

TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PERSPECTIVES ON THE TEACHER
EVALUATION PROCESS

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Submitted to the faculty of the School of Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy,
Indiana University
May 2020

Acceptance Page

Accepted by the School of Education Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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April 27, 2020

I dedicate this body of work to three very important people in my life, my mom, Sherry, my wife Dawn, and my daughter Christina.

To my mom, even though in some manner shape or form, I know you were with me through all this, I miss you and wish you could be here to share the culminating event. You always told me to do my best. Mom, this is my best, and I know this would have made you proud.

To my wife, Dawn, this would not have happened without you. You pushed me, you encouraged me, and you would not let me quit. You listened to me rant, you read countless pages of drafts, and this accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine.

To Christy, I know there are things in your childhood I missed while completing this whole process, but I hope I set the proper example of hard work and dedication. As I honor my mom in this dedication, honor me with a second doctorate in the family. If I can do this, you sure can.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Monica Byrne-Jimenez, for her hard work and commitment to this project. She took a floundering doctoral student and helped him to the finish line. I cannot thank you enough. To the rest of my committee, Dr. Suzanne Eckes and Dr. Cassandra Cole, you were both there for me, even before this project began, and your support was invaluable.

I want to thank Dr. Sue Lanham for her partnership through this process. We worked through our dissertations together, pushed each other, complained to each other, and got it done. I am proud we both got this finished.

Finally, Dr. Bruce Kulwicki, my doctoral coursework partner and good friend. I remember those evening homework sessions at the picnic table fondly, and it was there that we both committed to completing this process. The collaborative weekends and fruitful discussions we shared will be with me for a lifetime.

Abstract

Mark B. Black

TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PERSPECTIVES ON THE TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS

Within Indiana, growth and professional development are not a primary focus of the required teacher evaluation process. According to the Indiana Teacher Evaluation law, school administration must annually conduct performance evaluations on all certified employees. Rigorous measures of effectiveness are required as part of the law, which include observations, a rating designation ranging from highly effective to ineffective, and a discussion of the evaluation between the evaluator and the teacher. The Teacher Evaluation Law requires recommendations for improvement by the evaluator if a rating is below effective, but effective ratings are acceptable and do not require improvement initiatives. The Teacher Evaluation Law includes process requirements, but continuous improvement elements to the evaluation process are not present in the teacher evaluation law.

This study was a collaborative effort between the researcher and the district in which he is employed. A self-study with respect to the research questions and the evaluation process. The perspectives of teachers and school administrators were the focus of this study, thus, qualitative research methods were used. Thirteen semi-structured interviews provided the data for this study from nine teachers and four administrators. Exploratory qualitative research was used, which is introductory research intended to explain and define a problem to be solved.

Three interrelated concepts guided this study of teachers' perspectives on the teacher evaluation process: teacher observation, teacher feedback, and professional development. This research provides evidence that a disconnect between the design of professional development

and feedback provided to teachers as a result of classroom observations are not connected to continuous improvement. The improvement in instructional practices is dependent upon the principals' capacity to promote instructional leadership skills in observing teachers, providing feedback to teachers, and monitoring continuous improvement. Current research supports the findings of this study that effective teacher evaluation conducted within strong instructional leadership promotes continuous improvement.

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CHAPTER 1

Overview of Study

Introduction

Teacher evaluation is a primary component in school improvement initiatives across the country. Multiple elements construct the teacher evaluation process, including observation, feedback, reflection, and professional development. According to Danielson (2007), two main objectives in teacher evaluation promote continuous school improvement, ensuring teacher quality and promoting professional development. Engagement in the evaluation process must occur between both the evaluator and the teacher, which requires multiple observations and meaningful feedback (Toch, 2008). Effective teacher professional development is professional learning that effects changes in practice that results in improved student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, Hylar, & Gardner, 2017). Accordingly, effective feedback from the evaluator, meaningful reflection from the teacher, coupled with the integration of professional development are critical to excellence in the classroom (Ovando, 2005).

Since the conclusion of the 2012-2013 school year, only 2% of the teachers in Indiana receive an evaluation rating below effective (Evaluations, 2020). In addition to 98% of the teachers receiving at least an effective rating, highly effective teacher ratings continue to rise and, at last report, 45.5% of Indiana teachers are rated highly effective (Evaluations, 2020). Yet, research shows that teachers are less positive about the evaluation process than administration (Ansaldò, Cole, Murphy, & Robinson, 2015). Administrators receive detailed training on the evaluation process; teachers do not, which can explain some of the disparity in perspectives (p. 4). However, continuous school improvement requires an effective teacher evaluation process that promotes professional growth and is a collaborative effort between teachers and

administration. As stated, the relationship between continuous school improvement and teacher evaluation is critical, yet, research specific to detailed perspectives of teachers and administrators regarding the evaluation process is not expansive. This study will investigate teacher and administrator perspectives on the teacher evaluation process, specifically, observation, feedback, and professional development.

Indiana Policy Background

Indiana Code 20-28-11.5-4a, adopted in 2012-13, requires that each school corporation adopt or develop a plan that meets all requirements of the law to conduct annual performance evaluations for all certified teachers. Indiana Code 20-28-11.5-4c(2) requires that objective measures of student achievement and growth must “significantly inform” the evaluation, thus, requiring the integration of student state assessment results into the teacher evaluation. Upon passage of the law, the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) assessment was the dominant objective measure used in teacher evaluations (IDOE, 2011). In spring of 2019, ISTEP was replaced by the Indiana Learning Evaluation Assessment Readiness Network (ILEARN) test (ILEARN, 2020). The level of impact from student test scores on an individual teacher evaluation is dependent upon the plan adopted by the individual school corporation. IC 20-28-11.5-4c(3) requires rigorous measures, or an evaluation rubric, to be part of the evaluation along with teacher observations and other performance indicators. IC 20-28-11.5-4c(4) mandates four ratings for teachers: (1) highly effective, (2) effective, (3) improvement necessary, and (4) ineffective. The evaluator must assign one of those four ratings, using the performance indicators and the objective measures, in the final assessment of the teacher. Finally, IC 20-28-11.5-4d requires that the evaluator meet with the teacher at some point following the observation, but

there is not a stipulated timeline for that meeting in the law. IC 20-28-11.5-6 does stipulate that the evaluator provide written documentation to the teacher within 7 days of the observation.

Problem Statement

Within Indiana, growth and professional development are not a primary focus of the required evaluation process (Staff Performance Evaluations, 2011). According to the Indiana Teacher Evaluation law, (Indiana Code 20-28-11.5), school administration must annually conduct performance evaluations on all certified employees. Rigorous measures of effectiveness are required as part of the Teacher Evaluation Law, which include observations, a rating designation ranging from highly effective to ineffective, and a discussion of the evaluation between the evaluator and the teacher. Indiana Code 20-28-11.5-4(5) requires recommendations for improvement by the evaluator if a rating is below effective, but effective ratings are acceptable and do not require improvement initiatives. The Teacher Evaluation Law includes process requirements, but continuous improvement elements to the evaluation process are not present in the teacher evaluation law.

Research Questions

An investigation into teacher and administrator perspectives in Indiana regarding the teacher evaluation process uncovered critical information toward continuous improvement efforts. This study looked at each element in the evaluation process and investigated teacher and administrator perspectives specific to each element. The results of this study provide critical information toward the teacher evaluation process as it relates to continuous improvement efforts. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What factors influence teacher perspectives on the teacher evaluation process?

2. How do teachers and administrators view the link between teacher evaluation results, the instructional purpose of professional development, and continuous school improvement?

Conceptual Framework

Three interrelated concepts guided this study of teachers' perspectives on the teacher evaluation process: teacher observation, teacher feedback, and professional development. The purpose behind teacher evaluation is to identify teacher quality and to promote professional development, which results in a continuous improvement cycle critical to school improvement initiatives (Danielson, 2011). A review of each concept will assist in clarifying this conceptual lens.

First, teacher observation is a method used by administrators and instructional coaches to measure classroom behaviors by examining teachers (Heneman & Milanowski, 2001). Teacher observation perceptions generate from a comparison between the instructional activity and previously established standards (Danielson, 1996). Rigorous measures of effectiveness is a requirement in many state evaluation laws, including Indiana, and most states satisfy the requirement by using a standards based rubric (Evaluation Plans, 2017). The rubric enables the evaluator to compare the teacher against a compilation of personal skills, traits, practices, and knowledge identified in the rubric (Danielson, 1996). The rubric should allow the observer to evaluate how instruction aligns with the adopted curriculum and assessment system, as well as teaching conditions, such as time, class size, and facilities (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Second, feedback is a critical element of the observation, and both the evaluator and teacher must engage in the feedback process to identify strengths and a focus for improvement (Danielson, 2007; Frase, 1992). Some researchers claim the benefits of effective feedback, as a part of the evaluation process, has long been neglected (Frase, 1992; Frase & Streshley, 1994).

Common problems with teacher feedback include inflated ratings and feedback that is disconnected between teacher ratings and professional growth (Frase, 1992). Efforts to improve feedback should provide a direction for teacher improvement, which is fundamental for the continuous improvement of student learning (Frase & Streshley, 1994).

The final concept to consider as part of this conceptual lens is professional development. Effective professional development is “structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes” (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Teacher evaluations promote continuous school improvement in two ways: ensure teacher quality and promote professional development (Danielson, 2007). Observations provide data to offer effective teacher feedback, and feedback is the catalyst in the design of professional development (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Provided feedback that identifies how and why a teacher needs to improve begins the construction of effective professional development.

Overview of Methods

This study was a collaborative effort between the researcher and the district in which he is employed. A self-study with respect to the research questions and the evaluation process. The main qualities of self-study research is it captures human actions that convey developing knowledge of those involved, it is lodged in socially and contextually embedded situations, and can draw other people into the mix as the interview is unpacked (Galman, Kosnik, & Lassonde, 2009). The researcher can discuss and share developing knowledge with regard to the evaluation process and will continue to embed in the social context of the research site. As the narrative interviews evolve and are unpacked, the researcher is in a prime position to draw respondents into the mix.

The perspectives of teachers and school administrators were the focus of this study, thus, qualitative research methods were used. This study assumed an interpretivist perspective, which “looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world” (Crotty, 2012, p. 67). Exploratory qualitative research was used in this study. Exploratory qualitative research is introductory research intended to explain and define a problem to be solved (Lewis, Sanders, & Thornhill, 2012). The exploratory research methods used in this study were in-depth interviews that sought to understand through storytelling and allowing the participant to reconstruct the event. Using exploratory research during this study allowed for insight into teacher and administrator perspectives of the teacher evaluation process and the connection to continuous improvement efforts. Exploratory research was appropriate because participants reconstructed their understanding of the evaluation process by providing examples of observations, feedback, and professional development provided during the actual evaluation process. Identification of perspectives occurred through rich discussion using these qualitative research methods. It is the perspective of the participant in the evaluation process that is the focus, so questions will center on observation, feedback, and professional development.

Significance

Teacher evaluation is a primary focus in education today, and an effective evaluation process is critical toward continuous school improvement initiatives. In order for the evaluation process to contribute to continuous school improvement, the observation, feedback, and professional development must properly align (Danielson, 2011). A deeper understanding of teacher and administrator perspectives regarding each element of the evaluation process uncovered valuable information toward continuous school improvement. This study found a

lack of connection between the evaluation process elements and continuous school improvement efforts, and this gap is valuable information toward continuous school improvement efforts.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The teacher evaluation process, which includes the design of professional development, is critical to continuous school improvement efforts (Danielson, 2011). The purpose of this study was to understand teacher and administrator perspectives on the teacher evaluation process. This review focused on two areas of research that impact the evaluation process. The first section, policy context, focused on the federal and state requirements surrounding teacher evaluation. The second section, teacher evaluation advancement, looked at current research on teacher observations, feedback, and professional development. In order to clarify the study purpose and set the stage for an articulation of the methodology design, this chapter concluded with a discussion of the relevance of the literature presented.

Policy Context

The federal government passes education law and state governments adjust their education law to implement those policies at the local level. The reward for state compliance is federal education funding to the states. The original Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was updated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001, followed in 2015 by the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA). This section will look closer at NCLB, ESSA, and how the State of Indiana complies with ESEA.

Federal Policy Context

The intent of ESEA is to demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunity for all students in education (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2016). Teacher evaluation mandates did not appear in NCLB of 2001. As Congress deliberated changes in NCLB in 2012, President Barack Obama allowed states to submit waivers toward requirements of NCLB of 2001 (Slack, 2012). Within the waiver, states were required to include updates or improvements to their evaluation systems (ESSA/NCLB, 2018). The new focus on teacher evaluation transitioned the emphasis away from “highly qualified teacher.” The term “Highly qualified teacher” first appeared in NCLB of 2001. “Highly qualified” within NCLB context, defined teacher qualifications in terms of years of experience and education level, but did not reflect the actual quality of the teacher as referenced by an evaluation of a teacher (Danielson, 2007; NCLB, 2005). In order to be NCLB highly qualified, a teacher must hold a bachelor’s degree in a subject area along with state certification (NCLB, 2005). Missing from a highly qualified designation is a demonstrated ability to work with children, coursework in child development, and a demonstrated mastery in the subject area (Baines, 2017). Realizing the flaws in NCLB of 2001 and frustrated with the slow action of Congress, President Obama leveraged teacher evaluation reforms through the NCLB waiver process (Slack, 2012). Even though states would decide how they would reform their evaluation system, waiver requests were denied if student assessment performance did not inform the teacher evaluation results.

In December of 2015, Congress did not re-authorize NCLB. Instead, congress re-authorized ESEA of 1965 and created Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Specific to teacher evaluations, ESSA now allows states to decide how to conduct, document, and report teacher evaluations, so states now have the authority to establish their own requirements for teacher evaluation. Under the NCLB waiver system, state teacher evaluation plans were required to

include student outcomes, principal observation (or peer review), and constructive feedback to the teacher (Slack, 2012). The changes in ESSA shifts teacher evaluation design to the state level, to include whether to require student test scores to be part of teacher evaluation ratings (ESSA/NCLB, 2018). Indiana teacher evaluation guidelines and requirements are outlined in the next section to show compliance with ESSA.

Indiana Policy Context

Indiana Code 20-28-9-1.5 (teacher salary law) and IC 20-28-11.5 (teacher evaluation law) was formulated as part of the State Board of Education’s overhaul of the accountability system in 2011 (IDOE, 2018). The intent was to accomplish teacher quality through mandated teacher evaluation and potential financial reward for teachers designated as highly effective. The teacher evaluation law required school corporations to use a limited scope of evaluation models attempting to go beyond the NCLB designation of “highly qualified” and better differentiate between effective and less effective teachers. Thus, teacher evaluation is at the epicenter of continuous improvement efforts in Indiana and it is essential that these evaluations provide systematic information on teacher performance (Looney, 2011).

As the teacher evaluation law (IC 20-28-11.5) was developed and implemented in Indiana, six major requirements for school corporations are part of the law. The first was annual performance evaluations for all certificated employees, including a combination of formal and informal observations. The second was that objective measures of student achievement and growth must significantly inform the evaluation. The full impact of student achievement and growth is determined by individual districts. Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) was the first required objective measure required for teacher evaluations, followed by the Indiana Learning Evaluation Assessment Readiness Network (ILEARN) in 2019. Districts

have the option to use local tests to inform the evaluation, as well. In December 2015, the Indiana legislature voted to discontinue ISTEP+ testing in spring 2018. ILEARN is now the required objective measure for students in the third thru eighth grades, which began in spring 2019 (ILEARN, 2020). The third requirement was that rigorous measures of effectiveness, including observations and other performance indicators, required the use of a standards based rubric. Districts have the option to choose a preapproved rubric or design their own with approval from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). Fourth, each certified employee must receive a rating in one of the following rating categories: highly effective, effective, improvement necessary, or ineffective. Since the passage of ESSA, Indiana is one of multiple states that continues to require teacher evaluation results to supersede the highly qualified designation under NCLB, including years of experience in the profession (Thomsen, 2014). A teacher evaluation rating, then, is the determining factor to select which teachers lose their jobs in the event of a reduction in force. Fifth, teachers receiving a rating of “in need of improvement” or “ineffective” must have a clear explanation of the evaluator's recommendations for improvement and timeline in which improvement is expected. In addition, all teachers must receive documentation on the observation within five days. Lastly, the evaluation plan must include a provision that prevents a teacher who negatively affected student achievement and growth (using, ISTEP, ILEARN, and local assessment data) cannot receive a rating of “highly effective” or “effective.”

Objective measures for high school teachers in Indiana is not as straightforward as in grades three thru eight. Sophomore ISTEP testing will remain a graduation requirement for the graduating classes of 2019 thru 2022. However, in December 2017, the Indiana State Board of Education approved new graduation pathway stipulations for the graduation class of 2023. These

pathways eliminate ISTEP and ILEARN as graduation requirements, but utilize either a combination of the SAT, ACT, or ASVAB as potential graduation exams, now allowed under ESSA. Further, some industry apprenticeships and certifications are other options to satisfy graduation exam requirements. Without further clarification on the new graduation requirements, high school teachers would be those teachers identified in the evaluation law as teachers who do not teach in areas measured by statewide testing, thus, it is currently unclear how schools will comply with the objective measure requirement when statewide standardized testing stops for high school students.

Standards based evaluation. As part of the teacher evaluation law, rigorous measures of effectiveness is a requirement of Indiana Code 20-28-11.5, and Indiana districts are required to satisfy the requirement by using a standards based rubric (Evaluation Plans, 2017). Because of the teacher evaluation law, and a need for a solid standards based teacher evaluation model, the IDOE created a teacher evaluation framework called RISE in 2011. This framework was developed by a broad spectrum of educators as they examined numerous evaluation models, including Danielson, Marzano, and Wiggins and McTighe (State Evaluation Model, 2013). Across Indiana, local school corporations had the option of adopting RISE as their teacher evaluation framework or creating a locally developed framework using RISE, Danielson, Marzano, or a combination thereof (Evaluation Plans, 2017). Again, the teacher evaluation law specifies that standards based evaluations couple with objective measures of student achievement and growth. The objective measures must significantly inform the summative teacher evaluation.

Professional development. Even though the teacher evaluation law does not stipulate teacher professional development for all teachers, the IDOE does provide some support and recommendations for districts. Looking explicitly at the use of teacher evaluation data and the

design of professional development, the IDOE website provides links to The Center on Great Teacher and Leaders (GTL) at American Institutes for Research (IDOE, 2016). GTL provides a module with six hours of training to learn how to use evaluation data to provide feedback, practice in using data to design professional learning, and next steps to ensure districts support an evaluation system that focuses on growth (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2018). Handouts, PowerPoint slides, a facilitator guide, and a sample agenda is in the module and allow modifications specific to an individual state. GTL provides webinars and face-to-face presentations to assist in a wide range of issues, and many webinars are still available for viewing on the GTL site (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2018).

The Indiana teacher evaluation law was established to comply with the NCLB waiver process implemented by the Obama administration in 2012 (Slack, 2012). With the passage of ESSA, states are not required to follow the NCLB waiver guidelines specific to teacher evaluation, but Indiana's teacher evaluation and salary laws remain the same. The teacher evaluation process in Indiana will continue to require objective measures of student achievement and growth that inform the evaluation, rigorous measures of effectiveness, and clear explanations for improvement for teachers rated below effective.

Teacher Evaluation Advancement

This section will look into current research surrounding teacher evaluation and the literature that supports the changes required under ESEA. The focus of this section will be on the three evaluation process elements identified as part of this study. Observations focus on the visible practices and strategies that teachers use in the classroom. Teacher observation perceptions are grounded in the measures of effectiveness, or established standards, used to conduct the observation (Danielson, 1996). Perceptions of fairness and accuracy are critical for

both teachers and administrators. Feedback is provided back to the teacher based on the administrator's observations of the teacher's practices as compared to the established standards (Feeney, 2007). Effective feedback is critical to school improvement efforts (Frase & Streshly, 1994). Professional development is the final element in the teacher evaluation process. Established standards provide a common language between the teacher and evaluator toward school improvement efforts (Danielson, 1996). Improved student learning outcomes is the focus for school improvement efforts, thus, professional development should focus on improved student learning (Guskey, 2003).

Teacher Observation Perceptions

Prior to NCLB, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) was founded in 1987 "to enhance collaboration among states interested in rethinking teacher assessment for initial licensing as well as for preparation and induction into the profession" (INTASC, 1992, p. 5). In 1992, INTASC released a set of performance-based standards intended to raise the quality of teachers entering the profession. Ten standards, or principles, were developed, and each principle assessed teacher knowledge, disposition, and performance (INTASC, 1992). As momentum continued to shift towards standards based evaluation, Danielson (1996) released *A Framework for Teaching* designed to catch the vibrant development of classroom instruction. This framework sought to accomplish three things: (1) honor the complexity of teaching, (2) create a common professional language for conversation, and (3) develop a configuration for reflection and self-evaluation (Danielson, 1996). Through the development of standards based evaluation, a profound shift occurred in education regarding teacher evaluation late in the 20th century. This shift moved teachers away from a mere supervision emphasis and leans hard on teacher evaluation that focuses on student achievement

(Frontier, Marzano, & Livingston, 2011). A review of studies specific to observation and standards based instruments will follow.

Milanowski and Heneman (2001) conducted an early pilot study intended to look at teacher reactions to the new standards based teacher evaluation system in a mid-western school district. Danielson's (1996) framework was the foundation of the system, and the study looked at teacher reactions to the new standards, fairness of the evaluation system, and teacher perceptions surrounding the impact on instruction. The rationale behind the study was to understand teacher reaction to the new system, which is critical to acceptance and use of the method. Teachers from 10 different schools within the district volunteered to participate in a pilot test of the new evaluation system. Teachers participating in the study were scheduled to be evaluated that school year, 36 for a comprehensive evaluation, and 315 for an annual evaluation. All 36 volunteered from the list of comprehensive evaluations, and 255 from the annual evaluation list. Participating teachers received a continuing education unit for the school year. Semi-structured interviews of 35 of the comprehensive evaluation participants and 23 of the annual participants took place. The interview focused on six research questions. The questions looked at the evaluation process, rating fairness, acceptance of the standards, qualifications of the evaluator, clear understanding of the system, and impact on teaching. Suggestions for improvement to the system was also part of the interview. A survey of both annual and comprehensive participants completed the study design. Fifty-eight percent of the comprehensive teachers and 23% of the annual teachers took the survey.

Overall, teachers neither embraced nor rejected the new system. Teacher interview responses were slightly more favorable than survey responses, which were slightly below neutral. Years of experience nor the type of evaluation (comprehensive or annual) did not

influence favorableness toward the system. From the survey, a significant number of the teachers accepted the new standards and viewed the new system as having a positive impact on their teaching. They viewed the new system as fair and the evaluator objective. Interview results were consistent with survey results, but did suggest that the manner in which the evaluator operated the new system prompted teacher reactions. Multiple observations over a short period with minimal or delayed feedback created a poor collaborative environment between the evaluator and the teacher, according to teacher interview results. Conversely, proper application of the standards with timely evaluator feedback that was guiding and reassuring prompted positive teacher reactions. Overall, teachers felt the new evaluation system had potential to be better than the old system.

Meinz, Reeves and Tripamer (2014) conducted a study intended to look at teacher perceptions toward the new Missouri teacher evaluation instrument (standards based) compared to a traditional district instrument. The researchers looked separately at perceptions of the district evaluation instrument in use at the time, and then compiled data regarding perceptions toward the new Missouri model, which complies with ESSA. The rationale behind the study is that teacher evaluation determines the ability of the teacher to foster student achievement; thus, effective teacher evaluation builds the teacher's capacity to promote student success. Four research questions guided the study, two qualitative and two quantitative. The two quantitative questions focused on benefits of the current evaluation system and the new Missouri evaluation model specific to improved instructional practices. The two qualitative questions looked at teacher perceptions of the current instrument and the new Missouri evaluation model. All teachers in the district (1300) received the quantitative survey and 358 provided responses. The respondents completed a 21-item survey with a Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree)

to seven (strongly agree). Focus groups established in three elementary schools and two secondary schools provided data for the qualitative portion of the study. Membership in each focus group was comprised of various grades and subject areas and ranged from six to 11 members. The focus group questions attempted to guide respondents toward specific information regarding their impressions of both the current system and the new Missouri model. The authors used descriptive statistics to calculate two summary variables for the survey, including mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, and t-values. An analysis of transcripts from the interviews took place through coding using open and focused coding techniques.

Quantitative data did not show a substantial difference in preference. However, the t-values did show a statistically significant difference toward the Missouri model leading to a better evaluation than the current model. Qualitative data also showed relative weaknesses in the current evaluation model, and that the new Missouri model is a better evaluation tool than their current model. Again, the Mainz, Reeves and Tripamer (2014) study shows teacher support for the use of standards based observations.

Two years later, Lacireno-Paquet, Bocala, and Bailey (2016) conducted a study in conjunction with the Institute of Education Sciences and the United States Department of Education. The researchers wanted to look at teacher perceptions of the standards based system, and the reasons associated with effective execution of evaluation systems. As with Milanowski and Heneman (2001), Lacireno-Paquet, Bocala, and Bailey (2016) rationalized that teacher perceptions are an important influence on the effectiveness of system implementation. Research questions centered on the extent to which teachers are satisfied with the evaluation process, and the relationship with professional climate, teacher demographics, and the inclusion of student test scores. The National Center for Education Statistics conducted four studies between the years of

2011 and 2014. As part of the four studies, a follow up study sent back to previous participants looked at the aforementioned research questions. “A total of 4,430 teachers were sampled as part of the teacher follow-up survey, including 2,850 current teachers and 1,580 former teachers” (Lacireno-Paquet, Bocala, & Bailey, 2016, p. 3). All public schools were included in the sampling frame, so teachers came from any public school or public charter school (p. 3). Teacher responses analyzed produced averages, frequencies, and percentages for all variables, to include sampling weights to ensure unbiased population estimates.

Seventy-nine percent of the teachers reported being satisfied with the teacher evaluation process (agreed or strongly agreed) (p. 1). Most teachers reported a positive perception of their principal, but they did not report to have influence over school policies. Teachers that reported a positive perception of their principal were more likely to report satisfaction with the evaluation process. Teachers rated low in the evaluation process expressed less satisfaction with the process, and teacher ratings that include student test scores negatively impacted teacher satisfaction with the evaluation process. As with Milanowski and Heneman (2001) and Mainz, Reeves and Tripamer (2014), the Lacireno-Paquet, Bocala, and Bailey (2016) study finds teacher support for the standards based evaluation process.

Teacher Observation and Feedback

As part of the evaluation process, the importance of post observation feedback to the teacher is a strong point of emphasis (Feeney, 2007). Some researchers claim the benefits of effective feedback, as a part of the evaluation process, has long been neglected (Frase L. E., 1992; Frase & Streshly, 1994). Ten years prior to the passage of NCLB, Frase and Streshly (1994) stated, “the potential of feedback to improve teacher performance has not been realized” (p. 51). The authors reviewed four widespread problems with teacher evaluation: inflated ratings,

poor feedback, disconnection between teacher ratings and professional growth, and lack of administrator responsibility for evaluations. A primary focus of Frase and Streshly's (1994) review was teacher feedback. They advocated for improved efforts in feedback, since teacher feedback provides a direction for improvement and is fundamental for continuous improvement of student learning.

Feeney (2007) conducted a case study of the narrative feedback teachers received on their evaluations. The purpose of the study was to determine if using a performance rubric would enhance the characteristics of quality feedback and the improvement of instruction. The study analyzed and examined the quality of feedback provided to teachers during the evaluation process. Feeney (2007) rationalized that feedback should be based on observable data (standards based observation), should provide characteristics of effective teaching, and should "promote reflective inquiry and self-directedness to foster improvements in teaching supported by evidence of student learning" (p. 191). Feeney (2007) analyzed 15 teacher evaluations from a large western school district involving multiple evaluators. These evaluations occurred from 1982 to 2007, and, in 1999, the district implemented a new standards based evaluation system. The analysis compared feedback provided before 1999 and after the implementation of the new evaluation system.

Feeney (2007) found that feedback provided to teachers prior to 1999 did not promote professional learning. The feedback was "nondescript, meaningless at times, and did not reference student-learning outcomes" (p. 193). The feedback provided after 1999 was more specific to characteristics of effective teaching, due to the implemented performance standards. Feeney (2007) could not determine if that feedback led to reflective inquiry or self-directedness that resulted in improved student learning. The author concluded that positive strides occurred in

the teacher evaluation process after 1999, but that the performance rubric and provided feedback were not enough to ensure improved student learning outcomes.

In a study conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences and the American Institutes for Research, Brown, Garet, Manzeske, Rickles, Song, and Wayne (2017) rationalized that since improved student outcomes occurred by boosting educator effectiveness, more frequent and specific feedback to the teacher enhanced the evaluation process. The study had two goals, examine the implementation of the feedback based on certain performance measures and determine whether the increased feedback resulted in improved teacher ratings, and ultimately improved student-learning outcomes. Performance measures looked at the presentation of the feedback, teacher ratings, teacher experiences, the impact on teacher practice, and the impact on student performance. A requirement of 20 elementary and middle schools per district narrowed the sample pool, the district had to have a value added model in place for data purposes, and the performance measures and feedback provided to teachers had to be less intensive than the study intended to implement. Due to policy constraints and research needs, only 29 states had eligible districts and 457 districts met the criteria. After initial communication, 49 districts expressed interest in participation, 18 districts agreed to meet with study group, and eight districts participated once the involvement details clarified. In total, 63 treatment schools (49 elementary and 14 middle), 64 control schools (48 elementary and 16 middle), and 1179 teachers participated in the study.

Findings confirmed implementation of the measures in that treatment group teachers received more feedback and for longer periods versus control group teachers. Eighty five percent of the teachers received ratings in the top two categories, so negligible differences in teacher ratings provided limited information in identifying areas of improvement. The study also

showed some positive impacts on classroom practice, instructional leadership, and student outcomes. Teachers showed a slight increase in their evaluation ratings and slight gains occurred in the area of math but not language arts. Instructional leadership ratings improved for principals and teacher-principal trust increased. The study concluded that a positive relationship exists between principal-teacher feedback and standards based observations. Feedback may have been responsible for improvements in instructional practice, which showed slight improved student outcomes. Despite the increased feedback, treatment group teachers were not more likely to engage in professional development or to indicate they needed to improve than control group teachers.

Brodersen, Cherasaro, Reale, and Yanoski (2016) rationalized that teachers receive appropriate evidence based feedback in well-designed and properly implemented teacher evaluation systems. The purpose of their study was to support efforts to improve teacher effectiveness by looking at how teachers' value and use provided post-observation feedback. Three part research questions looked at teacher perceptions of the usefulness and accuracy of the feedback, the interrelationship between evaluator credibility and perceptions on the feedback, and access to resources related to the feedback. Additionally, the questions looked at how the perceptions were interrelated and how those perceptions related to the response to feedback. The districts selected for this study spanned across two states, and were all involved in a pilot test of a new evaluation system, which had feedback focus components. Seven school districts took part in this study with 317 PreK-12 classroom teachers from both urban and rural areas, large and small schools, and most all content areas and grade levels.

Most teachers agreed that their feedback was accurate, useful, that their evaluator was credible, and that they had access to resources. Evaluator credibility was the single most

important factor related to teacher response to feedback, which relates to how useful the teacher perceives the feedback to be. Evaluator credibility is strongly related to teacher perceptions of accurate feedback, which then underscores the usefulness of the feedback provided. The authors concluded that evaluator training be provided on guidance for frequent, timely, and specific feedback on content knowledge, instructional practices, classroom management, and for finding resources for finding professional development.

Cohen, Grossman, Loeb, Miller and Wyckoff (2019) conducted a study of principal's perceived agency to influence teacher effectiveness in schools. Perceived agency was defined as the principal's belief in their ability to improve their teachers. They also looked at the different levels of perceived agency within schools in New York City and their implementation of policy specific to teacher evaluation. This was through the lens of principals as instructional leaders and their ability to influence teaching effectiveness. Instructional leaders build teacher capacity for instructional improvement (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013). They focused primarily on teacher observation and feedback, discounting student standardized test scores, since not all teachers were evaluated with the integration of student test scores. Data was collected using surveys, interviews and administrative employment records. Surveys were distributed to 494 middle school principals in New York City Schools, 258 principals responded to the survey, and 40 principals were interviewed.

A key finding of Cohen, Grossman, Loeb, Miller and Wyckoff (2019) was that principals express differential agency over different groups of teachers. In general, principals did not express confidence to improve post-tenure teachers, although there was a small group of principals that did express the agency to improve post-tenure teachers. Further, they found that perceived agency was not a systematic measure for principals, which has implications for district

level administration. Principals identified as expressing a high perceived agency are engaged in activities associated with instructional improvements more so than teachers with a low perceived agency. High agency principals are good time managers, have clear goals associated with teacher effectiveness, and use the teacher evaluation policy to service their goals.

Before the passage of NCLB, the teacher evaluation process did not provide an adequate focus on the feedback provided to the teacher following an observation (Frase & Streshly, 1994; Feeney, 2007). Increased classroom visits and more frequent feedback provided to teachers improves classroom practice and does result in some improved learning outcomes (Brown, et al., 2017). Evaluator credibility is critical to perceptions of accurate and useful feedback provided to teachers. The perceived agency of principals strongly contributes to instructional leadership and the capacity to improve instructional effectiveness (Cohen, Loeb, Miller, & Wyckoff, 2019). Instructional leaders conduct observations and provide feedback, which leads to the effective design of professional development leading to school wide continuous improvement (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013).

Professional development

The final process element to consider as part of this literature review is professional development. According to Danielson (2007), teacher evaluations promote continuous school improvement in two ways: ensuring teacher quality (which occurs during observation and feedback) and promoting professional development. Yet, many studies show that teacher professional development does not always result in improved student learning outcomes (Bruce & Showers, 2016; Garet, Heppen, Smith, Walters, & Yang, 2016).

Guskey (2003) looked at 13 different research based lists that characterized effective professional development. The 13 lists came from “The American Federation of Teachers,

Association for Supervision and Curriculum, Education Development Center, Education Research Center, Educational Testing Service, Eisenhower Professional Development Program, National Governors Association, National Institute for Science Education, National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching, National Staff Development Council, and the United States Department of Education (Guskey, 2003, p. 748). Guskey (2003) was not looking for specific characteristics, rather common characteristics between lists to formulate agreement of effective professional development characteristics. He found that the lists were developed in many different ways, different characteristics defined effectiveness, and occasionally characteristics were contradictory. He concluded that the lists “rarely include rigorous investigations of the relationship between the noted characteristics [of professional development] and improvements in instructional practice or student learning outcomes” (p. 749). Guskey argues that improved student learning outcomes should be the “ultimate goal” in professional development. Reviewing current research on professional development and student outcomes, Copas, Glassett, and Shaha (2015) rationalized that coordinated professional development with focused observations on the provided professional development would improve student learning. Gareth et al. (2016) looked at the impact of increased teacher content area knowledge. Altun and Yurtseven (2017) researched student achievement gains while combining professional development on the implementation of Understanding by Design. A closer look at the three aforementioned studies will follow.

Copas, Glassett, and Shaha (2015) conducted a large study on the impact of teacher observations with coordinated professional development. The professional development offered was on-line and on-demand for convenient accessibility, which offered a range of assistance on collaborative purposes. This was a quantitative study involving 293 schools in 110 districts

across 27 states and approximately 4380 teachers participated. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact continuous improvement efforts have on student achievement (p. 57). Student performance data were collected on state standardized testing, and all state tests used rating scale terminology of proficient and advanced, which helped simplify data categorization. Additionally, the study analyzed the number of teacher observations and level of engagement in teacher professional development.

Schools with higher observation rates showed significant student achievement gains in both reading and math over schools with lower observation rates. Important to the results, teachers with higher observation rates showed a significantly higher utilization and engagement with the available professional development activities. The authors could not discern whether the increase observations or the higher level of engagement in professional development led to improvements in teacher efficacy. Copas, Glassett, and Shaha (2015) concluded that a coordinated approach, using observations with recommendations and the execution of specific professional development positively affects student achievement.

Garet et al. (2016) conducted a study of elementary teachers and the impact professional development on increasing content knowledge in math. The study stems from the growing consensus of mathematicians' and math educators that deeper content area knowledge in math was essential to effective math professional development for teachers. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect "of content-intensive professional development on teachers' math content knowledge, their instructional practice, and their students' achievement" (p. ES-1). The 93-hour professional development had three components, content knowledge (80 hours), collaboration (10 hours), and video feedback (3 hours). Noteworthy in this study was that collaboration and video feedback focused on the teacher practices, not student reaction to teacher

practices. Two hundred twenty one fourth grade teachers volunteered to participate in this project, which included 94 different schools within six school districts across five states. Approximately half the teachers were assigned control group status (no professional development) and the other half of the teachers designated as the treatment group. The quantitative data looked for knowledge gains due to professional development, changes in instructional practice, and student achievement gains.

Three dimensions of practice were assessed, the richness of the math, student participation, and errors and imprecisions. Results showed a positive impact on teacher content knowledge in math. Content knowledge scores on a math assessment given to all 221 teachers showed the treatment teachers scored 21 percentage points higher than the control group teachers scored. Treatment teachers showed significant positive differences in their richness of math lessons presented, but the scores on student participation and errors and imprecisions were statistically insignificant (p. ES-1). The researchers referenced previous studies that showed mixed results. A study by Ball, Hill, and Rowan (2005) found that knowledge gains by teachers did improve student achievement, but required teacher knowledge gains of two standard deviations in order to achieve student gains of 0.1 standard deviations. Conversely, Jacob, Kane, Rockoff, and Staiger (2011) did not find statistically significant student gains with increased teacher knowledge. Garet et al. (2016), summarized that student achievement might benefit with a closer focus on instructional practice along with increased teacher content knowledge.

Altun and Yurtseven (2017) conducted an action research study on teacher professional development and student achievement in Istanbul, Turkey. The study looked at the implementation of Understanding by Design (UbD) as a tool for the implementation of professional development. The focus of UbD is to consider instructional priorities based on

predetermined enduring understandings for student learning outcomes. The action research included training on UbD concepts. The purpose of the study was to “investigate the change (UbD) made on teachers’ professional development and students’ achievement” (p. 437). The rationale behind the study was that professional development was crucial for teacher growth, acquisition of knowledge, skills, and instructional practices to promote student achievement. The mixed-methods study involved 10 English foreign language teachers and 436 students, of which 211 students served as the control group (p. 442). The teachers of the 211 students in the control group did not receive any training on UbD.

The treatment group made considerable progress in the implementation of the UbD principles. Teacher performance in writing accurate desired results for students, preparing authentic performance tasks, determining assessment criteria, and enriching unit design all improved. This action research broke the professional development into three dimensions, unit design, implementation of the design, and “the contribution of UbD to the professional development” (p. 447). Through interviews, the teachers reported that the UbD principles assisted in enhancing their unit design and implementation, along with peer observations and self-reflection. The authors analyzed student achievement in three categories based on the course level (A-C). The B level students demonstrated significant achievement scores, whereas the A and C level student achievement was not significant. Altun and Yurtseven (2017) concluded that the positive results from the B level students has strong implications toward teacher professional development and improved student learning.

Reviewing current research on professional development and student outcomes, Copas, Glasset, and Shaha (2015) coordinated professional development with focused observations on the provided professional development and showed a connection between achievement gains and

increased observation rates. Garet et al. (2016) looked at the impact of increased teacher content area knowledge with little connection to achievement gains. Altun and Yurtseven (2017) found student achievement gains combining professional development on the implementation of Understanding by Design, which reflects positively on both professional development and Understanding by Design.

Ansaldo, Cole, Murphy, and Robinson (2015) conducted a survey of school superintendents across the State of Indiana on the Teacher Evaluation Law. The Center on Education and Lifelong Learning through Indiana University Bloomington published the findings in a policy brief. The brief compared findings published in similar brief published in 2012 to determine the evolvement of superintendent attitudes and concerns regarding the Teacher Evaluation Law. Superintendents were surveyed on “questions concerning their beliefs about teacher evaluation, the legislation mandating changes to the evaluation process, and the local district level impact of changes to their teacher evaluation process to comply with the legislation” (Ansaldo, Cole, Murphy, & Robinson, 2015, p. 2). A (1-7) Likert Scale was used ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Their findings on attitudes and concerns regarding professional development is significant to the findings in this study.

Most superintendents either agreed or strongly agreed (80.6%) that instruction can be fairly judged from the 2015 brief, up 6.9% from 2012. The increase in agreement was a shift away from somewhat agree, as the respondents remained steady in the disagreement categories at 3%. Similar levels of agreement surfaced when superintendents were asked to rate their confidence with their own district evaluation instrument to assess instruction (78.2% agreed or strongly agreed), which was not asked in the 2012 survey. Regarding professional development, most superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that the teacher evaluation system should drive

professional development in 2012 (79.3%), but dropped to 72% in 2014. Further, the 2014 survey asked an additional question regarding the alignment of their district evaluation instrument and the design of professional development. Only 54.5% of the superintendents agreed or strongly agreed that professional development design was driven by their district evaluation plan.

The superintendent attitudes and concerns are connected to the direction they lead their districts. Superintendents agree that instruction can be fairly assessed, which is important when considering the design of professional development. Roughly, half of the superintendents agreed that their district evaluation instrument drives their professional development design, which also means a significant percentage of districts do not connect teacher evaluation results to professional development design. These results are significant to this study and at the heart of the research.

Conceptual Framework

This literature review of the teacher evaluation process investigated three key elements: observation, feedback, and professional development. The teacher evaluation process is a mechanism to ensure teacher quality and design meaningful professional development through observation, reflection, and feedback. School improvement should be the result of the process. The studies represented attempt to demonstrate current educator perspectives and attitudes, as well as report current research specific to the evaluation process elements. This study will investigate the evaluation process based on the design in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Teacher Evaluation Flow Chart



An agreed upon standards based rubric is used to conduct observations

A qualified evaluator conducts the observation

The evaluator rates the observation and prepares feedback

Feedback

Ratings are provided to the teacher with written feedback

A collaborative discussion between the evaluator and teacher

Professional Development

Professional development is designed based on observations and feedback

Figure 1. The Teacher Evaluation Flow Chart shows the chronological order of the teacher evaluation process.

With respect to observation, the literature shows administrator and teacher support for a standards based observation system, particularly when multiple observations occur (Heneman & Milanowski, 2001). Teacher perception of the evaluator was an important factor related to positive perceptions, as well as higher teacher ratings (Lacireno-Paquet, Bocala, & Bailey, 2016). The feedback provided to teachers was more meaningful using the standards based system, the feedback was deeper, showed positive results on instructional practice, and showed some impact on student outcomes (Feeney, 2007), which contributes to continuous school improvement. Brown et al. (2017) and Brodersen, Cherasaro, Reale, and Yanoski (2016) both found teachers stressed the importance that a respected evaluator conduct the observation to provide knowledgeable feedback that was accurate and affective.

Professional development is the final element in the teacher evaluation process and is critical to continuous improvement initiatives (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Multiple sources promote expanding teacher content knowledge through professional development (Ball, Hill, & Rowen, 2005; Hill, et al., 2008), but recent studies show that, taught in isolation, expanding teacher content knowledge has limited effect on continuous improvement

efforts (Garet, Heppen, Smith, Walters, & Yang, 2016; Bruce & Showers, 2016). In a recent extensive meta-analysis of 35 professional development studies, Darling-Hammond, Hylar, and Gardner (2017) recommend that professional development be content focused, but also provide collaboration time along with feedback and reflection that “help teachers to thoughtfully move toward the expert visions of practice” (p. v). Andree, Darling-Hammond, Chung, Orphanos, and Richardson (2009) also concluded that, “professional development is most effective when teachers engage actively in instructional inquiry in the context of collaborative professional communities, focused on instructional improvement and student achievement” (p. 58). Successful professional development encompasses multiple design models in order to ensure the training addresses teacher needs (Darling-Hammond, Hylar, & Gardner, 2017).

This review of literature intends to underpin the rationale for the study. Investigating teacher and administrator perspectives on the teacher evaluation process sheds light on attitudes and commitments toward the individual elements that construct the activity. Indifference on the part of the administrator or teacher toward one or more of the process elements weakens continuous improvement efforts. In order for professional development to be effective, it must change instructional practices and improve student learning. The link between observation-feedback and professional development was a key focus of this study.

Conclusion

The teacher evaluation process in Figure 1 served as a guide to organize perspectives specific to the elements within the evaluation process. The concepts of ensuring teacher quality and designing professional development should occur as part of the teacher evaluation process. Improved student learning outcomes should be, in part, a result of effective professional development (Guskey, 2003). Thus, teacher and administrator perspectives on improved student

learning was an important consideration when investigating professional development. Links to professional development design and continuous school improvement, or lack thereof, was a primary focus of this research. The methodology used for this research project will occur in chapter three.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

The teacher evaluation law includes process requirements, but continuous improvement elements are not part of the law (Danielson, 1996). The evaluation process elements offer a format to link teacher observations, feedback, and professional development to continuous improvement efforts. Administrators conduct observations, provide feedback, and may or may not recommend professional development. Teachers are observed, given feedback, and depending upon the type of feedback, may or may not engage in professional development. This study examined the relationship between the evaluation process and continuous improvement.

This chapter outlines the research methods used to explore the teacher evaluation process and continuous improvement efforts. A focus on teachers and school administrators' perspectives on the teacher evaluation process offers insight into the connection between evaluation and professional development. Qualitative research methods provided the best way to conduct this research because this study sought a deep understanding of perspectives on the teacher evaluation process. In order to understand perspectives, an investigation of the whole evaluation experience was necessary. Qualitative methods allowed the research to look deeper into the personal level of the respondents, including frustrations, struggles, and successes (Bogdan, DeVault, & Taylor, 2015). This study assumed an interpretivist perspective, which "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world" (Crotty, 2012, p. 67). The interpretive perspective understands that individuals view the world based on their cultures and history, which affects the truth of their viewpoint (Butin, 2010). This study attempted to "accurately and thoroughly document the perspective being investigated" (p. 60).

Research Design

Exploratory qualitative research was used in this study. Exploratory qualitative research is introductory research intended to explain and define a problem to be solved (Lewis, Sanders, & Thornhill, 2012). The exploratory research methods used in this study were in-depth interviews that sought to understand through storytelling and allowing the participant to reconstruct the event. Using exploratory research during this study allowed for insight into teacher and administrator perspectives of the teacher evaluation process and the connection to continuous improvement efforts. Exploratory research was appropriate because participants reconstructed their understanding of the evaluation process by providing examples of observations, feedback, and professional development provided during the actual evaluation process. Identification of perspectives occurred through rich discussion using these qualitative research methods. It was the perspective of the participant in the evaluation process that was the focus, so questions centered on observation, feedback, and professional development. In order to understand teacher and administrator perspectives toward the teacher evaluation process, this study sought to understand the experiences of teachers and administrators, specific to the teacher evaluation process, through their eyes. This study took place within the district in which the researcher works. The district will not know the names of the teachers interviewed.

Research Context

Site

The site is located less than 30 miles from a major metropolitan city. The site is a medium sized school district in the State of Indiana with a student population of 3127 students, 90.8% white, 5.1% multi-racial, 2.9% Hispanic, and all others less than 1%. Seventeen percent of the students receive special education services, and 48.5% receive free or reduced lunch

(Compass, 2019). Two hundred and nine teachers serve the district, and 35% with 16 or more years of experience, 48% with 6 to 15 years' experience, and 18% with 5 or less years' experience (Compass, 2018).

The district has two high schools: one small rural junior/senior high with less than 400 students (6-12) and one medium sized suburban high school with close to 800 students (9-12). Five elementary schools feed the secondary schools and two of those schools are rural single section schools. Both the single section schools feed the larger high school in the district as well as two split multiple section suburban elementary schools (one pk-3 and one 4-6). One multiple section rural elementary school feeds the small rural high school. The district free and reduced lunch rate is 48.4% compared to the state average of 48.1%, and the special education population is 17.3% compared to the state's 14.7% (Compass, 2018). The district graduation rate is 95%, compared to a statewide graduation rate of 87% (Compass, 2018), so the site selection represents an average school district in the state of Indiana in multiple areas.

The district is an original member of the Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System (INTASS), which “offers states, districts, and schools support in designing, implementing, and monitoring their teacher evaluation systems, training teacher evaluators, and supporting teachers to engage in evaluation and professional growth opportunities” (INTASS, 2017, p. 1). The researcher is an administrator in the district, served as the INTASS representative, and continues to serve on the district teacher evaluation Oversight Committee. The Oversight Committee is a combination of teachers, administrators, and district leadership that reviews and collaborates on the implementation of the evaluation instrument, and makes recommendations to the superintendent in the event issues or adjustments to the plan are necessary.

Participant Selection

The data sources for this research were secondary and elementary teachers, administrators, and documents associated with the implementation of the teacher evaluation process within the district. Participants selected for this study were certified teachers in the State of Indiana who work full time within the aforementioned district. Five elementary teachers, four secondary teachers (one secondary teacher left the district before the conclusion of the study), and four administrators provided the qualitative data to analyze. Teachers had at least three years of teaching experience so that they participated in at least three cycles of the teacher evaluation process. Further, participating teacher evaluations were accountable to state standardized test scores for the specific students in their classroom. Thus, the pool of respondents was limited to elementary teachers in grades three thru six and secondary teachers in grades seven and eight, as well as Math and English teachers in grade 10. This limitation provided consistency in the application of student test data to the teacher evaluation. Selection was voluntary for participating teachers. A call for volunteers preceded a narrowing random selection, as an attempt to balance respondents from buildings across the district occurred. Only eight principals serve in the district, (one is the researcher), so all were asked to volunteer. Four principals volunteered to participate, two elementary and two secondary, so all four principals were selected and participated in the study.

The following teachers and administrators participated in this study using a pseudonym, teacher/principal assignment, and years of experience:

Karen, 4th grade teacher, over 10 years of experience.

Carly, 5th grade teacher, over 10 years of experience.

Bridget, primary teacher, over 10 years of experience.

Debbie, primary teacher, over 20 twenty years of experience.

Stella, elementary special education, under five years of experience.

Jane, secondary math teacher, under 10 years of experience.

Serenity, secondary English teacher, over 10 years of experience.

Christy, secondary English teacher, over 10 years of experience.

Bob, secondary math teacher, over 20 years of experience.

Mary, elementary principal, over 10 years of experience.

Peggy, elementary principal, over 10 years of experience.

Jerry, secondary principal, under 10 years of experience.

Jake, secondary principal, over 10 years of experience.

Given the size of the district used in this study, it was necessary to generalize teaching assignments and years of experience, since specificity in the information could breach confidentiality requirements.

Consent and Confidentiality. Informed consent outlines the study protocols, participant confidentiality, potential risks, and benefits. The protocols outline the number of interviews required, how interview documentation will be stored and shared, and the steps that will occur to ensure confidentiality. Respondents signed an informed consent document prior to participation (see Appendices A & B).

Participants were strongly encouraged to keep their selection confidential upon notification of selection to enable open communication during interviews. Teachers were assigned a pseudonym name in order to protect their identification. Further, the school location of the teacher was not identified, and only years of experience and subject area was provided. Gender identification was not restricted, even though some grade levels and subject areas are

predominantly male or female, since the final participant selection did not pose a risk for participant identification.

Risks and Benefits. The main benefit to all participants will be an improved teacher evaluation process. An improved teacher evaluation process underpins continuous improvement efforts, which equates to improved learning outcomes. Thus, the ultimate benefit will be to the students. Teachers participating in this study were not critical of their administrators, so potential risk to teachers due to identification of that teacher by an administrator is extremely low. This study was not an evaluation of administration, and the data collected focused on the teacher evaluation process. Principal knowledge of the evaluation process was part of the data collection for this study, and the data collected identified gaps in the teacher evaluation process, but nothing that posed a risk to principals. A professional attitude that focused on improving the evaluation process also limited any risk for all participants.

Data Collection

The researcher engaged participants in a series of interviews with questions intended to illuminate their perspectives on the teacher evaluation process. These interviews occurred face to face between the researcher and participant (Seidman, 2013). As a general practice, the researcher traveled to the participant at a location convenient for the participant. The duration of the interviews were approximately an hour in length, as the individual respondents' reaction to questions determined the exact length of the conversation (Mertens, 2010).

Due to the depth and volume of the questions outlined, interviews were broken into two parts. The first part of the interview focused on general information about the teacher and administrator as well as perspectives on domain one, Planning and Preparation. The second part of the interview focused on domain two and domain three, Classroom Management and

Instruction, in which both domains had a combined 14 elements to investigate. The interviews were broken into parts in the event a break was necessary or a second interview was needed, due to the length of the interview. After the first part of the interview, a break was discussed, but all interviews continued without a break. Two interviews went beyond an hour in length, one elementary teacher and one secondary principal, and both respondents requested to continue rather than reschedule a second interview. A follow-up interview took place with each respondent in order to share transcriptions, ensure accuracy of the document, and clarify or dig deeper into any responses.

A digital recording device recorded all interviews, and unstructured open-ended (conversation) questions began the interviews so that the respondent had a chance to become comfortable with the recorder. Transcription of the interviews occurred immediately following the interview by a professional service.

A triangulation of the data occurred from teacher interview transcriptions, principal interview transcriptions, and teacher evaluation rating data. The teacher evaluation rating data provided specific data regarding ratings associated with the observation rubric. The recordings of post observation conferences provided a meaningful comparison between interview results and a review of actual conversations between the administrator and teachers.

Data Analysis

After the interview and transcription occurred, four main phases of analysis followed in order to analyze the data: (1) data preparation, (2) data exploration, (3) data reduction, and (4) theme generation.

Data Preparation

Data preparation began immediately following each interview. A review of the field notes occurred while listening to the interview so the notes were clean for future review. This allowed for better organization of the transcriptions for analysis. Since a commercial service was used to transcribe the interviews, a detailed organization of field notes was important to generate prior to submitting the recording for transcription. Upon receipt of the transcriptions, a review of the recording and comparison of the transcribed documents took place. Using a word processor, grammatical errors and transcription inaccuracies were corrected from the resulting transcription service. A replay and simultaneous reading of the transcription differentiated between actual quotes containing grammatical errors or possible inaccuracies from the transcription service. Insertion of relevant field notes then occurred in order to add important nonverbal cues pertinent to specific quotes, or other applicable observations (Merriam, 2009).

Data Exploration

Data exploration used a deductive approach, meaning the questions directed toward the respondents assisted in organizing and grouping the data (Merriam, 2009; Trochim, 2006). A primary focus during the data exploration phase was the perspective of the respondent toward the evaluation process specific to the elements within the process. Some of this exploration occurred during the preparation phase while reading the transcription and listening to the recorded interview (Merriam, 2009, p. 184). A separate memo of notes recorded specific points in the transcription that fleshed out perspectives toward the focus on process elements.

Data Reduction

Data reduction began during the preparation and exploration phases. The elements of the teacher evaluation process organized the categories for analysis, plus any other categories that

surfaced because of the research (Seidman, 2013). Individual perspectives from respondents received a code specific to each process element (positive, negative, etc.). Teacher perspectives and administrator perspectives created two main categories of data. Sub-categories specific to perspectives of the evaluation process elements organized each of the two main categories. Organizing categorical and sub-categorical data reduced and helped make sense of the data specific to the research.

Theme Generation

The final phase, theme generation, connected the data to the aforementioned conceptual lens, the cited literature, and the research questions. This was primarily an inductive process that looked for potential patterns in perspectives from the interview data. The identified data patterns were organized into themes and sub-themes that assisted in the development of findings and conclusions specific to this research project (Trochim, 2006).

Trustworthiness

LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch (1993) state that conducting interviews is one way to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study, which goes to researcher transparency. Analysis of interview data was open to questioning and re-evaluation by not only committee members of this project, but also outside peer reviewers to ensure consistency in the researcher's interpretations, as well as consistency in interpretation within professionals across field of education.

Flick (2014) suggests a valid and trustworthy study conducts multiple interviews to ensure consistency in the experience. Flick (2014) also suggests that consistency in the shared experience across respondents ensures trustworthiness. Respondents received a copy of the transcription from their interview in order to ensure accuracy and trustworthiness of the shared experience. A follow-up conversation verified the accuracy of the data and allowed for

clarifications and further probing. This study sought to find consistency in the shared experiences of the respondents, which served to ensure trustworthiness.

Credibility

Internal validity, or credibility, is a review process to ensure the researcher properly translates the data collected, that the researcher does not significantly affect the data, and that the data does not represent something other than reality (Merriam, 2009, p. 213). In order to ensure that this study maintained a high level of credibility, a triangulation and validation of the data occurred. The interviews were lengthy in order to confirm that sufficient engagement occurred between the interviewer and respondents. The depth of the response from each respondent confirmed engagement and the details provided. This was further confirmed by the ability to code responses in the transcription, and the follow up interview addressed insufficient depth or detail in a response that was not detected in the first interview.

The interview of ten teachers identified perspectives toward the teacher evaluation process. The coding process of the transcribed interviews illuminated individual teacher perspectives, and those perspectives were triangulated between teachers, administrators, teacher evaluation data, and the current literature. This triangulation established a similarity in perspectives, which not only established a deeper credibility to the study, but illuminated perspectives specific to the process elements in review. Each interview extended to the point that a saturation of individual perspectives fleshed out. That saturation occurred after about an hour of conversation between the researcher and the respondent about their teacher evaluation experience, and became clearer as the interviews evolved. Once the interviews were transcribed, coded, and categorized for interpretation, a peer review transpired to determine if there is an agreement with the researcher's findings. Two colleagues conducted this review, and a

combination of sharing of documents followed by face-to-face meetings satisfied this credibility check. Additionally, two respondents reviewed findings with the researcher. The member review occurred after the peer review to streamline documents in order to minimize the time required of respondents.

Researcher Positionality

Reflexivity is defined as “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the “human as instrument” (Guba & Lincoln, 2000, p. 183). According to Merriam (2009), researchers need to explain their biases, dispositions, and assumptions regarding the research they are conducting (p. 219).

The researcher is a high school principal in Indiana with 30 years of experience in education, all with the same school district. The district is located within 25 miles of a major metropolitan city, but his current school is rural. He served as a secondary teacher for eight years, a junior/senior high assistant principal and athletic director for five years, an elementary principal for two years, a junior high principal for 12 years, and is currently in his third year as a junior/senior high principal. As a teacher, he was evaluated with a basic Likert Scale instrument during the early years in the classroom, but the district transitioned away from rating scale evaluations to standards based evaluations six years before passage of the Indiana Teacher Evaluation Law. The new district teacher evaluation process focused on meaningful feedback to teachers following observations based on the identified standards, which is noteworthy to the researcher positionality. However, only two ratings were allowed in the new district instrument, “meets” or “does not meet” the identified standard. Upon passage of the Indiana Teacher Evaluation law in 2011, the district collaborated with the Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System (INTASS), and formed a committee to build the new teacher evaluation instrument for

the district. The researcher served on that committee, and continues to serve on the oversight committee, which formed after the new evaluation instrument was approved and implemented. The Oversight Committee is a stakeholder group of teachers and administrators that make recommendations to the superintendent to adjust and improve the district teacher evaluation instrument. .

Since the researcher conducted Indiana teacher evaluations, his opinions and bias with regard to the research must be transparent. Applicable to this discussion is the perspective of the researcher towards the teacher evaluation process. The researcher espouses two ideological goals specific to teacher evaluation: compliance (with Indiana law) and to accurately rate teacher effectiveness. The policy driving the compliance goal is Indiana Code 20-28-11.5, which is under the guise of supervision. In order to accomplish the goal of compliance, the researcher must effectively manage time in order to complete observations, prepare documentation, share feedback, and provide teacher ratings. Time was a major concern, upon passage of the Teacher Evaluation Law, to comply with the new mandate and evaluate all teachers twice every year. As the years passed, time to complete the mandated evaluations proved to be reasonable with proper time management. The second goal to accurately rate teachers goes to instructional leadership. Consistency in the interpretation of the evaluation rubric is critical to the ability to accomplish accurate teacher evaluation ratings. Ongoing collaborative discussions occur among district administration to maintain a consistent interpretation of the evaluation rubric. Further, the researcher believes in meaningful collaborative discussions with teachers following observations to ensure clarity and fairness with teacher ratings. Finally, it is important to note that the researcher did not interview any teachers that are currently supervises.

Significance

Considering the significance of this study, the results have potential to encourage a fresh look at the evaluation process elements (Flick, 2014). Teacher and administrator perspectives on the evaluation process are critical to continuous improvement efforts. The illumination of perspectives has the potential to shed light on concerns with the evaluation process not previously known. An enlightenment of perspectives that positively or negatively affect the teacher evaluation process will provide a deeper, more meaningful, evaluation process that solidly contributes to continuous school improvement.

Teacher evaluation has two primary purposes, ensuring teacher quality or promoting professional development (Danielson, 2007). Marzano (2012) argues that the teacher evaluation process can only focus on one area, either rating teacher performance or promoting professional development. For teachers and administrators, this study illuminates the focus of the evaluation process in one district. This research provides valuable information to schools or districts that want to be intentionally focus on either ratings or development in their evaluation process. Additionally, Indiana Code 20-28-11.5 is very specific in the requirements for rating teachers (see chapter one). This study provides needed information to lawmakers for a potential adjustment to the Teacher Evaluation Law to promote continuous improvement in Indiana schools.

Limitations

This is a study of one school district and not a broad based investigation of teacher evaluation. The study looked at perceptions from within a relatively common group of people, so perspectives are specific to only the district that participated in this study. Thus, the findings presented have limits with regard to the context in which they are applied. Further, this was an

investigation of individual perspectives, and the researcher was a school principal, which can represent a power dynamic over the teachers. This power dynamic had the potential to limit the respondent's candor for fear anonymity will be lost. The researcher attempted to build a rapport with the respondent prior to conducting the interview, but it is unreasonable to assume all interviews resulted in a strong rapport between participant and researcher, so rich information gathering may not have occurred. Additionally, this is the first qualitative study the researcher has embarked upon, which could result in some mistakes in a plethora of areas, to include rapport building. Rapport building while maintaining neutrality was critical for the researcher to accomplish during interviews. There was a strong possibility that certain perspectives may reflect criticism, and teachers may have been hesitant to be critical of their evaluator, which was evident in the data collected. Rapport establishment helped the teacher to feel at ease to be more open to the researcher about evaluation perspectives from the principal's standpoint. This study was an investigation of individual perceptions regarding the teacher evaluation process, thus, regardless of the findings, were limited in that perspectives came from an individual, not a large body of respondents.

The volume of respondent data was limited due to a small number of interviewees participating in the study. Compounding the limitation in number of respondents, bounded rationality speaks to the limits of individual cognitive processes. It is impossible for an individual to make rational decisions based on complete information due to cognitive processing limits (Bacharach & Mundell, 1993, p. 427). This means that all respondents were likely to have additional information that they could have provided, but did not think of at the time of the interview. Since the interviews were an hour in length, the depth in which the specific perspective could have been limited by the respondent's ability to stay on topic within that

timeframe. Further, a limit to the depth of topic could have occurred if a respondent was hesitant to be openly critical of superiors, even with a promise of confidentiality. Finally, there are limits to the transferability of this study. The investigation was on the teacher evaluation process, so transferring results across private sector and public education lines were limited, other than those areas basic to all employer employee relationships.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the design and methods used in this study proposal. The interview questions were designed to get at the heart of the research questions, which sought to understand the perspectives, and factors that influence perspectives, toward the teacher evaluation process. The findings shed light on the connection, and lack of connection, between the teacher evaluation process and continuous improvement in one Indiana school district. The findings contribute to continuous improvement efforts in the district studied, as well as continuous improvement efforts across the State of Indiana.

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the teacher and administrator perspectives on the teacher evaluation process and the link to continuous improvement efforts. The research questions guided this study, which sought teacher perspectives on the teacher evaluation process, and the links between teacher evaluation results and the design of professional development. Three interrelated concepts were explored in this study of teacher perspectives: teacher observation, teacher feedback (provided by administrator), and engagement in professional development. The purpose behind teacher evaluation is to identify teacher quality and to promote professional development, which results in a continuous improvement cycle critical to school improvement initiatives (Danielson, 2011).

This chapter is organized by themes that surfaced during data analysis. Teacher and principal responses are organized using the identified themes by providing educator quotes and summarizations of teacher responses. The first theme, *growth incentive continuum*, focused on the teachers' general attitude toward professional growth. This continuum was developed to understand and organize the teachers' perspectives toward growth from high to minimal growth incentive attitudes. A second theme, *factors influencing teacher perspectives*, identified basic factors that influenced perspectives on the teacher evaluation process and professional growth. The final theme, *principals as instructional leaders*, looks at the three prongs of instructional leadership and the principals' capacity as an instructional leader.

Teachers

Growth Incentive Continuum

This theme described teachers' general attitude toward their professional growth. Specifically, this theme explored the teacher as the learner and their individual aspiration to grow. The first subtheme reports on a continuum of teacher growth. From an analysis of their responses, some teachers appeared to demonstrate a strong desire to grow while others seemed content to continue to teach in the same ways.

Based on data collected from interviews, a continuum from minimal growth to high growth was developed to describe the growth work incentive for each elementary and secondary teacher. The continuum was based on five criteria: approach to teaching, lesson planning, relationships with children, professional learning, and relationship with the principal. Professional learning and teaching were strong factors in determining placement on the continuum, while lesson planning, student relationships, and relationship with principal supported the growth incentive determination. A teacher with high growth incentive demonstrated a strong desire to grow professionally. A teacher with a medium growth incentive demonstrated a moderate desire to grow, while a teacher with a minimal growth incentive did not indicate that professional growth was part of their instructional practices. Actual teacher evaluation ratings were not considered in placement on the growth incentive continuum.

High Growth. Teachers who demonstrated a high growth incentive expressed an excitement for teaching and student learning. They loved working with children, and professional growth was important to them. In addition, flexibility in lesson planning to allow creativity was also important. Four teachers were identified as having a high growth incentive, Bridget, Debbie, Jane, and Christie.

Bridget loves working with children. Her general excitement for teaching was evident during her interview stating, “I love seeing them grow and just their love for learning at such a young age.” Regarding flexibility in planning, Bridget was positive about her change in administration stating, “our new administration that we have at our school is much more open to creativity. ‘Specifically, you don't have to stick to the textbooks.’” On professional growth, Bridget discussed readings she does on her own that help her go beyond lessons designed by a textbook, “I've read lots of books by Debbie Diller and Debbie Manner and I think it's important to stay fresh.”

Jane also demonstrated a love for working with children stating,

I love being able to work with the kids and not just in teaching, but I feel like at or grade level these kids are so impressionable as far as the decisions they're making that are going to last them for the rest of their life.

Jane described her lesson planning, stating,

As you learn your students, you know, a little better how you need to present the material in order for them to best learn. So a lot of my lesson planning is student centered.

On professional learning, Jane said, “I'm the type of person that I try to constantly improve myself as an educator. I want to do the best job that I can.” Jane discussed also professional trainings she attended during the summer in order to grow professionally.

Debbie repeatedly talked about the importance of strong student relationships so that she can “feed off what they're wanting to know, you can take them into things that you hadn't planned maybe to talk about. ‘That's one thing that I really like.’” Debbie talked about individual student learning while lesson planning,

I have a notebook that's just a regular composition book and I keep notes in there. How many children are, are totally lost with this lesson, so what am I going to do next week, so I know which part is going to have to be scaffolded into next week's lesson.

Describing professional growth, Debbie stressed the importance of continuous improvement and presented herself as a building leader stating, “I had several summer workshops and I am always asked to present about those with the staff.”

Christy discussed her lesson planning by stating,

I started planning differently about three years ago when I started doing a storytelling technique and it really relied a lot on what students were able to do in the moment. It's all very proficiency based, so when we're going through that process, I constantly monitor how kids are doing, and by the end of the period, I get a good sense of how I need to plan for the next day.

Explaining how she gets to know her students, Christy stated,

That's a big focus of the class. We tell student created stories and I want them to be part of the stories. That's how I have to get to know them by finding out how they fit in to the stories. Knowing things about students that made the story relevant then helps me and the other kids to learn about each other.

Christy also expressed her enjoyment for professional learning stating, “I really enjoy learning new things about it [teaching] and about how kids learn and I love seeing kids excited about what we're doing.”

Medium Growth. Teachers who demonstrated a medium growth incentive also enjoyed teaching and liked working with children. Organized lesson planning and structure is important

to them, more than flexibility and creativity. The principal or the district generally directed their professional growth, and was not an identified need from the teachers. Three teachers demonstrated a medium growth incentive, Karen, Stella, and Serenity.

Karen articulated less excitement for teaching than teachers with a high growth incentive. When asked what she enjoyed most about teaching, she stated, “I like working with kids every day,” and “I like the spark that I see in their eyes when they get something.” When asked about lesson planning, her response focused on a very structured and organized plan, which relied heavily on the provided curriculum. When asked about her professional growth, she stated, “she [principal] kind of felt like I was making a lot of copies, so we talked about that. ‘So I started using Google classroom a bit more and scanning things and attaching assignments, which has been wonderful.’” She “likes” working with students and seeing the “spark” when learning occurs, and lesson planning is focused on a structured curriculum, with no mention of creativity. Other professional growth initiatives were under the guise of school improvement activities.

Stella also demonstrated a medium growth incentive due to her lack of years in the profession. Her growth focus was primarily in areas common to new educators, such as learning building practices, classroom procedures, and classroom management. While Stella was discussing a growth conversation with her principal, she stated that her principal’s

Biggest piece of advice was to be confident in my role and when I’m talking with teachers because she, she has a lot of confidence in me to make sure that I’m reiterating what I want for our children at our school.

Her statement demonstrated a desire to grow, but her growth focus was more foundational and introductory to the profession. She also stated that she enjoyed working with kids, and that “I

enjoy working with a small group of the population and then seeing them go back out into the classroom and being able to even sometimes outshine their peers.”

Serenity talked about her relationships with students as the area she like most about teaching stating, “I think I enjoy the relationships the most. I think I see more and more kids that need positive role models.” When asked about lesson planning, Serenity stated,

I have a document that I created. It's a Google doc, but basically it's a calendar, a table that I fill in. First, I just start with what I want to accomplish in the semester. Then I break it down to the quarter and then I start looking at, you know, the weeks.

Serenity talked about her professional growth by describing different relationships with former and current principals. She recalled a recent professional development stating, “we've done stuff on close reading before, I feel like we focus a lot on reading, you know, read theory and in different things.” Again, professional growth is mandated and provided.

Minimal Growth. Teachers who demonstrated a minimal growth incentive expressed some enjoyment for teaching, but did not discuss any desire to engage in professional learning. They like working with children, and lesson planning is compliant with little creativity. Two teachers, Carly and Bob, were placed on the minimal growth incentive continuum.

Carly demonstrated a minimal growth incentive. When asked what she enjoyed most about teaching, she stated,

I enjoy when the kids, if they have that got it moment where they kind of, you can tell in their eyes they sparkle, they get excited because I see finally it clicked with them. ‘I enjoy reading to my kids doing read alouds.

Carly enjoyed working with students, but she did not portray a strong passion or excitement for teaching, similar to medium growth teachers. Illustrating her lesson planning lesson methods, Carly stated, “I kind of look at what the upcoming lessons and math with the textbook or the reading textbook, what's coming up next. ‘I use that as my guide.’” Carly described an interaction with her principal that helped her grow, stating, “after my observations, I'm talking with my principal. ‘There's been times where she has asked questions, uh, to make me kind of think what could I have done this a little bit differently or if I had brought in this as a resource or something like that.’” Carly did not make mention of professional growth during her interview.

Bob also demonstrated a minimal growth incentive. Camaraderie with students was important to him and he “likes” teaching. When asked about lesson planning, he stated, “I kind of look at what the upcoming lessons and math with the textbook or the reading textbook, what's coming up next. I use that as my guide.” When asked about lesson planning, Bob stated, “we pretty much follow it (the curriculum map) to the letter as far as or you know, sequence of teaching.” Bob discussed growth by depicting the differences in the principals he had over the years and the different expectations from them, but he did not discuss any personal focus or desire to grow.

Summary. The continuum looked at five criteria: approach to teaching, lesson planning, relationship with children, professional learning, and relationship with the principal, (see Table 1). Several teacher comments provided data on more than one area. For example, teachers expressed their relationships with students while discussing their approach to teaching (see Christy). Professional learning and teaching was the main factor in determining placement on the continuum, and all high growth teachers expressed an intrinsic desire to grow. Medium growth teachers engage in professional learning, but they engage mainly in building or district growth

activities. In other words, extrinsic forces provide their catalyst for engagement. Minimal growth teachers did not discuss professional learning outside general feedback comments from their principal. High growth teachers all expressed a desire to be creative in lesson planning, while medium and minimal growth teachers followed curriculum guides and textbooks. Not all teachers discussed their relationship with their principal, and any negative comments toward principals were directed at previous administrators, not current principals. Student relationships were important to all teachers interviewed.

Table 1: Teacher Growth Continuum

Criteria	High	Medium	Minimal
Professional learning	Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Not discussed
Teaching	Creative	Routine	Routine
Lesson Planning	Creative	Curriculum guide and textbook driven	Curriculum guide and textbook driven
Interactions w/Principal	Argue ratings or collaborate in creativity	Feedback on ratings	Feedback on ratings
Working with children	Love working with children	Like working with children	Like working with children

Factors Influencing Teacher Perspectives

Three main factors surfaced in this study as contributors to teacher perspectives on the evaluation process, *challenges*, *rating category*, and *rubric interpretation*. Teacher *challenges* are those things that each teacher identified as difficulties, debates, or conflicts in the profession. The teacher *rating category* is the score teachers receive at the end of the evaluation process. The *rubric interpretation* is how the teacher understands and defines the rubric.

Challenges. Teachers were asked to describe the challenges they faced in teaching. Respondents were free to discuss any challenge, and teachers had differing experiences. Teachers were not prompted to discuss any specific challenge, and all teachers interviewed identified at least one challenge. Perceived challenges either connect or do not connect to the teacher evaluation process, and underpin perspectives regarding the teacher evaluation process. For organizational purposes, teacher comments are organized by placement on the growth incentive continuum.

All four teachers with a high growth incentive described challenges that did not connect to the teacher evaluation process or continuous improvement efforts. The challenge is beyond their control, and the teacher conducted their classroom around the associated challenge.

Bridget discussed a lack of parental involvement and stated, “we're seeing a lot of kids with social and emotional issues from their home life.” Debbie also talked about a parent concern and said, “the biggest challenge is that kids are not coming to school prepared for school” Jane described student challenges with “trying to get through to the students that just really don't want to be here. ‘You get so many of those boys that just, they just don't want to be here.’” Bridget and Christy expressed concerns with student emotional problems, and Bridget added that parents addicted to drugs is a big challenge.

Two teachers with a medium growth incentive saw teacher challenges from the perspective of some type of continuous improvement and one teacher did not make a connection. The continuous improvement statements were focused on either more resources or improving collaboration.

Karen discussed a lack of teacher “tools” and “resources” available as her primary challenge, stating, “sometimes I feel limited on the things that I have access to.” She did go on to

say, “some kids have a really hard home life and that's been a really hard aspect to see over my years of teaching,” referencing specifically single parent homes and lack of family income. Stella, a special education teacher, discussed a lack of communication with fellow staff as her main challenge, “You have to deal with not only the classroom teacher, but the aides that you work with” and the effort to make sure “we're all on the same page.” Serenity stressed a lack of support to her profession as her primary challenge,

I feel like there's a lot of people against teachers. 'I think in Indiana in particular, one of our biggest issues is homeschooling that parents think they can do better. I really and truly think parents are a huge obstacle to my job.

Teachers with a minimal growth incentive saw teacher challenges differently. One teacher did not connect to continuous improvement efforts, and her challenge was not presented as correctable. The other minimal growth teacher discussed a challenge he overcame, and then discussed an ongoing challenge in teaching his classes

Carly's challenge was “having the time to get everything in; having to just teach to standards and the standardized testing, that's a big challenge.” She went on to say, “that we don't have as much freedom as I wish we did because of that.” Teaching to the standards and preparing students for standardized testing is assessed during the teacher evaluation process, but Carly did not reference observations, ratings, or feedback as connected to her challenge. Bob discussed a challenge he overcame early in his career and an ongoing challenge, stating,

When I first started [teaching], the challenge definitely was classroom management, and then as that got better, then really the challenge became what's the best way to reach the most number of kids and how can I keep them moving forward during the entire school year.

Early in his career, Bob took the initiative to improve his classroom management. Bob's challenge of keeping students moving forward is embedded in multiple areas in the evaluation process, but Bob did not reference observations, ratings or feedback as connected to his challenge.

Teachers with a medium and minimal growth incentive see some challenges in their teaching that connect to continuous improvement. Three improvement areas were referenced in the data, lack of resources, collaboration, and student growth. Student growth applies to several elements in the evaluation rubric. Teacher collaboration and resources available were not considered as part of this study. Growth and improvement was not cited as a challenge to high growth incentive teachers.

Knowledge of Rubric. According to teacher evaluation policy, administrators used the evaluation rubric to place teachers in a rating category. The rubric is broken down into four domains and each domain is broken down into elements. During the evaluation process, teachers receive a rating for each element of either highly effective, effective, needs improvement, or ineffective. During the interview, teachers were asked individual questions on elements of the rubric and several patterns emerged. Teachers were asked to define the elements of the rubric, and teacher responses reflected examples of instructional practices used in their classrooms. Knowledge of the evaluation rubric is critical to the establishment of the teachers' perspective toward the evaluation process. Teachers must know and understand the areas they are going to be evaluated on in order to be rated as effective or highly effective during the evaluation process. Further, during an observation, teachers conduct their lessons without access to the evaluation rubric, so they must design lessons that align with acceptable performance ratings in the rubric.

For organizational purposes, teacher comments are organized by placement on the growth incentive continuum.

All four teachers with a high growth incentive characterized responses, or used key phrases, consistent with some highly effective categories in the rubric. The remaining responses aligned with effective categories, and no responses aligned with needs improvement or ineffective. The teacher responses provided an indication of how teachers interpret the evaluation rubric, which aligned with their placement on the growth incentive continuum. Examples of responses that aligned with highly effective categories are provided below.

Bridget gave four responses that aligned with highly effective categories rubric. The evaluation rubric defines demonstrating knowledge of students as when the “teacher actively seeks knowledge of students’ skills, backgrounds, cultures, language proficiency, interests, and special needs, and attains this knowledge for individual students.” Bridget was asked about getting to know her student and stated, “it's hard for some teachers to start a conversation with a kid, but not hard for me, so mostly I just talk to each of my kids about what they're interested in.” Her response demonstrates her effort to get to know her students individually. The evaluation rubric defines differentiation as highly effective when the “teacher provides differentiated ways of learning with content and assignments specific to individual student needs, all aligned to the lesson’s objective.” Bridget said differentiation is about “giving each kid what they need as a learner.” Bridget’s response identifies individual students in her definition on differentiation. The evaluation rubric defines questioning and discussion techniques as highly effective when the

Teacher uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively, advance high level thinking and discourse, and promote meta-

cognition. Students formulate relevant questions, initiate topics and make unsolicited contributions.

Portraying the manner in which she poses questions to students, Bridget referenced Bloom's taxonomy and higher order thinking, and stated, "you do want to get past recall and maybe more into the inferring." By referencing Blooms taxonomy and using the term, "inferring" in her response aligned her definition with the highly effective category. The evaluation rubric defines assessment for instruction as highly effective when

Assessment is fully integrated into instruction, through extensive use of formative assessment. Students appear to be aware of the assessment criteria. Students self-assess and monitor their progress. A variety of feedback, from both the teacher and peers, is accurate, specific, and advances learning.

Student assessment is ongoing as Bridget stated, "we're constantly assessing, 'I like to give a kid feedback right away.'" Her response demonstrates that assessment was integrated into instruction and providing regular feedback is important to her.

Debbie gave three responses that aligned with highly effective in the evaluation rubric.

The evaluation rubric defines the facilitation of teacher engagement when

Three quarters or more of students are actively engaged in content at all times and are not off task. Teacher provides differentiated ways of engaging with content specific to individual student needs.

Debbie was the only teacher that referenced multiple and differentiated techniques to engage with students drawing from student interests to ensure students are "engaged fully." Explaining differentiation, Debbie stated, "that's making sure you meet everybody's needs in your class all the time". When posing questions to students, Debbie used terms like "deep" and "insight"

which demonstrated her understanding that the rubric calls for a high level of thinking and discourse to promote metacognition.

Jane gave four responses that aligned with highly effective categories of the evaluation rubric. Jane was asked to describe how she gets to know her students, she stated,

I really try to talk one on one with the students as much as possible. When I am walking around the classroom, I'm not only checking their work, but I'm maybe commenting on, hey, that was a big game you played last night. Sometimes I have them write down something they did well for that week, something that they want to improve on for the next week and then I talk to them about it.

Jane shows her efforts to get to know her students on an individual level. The evaluation rubric defines the establishment of instructional outcomes that are “clear and represent high expectations and rigor. They offer opportunities for coordination and integration within the disciplines and are adapted to individual student needs.” When asked to define rigor, Jane stated,

Rigor should provide a challenge for students without causing them ridiculous amounts of stress, but they need to have some struggle. Rigor gives them a good struggle and is different for each individual student.”

Follow up questions demonstrated her alignment with highly effective comparison by discussing the integration of other disciplines. When asked to define differentiation, Jane stated, “I don't want to say alter the curriculum, but presenting the curriculum in different ways to individual students based on their own way of learning.” Janes response discusses individualized student learning, which aligns with the highly effective category. When asked about posing questions to students, Jane stated,

So sometimes, I try to scaffold my questions to go a little deeper, a little deeper, a little deeper every time, so I start out with an easier question, and then get a little bit deeper into their higher level thinking.

Jane demonstrated her efforts to get student to higher order thinking skills while questioning students.

Christy gave three responses that aligned with highly effective categories in the evaluation rubric. When asked how she gets to know her students, Christy stated,

That's a big focus of the class. We tell student created stories and I want them to be part of the stories. That's how I have to get to know them by finding out how they fit in to the stories. Knowing things about students that made the story relevant then helps me and the other kids to learn about each other.

The aforementioned response is the same quote used to demonstrate how Christy uses creative instruction techniques and also gets to know her students in the growth incentive continuum.

Again, she demonstrates how she seeks to get to know her students on an individual level. When asked to define rigor, Christy stated,

I think it's hard to nail down a specific definition of rigorous because it's going to be different for each kid. I have high expectations, but I really want each student take on their individual challenge.

Christy explained differentiation by illustrating how she plans for students coming into her class, stating,

Well at a very broad sense, just giving each student what they need. That's really easy for me to gauge whenever I look at the rubric that I create because I can see

where each student fits in, I can decide what a kid needs to do to be able to move forward.

Christy’s response discusses individualized student learning, which aligns with the highly effective category.

Teachers with a medium growth incentive responded to questions on the elements within the rubric in which all responses aligned mainly with the effective categories of the rubric. Two medium growth teachers provided one response that aligned with a highly effective category, and no responses aligned with needs improvement or ineffective. Key phrases in teacher responses align with the effective category descriptions of the rubric. For comparative purposes, highly effective and effective descriptions of the evaluation rubric are contained in Table 2. The selection of responses are based on the three most frequent highly effective descriptions from high growth incentive teachers, differentiation (4), knowledge of students (3), and questioning (3).

Table 2: Effective Descriptions

Element	Knowledge of students	Differentiation	Questioning
Highly Effective	Teacher actively seeks knowledge of Students’ skills, backgrounds, cultures, language proficiency, interests, and special needs, and attains this knowledge for individual students	Teacher provides differentiated ways of learning with content and assignments specific to individual student needs, all aligned to the lesson’s objective	Assessment is fully integrated into instruction, through extensive use of formative assessment. Students appear to be aware of the assessment criteria. Students self-assess and monitor their progress. A variety of feedback, from both the teacher and peers, is accurate, specific, and advances learning. Questions/prompts/assessment are used regularly to diagnose evidence of learning by individual students
Effective	Teacher actively seeks knowledge of students’ skills, backgrounds, cultures, language proficiency, interests, and special needs, and attains this knowledge for groups of students	Teacher provides multiple ways of learning, as appropriate, all aligned to the lesson’s objective.	While the teacher may use some low-level questions, he or she poses questions to students designed to promote student thinking and understanding. Teacher creates a genuine discussion among students, providing adequate time for

			students to respond, and stepping aside when appropriate. Teacher successfully engages most students in the discussion, employing a range of strategies to ensure that most students are heard
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Karen had one description that aligned with the highly effective category. When asked to discuss how she acquires information on students, Karen stated,

I try to talk with my students every day. Each one of them, either as they're coming in the door or different things. They also write in a journal every day where I ask random questions, favorite foods, favorite sports, favorite teams.

Karen described efforts to get to know her students on an individual level, which compared to the highly effective category. When asked what Karen was looking for when asking students questions, “I'm looking for a thoughtful answer that shows me some understanding of what we are covering, um, in their own words.” When asked about differentiation, Karen stated, “different skills, different strategies, different lessons for different kids at different levels.”

Stella gave responses that compared to the effective category for all elements. When asked how she gets to know her students, Stella stated,

I talk to my students. I have a lot of team building activities. I work with them and we do morning groups and then I check in with them throughout the day.

Stella’s response regarding differentiation was close to highly effective but she did not address the individual learner, stating, “taking the material and breaking it down to meet the students’ need on how they learn. ‘So different types of learning.’” When asked about questioning students, she stated, “I am looking to see what they know”, which falls into the effective category.

Serenity gave one response that compared to the highly effective category for one element. When asked how she gets to know her students, she explained how she conducts interviews at the beginning of the year and gathers individual student information about reading habits and student interests. She uses that information to recommend readings and individual student projects. When asked about differentiation, Serenity stated, “to me, differentiation isn't just saying you get to pick. I do think there should be choice, but I think that it is having options that work for kids at different levels. When asked about questioning, Serenity stated, “I want them to pause before they answer because I want them to think. I don't allow students to say, I don't know if they say I don't know.”

Teachers with a minimal growth incentive responded to some questions in a manner that did not align with the effective category of the rubric. Key phrases in the effective category of the rubric did not surface in some teacher responses. The following teacher responses align with the needs improvement category of the evaluation rubric.

Carly responded to two questions that aligned with needs improvement. When asked about differentiation, she stated, “I think now technology is the big way that implement it through different programs and apps like IXL, that's, it makes it a lot easier.” She did not address the individual learner, and she did not address the need to vary instruction. When asked when assessment occurs in the classroom, she stated, “at the end of the chapter, Friday ends up being a common, they usually get spelling tests, I do math facts, quizzes so that those two things happen on Fridays.” She discussed regular summative assessments, but she did not discuss how the assessments are used to design instruction or how students receive feedback on the assessments.

Bob responded to one element in which he demonstrated a need of improvement. When asked about how Bob acquires knowledge of students, he stated,

Sometimes you over hear them having conversations about things and you may join in and, you know, find out their interests. But as far as the curriculum, I would say generally speaking, most of the kids that I've come across, I don't have many kids telling me that they really love it [the content area].

Bob did not describe an effective representation demonstrating knowledge of students. He gathers information in a passive manner, and does not actively seek information on groups of students.

Rating Category. The teacher evaluation *rating category* is the score the teachers received at the end of the evaluation process. Teachers were not asked directly to share their evaluation rating, but all teachers interviewed were asked about feedback provided specific to each element in the evaluation rubric. The importance of high ratings was definitive for some teachers; while other teachers did not express that high ratings were important. Specific to feedback received during the evaluation process, most teachers were unable to recall examples of feedback provided to them. For organizational purposes, teacher comments are organized by placement on the growth incentive continuum.

All four high growth incentive teachers expressed either a concern for high ratings or a desire to improve ratings. Most could not recall detailed feedback from an evaluator, but three of the four high growth incentive teachers reported their feedback as “positive.” Demonstrating her concern for high ratings, Bridget stated, “I’m always striving for a four, you know, so any area that I get a three in, I tried to talk to them about what I can do better in that area.” When discussing her selection of instructional practices and feedback from her administrator, Debbie talked about high ratings she received by stating, “I tend to get pretty high marks, I tend to get a

four.” Jane expressed her desire for high ratings and a focus on continuous improvement when she said,

I'm the type of person that I try to constantly improve myself as an educator, I want to do the best job that I can. I remember bringing the evaluation papers into the [principal's] office and saying, okay, why did I get this? What can I do to do better?

Christy expressed concern for her ratings, but not in the same context as the other three high growth incentive teachers. When asked about an interaction with her principal that did not help her improve instruction, she stated,

I was looking at the rubric and I asked [the principal] how I could move from one level to another, the response was I don't know. What can you do with that?

There's, there's no real feedback with that.

Teachers with a medium growth incentive did not discuss a concern to achieve high ratings, contrary to teachers with a high growth incentive. When asked about feedback provided specific to the elements in the evaluation rubric, most had difficulty recalling any feedback and did not describe their feedback as either positive or negative.

Comments regarding ratings and feedback were limited from medium growth incentive teachers. Karen discussed the feedback provided on the selection of instructional practices, stating, “She comments quite a bit on procedures and how the classroom runs.” The same question was presented to Stella and she stated, “there might have been [feedback], I just don't recall it.” Without being asked an interview question and unprompted, Serenity wanted to share this perspective,

I do feel like it's hard to get a four [highly effective], but I also feel like it's hard to get a one [ineffective]. So that kind of balances out. 'And I think when the rubric first came about, it was kind of like, wow, to get to a four is difficult.

Both teachers with a minimal growth incentive discussed evaluation ratings provided by their administrators, but did they not discuss any desire or effort to improve their ratings.

Carly on feedback provided on the selection of instructional practices stated, "I've always had administrators, they've done a good job of pointing out those areas that need to be, you know, have attention paid to it because they're [the students] not all going to learn exactly the same way." When asked about feedback Carly stated, "usually with the values [the rating from administrator] with the observations, so I've gotten feedback I guess in that way". Bob did not discuss ratings during his interview.

Summary

Teachers with a high growth incentive view professional growth from an intrinsic perspective. When discussing challenges in their teaching, they see their challenges outside the evaluation process. They all demonstrate highly effective knowledge of multiple elements in the evaluation rubric, and they all shared concerns to get high ratings. Teachers with a medium growth incentive view professional growth from an intrinsic perspective. Some of their challenges connect to the teacher evaluation process, and two teachers demonstrated highly effective knowledge of the rubric for one element. Some concern was shared regarding their ratings, but they did not discuss a strong desire to improve ratings. Teachers with a minimal growth incentive did not discuss professional growth. Each minimal growth incentive teacher had one element that aligned with a needs improvement category of the evaluation rubric, and some of their challenges connect to the teacher evaluation process. Both teachers with a minimal

growth incentive discussed evaluation ratings provided by their administrators, but they did not discuss any desire or effort to improve their ratings.

Principals

Principals as Instructional Leaders

Four principals were interviewed, and questions were designed to mirror probes presented to teachers. While teacher perspectives represented views of the evaluation process, principal perspectives represented what they were looking for while conducting observations. Further, questions presented to principals went beyond teacher observation and reviewed their advancement of effective teaching practices and improvement efforts. These questions gave an indication of their capacity as instructional leaders.

An analysis of principal responses revealed three sub-themes, or prongs, aligned with the capacity of instructional leaders: (1) *evaluating teacher practice*, (2) *promoting effectiveness*, and (3) *continuous improvement*. *Evaluating teacher practice* looks at the principals' capacity to conduct teacher evaluations. Principals were asked questions based on the evaluation rubric used to conduct observations. During the data review, principal responses were compared with the evaluation rubric to determine the principals' depth of understanding of the rubric. *Promoting effectiveness* explores the principals' capacity to promote effective teacher practices in the classroom. Principals were asked about feedback provided to their teachers regarding interpretations of the practices they observed. *Continuous improvement* expanded on principals' capacity to design professional development activities within their buildings. Principals were asked about the promotion of professional development specific to their interpretations of teacher practices. The aforementioned themes provide insight into three prongs of instructional leadership demonstrated by the principals interviewed.

Evaluating Teacher Practice

During the interview, principals were asked about each element of the rubric. Principals were asked to reflect their understanding of the nineteen elements of the rubric in order to gain an understanding of their knowledge and capacity to evaluate teacher practice. Principal reflections for each element were compared to the evaluation rubric categories (highly effective, effective, needs improvement, or ineffective) in order to provide evidence for principal capacity to improve instructional practice. Principals did not have access to the rubric during interviews to ensure responses were a personal reflection and not a simple recitation of the rubric. By conducting interviews in this manner, principal reflections demonstrate a more accurate view of their perception of observed instruction. Principal perceptions of instruction, without access to the rubric, demonstrates knowledge of effective teaching practice and the capacity to assess the instructional practice.

All principals demonstrated a strong capacity to conduct teacher evaluations since all responses compared to either effective or highly effective practices in the rubric. None of the principals interviewed gave responses that aligned with needs improvement or ineffective ratings. The first prong of instructional leadership is effective teacher evaluation. The capacity to assess instruction is at the heart of the principals' perception of the proper dissemination of the instructional activity. The principal perspectives were fleshed out by asking for descriptions of instructional practices, without the use of the rubric, in order to get an accurate indication of their true perception of effective instructional practice. The following review of principal responses reflect those that compared to highly effective categories of the evaluation rubric. These responses not only demonstrate the principals' capacity to conduct evaluations, but also reflect higher performance expectations from teachers.

All principals interviewed demonstrated at least an effective understanding of all nineteen elements questioned, comparing individual responses with the evaluation rubric. Of the nineteen elements, all principals provided responses that compared to effective practices for the same seven elements. All principals gave responses that compared to the highly effective category for one element (3.9 Uses Technology in Instruction). For both elementary principals, thirteen responses matched effective categories and six responses aligned with the highly effective categories, but only two categories were the same. Secondary principals also matched thirteen effective categories, but Jerry defined six elements that compared with highly effective categories and Jake defined four highly effective elements, while three response categories were the same. This data review will look at individual principal responses that had at least three principals in the same category, which includes all the aforementioned matching categories between secondary and elementary principals. This review will also include the response from the lone principal that did not align with the highly effective category, which will allow for a more in depth review of the element.

Knowledge of Content. According to the evaluation rubric, a highly effective rating requires extensive knowledge of their content, and the teacher should relate their content to other disciplines. Most secondary teachers have a degree in the content area they teach, so strong understanding of their subject area is the norm. For elementary teachers, strong understanding of their content is also the norm as complexity of the content is less rigorous than secondary expectations. Relating their content to other subject areas is how teachers earn a highly effective for this element. Jerry spoke directly to what he is looking for when rating teachers stating,

The difference between a 3 and a 4 is whether you relate it to other subject matter as well. So math or language arts or literacy standards and things of that nature, as well as content knowledge.

When asked how he determines a teacher has a strong understanding of their content, Jake stated, “I’m looking at the questioning, are they doing depth of knowledge, do they tie it into other content areas?” Peggy’s response compared to highly effective by stating,

Well, it comes from a lot of different sources. It would be conversation with me about what they're teaching, my observation in the classroom and what they're teaching. And then, also how they connect that to other subject areas, and then also review of their lesson plans.

All the responses compare to the highly effective category of the element since they discussed other subject areas, or “disciplines” in their response.

Mary gave a response that compared to the effective category, stating,

Well, when I'm having conversations just casually with them, generally that topic comes up sometimes. Plus, when we meet to discuss their evaluation or when we meet to discuss curriculum, I kind of note that in the back of my mind of how engaged they are in their content.

The response compares to an effective description in the evaluation rubric, which requires a “solid” knowledge of the content, but Mary did not discuss how the content should relate to other disciplines. Based on the above responses, three of the four principals interviewed are looking for integration of other content areas into lessons when assessing ratings for this element.

Differentiation. According to the evaluation rubric, a highly effective rating for differentiation requires content and assignments be specific to the individual learner, whereas an

effective rating looks for instruction to be presented in different ways to all learners. Mary, Peggy, and Jerry gave responses consistent with a focus on the individual learner. When asked to define differentiation, Mary stated,

Making sure that the work is given on the students' level and meets their needs individually, even if that's a high ability kid. They need to have a work that is not something that they're just going to fly through and that it needs to be a bit of a challenge for them. It might be written differently and may be a different format. It may be a completely different assignment.

When Peggy was asked to define differentiation, she stated,

Differentiation is based on your meeting the students where they are and specifically meets their strengths and challenges. You could have in a classroom, you may have to have 10 different assessments or 10 different ways for students to demonstrate an understanding.

Jerry defined differentiation stating,

Knowing your kids, knowing your students and knowing that one size of a lesson doesn't fit all. So adapting and catering that lesson to fit what you know about the individual kids that you have.

Jake gave a response that compared to the effective category on differentiation, stating,

Providing two or three avenues to get to the same standard or a concept or outcome. Being able to speak, it's like they said in years past, don't speak louder and slower, present it in a different way.

Jake's response did not address individual student learning.

Based on the above responses, three of the four principals interviewed were looking for instructional practices and assessments that are individualized for students. Jake discussed differentiation in instructional practices, which falls into the effective category.

Questioning and Discussion. According to the evaluation rubric, a highly effective rating for questioning and discussion requires students to engage in high level thinking, and the teacher should challenge students' thinking. Students should formulate their own relevant questions and student discourse is often used to gather evidence for ratings. Jerry, Jake, and Peggy gave responses that compared to the highly effective element in the evaluation rubric.

Demonstrating his understanding of the questioning and discussion element, Jerry stated,

First of all, clarity, to ensure the understanding of what's trying to be taught, but also, the freedom for our students to answer and ask questions. Do the kids get it? And what does the rigor of the questions, you know, is it a simple yes or no? Is it a simple statement or is it a compare/contrast or is it a little bit deeper thinking?

Demonstrating his understanding of questioning and discussion, Jake stated,

So if it's a yes, no question or it's a one answer question, I mean are they getting it right? If it's an open ended question with depth of knowledge, I mean is the student able to expound upon an answer? Can he restate that or can he evaluate or analyze something? I would love to also see kids asking those relevant questions.

Demonstrating her understanding of questioning and discussion, Peggy stated,

A high level answer. I mean that's what I was talking about when we're talking about literal like you know, you're asking questions that are specifically in the text or is it a question that you have to think and look at your background knowledge,

think about, you know, and other things that you've read that have helped you to answer that question.

Mary gave a response that compared to the effective category on questioning and discussion, stating,

Well, I would look for the student to be respectful, number one. And I want them to answer it in a complete sentence and show they not only understand the question, but can give the right answer. I want them to be direct with their answers. I want that to have some like variation in their voice tone. I want them to be kind of excited about the learning and you can tell that through the conversation in the classroom.

Both secondary principals and Peggy gave responses that compared to highly effective in the rubric element on questioning and discussion. Mary's response compares to the effective category, which focuses more on general thinking, discussion, and understanding of the lesson.

Uses Technology in Instruction. According to the evaluation rubric, a highly effective rating for technology use is effectively integrated in the classroom as an instructional tool, while an effective rating simply states that technology was appropriately used during instruction. All principals gave responses that compared to highly effective descriptions of using technology specific to leaning and instruction. Appropriate use of technology was discussed, which demonstrated how all principals justified their perspectives.

When asked to differentiate between effective and appropriate use of technology in the classroom, Jerry stated,

We have kids respond via or submit stuff on Google classroom, but I think if you take that up a notch, are they collaborating together in various platforms? I think

that's where the integration of the technology is truly immersed. But it's also not only how do you use your technology, do you use it to show visuals to support your concept or what you're trying to get through to kids? I think there's multiple layers to that, but I think the ultimate goal is, are you just using it to email or interact to Google classroom, or are they actually interacting, learning, and providing feedback and answers and collaborating using technology?

Demonstrating his understanding of technology use, Jake stated,

Effective use of technology would be kids are using Google classroom. But that four is, you know, students searching for Info. The Pi Day, having the kids get on their Chromebook, all right everybody start looking on Chromebooks. See what you can find about why Pi's important to engineering. The Chromebooks are used as an instructional tool.

When asked to differentiate between effective and appropriate use of technology in the classroom, Mary stated,

Everybody uses the PowerPoint. I don't know how effective that is. I think you must do something that is going to engage the students with you in learning, that's highly effective.

When asked to differentiate between effective and appropriate use of technology in the classroom, Peggy stated,

If they're using it as using it as research, collaborating with a partner, using it to design or develop something on their laptop or on their iPad or whatever device that they're using to learn, create, be creative, that would be effective.

Use of technology was the only element that all four principal responses compared to the highly effective category. During interviews with all respondents, teachers and administrators referenced that district leadership identified technology use as a focus area for improvement and provided multiple and ongoing professional development opportunities.

All principals interviewed reflected highly effective responses in the areas from domain one (planning and preparation), and from domain three (instruction). Domain two (classroom management) did not have any responses in which more than one principal's response compared to the highly effective category, and three of the five elements were represented. Mary and Jerry did not have a highly effective rating in domain two. Domain three (instruction) was the most prevalent domain with highly effective interpretations, two for Jerry, three for Jake, five for Mary, and three for Peggy. There are nine elements in domain three (instruction), five elements in domain one (planning and preparation), and five elements in domain two (classroom management). Due to the higher number of elements in domain three (instruction), and with the domain focused on instruction, the higher number of highly effective interpretations was expected.

This sub-theme provides a platform to investigate the principals' capacity to promote effective instructional practices in the next sub-theme, *promoting effectiveness*. After principals conduct teacher evaluations, the results are shared with teachers, which should provide an avenue for the principals to improve teacher instruction.

Promoting Effectiveness

Promoting effectiveness defines principals' capacity to promote effective teacher practices in the classroom. The data reviewed in the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme provided the foundation to investigate principals' capacity to promote effective instructional

practices. After principals were asked to explain their understanding of the rubric elements, they were asked to provide examples of feedback provided to teachers regarding the instructional practices observed. During the interview, principals were asked about feedback they provided in all areas evaluated in the rubric. In this section, focus is on the same elements where principals were described as being highly effective.

Responses came in five different types. The first type of response, principals repeated the basic statements they made to teachers or almost quoted feedback statements to teachers. The second type of response, principals gave an example of why the teacher needed to improve. In the third type of response, principals gave specific examples of what the teacher needed to do to improve. In the fourth type of response, the principal identified the area as an instructional practice in need of improvement in their building. The fifth type of response, the principal could not recall any specific feedback.

A close review of principal responses regarding feedback provided during the evaluation process demonstrated principals' capacity to promote effective teaching strategies in their classrooms. Using the principal responses in the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme, along with categorizing the type of response given during the interview, provide evidence of a capacity to promote effective teaching strategies. The feedback statements reviewed here to promote instructional effectiveness provided the data to review principals' capacity to promote *continuous improvement* in their buildings, in the last sub-theme.

Knowledge of Content. Three principals gave responses that compared to highly effective categories in the *evaluating teacher effectiveness* sub-theme. Peggy could not recall any feedback provided in that area. When asked about feedback provided to teachers' knowledge of content, Jerry stated,

I talked to science teacher about surface area to volume ratio. I think she was saying it backwards. We had a little dialogue with that after class and that's, you know, I didn't want to put the teacher on spot and press her on it in front of students. I said just watch what you are saying cause I think you reversed it.

The response provided by Jerry is an example of feedback intended to tell the teacher what she needed to do to improve her instruction. When asked about feedback provided to teachers' knowledge of content, Jake stated, "I meet with teachers and we have that conversation on their post observation. We do that individually and discuss how they can obtain a four." The response provided by Jake is an example of feedback intended to tell the teacher what she needed to do to improve her instruction.

Mary did not give a response that compared to the highly effective category in the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme, and did not give an example of feedback provided to teachers. Peggy could not recall any feedback to teachers regarding knowledge of content.

Differentiation. Three principals gave responses that compared to highly effective categories in the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme on differentiation. When asked about feedback provided, Mary stated,

I have definitely given feedback on this because especially like we have one class that has a high number of special education students and when they go back to work with the special ed. teacher, and the assignments are the same for every group.

The feedback response she provided gave an example of an instructional practice that she wanted to improve. When asked about feedback provided in the area of differentiation, Peggy stated,

That's a weak area I think that I see in our school. We do a lot of general assessments for all kids rather than giving them an opportunity to demonstrate it through, you know, they don't give an opportunity for students to do it in writing or maybe in some kind of a visual or something in technology or whatever. They don't give them [assignments] in a variety of ways.

The feedback response she provided gave an example of an instructional practice that she wanted to improve in her building, and she also gave an example of what teachers need to do to improve. When asked about feedback provided in the area of differentiation, Jerry stated,

I made the math teachers, before the first semester was out, I made each math teacher observe the other two math teachers. One teacher was differentiating at a four level. Another one was differentiating at a two or three level and the other one was more in the two range. But all three thought that they were differentiating at a three or four level.

The feedback response he provided was a representation of directives he made to teachers after he identified a need to improve.

Jake did not give a response that compared to the highly effective category in the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme, but when asked about feedback provided regarding differentiation he stated,

I told one teacher, you need to do a mini lesson or reteach and you can utilize your instructional assistant or your special ed teacher in the room with you, I think you should have flexible grouping which would facilitate some of that, because there are times when some of the class may not need a mini lesson.

The feedback response he provided was a representation of a feedback quote he made to a teacher and what the teacher needed to do to improve.

Questioning. Three principals gave responses that compared to highly effective categories in the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme on questioning and discussion. When asked about feedback provided on questioning students during instruction, Peggy stated,

Oh, yes, because sometimes a lot of the questioning is just literal and so kids don't have to have to think. Definitely, they have to have access any kind of deeper knowledge or background knowledge.

The feedback response he provided was an example what teachers need to do to improve. When asked about feedback provided on questioning students during instruction, Jerry stated, "We need it. I've talked about it, but our teachers our mainly knowledge based in questioning." The feedback response he provided was an example why teachers need to improve. When asked about feedback provided on questioning students during instruction, Jake stated, "Yeah, but just brief [feedback]. I don't think as whole group, more follow-up with the teacher on post observations, more individual, to get them to understand higher order." The feedback response he provided was an example of why teachers need to improve." Mary did not give a response that compared to the highly effective category in the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme, but when asked about feedback provided on questioning, stated,

I had talked to a teacher about having more open-ended questions, and trying to have higher order questions and it goes back to the writing. Also, if they use higher vocabulary, the kids will use, respond to the higher vocabulary. So I've asked teachers to really talk and engage and think about how they're talking to kids and make kids think through the process.

The feedback provided supports the improvement of instructional practices through improving the questions presented to students during instruction.

Uses Technology in Instruction. All principals gave responses that compared to highly effective categories in the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme on use of technology during instruction. When asked about the feedback specific to the use of technology in lessons, Mary stated,

I encouraged a couple of teachers to get creative with technology. A teacher then created a flip grid where students work a problem and tape themselves working. They trade that video and give each other feedback on how they went through the problem with how they can better answer the question.

The feedback provided on the use of technology supports an example of improvement in the instructional practice. When asked about feedback provided in the use of technology during instruction, Peggy stated,

I've discussed with our elementary, a lot of times students are getting on their device to, instead of doing silent reading, they're getting on there and using it as a babysitter.

The aforementioned reply on the use of technology supports an example of why improvement on the instructional practice needs to improve. When asked about feedback provided in the use of technology during instruction, Jerry stated,

I think that a three (rating for teachers) is very, very prevalent. The appropriate use of technology. I think there's still some growth to go to the for effective ratings.

The answer provided on the use of technology supports an example of an identified need to improve the instructional practice. When asked about feedback provided in the use of technology during instruction, Jake stated,

We have kids respond via or submit stuff on Google classroom, but I think if you take that up a notch, are they collaborating together or whatever platform that may be. Can they do that outside the confines of the confines of the classroom? I think that's where the integration of the technology is truly immersed.

The comment provided on the use of technology supports an example of what teachers need to do to improve the instructional practice.

The three prongs of instructional leadership, as outlined in this study, are *evaluating teacher practice, promoting effectiveness, and continuous improvement*. Based on the data collected for this study, all principals interviewed evaluate teachers in a manner consistent with effective instructional leaders. Without the assistance of the evaluation rubric, all principals demonstrated effective knowledge of all elements of the rubric consistent with the descriptions in the effective categories, and all principals demonstrated highly effective knowledge in some category descriptions. All principals also demonstrated the capacity to improve instructional effectiveness. Seventeen feedback responses were categorized, and 14 responses were categorized as either providing an example of an instructional practice that needed to improve (5) or provided examples of what the teacher needed to do to improve (9). Combining the data collected in the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme and the *promoting effectiveness* sub-theme, the principals interviewed in this study demonstrate the capacity to satisfy the first two prongs of instructional leadership. *Continuous improvement* is the final prong in demonstrating

the capacity of instructional leadership, and the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme data will provide the foundation to review professional development opportunities provided by principals.

Continuous Improvement

The progression of school wide continuous improvement includes organization, planning, implementation, monitoring, and repetition of the process (Zepeda, 2003). The teacher evaluation process assists in the monitoring of school wide continuous improvement and demonstrates the principals' capacity for effective school leadership. The data reviewed in the *evaluating teacher practice* sub-theme provided the foundation to investigate the principals' capacity to promote *continuous improvement*. After principals were asked to provide examples of feedback offered to teacher's specific to elements in evaluation rubric, they were asked to provide examples of professional development delivered to teachers for each element. This data review compared feedback responses with professional development responses reviewed in the *promoting effectiveness* sub-theme. Feedback that provided suggestions for improvement is an important consideration when looking at professional development offerings.

Knowledge of Content. Both secondary principals gave feedback responses on content knowledge that focused on providing suggestions for improvement, but both principals did not recall professional development activities. Both elementary principals did not provide examples of feedback in this area. However, Mary did provide suggestions for professional development, stating, "so I tried to make some suggestions of professional reading. I also try to connect that person with someone else within the district who is strong in that content area". Peggy did not provide a feedback response and could not recall an example of professional development.

Differentiation. All Principals gave some type of feedback response in the area of differentiation. Mary provided an example of an instructional practice that needed to improve,

and when asked about professional development, she stated, “we haven't done a good job of professional development on differentiation.” Peggy also gave an example of an instructional practice that needed to improve, but could not provide an example of professional development provided to teachers. Both secondary principals gave feedback responses that gave a suggestion to a teacher for improvement. When asked about professional development for teachers in that area, Jerry stated, “you know, that is something that we have not had. That would be great in a workshop”. Jake could not recall any professional development in this area.

Questioning. All Principals gave some type of feedback response in the area questioning and discussion. Mary provided a suggestion for improvement, and Peggy provided a feedback response that was an example of an instructional activity that needed to improve. Both elementary principals could not recall any recent professional development in this area. Jerry provided a feedback response that explained why a teacher needed to improve, and Jake provided a response that was a suggestion for a teacher to improve. Both principals could not recall any professional development in this area.

Uses Technology in Instruction. All Principals gave some type of feedback response in the area questioning and discussion. Mary provided a feedback response that was an example of an instructional activity that needed to improve, and Peggy provided a suggestion for improvement. When asked about professional development, Mary stated, “the district provided a great deal of professional development on technology, and there is always help if you need it.” On provided professional development, Peggy stated, “we're using it the way you should, but they're not being creative or designing or whatever. We need professional development in that area.” Jerry provided a feedback response that was an example of an instructional activity that needed to improve, and Jake provided a suggestion for improvement. When asked about

professional development, Jerry stated, “we get a lot of professional development; I would say that more than more than any other area.” When asked about professional development, Jake stated,

I think there's multiple layers to that, and district provides a lot of PD, but I think the ultimate goal is are you just using it to email or interact to Google classroom, or are they actually interacting and providing feedback and answers and collaborating using technology?

The type of feedback response illuminated the principals’ capacity to promote continuous improvement, but questions specific to professional development activities demonstrate the principals’ focus for actual improvement. Feedback responses that provided suggestions for improvement to teachers is a first step in professional development. The only rubric element that all principals agreed that professional development occurred was in the area of technology, and that professional development was provided by the district. The lack of professional development data is significant to this study. The interview questions presented to principals went beyond teacher observation and reviewed their advancement of effective teaching practices and improvement efforts. Principal responses demonstrated that they had the capacity to evaluate teachers, promote effective instructional practices, but continuous improvement efforts are not connected to the teacher evaluation process.

Summary

Questions presented to the four principals in this study were aimed to align with the investigation of teacher perspectives. While teacher perspectives represented views of the evaluation process, principal perspectives represented what they were looking for while conducting observations. Data was collected from principals on teacher observation and their

advancement of effective teaching practices and improvement efforts. Three prongs of instructional leadership were investigated, (1) *evaluating teachers*, (2) *promoting effectiveness*, and (3) *continuous improvement*. The connection between prongs is sequential, meaning, instructional leaders conduct teacher observations, then, based on the results of the observations, provide feedback to teachers that promotes effective instructional practices. Connecting the third prong, observation data and resulting feedback should provide the foundation to design professional development that promotes continuous improvement.

The data collected showed a clear disconnect in the area of professional development. Principal responses regarding the design and implementation of professional development, specific to the evaluation rubric, did not connect to observation and feedback. Professional development design was mainly viewed as a district responsibility. All principals demonstrated the capacity to conduct teacher evaluations and provide effective feedback that promotes instructional improvements.

Conclusion

This chapter was organized by themes that surfaced during data analysis. Teacher and principal responses were organized using the acknowledged themes by providing educator quotes and summarizations of teacher and principal responses. The identified themes provide insight into teacher perspectives of the teacher evaluation process and links to professional development as result of that process.

The first theme, growth incentive continuum, focused on the teachers' general attitude toward professional growth. This continuum was developed to understand and organize the teachers' perspectives toward growth from high to minimal growth incentive attitudes. The continuum was developed as a result of teacher interview data, and actual teacher evaluation

ratings were not considered in placement on the continuum. A comparison between teacher evaluation ratings and placement on the growth incentive continuum occurs in the final chapter of this study. This was necessary in order to investigate whether perspectives related to placement on the continuum connect to actual teacher evaluation ratings. This study assumed that teachers identified as having a high growth incentive would result in highly effective ratings, but actual teacher evaluation ratings did not support that finding.

The second theme, *factors influencing teacher perspectives*, identified basic factors that influenced perspectives on the teacher evaluation process and professional growth. This theme looked at interview data compiled from questions specific to challenges teachers face, their focus on evaluation ratings, and their interpretation of the evaluation rubric. Comparing the data with placement on the continuum showed the importance of connecting principal feedback to the teacher evaluation process. Teachers that discussed ratings in connection with the evaluation process received higher ratings. Again, teacher ratings were not known during the data analysis of *factors that influence teacher perspectives*, which prevented the analysis to be influenced by teacher evaluation ratings. Teachers' level of understanding of the evaluation rubric varied, but all teachers had a working knowledge of the instructional practices evaluated, and teachers did not identify the teacher evaluation process as a challenge.

The final theme, *principals as instructional leaders*, looks at three prongs of instructional leadership, (1) *evaluating teacher practice*, (2) *promoting effectiveness*, and (3) *continuous improvement*. All principals demonstrated the capacity to conduct teacher evaluations and promote effective improvements in instructional practices. The data analyzed indicated an obvious disconnect between professional development and the teacher evaluation process. Principal responses regarding the design and implementation of professional development,

specific to the evaluation rubric did not connect to observation and feedback. A disconnection with the third prong of instructional leadership inhibits the promotion of continuous improvement, which is a significant finding in this study.

Based on the data within the organized themes, factors that influence perspectives on the teacher evaluation process rely heavily on the principal. Teacher ratings improve if the teacher evaluation process connects to principal feedback, (discussed in the next chapter), but the principal must take that feedback beyond teacher ratings and connect to professional development. Both teachers and administrators look for outside entities to provide professional development, and the focus of the teacher evaluation process is primarily on teacher ratings. Feedback provided to teachers, and teacher discussions on the feedback provided, did not indicate there was any link to professional development activities. A teacher's incentive to grow can be intrinsic or extrinsic, but this study demonstrates the importance of the principal in recognizing each teacher's desire to grow and to foster that growth with meaningful feedback and the design of corresponding professional development. The third prong of instructional leadership is continuous improvement, and this study validates the importance of that connection.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Within Indiana, growth and professional development are not a primary focus of the required evaluation process (Staff Performance Evaluations, 2011). Annual evaluations must occur for all certified teachers, but improvement mandates are only required for low performing teachers. Continuous improvement is a critical element in the teacher evaluation process (Danielson, 2007), which is not required by the Indiana Teacher Evaluation Law.

The Indiana Teacher Evaluation Law includes process requirements for observation and feedback, but continuous improvement requirements as part of the evaluation process are not present in the teacher evaluation law. Since the conclusion of the 2012-2013 school year, only 2% of the teachers in Indiana received an evaluation rating below effective and the percentage of Indiana teachers rated as highly effective for 2019 was 49.8%. The percentage of highly effective ratings for teachers has gone up every year since 2013 (from 26.43% in 2013) (Evaluations, 2020). Between 2017 and 2018, statewide student test scores for ISTEP+, however, dropped slightly for both English/Language Arts and Math for grades three thru eight. Test scores dropped significantly between 2018 and 2019 (16% for E/LA and 10% for Math), but the test administered to students changed from ISTEP+ to ILEARN, which accounts for the change. Statewide data shows significant improvements in instructional practices, but student performance data on state testing has not improved (Compass, 2019). The school district examined in this study mirrored statewide teacher evaluation results. Highly effective ratings rose from 25% in 2013 to 46% in 2019. Test scores for E/LA and Math also dropped between 2017 and 2018, and dropped significantly between 2018 and 2019 (20% for E/LA and 4% for

Math). It is evident that the relationship between teacher evaluations and student outcomes is complex.

The purpose behind teacher evaluation is to identify teacher quality and to promote professional development, which results in a continuous improvement cycle critical to school improvement initiatives (Danielson, 2011). The researcher's positionality and Indiana superintendent perspectives reported in the Ansaldo et al. (2015) brief illuminate the blend between the purpose of teacher evaluation and compliance with the Indiana Teacher Evaluation Law. In his positionality as a 22-year veteran principal, the researcher espoused two main goals specific to teacher evaluation, compliance with the law and accuracy in ratings. Since the Teacher Evaluation Law does not require that professional development be attached to teacher evaluation results, then it does not make the long list of "must do" tasks for the principal. The focus is to get the evaluations done in compliance with the law and to rate teachers fairly. This is reflected in superintendent perspectives when Ansaldo et al. found, between 2012 and 2014, a 10% decline in agreement that teacher evaluation should drive professional development. Further, in 2014, only 54% of the superintendents surveyed reported that professional development was connected to their district teacher evaluation instrument, which was only two years after the mandated Teacher Evaluation Law was enacted. Three glaring questions spurn off that finding:

1. Did superintendents allow the connection between the design of professional development and teacher evaluation results to decline as implementation of the Teacher Evaluation Law moved forward?
2. What is level of fidelity of the professional development implemented?

3. For districts that claim to connect teacher evaluation results with the design of professional development, is there a connection to improved instruction and improved student learning outcomes?

The results of this study do not answer the aforementioned questions, but this study does demonstrate the need to get answers.

The overarching goal of this study was to understand the teacher evaluation process that connects teacher observation, teacher feedback, and continuous improvement resulting in improved student learning. An investigation of teacher perspectives throughout the teacher evaluation process explored administrator links to professional development. The purpose of this study was to examine the teacher evaluation process through teacher and administrator perspectives, and the extent that the evaluation process goes beyond the requirements of the Indiana Teacher Evaluation Law. As stated, growth and professional development are not required as part of the evaluation process (Staff Performance Evaluations, 2011). The Teacher Evaluation Law includes process requirements, but continuous improvement requirements are not part of the teacher evaluation law. This study digs deep into an Indiana district's implementation of the teacher evaluation process and their provided professional development, without a requirement to make connection between the two responsibilities.

Summary of Research

This qualitative study explored teacher and administrator perspectives on the teacher evaluation process and the link to continuous improvement efforts. School administrators play an integral role in the teacher evaluation process. Three interrelated concepts within the teacher evaluation process grounded this study of educator perspectives: teacher observation, teacher feedback (provided by administrator), and continuous improvement. Under the concept of

observation, this study investigated teacher and administrator understanding of the rubric used to define effective teacher practices. Then, teachers and administrators were asked to share feedback either provided or received, based on their understanding of the rubric. Finally, teachers and administrators were asked to share their participation in professional development activities based on the observation and feedback provided. Teacher and administrator responses were organized using identified themes from the interview data using quotes and summarizations of educator responses, and the themes align to the research questions.

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What factors influence teacher and administrator perspectives on the teacher evaluation process?
2. How do teachers and administrators view the link between teacher evaluation results, the instructional purpose of professional development, and continuous school improvement?

The teacher perspectives investigated in this study are represented in the identified themes, *growth incentive* and *factors influencing perspectives*. The principal perspectives investigated in this study are represented in their capacity to demonstrate *instructional leadership* skills, which was the third identified theme. The teacher evaluation process is one area that principals demonstrate and establish themselves as instructional leaders (Zepeda, 2003).

According to Lewis, Sanders, and Thornhill (2012) exploratory qualitative research is introductory research intended to explain and define a problem to be solved. The exploratory research methods used in this study were in-depth interviews that sought to understand through storytelling and allowing the participant to reconstruct the event. Using exploratory research during this study allowed for insight into teacher and administrator perspectives of the teacher evaluation process and the connection to continuous improvement efforts. Exploratory research

was appropriate because participants reconstructed their understanding of the evaluation process by providing examples of observations, feedback, and professional development provided during the actual evaluation process. The following section includes a discussion of how perspectives from teachers and administrators aligned with the interpretations of the previously reviewed literature.

The findings and perspectives presented are based on the responses from nine teachers, four secondary teachers and five elementary teachers, who agreed to participate. One secondary teacher interviewed was eliminated because the teacher left the district after the interview and teacher evaluation results were unavailable. Data were collected using transcriptions garnered from semi-structured interviews, along with field notes and relevant artifacts. All nine individual semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed, while the researcher added documentation of non-verbal cues and reactions of participants. Transcriptions were analyzed, coded, and organized by identified themes. The data organized within the identified themes was then used to answer the research questions at the heart of this study.

Summary of Findings

Three main themes emerged from the data analysis of relevant artifacts and transcriptions from nine individual semi-structured interviews. The themes include (1) *teacher growth incentive*, (2) *factors influencing perspectives*, and (3) *instructional leadership*. Two main themes fleshed out of the teacher interview data, *teacher growth incentive* and *factors that influenced perspectives*, which addresses the first research question. One theme is associated with the second research question, *instructional leadership*, and the data were compiled from principal interviews. A review of the aforementioned themes as they align to the first research question will occur next.

Teacher Growth Incentive

This study identified the incentive to grow as a factor that influenced the teacher evaluation process, since continuous improvement is an interrelated concept within the teacher evaluation process. Looking at the evidence from the data compiled in teacher interviews, the incentive to grow was either intrinsic or extrinsic. Teachers that demonstrated an intrinsic desire to grow approached continuous improvement from a personal perspective. Their incentive to grow came out of their own teaching experiences and identified areas that they needed to improve upon. Teachers that only discussed continuous improvement initiatives generated by outside entities, like building level or district level activities, viewed continuous improvement as extrinsic, or a requirement. A growth incentive continuum was developed in this study, and teachers were placed in categories on the continuum to organize teacher perspectives. A teacher with high growth incentive demonstrated an intrinsic desire to grow professionally. A teacher with a medium growth incentive demonstrated an extrinsic desire to grow, while a teacher with a minimal growth incentive did not indicate that professional growth was part of their instructional practices. Important to the continuum design, the researcher did not know teacher evaluation ratings prior to placing teachers on the continuum. Teachers were placed on the continuum based solely on the results of the data collected from interviews.

Teachers identified in this study with a high growth incentive that also connected their growth initiatives to the teacher evaluation process received highly effective ratings as a result of their most recent evaluation. High growth incentive teachers that did not connect their growth to the teacher evaluation process received slightly lower ratings, which resulted in effective designations. All teachers identified in this study with a high growth incentive saw growth from

an intrinsic dynamic. This demonstrates that teachers that collaborate with their principal specific to growth will likely be rewarded with higher evaluation ratings

Medium growth incentive teachers did not identify a personal desire to grow, rather, their growth focus was provided for them by principals or the district. All teachers with a medium growth incentive did make connections to the teacher evaluation process and the extrinsic growth requirements. All teachers on the medium growth incentive continuum received highly effective ratings on their most recent evaluation. With medium growth incentive teachers, the principal led growth directions, the teachers complied, and they received high ratings.

Teachers identified with a minimal growth incentive received some type of extrinsic feedback, but they did not discuss growth during their interviews. Since growth was not discussed during their interviews, there was no connection to the teacher evaluation process. Both teachers with a minimal growth incentive received effective ratings from their principals. This finding goes directly to the problem statement in this study in that teachers can still be rated as effective and not engage in individual growth.

Factors that Influenced Perspectives

Identified teacher challenges did not make a strong connection to the teacher evaluation process. Two teachers identified challenges related to continuous improvement, (lack of resources and collaboration) but only one challenge came out of feedback received during the evaluation process (collaboration). It is important to note that teachers did not identify the teacher evaluation process as a challenge. Since this district implemented standards based teacher evaluation well before 2012, the adjustment to the Teacher Evaluation Law was not overwhelming. The standards and the ratings changed, but the process was very similar. The biggest change was the number of evaluations a principal had perform during a school year.

The data collected for this did not show that a deeper knowledge of the evaluation rubric was a perspective that generates higher evaluation ratings for teachers. Of the four teachers that demonstrated highly effective knowledge in three or more elements, only two were rated as highly effective. Three teachers that demonstrated effective knowledge in all areas of the rubric were all rated as highly effective. Two teachers that did not demonstrate effective knowledge in all elements were both rated as effective. This shows that teachers teach their content, and the evaluation rubric is rarely a consideration outside the evaluation process. Not one teacher in this study referred to the evaluation rubric outside directed questions toward the rubric. Thus, teacher pedagogical knowledge is generally “effective”, and further exacerbates the role of the instructional leader. A key point, three teachers in this study gave “effective” pedagogical descriptions to questions specific to the rubric, but were all rated as highly effective. There is a disconnect between their expressed pedagogical knowledge and their observed practice.

Finally, expressing a concern for ratings was not a perspective that equated to a highly effective rating on teacher evaluations. The three teachers that did not discuss ratings during their interviews all received highly effective ratings, (medium growth incentive). High growth incentive teachers all expressed concern about ratings, but only half received highly effective ratings. These findings can be viewed through a few different lenses. First, a teacher may not express concern about a rating because they know they will get a good rating, as demonstrated by the medium growth incentive teachers. Next, a concern for ratings could imply something different, such as disagreement about ratings or a focus on instructional practices that are not in line with the evaluator’s focus. Finally, with the low number of teachers across the state rated below effective, then it makes sense that a lack of concern for ratings would exist.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is demonstrated when a principal conducts effective teacher evaluations, promotes effective classroom instruction, and monitors effective professional development for teachers (Cohen, Loeb, Miller, & Wyckoff, 2019). Four principals were interviewed and the data collected were organized into three sub-themes, *evaluating teacher practice, promoting effectiveness, and continuous improvement*. *Evaluating teacher practice* reviewed perspectives on teacher observation that reflected their understanding of nineteen elements in the teacher evaluation rubric, which demonstrates their knowledge and capacity to evaluate teacher practice. *Promoting effectiveness* looked at the feedback principals provided to teachers and investigated principals' capacity to promote effective instructional practices. *Continuous improvement* within the realm of teacher evaluation monitors the implementation of professional development initiatives during the teacher evaluation process. The aforementioned sub-themes demonstrate the principals' capacity as instructional leaders.

Evaluating Teacher Practice. Principal capacities were demonstrated by responding to questions specific to elements in the evaluation rubric used to describe effective teacher practices. Absent the rubric, principals were asked to describe effective teaching practice, which demonstrated their capacity to assess the instructional practice. By conducting interviews without the rubric, principal responses demonstrate a more accurate view of their expectations of observed instruction. Principal perceptions of instruction demonstrates knowledge of teaching practice and the capacity to assess the instructional practice.

All principals demonstrated a strong capacity to conduct teacher evaluations since all responses compared to either effective or highly effective practices in the rubric. None of the principals interviewed gave responses that aligned with needs improvement or ineffective

ratings. The data analysis focused on individual principal responses in which at least three principals described highly effective instructional practices in the same category. Four elements in the teacher evaluation rubric had at least three principals provide a description that aligned with highly effective teacher practice. The four elements, or instructional practices, analyzed were (1) knowledge of content, (2) differentiation, (3) questioning and discussion, and (4) use of technology.

Principal responses did shed light on areas of focus based on elementary or secondary principal responses. Both secondary principal responses on (1) knowledge of content aligned with the highly effective description, and secondary teachers require a deeper understanding of their content. Both elementary principal responses on (2) differentiation compared to the highly effective description, and elementary teachers have smaller class sizes that better facilitate differentiation. Both secondary principal responses on (3) questioning and discussion aligned with the highly effective description, and secondary classrooms promote deeper knowledge based discussion and questioning of students. All principal responses on (4) use of technology compared to highly effective description, and the district had provided professional development and an expectation for improved integration of technology during instruction at all grade levels across the district.

Some district principals conduct an excess of 50 formal teacher observations per year. Each formal observation engages the evaluation rubric, so principals should be more than familiar with the rubric. The data collected from principals was presented in the form of observed practices. Secondary principals expect strong content knowledge and elementary principals expect individualized differentiation. However, looking at the district teacher evaluation data for 2019, the district wide average rating for secondary teachers in content

knowledge was 3.2 (effective), and the district wide average rating for elementary teachers in the area of differentiation was 3.1 (effective) (SFS, 2020). For use of technology, the district wide average rating for all teachers was 3.2 (effective). In other words, principals can articulate highly effective in those areas, but most teachers receive effective ratings. With the exception of technology, when asked about professional development in those areas, both teachers and principals could not recall any recently. This highlights the strong capacity for administrators in this district to conduct evaluations and a disconnect with professional development.

The four elements analyzed provided the areas of focus for the *promoting effectiveness* sub-theme.

Promoting Effectiveness. *Promoting effectiveness* defined principals' capacity to influence teacher practices that advance student learning. Principals promote effective teaching practices by providing feedback based on teacher observations. Following principal explanations of rubric elements, they provided examples of feedback provided to teachers specific to the element.

Feedback responses were identified in five different types. The first type of response, principals repeated the basic statements they made to teachers or almost quoted feedback statements to teachers. The second type of response, principals gave an example of why the teacher needed to improve. In the third type of response, principals gave specific examples of what the teacher needed to do to improve. In the fourth type of response, the principal identified the area as an instructional practice in need of improvement in their building. The fifth type of response, the principal could not recall any specific feedback. Feedback responses that focused on why and how teachers could improve instruction were prevalent in the feedback examples

provided by principals, which demonstrated their capacity to influence instructional improvements.

Continuous Improvement. After principals were asked to provide examples of feedback offered to teacher's specific to elements in the evaluation rubric, they were asked to provide examples of professional development delivered to teachers for each element. This data analysis compared feedback responses with professional development responses reviewed in the *promoting effectiveness* sub-theme. Feedback that provided suggestions for improvement is an important consideration when looking at professional development offerings. Examples of feedback provided to teachers demonstrated principals' capacity to promote instructional improvements by teachers, but professional development design did not align with feedback responses. This study found a clear disconnect between feedback provided to teachers and the design and implementation of professional development.

Discussion of Findings

The research questions in this study examined three key components in the teacher evaluation process: observation, feedback, and professional development. The teacher evaluation process is a mechanism to ensure teacher quality and design meaningful professional development through observation and feedback. School improvement should be the result of the process. The literature review demonstrates current educator perspectives and attitudes, as well as reported current research specific to the teacher evaluation process. The conceptual framework surrounding this study focused on the aforementioned three key components of the teacher evaluation process.

This research provides evidence that a disconnect between the design of professional development and feedback provided to teachers as a result of classroom observations will limit

improved student learning outcomes. The improvement in instructional practices is dependent upon the principals' capacity to promote instructional leadership skills in observing teachers, providing feedback to teachers, and monitoring continuous improvement. Current research supports the findings of this study that effective teacher evaluation conducted within strong instructional leadership promotes continuous improvement.

Growth Incentive Continuum

Frase (1992), Frase and Steshley (1994), and Feeney (2007) conducted studies that supported improvements in the feedback provided to teachers after the observation. Then, Brown, et al. (2017) found that more feedback provided to teachers for longer periods of time showed negligible differences in evaluation ratings, but most teachers were rated in the top two rating categories. The study did show some positive impacts on classroom practice, instructional leadership, and student outcomes. Teacher growth incentive, as part of this study, identified whether teachers demonstrated an extrinsic or intrinsic desire to grow. As part of that analysis, teachers were asked to provide feedback provided to them specific to elements in the evaluation rubric. All teachers that provided feedback examples that connected to the evaluation rubric were rated as highly effective. These findings build upon the findings of Frase (1992), Frase and Steshley (1994), Feeney (2007), and Brown et al. (2017) in that specific feedback connected to the evaluation process improves teacher evaluation ratings and the potential for improved student outcomes.

Factors that Influenced Perspectives

Milanowski and Heneman (2001), Meinz, Reeves and Tripamer (2014), and Lacireno-Paquet, Bocala, and Bailey (2016) found that teacher perceptions of standards based teacher evaluation was an important factor contributing to acceptance and implementation of the

approach. Participants in this study acknowledged that evaluations grounded in standards (rubric) based logic underpinned teacher observations. Implementation of the standards based approach was accepted as an integral part of the teacher evaluation process in this study, and teachers did not identify any *challenges* with the evaluation procedure. Teachers interviewed all demonstrated a proficient *knowledge of the evaluation rubric*, which provided the foundation for fundamental teacher observations as part of the teacher evaluation process. In the study conducted by Milanowski and Heneman (2001), rating fairness was dependent upon the manner in which the evaluator conducted the observation. Teachers in this study discussed their *rating category*, which demonstrated their level of concern regarding the ratings disseminated by their evaluators. Some teachers expressed a concern for higher ratings, but none of the teachers interviewed communicated a concern specific to the manner in which their evaluator assigned ratings.

With respect to observation, the literature shows administrator and teacher support for a standards based observation system, particularly when multiple observations occur (Heneman & Milanowski, 2001). Throughout this study, teachers and administrators demonstrated an acceptance for the standards based observation system and did not express any concern regarding the process. The conceptual framework assumed that teacher perception of the evaluator was an important factor related to positive perceptions of the teacher evaluation process, as well as higher teacher ratings (Lacireno-Paquet, Bocala, & Bailey, 2016). As teachers reflected on the evaluation process in this study, shared perceptions of principals were overall positive, and rare negative perceptions were directed at former principals.

Instructional leadership

This study examined principals and their capacity as instructional leaders to conduct effective teacher observations, promote effective instructional practices, and connect teacher

evaluation results with continuous improvement efforts to include professional development. Cohen, Loeb, Miller, and Wyckoff (2019) examined teacher observation and feedback methods of the evaluation process in order to determine principals' perceived agency and their capacity to influence the teacher workforce. They found that principals express differential agency over different groups of teachers (tenured vs non-tenured teachers). Principal data collected during interviews in this study demonstrated that all principals interviewed have the capacity to conduct effective teacher evaluations and promote effective instruction, which satisfies two prongs of instructional leadership. Teacher data collected during this study showed that evaluation feedback connected to the teacher evaluation process leads to highly effective teacher ratings.

The conceptual framework assumed feedback provided to teachers was more meaningful using the standards based system, should be deeper, show positive results on instructional practice, and contribute to continuous school improvement (Feeney, 2007; Brown, et al., 2017). The investigation of feedback was important to this study, and the connection of feedback to observation showed higher teacher ratings.

Copas, Glassett, and Shaha (2015) concluded that a coordinated approach, using observations with recommendations and the execution of specific professional development positively affects student achievement. The findings of this study agree with Copas, Glassett, and Shaha (2015) assuming that professional development focuses on instructional practices that improve student outcomes. The findings in this study build upon the findings of Cohen et al. (2019) and stress the importance of perceived agency to conduct effective teacher observations and promote instructional improvements. The conceptual framework for this study assumed that connecting feedback with professional development would lead to student learning outcomes through effective improvements in instructional practices. However, this study did not find a

connection between teacher feedback and professional development activities. This finding goes directly to the second research question which seeks the link between teacher evaluation results and professional development design.

Andree, Darling-Hammond, Orphanos, Richardson and Wei (2009) concluded that, “professional development is most effective when teachers engage actively in instructional inquiry in the context of collaborative professional communities, focused on instructional improvement and student achievement” (p. 58). The evaluation process analyzed in this study did not adequately connect teacher observations and provided feedback with any professional development initiatives. Successful professional development encompasses multiple design models in order to ensure the training addresses teacher needs (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). The third prong of instructional leadership is continuous improvement, and the gap found in this study is substantive.

Implications and Recommendations

The three components examined in this study critical to the teacher evaluation process were (a) teacher observation, (b) observation feedback, and (c) continuous improvement. The findings of this study align with current research and support the integration of continuous improvement efforts that connect to the teacher evaluation process that lead to improved student learning outcomes. While the main data for this research was from the teachers’ perspectives, the implications of each component on leadership practices and preparation are clear.

Teacher Observation

Teacher observation is a process requirement as part of the Teacher Evaluation Law. Principals that participated in this study demonstrated the capacity to conduct meaningful observations related to their understanding of the evaluation rubric. The description of

instructional practices within the rubric is a key factor and must promote instruction that results in student learning. Provided the instructional practices described in the evaluation rubric promote student learning, and teachers conduct instruction comparable to the description in the evaluation rubric, then improved student learning should occur. All components of the evaluation process must be under review, including the evaluation rubric. The district Oversight Committee, which consists of teachers, principals, and district administrators, is vested with the responsibility to review and make recommendations to the superintendent for adjustments to the evaluation rubric, as well as the teacher evaluation process. That review must focus on instructional practices critical to improved student learning outcomes, and the teacher evaluation process must align with the renewed focus.

As a result of this study, there are two recommendations. The first, the district should engage in a collaborative review of the evaluation rubric with principals to identify critical elements in the rubric that promote student learning outcomes. These elements should be interconnected and build upon one another in order to move away from a rating focus and illuminate instructional practices in need of professional development. The second is a collaborative review of the evaluation rubric with the Oversight Committee, which includes teachers, principals, and district leadership, so that all stakeholders have input on critical elements and potential changes to the rubric.

Observation Feedback

Continuous school improvement requires an effective teacher evaluation process that promotes professional growth and is a collaborative effort between teachers and administration (Danielson, 1996a). Data collected in this study regarding feedback demonstrated a connection between high teacher evaluation ratings and feedback connected to the evaluation process.

Principals provided examples of feedback that promoted improvements in instruction, which demonstrated their capacity to promote instructional improvements. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, district student test score data on ISTEP+ and ILEARN, however, did not align with improvements in teacher evaluation ratings. The provided feedback must be specific to the evaluation rubric, go beyond teacher ratings, and include a focus on critical instructional practices that promote improved student learning outcomes. Recommendations for meaningful feedback build upon the recommendations put forth in the previous section. Again, a collaborative review with principals to discuss observation results focusing on the critical elements previously identified, and the feedback provided to teachers. This would build a learning community with principals to discuss feedback provided and observed instructional practices to ensure consistency and fidelity in the evaluation process. Additionally, feedback should be at the heart of professional development design, particularly feedback focused on why and how teachers need to improve. Results should be shared with the Oversight Committee to allow input from all stakeholders.

Feedback must be a primary focus within the teacher evaluation process. It is at the center between observation and professional development design. When feedback is provided specific to an element in the evaluation rubric coupled with an effective rating, then urgency for growth is low; growth is left to intrinsic and extrinsic forces. In addition, many elements in the teacher evaluation rubric are just rated with no feedback, meaning effective ratings with no feedback are likely to stay the same. This study shows a district with a teacher evaluation process compliant with the Indiana Teacher Evaluation Law, conducts observations, and provides meaningful feedback to teachers, yet, improved student learning outcomes are stagnate, as with most school districts across the State of Indiana (Compass, 2019). The results of this study strongly suggest

that districts look closely at the feedback that is provided to teachers and what teachers and principals do with the feedback, after the post observation meeting.

Continuous Improvement

Professional development must actively engage teachers in instructional inquiry and focus on instructional improvement and student achievement (Andree, Chung Wei, Darling-Hammond, Orphanos, & Richardson, 2009). Teacher observations and feedback examined in this study did not connect to professional development initiatives. The disconnect between professional development and observation/feedback cannot be oversimplified. Teacher observations focused on ratings provide different feedback than observations focused on growth (Marzano, 2012).

Principals must provide learning opportunities that connect to observed deficiencies in instruction and offer feedback that clarifies the need to improve. In order to connect all components of the teacher evaluation process, the focus of the observations must center on specific growth initiatives that improve student learning outcomes. The combination of effective and highly effective ratings for a teacher may result in a highly effective rating for a teacher, but the high rating may not affect student learning. Recommendations for the design of professional development build upon the recommendations put forth in the previous section.

Professional development activities should be designed based on feedback provided on the aforementioned critical elements. Two types of feedback should be under review, (1) why the teacher needs to improve an instructional practice, and (2) what the teacher needs to do to improve the instructional practice. This professional development can be differentiated based on teacher evaluation results, so that the professional learning is meaningful to all participants. Further, based on teacher evaluation results, teachers that demonstrate a strong capacity specific

to the critical elements can lead the differentiated professional development. The professional learning community of principals can collaborate to determine the best way to implement the professional development. Professional development needs identified with multiple principals can be designed at the district level, using the district Professional Development Committee. Identified needs in professional development specific to individual principals can be conducted within their buildings in small groups or with individual teachers.

The lack of connectivity to professional development does highlight the Ansaldo et al. (2015) brief that found almost half of the superintendents do not use their teacher evaluation instrument to design professional development. Most agree that the evaluation results are accurate and fair, and evaluation results have been on a steady incline since the Teacher Evaluation Law went into effect. So, based on the teacher evaluation results, instruction is improving, but student performance remains the same, but why? A simple answer could be that principals are focused on ratings and compliance with the law, and teacher-rating improvements are driven by teacher expectations, not the instructional leader's expectations. This gap in professional development has strong implications for principals, superintendents, and policy makers. This is not just an oversight in implementation, but more of a paradigm shift made necessary by the design of the Teacher Evaluation Law.

We suggest that districts across the State of Indiana look within, starting with the Superintendent. The superintendent sets the stage for the instructional leaders in the district, and setting the expectation to provide meaningful feedback to teachers is the first step, but the feedback must require some type of action. Marzano (2012) makes a valid point that attempting to integrate teacher evaluation for both ratings and growth is difficult, so feedback must focus on growth, not ratings. If feedback does not suggest a design for professional development, either

for an individual teacher or group of teachers, then growth will not occur, and that includes students.

Future Research

This study was limited to data acquired from one school district in suburban Indiana. A review of the literature indicates an alignment with teacher evaluation data collected in this study and other research. Additional research should be considered to evaluate the teacher evaluation process in connection with student learning outcomes. Specifically, what instructional practices improve student learning outcomes, and how can the evaluation process go beyond rating teachers and provide meaningful teacher growth?

Concerning this study, and based on the recommendations listed in the previous section, focusing on critical teacher evaluation rubric elements that are interconnected could provide meaningful evaluation data that assists in the proper design of professional development for the district in this study. We suggest a focus on three critical interconnected instructional practices from the district evaluation rubric as part of this study, (1) establishment of instructional outcomes, (2) communicating instructional outcomes, and (3) monitoring student learning. A laser focus on these three elements could illuminate gaps in either planning, instruction, or assessment, and provide the needed information to design appropriate professional development.

Two prongs of further research could occur here, (1) conduct a study that designs professional development from teacher evaluation feedback and monitor improvements in instruction and (2) conduct a study the improved instruction lead to improved student learning outcomes?

Based on the results of this study, principals conduct teacher observations and provide feedback that can lead to improved instructional practices, which complies with the Indiana Teacher Evaluation Law. A lack of connectivity between teacher evaluation results and professional development design by instructional leaders in this study exists, which has many implications. Statewide data and district data in this study were similar specific to teacher evaluation ratings and student performance on state mandated assessment. Further research on whether the gap in professional development design by instructional leaders is consistent across Indiana schools, which could shed light on factors that contribute to stagnate state mandated test scores.

Two prongs of further research would inform the results of this study, as well as the current literature. (1) Conduct a study that designs professional development from teacher evaluation feedback and monitor improvements in instruction. (2) As a result of the first prong, analyze student-learning outcomes from teachers with documented improvements in instruction. This study could also inform instructional leadership literature, since there needs to be a critical balance between observation, feedback, and the resulting professional development.

Further research should focus on the Indiana Teacher Evaluation Law, even beyond professional development. The law attempts to provide freedom to individual schools districts to design the teacher evaluation instrument, which creates a lack of standardization. For high performing districts, research specific to the type evaluation instrument used could be a starting point to research a more standardized requirement. Also, the Teacher Evaluation Law requires that all teachers receive a rating of either ineffective, needs improvement, effective, or highly effective. The rating categories force principals, at times, to split hairs when assigning a final rating. For example, a teacher rated just above a needs improvement designation has significant

improvements that should occur, but it is up to the instructional leader to require the improvements since the law does not require any action. Additionally, teachers rated just below a highly effective designation not only lose compensation, but receive the same rating as a teacher that just missed mandatory growth plan requirements, required by the law. This process requirement in the Teacher Evaluation Law could also be one explanation for the continued rise in highly effective ratings, since so few teachers receive rating below effective.

Finally, the capacity for instructional leaders based on the configuration of the school and district is an area open to further research. Principals in small schools have fewer students, but potentially fewer resources, which frequently requires multiple additional tasks. Small school principals may be required to drive a bus, provide classroom instruction, serve lunch supervision, and other building manager tasks not required of instructional leaders of larger schools and districts with more resources. Significant to the results of this study, what impact does additional principal duties have on instructional leadership capacity for small rural high schools? Further, capacity is an important consideration for research with large school and district instructional leaders, as their tasks can become too focused in certain areas due to large student populations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the teacher evaluation process through teacher and administrator perspectives, and the extent that the evaluation process goes beyond the requirements of the Indiana Teacher Evaluation Law. This study focused on an Indiana suburban/rural school district in which the researcher is employed to allow for an in depth review of the aforementioned research questions.

This study has increased the body of literature on the teacher evaluation process and the importance of instructional leadership skills associated with connecting all components of the

evaluation process. This study's findings may assist Indiana school districts with rising teacher evaluation ratings and stagnate student-learning outcomes. Further, these findings provide relevant information to Indiana policymakers that requires a teacher evaluation process void of continuous improvement requirements. Continuous improvement is only required for teachers rated below effective, which only represents 2% of Indiana teachers. However, the State of Indiana does hold schools accountable for continuous improvement by issuing school and district grades based on student test scores. Essentially, the connection between teacher evaluation results and continuous improvement is represented in school grades. Low school grades coupled with high teacher evaluation ratings represents a district problem to solve. By not connecting the teacher evaluation process requirements to continuous improvement absolves the State of Indiana from providing resources in that area.

Finally, this study builds upon the literature espousing the need for effective professional development in order to affect district and building level continuous improvement efforts. The capacity of instructional leaders to connect continuous improvement to the teacher evaluation process is critical to improved student learning outcomes. A focus on critical elements in district evaluation rubrics provides a good first step in planning for meaningful professional development that is connect to the teacher evaluation process.

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Appendix A

Introductory E-mail for One-To-One Interviews

Greetings Educator,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Mark B. Black, and I am an administrator in this district. I am currently writing a dissertation as a requirement to earn a Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Indiana University Bloomington.

The purpose of this message is to invite you to participate in the research study. This study seeks to explore teacher and administrator perspectives on the teacher evaluation process. If you choose to participate, you will take part in a confidential one-to-one 60-minute interview at your preferred time and location. The semi-structured interview seeks to explore your perspectives on the teacher evaluation process, and how the process links evaluation results to professional development activities. While there is a common set of questions that will be asked of all participants, participants may be asked to add specific details in order to expand the understanding of answers they have given. I will provide each participant with a copy of the transcription of the interviews to ensure that I have precisely captured the evidence communicated during the conversation. With your permission, the one-to-one interview will be recorded and I will take notes of the conversation. The audio file will be transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate records of the conversation have been taken. While your responses will inform the findings and conclusions of the study, your identity will be kept confidential. In the final document, you will be recognized only by way of a pseudonym. I value you and your support. As an educator, your perspective and understanding of the teacher evaluation process and how you incorporate professional development into classroom practices will be invaluable. You are

free to decide not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study. If you are willing to participate, please contact me at Blackm@shcsc.k12.in.us.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Mark B. Black

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

I _____ voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after my review of the transcripts from my interview, in which case the material will be deleted and destroyed.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing by the researcher and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves two interviews and an expectation that you will review the transcripts provided to you from the interviews.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research, other than the Exceptional Leadership Stipend credits, if applicable.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all personal information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research, my identity will remain anonymous. Names will not be used in the research document, nor will the name of the district or affiliated schools. I will only be identified as teacher 1, 2, 3, etc. Years of experience and years in the district will be identified in the study, but gender will not be identified.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation, the dissertation committee presentation, any conference presentation that could arise as a result of this work, and any publications that may agree to publish the results of these findings.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, the researcher may have to report this to the relevant authorities (The Indiana University Review Board), in which the researcher will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in secure location within the researcher's personal residence until Indiana University allows destruction of documents.

I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date this project is approved by Indiana University.

I understand that under freedom of information I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Mark B. Black, Doctoral Candidate, Indiana University Bloomington

Dr. Monica C. Byrne-Jimenez, Dissertation Committee Chair, Indiana University Bloomington

Dr. Suzanne E. Eckes, Dissertation Committee Member, Indiana University Bloomington

Dr. Cassandra M. Cole, Dissertation Committee Member, Indiana University Bloomington

Signature of research participant _____

Date_____

Signature of researcher_____

Date_____

Appendix C

One-to-one Interview Protocol and Potential Questions

Time of interview:

Date:

Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

The purpose of this study is to explore teacher and administrator perspectives on the teacher evaluation process, and how evaluation results link to professional development activities. The information gathered will be used to provide baseline data to provide critical information on the evaluation process conducted by the district, as well as inform districts across Indiana regarding continuous improvement efforts. The data can be used to inform future practice and the design of professional development. I will be conducting one-on-one interviews with up to ten faculty members and four principals. All participants in the study will be assigned a pseudonym and only I will know the name of the participant. I anticipate this interview lasting up to sixty minutes).

[Have the interviewee read and sign the consent form.]

[Turn on the recording device.]

Appendix D Teacher Interview Questions

Preliminary Interview Questions

- Start by telling me what grade and/or subject area you teach
- Tell me about why you became a teacher.
- How did you come to teach in this school/district?
- What are some of the things you enjoy most about teaching?
- What are some challenges of teaching
- Tell me about your regular lesson planning and preparation.
- Tell me about an interaction with your principal that helped you improve your teaching?
 - What was it about that interaction that helped you to learn?
- Conversely, give an example of an interaction with your principal in which there was an intent to help you improve instruction, but had no impact on your teaching?
 - What was it about that interaction that did not help you learn or improve?
- How has the teacher evaluation process changed since you began teaching?
 - How is it better?
 - How is it worse?

Domain 1 Planning and Preparation

1.1 Demonstrates Knowledge of Content and Structure of the discipline.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
1.1 <i>How do you select instructional practices specific to the content you teach?</i>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Do you prefer to use certain instructional practices when an observation occurs?</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>When do you adjust your instructional practices?</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	Teacher displays extensive knowledge of the important concepts in the discipline and how these relate to one another and to other disciplines (1.1.HE)	Teacher displays solid knowledge of the content and/or instructional practices specific to that discipline (1.1.E)

1.2 Demonstrates Knowledge of Students.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>1.2 <i>How do you acquire information on your students' interests?</i></p> <p><i>How do you learn about the various cultures of students in your classroom?</i></p> <p><i>How do you prepare for students with special needs, including language proficiency?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation/Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> Infer based on response to questions.</p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Teacher actively seeks knowledge of students' skills, backgrounds, cultures, language proficiency, interests, and special needs, and attains this knowledge for individual students (1.2.HE)</p>	<p>Teacher actively seeks knowledge of students' skills, backgrounds, cultures, language proficiency, interests, and special needs, and attains this knowledge for groups of students (1.2.E)</p>

1.3 Establishes Instructional Outcomes.

3.4 Communicates desired Outcomes.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>1.3 <i>Define Rigor?</i></p> <p><i>How do you determine the instructional outcomes for the lessons you teach?</i></p> <p><i>When it comes to student learning, what are your expectations?</i></p> <p><i>How do you communicate instructional outcomes to students?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation/Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>Prior to a formal assessment, how do you know students have accomplished your learning expectations?</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional</p>	<p>Instructional outcomes are clear and represent high expectations and rigor. They offer opportunities for coordination and integration within the disciplines and are adapted to individual student needs (1.3.HE)</p>	<p>Instructional outcomes are clear and represent high expectations and rigor. They are connected to a sequence of learning (1.3.E)</p>

	development you have engaged in specific to this area?		
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1.4 Designs Standards Based Units of Instruction.

1.5 Utilizes Assessments to Plan and Analyze Progress.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>1.4,1.5 What role does assessment play in the establishment of your instructional outcomes? <i>Do you expect all students to do well on formal assessments? (get an A).</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response <u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area? <u>Reflection:</u> <i>Give an example of a time you adjusted your instruction design because students struggled with your intended instructional outcome(s).</i> <u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p><u>1.4</u> Plans represent the coordination of in-depth content knowledge, understanding of different students' needs and available resources (such as technology, leveled readers, alternative delivery methods etc.), resulting in a series of learning activities designed to engage students in high-level cognitive activity. These are differentiated, as appropriate, for individual learners (1.4.HE). <u>1.5</u> Teacher's plan for student assessment is fully aligned with the instructional outcomes, with clear criteria and standards that show evidence of student contribution to their development. Assessment methodologies have been adapted for individual students, as needed (1.5.HE)</p>	<p><u>1.4</u> The teacher designs learning experiences that align with instructional outcomes and suitable for the groups of students. The learning activities have reasonable time allocations; they represent significant cognitive challenge, with some differentiation for different groups of students. The lesson or unit has a clear structure (1.4.E). <u>1.5</u> The plan for student assessment is aligned with the instructional outcomes; assessment methodologies may have been adapted for groups of students. Assessment criteria and standards are clear. Teacher has a well-developed strategy for using formative assessment and has designed particular approaches to be used. Teacher intends to use assessment results to plan for future instruction for groups of students (1.5.E)</p>

Domain 2 The Classroom Environment

2.1 Facilitates Student Engagement.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>2.1 <i>How would you define student engagement?</i></p> <p>How do you facilitate Student engagement?</p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> Give an example of a time you made adjustments to the manner in which you had students engage in content, based on engagement?</p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>¾ or more of students are actively engaged in content at all times and are not off task. Teacher provides differentiated ways of engaging with content specific to individual student needs (2.1.HE)</p>	<p>¾ or more of students are actively engaged in content at all times and are not off task (2.1.E)</p>

2.2 Facilitates Classroom Culture/Climate.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>2.2 <i>What kind of classroom environment is most conducive to student learning?</i></p> <p>How do you establish that type of classroom environment?</p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u></p>	<p>Classroom interactions between the teacher and students are highly respectful. Students monitor themselves and ensure positive character and behavior among classmates (2.2.HE)</p>	<p>Classroom interactions between the teacher and students are polite and respectful. Teacher reinforces positive behaviors and uses consequences to discourage negative behavior (2.2.E)</p>

	<p><i>Discuss a time in which you needed to re-establish your classroom environment and the reason behind the re-establishment?</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>		
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2.3 Establishes Expectations for Success.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p><i>2.3 How do you define student success?</i></p> <p><i>How do you align your instructional outcomes to promote student success?</i></p> <p><i>How do you scaffold your instructional outcomes?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>How do you ensure students are successful in accomplishing your formative instructional outcomes?</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Instructional outcomes, activities, and assignments convey high expectations for all students. There is active participation and the students take the initiative in conveying the importance of their work (2.3.HE)</p>	<p>Instructional outcomes, activities, and assignments convey high expectations for student learning. Students demonstrate pride in their work, giving evidence to buy-in (2.3.E)</p>

2.4 Manages Classroom Procedures.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>2.4 <i>What are the most challenging student behaviors in your classroom?</i></p> <p><i>How do you address those issues?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>Discuss a challenging student issue and how you adjusted.</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Instructional time is maximized due to efficient classroom routines and procedures. Students contribute to the management of instructional groups, transitions, and/or the handling of materials and supplies. Routines are well understood and may be initiated by students (2.4.HE)</p>	<p>There is little loss of instructional time due to effective classroom routines and procedures. The teacher's management of instructional groups and/or the handling of materials and supplies are consistently successful. With minimal guidance and prompting, students follow established classroom routines (2.4.E)</p>

2.5 Manages Classroom Behaviors

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>2.5 <i>How do you respond to student misbehavior?</i></p> <p><i>What is the role of the students in monitoring their behavior?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>Discuss a situation in which you adjusted your classroom procedures in order to improve behaviors.</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss</p>	<p>Student behavior is entirely appropriate or is effectively managed. Students take an active role in monitoring their own behavior and that of other students against standards of conduct. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive. Teacher's</p>	<p>Student behavior is generally appropriate. The teacher monitors student behavior against established standards of conduct. Teacher response to student misbehavior is consistent, proportionate and respectful to students and is effective (2.5.E)</p>

	any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?	response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs and respectful of students (2.5.HE)	
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Domain 3 Instruction

3.1 Maintains Teacher Engagement.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>3.1 (This is about teacher engagement with students, not student engagement).</p> <p><i>If lecture is an example of engaging with students, what are three other techniques you use to engage with your students?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>What do you consider your most effective technique to engage with your students?</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>The teacher links the instructional purpose of the lesson to student interests; the directions and procedures are clear and anticipate possible student misunderstanding. The teacher continually checks for understanding throughout the instructional time while offering varied techniques for conveying information (3.1.HE)</p>	<p>The teacher's explanation is clear and uses some varied techniques for conveying purpose and procedures with limited invitations to students for intellectual engagement (3.1.E)</p>

3.2 Differentiates Instruction.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>3.2 <i>How do you define differentiation?</i></p> <p><i>How do you implement differentiation in your classroom?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u></p>	<p>Teacher provides differentiated ways of learning with content and assignments specific to individual student needs, all aligned to the lesson's objective (3.2.HE)</p>	<p>Teacher provides multiple ways of learning, as appropriate, all aligned to the lesson's objective (3.2.E)</p>

	<p><i>How do you decide that differentiation is necessary?</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>		
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3.3 Communicates Content.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p><i>3.3 How do you plan the manner in which you communicate your content to students?</i></p> <p><i>In your classroom, what are the various techniques you use to communicate content?</i></p> <p><i>How do you organize the communication of content to students?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>How do you know students have connected to your delivery of the content?</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Teacher’s explanation of content is thorough and clear, developing conceptual understanding through artful scaffolding and connecting with students’ interests. Teacher communicates content in various ways (visual aids, music, literature)</p> <p>Teacher’s spoken and written language is expressive, and the teacher finds opportunities to extend students’ vocabularies (3.3.HE)</p>	<p>Teacher’s explanation of content is well scaffolded, clear, and accurate, and connects with students’ knowledge and experience. Teacher communicates content in various ways (visual aids, music, literature). Vocabulary is appropriate to the students’ ages and interests (3.3.E)</p>

3.4 Communicates Desired Outcomes (combined with 1.3).

3.5 Uses Questioning and Discussion Techniques.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
3.5 <i>When posing questions to students in the classroom environment, what are you looking for in their responses?</i>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> Infer based on <i>question response</i>.</p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	Teacher uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively, advance high level thinking and discourse, and promote meta-cognition. Students formulate relevant questions, initiate topics and make unsolicited contributions (3.5.HE)	While the teacher may use some low-level questions, he or she poses questions to students designed to promote student thinking and understanding. Teacher creates a genuine discussion among students, providing adequate time for students to respond, and stepping aside when appropriate. Teacher successfully engages most students in the discussion, employing a range of strategies to ensure that most students are heard (3.5.E)

3.6 Assesses for Instruction.

3.7 Monitors Student Learning.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
3.6 <i>When does assessment occur in your classroom?</i>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall</p>	Assessment is fully integrated into instruction, through extensive use of formative assessment.	Assessment is regularly used during instruction, through monitoring of progress of
3.7 <i>How do your</i>			

<p><i>assessments drive instruction?</i></p> <p><i>How do you provide feedback on informal/formative assessments?</i></p>	<p>any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>How is the feedback provided on informal/formative assessments used to prepare students for formal/summative assessments.</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Students appear to be aware of the assessment criteria. Students self-assess and monitor their progress. A variety of feedback, from both the teacher and peers, is accurate, specific, and advances learning. Questions/prompts/assessments are used regularly to diagnose evidence of learning by individual students (3.6.HE)</p>	<p>learning by teacher and/or students, resulting in accurate, specific feedback that advances learning. Students appear to be aware of the assessment criteria; some of them engage in self assessment. Questions/prompts/assessments are used to diagnose evidence of learning (3.6.E)</p>
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3.8 Adapts Structure and Pacing.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p><i>3.8 Describe a time when a lesson did not go as planned, (students did not learn), How did you respond in the moment? How did you respond in the next lesson? How would you define a teachable moment?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> Infer based on <i>question response.</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Teacher takes advantage of a “teachable moment.” Teacher persists in seeking effective approaches for students who need help, using an extensive repertoire of instructional strategies and soliciting additional resources from the school or community (3.8.HE)</p>	<p>Teacher promotes the successful learning of all students, making minor adjustments as needed to instruction plans and accommodating student questions, needs, and interests. The teacher persists in seeking approaches for students who have difficulty learning, drawing on a broad repertoire of strategies (3.8.E)</p>

3.9 Uses Technology in Instruction.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>3.9 Discuss your strengths and weaknesses regarding the use of technology in the classroom?</p> <p><i>How do you use technology to promote student learning?</i></p> <p><i>What is your strengths in the use of technology?</i></p> <p><i>What are your weaknesses?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> Infer based on <i>question response</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Technology is effectively integrated as an instructional tool (3.9.HE)</p>	<p>Technology is used appropriately during instruction (3.9.E)</p>

Appendix E Principal Interview Questions

Preliminary Interview Questions

- Start by telling me what grade and/or level you are a Principal?
- Tell me about why you became an administrator.
- How did you come to lead in this school/district?
- What are some of the things you enjoy most about the principalship?
- What are some challenges to your position?
- Tell me how you expect to conduct regular lesson planning and preparation.
- Tell me about an interaction with a teacher that helped improve their teaching?
 - What was it about that interaction that helped them learn?

- Conversely, give an example of an interaction with a teacher in which there was an intent to help improve instruction, but had no impact on their teaching?
 - What was it about that interaction that did not help them learn or improve?

- How has the teacher evaluation process changed since you entered the education profession?
 - How is it better?
 - How is it worse?

Domain 1 Planning and Preparation

1.1 Demonstrates Knowledge of Content and Structure of the discipline.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<i>1.1 How do you determine a teacher has a strong understanding of their content?</i>	<u>Observation/Feedback</u> <u>Reflection</u> <u>Professional Development</u>	Teacher displays extensive knowledge of the important concepts in the discipline and how these relate to one another and to other disciplines (<i>1.1.HE</i>)	Teacher displays solid knowledge of the content and/or instructional practices specific to that discipline (1.1.E)

1.2 Demonstrates Knowledge of Students.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>1.2 <i>How do you know a teacher has sought information on students' interests?</i></p> <p><i>How do you determine a teacher understands the various cultures of students in their classroom?</i></p> <p><i>How do you know a teacher has prepared for students with special needs, including language proficiency?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation/Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> Infer based on response to questions.</p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Teacher actively seeks knowledge of students' skills, backgrounds, cultures, language proficiency, interests, and special needs, and attains this knowledge for individual students (1.2.HE)</p>	<p>Teacher actively seeks knowledge of students' skills, backgrounds, cultures, language proficiency, interests, and special needs, and attains this knowledge for groups of students (1.2.E)</p>

1.3 Establishes Instructional Outcomes.

3.4 Communicates desired Outcomes.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>1.3 <i>Define Rigor?</i></p> <p><i>How do you know the instructional outcomes have been determined?</i></p> <p><i>When it comes to student learning, what are your expectations?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation/Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> Infer based on answers to questions.</p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have</p>	<p>Instructional outcomes are clear and represent high expectations and rigor. They offer opportunities for coordination and integration within the disciplines and are adapted to individual student needs (1.3.HE)</p>	<p>Instructional outcomes are clear and represent high expectations and rigor. They are connected to a sequence of learning (1.3.E)</p>

<i>How do you expect teachers to communicate instructional outcomes to students?</i>	engaged in specific to this area?		
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1.4 Designs Standards Based Units of Instruction.

1.5 Utilizes Assessments to Plan and Analyze Progress.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>1.4,1.5 while observing a teacher, what do you look for to ensure assessments are aligned with instructional outcomes?</p> <p><i>Do you expect all students to do well on formal assessments? (get an A).</i></p> <p><i>How do you know observed lessons are standards based?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>Infer based on answers to questions.</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p><u>1.4</u> Plans represent the coordination of in-depth content knowledge, understanding of different students' needs and available resources (such as technology, leveled readers, alternative delivery methods etc.), resulting in a series of learning activities designed to engage students in high-level cognitive activity. These are differentiated, as appropriate, for individual learners (1.4.HE).</p> <p><u>1.5</u> Teacher's plan for student assessment is fully aligned with the instructional outcomes, with clear criteria and standards that show</p>	<p><u>1.4</u> The teacher designs learning experiences that align with instructional outcomes and suitable for the groups of students. The learning activities have reasonable time allocations; they represent significant cognitive challenge, with some differentiation for different groups of students. The lesson or unit has a clear structure (1.4.E).</p> <p><u>1.5</u> The plan for student assessment is aligned with the instructional outcomes; assessment methodologies may have been adapted for groups of students.</p>

		<p>evidence of student contribution to their development. Assessment methodologies have been adapted for individual students, as needed <i>(1.5.HE)</i></p>	<p>Assessment criteria and standards are clear. Teacher has a well-developed strategy for using formative assessment and has designed particular approaches to be used. Teacher intends to use assessment results to plan for future instruction for groups of students <i>(1.5.E)</i></p>
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Domain 2 The Classroom Environment

2.1 Facilitates Student Engagement.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>2.1 <i>How would you define student engagement?</i></p> <p>How do you know a teacher facilitates Student engagement?</p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> can you provide an example of a time you provided feedback to a teacher on student engagement?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>Infer based on answers to questions.</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have provided specific to this area?</p>	<p>¾ or more of students are actively engaged in content at all times and are not off task. Teacher provides differentiated ways of engaging with content specific to individual student needs (2.1.HE)</p>	<p>¾ or more of students are actively engaged in content at all times and are not off task (2.1.E)</p>

2.2 Facilitates Classroom Culture/Climate.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>2.2 <i>What kind of classroom environment is most conducive to student learning?</i></p> <p><i>How does a teacher establish that type of classroom environment?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>Infer based on answers to questions.</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u></p>	<p>Classroom interactions between the teacher and students are highly respectful. Students monitor themselves and ensure positive character and behavior among classmates (2.2.HE)</p>	<p>Classroom interactions between the teacher and students are polite and respectful. Teacher reinforces positive behaviors and uses consequences to discourage negative behavior (2.2.E)</p>

	Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?		
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2.3 Establishes Expectations for Success.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>2.3 <i>How do you define student success?</i></p> <p><i>How do you know that instructional outcomes promote student success?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>Infer based on answers to questions.</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Instructional outcomes, activities, and assignments convey high expectations for all students. There is active participation and the students take the initiative in conveying the importance of their work (2.3.HE)</p>	<p>Instructional outcomes, activities, and assignments convey high expectations for student learning. Students demonstrate pride in their work, giving evidence to buy-in (2.3.E)</p>

2.4 Manages Classroom Procedures.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>2.4 <i>What are the most challenging student behaviors sent to your office?</i></p> <p><i>How do you address those issues?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u></p>	<p>Instructional time is maximized due to efficient classroom routines and procedures. Students contribute to the management of instructional groups, transitions, and/or the</p>	<p>There is little loss of instructional time due to effective classroom routines and procedures. The teacher's management of</p>

	<p><i>Infer based on answers to questions.</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>handling of materials and supplies.</p> <p>Routines are well understood and may be initiated by students (2.4.HE)</p>	<p>instructional groups and/or the handling of materials and supplies are consistently successful. With minimal guidance and prompting, students follow established classroom routines (2.4.E)</p>
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2.5 Manages Classroom Procedures.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>2.5 <i>How do you expect teachers to respond to student misbehavior?</i></p> <p><i>What is the role of the students in monitoring their behavior?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>Infer based on answers to questions.</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Student behavior is entirely appropriate or is effectively managed. Students take an active role in monitoring their own behavior and that of other students against standards of conduct. Teacher’s monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive. Teacher’s response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs and respectful of students (2.5.HE)</p>	<p>Student behavior is generally appropriate. The teacher monitors student behavior against established standards of conduct. Teacher response to student misbehavior is consistent, proportionate and respectful to students and is effective (2.5.E)</p>

Domain 3 Instruction

3.1 Maintains Teacher Engagement.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>3.1 (This is about teacher engagement with students, not student engagement).</p> <p><i>If lecture is an example of a teacher engaging with students, what are three other techniques you prefer teachers use to engage students?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>What do you consider your most effective technique to engage students?</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>The teacher links the instructional purpose of the lesson to student interests; the directions and procedures are clear and anticipate possible student misunderstanding. The teacher continually checks for understanding throughout the instructional time while offering varied techniques for conveying information (3.1.HE)</p>	<p>The teacher's explanation is clear and uses some varied techniques for conveying purpose and procedures with limited invitations to students for intellectual engagement (3.1.E)</p>

3.2 Differentiates Instruction.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>3.2 <i>How do you define differentiation?</i></p> <p><i>How do you expect differentiation to be implemented in the classroom?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u></p>	<p>Teacher provides differentiated ways of learning with content and assignments specific to individual student needs, all aligned to the lesson's objective (3.2.HE)</p>	<p>Teacher provides multiple ways of learning, as appropriate, all aligned to the lesson's objective (3.2.E)</p>

	<p><i>How do you determine, during an observation, that differentiation was necessary and not implemented?</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>		
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3.3 Communicates Content.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>3.3 <i>How do you expect teachers to communicate content to students?</i></p> <p><i>What techniques do you look for?</i></p> <p><i>How do you expect teachers to organize the communication of content to students?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> <i>How do you know students have connected to the delivery of the content?</i></p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Teacher’s explanation of content is thorough and clear, developing conceptual understanding through artful scaffolding and connecting with students’ interests. Teacher communicates content in various ways (visual aids, music, literature)</p> <p>Teacher’s spoken and written language is expressive, and the teacher finds opportunities to extend students’ vocabularies (3.3.HE)</p>	<p>Teacher’s explanation of content is well scaffolded, clear, and accurate, and connects with students’ knowledge and experience. Teacher communicates content in various ways (visual aids, music, literature). Vocabulary is appropriate to the students’ ages and interests (3.3.E)</p>

3.4 Communicates Desired Outcomes (combined with 1.3).

3.5 Uses Questioning and Discussion Techniques.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
3.5 <i>When a teacher poses questions to students in the classroom environment, what are you looking for in their responses?</i>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> Infer based on <i>question response</i>.</p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	Teacher uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively, advance high level thinking and discourse, and promote meta-cognition. Students formulate relevant questions, initiate topics and make unsolicited contributions (3.5.HE)	While the teacher may use some low-level questions, he or she poses questions to students designed to promote student thinking and understanding. Teacher creates a genuine discussion among students, providing adequate time for students to respond, and stepping aside when appropriate. Teacher successfully engages most students in the discussion, employing a range of strategies to ensure that most students are heard (3.5.E)

3.6 Assesses for Instruction.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
3.6 <i>When do you expect assessment to occur in the classroom?</i>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall</p>	Assessment is fully integrated into instruction, through extensive use of formative assessment.	Assessment is regularly used during instruction, through monitoring of progress of

<p>3.7 How should assessments drive instruction?</p>	<p>any specific feedback from an observation based on this area? <u>Reflection:</u> <i>How should feedback be provided on informal/formative assessments to prepare students for formal/summative assessments?</i> <u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Students appear to be aware of the assessment criteria. Students self-assess and monitor their progress. A variety of feedback, from both the teacher and peers, is accurate, specific, and advances learning. Questions/prompts/assessments are used regularly to diagnose evidence of learning by individual students (3.6.HE)</p>	<p>learning by teacher and/or students, resulting in accurate, specific feedback that advances learning. Students appear to be aware of the assessment criteria; some of them engage in self assessment. Questions/prompts/assessments are used to diagnose evidence of learning (3.6.E)</p>
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3.7 Monitors Student Learning (See 3.6).

3.8 Adapts Structure and Pacing.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>3.8 How do you know, during an observation, that a teacher is making minor adjustments to instruction plans to promote successful learning of all students? <i>How do expect teachers to respond to student failure?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response <u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area? <u>Reflection:</u> Infer based on <i>question response.</i> <u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you</p>	<p>Teacher takes advantage of a “teachable moment.” Teacher persists in seeking effective approaches for students who need help, using an extensive repertoire of instructional strategies and soliciting additional resources from the school or community (3.8.HE)</p>	<p>Teacher promotes the successful learning of all students, making minor adjustments as needed to instruction plans and accommodating student questions, needs, and interests. The teacher persists in seeking approaches for students who have difficulty learning, drawing on</p>

	have engaged in specific to this area?		a broad repertoire of strategies (3.8.E)
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3.9 Uses Technology in Instruction.

Question	Process element/Follow up question(s)	Rubric Highly Effective	Rubric Effective
<p>3.9 Discuss the difference between appropriate use of technology and effective integration of technology as an instructional tool?</p> <p><i>How do you expect technology to promote student learning?</i></p>	<p><u>Observation:</u> Infer based on feedback response</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> Other than ratings, do you recall any specific feedback from an observation based on this area?</p> <p><u>Reflection:</u> Infer based on <i>question response</i>.</p> <p><u>Professional Development:</u> Discuss any professional development you have engaged in specific to this area?</p>	<p>Technology is effectively integrated as an instructional tool (3.9.HE)</p>	<p>Technology is used appropriately during instruction (3.9.E)</p>

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Assistant Principal/Athletic Director

August 1998-June 2003

South Central Junior/Senior High

- Appointed District Safety Co-Director for SHCSC, and currently working to implement the ALICE Program k-12 district wide.
- Implemented the integration of a School Resource Officer serving three schools
- Lead District Professional Development Committee, which plans, directs, and implements district wide professional development programs.
- Led several district search and selection committees to hire corporation employees, to include principals, assistant principals, and counselors.
- Implemented standards based grading at the elementary level.
- Served on the district Equity Advisement Committee working with the Great Lakes Equity Center.
- Advised district leadership and implemented corporation staff reductions as a result of funding cuts at the state level.
- Planned and assisted in the supervision of three school district renovation projects: South Central Jr/Sr High, Corydon Intermediate, and Corydon Central Jr/Sr High.
- Successfully transitioned a k-12 athletic department from a struggling financial unit to a viable self-supporting organization.

- Increased the school letter grade from a D to an A, which assisted in moving the district grade from a B to an A.
- Serve on District Technology Committee, which oversees and directs the use and implementation of technology on the curriculum.
- Oversee 30 instructional leaders in the daily operations of the school to include all student discipline, teacher evaluation, professional development, curricular development.
- Implemented and supervised the transition of daily lesson planning to a technology based program, which also serves as the location of district curriculum.
- Collaboratively directed the design and implementation of the district evaluation instrument under the advisement of INTASS.
- Serve on District Oversight Committee, which reviews annual teacher evaluation results, and submits recommendations to the Superintendent for change, when applicable.
- Organized, directed, and supervised ten student learning trips to Washington DC.

RELATED ACTIVITIES and ORGANIZATIONS

2008 Educator of the year Harrison County Chamber of Commerce

Indiana Middle Level Education Association Board of Trustee member

Member of the Indiana Association of Secondary School Principals

Indiana Principal Leadership Academy Group 41

Harrison County Safety Committee

Veteran of the United States Marine Corps

Member of the American Legion

Member of the Marine Corps League

RECENT COURSEWORK

Problems in Ed Leadership

Advanced School Law

Microeconomic App. of Ed Lead

Planning and Change in Ed. Org.

Public School Personnel Management

Intermediate Stats

Org. Context of Education

Moral Dimensions in Ed. Leadership

Strategies of Educ. Inquiry