model, which would move to the professional model that Wise and Darling-Hammond recommended in their research. The district leaders wanted a home-grown system unique to their district that would state clearly the roles of administrators

and supervisors and meet the different needs of their teachers, unlike previous systems that did not distinguish between struggling and competent teachers (Glatthorn & Holler, 1987). Through intensive training with both teachers and administrators, the district defined the new evaluation system with three levels of observations, specified quantities of meetings, and a differentiated approach for new or struggling teachers versus tenured teachers deemed as competent. A teacher from the county responded, "The process is straightforward and clearly stated. By having a well-defined model, there is more trust between teacher and supervisor" (p. 58). The differentiated model had new or struggling teachers on an intensive model with veteran, competent teachers only receiving one observation and one meeting each year. Though this model made necessary changes to improve the teacher evaluation process, the question remained regarding how this model would improve practices for those that have not been designated for intensive rating.

Later, Race to the Top funding and waivers to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 increased the speed of these revisions of evaluations as states competed for these funds, knowing that part of the criteria for receiving the funds would be including performance-based standards for both teachers and administrators in their proposal. The Race to the Top (RTTT) was the largest competitive grant program sponsored by the federal government, and it was designed to motivate states and districts to create plans for improving their education system (US Department of Education, 2009). In the grant evaluation criteria, grants proposed systems to evaluate teachers using multiple measures, including student performance weighed heavily. In 2011, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility or No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waivers also were designed to include states' education reform by providing relief to some key requirements of NCLB in exchange for new expectations (US Department of Education, 2012). One element of the waiver was to implement teacher and principal evaluation systems that support student achievement. Policy makers hoped these incentives would replace previous ones that yielded little variation in observed teacher effectiveness (Hill & Grossman, 2013).

Modes of Teacher Evaluations

With the evolution of teacher evaluations, many school systems utilized a variety of modes within the process from observations, to test scores, to portfolios. There are many

possible approaches leaders can choose for teacher evaluations, and the key to improve the evaluation process is to accurately measure teacher effectiveness that leads to improved instruction (Goe et al., 2008).

Observations. The most common practice in teacher evaluation systems is the classroom observation. A variety of types of classroom observations, from formal observations to walkthroughs, and a variety of tools, from Danielson's Framework for Teaching--the most commonly used observation protocols -- to district-created ones, are used as part of the evaluation process (Goe et al., 2008). Observations can provide rich feedback to teachers and are frequently seen as valid by both teachers and administrators, but there are issues with validity and rater reliability, such as different evaluators giving different scores to the same teacher. Raters, typically administrators, needed proper and on-going training to stay calibrated and clear criteria consistently applied throughout the year, because they were making minute-by-minute judgments on what they saw (Goe et al., 2008). Goe et al. (2008) stated in their research for the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality that only eight percent of districts mentioned evaluator training as a component of the teacher evaluation system and, "There is little research that links scores on well-validated observation protocols with other student outcomes of interest" (p.25). In the *MET Project* (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013), adding a second observer increased reliability more than having the same observer make two observations. Also, their analysis showed that observations based on the first 15 minutes of a lesson were about 60 percent as reliable as a full lesson observation but required a third of the time; therefore, another way to increase reliability is to have three separate observers for 15 minutes, instead of one for 45 minutes (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation). Though having multiple observers increase reliability, using only observations, even with four full classroom observations by trained professionals, performed the lowest of evaluation design compared to using multiple measures (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).

The accuracy of scores from observations is another element to examine. Hill and Grossman (2013) argue that the accuracy of scores affects the improvement efforts. If a teacher receives inaccurate negative feedback about one aspect of his/her teaching, this teacher may work to improve an area that is truly not a weakness. Also, these observation scores need to be accurately aligned with value-added models, if these are used (Hill & Grossman, 2013). Again, teachers could receive mixed messages if state test scores do not match with observation

scores. According to the research of Strong et al. (2011), there is little evidence that the observation-based teacher evaluations ratings have a strong relationship with student academic outcomes. Strong et al.'s experimental study, in which evaluators viewed teacher lessons and rating the teachers, showed high levels of agreement among judges but revealed inaccuracy in connecting these to teachers' student achievement gains. The results from this research cause one to question if educators can truly identify effective teaching through observations.

In many teacher evaluation systems, administrators commonly conduct the evaluations. Even though this may be common practice, principals may have limited time, resources, and even expertise (Herlihy et al., 2012). Also, Kimball and Milanowki (2009) noted that because they did not find clear patterns that explain why some evaluators had more valid ratings than others, using classroom observations pose a potential problem with single evaluators, typically school principals and assistant principals. In the Wise & Darling-Hammond's study (as cited in Wise & Darling-Hammond, 1985), many of the districts that were moving to a professional model of teacher evaluations used expert teachers in some aspect of the evaluation process. They believed, "The use of peer review or peer assistance in these districts greatly strengthens their capacities for effective teacher supervision by providing additional time and expertise for this function" (p. 32). In the case studies researched by White, et al. (2012), one of the districts utilized Peer Assistance Review (PAR) and found that it both "provided support to teachers and alleviated burden on principals" (p. 18). They found the PAR program built leadership capacity with teachers and helped improve both new and struggling teachers by facilitating learning from respected and experienced teachers. Taylor and Tyler (2011) noted in their research in Cincinnati Public Schools that the positive results of the evaluation process on mid-career teachers on teacher practices the year of the evaluation and the subsequent year may be due to teachers being more receptive to the feedback from the peers as opposed to the supervising administrators.

Portfolios. To assess student achievement, portfolios have been utilized as a primary or sometimes alternate way to gather a larger and possibly more accurate picture of a student's growth and accomplishment. The same method of using a portfolio can be applied to teachers. Portfolios are a collection of classroom artifacts that can include items such as lesson plans, class assignments, student work, videos, photographs, evidence of professional development, and assessment results. Using portfolios for teachers in their assessment instead of, or in

addition to, the more common teacher observation, could provide a more accurate evaluation of the teacher. The validity and reliability of portfolios can be debated, and Tucker, Stronge, Gareias, and Beers (2003) sought to understand the role of portfolios in teacher evaluation by conducting a multi-year study to determine the efficacy of portfolios on the teacher evaluation process and professional growth. Four basic questions guided this mixed- methods study, designed to provide an initial research base on the use of portfolios in the teacher evaluation process. These questions included determining if portfolios are valid assessments, if they differentiate the quality of performance, what the perception of portfolios is, and how they contribute to professional growth. Through this multi-year study in a school district three years after the implementation of portfolios, four methods to gather data were used in this analysis: content analysis of portfolios by the researchers, survey questionnaires, archival record analysis, and focus groups (Tucker et al., 2003). The researchers found that of the sample portfolios examined, "90% of all artifacts selected and included by teachers had content validity" (p. 583). From the surveys, Tucker et al. (2003) found that administrators and teachers similarly rated "fairness" and "accuracy" in the use of portfolios higher, but rated "usefulness" and "feasibility" lower. In the focus groups, Tucker et al. (2003) were able to get anecdotal evidence that helped to explain the different rating, such as the amount of time needed to put together the portfolio, leading to the lower "feasibility" rating. They concluded, "Portfolios do enhance the evaluation of teachers for both accountability and professional development purposes" (p. 592). Though the findings do give light to the use of teacher portfolios in the teacher evaluation system, the small sample size and the qualitative data described in the study can only relate to portfolios for this school district. Tucker et al. (2003) highlighted possible recommendations for further research to see how portfolios can lead to changes in instructional practices. Some suggestions included the use of more self-reflection and training, the use of peer coaching, and having more professional time devoted toward portfolios.

Value-added models. A more recent trend in order to add more objective measures of student growth and achievement is utilizing value-added models (VAMs). VAMs attempt to estimate, through statistical analysis of test scores, the contribution of a teacher on student learning. These models link the teacher-student data longitudinally in order to be used to evaluate teachers. Historically, teacher evaluations focused on teacher behavior and teacher

performance but did not include student outcomes (Ellett & Teddlie, 2003). The value-added models are also driven by technology developments (Goe et al., 2008). Briggs and Domingue (2011) sought to evaluate the validity of a *LA Times* report by Buddin of value-added models in Los Angeles Unified School District. Through analysis of the statistical procedures and replication of the study, they found that sorting cannot be controlled in VAMs, and the model is not accurate when compared to other models that control for outside factors such as student history, peer influences, and school-level factors (Briggs & Domingue, 2011). Goe, et al. (2008) concluded with the review of their studies that there is not consistent correlation between what teachers do in the classroom and the value-added scores, and value- added scores do not increase the understanding of what effective teachers do to reach these results. There is also concern about whether or not student test scores are valid and reliable indicators of student learning (Goe, et al., 2008). In addition, limitations to VAMs are due to the fact that some teachers do not teach subjects or grade levels that are currently tested and that some standardized assessments were not designed to measure student growth (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2011). Though the value-added model does not appear to be as accurate as once thought, Briggs and Domingue (2011) defended the use of this model in the teacher evaluation process, because they contend that the value-added model does not need to be perfect in order to be included with other sources to show the full picture of a teacher for the purpose of teacher improvement. The *MET Project* (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013) research also supported the use of state tests in this form, but the data suggest only assigning 33 or 50 percent of the weight to "increase reliability and potentially avoid the unintended consequences from assigning too-heavy weights to a single measure" (p. 15). Educators, including teacher unions, still have expressed strong concerns about reliability and validity in using these student growth data to evaluate teachers (Herlihy et al, 2014).

Student feedback surveys. Student surveys are another possible piece of evidence that can be used to determine a teacher's effectiveness in the evaluation process. Surveys offer a number of advantages because they are cost and time efficient, can be collected anonymously, require minimal training, and provide specific feedback to teachers that "may ultimately help to improve their effectiveness" (Hanover Research, 2013). Professional development through student perception surveys would give teachers immediate feedback from the people that are actually in the classroom learning. Much like the business world, where consumers can give

feedback on purchased products, it makes good practice for those receiving the teaching to have an opportunity to provide feedback on their learning. Goe, et al. (2008) stated, "A teacher's first responsibility is to his or her students, and students are in turn the most frequent source of a teacher's performance" (p. 40). Wilkerson, Manatt, Rogers, and Maughan (2000) designed a study to determine whether a relationship existed between student achievement and performance ratings of teachers by their students, selves, evaluation models, and principal feedback. The study showed high, positive correlations between student feedback of teacher performance and student achievement in all three content areas, while the teacher self-rating and principal ratings did not have a strong correlation and wasn't consistent over all three content areas examined (Wilkerson et al., 2000). Hanover Research (2013) compiled the results from studies and districts that used student surveys to see if they are reliable measures of teacher effectiveness, and they concluded that surveys can provide accurate measures of teacher effectiveness.

Though studies showed how student surveys can be a predictor of student achievement, there are still concerns with validity of students completing the rating. Some question if students can accurately rate teachers on curriculum, content, and professionalism. Others worry about halo effects that may arise when a student judges a teacher on physical or emotional characteristics instead of on teacher ability. Also, as teachers' reputations expand past their four classroom walls, some worry teachers that either have positive or negative reputations receive inaccurate rating due to past experiences. It is important to note that using student surveys in the teacher evaluation process may cause teachers to use unorthodox methods to try to gain classroom approval. Additionally, surveys may affect overall teacher morale if teacher evaluation ratings are poorly affected by student survey data. Finally, the research report by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2013) research concludes that there must be an assurance of student confidentiality with the use of student surveys.

Another concern with student surveys is the validity of the survey. Two surveys identified as effective to use in the teacher evaluation process due to their validity are the Tripod Survey and My Student Survey (Hanover Research, 2013). The Tripod Survey is used in Memphis City Schools, and Memphis is the only district that requires the student perception survey. Additionally, the survey, administered twice a year, counts for five percent of a teacher's evaluation (Hanover Research, 2013).

Other districts, like Davis School District in Utah, allow student surveys to be one of the source options in evaluations along with data sources, portfolios, and teacher tests. (Hanover Research, 2013). Goe, et al. (2008) noted that studies "provide convincing evidence that student ratings of teaching are worth considering for inclusion in teacher evaluation system" (p. 9)

Multiple measures. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has been a model for over twenty-five years on researching and guiding best practices for teaching. Using established teaching standards, such as NBPTS's, Darling-Hammond, et al. (2012) argued that to improve the teacher evaluation system multiple measures should be used, such as multiple classroom observations, a variety of data sources, timely feedback, calibrated observations, collaboration between the evaluator and the teacher, and peer review. Another vital aspect would be negotiated responsibility for evaluations where there is a collective professionalism in administrators and teachers collaborating for school improvement (Wise & Darling-Hammond, 1985). Wilkerson, et al. (2000) noted, "Multisource assessments that tap the collective wisdom of supervisors, peers, students, parents, and others provide the opportunity to more effectively improve teaching and document its quality" (p. 180), but unfortunately in 46 of 50 states only a principal or a single individual assesses the performance of teachers. The *MET Project* (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013) stated that each measure adds something of value to the evaluation process. Kane and Staiger (2013) concluded that multiple measures led to higher reliability.

One district provided choice for their teachers in the evaluation model. Oxnard Union High School District is a medium-sized district with six high schools in an urban coastal location. The teachers have the option of being evaluated by an administrator, or a peer, or through a portfolio. In a survey of approximately 200 teachers from three of the schools, 44 percent chose the administrator option, 43 percent chose the peer option, and only 10 percent chose the portfolio (Palazuelos & Conley, 2008). Palazuelos and Conley reflected on their results, indicating "One interpretation of this finding is that teachers' positive response was due to the fact that they were able to choose how they want to be evaluated" (2008, p. 21). This small study still leaves the question of how to balance the amount of choice to meet the teachers' needs with keeping the process simple enough to be clearly communicated. Also, another point that Palazuelos and Conley (2008) made is how to have a choice-driven system

that does not add more intensive work to the already high demands of both teachers and administrators. This may be one of the reasons that portfolios were not a popular choice for evaluation. The time involved may be a deterrent.

Unfortunately, there is still little validity and reliability in measuring teacher effectiveness with the wide variety of data collection instruments currently being used. Goe et al. (2008) cautioned from their research synthesis on evaluating teacher effectiveness, "Unfortunately, there is little empirical evidence of the validity of these various methods for measuring teacher effectiveness, and in many cases, there are no standardized instruments for data collection. Instead, the collection of data – and decisions about what is important to collect – is left up to local decision makers" (p. 48). In guiding leaders on how to best measure teacher effectiveness as part of teacher evaluations, leaders should consider using multiple measures, aligning the purpose of the evaluation to the tool employed, checking validity and reliability of those measures, and training individuals on how to use these measures (Goe, et al.).

Perceptions of Teacher Evaluations

The effective use of tools to measure teaching quality is important, but the perception of the process and the intended and unintended outcomes also play an important role in the overall effectiveness of the process toward the purposes of accountability and teacher quality resulting in student improvement. In Chile, the nation teacher evaluation system (NTES) was introduced by the Ministry of Education in 2003 and has been mandatory for teachers in municipal schools since 2005. The evaluation system contains multiple measures, including portfolio assessments, peer interview, self-assessment, and supervisor assessment. Teachers receive a detailed report describing strengths and weaknesses as part of the evaluation. Taut, Santelices, Araya, and Manzia (2011) conducted a qualitative study to analyze the perceived effects of the NTES. The researchers conducted 57 semi-structured interviews of principals in 30 municipal schools, and the results showed positive, negative, and neutral perceptions to some of the aspects of the NTES (Taut et al, 2011). Some of the positive perceptions for teachers included collaboration among peers through peer observations, increased revision and reflection on teaching, and improved teaching practices due to peer comparison and accountability; the negative perceptions revolved around the amount of time involved for both

teachers and administrators, the stress for teachers due to assessment, and negative emotions to poor results (Taut et al., 2011). Both positive and negative perceptions were from only administrators, not teachers. Also, of all the gathered data from interviews, observed improved student learning was not identified as a result from the evaluation process. Finally, in regards to how the information from the evaluations was used, the researchers concluded, "There was limited or no active use of the assessment in their schools" (Taut et al., 2011, p.225).

The role a principal plays in the evaluation process and the perceived effectiveness of the principals can also affect the evaluation process. Delvaux et al. (2013) discussed that a school leader is responsible for the quality of teaching and should be capable of providing constructive feedback to teachers. Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton (2003) agreed that the principal can be a key component in teacher evaluations, leading to school improvement, and they added that teachers also believe their principals are important to their growth as educators. Through a qualitative study of five counties in Florida through surveys, the researchers studied the teachers' perceptions of the evaluation system and the principal's role. The positive perceptions of the evaluation process included general and pedagogical feedback, but the negative perceptions included inconsistent processes, subjectivity, unidirectional manner, lack of motivation from the principal, lack of pedagogical background, and lack of time (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003). These issues with the evaluator can affect the motivation of a teacher and leave the evaluation system lacking in its purpose of teacher growth, accountability, student achievement, and ultimately, school improvement. Finally, communication and relationships can affect the evaluation process. The study showed that teachers want an open, trusting, and reciprocal relationship with their principal in order to have an effective feedback loop (Stiggin & Nickel, 1989; Zimmerman, & Deckert-Pelton, 2003).

The lack of time noted in Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton's study was also noted in The New Teacher Project's (2009) research on evaluations. This study showed that little time is spent on the evaluation process. Across all 12 districts studied, 64 percent of tenured teachers were observed two or fewer times for an average of 75 minutes (TNTP). The lack of time in the observations shows the infrequency that might affect the quality and specificity of feedback teachers receive in their evaluations.

Through teacher interviews, Kimball and Milanowski (2009) found some teachers expressing concerns about the feedback received in evaluations, which lacked constructive

criticisms and specific instructional strategies for improvement. The Consortium on Chicago School Research (2011) also revealed teachers feeling of skepticism of a principal's ability to use the observation tool accurately and fairly. Overall, if principals are perceived as knowledgeable, move through the evaluation process with fidelity, and have positive relationships, the process can be effective, but if principals are perceived as incompetent, teachers can distrust the process and the results. The perception data show that even with an outstanding teacher evaluation program, there may be little meaning if the school leader is not supportive or effective (Delvaux et al, 2013).

The concern over quality of feedback also highlights a possible issue. Positive feedback and good relationships are foundations of good morale and motivation. How do relationships affect the perception of the feedback teachers receive: The relationship between the teacher and administrator may affect the type of feedback given and how the teacher perceives the feedback as useful. Teachers crave this feedback, according to Darling-Hammond (2014), and she argued, "they [teachers] want more robust systems that are useful, fair, and pointed at productive development" (p. 5).

Feedback

The feedback as part of the evaluation system could be the key to a teacher's professional development. Hattie and Timperley (2007) define the purpose of feedback is to reduce discrepancies between current state and goal. Within evaluation systems, this means the purpose of feedback is to communicate current instructional practices, and the impact is to communicate how to reach the desired instructional practices from understanding the current practices. In the medical field, one main intervention that contributes to a teachers' professional development is the feedback from resident evaluations on teachers' performance (Van Roermund, T., Schreurs, M.-L., Mokkink, H., Bottema, B., Scherpbier, A., & van Weel, C., 2013). Since the feedback contributes to the professional growth and little research was found on how teachers respond to this feedback, Van Roermund et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative study to understand how teachers respond to the feedback reports immediately after reading them. The researchers were interested in the relationship between self-regulation, self-efficacy, and self-esteem with the receiving of the feedback. For the recipients that received positive feedback, the teacher displayed a positive attitude and self-confidence, although some

showed skepticism toward these scores; on the other hand, those that received negative feedback attributed the results to causes outside themselves (Van Roermund et al.). The researchers concluded that acceptance of feedback is influenced by self-efficacy, attribution, reflection on one's own abilities and general attitude toward improving performance. The results of this study show how a teachers' perceptions of themselves can impact how they receive and use feedback.

Like in the medical field, specific information about performance through feedback can be scarce in the field of education, which suggests a lack of information about how to improve (Taylor & Tyler, 2011). In order to have the "robust" systems that teachers want, both the quality of the feedback embedded in the evaluation system and how this feedback is linked to teacher professional development need to be considered (Ovando, 2005). Instructional leaders can influence teaching and learning through precise and effective feedback, but these instructional leaders need the professional development themselves on how to effectively deliver this feedback (Ovando, 2005). Furthermore, the feedback cannot be given in a vacuum; there must be a learning context to which feedback is addressed (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The feedback is ineffective if the administrator and teachers involved perceive it as a chore instead of as a way to discuss openly and constructively instruction and if the focus of feedback is quantity instead of quality (TNTP, 2010). With these philosophies of feedback in mind, Ovando (2005) conducted a study based on the theoretical premises that constructive feedback should be formative in nature and administrators should have the instructional capacity to deliver this feedback. In Ovando's study of how aspiring leaders prepare to deliver written constructive feedback to teachers, the notion that written feedback has potential to guide teacher's professional development emerged. The study further emphasized the need for strong knowledge foundation related to quality instruction for instructional leaders in order for feedback to be more effective.

The New Teacher Project (2009) study also highlighted the need for meaningful feedback in the teacher evaluation process. In the 12 districts studied, the researchers found only 26 percent of teachers had development areas identified in the evaluation (TNTP). This meant that many teachers were receiving no specific feedback on how to improve their practice. The study also found that with novice teachers only 43 percent had identified areas of development (TNTP). The researchers concluded from the results that many administrators do

not regularly offer feedback on instructional performances, and only 43 percent thought that evaluations help teachers improve.

Written feedback is not the only type of feedback that teachers receive in the teacher evaluation process. As part of many evaluation systems, pre- and post-observations occur so the teachers and evaluators can discuss the instruction observed. “It is the conversations themselves that act as the true lever for instructional improvement and teacher development,” argued Consortium on Chicago School Research (2001). In the CPS pilot, Consortium on Chicago School Research analyzed the quality of conversations between teachers and principals by examining the types of questions asked and the amount of time each participant spoke. From these conversations, feedback was given, received, and responded to. Principals were interviewed about their experiences in this process, and the principals reported challenges with engaging teachers who rarely reflected on their practice or teachers that did not necessarily know how to have a reflective conversation (Consortium on Chicago School Research). The lack of engagement may be due to a lack of training. Stiggins and Nickel (1989) found in one of their studies leading up to the development of the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) that one barrier to teacher development in evaluation models is the lack of training among participants in effective evaluation and feedback procedure.

Professional Development

Once teachers receive feedback, another concern in the teacher evaluation process is how this influences professional development. The processes of evaluation should inform professional development to work toward continuous school improvement (MERC, 2014). Additionally, professional development is an important part of the process because it influences student outcomes (Stronge et al., 2011). Delvaux et al. (2013) found in reviewing literature that teacher evaluations do not always have a positive influence on professional development; therefore, they conducted a study to examine influential variables for professional development as a teacher evaluation outcome from a teacher’s perspective. Their findings reflect only limited effects of the evaluation systems on a teacher’s professional development and show that limited teaching experience, useful feedback, and a positive attitude of the principal are the most important characteristics of the evaluation system. In order to explain the impact on those with five years or fewer teaching experience, Delvaux et

al. explains, “An alternative explanation could be that more-experienced teachers have more job security or have obtained tenure” (p. 8).

The purpose of the teacher evaluation system may impact professional development, because a system that is designed to motivate teaching and learning might have a different outcome than those systems that are more focused on accountability. In the study conducted by Delvaux et al. (2013), the formative and summative purposes of the evaluation system had different impacts on professional development. The formative and summative purposes in teacher evaluation systems create a conflict because a formative evaluation requires teachers to be open while a summative evaluation has outcomes that can have significant consequences that hinder the openness (Delvaux et al.). The study also concluded formative purposes of the evaluation system showed little to no effect on professional development, while summative purposes had a small but significant impact on perceived professional development (Delvaux, et al.) These findings are not in line with previous research, but one explanation for the results is that teachers are more inclined to partake in professional development when they feel more pressure due to accountability and fear of consequences or sanctions (Van Roermund, 2013).

The evaluator also plays a vital role in the link of teacher evaluations to professional development. In the study conduct by Delvaux et al. (2005), teachers experience greater effects on their professional development if the credibility of the evaluator is rated high; however the relationship has a different effect. If the relationship between evaluator and teacher is perceived by the teacher to be more positive, teachers experience fewer effects of the evaluation system on professional development (Delvaux et al.). The results of this study may be due to the possibility that teachers who have a more positive relationship with their evaluator do not fear consequences and may not feel compelled to take actions as part of the evaluation system.

Virginia Teacher Performance Evaluation

Many states have made revisions to their teacher evaluation process, especially with federal mandates due to NCLB and incentives such as Race to the Top funding. Virginia is one state that has revised its evaluation system (Virginia Department of Education, 2011). The new Virginia system has seven teacher performance standards, and the first six are process standards, meaning behaviors that the teacher demonstrates. These standards are Professional

Knowledge, Instructional Planning, Instructional Delivery, Assessment for and of Learning, Learning Environment, and Professionalism (Virginia Department of Education, 2011). The seventh standard, a product of the processing standards, is based on student performance and growth, and is titled Student Academic Progress. The Commonwealth's new evaluation system guidelines recommend the inclusion of multiple measures such as observations, informal and formal walkthroughs, student surveys, portfolios, and self-reflection. The guidelines also include components to support teacher improvement, which includes dialogue between evaluators and teachers in effort to improve teacher performance and student achievement. Finally, the new Virginia teacher evaluation system has an increase in the number of rating levels to show more variations in teacher performance. In the previous evaluation system, teachers would be rated on a two- or three- point scale, depending on the school district. The new guidelines recommend four rating levels – Exemplary, Proficient, Needs improvement, and Unacceptable.

A pilot was designed to help guide the development of the new system. Stronge, Ward, and Xu (2013) examined the results of the pilot in an evaluation report. The report was to evaluate the validity of Virginia's 2011-2012 piloting of a new teacher evaluation system implemented in 25 schools across the state. At the end of the pilot year, the researchers collected data from spreadsheets from each of the participating schools. The data included ratings for all teachers in all seven standards. Stronge et al. (2013) developed evaluation questions related to the purpose of the study in order to analyze this data. These questions were as follows:

1.) What are the relationships among the ratings on the six teacher process standards (Standards 1-6)?
2.) To what degree do ratings of teachers' six process standards predict student academic growth as measured by Standard 7 – Student Academic Progress?
3.) Are the results for teachers with SGPs similar to the results for teachers who have student achievement goal-setting as a major measure of progress?
4.) Do school principals sufficiently discriminate in the application of the teacher evaluation system based on measures of effectiveness?

To analyze the data to answer the first question, the researchers ran correlations among all six standards to show the relationships. They found that, “The ratings of the process standards have considerable overlap” (Stronge et al., 2013, p. 44). The results also show that the six process standards do have an interlocking connection, which reflects the complexity of a teacher’s job.

Stronge et al. hypothesized that the process standards would predict the outcome rating, the seventh standard. The analysis showed that only Standard 4 Assessment for and of Learning, Standard 5 Learning Environment, and Standard 6 Professionalism were the only significant predictors to Standard 7 Student Academic Progress (Stronge et al, 2013). Interestingly, knowledge, planning, and instruction did not have a greater impact on student achievement as reflected in the data from the pilot study on the Virginia new teacher evaluation system.

With the new Virginia teacher evaluation system, student achievement could be measured by either Student Growth Percentile (SGP) or student goal setting. SGP is an analysis of Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments for a particular subject area and measures the amount of growth from one year to the next the students achieved. These data are only available to teachers that teach SOL courses and only for the students for whom there are data from one year to the next. The alternate to using these SGP data to determine the rating for Standard 7 is developing student academic progress goals based on pre- and post-assessment data. Stronge et al. (2013) ran a t-test that indicated there was no significant difference between the SGP results and goal setting results for a teacher’s evaluation.

Finally, Stronge et al. were interested in the increased levels of rating and how this may distribute the evaluations over the continuum. The new system includes four levels of rating for teachers: exemplary, proficient, developing/needs improvement, and unacceptable. The summative evaluation analysis in these pilot schools showed a variation of summary ratings, but still had higher distribution in the upper end (i.e. exemplary and proficient) than the lower end (i.e. developing/needs improvement and unacceptable) (Stronge et al., 2013).

The pilot study conducted by Stronge et al. on a new evaluation system helped to guide the new teacher evaluation system recommended by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for all school districts in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The new evaluation system followed many of the guiding principles to have an effective evaluation system outlined by

The New Teacher Project (2010). The recommended system by the VDOE provided 1.) specific guidelines for annual evaluations, 2.) new performance standards with sample indicators for each standard, 3.) multiple measures of evaluation including self-assessments, student surveys, and portfolios, 4.) four rating levels to show differences in teacher effectiveness, 5.) recommendations for how to give effective feedback and follow-up through post-observation conferences, and 6.) rationale for a significant focus on evaluations to improve teaching and learning. Chesterfield County Public Schools adopted the new evaluation systems in July 2012.

District Level Teacher Evaluation Implementation

Chesterfield County Public Schools (CCPS) is a large suburban division in central Virginia. In preparation for implementing the new teacher evaluation system that would go into effect July 2012, all CCPS administrators were trained in the fall of 2011 using The New Teacher Center model of providing effective feedback as part of observations in order to improve student achievement. The model focused on giving descriptive and evidence-based feedback rather than evaluative feedback. The use of the evidence-based feedback removes some of the emotion and subjectivity from the evaluation process and promotes fairness (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2011). In addition, the district began using PD360, an on-line observation tool where administrators could use their iPad or laptop computer to record notes and complete the observation documents. Administrators were also trained on how to use this technology along with giving evidence-based feedback.

In the spring of 2012, all administrators were trained on the new evaluation system to begin in 2012. The professional development revolved around understanding the new seven performance standards and how they compared to our previous standards. Special attention was paid to Standard 7 Student Academic Growth. This seventh standard would mark the first time teachers would be evaluated on student achievement and would account for 40% of a teacher's overall evaluation. Administrators were trained on how to help teachers develop SMART goals based on student achievement and how to evaluate these at the end of the year. Finally, the administrator trainings explained how the new rating system of 1-4 for each standard would be implemented in summative evaluations.

In addition to administrator training, each school was asked to identify a minimum of six teacher leaders. These teacher leaders were trained on the same topics as the administrators during the summer of 2012. They then were asked to collaborate with administrators in their building to train the staff on the new evaluation system.

Midway through the 2012-2013 school year, the first year of implementation, central office administrators visited each school to review the SMART goals of teachers by looking at a sampling of teachers. Administrators then met with central office leaders to discuss the goals and make plans for the end of the year evaluations.

In the spring of 2013, administrators received a professional learning session on how to accurately and effective conduct the summative evaluations. Administrators were taken through a simulation by reviewing a sample teacher portfolio. From this review, the administrators rated the teacher in each of the seven standards, which then gave the teacher an overall rating of exemplary, proficient, developing/needs improvement, or unacceptable. The training's goal was to calibrate administrators' ratings to create a fair and consistent process across the school division.

During the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school year, new administrators received training on the adopted evaluation process and conducting observations using evidence-feedback. In addition, during the fall of 2014, all administrators received training on a new on-line system TalentEd in order for the entire evaluation process to be paperless. The goal of the on-going trainings each year as well as the new electronic system for evaluations was to help administrators provide specific feedback that is well-timed, not too cumbersome, and includes descriptive not judgmental information in order to improve both teaching and student academic achievement.

Summary

In Virginia, and specifically in CCPS, it is the third year of the new teacher evaluation process, yet many questions still remain about the process and its effectiveness. While there are a wide range of evaluation modes, as discussed in this chapter, there are questions to which modes truly evaluate teacher effectiveness with reliable and valid measures. Another question is how are these data in the evaluation process used to make adjustments with teaching practices to help teachers grow professionally that will make all students achieve to their

fullest potential. Finally, to be used effectively, teacher evaluations must be connected to student achievement and aligned with professional development activities for teachers and staff in order to promote school improvement. The effective use of teacher evaluations can only happen if all persons involved use the information gathered in efforts to increase student achievement and take the data to motivate teachers toward further learning. In the area of professional development, studies have shown the importance of feedback, but what is left unstudied is how the feedback loop is used to increase professional growth in the evaluation system. Policy makers have pushed for revised teacher evaluations, and researchers have showed that evaluations could be one of the best ways for teachers to improve classroom instruction and increase student achievement; therefore answering these questions is vital for school leaders. Yet answering these questions may not be enough. How the assessors and teachers perceive and use the data from the evaluation process may make the ultimate difference to if the evaluation process can be an effective tool to lead to teacher growth and increased student achievement; therefore the intent of this study is to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process, how they perceive the impact of feedback on teacher growth, and what professional development has been offered because of the feedback.

Chapter III
Methodology

This chapter includes methods and procedures that were used to gather the data to investigate the perceptions of feedback in teacher evaluation systems and how they impact teacher professional growth. The chapter includes the purpose of the study, research design, setting, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process, how they perceive the impact of feedback on teacher growth, and what professional development has been offered as a result of the feedback. Teacher evaluations could be one effective method for teachers to improve classroom instruction and increase student achievement; therefore, the answers to the following questions could benefit school leaders.

1. What are the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the quality of feedback as part of the teacher evaluation process?
2. What adjustments in teaching practices do teachers and administrators indicate have been made based on feedback from teacher evaluations?
3. What perceptions do teachers and administrators have about how adjustments made to instructional practices affected teacher growth?
4. What professional development opportunities were made available to teachers based on the feedback given as part of the evaluation system?

Research Design

In order to understand the impact of new teacher evaluations systems on professional development, a mixed methods approach was used to analyze perceptions of administrators and teachers. The research purpose was descriptive in nature and it sought to answer the questions of what type of feedback teachers receive as part of the evaluation system and how these newly designed teacher evaluations, with the focus on feedback, impact teacher growth. Descriptive dissertations can be focused on issues that lack clarity and use the construction of categories to explain a phenomenon (Butin, 2010). The specific focus of feedback in the

teacher evaluation process was used to better understand the impact of the evaluation systems on teacher growth. For exploratory purpose, mixed methodology was suggested in order to clarify complex data (Butin, 2010). The data collected were used to describe how feedback, as part of a teacher evaluation process, is perceived and how it can affect teacher growth. The descriptive data collected were from a specific population and cannot be generalized; however, other similar populations or different populations may find the results to be meaningful as they explore their practices with feedback and teacher evaluations. This study utilized a survey to allow the researcher to gather information from a larger pool of participants. The data collected from the survey were coded and analyzed to enable the researcher to describe and understand any connections perceived by administrators and teachers between feedback in the teacher evaluation process and teacher professional growth.

The Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) survey was selected as the instrument to be administered in order to collect and analyze perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding feedback. The survey allowed a large sample to participate in a restricted amount of time. Using Virginia Tech Qualtrics, the survey was distributed to half the teachers and administrators in the school division. The overall study design was descriptive to investigate connections between feedback and teacher professional growth. This study provided additional insight and recommendations to help administrators and teachers understand the utility and significance of feedback in the evaluation process.

Setting

This research study took place in Chesterfield County Public Schools, a large, suburban school division in central Virginia with 62 schools -- 12 high schools, 12 middle schools, and 38 elementary schools. The student population was approximately 59,000 students with the student body consisting of 55 percent white, 26 percent black, 11 percent Hispanic, 3.5 percent Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific islander, 4 percent two or more races and 0.5 percent American Indian/Alaskan native. This school district was selected because of its recent division-wide efforts related to the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system and on-going support. The school district implemented a new teacher evaluation system in July 2012 and utilized the recommendations from the Virginia Department of Education in designing the evaluation system. This population also was chosen due to its diversity of urban, suburban, and rural

schools within one district. The large size of the district was also considered in order to give the researcher a broad spectrum.

Population

The school system had 7,679 full-time and part-time teaching positions and 174 administrators. Before the 2012-2013 school year, all teachers and administrators were trained in the new teacher evaluation system. Chesterfield County Public Schools approved the study in the school district, but limited the population to half of the schools based on student characteristics, allowing a representative sample while lessening the burden on the district. The 32 schools selected represents half of the school district, with 1980 teachers and 93 administrators invited to participate in the study. Participants were asked to use the experiences of the past two years of the new teacher evaluation system to base their responses. Because familiarity with the teacher evaluation system in Chesterfield County Public Schools was necessary to make a reliable judgment, teachers new to CCPS were excluded in the study.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to collect data was the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) survey. A survey can be manageable instrument to distributed and collected from the large population, as in this study (Butin, 2010). The researcher used a modification of the 46-item Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) survey instrument, developed by Stiggins and Duke (1988) at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, in order to gather data about teacher and administrator perceptions of feedback as part of the teacher evaluation system. Stiggins and Nickel (1989) noted the instrument allows users to document the nature of the evaluation environment. “The instrument and reporting system arose from a program of research that identified the important attributes of a specific kind of teacher evaluation environment – that is, an environment promoting the professional development of teachers,” stated Stiggins and Nickel (p. 151). Though the survey was developed over twenty-five years ago, there are a number of questions that direct address the perceptions of feedback as part of the current evaluation model. Also, there have been recent revisions to this survey to use with administrators to gather perceptions that will also be utilized for this study. The TEP was an instrument of high reliability and has an internal consistency reliability as a whole of .94

(Stiggins & Nickel, 1989). For this particular study, the reliability of the instrument may be affected due to omitting all questions that do not relate to the research questions in this particular study. The researcher included only survey questions that related to the research questions of this study. In order to evaluate reliability, Cronbach's alpha was utilized to determine the internal consistency of the survey questions selected for this study. Only one demographic question and the section of questions related to the attributes of feedback were kept as part of the modified TEP for the current study. Administrators were given a similar version modified by Sheppard (2013) that was based on a revision by Doherty (2009). Only one demographic question and the section of questions related to the attributes of feedback were kept for this study. The researcher was granted permission by Dr. David Duke (see Appendix A), who created the TEP instrument, to use this instrument and its current revisions in the research.

The TEP instrument was an appropriate choice because of its efficiency to administer, score, and report; it can also be administered in large-group contexts (Stiggins & Nickel, 1989). The modified TEP instrument for both teachers and administrators consisted of one demographic question about level of position (elementary, middle, or high). It also contained eleven survey items presented in a five-point Likert response scale with 1 being the lowest or least favorable and 5 being the highest or most favorable. In addition, the researcher added four open-ended response questions related to the research questions regarding perceptions of use of feedback, opportunities of professional development, and how it has impacted teacher professional growth (see Appendix B). The questions were developed from the research questions and literature review findings. These open-ended questions were given to a pilot study – a random sample of individuals who typify the population to be studied – in order to test the survey (Butin, 2010). The survey took about 15 minutes for a participant to complete.

Data Collection

Prior to research beginning, the researchers requested and obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Virginia Polytechnic University by submitting the IRB Proposal Request Application. Once approval was received from the IRB (see Appendix C), the researcher then requested approval from the school division to conduct the study and collect the data by submitting an application to the Department of Research and Evaluation and

a letter to the superintendent. After permission was granted (see Appendix D), the researcher worked with the Director of Research and Evaluation and the Research Analyst to distribute the survey, maintain confidentiality of survey data, and store data.

Chesterfield County Public Schools provided the researcher with email addresses of teachers and administrators for the selected schools. The school district contacted the principals of the schools prior to the survey being released to inform them that the study had been approved and that the participants should be expecting contact from the researcher. The school district then contacted all teachers and administrators in the selected schools prior to the survey being sent by the researcher to inform them that the study had been approved and that the participants should be expecting contact from the researcher (see Appendix E). The researcher sent a cover letter explaining the survey and a link to the survey, using VT Qualtrics (see Appendix E). The data were collected anonymously through VT Qualtrics. A month was given for the completion of the survey, and a follow-up email reminder was sent to encourage participation (see Appendix E). Each respondent's consent to participate in the study was voluntary, and consent was implied when the respondent completed the survey. All data collected were kept confidentially, stored on a separate hard drive for access by the researcher, secured in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home, and will be destroyed once the research study is complete and dissertation successfully defended. No identifying information was collected. At the end of the study, respondents may request a copy of the findings of the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began once the month to complete the survey had passed. The survey responses were tabulated and organized by demographic information. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) computer program was used to analyze the descriptive statistics and determine the degree of variance. Descriptive analysis of the survey was conducted and included means, frequency totals, and standard deviation. An independent samples t-test was also run for each of the 11 Likert-scale questions to test for significance in differences between teachers and administrators' perceptions. Also, using the demographic information, responses were compared by level– elementary, middle, and high using a one-way between subjects ANOVA to compare the effect of teachers' and administrators'

perceptions of the quality of feedback. The open-ended responses were analyzed qualitatively through coding and examining themes. As themes emerged, frequency of these themes were categorized and analyzed. This descriptive study presented the findings in frequencies and means as they relate to the research question. The analysis of the findings helped to identify similarities and differences between teachers and administrators in the perceptions of feedback, teaching adjustments due to feedback, teacher growth from adjustments, and opportunities in professional development.

Summary

Teacher evaluations and the feedback involved in the evaluation process could be a vehicle to impact teacher growth. In order to better understand this possible impact, a study was conducted to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process, how they perceive that feedback impacts teacher growth, and what professional development has been offered as a result of the feedback The researcher conducted a mixed-methods descriptive study gathering data from teachers and administrators in a large suburban school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The data gathered on the administrators and teachers perceptions were collected through an on-line survey that contains both Likert scale questions and open-ended questions. The data were analyzed, coded, and interpreted. The data and analysis are reported in Chapter Four, and the findings, implications, and recommendations for future research derived from this study are revealed in Chapter Five.

Chapter IV
Results

This chapter reports the results of the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) surveys from both teachers and administrators in Chesterfield County Public School in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Additionally, the purpose of the study is restated and information about the participants and response rate is discussed in this chapter. The results from the survey are presented as they relate to each research question and then analyzed to explain suggestions based from the data.

Restatement of the Purpose

The study was designed to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process, how they perceive the impact of feedback on teacher growth, and what professional development has been offered as a result of the feedback. Teacher evaluations could be one effective method for teachers to use to improve classroom instruction and increase student achievement; therefore, the answers to the following questions could benefit school leaders.

1. What are the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the quality of the feedback as part of the Virginia teacher evaluation process:
2. What adjustments in teaching practices do teachers and administrators indicate have been made based on feedback from teacher evaluations:
3. What perceptions do teachers and administrators have about how adjustments made to instructional practices affected teacher growth:
4. What professional development opportunities were made available to teachers based on the feedback given as part of the evaluation system?

This chapter reports the results of teachers and administrators responses to a modified portion of the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) survey and additional open-ended response questions. The teachers and administrators from 32 schools in Chesterfield County Public Schools in Virginia received the survey electronically through Qualtrics. Teachers and administrators were asked to rate 11 items, using a five-point scale, in relation to quality of feedback as part of the teacher evaluation process. The survey also asked one demographic

about school level (elementary, middle, or high) and three open-ended questions. The Likert scale responses ranged from 1-5 with 1 being the lowest/least favorable and 5 the highest/most favorable. In order to determine whether the 11 questions in this survey all reliably measure the same construct of quality of feedback, a Cronbach's alpha was employed. The Cronbach's alpha for the 11 survey items on quality of feedback was .613, which shows an acceptable level of internal reliability of measuring quality of feedback (Howell, 2011).

Survey Response Rate

The teacher survey was sent to 1980 teachers. For generalizability for a population of 1980 teachers with a confidence level of 95% ($p<.05$), 322 participants were needed. For this study, 360 teachers started the survey, 281 completed the 11 Likert-scale questions, and 235 teachers answered all questions on the survey. The administrator survey was sent to 93 administrators in 32 schools. For generalizability for a population of 93 administrators with a confidence level of 95% ($p<.05$), 75 participants were needed. The survey was begun by 42 administrators, 38 answered the 11 Likert-scale questions, and 30 administrators completed all questions. As seen in Table 1, which shows the breakdown of participants for both teachers and administrators, the participation in this study did not meet the threshold for generalizability to the larger population.

Table 1

Survey Participation

Group	Number of Potential Participants	Number of Participants that took part of the survey	Number of participants that answered all questions
Administrators	93	42	30
Teachers	1980	360	235

Participants were asked to provide demographic information in one area – current teaching or administrative assignment. This information was asked in order to understand any differences that may present themselves among elementary, middle, and high school teachers and administrators perceptions of feedback and teacher professional development. Table 2 and 3 show the numbers of participants, broken down by school level.

Table 2

Teacher School Level

Teacher	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants	Percentage of Population
Elementary	132	36.7	42.47
Middle	103	28.6	25.81
High	125	34.7	31.72

Table 2 shows that more elementary teachers (36.7%) responded to the survey in comparison to middle (28.6%) and high school teachers (34.7%), and middle school teachers had the fewest number of participants. Elementary schools have the highest number of teachers (42.47%), serving six grades, or seven grades if they offer pre-K classes, while middle schools serve only three grade levels of students. The representation of middle and high school teachers in the sample is higher than that of the overall population. The data indicate that middle and high school teachers were more likely to respond to survey than elementary teachers.

Table 3

Administrator School Level

Administrator	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants	Percentage of Population
Elementary	14	33.3	39.88
Middle	11	26.2	25.81
High	17	40.5	34.41

The tables show that more high school administrators (40.5%) responded to the survey in comparison to middle and elementary school administrators, and middle school administrators had the fewest number of participants (26.2%). Elementary schools have the highest number of administrators, with 16 schools and two to three administrators in each building, while there are only 6 middle schools with three to four administrators in each building. The data show that high school administrators were more likely to respond to the survey than middle school administrators and middle school administrators were more likely to respond than elementary administrators.

Data Results

Research question 1. What are the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the quality of feedback as part of the Virginia teacher evaluation process: Survey questions 2-12 examined the quality of feedback. The information obtained in this section included amount of information received, frequency of formal feedback, frequency of information feedback, depth of information provided, quality of ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback, specificity of information provided, nature of information provided, timing of feedback, whether or not the feedback was focused on the evaluation standards, and the working relationship between evaluator and teacher. Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviation for each question answered on the 5-point Likert scale. The table also reports the mean and standard deviation for both the sum and average of all survey items.

Table 4

Frequency Table

	Teachers			Administrators			
Variable	N	*M*	*SD*	N	*M*	*SD*	*M* Difference
Information Received	281	3.15	1.019	38	3.74	.760	.59
Frequency Formal Feedback	280	2.45	1.056	38	3.37	.998	.92
Frequency Informal Feedback	279	2.63	1.180	38	3.58	1.004	.95
Depth Of Information	279	2.79	1.173	36	3.72	.741	.93
Quality Of Ideas/Suggestions	279	2.70	1.195	38	3.82	.730	1.12
Specificity Information	280	2.90	1.224	37	3.97	.799	1.07
Nature Information Provided	279	3.46	1.101	37	4.00	.471	.54
Timing Feedback	278	3.28	1.252	35	3.63	1.031	.35
Feedback Focus	278	3.77	1.049	36	4.00	.862	.23
Usefulness Suggestions	277	2.94	1.147	36	4.06	.791	1.12
Working Relationship	278	4.21	1.033	37	4.30	.618	.09
Survey Sum	281	33.986	9.4638	38	40.947	6.17	6.961
Survey Average	281	3.1095	.84358	38	3.8340	.3893	.7245

The mean score for teachers ranged from 2.45 to 4.21 with the highest mean score for working relationship and the lowest mean score being for frequency of formal feedback in the evaluation process. Administrators' mean scores ranged from 3.37 to 4.30. Like teachers, administrators' highest mean score was for working relationship, and frequency of formal feedback in the evaluation process received the lowest mean score. The differences in means

of scores show that teachers consistently scored the elements of quality of feedback, as defined by the 11 survey questions, lower than administrators.

In order to compare the differences between the perceptions of administrators and teachers on feedback as part of the evaluation process, an independent samples t-test was conducted. Prior to conducting an independent samples t-test, all assumptions were checked. All assumptions were met except for homogeneity of variance, which was tested using a Levene Test of Equality of Variances (see Table 5). For 8 of the 11 survey questions and both the sum and average of survey items, the assumptions of equal variance were not met; thus the results are reported from equal variances not assumed. For the remaining three questions, they met the assumption and equal variance t-test is reported.

Table 5

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

Variable	F	Sig.
Information Received	4.515	.034*
Frequency Formal Feedback	.246	.620
Frequency Informal Feedback	2.604	.108
Depth Of Information	9.744	.002*
Quality Of Ideas/Suggestions	16.332	.000*
Specificity Information	11.378	.001*
Nature Information Provided	47.888	.000*
Timing Feedback	2.491	.115
Feedback Focus	6.140	.014*
Usefulness Suggestions	13.343	.000*
Working Relationship	11.564	.001*
Survey Sum	12.810	.000*
Survey Average	21.020	.000

*p<.05

The amount of information received as part of feedback in the evaluation process was the first component that was reviewed. An independent samples t-test was run to examine the difference between teacher and administrators survey responses on Information Received. There was a significance difference in the survey scores for teachers (M=3.15, SD= 1.02) and administrators (M=3.74, SD=.760); $t(56.76) = -4.30$, p=.000. The effect size for this analysis, r (56.76) = -.31 shows a medium strength in the significance between the teachers and administrators in relation to the information received or given in feedback. Table 6 shows results of the independent samples t-test. The data show that teachers perceive they received

less information in feedback than administrators perceive to have given in their feedback to teachers.

Table 6

Results of t-test for Information Received by Teachers and Administrators

	Teacher		Administrator						
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*Df*	*p*	95% CI	*r*
Information Received	3.15	1.02	3.74	.760	-4.30	56.76	.000	[-.866, -.316]	-0.31

The frequency of both formal and informal feedback was investigated. An independent samples t-test was run to examine the difference between teacher and administrators survey responses on the frequency of formal feedback. There was a significance difference in the survey scores for teachers (M=2.45, SD= 1.06) and administrators (M=3.37, SD=.998); *t*(48.96) =-5.31, p=.000. The effect size for this analysis, r(56.76) = -.41, shows a medium strength in the significance between the teachers and administrators in relation to the frequency of formal feedback given or received as part of the evaluation process. Table 7 shows the results from the t-test and effect size. Also, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the different between teacher and administrators perceptions of the frequency of informal feedback. There was a significant difference in the results from teachers (M=2.63, SD=1.18) and administrators (M=3.58, SD=1.00); *t*(52.01)=-5.36, p = .000. As with formal feedback, there was a medium effect size, r(52.01)= -.40, showing a moderate significance between these teacher and administrator perceptions from the survey results (see Table 7). These results show that teachers perceive the amount of formal and informal feedback to be less frequent than what administrators perceive the frequency of giving the feedback.

Table 7

Results of t-test for Frequency of Feedback by Teachers and Administrators

	Teacher		Administrator						
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI	*r*
Frequency of Formal Feedback	2.45	1.06	3.37	.998	-5.08	316	.000	[-1.28, -.565]	-0.41
Frequency of Informal Feedback	2.63	1.18	3.58	1.00	-4.74	315	.000	[-1.31, -.596]	-0.40

The depth of information, noted as shallow or in-depth, as part of the feedback was studied. An independent samples t-test was run to examine the difference between teacher and administrators survey responses on Depth of Information. There was a significance difference in the survey scores for teachers (M=2.79, SD= 1.17) and administrators (M=3.72, SD=.741); *t*(60.49) = -6.57, p=.000, with a medium effect size, r(60.49)= -.41. These results indicate that administrators perceive their feedback to be more in-depth than how teachers perceive the feedback they received from administrators.

Table 8

Results of t-test for Depth of Information by Teachers and Administrators

	Teacher		Administrator						
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*P*	95% CI	*r*
Depth of Information	2.79	1.17	3.72	.741	-6.57	60.49	.000	[-1.22, -.650]	-0.41

In addition to studying the depth of information in the feedback, the quality of ideas and suggestions with the feedback were to be inspected. An independent samples t-test was run to examine the difference between teacher and administrators survey responses on Qualities of Ideas/Suggestions. From the survey results, teachers significantly (M=2.70, SD= 1.20) perceived the quality of ideas and suggestions lower that how administrators (M=3.72, SD=.741) perceived the ideas and suggestions given, *t*(67.76) =-8.10, p=.000 with a medium effect size, r(67.76)= -.50 (see Table 9). The results from the t-test indicate that teachers believe the suggestions and ideas contained in the received feedback is of a lesser quality than the feedback administrators believed to be giving.

Table 9

Results of t-test for Quality of Ideas/Suggestions by Teachers and Administrators

	Teachers		Administrators						
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*P*	95% CI	*r*
Quality of Ideas/Suggestions	2.70	1.20	3.72	.741	-8.10	67.76	.000	[-1.40 -.84]	-0.50

Another aspect that impacts quality of feedback can be how general or specific the information contained in the feedback is. Through an independent samples t-test , teachers

(M=2.90, SD= 1.22) reported, through the survey responses, significantly more general information contained in feedback than administrators (M=3.97, SD=.799); *t*(61.04) =-7.16, p=.000. The medium effect size, r(61.04)=-.46, and results indicate that administrators perceive their feedback as more specific, showing a discrepancy in the perceptions by teachers and administrators about the specificity of feedback that teacher receive in the evaluation process.

Table 10

Results of t-test for Specificity Information by Teachers and Administrators

	Teachers		Administrators						
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI	*r*
Specificity Information	2.90	1.22	3.97	.799	-7.16	61.04	.000	[-1.38, -.776]	-0.46

The nature of the feedback, whether the feedback is judgmental or descriptive, can influence the perception of the quality of feedback. An independent samples t-test was performed to examine the difference between teacher and administrators survey responses on Nature Information. There was a significant difference in the perceptions teachers (M=2.90, SD= 1.22) and administrators (M=4.00, SD=.471); *t*(100.18) =-5.35, p=.000 , with administrators perceiving the feedback to be more descriptive than teachers. The medium to large effect size, r(100.18)= -.51, shows this discrepancy is larger than the differences in the other variables examined through the survey. The data also suggest that teachers perceive the feedback to be more judgmental than administrators perceived they had been in giving the feedback.

Table 11

Results of t-test for Nature Information Provided by Teachers and Administrators

	Teachers		Administrators						
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI	*r*
Nature Information Provided	2.90	1.22	4.00	.471	-5.35	100.18	.000	[-.747 -.343]	-0.51

The perception of both the timing of the feedback, whether delayed or immediate, and focus of the feedback on standards was examined for differences between teachers and

administrators using an independent samples t-test. The results showed that teachers (M=3.28, SD= 1.25) and administrators (M=3.63, SD=1.03) did not have a significant difference in their perception of the timing of the feedback, *t*(47.58) =-1.83, p=.073 (see Table 12), nor did teachers (M=3.77, SD= 1.05) and administrators (M=4.00, SD= .86) have a significant difference in perception of the feedback focus, *t*(49.48) =-1.45, p=.155 (see Table 12). From the results, it can be suggested that teachers and administrators similarly perceive the timing of feedback to be more immediate than delayed and that the feedback given is focused on the standards.

Table 12

Results of t-test for Timing Feedback and Feedback Focus by Teachers and Administrators

	Teachers		Administrators						
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI	*r*
Timing Feedback	3.28	1.25	3.63	1.03	-1.58	311	.116	[-.730, .034]	-0.15
Feedback Focus	3.77	1.05	4.00	.86	-1.45	49.48	.155	[-.542, .088]	-0.12

The usefulness of suggestions for improvement contained in the feedback is another variable that impacts quality of feedback. Using an independent samples t-test, the results showed a statistically significant difference between teachers (M=2.94, SD= 1.15) and administrators (M=4.06, SD=.791) perceptions of how useful the suggestions for improvement were in the feedback given or received, *t*(56.20) =-7.53, p=.000. The medium effect size, r(56.20)=-.49, and results of t-test indicate teachers perceive the feedback less useful for improvement than administrators (see Table 13).

Table 13

Results of t-test for Usefulness of Suggestions by Teachers and Administrators

	Teachers		Administrators						
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI	*r*
Usefulness of Suggestions	2.94	1.15	4.06	.791	-7.53	56.203	.000	[-1.418, -.823]	-0.49

The final variable examined related to the quality of feedback was the working relationship. An independent samples t-test was run to examine the difference between teacher

and administrator perceptions on working relationships and the results can be found in Table 14. The teachers (M=4.21, SD= 1.03) and administrators (M=4.30, SD=.618) perceptions of working relationships did not differ significantly on the survey, *t*(56.76) =-4.30, p=.000. The results show that teachers and administrators perceive similarly that their relationships with those they get feedback from or give feedback to are mostly positive.

Table 14

Results of t-test for Working Relationship by Teachers and Administrators

	Teacher		Administrators						
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI	*r*
Working Relationship	4.21	1.03	4.30	.618	-.776	66.573	.441	[-.330, .145]	-0.05

The eleven variables measured through survey questions 2-12 on the survey showed an acceptable level of internal reliability of measuring the quality of feedback with a Cronbach's alpha score of .613. To see how all of these variables as a survey sum differed between teachers and administrators an independent samples t-test was conducted. Table 15 shows there was a significant difference in the sum of survey scores for teachers (M=33.99, SD= 9.46) and administrators (M=40.95, SD=6.17); *t*(63.37) =-6.05, p=.000. The results indicate that overall teachers perceive the quality of feedback to be lower than administrators perceive the quality of feedback given.

Table 15

Results of t-test for Survey Sum by Teachers and Administrators

	Teachers		Administrators						
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI	*r*
Survey Sum	33.99	9.46	40.95	6.17	-6.05	63.37	.000	[-9.26, -4.66]	

In addition to analyzing the significance of the difference between teachers and administrators, the teachers and administrators from each level – elementary, middle, and high – were compared to see if there is a difference in perceptions among levels. A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of teacher and administrators' perceptions of the quality of feedback, represented by the survey sum scores from the TEP

survey instrument. Because the differences were statistically significant in the results of the ANOVA, a post hoc test was conducted, and the researcher selected the Tukey post hoc test. This test is designed to compare each of the conditions to every other condition. This test compared teachers and administrators that work in elementary schools compared to those that work in middle and high schools. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the elementary teachers and administrators (M = 3.34, SD = .85) was significantly different than the middle school teachers and administrators (M = 3.01, SD = .82) and significantly different than the high school teachers and administrators (M=2.97, SD=.83), F(2, 278) = .003. However, there was no significant difference between the middle school teacher and administrators and the high school teachers and administrators (see Table 16). The results indicate that elementary teachers and administrators perceive quality of feedback higher than middle and high school teachers and administrators.

Table 16

One-Way Analysis of Variance Related to School Level and Perceptions of Quality of Feedback

Variable	*Df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between-group	2	7.97	3.986	5.792	.003
Within-group	278	191.29	.688		
Total	280	199.26			

Research question 2. What adjustments in teaching practices do teachers and administrators indicate have been made based on feedback from teacher evaluations:

The qualitative data for this research question were derived from question 13 in the modified Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) survey instrument. To teachers, the question asked, “What adjustments in teaching practices did you make based on feedback from teacher evaluations you received from administrators?”, and to administrators, the question asked, “What adjustments in teaching practices did teachers make based on feedback you gave them as part of the teacher evaluation process?” From the responses to this question of both teacher and administrator surveys, the data were exported to an Excel spreadsheet organized by each participant’s answer. Each participant was identified as T for teacher and A for administrator. Also, an ID number and label of E for elementary school, M for middle school, and H for high school was assigned to identify each respondent. Each response was coded, and through

frequency of keywords and concepts, themes emerged. From the data analysis, five themes emerged that help answer research question 2. The five themes were: instructional delivery, technology, classroom management, planning, and no adjustments.

Table 17

Themes in Adjustments in Teaching Practices

Themes	Frequency	
	Teachers	Administrators
Instructional Delivery	38	14
Technology	11	4
Classroom Management	9	10
Planning	9	3
No Adjustments	101	0
No Response	83	11

Instructional delivery. The first theme to emerge regarding adjustments in teaching practices based on the feedback given or received as part of the evaluation system was instructional delivery. According to the responses of the teacher survey, 38 of 281 possible responses noted changes in instructional delivery, such as using differentiation, increasing rigor in questioning, including high order thinking activities, and working on student engagement. Teachers commented on more general instructional delivery changes like T20H who said, "I utilized more instructional strategies that fit the levels of students I was working with." Others teachers made adjustment more specifically based on feedback. "I include more higher level questions in my classes as regular means of discourse," mentioned T4M, and T140E said, "Feedback was given to display plans in a visual location. I did so. Feedback was given to include exit tickets at the end of a lesson. I have included a few." Finally, adjustments were made on how to engage students with the instructional strategies as commented by T227M, "I made efforts to interact more with every student. I asked for raised hands more frequently and called on everyone to ensure engagement of all students."

According to the responses of administrators on the survey, administrators gave feedback that resulted in adjustments with instructional delivery. Of the possible 38 responses, 14 included adjustments made with instructional approaches. A24E remarked that teachers used "more intentional teaching with assessment for learning practices being utilized more often" and included the "use of learning targets before, during, and at the end of lessons." Other administrators discussed adjustments made to instructional delivery in order to facilitate

student engagement such as A5M who mentioned changes in "specific techniques in getting students attention and keeping them on task." Though administrators saw changes in practices, some administrators doubted about the impact of the changes. A32H commented, "They seem more aware of trying to use more student - directed learning activities but I am not convinced that changes are always made with a true paradigm shift in their approach." The responses suggested that both teachers and administrators viewed some adjustments made in instructional delivery due to feedback.

Technology. Another area in which both administrators and teachers identified adjustments having been made was the use of technology. Eleven teachers commented on changes in using technology and 4 administrators specifically noted technology. A10M generally stated that based on feedback that was given, there was "increased use of technology," and other administrators included specific ways technology has changed overall teaching practices such as A11M who responded "I have had a teacher flip her classroom." Teachers agreed with administrators with making changes in the area of technology: "I worked to integrate strategies suggested and experimented with technology where I previously had not," said T20M. Though some teachers felt that the technology changes were more based on requirements or using technology for the sake of using technology. T71E responded, "I adjusted the amount I used technology for classroom purposes and documentation efforts," and T80H noted using "more technology even though it was more time consuming and distracting from the content instruction for the class." The responses by teachers and administrators showed that technology is a focus for adjustments in teaching, though the feedback and adjustment may stem for requirements to include instructional technology.

Classroom management. How a teacher creates a positive learning environment through classroom management also showed as a theme in the responses on the survey. Both teachers and administrators, with 9 and 10 responses respectively, included specifics about classroom management adjustments through feedback. The feedback helped teacher T248H who said, "I was able to work on behavior modification to better reach students that had issues following along in class." The additional set of eyes that an observer can provide in a classroom also assisted teacher T208E, "I tried to curb some of the discipline that I overlooked previously due to the special nature of the child. I did not realize it was taking away attention from other students." Administrators agreed that teachers took feedback and "have made

adjustments in behavioral systems," according to A19E. Responses from administrators and teachers show positive adjustments to teaching practices in the area of classroom management due to feedback teachers received in the evaluation process.

Planning. The fourth theme that showed some frequency in responses was a focus on planning, with 3 administrators and 9 teachers commenting on adjustments in planning. Teachers saw an impact on how lesson planning could affect instructional practices. From feedback, A4E commented, "Lesson planning became more focused," and T28E agreed, "Based on my feedback from teacher evaluations, I have adjusted my teaching practices by being more in-depth with my lesson plans and also have ensured that my students are truly learning the written, taught, and assessed curriculum." The responses from both teachers and administrators embedded planning with other suggestions, such as utilizing PLC (Professional Learning Communities) for planning, using data to help drive planning, and "planning for student work for snow days," mentioned A10M. The responses from administrators and teachers showed importance of planning, but the low frequency may be due to instructional planning being a behavior that can be difficult to observe in a teacher observation.

No adjustments. The most frequent response by teachers to survey question 13 was no adjustments to teaching practices were made, with 101 teachers responding in this fashion. Many teachers simply commented that no adjustments were made, but some teachers gave insight to why the feedback did not lead to adjustment. A few teachers noted that there was not direct adjustment but it helped to provide self-reflection. "I think the process of being observed, not necessarily evaluated, helped me reflect and take notice on my own practices, but no adjustments were made as a direct result of the evaluations," responded T39H. Other teachers perceived a lack of specifics for improvement such as T141M who said, "Feedback usually consists of a checklist, with boxes marked, and a 'Good Job' comment at the bottom. I adjust my teaching practices based on what I feel are the students' needs," and T9E said, "No feedback was given that was intended to change anything observed in the classroom." Others included, "My evaluations did not include any suggestions for improvement, just a list of things noticed or observed during observations," commented T159H.

No administrators mentioned that teachers did not make any adjustments based on the feedback. Though one administrator commented on how difficult it may be for teachers to make adjustments in teaching practices. A9H said, "Teachers have a hard time learning how to

make learning student-centered. Their instruction is very much teacher-led. Even with feedback and examples, they have a hard time making the switch." The teachers' responses that no adjustments were made contrasted to administrators who noted changes in teaching practices, thus showing a discrepancy between teachers and administrators in perceived adjustments in teaching practices due to feedback as part of the evaluation process.

Summary. The data from the TEP survey question 13 suggest that teachers perceive less frequency that adjustments are made in teaching practices based on feedback received as part of the evaluation system, whereas administrators responded that teachers did make adjustments. The discrepancy shows the varied perceptions of feedback and causes one to question if the feedback does lead to teaching adjustments. When specific adjustments have been made, the adjustments centered around four areas: instructional delivery, technology, classroom management, and planning. Instructional delivery was the most frequent theme for administrators and second for teachers, behind no adjustment being made. Both teachers and administrators perceived adjustments in instructional delivery through the feedback given to teachers from administrators as part of the evaluation process. The adjustments ranged from specific strategies such as use of learning targets and questioning techniques to broader inclusion of differentiation. Adjustments with technology was commented more with teachers and administrators, and some teachers felt that the technology changes were more about meeting technology requirements and not about changing teaching practices. Planning and classroom management adjustments had a lower frequency, but both teachers and administrators made positive comments on how teachers made adjustments in classroom management and planning that affected instructional practices. Finally, 11 administrators 85 teachers chose not to answer this question. The results of this survey question show that administrators perceive more adjustments to teaching practices from the feedback they provide, and teacher perceive fewer adjustments, if any.

Research question 3. What perceptions do teachers and administrators have about how adjustments made to instructional practices affected teacher growth: The qualitative data for this research question were derived from question 14 in the modified Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) survey instrument. To teachers, the question asked, "If you made adjustments to your teacher practices, how have these adjustments made to instructional practices affected teacher growth?" To administrators, the question asked, ". If adjustments

were made, how have these adjustments made to instructional practices affected teacher growth?" From the responses for this question of both teacher and administrator surveys, the data were treated like the data from survey question 13 with exporting the data, organizing each participant's response, identifying each response, and coding the responses for emerging themes. From the data analysis, five themes emerged that help answer research question 3. The five themes were: positive growth, instructional delivery and student learning, self-reflection, new ideas, and no growth.

Table 18

Themes in Perceptions of Teacher Growth

Themes	Frequency	
	Teachers	Administrators
Positive growth	17	7
Instructional delivery & student learning	15	12
Self-reflection	16	1
New ideas	4	5
No growth	60	0
No response	134	14

Positive growth. Teachers and administrators both stated that they perceived overall teacher growth based on the feedback as part of the evaluation process. From the teacher responses, 17 teachers noted positive growth based on the feedback received from administrators, and 7 administrators agreed that they perceived teacher growth based on the feedback they gave. The responses in this coded theme were general comments about positive teacher growth but did not include specifics regarding what type of growth. Some administrators, such as A7E, generally saw "improved instructional abilities", while A25M agreed that teachers grew based on feedback on "the use of best practices and research-based strategies." A34H commented on how the feedback was "helpful with some teachers in improving overall job performance." Teachers also responded positively about their growth based on adjustments from feedback. T217H said, "I have grown tremendously as a teacher as a result of the changed teaching practices, and T48E agreed, "They have made me a stronger, more knowledgeable teacher in many of the subject areas that I teach." Generally, survey

responses showed both teachers and administrators perceived positive professional growth if adjustments were made to teaching practices based on feedback given to teachers.

Instructional delivery and student learning. Another more specific area that both teachers and administrators saw teacher growth was with instructional delivery and connection to student learning. Fifteen teachers reported growth related to instructional delivery growth and an additional 12 teachers affirmed growth related to student learning, while 10 administrators commented on growth related to instructional delivery and student learning. Administrators noted the positive impact of growth from the adjustments made based on feedback. "Teachers that are willing to adjust found that student learning was positively impacted," asserted A3H.

The teachers that made adjustments and saw teacher professional growth agreed with administrators. "I think it has assisted me in probing my students for more in depth explanations of their ideas. I feel as though this is helping me grow into a stronger teacher that has a greater impact on my students' critical thinking growth," said T4M. Another teacher, T241E, reported, "It helped me to see how my lesson plans have to consider even more the different types of learners." Not only do the teachers see the growth in their practices in both delivery and planning of the instruction, one teacher noted how the feedback helped with resources and student ownership. "This adjustment has allowed me to find things more accessibly and quickly. It has also allowed me to hold the student's more accountable," noted T71H. Though both teachers and administrator stated positive teacher professional growth, specifically in areas of instructional delivery and student learning, one administrator noted a challenge. Respondent A17E noted about teachers that "they seem to have made slight gains in achievement and even more gains in teacher growth but with some hesitation on teachers [being overwhelmed]." The concern stated by an administrator shows a possible reason to why the feedback may not lead to teaching adjustments or teacher professional growth.

Self-reflection. One of the most frequent themes from teacher responses to survey question 13 included the notion of self-reflection. Sixteen teachers expressed the importance of how self-reflection led to teacher professional growth. A number of teachers specifically referred to how the adjustments made from feedback impact teacher professional growth through reflection. The feedback "made me reflect more on my teaching practice," commented T41M. The adjustments also "affect my growth by requiring me to be constantly self-

reflective," asserted T93E. The feedback and adjustment not only helped teachers be more reflective but this directly connected to the other theme of instructional delivery and student learning. The self-reflection helped to make the needed adjustments to meet the needs of students. Respondent T57H said, "I feel like I am not just doing the "same old thing", but I am actually taking more time to rethink what I have always done and add new activities and more technology to my lessons."

The teacher professional growth did not always stem from the adjustment made due to the feedback from an administrator. Some teachers noted in their responses to this survey question that the self-reflection led to growth but were based on other factors, such as T160H who said, "I have made adjustments based on my own experiences and student feedback on my own course evaluation survey." Another teacher, T113M, noted, "Any adjustments I've made that have affected my growth are because of self-evaluation or peer-evaluation. They affect my growth because these adjustments are differentiated toward my specific classroom needs and situation. The adjustments have helped me to be flexible and to look at things from different angles in order to best plan and accommodate for my students." In addition, only one administrator perceived teacher professional growth through the self-reflection of the feedback and adjustments made. A6H asserted, "Teachers were more reflective in practice through the guided, specific feedback." The responses suggest that self-reflection affect professional growth, but the self-reflection may not always come from the feedback and adjustments made from the evaluation process.

New ideas. More teachers perceived self-reflection as a component to the teacher professional growth, while more administrators perceived teacher professional growth stemming from the new ideas and approaches in the teaching adjustments. Five administrators referred to teachers growing by trying new strategies or inquiring about professional development, like A11M who said, "I feel the adjustments helped teachers grow because they tried something different than what they had done before." Another administrator, A1E, noted growth from new ideas, "They have opened up their lessons to new ideas and strategies. They have inquired about further professional developments and interests in other content and grade level specifics." Though only 4 teachers included comments about new strategies and innovation through the feedback and adjustments, these 4 teachers responded positively about the new ideas. A middle school teacher, T52M asserted, that he or she "didn't keep all the

suggestions, but it was good to try new things." The responses showed that administrators more than teachers noted teacher professional growth occurred due to trying new ideas in response to the feedback.

No growth. The most frequent teacher response to growth made due to the adjustments from feedback was no growth. From the survey question, 29 teachers noted that no teacher professional growth occurred from adjustments made in teaching practices from feedback. Also, 31 teachers responded "not applicable" because no adjustments were made due to feedback; therefore, no growth could be present. Many teachers simply responded "none", but some teachers specifically noted that "teacher growth was not affected by administrative feedback", asserted T96H. Another teacher expressed that teacher professional growth occurred but not due to feedback and adjustment. "I feel that each year of experience in teaching, I grow as a teacher but I do not feel that it is due to feedback from administration," said T109E. No administrators specifically noted that no teacher professional growth occurred, but 14 administrators and 135 teachers choose not to respond to this survey question. The responses from teachers indicated that there lies a discrepancy in perception of teacher growth due to feedback with teachers noting no growth occurring more frequently.

Summary. The data from survey question 14 suggest that there is a varying perception of teacher professional growth from administrators and teachers. Teachers most frequently perceive that no teacher professional growth occurs from the adjustments in teaching practices due to feedback in the evaluation process, whereas administrators did not perceive the lack of professional growth. The teachers that did perceive teacher professional growth were positive about their growth and noted the growth in areas of instructional delivery and student learning. Teachers also agreed that the self-reflection that stems from the adjustments and feedback lead to the professional growth. Administrators also noted growth with instructional delivery and student learning, but added growth in teaching trying new strategies in their classroom.

Research question 4. What professional development opportunities were made available to teachers based on the feedback given as part of the evaluation system: The qualitative data for this research question were derived from question 15 in the modified Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP) survey instrument. In survey question 15, teaches were asked, "What professional development opportunities were made available to you based on the feedback given as part of the evaluation system?" and administrators were asked, "What

professional development opportunities were made available to the teachers based on the feedback given as part of the evaluation system?" The data from the question responses were treated similar to the other two open-ended survey questions. The responses were exported to a spreadsheet, organized by each person's responses, identified by teacher or administrator, labeled with a number and school level, and coded for emerging themes. From the data analysis, four themes emerged that help answer research question 4. The four themes were: district and school-wide professional development, technology professional development, collaboration among peers, and no suggestions.

Table 19

Themes in Professional Development Opportunities

Themes	Frequency	
	Teachers	Administrators
District and school-wide	19	12
Technology	15	1
Collaboration among peers	2	4
No suggestions	110	0
No response	92	12

District and school-wide professional development. When asked what professional development opportunities were made available, 12 administrators and 19 teachers commented on district and school-wide professional development opportunities. Administrators referred to general district opportunities. "Teachers were directed to some of the professional development courses offered through Chesterfield County," mentioned A18H. Other administrators added specific professional development courses that were offered such as A6H who asserted, "Recommendations were made to some in need to seek out specific professional development opportunities (e.g. Tools for Teaching)." *Tools for Teaching* is a workshop on classroom management offered through the Department of Professional Development each semester for teachers. Teachers agreed with administrators and commented on professional development opportunities through the district and within the school. Teacher T125H said, "Professional development opportunities were offered through the Office of Professional Development," and T126E asserted, "Professional Development is provided through the county office. Little guidance from direct supervisors." Other teachers were given specific recommendations based on the feedback such as teacher T254M who responded, "I was

recommended to take a classroom management class provided by my county." Chesterfield County Public Schools also has four half-days built into the school year for the purpose of professional development for teachers. Some teachers commented on how they were offered professional development on these half-days. "Our school continues to work on professional development sessions during staff meetings and early release days," said T142E. The responses from teacher and administrators indicated that when professional development opportunities were suggested that these were usually previously designed professional development offered by the district or school-wide mandated sessions.

Technology professional development. Opportunities for professional development in technology was another area that 15 teachers and 1 administrator noted. With an increased expectation for teachers to use technology in the classroom, one administrators noted the importance and availability of "ongoing technology implementation PD," added A10M. Teachers saw technology professional development to be a constant throughout the year as well. T88H commented that there was "ongoing tech training through our school technology specialist." Though technology training was offered, some of these professional development opportunities did not directly tie to the feedback received through the evaluation nor in the adjustments made. Teacher T108M noted, "None related to the suggestions. All the prof development we have had this year is based on technology." Other teachers added that only technology professional development was offered. "I can't really think of professional development opportunities in our school--except for technology," asserted T131M. The responses from teachers and one administrator indicated that technology professional development was offered through feedback.

Collaboration among peers. A small number of administrators and teachers responded that collaboration among peers through Professional Learning Communities, peer observations, and book studies were offered to teachers. Four administrators and 2 teachers noted this in their survey responses. A9H suggested to teachers, "They have observed other teachers." Another administrator A8H added the idea of collaborative and personalized professional development by saying, "Professional development is both collaborative with other teachers and individualized focused on specific student learning targets." One teacher asserted that the administrator suggested professional development through a PLC. T15E stated that it was suggested to utilize "PLC meetings to analyze data and determine next steps."

The responses from a few teachers and administrators indicated suggestions for peer collaboration as a mode of professional development for teacher growth.

No suggestions. The most frequent response for teachers to the TEP survey question 15 was that no suggestions were made, with 110 teachers responding with a similar answer. Some teachers simply answered "none", but many teachers gave insight to "no suggestions." Teacher T23M commented that "none were offered but I seek them out on my own often." Another teacher T39H noted specifically that "none based on the feedback from the evaluation system." Similar to comments made in regards to the technology professional development, another teacher asserted that the opportunities do not connect to the feedback such as when T145H included, "None because no feedback last year. Two years ago, a different administrator assigned a video to watch but it did not have anything to do with my feedback. It was just supplemental." Besides no suggestions being offered, the rating system that is part of the evaluation process also affected the responses from the teachers. "My evaluation was exemplary so I was not advised to attend any specific professional development opportunities," commented T211M. No administrators responded to the survey that no suggestions were made and 12 administrators and 92 teachers did not answer this question on the survey.

Summary. The data from survey question 15 suggest that teachers more frequently noted that no suggestions for professional development were made based on the feedback in the evaluation process. Administrators differed in their perception as they responded to school and district professional development opportunities that were suggested to teachers. The teachers who commented that professional development opportunities were suggested included both school and district examples as well as an emphasis on technology.

Chapter Summary

The information in chapter 4 showed the data from the TEP survey on the perceptions of teachers and administrators of quality of feedback and how this feedback impacts teacher professional growth. Data were analyzed by position (teacher and administrator). The data suggest that teachers and administrators vary significantly in their perception of the quality of feedback as part of the evaluation process. The overarching themes to emerge from the survey data revealed that many teachers did not see adjustments or teacher professional growth as part of the feedback process, yet administrators noted more specific adjustments and teacher

growth. When adjustments and teacher professional growth were noted, they surrounded the theme of instructional delivery, student outcomes, and technology most frequently. Further discussion regarding the findings, implications, conclusions, and recommendations will be discussed in Chapter V.

Chapter V
Findings

Chapter V contains a summary of the findings of the study as well as implications, recommendations for future research, and conclusions. The purpose of this descriptive study was designed to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process, how they perceive the impact of feedback on teacher growth, and what professional development has been offered because of the feedback.

This study surveyed teachers and administrators in 32 of Chesterfield County Public Schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The 32 schools selected represent half of the school district, with 1980 teachers and 93 administrators invited to participate in the study. From those invited, 285 teachers and 38 participated in this study. Data were analyzed by job position (teacher or administrator) and school level (elementary, middle, or high).

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the quality of the feedback as part of the Virginia teacher evaluation process:
2. What adjustments in teaching practices do teachers and administrators indicate have been made based on feedback from teacher evaluations:
3. What perceptions do teachers and administrators have about how adjustments made to instructional practices affected teacher growth:
4. What professional development opportunities were made available to teachers based on the feedback given as part of the evaluation system?

This research will inform educational reform leaders and school administrators as they work to develop and implement an effective teacher evaluation process that promotes teacher professional growth.

Findings

Finding 1. Teachers perceived the overall quality of feedback they received to be lower than administrators perceived the overall quality of the feedback they gave. The overall quality of feedback was defined by 11 survey questions as part of a modified version

of the Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP). The 11 questions asked both teachers and administrators about information received, frequency of formal feedback, frequency of information feedback, depth of information provided, quality of ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback, specificity of information provided, nature of information provided, timing of feedback, whether or not the feedback was focused on the evaluation standards, and working relationship between evaluator and teacher. From the results of these questions, teachers scored all 11 elements of quality of feedback lower than administrators. The mean score for teachers ranged from 2.45 to 4.21 and administrators ranged from 3.37 to 4.30. Both teachers and administrators had their lowest mean score in frequency of formal feedback and their highest mean score for working relationship. In analyzing the sum of administrators and teachers' responses, there was a significance difference in the sum of survey scores for teachers (M=33.99, SD= 9.46) and administrators (M=40.95, SD=6.17). These results show that administrators thought they were providing more quality feedback than teachers thought they were receiving.

These findings are in line with the report from The New Teacher Project (2010). Based on their research, they recommend six key components to an effective evaluation system. The fifth element related to feedback, and the researchers strongly suggested that teacher receive quality feedback, not just quantity. The teachers in this current study did not perceive the quality of feedback as highly as administrators viewed the feedback they gave. This discrepancy could affect the effectiveness of the evaluation system as noted in recommendations from The New Teacher Project (2010).

Finding 2. Elementary teachers and administrators perceived the quality of the feedback to be higher than middle and high school teachers and administrators perceived the quality of their feedback. In using the survey sum of teachers and administrators at each school level (elementary, middle, and high), there was a significant difference between elementary teachers and administrators (M = 3.34) and middle school teachers and administrators (M = 3.01), and between significantly different than the high school teachers and administrators (M=2.97). However, there was no significant difference in the middle school teacher and administrators to the high school teachers and administrators. The results suggest that elementary teachers and administrators perceive quality of feedback higher than in middle and high school teachers and administrators.

The differences between elementary versus secondary teachers and administrators aligns to the research completed by the Wallace Foundation (2010). Their intensive study on examining ways to improve student learning researched possible differences between elementary and secondary schools. Both elementary and secondary teachers perceived their administrators capable of creating a culture of growth, yet the teachers and administrators differed when responding to instructional actions. The research showed that secondary administrators rated lower on instruction actions and that teachers perceived that administrators did not have a direct role in the instructional operations of the school. The Wallace Foundation's research can help to explain the possible differences with elementary and secondary teachers in perception to quality of feedback if secondary teachers and administrators do not feel that secondary administrators do not play an active role in instruction.

Finding 3. Teachers perceived that the information contained in the feedback was a lower quality than the information administrators perceived to have given. Teachers believed the feedback to be a lesser quality than administrators believed in all eleven elements of quality defined by the survey, but teachers also specifically believed the information contained in feedback was also a lesser quality as measured in four separate survey questions – Information Received, Depth of Information, Quality of Ideas, and Specificity of Information. Teachers consistently scored these areas lower than administrators, and the differences between teachers and administrators' perceptions in these four areas were statistically significant. For the survey question on Information Received, teachers (M=3.15) responded that they receive less information in the feedback than compared to administrators (M=3.74) perceived giving in the feedback. Contained in the information in the feedback, teachers (M=2.79) perceived the feedback to be less in-depth than administrators (M=3.72) perceived the feedback, and teachers (M=2.70) perceived the quality of ideas or suggestions lower than how administrators (M=3.72) perceived the ideas and suggestions given. Finally, teachers (M=2.90) reported more general information contained in feedback while administrators (M=3.97) reported the information to be more specific. These four areas about the information contained in the feedback as part of the evaluation process suggested a discrepancy in the perception of the feedback between teachers and administrators.

The significance of quality of feedback is in line with a number of studies related to teacher evaluations. The importance of quality of feedback was studied by Ovando (2005). By studying the observation and feedback practices of aspiring leaders in order to build instructional leadership, Ovando concluded that in feedback "it is imperative to be specific in highlighting teaching behaviors." Though Ovando's study showed the importance of specificity in feedback, the teachers in this study did not perceive their feedback as specific. In this study teachers perceived that they do not receive detailed, specific, in-depth, feedback with quality of ideas or suggestions. Kimball and Milanowski (2009) found similar results, during interviews with teachers, that some teachers expressed concerns about the feedback, which was not specific. Teachers in Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton's (2003) also agreed that they do not receive constructive feedback as part of the evaluation system and noted that feedback was most effective when given specific areas of improvement. Other studies stressed the importance of the specifics in feedback. Taylor & Tyler (2011) found when teachers received detailed feedback on performance, teachers demonstrated improvement. This highlights the importance of the quality of feedback as a method to promote teacher growth.

Finding 4. Teachers perceived the frequency with which they received both informal and formal feedback to be less than administrators believed they were providing it. From survey questions 3 and 4 on the TEP, teachers and administrators significantly differed on their responses to the perceptions of frequency in both informal and formal feedback. The frequency of formal feedback was perceived lower, according to the responses for teachers (M=2.45) and administrators (M=3.37) compared to the frequency of informal feedback for teachers (M=2.63) and administrators (M=3.58). These results suggested that teachers perceived the amount of formal and informal feedback to be less frequent than what administrators perceived, and both teacher and administrators believe formal feedback occurs less frequent than informal feedback.

The factor of time and frequency aligns to previous studies. Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton (2003) found in their study on teachers' perceptions of the evaluation process that teachers expressed concern that administrators did not have the available time in the classroom for evaluation. In the study by The New Teacher Project (2009), 64 percent of tenured teachers were observed two or fewer times for an average of 75 minutes. Both of these studies align with the perceptions of teachers in this study that there is a lack of

frequency in feedback received from administrators. Consequently, when there is an increase in frequency, studies show more potential for increased teacher growth (Taylor & Tyler, 2011).

Finding 5. Teachers and administrators perceived the timing of feedback to be more immediate than delayed. Both administrators and teachers similarly responded to survey question 9. In response to the timing of the feedback, whether delayed or immediate, there was no significant difference between teachers (M=3.28) and administrators (M=3.63).

The timing of feedback can be an important element in effective evaluations. The New Teacher Project (2009) added in their recommendations for effective evaluation systems that evaluators need to get the feedback in a timely fashion in order to improve instruction. This recommendation based on their research aligns to the perceptions of the current study. Teachers and administrators similarly perceive the feedback to be more immediate than delayed. Also, administrators in this school division were trained and required to use on-line tools for observations and feedback, which may aid in the timing of feedback being given.

Finding 6. Teachers and administrators perceived that the feedback given was focused on the standards. Both teachers and administrators responded similarly to survey question 10 on the Focus of Feedback. Teachers (M=3.77) and administrators (M=4.00) both gave high ratings to the focus of feedback in the evaluation process. The data suggest that the feedback is focus on standards.

The findings from this study align to recommendation made by The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in the MET project (2012). In the report, the researchers suggested that high quality observations as part of the evaluation process focus on standards (Bill and Melinda Gates Foudation). Also, Virginia revised its evaluation system to include seven specific teacher performance standards (Virginia Department of Education, 2011). These seven standards drive the evaluation system and can help to explain the similar perceptions of teachers and administrators on feedback being more focused on standards.

Finding 7. Teachers rated suggestions from feedback to be less useful in changing teaching practices; whereas, administrators rated the suggestions given as being useful in changing teaching practices. In survey question 11, teachers and administrators were asked about the how useful the feedback was to making changes in teaching practices. Teachers (M=2.94) perceived the feedback less useful than administrators (M=4.06)

perceived the feedback they gave, and this difference was significant. In addition, the open-ended response question 14, asked teachers and administrators about how teachers made adjustments to their teaching based on the feedback. Of the surveyed teachers, 101 noted no adjustments to teaching practices were made, and some teachers added that there were no adjustments because the feedback consisted of a "checklist with boxes marked" or "just a list of things noticed or observed." These comments show a lack of usefulness in suggestions and are consistent with the results from survey question 11.

These results align to the research of Kimball and Milanowski (2009). The researchers found in their study about validity in evaluation, some teachers expressed concerns the feedback did not contain recommendations on specific instructional strategies. Hill and Grossman (2013) agreed in their article learning from the new teacher evaluation systems. In their article, the researchers outline recommendations for these new systems. Specifically, they recommended that feedback is useful in helping teachers improve instruction (Hill & Grossman). Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton (2003) found in their study that teachers found feedback most effective when given specific suggestions of improvement. According to the current study, teachers did not perceive the feedback as helpful for improvement, which aligns to The New Teacher Project (2009) research where only 43 percent of teachers agree that evaluation helps teachers improve.

Finding 8. Both administrators and teachers perceived their working relationships as positive. Survey question 12 asked both teachers and administrators about how the working relationship was perceived. The teachers (M=4.21) and administrators (M=4.30) perceptions of working relationship did not differ significantly on the survey. The results suggested that teachers and administrators perceive similarly that their relationships with those they receive feedback or give feedback are positive.

The findings from this study align to research that suggests the importance of positive relationships. Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton (2003) found in their study that teachers want an open, trusting relationship with their principal in order to have an effective feedback loop. Consortium on Chicago School Research (2011) also revealed teachers feeling of skepticism of a principal's ability to use the observation tool accurately and fairly. Teachers and administrators both viewed relationships as positive and both had this quality rated the highest compared to the other 10 questions.

The relative positive relationships could explain another finding. In the study conducted by Delvaux et al. (2005), if the relationship between evaluator and teacher is perceived by the teacher to be more positive, teachers experience fewer effects of the evaluation system on professional development (Delvaux et al.). The results of this study may be due to teachers that have a more positive relationship with their evaluator do not fear consequences and may not feel compelled to take actions as part of the evaluation system. The positive relationship that both teachers and administrators perceived in the current study might explain finding 9 that shows a lack of professional growth due to the feedback in the evaluation process.

Finding 9. Because teachers did not make adjustments in their teaching practices, the majority of teachers indicated they did not grow as a result of the feedback given. From the open-ended survey question 14, which asked if teacher growth occurred due to the adjustments made from feedback given, the most frequent teacher response was no growth was made. Of the surveyed teachers, 29 teachers added that no teacher professional growth occurred from adjustments made in teaching practices from feedback. An additional 31 teachers responded “not applicable” because no adjustments were made due to feedback.

The lack of growth perceived by teachers in the current study aligns to previous studies. In the study by Delvaux et al. (2013), the researchers found that teacher evaluations have only limited effects of the evaluation systems on a teacher’s professional development. When the evaluations did impact professional development, teachers had received useful feedback. This aligns with this research because teachers did not perceive the quality of feedback to be high; therefore they did not make adjustments in teacher practices nor perceive teacher growth.

Finding 10. Teachers perceived that there were few professional development opportunities resulting from the feedback given. Teachers and administrators were asked about what professional development opportunities were offered to teachers as part of the feedback in the evaluation process. The most frequent response for teachers to the TEP survey question 15 was that no suggestions were made, with 110 teachers responding with a similar answer. No administrators commented that teachers received no suggestions or opportunities, suggesting that the administrators believe they are providing professional development opportunities.

The connection of the feedback to professional development appeared in number of studies. Ovando (2005) stressed the importance of how feedback is linked to teacher professional development in order to have an effective evaluation system. With research on teacher improvement, Taylor and Tyler (2012) commented that a lack of information on how to improve could be the barrier to teacher growth.

Implications

Implication 1. School district leaders should provide professional development for administrators on giving effective feedback. Research suggests that providing effective feedback can alter teaching effectiveness. The findings indicated that teachers rated the quality of feedback lower than administrators, showing administrators are not providing effective feedback; therefore, administrators should receive more professional development on giving effective feedback. Specifically, the professional development should focus on helping administrators provide more information in the feedback that is in-depth and has specific ideas. The training also relates to the finding that teachers believe the suggestions made in feedback could be more useful in making changes in teaching practices. If administrators improved in providing feedback that is more in-depth and specific, teachers may find the feedback more impactful in changing teaching practices.

School district leaders should also be sure to continue to align the feedback to standards when training administrators on giving effective and quality feedback. In Chesterfield County Public Schools, administrators received extensive training on giving feedback in relation to the newly implemented Virginia Performance Standards for Teachers. These professional development sessions could explain the finding that there were similar perceptions by teachers and administrators that the feedback was more focused on standards.

Implication 2. School leaders should examine their observation cycles and meeting times for feedback to increase the frequency of feedback teachers receive. This study revealed the finding that teachers perceived the frequency with which they received both informal and formal feedback to be less than administrators believed they were providing it. School leaders, along with school district leaders, should examine the duties of administrators in buildings and determine alternate ways to build time in the daily schedule to conduct both formal and informal observations. Another consideration is for school leaders to

utilize teacher leader positions to help with administrator responsibilities to help create more time for administrators to deliver feedback to teachers. These roles could be handling smaller discipline issues or using teacher leaders for peer observations. In this second option, teachers can have an increase frequency of feedback and different perspective from colleagues.

The strategic examination of how time is used also aligns to the finding that teacher and administrators at the elementary level differ in their perception of feedback than teachers and administrators at the secondary level. By restructuring responsibilities at the secondary level, this could allow for time for hands-on instructional leadership and actions, including providing teachers more frequent feedback on their instruction.

Implication 3. Professional development opportunities should align with the needs of teachers based on the feedback in the evaluation process. Based on the finding that teachers did not perceive many professional development opportunities made available to them through the feedback in evaluations, school districts should improve their systems of communication between teacher, school, and district. A content analysis of feedback teachers receive can show trends of areas in which teachers need to grow. Also, surveying teachers and administrators in what professional opportunities are needed can help have school districts create a menu of options based on needs at both the school and district level.

Implication 4. Administrators should capitalize on positive relationships, noted between teachers and administrators, in order to help teachers' professional growth, especially on further understanding the feedback process and helping to develop plans for teacher professional growth with specific action steps and goals. The findings in this study show a majority of teachers did not grow due to feedback. In order to help teachers grow from the teacher evaluation system, teacher may need a better understanding of the purpose of the system. Communication and trainings for teachers need to focus on how the evaluation system is both formative, by helping teachers grow, and summative, by providing accountability. An additional finding indicates teachers and administrators perceive their relationships as positive. School leaders can utilize these positive relationships to help teachers create specific growth plans with goals and action steps. These positive relationships can help teachers and administrators to have honest and transparent dialogue around improving instruction and student outcomes.

Recommendations for Future Research

In conducting this study, the researcher discovered other possible research opportunities for exploration. Studies in these areas will help to inform district and school leaders on how feedback or other areas of the evaluation system can help promote teacher professional growth.

- A qualitative study needs to be conducted to analyze how teacher and administrator define quality feedback and what type of feedback helps teachers grow professionally.
- Future research needs to be done to analyze the differences in evaluation systems among elementary, middle, and high school teachers and administrators.
- Another area for future research is to examine the different types of feedback schedules in different schools and determine the frequency in feedback. These schools can then be compared to determine if frequency helps with the changing of the instructional practices.
- Through focus groups and interviews, a qualitative study needs to look at why teachers did not use the feedback that is received in the feedback as part of the evaluation process. The study could further analyze what feedback would help teachers make adjustments in teaching practices and help them grow professionally.
- Finally, in terms of professional development opportunities, researchers could examine what teachers perceive to be effective professional development that changes teaching practices and promotes teacher professional growth.

Conclusion

This descriptive study, using qualitative data and quantitative data derived from a survey, was designed to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process, how they perceive that feedback impacts teacher growth, and what professional development has been offered because of the feedback. The findings from this study are important in indicating how the feedback in the teacher evaluation system is not as impactful in promoting teacher professional growth as it

should be. As suggested by the findings, professional development needs to be improved in order to help administrators to give more effective feedback. In addition, teachers, with the help of administrators, need to continue to find professional opportunities to help them make adjustments in teaching practices in order to grow professionally and positively impact student outcomes. With the adjustment made to improve feedback, the teacher evaluation system can better serve one of its purposes – to improve teacher effectiveness and increase student outcomes.

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Appendix A

Approval to Use Revised "Teacher Evaluation Profile" (TEP) in Study

Daniel L. Duke <dld7g@cms.mail.virginia.edu> 9/14/14

Autumn:

Thank you for your inquiry. I'm delighted that you are interested in using the revised TEP in your dissertation, and I grant you permission to use it. Please let me know what you find. Sorry about the East Carolina game.

All the best,
Dan Duke

On Sun, 14 Sep 2014 13:33:50 -0400
Autumn Nabors <autumn_nabors@ccpsnet.net> wrote:

Good Afternoon Dr. Duke:
I am currently doctoral candidate in the Ed.D Program at Virginia Tech. My dissertation title is *Perceptions of How Teacher Evaluations and Feedback Impact Teacher Professional Growth in a Large Suburban School District in Virginia*. I would like to use the revised "Teacher Evaluation Profile" (TEP) as an instrument in my research. Are you able to grant permission for my use of the revised TEP? If you are unable to grant permission, would you be so kind to direct me to the correct individuals who would be able to do so? Thank you in advance for any guidance and assistance that you may offer.

Sincerely,
Autumn Nabors, NBCT
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Appendix B

Teacher Evaluation Profile for Teachers

Overview

This survey has been designed to allow you to describe in some detail your most recent experience with teacher evaluation and feedback in your school district. Your responses will be combined with those of other teachers to yield a picture of the feedback component in the teacher evaluation experience in your school district. The goal of this survey is to determine how the feedback process as part of teacher evaluations can be revised to help it serve relevant and useful purposes toward teacher professional growth. Your frank and honest responses are important to reach this goal and will remain anonymous.

While this questionnaire is designed to be comprehensive in scope, it will take only a short time to complete. Please follow the instructions carefully and set aside about 15 uninterrupted minutes to provide thoughtful responses.

The Definition of Teacher Evaluation

Teacher evaluation takes different forms in different programs. For the purpose of this study, teacher evaluation procedures and feedback may include all or some of the following:

- Classroom observations
- Student evaluation of teachers
- Meetings with teacher evaluators
- Peer evaluation
- Examination of lesson plans, materials or other artifacts
- Self-evaluation
- Student achievement

When reference is made in this survey to teacher evaluation, it should be understood to encompass any of these procedures that are followed in the evaluation program within your school district.

Instructions

Please use the scales provided on the following pages to describe yourself and the nature of feedback in your most recent teacher evaluation experience in the school district. Do this by:

- Considering each of the items carefully,
- Studying the scale to be used to describe each,
- Circling the number of the scale that best represents your response.

Please remember your decision to participate is voluntary, anonymous, and will have no effect on your employment with the school district. Thank you for your participation.

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Your current teaching assignment grade level (select the answer that best describes your current position).
   a. Grades PreK-5
   b. Grades 6-8
   c. Grades 9-12

Section 2: Rating Attributes of Evaluation

Please describe the attributes of the feedback you received during the evaluation process throughout the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school year:

2. Amount of information received						
None	1	2	3	4	5	Great Deal
3. Frequency of formal feedback						
Infrequent	1	2	3	4	5	Frequent
4. Frequency of informal feedback						
Infrequent	1	2	3	4	5	Frequent
5. Depth of information provided						
Shallow	1	2	3	4	5	In-depth
6. Quality of the ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback						
Low	1	2	3	4	5	High
7. Specificity of information provided						
General	1	2	3	4	5	Specific
8. Nature of information provided						
Judgmental	1	2	3	4	5	Descriptive
9. Timing of feedback						
Delayed	1	2	3	4	5	Immediate
10. Feedback focused on standards						
Ignored the standards	1	2	3	4	5	Focused on the standards
11. Usefulness of suggestions for improvement						
Useless	1	2	3	4	5	Very useful
12. Working relationship with the person who you gave feedback						
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	Positive

Section 3: Open-Ended Questions

13. What adjustments in teaching practices did you make based on feedback from teacher evaluations you received from administrators:

14. If you made adjustments to your teacher practices, how have these adjustments made to instructional practices affect teacher growth?

15. What professional development opportunities were made available to you based on the feedback given as part of the evaluation system?

16. Is there anything about the teacher evaluation process that has not been asked that you would like to add?

TEACHER EVALUATION PROFILE FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Overview

This survey has been designed to allow you to describe in some detail your most recent experience with teacher evaluation and feedback in this school district. Your responses will be combined with those of other administrators to yield a picture of the feedback component in the teacher evaluation experience in this school district. The goal of this survey is to determine how the feedback process as part of teacher evaluations can be revised to help it serve relevant and useful purposes toward professional growth. Your frank and honest responses are important to reach this goal and will remain anonymous.

While this questionnaire is designed to be comprehensive in scope, it will take only a short time to complete. Please follow the instructions carefully and set aside about 15 uninterrupted minutes to provide thoughtful responses.

The Definition of Teacher Evaluation

Teacher evaluation takes different forms in different school districts. For the purpose of this study, teacher evaluation procedures and feedback may include all or some of the following:

- Goal Setting
- Formal and informal classroom observations
- Pre/Post observation meetings with Teacher Evaluator
- Examination of lesson plans, materials or other artifacts
- Self-Evaluation
- Final Written Summative Evaluation

When reference is made in this questionnaire to teacher evaluation, it should be understood to encompass any of these procedures that are followed in the evaluation program with this school district.

Instructions

Please use the scales provided on the following pages to describe yourself and the nature of feedback in your most teacher evaluation experience in the school district. Do this by:

- Considering each of the items carefully,
- Studying the scale to be used to describe each,
- Choosing the number on the scale that best represents your response.

Please remember your decision to participate is voluntary, anonymous, and will have no effect on your employment with the school district. Thank you for your participation.

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Your current assignment grade level (select the answer that best describes your current position).

a. Grades PreK-
5b. Grades 6-8
c. Grades 9-12

Section 2: Rating Attributes of Evaluation

Please describe the attributes of the feedback you typically gave to teachers during evaluation process throughout the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school year:

2. Amount of information given						
None	1	2	3	4	5	Great Deal
3. Frequency of formal feedback						
Infrequent	1	2	3	4	5	Frequent
4. Frequency of informal feedback						
Infrequent	1	2	3	4	5	Frequent
5. Depth of information provided						
Shallow	1	2	3	4	5	In-depth
6. Quality of the ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback						
Low	1	2	3	4	5	High
7. Specificity of information provided						
General	1	2	3	4	5	Specific
8. Nature of information provided						
Judgmental	1	2	3	4	5	Descriptive
9. Timing of feedback						
Delayed	1	2	3	4	5	Immediate
10. Feedback focused on standards						
Ignored the standards	1	2	3	4	5	Focused on the standards
11. Usefulness of suggestions for improvement						
Useless	1	2	3	4	5	Very useful
12. Working with relationship with the person who you gave feedback						
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	Positive

Section 3: Open-Ended Unrestricted Questions

13. What adjustments in teaching practices did teachers make based on feedback you gave them as part of the teacher evaluation process:

14. If adjustments were made, how have these adjustments made to instructional practices affect teacher growth?

15. What professional development opportunities were made available to the teachers based on the feedback given as part of the evaluation system?

16. Is there anything about the teacher evaluation process that has not been asked that you would like to add?

Appendix C

IRB Approval Memo

VirginiaTech

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
email irb@vt.edu
website http://www.irb.vt.edu

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 2, 2014

TO: Ted S Price, Autumn Nicole Nabors

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Perceptions of How Teacher Evaluations and Feedback Impact Teacher Professional Growth in a Large Suburban School District in Virginia

IRB NUMBER: **14-1009**

Effective December 1, 2014, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

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

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

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm

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

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As:	**Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 2,4**
Protocol Approval Date:	**December 1, 2014**
Protocol Expiration Date:	**N/A**
Continuing Review Due Date*:	**N/A**

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

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

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

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

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An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution

Appendix D

Approval of Proposed Research Study Letter

Chesterfield County Public Schools

Marcus J. Newsome, Ed.D., Superintendent

Delivered via email on September 18, 2014

September 18, 2014

Ms. Autumn Nabors
4003 Cogbill Road
North Chesterfield, VA 23234

Dear Ms. Nabors

I am pleased to inform you that, with the modifications indicated below, the Review Committee has approved your proposed research study entitled *Perceptions of How Teacher Evaluations and Feedback Impact Teacher Professional Growth in a Large Suburban School District in Virginia.* We are eager to work with you on this project and appreciate the opportunity to work together for the benefit of our teachers and students.

Due to current research obligations within the division, your study has been approved for select schools within the division. A list of the schools approved for your study is included with this communication.

As a reminder, by summiting your application, you understood and agreed that:

- acceptance of this request for approval of a research proposal in no way obligates Chesterfield County Public Schools to participate in this research,
- approval does not constitute commitment of resources or endorsement of the study or its findings by the school system or by the School Board,
- participation in research studies by students, parents, and school staff is voluntary,
- the anonymity of all participants including individuals, schools and the school system will be protected by not revealing the identity or including identifiable characteristics without written permission, and
- research shall be conducted within the policies and regulations of CCPS and any stipulations accompanying this letter of approval, and
- upon completion of the study, a copy of the written report will be shared with CCPS.

If you have any questions regarding this approval or if I may assist you in any way, please contact me at patricia_fox@ccpsnet.net or (804) 279-1912.

Sincerely,

Patricia Fox, Ph.D.
Research Specialist

Enc: Selected Schools for Research Study

Research and Evaluation
4003 Cogbill Road • North Chesterfield, VA 23234
Telephone (804) 279-1912 • FAX (804) 279-7464
Equal Opportunity Employer

Appendix E

Email Correspondence for Completion of Survey

Email to be sent to principals of select schools prior to invitation to staff to complete survey.

Good morning, Principals:

The Department of Research and Evaluation has approved two large-scale surveys to take place this fall related to teacher evaluation. In order to lessen the burden on individual schools, each school has been selected to receive invitations to participate in only one of the surveys.

As always, your participation and that of your staff is voluntary and anonymous, but we have approved this particular study because we believe it has value in examining our current practices related to teacher evaluation. The purpose of the study is to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process and how the feedback impacts teacher growth.

Members of your instructional and administrative staff will be receiving an email from me later indicating that the study is authorized and an invitation to complete the on-line survey. The survey should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The results will be used as part of a dissertation and possible publication. The administrators' and teachers' decisions to participate will have no effect on their employment with the school district.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. For questions about the study, please contact the researcher, Autumn Nabors, at autumn12@vt.edu or (804) 639-8924. Also, if you have questions about your rights as a human subject participant, please contact Dr. Moore at moored@vt.edu or 540-231-4991.

Thank you.

Patricia Fox, Ph.D.
Department of Research and Evaluation
patricia_fox@ccpsnet.net
804.639.8716

Email to be sent to instructional and administrative staff of select schools prior to invitation to staff to complete survey.

Good morning,

This email is to let you know that your school has been selected to participate in a research study examining the current teacher evaluation process in Chesterfield. The purpose of the study is to identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process and how the feedback impacts teacher growth. Your participation is voluntary, anonymous, and will have no effect on your employment with the school district

Later this week you should be receiving an email invitation through Virginia Tech Qualtrics to participate in an on-line survey. The survey should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The results will be used as part of a dissertation and possible publication. Should you have any questions, you may contact me directly.

For questions about the study, please contact the researcher, Autumn Nabors, at autumn12@vt.edu or (804) 639-8924. Also, if you have questions about your rights as a human subject participant, please contact Dr. Moore at moored@vt.edu or 540-231-4991.

Thank you,
Patty Fox

Patricia Fox, Ph.D.
Department of Research and Evaluation
patricia_fox@ccpsnet.net
804.639.8716

Email to be sent to instructional and administrative staff of select school via Qualtrics.

Good afternoon,
You are invited to participate in a research study which will identify the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the feedback teachers receive from the teacher evaluation process and how the feedback impacts teacher growth. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Virginia Tech under tracking number 14-1009 and the Department of Research and Evaluation in Chesterfield County Public Schools.

Your participation is anonymous, voluntary, and will have no effect on your employment with the school district. The survey should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

For questions about the study, please contact me at autumn12@vt.edu or (804) 639-8924. Also, if you have questions about your rights as a human subject participant, please contact Dr. Moore at moored@vt.edu or 540-231-4991.

Your survey completion indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, and that you are aware of your right to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.

Sincerely,
Autumn N. Nabors
Virginia Tech Doctoral Student
Program Manager, Professional Development
Chesterfield County Public Schools

Follow this link to the Survey:
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

Reminder email to be sent to instructional and administrative staff of select schools via Qualtrics.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study. If you have not had the opportunity to complete the survey, it will remain open for approximately one more week. The survey will take approximately fifteen minutes. Participation is entirely voluntary and will have no effect on your employment in the school district.

For questions about the study, please contact me at autumn12@vt.edu or (804) 639-8924. Also, if you have questions about your rights as a human subject participant, please contact Dr. Moore at moored@vt.edu or 540-231-4991.

Your survey completion indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, and that you are aware of your right to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.

Sincerely,
Autumn N. Nabors
Virginia Tech Doctoral Student
Program Manager, Professional Development
Chesterfield County Public Schools

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${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}