Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of Teacher Evaluations' Impact

on Teacher Growth

_____

A Capstone Project

Presented to

The Faculty of the Curry School of Education

University of Virginia

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

_____

by

David Stratuik, BA, M.S.T., Ed. S

June 2021

Executive Summary

Dr. Sandra P. Mitchell, Advisor

"The paradox of teacher evaluation is that it holds the potential to help nearly every teacher improve, yet in actual practice it helps almost no one" (Stiggins & Duke, 1988, p. 1). While the above quote was written more than three decades ago, some would suggest that while the process looks different, the outcome has changed very little. Significant resources of both time and money have been poured into improving the teacher evaluation process. At its core, teacher evaluation is viewed as a tool to remove ineffective teachers and improve instructional practices (and consequently, raise student achievement). Despite the resources and the potential impact of the teacher evaluation process, there is little evidence to show that changes in the process have resulted in positive outcomes for teachers or students (Weisberg et al., 2009; Dynarski, 2016; Stecher et al., 2018). This capstone project focused on better understanding the current perceptions of teacher evaluation in Chase Township Public Schools and how it might be improved by embedding principles of adult learning theory, specifically, research-based feedback strategies.

This study took place in Chase Township Public Schools, a pseudonym for a suburban school district in the United States. The district has a total of eight schools, 5500 students, and approximately 700 certificated staff members. The study focused on the teachers and administrators in four of the district elementary schools that span from kindergarten through fifth grade.

The purpose of this study was to describe teacher and administrator perceptions of the teacher evaluation process in CTPS and its perceived impact on teaching and learning. The study uses adult learning theory as a lens for possible ways the process might be improved.

A mixed-methods approach, beginning with a survey of teaching staff, followed by semi-structured interviews of teachers and administrators, was utilized to gain a better understanding of perceptions of the teacher evaluation process in Chase Township Public Schools. This study looked specifically at the perceived impact teacher evaluation has on teacher growth and improvement through observation and feedback. In better understanding how teachers and administrators perceive the current evaluation process the researcher could begin to consider which changes, if any, are needed to fully realize one of the core objectives of teacher evaluation: growth and improvement.

The data from both the quantitative survey (teachers) and qualitative semi-structured interviews (teachers and principals) painted a picture of the perceptions of teachers and administrators in Chase Township Public Schools. The survey provided the broad strokes by capturing the responses of nearly 60% (n=98) of the certificated teachers in the four schools included in this study, while the semi-structured interviews offered a deeper understanding of the 'why' behind the perceptions. After an in-depth analysis of the data, three themes emerged:

1.   Observation feedback is valuable, but it does not happen enough.

2.   Administrator follow-up after an observation and feedback conference is not a regular or consistent evaluation practice.

3.   While the observation and feedback process are viewed as valuable by

both teachers and administrators, related evaluation components (SGOs, PDPs, End of Year reflections) contribute to the belief that the teacher evaluation process is not worth the investment of time.

From these findings, four recommendations were presented to the district leadership in Chase Township Public schools. The recommendations included:

1. Increasing opportunities for classroom observations and feedback.

2. Embedding follow-up in the feedback process.

3. Redesigning or eliminating ancillary evaluation components.

4. Differentiating the delivery of feedback.

Department of Leadership, Foundations, and Policy
Curry School of Education
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

APPROVAL OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

This capstone project, Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of Teacher Evaluations' Impact on Teacher Growth, has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Curry School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

_____

Capstone Chairperson (Sandra Mitchell, Ed.D.)

_____

Capstone Committee Member (Sara Dexter, Ed.D.)

_____

Capstone Committee Member (Michelle Beavers, Ph.D.)

Date of Defense: June 29, 2021

Dedication

To my wife, Caitlin, you have been patient, understanding and taken on many additional duties while I undertook this important endeavor. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging me every step of the way.

To my children: Chase, Levi, Julia, and Elise, you drive me to be a better dad, person, and educator. Thank you for inspiring me each and every day.

To my parents, David and Lou Anne Stratuik and Julie and Warren VanLuven, thank you for pushing me, challenging me, and encouraging me. Thank you for instilling in me the importance of hard work and doing your best. I'm grateful that you are always in my corner.

Finally, to my late mother-in-law, Patricia Buchanan. Thank you for being my 'mom away from home.' I know how proud and excited you would be that I completed this journey. You always thought your little girl was going to marry a doctor. I'm glad I could finally make that a reality.

I also want to acknowledge and thank my fellow cohort members Jeff, Jennifer, Jessica, John, Kevin, Kate, Kisha, Martha, Mike, and Maureen. I so enjoyed getting to know all of you; having the opportunity to learn from you was a privilege and an honor. I am beyond proud to call you colleagues and friends.

Finally, I want to give a special shoutout to one of our cohort members, Dr. Maureen Boland. Dr. Boland was the glue that held our cohort together. After our coursework at UVA was complete, she made sure we all stayed connected and in the loop to celebrate important milestones (e.g. capstone proposal and defense) and special events (weddings/births/birthdays). Thank you for being a cheerleader for all of us. I cannot thank you enough for all of your feedback, and encouragment with this capstone.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One

Introduction

The paradox of teacher evaluation is that it holds the potential to help nearly every teacher improve, yet in actual practice it helps almost no one" (Stiggins & Duke, 1988, p. 1). While the statement above was published in *The Case for Commitment to Teacher Growth: Research on Teacher Evaluation* over 30 years ago, some argue that it still holds true today. And while the teacher evaluation process has seen significant changes and modifications over the years, the outcome of the process has, for the most part, improved teaching very little (Dynarski, 2016; Sawchuck, 2013; Tucker, 1997; Weisberg et al., 2009). Yet the potential for instructional improvement via the evaluation process remains important because teachers matter. Teachers have consistently been found to have the greatest impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hattie, 2003; Rand Education, 2012; Stronge, 2018).

Though we have seen changes in the way teachers are evaluated, the intent of teacher evaluations has continued to center around two critical components: improving teaching (e.g., through the feedback process) and accountability or quality assurance (Duke, 1990; Stronge, 1995; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). Teacher evaluation has the potential to be a powerful tool in helping to improve instruction and subsequently, student achievement, but it is often viewed as time consuming and burdensome by administrators and teachers (Stiggins & Duke, 1988; Weisberg et al., 2009; Sawchuck, 2013; Derrington & Campbell, 2015; Dynarski, 2016).

Further, the literature reveals additional challenges within the teacher evaluation process:

- Lack of instructional expertise on the part of the evaluator (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 6)

- Reluctance/fear to provide constructive feedback (Tucker, 1997, p. 116)

- Disconnect between the evaluation process and how adults learn best (Drago-Severson & Blum, 2014; Drago-Severson, 2011)

- Lack of follow-through to see that identified areas are addressed in future lessons (Fullan, 2014, p. 79)

- Lack of trust (Stronge & Tucker, 2005, p. 10)

In an ongoing effort to improve teaching and learning, the teacher evaluation process has gone through a number of iterations and reforms (Papay, 2012; Kraft et al., 2018). Less than a decade ago many states observed and evaluated teachers only once every five years (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013). More recently, most districts evaluate and observe teachers every year with school administrators and districts often using multiple factors to determine effectiveness, including student achievement and both formal (announced) and informal observations (unannounced) (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013). Adding more frequent observations and including student achievement data requires more time from administrators and teachers but have not significantly impacted student outcomes (Kraft & Gilmore, 2016; Stecher et al., 2018). For example, one study found "… principals believe that the current teacher evaluation systems are inordinately time intensive and preclude many other opportunities for school building leaders to work with faculty to improve classroom instruction" (Kersten & Israel, 2005, p. 62). It stands to

reason that if both teachers and administrators are going to devote large amounts of time and resources to the evaluation process, it should result in positive outcomes for teachers, the school organization, and most importantly, students.

While changes in frequency and type of observations (announced/unannounced) and in many cases the inclusion of student achievement data have made the evaluation process vastly different from in the past, the accountability aspect of evaluations in many states remains relatively unchanged (Weisberg et al., 2009). That is, these new systems do not appear to have distinguished between ineffective and effective teachers. In 1997, Tucker found that, "Despite incompetence estimates of five percent and higher for the teaching profession, the dismissal rate is far less than one percent" (Tucker, 1997, p. 104). Two decades later, dismissal rates have changed very little. More recently, Michigan rated 98% of teachers as effective or better and other states using new evaluation systems (Florida 97%, Tennessee 98%) had similar results (Sawchuck, 2013). Additionally, a 2009 TNTP study found that less than one percent of teachers were rated as unsatisfactory even with multiple measures and reforms to the teacher evaluation process (Weisberg et al., 2009). Kraft and Gilmore (2016) examined the results from this 2009 study and compared it with current data; the researchers found that in the vast majority of states the percentage of teachers rated as unsatisfactory remains below one percent.

The approaches to teacher evaluation have continued to change over the years, most recently to rubric based approaches (Stronge, 2005; Danielson, 2007); however, the impact these changes have had on administrators, teachers, and students remains unclear (Weisberg et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2015; Kraft & Gilmore, 2016). The result is a

system where two commonly cited goals of personnel evaluation — professional growth and accountability (Duke, 1990; Stronge, 1995; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Kraft & Gilmour, 2016) often go unrealized (Weisberg et al., 2009; Marshall, 2009; Sawchuck, 2013; Kraft & Gilmore, 2016; Stecher et al., 2018). Furthermore, teachers and administrators often fail to see the value of teacher evaluation as there is little concrete evidence of positive outcomes for individuals or schools (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2015; Dynarski, 2016; Lovison & Taylor, 2018; Stecher et al., 2018).

This capstone project explores teachers' and administrators' perceptions about the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation process. The perceptions of stakeholders are analyzed to determine alignment of teacher evaluation with adult learning theory and research based feedback strategies as well as examine the perceived impact of evaluation on teacher growth. Adult learning theory research suggests that if we account for the way that an adult learns and tailor feedback to match the needs of the learner, it will strengthen relationships and improve teacher performance (Drago-Severson & Blum, 2014). Perhaps the intent of teacher evaluations might be realized more consistently if they incorporated core components of adult learning theory into the process. The goal of this capstone is to address this assumption through an examination of teacher and administrator perceptions about their teacher evaluation approach in a small school district in New Jersey.

Preview of the Literature

As discussed previously, teacher evaluations look quite different from years past; the process has moved from a subjective narrative, to a reflective model, to checklists, and more recently, rubrics, student growth measures, portfolios, and goal setting

(Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). But while the look of evaluations has changed in most states, the value and impact these changes have had on teacher practice and student achievement is not clear (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 3; Dynarski, 2016).

The literature review section of this capstone highlights research on different models of teacher evaluations and the impact of those models. Current research on adult learning theory is explored with a focus on how the teacher evaluation process incorporates (or omits) key principles related to how adults learn. Finally, outcomes of current teacher evaluation models are addressed.

Problem of Practice

Context. Chase Township Public Schools (CTPS) is a high performing (based on state standardized test results) K-8 school district in central New Jersey. The district has one early learning center that serves kindergarteners, five elementary schools (1-5 grade), and two middle schools (6-8 grade). There is no high school in this district; the middle schools feed to a regional high school. According to the New Jersey Department of Education, the district has a factor of 'I' which is the second highest factor group that exists, meaning that the district has a relatively low number of students in poverty. The district has approximately four hundred teachers and 5,000 students.

The teacher evaluation process in CTPS follows the Charlotte Danielson Teaching Framework. The Danielson Framework is based on Education Testing Services (ETS) Praxis III: Classroom Performance Assessments, which assesses actual teaching skills and classroom performance (Alvarez & Anderson-Ketchmark, 2011). "The framework was developed using practice, wisdom, and research, then field tested and researched prior to its release" (Alvarez & Anderson-Ketchmark, 2011, p. 61). In the framework, 22

components contain 76 elements clustered into four overarching domains: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities (Danielson, 2013). Tenured teachers, described as those who have completed four years of successful teaching in the district, are required to have two observations per year, while non-tenured teachers (e.g. new hires and those with less than four years of teaching in the district) are required to have three observations. Teachers are required to document professional development to reach a minimum of twenty hours per year, create at least one student achievement goal based on data, and complete a written response documenting how they met the objectives of the professional responsibilities domain as part of their summative evaluation.

Problem. Although teacher evaluations have seen significant reform and change in terms of the process, the impact of TE on teacher growth and accountability has been difficult to assess, with many studies showing that little has changed (Weisberg et al., 2009; Kraft & Gilmore, 2017). For example, in Chase Township Public Schools, in 2016–2017 .001% of teachers (n=714) were rated unsatisfactory, in 2017–2018 zero teachers (n=740) rated unsatisfactory. There is little evidence or research that supports the premise that new models of teacher evaluations have resulted in improved teacher practice and/or increases in student achievement (Dynarski, 2016; Stecher et al., 2018). When asked how satisfied he was with the current evaluation system during a personal interview the CTPS Human Resource director said:

> There are many, many hours invested in this process and we are not getting bang for our buck. Time is the only commodity that we control — the formality of the process and all of the minutes spent on observation rarely results in meaningful

changes to instruction. Anyone who gets a 3 or better just moves on and if you

are tenured and above a 3 — there isn't a significant investment in caring about

the feedback (Director, HR, personal interview, March 13, 2019).

In CTPS, teachers and administrators are investing significant time and effort in

the evaluation process, and it is important to have a clear understanding of how to

leverage the process to improve teaching and ensure accountability.

Several studies reflect the CTPS HR director's concerns; the number of teachers

rated as ineffective has remained consistent despite changes to the teacher evaluation

process (Sawchuck, 2013; Weisberg et al., 2009). A study of twelve school districts

spanning four states found that more than 99% of teachers were rated as effective

(Weisberg et al., 2009), this despite estimates of teacher ineffectiveness at five percent

and higher (Tucker, 1997; Yariv, 2004; Weisberg et al., 2009). This suggests that one

important objective of teacher evaluation, to dismiss ineffective teachers, is not being

realized. Additionally, there is little research to show that the evaluation process has

improved teacher practice or resulted in improved student achievement (Dynarski, 2016;

Lovison & Taylor, 2018; Stecher et al., 2018).

Significance and Purpose of Study

Significant resources of both time and money are being poured into improving the

teacher evaluation process. At its core, teacher evaluation is viewed as a tool to remove

ineffective teachers and improve instructional practices (and consequently raise student

achievement). Despite the resources and the potential impact of the teacher evaluation

process, there is little evidence to show that changes in the process have resulted in

positive outcomes for teachers or students (Weisberg et al., 2009; Dynarski, 2016;

Stecher et al., 2018).

It is very difficult to link gains in student achievement to a singular effect because of the myriad factors that impact student learning — e.g., home life, school climate, prior teacher, current teacher, curriculum, resources, etc. (Hattie, 2012), but what can be examined is the perceived impact of the current evaluation system to better understand the effect on both teachers and administrators.

The purpose of this study is to describe teacher and administrator perceptions of the teacher evaluation process in CTPS and its perceived impact on teaching and learning. These perceptions are explained using adult learning theory as a lens for possible ways the process might be improved.

The feedback from teachers and administrators, including ways the process can be improved, may provide insight on potential modifications or changes that could enhance the outcomes for all stakeholders. Finally, in examining the evaluation process in terms of the alignment with best practices in adult learning theory, potential deficits in the process may be identified and may address concerns expressed by the CTPS Human Resource director about authenticity and feedback.

Preview of Conceptual Framework

A high-quality evaluation process is comprised of a "system that is built squarely upon individual and institutional improvement" (Stronge, 1995, p. 146). The teacher evaluation process is something that requires significant resources of both time and money. While many researchers have identified teacher growth or improvement as a cornerstone of the teacher evaluation process (Duke, 1990; Stronge, 1995; Danielson & McGreal, 2000), the impact of teacher evaluation on teacher growth and improvement is

unclear at best and potentially absent at worst (Marshall, 2005; Toch & Rothman, 2008; Danielson, 2010; Dynarski, 2016). When it comes to teacher growth and improvement through the teacher evaluation process, many researchers agree that high quality formative feedback is one of the most important elements (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Marshall, 2005; Stronge & Tucker, 2017). That being said, "… there is remarkably little evidence that associates the new generation of teacher evaluation with capacity development of teachers or more consistent growth in learning outcomes for students" (Hallinger et al., 2014, p. 22).

Looking at feedback through a developmental lens and potentially differentiating feedback based on the individual teacher (Phillips et al., 2014; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017) may lead to improved outcomes in terms of teacher growth and improvement while engaging in the evaluation process.

The conceptual framework for this study is based on teacher evaluation literature that points to the primary intent of teacher evaluation: teacher growth. The researcher hypothesizes that the perceptions of CTPS teachers and administrators mirror the literature in that teacher evaluation is not favorably impacting teacher growth. Further, the researcher hypothesizes that these areas would be strengthened if evaluation processes included aspects of adult learning theory, specifically research on feedback strategies. The teacher evaluation process has the capacity to change teacher practice and improve outcomes for students (Duke, 1990; Stronge, 1995; Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Understanding how it aligns with adult learning can provide valuable insight on the process and may help identify potential improvements.

Research Questions and Methodology

The focus of this study is to gain a better understanding of how teachers and administrators in the four elementary schools in CTPS view the teacher evaluation process and whether they believe it is achieving intended outcomes (improved teacher practice, accountability, increased student achievement). The questions this study hopes to address are below:

1) What is the nature of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the current teacher evaluation process?

    a) What aspects of the evaluation process are regarded as most and least useful?

    b) Does the impact of teacher evaluation warrant the amount of time that is spent on the evaluation process?

    c) To what extent does the teacher evaluation process contribute to teacher growth?

    d) To what extent do teachers and administrators believe the evaluation process is effective in identifying effective and ineffective teachers?

2) To what extent do teachers and administrators believe the feedback received within teacher evaluation process in CTPS positively impacts teacher growth?

    a) Do administrators believe they positively impact teacher practice through the current evaluation process?

    b) Do teachers believe the evaluation process positively impacts their instructional practice?

3) What changes (if any) do teachers and administrators suggest that could improve the teacher evaluation process?

This study of four elementary schools (K-5th grade) in CTPS begins with a survey that is sent to certificated teaching staff and school based administrative staff (vice principals and principals) in the schools. Data from the surveys is analyzed using selected literature reflected in the literature review as a lens for analysis. Trends and potential recommendations for improvement are discussed. Follow up semi-structured interviews with a small number of principals and teachers dig deeper into the research questions.

Methodology. This study utilizes survey data to examine the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding how they view the evaluation process and its impact on instructional practice. The results of the survey are discussed and analyzed to look for the degree to which the stakeholder groups, teachers and administrators, agree or disagree with the impact of teacher evaluation. The link or commonalities between administrators and teacher perceptions of the process is also explored. The semi-structured interviews are transcribed and coded looking for themes and trends. The data is then analyzed.

Limitations and Delimitations of Study

The sample size and demographics are two significant limitations of this study; the limited focus (four elementary schools) and emphasis on qualitative research limits the transferability and generalizability of any findings. The study was conducted in an affluent school district in New Jersey comprised of just eight schools serving kindergarten through eighth grade so the demographics are also relatively narrow in scope. This district is high performing, so results from higher needs schools or high school populations could produce different outcomes.

There is potential for researcher bias as this study is being conducted by a school administrator. Additionally, based on the researcher's experience as an administrator, beliefs have been formed that the teacher evaluation system has some flaws and could be improved. There is also potential for interviewee or response bias; when interviewing teachers or administrators, they could provide answers they think the researcher wants to hear or modify their response to what they believe is the correct answer.

Organization of the Capstone

Chapter one of this capstone presents a brief overview of the study and an introduction that highlights why this research is both timely and relevant. Chapter two of the capstone provides context by reviewing the literature on models of evaluation, goals of the evaluation process, and background on adult learning theory, focusing specifically on aspects that relate to teacher evaluation. Chapter three focuses on methodology of the study, including the conceptual framework that forms the lens of the study. Finally, in Chapters four and five, the findings from the study are discussed and recommendations are offered.

Summary

This capstone focuses on the perceptions of teachers and administrators as it relates to teacher evaluation in Chase Township Public Schools. The researcher aims to better understand how teachers and principals view the strengths and weaknesses of the current evaluation system (i.e., Charlotte Danielson Teaching Framework). Teachers and administrators will share feedback on the evaluation process including the perceived impact on teacher growth, strengths or weaknesses of the current system and any suggestions for improvement.

There have been numerous changes to teacher evaluation over the past ten years. This study will examine the perceptions of critical stakeholders (administrators and teachers) to better understand what value they see in the teacher evaluation process and which changes they believe are most and least useful.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

The problem of practice in this study is that while efforts have been made to improve the teacher evaluation process in Chase Township Public Schools (CTPS), the evaluation process has not had a clear impact on instruction, student learning, or teacher accountability (Weisberg et al., 2009; Dynarski, 2016; CTPS Evaluation Data 2015–18). This study seeks to examine the perceptions of administrators and teachers to determine the extent to which they believe the process has impacted their growth and thereby improved instruction and learning, and to determine if and/or how they believe the process might be improved. These perceptions are examined using adult learning theory, specifically research on providing feedback, as a lens for analysis. This review, therefore, will examine literature related to the (a) policies affecting teacher evaluation; (b) the challenges of teacher evaluation, in general; (c) teacher evaluation approaches and adult learning theory and connections to teacher performance and instructional improvement.

While the impact of change to the teacher evaluation process has been inconsistent, research has shown "… a critical link between effective teaching and students' academic achievement" (Mathers, & Oliva, 2008, p. 1). The evaluation process continues to be a high leverage and important vehicle for school improvement and should remain a focus of research and policy. A number of variables influence a child's achievement and learning in school; however, the most significant factor in a child's

success is his or her teacher (RAND Education, 2012). The important role that teachers play in the learning process is not a surprise, but the limited number of studies examining evaluation and feedback and the link to teacher practice and student achievement is somewhat limited (Peterson, 2000; Brandt, Mathers, Oliva, Brown-Sims & Hess, 2007).

While the pool of research on teacher evaluation continues to grow, it is important to examine available research on current evaluation approaches and their strengths and limitations. The following investigates current research studies on teacher evaluation and feedback.

Literature Search Strategy

Search terms and topics. The research question references a number of terms used in electronic searches for this capstone, including: 'models,' 'teacher evaluation,' 'teacher feedback,' 'impact,' 'instructional practice,' and 'student outcomes.' In addition to these terms, the researcher considers synonyms or alternative phrasing that might be used, shown in the following chart.

Research Question Term	Relevant Alternatives
Approaches	Model, Framework
Evaluation	Observation, Rating, Assessment
Feedback	Critique, Suggestions
Instructional practice	Teaching, pedagogy, instructional strategies
Student outcomes	Value-added, student results, student growth, student achievement
Impact	Change, Alter, Transform
Teacher	Educator

Limitations. This paper examines current models of teacher evaluation; therefore, the search is focused on research conducted within the last fifteen years. Additionally, only studies in English (or transcribed in English) are used. The vast majority of journals and books are accessible through the University of Virginia Library and open source; a few resources provided limited access (i.e., *Harvard Education Review*) based on the university library subscription.

Types of studies included. The majority of articles used in this paper are from peer-reviewed journals, including individual research studies, meta-analysis, and literature reviews. Books and textbooks when applicable and available are also included.

Databases and search engines. Google Scholar and EBSCO are the primary databases used to search for journals and applicable resources. Google now allows researchers to link their university library to the Google Scholar search engine to quickly access full text articles that may not be available through the open source system. In Google Scholar, one additional important feature is the 'cited by' link; clicking on 'cited by' provides a list of articles that cited a particular study and the articles are sorted from most to least cited so researchers are able to quickly identify highly influential studies that are important to include on the topic. This feature of Google Scholar facilitates 'piggybacking' on important studies to identify articles that may not be found by simply using key words and search terms (but are still highly relevant), thus reducing the likelihood of missing an important study. One additional use of 'piggybacking' is examining the references of critical works that have been identified. The reference list of influential and important studies is scanned for additional relevant resources. The third search engine used is What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), which reviews and assesses

current research on a variety of education-based topics. The WWC also houses in-progress studies, white papers, and surveys that can provide additional timely insight on the topic.

Organizing the Literature

The search strategy has been described above; however, possibly more important is how information is collected, analyzed, and organized. In order to organize the literature for this paper a table was created that would allow for efficient recording of important information on an article that later could be retrieved quickly. An example of text organization is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Text Organization

Article Citation	Link	Citations	Summary	Question addressed	Quotes/ Specific Notes
Danielson, C. (2011). Evaluations that help teachers learn. *Educational Leadership*, 68(4), 35-39.	Link	140	"A good system of teacher evaluation must answer four questions: How good is good enough? Good enough at what? How do we know? and Who should decide?"	#1 and #3	- Focus on specific framework of teaching - Common expectations for good teaching - Findings from Chicago Study suggesting positive outcomes with use of Danielson Framework for Teaching

Once the search strategy was applied and a potential study was identified, the abstract and conclusion of the study were reviewed to determine whether the article should be included. When scanning potential literature, the focus questions for this paper

(What is the impact of the teacher evaluation and feedback process on teacher practice and/or student achievement? What models of teacher evaluation and feedback are currently in use? Do particular approaches to teacher evaluation and feedback result in better outcomes for students and teachers?) was used to determine relevance and guide inclusion. The literature review is organized with an overview of policies impacting teacher evaluation and models of teacher evaluation, followed by a review of prominent studies done on approaches to teacher evaluation. The second part of the literature review focuses on challenges to teacher evaluation and adult learning theory.

Policies Impacting Teacher Evaluation

Two policy decisions had a substantive impact on recent teacher evaluation reform. The first, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), was signed into law in 2002. The NCLB required states to implement systems of accountability, including annual testing of student proficiency, as well as both sanctions and rewards for schools based on student performance. This increased accountability also trickled down to teacher evaluations (Dee & Jacob, 2010). Following the NCLB was the Race-to-the-Top program that came out of the Obama administration and added additional accountability measures, including linking teacher evaluation and student performance. This change resulted in many states modifying tenure laws in order to connect teacher evaluations with student performance (Baker, Oluwole, & Green, 2013). "Arizona, for example, uses a range approach for the weight given to student performance; specifically, the state requires that anywhere between 35% to 50% of teachers' evaluations must be based on student performance data" (Baker et al., 2013, p.3). In other states (e.g., Colorado, Florida, and Idaho) it is a

requirement that student performance make up 50% of the teacher evaluation at a minimum (Baker et al., 2013).

These policy changes also led states to examine current evaluation methods and explore options that would better align with the policy focus of increased accountability. When states started to shift in their understanding and implementation of different approaches to teacher evaluation it provided opportunities for consultants, researchers, policy and educational leaders, among others, to suggest and develop new and more objective ways of evaluating educators (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009). State and district responsibility for most educational decisions in the United States has created an environment in which there is very little consistency in evaluations across a particular state and, more broadly, the country. The varied approaches to evaluations across districts and states create some challenges in terms of evaluating effectiveness and generalizing findings. However, it also provides opportunities to examine the impact of a number of different approaches on a smaller scale.

More recently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that replaced NCLB in 2015, significantly reduced federal involvement in teacher evaluation; there is no longer a requirement to include student test scores in teacher evaluations. The accountability measures for the teacher evaluation process have been delegated to the state level (Sawchuck, 2016). "New York officials last month approved plans to delay for four years the tethering of test scores to teacher evaluation" (Sawchuck, 2016, p. 3). While some states quickly removed or reduced the impact of student test scores on evaluations (New York, Oklahoma) other states (e.g., New Mexico and North Carolina) intend to maintain student achievement scores as an important part of the teacher evaluation

process (Sawchuck, 2016). The overall impact of ESSA on teacher evaluation and how individual states will respond to less oversight from the federal government remains to be seen.

Teacher Evaluation Approaches

There are two primary approaches to teacher evaluation that are currently in use in some form or another (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Papay, 2012): standards based or rubric models (i.e., Danielson, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005; Tucker & Stronge, 2005; La Paro & Pianta, 2003) and value-added measures (VAM), which focus on student achievement scores and student growth (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Within both of these models are additional components that are often included as part of a comprehensive evaluation system. A few of the components are portfolios or evidence logs (demonstrating teacher and/or student work), goal setting, and self-reflection. In Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, for example, the evaluation model includes a standards-based classroom observation rubric (Stronge, 2012), a goal setting component, a student achievement measure, and a document log or portfolio to collect evidence linked to teacher proficiency standards (FCPS, 2012). In all the teacher evaluation studies examined in this paper and identified through research, classroom observations are a consistent component of the evaluation process. A brief overview of the two primary approaches to teacher evaluation follow.

Standards Based

A number of different standards-based (or rubric-based) evaluation approaches are being used in districts across the country. A few of the more prominent authors of these models include those developed by Stronge (2005), Danielson (2007), Pianta

(2003), and Marzano (2005). The idea behind standards-based evaluations is to communicate clear expectations to teachers about what they are expected to do and how they will be evaluated. The standards form the basis for conversations about instructional improvement and encompass instructional, collaborative, and professional development expectations (Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

One example of how the standards convey expectations concerns the level of questioning teachers use with their students. A teacher may ask simple yes or no, or recall questions that require little thinking on the part of a student; this type of questioning might fall into the ineffective or developing category. A different teacher may ask open-ended questions pushing their students to think deeply about a topic; for example, a question requiring students to evaluate or compare two concepts. This type of questioning might fall into the effective or highly effective range (Stronge, 2012; Danielson, 2007).

Within these rubrics are a set of standards. The established standards are research based, the number of standards varies by the evaluation model, but in general, the standards encompass the following pieces: teacher knowledge, planning, instruction, classroom environment, assessment, professionalism (i.e., professional development and collaboration with colleagues) and student progress (or student achievement) (Danielson, 2007; Stronge, 2012). The standards-based evaluation system is one of the more common approaches to teacher evaluation (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2005).

In one study, Kimball, Milanowski, & White (2004) examined the relationship between standards-based evaluations of teachers and student achievement. The authors

21

focused on three school organizations that implemented standards-based teacher evaluations systems, which included: Cincinnati (Ohio) Public Schools, Vaughn Next Century Learning Center (a charter school in Los Angeles, California), and the Washoe County (Nevada) School District (Kimball et al., 2004). Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching was utilized in two of the organizations and was a major resource for setting the foundation of the standards-based approach in the third. The authors examined teachers' evaluation scores compared to student achievement on norm-referenced tests for students in third, fourth, and fifth grade (Kimball et al., 2004).

This study had high level access to data including teacher evaluation data, student assessment scores, and both teacher and student characteristics in the three organizations that were examined. There were more than 12,000 students who were initially part of the study and 328 teachers.

One of the limitations of this study was missing test scores and assessment data for many students, which resulted in second and eighth grade not being included in the results. This study also focused on elementary and middle schools and did not examine high schools because of challenges with grading, so it is unclear how this would translate to the high school level. The validity of evaluators' scores on teacher evaluations is also a potential limitation. Additionally, the study includes only data from one year, "which yielded tentative conclusions about the value added from a teacher's individual performance" (Kimball et al., 2004).

In language arts and math positive correlations were found between teacher evaluation scores and student achievement. The authors argue that "standards-based teacher evaluation systems provide both incentives and guidance for teachers to change

22

their practice toward the model embodied in the standards" (Kimball et al., 2004, p. 2). The results of this study suggest a standards-based evaluation system can have a positive impact on student achievement.

Value-Added Models (VAM)

The Value-Added Models of evaluation utilize statistical models to compute growth in student achievement (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2007). The intent of Value-Added Models or (VAM) is to use achievement data on standardized tests to predict expected student growth and compare that with actual student growth (Darling-Hammond, 2015). For example, the score of a student in 3rd grade would be used as a baseline of performance and compared with the score at the end of 4th grade; the growth or regression in performance would be used to determine teacher effectiveness.

In some VAM models, this approach compares a beginning of year pre-assessment and end of year post-assessment; other VAM protocols look at the performance of students on statewide standardized tests in the grade level before and compare that with the achievement in the current grade level (Darling-Hammond, 2015). If students perform better than expected the teacher is viewed as being effective or highly effective and if students perform poorly or regresses the teacher might be identified as ineffective or needs improvement (Little, Goe, & Bell, 2009).

Some VAM systems account for a variety of factors within the model, including subgroup (gender, race) and socioeconomic status and others simply compare achievement across years (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2007). The proponents of VAM argue it is an objective measure that clearly links how successful teachers are in promoting student achievement and growth (Hershberg, Simon, & Lea-

Kruger, 2004; Sanders, 2000). Others point to the mixed results from VAM studies and suggest that we do not yet know enough about the models to make informed decisions about teaching and learning (Little, Goe & Bell, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2012).

Additional Components of a Comprehensive Evaluation System

While the standards-based rubrics and value-added data are at the core of the evaluation cycle where they are being utilized, other components are often included in a comprehensive teacher evaluation system. The Center for Public Education reported that forty-one states now require or strongly recommend multiple measures for evaluating teachers (Hull, 2013). "Successful systems use multiple classroom observations, expert evaluators, multiple sources of data, are timely, and provide meaningful feedback to the teacher" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012, p. 14). Portfolios or evidence logs, teacher self-assessment, and goal setting are some of the additional components that make up a comprehensive teacher evaluation system.

Portfolios and evidence logs. This evaluation component looks at various pieces of evidence to demonstrate proficiency in teaching and learning. The pieces of evidence or artifacts are often linked to a rubric focused around standards of teaching. A few examples of items that teachers may include in their portfolios: lesson plans, student work samples, assessments or sample of feedback given to students, video of classroom instruction, documentation of professional learning, or an explanation of their classroom management approach. This evidence is often used in conjunction with classroom observations to form a more well-rounded view of a teacher (Mathers, Olivia, & Laine, 2008).

One of the benefits of this approach is its ability to promote self-reflection on the

part of teachers and to allow "… evaluators to identify teachers' instructional strengths and weaknesses, and encourage ongoing professional growth" (Mathers, Olivia, & Laine, 2008, p. 6). It also enables evaluators to see things that they may not be able to see during a short classroom visit and provide feedback on areas such as assessment, which might not be visible during the observation. The challenge of a portfolio or evidence log is that it is time consuming for teachers as well as for those evaluating the portfolio and providing feedback (Attinello et al., 2006). There was concern noted from both teachers and administrators that portfolios may provide an inaccurate picture of a teacher; an ineffective teacher could produce a great portfolio and a great teacher could produce a mediocre portfolio (Attinello et al., 2006; Tucker et al., 2002).

Attinello, Lare, & Waters (2006) looked at the value of a portfolio-based teacher evaluation system in a school district of approximately 20,000 students and 1,750 staff. This district has used a portfolio-based teacher evaluation system for four years. This descriptive study utilized surveys developed by Tucker, Stronge, & Gareis (2002) to collect quantitative and qualitative data on teacher and administrator perceptions of the portfolio evaluation process, specifically, whether they felt the process was valuable. The response rates for surveys was 63.4% for teachers and 70.8% for administrators. In addition, the study held focus groups at schools based on the number of interested participants, with a total of fourteen personal interviews (ten teachers and four administrators). The quantitative data was averaged to create ratings for each item on the teacher and administrator surveys. The authors also used a multivariate analysis of variance to study multiple dependent variables "… while controlling for the correlations among them" (Attinello et al., 2006, p. 139).

This study found that teachers and administrators, in general, believe that portfolios were more accurate and comprehensive than singular classroom observations. In addition, the portfolio was viewed as a tool that could provide context and insight that might not be visible through a traditional classroom observation. Teachers and administrators both viewed the portfolio process as encouraging reflection and identifying strengths and areas of growth. As with most studies involving portfolios, the primary concern was the issue of time; time to put the portfolio together and maintain and update it throughout the year. Finally, this study revealed both teachers and administrators, on average, believed that the portfolio process had a positive impact on teaching practices (Attinello et al., 2006).

Goal setting and self-assessment. Goal setting is a process that is often linked to student achievement and growth. However, in most cases, the data used in goal setting is identified by the teacher, and often, too, is the measure of success. In most examples of goal setting teachers look at and review data on their students at the beginning of the year, then identify an area of focus (or two), create an objective, determine how they will assess progress, and after approval from an administrator, collect evidence on student progress toward the goal (Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

Some of the benefits of the goal setting and self-assessment process identified by Tucker & Stronge (2005) include use of formative assessments to check on progress, interventions for students not making progress, and regularly checking in to determine mastery of concepts. Challenges highlighted with goal setting include added stress if students are not making adequate progress toward goals, which can be time consuming to create, monitor, and document goals for teachers (Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

The Challenges of Teacher Evaluations

As discussed previously, teacher evaluations look quite different from years past; the process has moved from a subjective narrative, to a reflective model, to checklists and more recently, rubrics, student growth measures, portfolios, and goal setting (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). But while the look of evaluations has changed, the impact these changes have had on teacher practice and student achievement is unclear (Weisberg et al., 2009; Stetcher et al., 2018). While changes to the evaluation process have the potential to positively impact teaching and learning, implementing a meaningful evaluation model presents several challenges. A few of these challenges include: difficulty distinguishing between effective and ineffective teachers; lack of consensus on the characteristics of an effective teacher; lack of a consistent evaluation method; and difficulty providing critical and actionable feedback (Cruickshank & Haefele, 1990; Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008; Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012). Two of these challenges link back to the dual purpose of teacher evaluation (accountability and growth): the inability of evaluation systems to consistently distinguish between effective and ineffective teachers and consistent teacher growth, and improvement through the observation and feedback process.

Distinguishing between ineffective and effective teachers. One of the two primary objectives in the teacher evaluation process is accountability, or the ability to distinguish between ineffective and effective teachers. However, when we examine how accountability has been impacted by changes to the evaluation system, the 2009 study *The Widget Effect* found that despite changes to teacher evaluations the vast majority of teachers continued to be rated as effective or highly effective and a very small percentage

(less than one percent) were rated as ineffective (Weisberg et al., 2009). Kraft &

Gilmour (2017) recently revisited these findings and also concluded that the percentage

of teachers rated as unsatisfactory remains less than one percent; however, they did find

significant variations across states. Additionally, the study found in interviews that

principals believed there were three times as many ineffective teachers in their schools

compared with the actual number they rated as ineffective through the evaluation process

(Kraft & Gilmour, 2017).

The reluctance or fear of providing negative or constructive feedback because of

school climate, union concerns, or fear of confrontation is a significant obstacle to

distinguishing between effective and ineffective teachers (Tucker, 1997; Kersten &

Israel, 2005). The investment of time in the evaluation process, in addition to a myriad of

other administrative duties, often creates a disincentive or deterrent for administrators

when it comes to addressing ineffective teachers (McGrath, 2000; Kersten & Israel,

2005). "… building-level administrators believe that they do not have adequate time

available to devote to teacher evaluation particularly since their teacher evaluation

processes are time intensive and difficult to implement given the other demands of school

administration" (Kersten & Israel, 2005, p. 57).

Distinguishing between ineffective and effective educators and navigating time

constraints (McGrath, 2000; Kersten & Israel, 2005) and building climate concerns

(Tucker, 1997; Kersten & Israel, 2005) is a challenge; supporting teacher growth and

improvement is an equal, if not greater, challenge (Lane, 2019).

The challenge of impacting teacher improvement and growth. In addition to

the challenge of distinguishing between effective and ineffective teachers, the leaders'

ability to engender growth within the evaluation context is equally challenging. This particular challenge is the focus of this study.

How teacher evaluation processes have impacted teacher growth and improvement remains difficult to quantify. In one study, Lane (2019) found that "all teachers doubted the connection between the observation protocol and earning a high relative evaluation score" (p. 22). Lane (2019) also found several other prevailing beliefs among teachers:

- High scores on the evaluation rubric do not require educational excellence

- You can spend energy on getting a high evaluation scores even if you are actually neglecting what you need to do to improve your instruction

- You can make lesson tweaks to satisfy the needs of your principal in order to get a higher score.

Stronge (2005) argues that the teacher evaluation cycle is critical to instructional improvement and growth; however, the impact of the evaluation cycle, as it relates to teacher growth, is reliant on the effectiveness, knowledge, and expertise of the evaluator. "A meaningful evaluation focuses on instructional quality and professional standards, and through this focus and timely feedback, enables teachers and leaders to recognize, appreciate, value, and develop excellent teaching" (Stronge, 2012, p. 7). While there are several components to the evaluation process that can impact teacher improvement, feedback is arguably the most important (Stronge, 2006; Goe, 2013; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2014).

Feedback in teacher evaluation. As a core component of most teacher evaluation systems, feedback should aim to improve instructional practice and promote

teacher growth (Feeney, 2007). Additionally, feedback should foster reflection and engage teachers in the process of considering possible changes to professional practice (Glickman, 2002). When meaningful feedback is given to teachers based on observations it has shown positive correlations to teacher growth and increased student achievement (Kimball et al., 2004; Taylor & Tyler, 2012).

One of the inherent challenges with feedback in the evaluation process is the variability of the tools and with those implementing the evaluations (Stronge, 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). There is also the challenge of differentiating feedback based on individual teacher needs; while some teachers prefer a clear road map or directive on how to improve, others prefer a coaching dialogue with options and choices that can allow them to take ownership over the learning (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2014).

Drago-Severson, Blum-DeStefano, & Ashgar (2013) identified critical preconditions to teacher growth which include trust, respect, and safety. In order for teachers to be open during the feedback process it is important that a climate of trust, respect, and safety has been established (Wheatley, 2005; Drago-Severson et al., 2013).

Quality feedback is important and it has the potential to improve teaching and learning, but it is not a consistently effective part of the teacher evaluation process (Weisberg et al., 2009). In a study of twelve large American school districts, only one in four teachers reported that they received any specific feedback to improve their performance on their evaluation (Weisberg et al., 2009).

The concerns of the HR director in Chase Township Public Schools mirrored the results of the 2009 report, *The Widget Effect*. The HR director stated that despite

numerous hours spent on the evaluation process, it rarely resulted in meaningful changes to instruction (Director, HR, Personal Interview, March 13, 2019). This issue is not unique to CTPS, and while teacher growth has been a focus of many of the reforms to teacher evaluation, the impact on instruction has been inconsistent.

Conclusion

There are certainly different ways to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers, a few of which have been examined above. The challenge faced in education is not simply labeling teachers as 'effective' or 'highly effective' or even 'ineffective,' but identifying the specific actions and activities great teachers do that positively impact students and providing specific feedback to teachers based on their area of need or weakness. This fulfills the promise and true purpose of teacher evaluation. Teasing out these characteristics and practices is incredibly difficult because there are so many factors that can impact a child's learning:

- Family life

- Socio-economic status

- Peer groups/classroom composition

- Before/after school supports

- School climate

- Available school resources

- Learning or behavioral needs and deficits

- School teacher supports (reading teacher, math specialist, instructional coach, etc.)

- Aligned curriculum (Hattie, 2012).

When we consider approaches of teacher evaluation that encompass portfolios, value-added measures, self-reflections, and goal setting, they often reveal important information and opportunities for teacher growth, but they don't include a flow chart with clear directions on what to do next. In each of these evaluation tools there are pros, cons, and limitations, and similar to most tools, they are only as effective as the individuals using them (Stronge, 2005).

The Challenges in Teacher Evaluation

Though there are a number of challenges within teacher evaluation, arguably the two most significant challenges connect to the dual purpose of the evaluation system: accountability and growth. Identifying effective and ineffective educators is the accountability challenge. Time constraints, reluctance to provide critical feedback or jeopardize relationships, and building climate all contribute to the difficulty in distinguishing between effective and ineffective educators (Tucker, 1997; McGrath, 2000; Kersten & Israel, 2005).

If an administrator is able to distinguish between effective and ineffective, the next challenge is supporting the teacher's improvement and growth. This is largely accomplished through the observation and feedback process, but it is not without challenges, including trust between the teacher and administrator, expertise and knowledge of the administrator, as well as providing meaningful, timely, and specific feedback that is differentiated based on the teacher's needs (Stronge, 2006; Goe, 2013; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2014; Lane, 2019).

In examining the research on teacher evaluation approaches, there did not appear to be concrete evidence that one system was significantly superior or more effective than

the others. To date, there has also been a void in the research in terms of a

comprehensive study comparing systems of teacher evaluation and their effectiveness.

There is agreement, however, on the importance of timely and quality feedback as an

important part of the teacher evaluation process, especially as it relates to teacher

improvement and growth (Stronge, 2006; Goe, 2013; Drago-Severson & Blum-

DeStefano, 2014).

  This first part of the literature review has looked at current research on teacher

evaluation approaches, reforms to the teacher evaluation process, and challenges with

teacher evaluation. It is important to understand the ways the teacher evaluation process

has changed so that we can better understand how these changes are viewed through the

eyes of impacted stakeholders (teachers/principals). Adult Learning theory and how it

connects to changes in the teacher evaluation process is explored in the literature review.

Adult Learning Theory

  The researcher hypothesizes that if one of the primary objectives of teacher

evaluation is to improve teacher practice (Duke, 1990; Stronge, 1995; Danielson, 2011),

embedding principles of adult learning theory research in the teacher evaluation process

may improve the likelihood of achieving this objective. The following provides a brief

timeline of adult learning theory research from the first book published on adult learning

in 1928 to the recent work of Drago-Severson, which examines different ways adults

learn or their ways of knowing. The work of Kegan and Drago-Severson and the

Constructive Development Theory of adult learning provides the lens for this study as the

conceptual framework and is further discussed in the methodology chapter.

  Adult learning theory began as a question of whether adults could learn; this

question was the primary focus of adult learning research in the early twentieth century (Merriam, 2001). "The first book to report the results of this topic, Thorndike, Breman, Tilton, and Woodyard's *Adult Learning* (1928), was published just two years after the founding of adult education as a professional field of practice" (Merriam, 2001, p. 3). The majority of adult educators relied on research from the fields of psychology and educational psychology to guide adult learning through the middle of the twentieth century (Merriam, 2001). The focus of research through the 1950s continued to be whether adults could learn and how they compared to children; in the majority of research adults and children were tested under the same conditions and their results were compared (Merriam, 2001).

Once the question of whether adults could learn was answered in the affirmative, research began to shift toward examining what was different about the way adults learn (Merriam, 2004). "Thus the drive to professionalize, which included the need to develop a knowledge base unique to adult education, was the context in which two of the field's most important theory-building efforts — andragogy and self-directed learning — emerged" (Merriam, p. 4, 2001).

Andragogy: The Art and Science of Helping Adults Learn

In 1968 Malcolm Knowles distinguished between pedagogy, helping children to learn, and andragogy, which he defined as the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1968). Knowles (1984) identified six core assumptions or principles of adult learning theory:

1. Adults are internally motivated and self-directed

2. Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to their learning

3. Adults are goal oriented

4. Adults need to know why they need to learn something

5. Adults want to learn content that is relevant to their lives and work

6. Adult learners like to be respected in the learning environment

Knowles went on to acknowledge that his research on adult learning was not necessarily a theory but "… assumptions about learning or a conceptual framework that serves as a basis for an emergent theory" (Knowles, 1989, p. 112).

Criticism of andragogy. One of the primary criticisms of Knowles' assumptions about adult learning is that the assumptions were linked only to adult learners. "Some adults are highly dependent on a teacher for structure, while some children are independent, self-directed learners. The same is true for motivation" (Merriam, 2001, p. 5). Others argued that in certain cases life experiences may actually hinder learning as it could skew or prevent learners from being open to a different way of thinking (Merriam, Mott, & Lee, 1996). Additionally, "… adults are not necessarily more experienced because they have lived longer" (Hanson, 1996, p. 99). These criticisms led Knowles to move away from the dichotomy of adult vs. child and toward a learning continuum from teacher-directed to student-directed within which children and adults could fall in a given situation (Knowles, 1984).

Self-Directed Learning

"Self-directed learning may well be the most prominent and well researched topic in the field of adult education" (Garrison, 1997, p. 19). The early research on self-directed learning was led by Tough (1971), which built on the work of Houle (1961). Tough "… studied and described the self-planned learning projects of sixty-six

Canadians (Merriam, 2001, p. 8). Tough found that most adults (90%) engage in self-directed learning in their everyday lives through various projects; these projects were systematic and did not require a teacher or classroom environment (Tough, 1971). A few examples of these projects include teaching oneself to play an instrument, building a piece of furniture, or putting in a tile floor. Self-directed learning, at its core, is planned, evaluated, and led by the learner (Knowles, 1975); about 70 percent of adult learning is self-directed (Cross, 1981).

Constructive Development Theory

Building off of Knowles' work, Kegan (1982, 1994) examined adult learning through the lens of how humans grow and change over the course of their lives; specifically, how they construct meaning and how that develops and becomes more complex over time.

Subject-Object Balance

Kegan (1982) found that the way a person's constructs meaning is derived from the balance between what we can control or have perspective on — object — and what we cannot change — subject (i.e. an assumption or belief that we do not question). "We cannot be responsible for, in control of, or reflect upon that which is subject" (Kegan, 1994, p. 32).

In addition to the object-subject balance, Kegan (1994) identified five stages of adult development that impact our ability to learn and make meaning; these stages include: impulsive mind (early childhood); imperial mind (adolescence); socialized mind (58% of the population); self-authoring mind (35% of population); and self-transforming mind (one percent of population). These stages of development or orders of the mind are

not static; people can, and do, move between different stages based on the task, situation, life experiences, education, and other factors (Kegan, 1994). In order to move between these stages of development, Kegan offered the idea of a holding environment (Kegan, 1982). The holding environment acts as a bridge between stages of development; it has the concurrent goal of supporting individuals in their current stage and helping to move them to a more advanced stage of development. Kegan later built off the work of orders of the mind and stages of development which evolved into the ways of knowing.

Ways of Knowing

The ways of knowing was originally developed by Kegan's work on adult development; later, Drago-Severson (2004, 2009, 2012, 2014) applied Kegan's ways of knowing to adult learning and specifically to educators, looking at professional development and feedback for growth. There are four ways of knowing that should be considered with adult learners: Instrumental, Socializing, Self-Authoring, and Self-Transforming (Drago-Severson, 2009).

Individuals who have an instrumental way of knowing believe that supervisors or principals know which goals will help them move forward (Drago-Severson, 2009). Instrumental knowers are best supported by explicit and specific feedback and suggestions and step-by-step support to help them complete the objective (Drago-Severson, 2009). "They want to know when given feedback, what they did right, and what they did wrong" (Drago-Severson, 2014, p. 18).

Socializing knowers have more complex internal development capacities for reflection and are able to think more abstractly. They understand which goals are best for them when presented with options and they like to feel valued by supervisors (Drago-

Severson, 2009). A person who has a socializing way of knowing is other focused and often views interpersonal conflict as a threat. "… it may be helpful to understand that giving feedback — especially critical feedback — can be difficult for socializing knowers, as conflict is experienced as a threat to one's very self" (Drago-Severson, 2014, p. 20).

Self-authoring knowers have a strong internal value and belief system that guides them and they like to decide for themselves what they are doing well and where they should improve (Drago-Severson, 2009). "In a feedback exchange, self-authoring knowers value opportunities to voice their own opinions, offer suggestions and critiques, and formulate their own goals" (Drago-Severson, 2014, p. 20). Self-authoring individuals have the ability to prioritize and reflect on learning; however, they may have some difficulty accepting ideas and feedback especially when it is in contrast to their own belief system (Drago-Severson, 2009).

The fourth way of knowing, self-transforming, is far less common at approximately nine–ten percent of the population in the U.S. (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). "Adults with a self-transforming way of knowing are more open to others' points of view, standards, ideologies, and beliefs (Drago-Severson, 2014, p. 21). These individuals appreciate when they can work collaboratively and explore alternative approaches and practices (Drago-Severson, 2009).

Drago-Severson (2004, 2009, 2012) suggests that differentiating feedback and professional development based on an individual's way of knowing would provide support for the individual and result in the best chance at a positive outcome.

Connecting Adult Learning Theory and Teacher Evaluation

Researchers have identified professional growth and improvement as one of the important goals in the teacher evaluation process (Duke, 1990; Stronge, 1995; Danielson & McGreal, 2000), yet as the aforementioned literature has revealed the impact on teacher effectiveness is both elusive and questionable. Similarly, adult learning theory research has been around for more than fifty years, the literature is scant on direct links between adult learning theory and teacher evaluation and the impact of both of these areas on teacher growth and effectiveness. However, this researcher posits that aspects of the research emanating from ALT may address the challenges of the teacher evaluation process, most specifically the challenge of favorably impacting a teacher's growth within an evaluation process. While feedback has been a critical component of teacher evaluation reform, it has not resulted in significant gains in student achievement (Hallinger, Heck, & Murphy, 2014).

"The need to do feedback better is evident in the mixed results of current evaluation policies" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2014). One of Knowles' (1984) principles of adult learning theory is adult learners like to be respected in the learning environment; to that end, Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano (2014) apply the four ways of knowing to the observation and feedback process in order to intentionally differentiate "feedback so that adults, who make meaning in qualitatively different ways, can best hear it, learn from it, take it in, and improve their instructional and leadership practice." In differentiating the way feedback is delivered, it is more likely that an educator receiving feedback will find it supportive rather than threatening or confusing (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2014).

Research has shown that the majority of adults make meaning through one of the four ways of knowing: instrumental, socializing, self-authoring and self-transforming. When we tailor feedback to the way an adult makes meaning, we are better able to support teacher growth (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2014).

The ways of knowing are important in understanding the way in which an adult learner makes meaning, but how an adult learner is best supported is what Drago-Severson (2008) calls pillar practices. The pillar practices "take into account how a person makes meaning of her experience in order to grow from participation in them" (p.63). The pillars provide opportunities for adults to "collaborate and engage in dialogue and reflection as tools for professional and personal growth" (Drago-Severson, 2012, p. 147). The four pillar practices offered by Drago-Severson (2008) include teaming, leadership, collegial inquiry, and mentoring. The pillar practices can support growth in all adult learners regardless of their primary way of knowing; the practices center around collaboration and reflection (Drago-Severson, 2008). The four pillar practices are expanded next.

Teaming. Teaming is intentionally creating teacher teams throughout the school building. A few examples are grade level or department teams, literacy, math, or diversity — in some schools these are called committees, but the focus is on adult collaboration (Drago-Severson, 2008). The benefits of creating opportunities for teaming include capacity building by providing multiple leadership opportunities across the school, building trust through shared perspectives and decision making, and providing a space to question and challenge thinking among colleagues (Drago-Severson, 2008).

Providing leadership roles. Drago-Severson (2008) explains that providing

leadership roles is a practice that invites "teachers to share authority and ideas as

teachers, curriculum developers, or administrators as they collaboratively worked toward

building community, sharing leadership, and promoting change" (p. 62). It was reported

by principals and teachers that a focus on providing leadership roles led to additional

opportunities for transformational learning and helped school staff identify assumptions

they may have held about leadership roles (Drago-Severson, 2008).

Collegial inquiry. "Collegial inquiry is shared dialogue with the purpose of

helping people become more aware of their assumptions, beliefs, and convictions about

their work and those of colleagues" (Drago-Severson, 2008, p. 62). Collegial inquiry can

be used to engage adults in a variety of different settings and purposes; a few examples

include goal setting and decision-making, important school issues or challenges, and

conflict resolution (Drago-Severson, 2008). Collegial inquiry also "… provides adults

with opportunities to develop more complex perspectives through listening to and

learning from their own and others' perspectives" (Drago-Severson, 2008, p. 62).

When considering collegial inquiry through different ways of knowing, it is

important to understand that teachers will need different supports as this practice will

challenge teachers in very different ways. Drago-Severson (2008) provides the example

of a goal-setting conference with three different teachers — an instrumental, a

socializing, and a self-authoring knower. The instrumental knowers will assume the

supervisor knows the right goals and will likely not have ideas of their own. These

teachers could be supported by offering a menu of options and encouraging them to step

outside their comfort zone when selecting a goal. They may also benefit from some

coaching on how to map out a plan to achieve the goal. In contrast, socializing knowers

do have some ideas about goals, but they expect the administrator to know the best goal

for them so they may need support and encouragement to share their thinking and

coaching on which goal is the best fit. Finally, the self-authoring knowers have clear

goals in mind before meeting with the administrator, but they may need support in

looking more objectively at the goals they have generated and help in seeing the value of

other options (Drago-Severson, 2008).

     Mentoring. "Mentoring or coaching creates an opportunity for broadening

perspectives, examining assumptions, and sharing expertise and leadership and can be a

more private way to support adult development" (Drago-Severson, 2008, p. 63). In a

school setting one of the more common examples of mentoring is connecting a new

teacher with a strong experienced teacher. However, there are other purposes of

mentoring including improving instructional practice and knowledge, understanding

school culture and climate, and emotional support (Drago-Severson, 2008). When there

is a good fit between the mentor and mentee both parties can benefit and grow (Drago-

Severson, 2008).

     Pillar practices. The different ways of knowing for adult learners necessitate

differentiated supports within the four pillar practices. The way an instrumental knower

experiences teaming compared to a self-authoring knower is very different; however,

when the right supports are offered all knowers can grow and benefit from engaging in

the pillar practices (Drago-Severson, 2008). In understanding the ways of knowing for

teachers, school administrators are better able to help staff grow by providing appropriate

supports so that teachers can engage in pillar practices focused on collaboration and

reflection. The ways of knowing also impact both how we give and how we receive feedback and therefore, something that school administrators should consider (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016). "Understanding these differences, and their strengths and potential limitations, can help us enrich our own propensities for giving feedback so that colleagues can best take in and learn from it" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p. 119).

Research-based Feedback Strategies

Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2016) identified ten takeaways from research and literature on feedback. The ten feedback takeaways include:

1. Individualize feedback for the receiver.

2. Offer specific, focused feedback.

3. Keep feedback objective and nonjudgmental.

4. Maintain a positive, compassionate focus during feedback and other communication.

5. Give feedback sensitively and within the confines of safe contexts and relationships.

6. Make feedback regular and ongoing.

7. Be consistent.

8. Offer feedback in a timely manner.

9. Follow up on feedback.

10. Provide feedback recipients with opportunities to respond, reflect, and contribute

    (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016).

The highlighted feedback strategies are based on "… research from the Gates, Carnegie, and Wallace Foundations, as well as the work of leading scholars such as Danielson, Linda Darling-Hammond, DuFour, John Hattie, Marshall, and Marzano" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p. 26). The following will provide a brief overview of each of the ten feedback strategies.

Individualize feedback for the receiver. The term differentiation has been a buzz word in education for many years; in the classroom, differentiation means individualizing instruction based on student needs. This feedback strategy is differentiating the feedback process for teachers based on their needs and personalities. The feedback process might look different based on the developmental orientation (or ways of knowing) of the teacher (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016).

Offer specific, focused feedback. Feedback that is direct, has clear expectations, and includes concrete examples and data can help ensure that the most important feedback stays at the forefront and helps avoid overwhelming a teacher with too much information (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016).

Keep feedback objective and nonjudgmental. To the extent possible, assumptions and judgments should be avoided when providing feedback. Utilizing multiple data points can also help with validity of the observation. However, "… data is never truly value-neutral" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p.27); observations will typically focus on what the observer feels is most important.

Maintain a positive, compassionate focus during feedback and other communication. "This approach is not about making people feel good through empty platitudes. Rather, it involves offering genuinely constructive feedback in affirming

ways so that recipients can take it in and hear it more effectively (Drago-Severson &
Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p. 28).

**Give feedback sensitively, and within the confines of safe contexts and
relationships.** The way that the feedback is delivered is just as important as the feedback
itself. Administrators have to provide a safe environment and respond appropriately,
especially if and when things become emotional. Establishing trust is a significant
component of creating an environment where feedback can be seen as supportive and not
as a threat (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016).

Make feedback regular and ongoing. The research suggests that "authentic
communications, frequent check-ins, and multiple opportunities to learn and grow"
(Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p.29) is more effective and more often
results in improved teacher practice.

Be consistent. When administrators are consistent and stay on message it helps
to establish trust and it creates a feeling of safety during formative and summative
conversations. When you have a consistent approach, use consistent language and stay
on message; it helps keep the focus on the learning (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano,
2016).

Offer feedback in a timely manner. When feedback is delayed it can become
more difficult for teachers to remember back to specific aspects of the lesson and to make
connections and reflect on the feedback. Providing feedback in a timely manner "…
while the experience is still fresh, can be a powerful support and motivator" (Drago-
Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p. 30).

Follow up on feedback. Providing meaningful feedback is important, but it is equally important to follow up to check on progress toward the goals discussed during the feedback conference and provide additional support where needed (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016).

Provide feedback recipients with opportunities to respond, reflect, and contribute. "Scholars and practitioners alike emphasize that recipients of feedback need opportunities to respond, reflect, and refocus future actions and directions collaboratively and with some self-direction" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p.30). The feedback process should not be one-sided; some of the most significant learning occurs during self-reflection and many times teachers have already identified ways to change and improve their instructional practice based on the feedback (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016).

Summary of Feedback Strategies

Utilizing these ten research-based feedback strategies may help contribute to a more positive and productive feedback process. When these strategies are used in concert with differentiating based on an individual's developmental way of knowing, teachers are put in the position to succeed and grow (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016).

Summary of Adult Learning

Adult learning theory has moved from a question about whether adults could learn, to overarching assumptions and principles of adult learning, to a consideration of the perspective situation (subject-object) and an understanding that adults, like children, are individuals who learn in different ways. More recently, Drago-Severson has focused

her work on educators, specifically applying constructive development theory to feedback conversations between principals and teachers and teacher professional development. Two areas of Drago-Severson's work, if addressed by leaders, may favorably impact the teacher evaluation process; pillars of practice and her synthesis of feedback strategies is the basis for the conceptual framework as the alignment with teacher evaluation and adult learning is examined.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology and research design that was used to answer the research questions posed in Chapter one. Chapter three begins with the conceptual framework and the research questions. Research design and data collection and sources follow.

Conceptual Framework

The researcher hypothesized that teacher evaluation might be improved if practices were more deeply rooted in adult learning theory, more specifically, research-based approaches to providing feedback for adults. As discussed in the preceding chapters, teacher evaluation approaches often miss the mark in terms of teacher growth. Adult learning theory holds some promise in this area, particularly in providing meaningful and actionable feedback that is differentiated for individual teachers. This study examined stakeholder perceptions of the teacher evaluation process. Teacher evaluation requires an investment of time from both teachers and administrators and has the potential to have a positive impact on teacher practice and student outcomes (DeRoche, 1987; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Marzano, 2012). It is this potential impact that makes examining and improving this process such a critical exercise.

In Chapter two, relevant literature and research was shared on adult learning theory; the focus of this conceptual framework is the work of Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, which looked specifically at how feedback is delivered. Drago-Severson &

Blum-DeStefano (2014) posited that if leaders take account of the way that an adult learns and tailor feedback to match the needs of the learner it will strengthen relationships and improve performance.

Utilizing the *ten key takeaways from feedback literature* (Drago-Severson & Blum, 2014) to analyze the teacher evaluation process can help us understand in what ways the process is aligned with research on how adults learn and how we could make changes to better support educators in the future.

Therefore, the conceptual framework for this study was developed with the problem of practice in mind. Despite numerous attempts and best efforts to improve teacher evaluation, it is not having the expected impact when it comes to improving instruction, and subsequently, increasing student achievement. Foundational to the conceptual framework are the years of research on how adults learn best. From Knowles to Kegan, and more recently, the work of Drago-Severson — these leading experts in adult learning theory have studied and examined the most effective way adults learn and grow. If one of the primary objectives of teacher evaluation is to improve teacher practice, aligning the evaluation process with research-based practices in adult learning and feedback is critical.

Feedback in the teacher evaluation process is crucial to the improvement of teacher performance (Kraft & Gilmour, 2015). In focusing on feedback in the teacher evaluation process, this study narrowed the scope to highlight one of the highest leverage tools available for teacher growth and instructional improvement — feedback. Figure 1 illustrates the teacher evaluation process.
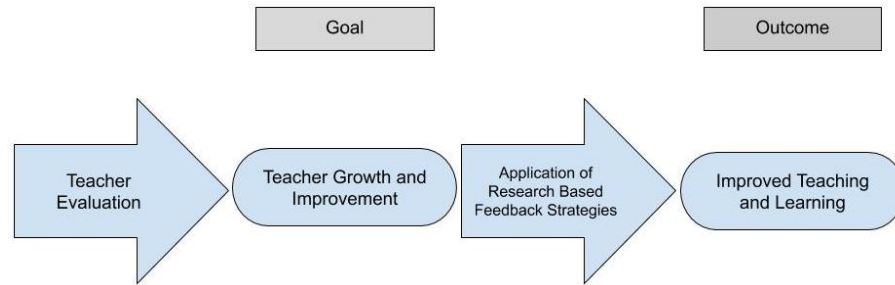
Figure 1. Teacher Evaluation Process

The Ten Key Takeaways from Feedback Literature (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016) was used as the lens for analysis of this study. The researcher examined the perceptions concerning the teacher evaluation process in Chase Township Public Schools and looked at how these connect to the ten feedback strategies identified by Drago-Severson and Blum-Stefano.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the current teacher evaluation process?

   a. What aspects of the evaluation process are regarded as most and least useful?

   b. Does the impact of teacher evaluation warrant the amount of time that is spent on the evaluation process?

   c. To what extent does the teacher evaluation process contribute to teacher growth?

   d. To what extent do teachers and administrators believe the evaluation process is effective in identifying effective and ineffective teachers?

2. To what extent do teachers and administrators believe the feedback received within teacher evaluation process in CTPS positively impacts teacher growth?

c) Do administrators believe they positively impact teacher practice through the current evaluation process?

d) Do teachers believe the evaluation process positively impacts their instructional practice?

3. What changes (if any) do teachers and administrators suggest that could improve the teacher evaluation process?

The first research question — *What is the nature of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the current teacher evaluation process?* — was designed to better understand how teachers and administrators feel about the current teacher evaluation process in Chase Township Public Schools. The quantity and quality of feedback, the value of the process, the required investment of time, the level of support and training provided was investigated. The goal was to understand the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the current evaluation system.

The second and primary research question of this study — *To what extent do teachers and administrators believe the teacher evaluation process in CTPS positively impacts teacher growth?*— was intended to assess if stakeholders believe that the evaluation process positively contributes to improving instructional practice. The answer to this question and how it connects to the application of research-based feedback strategies helped the researcher better understand the current impact of the teacher evaluation process and ways it may be improved, and ultimately investigate potential impact of employing the ten feedback strategies as a part of the teacher evaluation process.

While the primary research question focused on whether stakeholders believe the

evaluation process contributes to growth, question two looked specifically at the role of feedback: *How do you perceive the feedback that is given/received through the observation process?* This question aimed to understand teacher and administrator perceptions of feedback in the evaluation process. Is the feedback individualized, specific, nonjudgmental, regular and ongoing? Is it a positive and safe experience? (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016).

Finally, as the researcher surveyed and interviewed the primary stakeholders in the evaluation process (teachers and administrators), it was important that the researcher heard their input on how they believe the evaluation process may be improved. Not asking that question would ignore the personal and lived experiences of stakeholders and potential ways the process can be changed for the better.

In order to answer these questions, this study conducted a survey that was sent to elementary certificated teachers in Chase Township Public Schools, as well as follow up semi-structured interviews of both teachers and administrators, to dig deeper into stakeholder experiences with teacher evaluation.

Research Design

This case study utilized a mixed-methods approach beginning with an online survey and followed by semi-structured interviews with a select group of participants. "A convergent parallel mixed methods design will be used, and it is a type of design in which qualitative and quantitative data are collected in parallel, analyzed separately, then merged" (Creswell, 2013). The rationale for a mixed-methods study is the need to (1) better explain quantitative results and (2) confirm quantitative results with qualitative experiences (Creswell, 2013). In Phase One of the study, a survey was sent to all

certificated staff in four of the elementary buildings in CTPS; a total of approximately 200 teachers were sent the survey. The survey primarily focused on the first two research questions which address perceptions about the teacher evaluation process in CTPS and perceptions about the impact of feedback within the evaluation process. The survey was relatively brief (40 questions) to encourage participation and completion of the survey. (See Appendix B.)

In Phase Two of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to uncover and understand the meaning behind teacher and administrator perceptions of the evaluation process and how it relates to teacher growth and improvement. Qualitative researchers are interested in the way an individual's perception influences engagement and how they make meaning from an experience (Merriam, 2009). Phase Two asked questions related to all three of the research questions, and more deeply investigated Research Question 3, which was an optional short answer question in Phase One. While the survey provided some broad strokes of teacher evaluation perceptions, the qualitative interviews allowed for a deeper understanding of individual experiences with teacher evaluation.

Following the survey, Phase Two of the research, which consisted of semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators, commenced. The volunteer approach was utilized first by asking participants of the survey if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview (Bergman, 2008). Those who responded in the affirmative to participating in a follow-up interview were sorted by school and then into two groups: upper and lower elementary teachers. A total of eight teacher participants were selected from these groupings including two teachers at each of the schools and a

mix of both upper (3–5) and lower (K–2) grade elementary teachers. The selection of teachers was not based on their survey selections.

Site Selection and Participants

This study took place in Chase Township Public Schools, a pseudonym for a suburban school district in the United States. The district has a total of eight schools, 5500 students, and approximately 700 certificated staff members. The study focused on the teachers and administrators in four of the districts five elementary schools which span from kindergarten through fifth grade. The schools in this district score in the high range when compared to average performance on state assessments and tall have a poverty rate under six percent.

In Phase One of the study, sampling was not used. The survey was sent to approximately two hundred certificated teaching staff in the four elementary schools.

In Phase Two, four administrators were selected with the goal of selecting one in each school as well as two teachers in each of the four school buildings for semi-structured interviews. This selection was first based on volunteering for participation on the survey and if needed, incentives, in the form of gift cards, would be provided. The study focused on only four of the elementary schools because of the researcher's leadership position within the district and the challenges of conducting unbiased interviews with staff working in the same school building.

Data Sources

The first source of data for this study was an online survey for teachers. The results of the survey helped to identify the way teachers feel about the evaluation process, and it allowed for some findings to be generalized across the district. The surveys were

confidential; respondents only needed to select their school building but were otherwise anonymous.

In addition to the online survey, semi-structured interviews were used with a group of four principals (one from each of the four schools) and eight teachers (two from each school) to dig deeper into the research questions.

Survey Design

The survey was designed to capture perceptions about the teacher evaluation process from teachers, including whether staff members found the process meaningful, which research-based feedback strategies were utilized (if any) and whether the process resulted in any perceived positive change(s) to instruction.

The survey instrument was created using questions developed from current research on feedback strategies (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016), as well as questions used from RAND Corporation's "A Nationwide Look at Teacher Perceptions of Feedback and Evaluation Systems" (2018). Every attempt was made to ensure that the survey was a valid instrument by following the three principles of effective survey questions: "keep it clear, keep it simple, and keep the respondent's perspective in mind" (Neuman, 2014, pp. 169–170).

The survey utilized Qualtrics as the survey medium and included a short paragraph explaining to the participants the purpose of the survey and ensuring they had a clear understanding of what their participation entailed.

There were a total of forty questions on the survey that included the following topics:

Block 1: How often feedback is provided?

Block 2: How helpful is feedback for improving instructional practice?

Block 3: Which research-based feedback strategies are employed during the evaluation process.

Block 4: Which components were included in the teacher evaluation process?

Block 5: Did the evaluation process help you become a better teacher?

Block 6: What is the purpose of teacher evaluation?

Block 7: Do you have appropriate resources to be successful?

Block 8: What suggestions do you have to improve teacher evaluation? (open ended/optional).

Semi-structured interviews. Following the survey, semi-structured interviews with principals and teachers in each of the schools was conducted. Interviews were recorded with participant consent and transcribed. The questions for the semi-structured interviews encompassed all of the research questions. Principals were not included in the survey so the semi-structured interview was critical to understanding their perspective on teacher evaluation. The interviews dug deeper into the research questions to better understand the 'why' behind both teacher and administrator perceptions of teacher evaluation.

Data Collection Process

This case study utilized both quantitative (online survey) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) instruments to collect data on the perceptions of school-based administrators and teachers as it pertains to the teacher evaluation process. The data collection happened in two parts. To gather general data from the teaching staff, a survey was conducted in December of 2020 and semi-structured interviews took place in late

January of 2021. A transcription service was utilized to transcribe the semi-structured

interviews.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was also conducted in two phases. In Phase One, the survey

was analyzed using descriptive statistics by identifying trends using "… modes, medians,

and frequencies" (Boone, H. N. & Boone, D. A., 2012). All the questions in the survey

utilized a Likert scale to indicate level of agreement with a statement, with the exception

of the final open-ended question. In the initial survey the researcher looked to see how

teachers perceive the teacher evaluation process. Do they believe it helps them become a

better teacher? Is the process worth the investment of time? Do teachers feel that

feedback is delivered using research-based strategies? This information informed Phase

Two of the study: semi-structured interviews.

The goal of Phase Two of the study was to understand more fully the perspectives

of both teachers and administrators when it comes to teacher evaluation. The semi-

structured interview "allows researchers to develop in-depth accounts of experiences and

perceptions with individuals (Cousin, 2009, p. 71). In the semi-structured interview, the

researcher explored perceptions of the teacher evaluation process and while there were

questions that guided the interview, not all interviewees necessarily answered all the

same questions (Bryman, 2004). The qualitative data from the transcripts of interviews

was examined looking for themes or trends and then coded to make connections with

common responses among participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The researcher

utilized the program NVivo to code all of the interviews and the open-ended survey

question regarding suggestions for improvement to teacher evaluation. An inductive

approach to coding was utilized where the researcher reads through transcripts in order to

develop concepts or themes based on the data (Thomas, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Research Ethics

This study involved teachers sharing their perspectives on the way they are

observed and evaluated, which can be a sensitive topic. In order to ensure that

participants were comfortable sharing their genuine and authentic feedback, it was critical

that the anonymity of participants was protected and that they knew and understood their

data would not be linked to them or scrutinized by district staff. This all goes to the

primary goal of all researchers: to do no harm. Pseudonyms were used for all

interviewees as well as for the district and the individual schools to maintain

confidentiality.

It was also important to obtain approval from participants for the semi-structured

interviews prior to meeting and for approval to record the audio from the meeting. While

the interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom video conferencing software, only the

audio from the interviews was recorded to protect the identities of participants.

Participants also knew they could refuse to answer any questions they did not feel

comfortable with and they were also free to withdraw from participation at any time.

Researcher Bias

In any study, a researcher has to examine potential biases, beliefs, or experiences

that could play a role in the outcome of the study. Bias is essentially any influence that

can alter the data or findings in a study (Polit & Beck, 2014). In this case, the researcher

is a school administrator who has experienced teacher evaluation from both a teacher and

administrator lens. Through these lived experiences some assumptions and beliefs about

the evaluation process have developed over time. These assumptions and beliefs have less of an impact on the results of the quantitative survey as many questions were gleaned from Rand (2018) and Drago-Severson & Blum (2016); however, they can play a role in the qualitative part of the study. For this reason, having a set of semi-structured interview questions designed to elicit authentic feedback, experiences, and a deeper understanding of perceptions around teacher evaluation is critical. These questions ensured that the researcher remained focused on the research questions and minimized the risk of leading question bias and confirmation bias.

Summary

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, beginning with a survey of teaching staff, followed by semi-structured interviews of teachers and administrators, to gain a better understanding of perceptions of the teacher evaluation process in Chase Township Public Schools. This study looked specifically at the perceived impact teacher evaluation has on teacher growth and improvement through observation and evaluation. In better understanding how teachers and administrators perceive the current evaluation process the researcher could begin to consider which changes, if any, are needed to fully realize one of the core objectives of teacher evaluation: growth and improvement.

Chapter Four

Findings

If the teacher evaluation process is a potential lever for improving instruction and simultaneously, student achievement — understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the system from critical stakeholders is of paramount importance. The purpose of this study was to describe teacher and administrator perceptions of the teacher evaluation process in Chase Township Public Schools and its perceived impact on teaching and learning. These perceptions are explained using adult learning theory as a lens for possible ways the process might be improved.

Teacher evaluation requires an ongoing investment of time from both teachers and administrators every school year. While research suggests there are two primary objectives of teacher evaluation — accountability and growth (Danielson, 2011; Duke, 1990; Stronge, 1995) — this study focused primarily on the objective of teacher growth and improvement. If teachers are growing and improving because of the teacher evaluation process, there is a reduced need for (and significance of) accountability. The primary goal of any evaluation system should be improvement and growth; in focusing teacher evaluation on this objective and helping all teachers grow to become effective and highly effective educators, the most meaningful objective of teacher evaluation is fulfilled.

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach. Phase One included a survey sent to all certificated educators employed in the four elementary schools selected for this

research study in Chase Township Public Schools. Phase Two included semi-structured

interviews with eight teachers (two at each of the schools) and the principal from each of

the four schools.

In this chapter, I present the methodologies used in both phases of this study,

followed by a review of the three research questions. Finally, findings are presented;

findings are organized by research question with quantitative survey data presented first,

followed by qualitative interview data.

Teacher Evaluation Survey Methodology and Participants

Phase One of this study asked certificated teachers in the four elementary schools

to share their perceptions about the teacher evaluation process through the use of a survey

which was largely adapted from RAND Corporation's "A Nationwide Look at Teacher

Perceptions of Feedback and Evaluation Systems" (2018). A total of nine multi-part

questions in the survey addressed each research question.

The survey was sent to 171 certified teachers in the four elementary schools in the

CTPS school district, and 98 (57%) teachers submitting a completed survey. Table 3

breaks down length of time teaching by years, percentages, and raw numbers. As Figure

1 indicates, the majority (63%) of teachers completing the survey had ten or more years

of experience. The survey has a margin of error of 6% based on a confidence level of

95% (57% response rate).

Table 2

Summary of Qualitative Data Samples

Survey Data
171 teachers invited
128 respondents started survey   (75%)
98 respondents completed survey   (57%)

Table 3

Length of Time Teaching

Tenure	Percentage	Number
0-5 years	14.29%	14
6-10 years	22.45%	22
10+ years	63.27%	62

Figure 1

Teaching Experience of Survey Participants
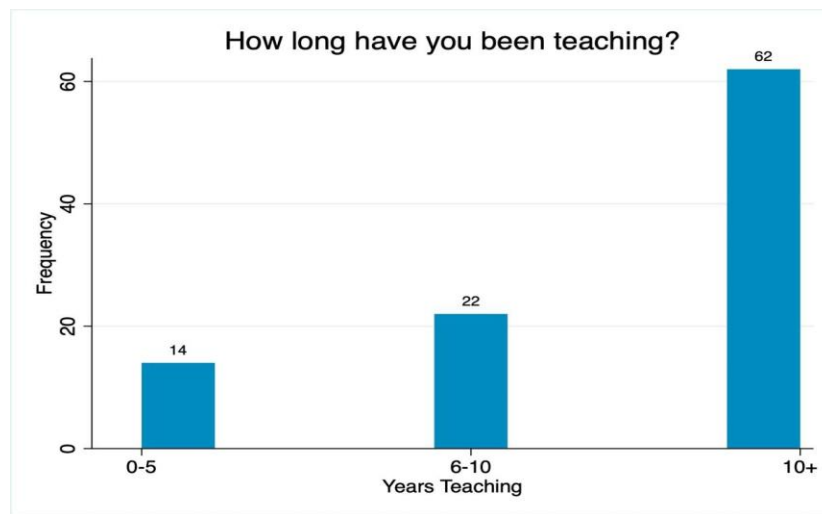
The survey questions focused primarily on Research Questions 1 and 2. The last question on the survey was an optional open-ended question to provide teachers with an opportunity to share their thinking on how the teacher evaluation system might be improved.

Semi-Structured Interview Methodology and Participants

Table 4

Summary of Qualitative Data Samples

Interview Data
8 teachers (2 from each school)
2 male & 6 female teachers
4 principals (2 male/2 female)

To dig deeper into perceptions of the teacher evaluation process, Phase Two of this study included semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators. A total of eight teachers were selected to participate, two teachers from each of the four elementary schools. Teachers who expressed an interest via the Google Form that was shared along with the invitation to complete the survey were pooled by elementary school and then randomly selected. In addition to the eight teachers, all four elementary school principals agreed to participate in the study as seen in Table 4.

An inductive approach to coding was utilized, i.e., reading through the transcripts from both teacher and administrator interviews and generating a list of codes from the themes that emerged (Thomas, 2006). NVivo software was utilized for the coding process which allowed for a small snippet of text to be selected and quickly tagged with a code; the number of references to a specific code and how many different interviews have been tagged with a particular code are data points that are tracked and tabulated through the NVivo program.

A total of eight elementary teachers and four elementary school principals were interviewed in Phase Two of the study (See Table 5). In the teacher group were six females and two males with most teachers currently in an upper grade (3rd, 4th, or 5th) teaching assignment. All the teachers interviewed were tenured educators, meaning they had a minimum of four successful years of teaching in the district. All four principals from each of the elementary schools agreed to be interviewed for this study. There were two male and two female principals. The principals have been at their respective schools ranging from two to six years but have many years of prior experience with administrative and teaching positions.

Table 5

Interview Participants

Interview Participant Name (pseudonym)	Position
Ms. Barbara Barton	Teacher
Ms. Doreen Green	Teacher
Ms. Jennifer Walters	Teacher
Ms. Natasha Romanoff	Teacher
Mr. James Rhodes	Teacher
Ms. Susan Richards	Teacher
Mr. Sam Wilson	Teacher
Ms. Rita DeMara	Teacher
Mr. Bruce Wayne	Principal
Ms. Diana Prince	Principal
Ms. Kathy Kane	Principal
Mr. Clark Kent	Principal

The interviews for both teachers and administrators included 11 questions, both interviews followed the same sequence of questions. Six of the interview questions were identical for both teachers and administrators; the five other questions had similar themes but targeted a teacher or administrator perspective.

Research Questions

The online surveys and semi-structured interviews both addressed all three of the research questions of this study. These guiding questions were used to organize the data and findings in Chapter Four. The research questions are below:

Research Question 1 (RQ1). *What is the nature of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the current teacher evaluation process?*

a) What aspects of the evaluation process are regarded as most and least useful?

b) Does the impact of teacher evaluation warrant the amount of time that is spent on the evaluation process?

c) To what extent does the teacher evaluation process contribute to teacher growth?

d) To what extent do teachers and administrators believe the evaluation process is effective in identifying effective and ineffective teachers?

Research Question 2 (RQ2). *To what extent do teachers and administrators believe the feedback received within the teacher evaluation process in CTPS positively impacts teacher growth?*

a) Do administrators believe they positively impact teacher practice through the current evaluation process?

b) Do teachers believe the evaluation process positively impacts their instructional practice?

Research Question 3 (RQ3). *What changes (if any) do teachers and administrators suggest that could improve the teacher evaluation process?*

Research Question 1: What is the nature of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the current teacher evaluation process?

The goal of Research Question 1 was to ascertain how teachers and administrators feel about the teacher evaluation process currently employed in Chase Township Public Schools. The principal objective was to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current evaluation system from the stakeholders (teachers/administrators) who are directly impacted. There were four sub-questions under the umbrella of RQ1 which tease out some of the more significant questions relating to teacher evaluation in CTPS: value, time, and teacher growth and accountability.

The first sub-question asked teachers and administrators about the most and least

useful parts of the teacher evaluation process. The TE process in Chase Township Public Schools includes several different components (SGOs, observations, PDPs, EOY reflections); the purpose of this sub-question was to discover which of these tasks were meaningful and impactful while concurrently identifying parts of the TE process that are not currently perceived as useful by teachers and administrators.

The second sub-question asks if the impact of teacher evaluation is worth the amount of time spent on the process. This question was designed to evaluate how stakeholders feel about teacher evaluation as a whole and to understand if they believe that time spent engaging in the evaluation process results in positive or beneficial outcomes.

The next sub-question asked teachers and administrators if teacher evaluation, as a whole, contributes to teacher growth. The difference between this question and a similar sub-question for RQ2 is that this question focuses on the entire evaluation process while RQ2 looks only at feedback.

The goal of the final sub-question was to determine how effective teachers and administrators believe the evaluation system is at identifying effective and ineffective educators. This question links back to one of the primary objectives of teacher evaluation: accountability. While accountability is not the primary focus of this study, this question is relevant and important in understanding how well the TE process in Chase Township Public Schools achieves one of the two primary objectives of teacher evaluation.

The next section investigates the relevant data from the teacher evaluation survey related to Research Question 1.

Teacher Evaluation Survey Findings (RQ1)

In examining the perceptions of teachers regarding the purpose of teacher evaluation (shown in Table 6) more than 80% of teachers somewhat or strongly agreed that teacher evaluation was intended to improve instructional practice. In comparison, only 57% of teachers believed that the purpose of evaluation was promotion, retention, and/or placement. A distinction between improving instructional practice and promoting teacher growth and development appears to exist as 27.5% of teachers (strongly or somewhat) disagreed that teacher growth and development was an intention of TE compared to just over 19% who disagreed (strongly or somewhat) that the intention was to improve instructional practice.

Table 6

Question 7. Perceptions of the Purpose of the Formal Observation System

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The teacher evaluation system is intended to promote teacher growth and development.	10.20%	17.35%	52.04%	20.41%
The teacher evaluation system is intended to help me improve my instructional practice.	7.14%	12.24%	60.20%	20.41%
The teacher evaluation system is intended to improve student learning.	8.16%	15.31%	56.12%	20.41%
The teacher evaluation system is intended to inform teacher promotion, retention, and/or placement.	15.31%	27.55%	37.76%	19.39%

The group of questions in Table 7 highlights the information teachers believe is included in their year-end evaluations. The purpose of this question was to understand if educators are clear about the different components that encompass their evaluation.

Table 7

Question 4. Information Included in Year-end Evaluations

Information Source	Not Included	Optional	Included	Don't Know
Trends in student achievement for the students you teach (e.g., value-added or student growth percentile)	35.71%	5.1%	38.78%	20.41%
Percentage of your students achieving proficiency (or the average student achievement level)	36.73%	8.16%	32.65%	22.45%
Success of your students in meeting student learning objectives (SLOs) or student growth objectives (SGOs)	15.31%	7.14%	68.37%	9.18%
Schoolwide achievement level (e.g., schoolwide value-added, schoolwide percentage proficient)	42.86%	12.24%	12.24%	32.65%
Ratings for classroom observations	2.04%	1.02%	91.84%	5.1%
Ratings from validated externally developed student surveys	79.59%	2.04%	3.06%	15.31%
Informal student feedback (e.g. teacher-developed student surveys).	77.55%	7.14%	7.14%	8.16%
Parent feedback (e.g., surveys, other feedback)	80.61%	5.1%	3.06%	11.22%
Feedback from coach or mentor	81.63%	4.08%	6.12%	8.16%
Other (please specify)	51.56%%	0.00%	9.38%	39.06%

In addition to the selections mentioned, six respondents indicated that "other" pieces of information were included in evaluations, including:

- Cooperating teachers for student teaching

- Director of special services

- Members of the RTI (Response to Intervention) team

- Professionalism

- Social media presence

- Summary from teacher

One of the most striking features of this set of responses is the number of respondents who "don't know" whether certain pieces of information are included in their year-end evaluations. For instance, nearly 1/3 of respondents did not know whether school-wide achievement level is included in the evaluation (it is not). The most included piece of information (that respondents were aware of) was "ratings for classroom observations." Interestingly, a significant component of the Chase Township Public Schools evaluation system are Student Growth Objectives (SGOs). They often account for 25% of a teacher's summative evaluation score. At the time of this study the state determined the SGO score will not count in the teacher's summative score, but that it still needs to be completed and included as part of the teacher's evaluation file. This may account for the almost 25% of respondents who said it was not included or they did not know.

Table 8 represents how effective teachers feel the teacher evaluation system is at identifying effective and ineffective educators and whether they believe the TE process is worth the amount of time spent to complete all necessary requirements.

Table 8

Question 6. Perceptions of Usefulness of the Formal Observation System

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
The teacher evaluation process is successful at identifying effective and ineffective teachers in my school.	17.35%	36.73%	23.47%	12.24%	10.20%
The teacher evaluation process is worth the investment of time.	13.27%	33.67%	39.80%	10.20%	3.06%

Teachers were divided on whether teacher evaluation was successful at identifying (in)effective teachers and whether the evaluation process was worth the investment of time.

When asked about whether evaluation was worth the investment of time approximately 47% of teachers indicated it was not and only 10% of teachers strongly agreed that it was worth the investment of time. A little more than one-third of teachers indicated some level of agreement that the observation system is successful at identifying (in)effective teachers, whereas 54% disagreed and 10% said they "don't know." It also appears that teachers become more skeptical of the teacher evaluation systems effectiveness when it comes to identifying (in)effective educators the longer they have been teaching. Table 9 breaks down the responses to the statement regarding identifying (in)effective teachers, based on years of teaching experience.

Table 9

The Teacher Evaluation Process is Successful at Identifying Effective and Ineffective Teachers in My School.

Years Teaching	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
0-5 (N=14)	7.14%	35.71%	21.43%	28.57%	7.14%
6-10 (N=22)	18.18%	36.36%	36.36%	4.55%	4.55%
10+ (N=62)	19.35%	37.1%	19.35%	11.29%	12.9%

The next section will provide an overview of findings from the semi-structured interviews related to Research Question 1. Following the discussion of the interview data, I will summarize findings from both Phase One and Phase Two of this study.

Interview Data (RQ1)

Perceptions about the purpose of TE. The first question asked in the semi-structured interviews was, 'What do you believe is the purpose of teacher evaluation?' The survey data found that most teachers somewhat or strongly agreed that it was intended to improve instructional practice (81%) and to a lesser extent, promote growth and development (72%). In an analysis of the interviews from teachers — the answer to this question fell into two categories: accountability, which addresses whether evaluation distinguished between effectiveness or ineffective teachers and growth, which addresses whether the evaluation has helped the teacher grow as a teacher. All eight of the teacher interviews mentioned accountability as a purpose of teacher evaluation and four of the eight mentioned teacher growth.

Ms. Barton shared the following about the purpose of teacher evaluation: "Sometimes they feel like the way they are used now isn't as much for the reflective piece; it is more to check the obligatory box. Yes, we checked on them and they are okay at their job. It is almost like — give them a rating and move on sometimes."

Mr. Rhodes shared a similar sentiment. "… sometimes the goal gets shifted a little bit and some perceive it to be just an accountability measure and some perceive it to be a punishment or a check on those who are not doing their job."

Ms. Walters added, "I also think there is an underlying piece of weeding out the good and the bad, but I think the purpose is really to make sure we're effective teachers."

However, both Mr. Rhodes and Ms. Barton also saw teacher growth and improvement as a primary purpose of the evaluation process.

Mr. Rhodes shared the following "… the main goal is to improve instruction — I think when people sat down to design our system, that was the focus."

Ms. Barton stated, "I think the original intended purpose was to help the teacher and their supervisor check in on progress and look for areas of improvement and help them grow professionally."

Finally, Mr. Wilson shared a similar belief. "To improve the overall teaching in the school, for administrators to give appropriate feedback so we can improve things in our lesson."

In contrast, all four of the principals interviewed believed that teacher growth was a primary purpose of the TE process.

Mr. Kent remarked, "I would say evaluation is about identifying areas of improvement — whether it is a lot of improvement or simply fine tuning an area that is already a strength."

While Ms. Prince said the purpose was "… more of a way to help teachers do better, up the ante with their instruction, open their eyes to new developments."

Ms. Kane offered a similar perspective. "I believe the purpose is to really drive instructional practice in the classroom. It is a tool for administrators and teachers to better understand what instructional practices are happening and to guide teachers in a positive direction."

In terms of accountability, two of the four administrators mentioned accountability as a purpose of TE during the interviews.

Mr. Wayne commented, "What should the philosophical purpose be? To improve and have an accountability measure."

Ms. Prince also acknowledged accountability as a purpose: "… from my perspective it is to ensure that teachers are using their instruction in the correct manner" and "… to observe and evaluate to make sure things are going the way they should."

Experiences engaging in the teacher evaluation process. When teachers were asked to talk about experiences going through the evaluation process, a total of eight references coded as negative experiences and six coded as positive experiences (some teachers shared both positive and negative experiences).

Ms. Green shared the following positive experience. "I've been part of co-observations where a building administrator and district administrator observed me at the same time. That was interesting, because each administrator saw different things and had different experiences with the lesson and the dialogue was a lot richer and had a deeper conversation with the three of us."

Ms. Barton, who also shared a positive experience, commented: "I've had some really successful experiences with it. Some administrators take a lot of time to put a personal touch on the pre-conference. You can tell they have read through what you've

written in those pre-conference questions before they meet with you."

The positive feelings about the observation process shared by teacher participants were linked primarily to the following approaches by administrators:

- specific and targeted feedback from administrators

- an investment of time from administrators in the process to really target the needs of the specific teacher

- meaningful and positive dialogue about the lesson at the post-conference.

Five of the eight teachers interviewed examples of negative experiences they have had through the TE process.

Ms. Richards provided the following example: "I do feel like when recommendations are made, they are never really followed up on. You are observed by one person, who tells you XYZ, then you are observed by someone else, who didn't look at what the first person recommended to see if you followed up on it. It just doesn't seem like the process is complete."

Mr. Rhodes talked about the process feeling more like a requirement. "Most of my observations have been good and my scores have been good. I have felt sometimes that it is more of a 'Let's check this off, we need to do this, I know you're a good teacher, you know you're a good teacher, so let's check this off.'"

Ms. Barton echoed this thought. "I've had different experiences with other administrators who maybe were overwhelmed with other duties and I could tell from the moment they met me at our pre-conference that they hadn't read anything I had written."

Ms. DeMara responded: "I prefer when I get an administrator who I feel is giving me honest feedback and is not just going through the motions."

Overall, the negative experience mentioned most by teachers was the concept of the evaluation being more of an obligation than a priority and that it did not feel like a meaningful process where both sides were invested in the outcome. A few of the other concerns shared included a lack of follow-up, not feeling safe to ask questions or respond to criticism, and not providing any meaningful feedback. Principals' responses related to engagement with teachers during the evaluation process were neutral in nature and could not be characterized as positive or negative.

Perceptions of the most and least useful components of TE (RQ1a). Teachers and administrators were asked about the components of the teacher evaluation process that they found most and least useful. This question was open-ended; the interviewer did not go through each of the evaluation components and ask participants whether they were useful or not. This is an important distinction because one teacher mentioned the end-of-year reflection as something that was not useful; other participants may have agreed or disagreed if they were presented with a list of components. The question was designed to capture what immediately comes to mind that is important and not important or not a good use of time.

In Chase Township Public Schools, the following evaluation components are required each school year:

- 2-3 classroom observations (includes pre- and post-conferences before and after classroom observations)

- 2x student growth objectives (SGOs)

- 2x professional development plans (PDPs)

- In grades 4 and 5, teacher median student growth percentile (mSGP)

75

calculated and provided by the state

- End of year Domain 4 reflection

Table 10 highlights components that teachers and administrators found to be most useful (only components discussed by the interviewees were included in the table).

Table 10

Most Useful Components of TE

Evaluation Component	Teachers who found component useful	Principals who found component useful
Observation (includes pre and post conference and recommendations)	8/8 Teachers shared that the observation and feedback process was the most useful component of TE.	4/4 administrators shared that the observation and feedback process was the most useful component of TE.
Professional Development Plans (PDPs)	1/8 teachers shared PDPs was a useful component to TE.	2/4 principals shared PDPs could be useful if they were implemented in the right way.
Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)	1/8 teachers shared that SGOs (if approached properly) can be useful	Not mentioned

The most important component of the evaluation process shared by all interviewees was the observation and feedback process. In each of the teacher interviews, observations were clearly the most critical component.

Ms. Walters talked about the importance of the feedback process after an observation: "Honestly, the most useful is the post-conference after an observation. I think it's super important to get the feedback on the lesson, good or bad, because not every lesson is going to be wonderful."

Ms. Romanoff added: "I think having an observation with an administrator who is honest with you and can give suggestions is definitely beneficial."

While all the teachers interviewed felt that the observation was the most useful part of the process, there were caveats to the value of the observation.

Mr. Rhodes stated: "I think the pre- and the post-conference can be the most useful part if everyone is engaged in the process, and we are not just checking the box. If you are really engaging in the pre- and post-conference, that is the most beneficial part."

Ms. Barton commented: "Observations are helpful if they are personalized, and the evaluators are invested and have done their homework."

Despite those qualifiers, interview participants felt that the observations were the most meaningful part of the teacher evaluation process. While there was consensus on the most valuable component of teacher evaluation, the discussion around what was least useful in TE was slightly more divided as seen in Table 11.

Table 11

Least Useful Components of TE

Evaluation Component	Teachers who found component useful	Principals who found component useful
Professional Development Plans (PDPs)	5/8 teachers felt PDPs were not useful	2/4 principals felt PDPs were not useful
Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)	6/8 teachers felt SGOs were not useful	4/4 principals felt SGOs were not useful
Median Student Growth Percentile (mSGP)	1/8 teachers felt mSGPs were not useful	1/4 principals felt mSGPs were not useful
End of Year Domain 4 Reflection	1/8 teachers felt end of year Domain 4 reflections were not useful.	Not mentioned

Table 11 illustrates teacher and administrator perceptions of the least meaningful or useful components of the evaluation process. While not unanimous, SGOs were most commonly cited by teachers and administrators as least useful. Professional development

plans (PDPs) followed closely behind.

Mr. Wayne, one of the elementary principals in Chase Township Public Schools, shared this about SGOs: "SGOs, they defy human nature — no one is going to score themselves a 2 on an SGO and lower their score." Mr. Kent, one of the other principals, added: "SGOs, my experience with SGOs, from an administrative lens, have been a waste of time."

Teachers shared similar perspectives on student growth objectives.

Ms. Walters shared that, "SGOs to me are such a silly waste of time because we're in total control … I think it's more just checking the box."

Ms. DeMara commented, "The least useful part of the evaluation process is easily the SGO."

Perceptions of the evaluation process and time (RQ1b). Teachers and administrators were asked to think about a regular school year and consider how much time was spent on the evaluation process. They were then asked the follow-up question of whether they believed the evaluation process was worth the investment of time.

The amount of time spent on the evaluation process varied from teacher to teacher, as noted.

Ms. Barton commented: "I'm thinking a formal observation is at least three hours of work. SGOs for me take days and a number of prep periods. I am not spending the entire day, but I will spend almost a week every day during prep and then my normal work is done at night to catch up."

Mr. Rhodes stated: "If I added it all up, I think it would be several hours — PDP, at least an hour, SGOs longer, the reflection at the end of the year is the longest piece —

several hours."

Ms. Romanoff shared a similar perspective. "It takes a long time, just setting up the SGOs, the pre-assessment, the hours into the PDP. I'd have to really think about it, but hours."

A few of the teachers shared that as they have gained years of experience, the process does not require as much time. "At this point in my career it goes a lot quicker, and I feel like it's just something I have to do," said Ms. DeMara.

Ms. Green remarked, "Over time, I've put less time into scripting everything out."

The question asked of administrators concerning time spent on the evaluation process was slightly different. Administrators were asked to consider the total time spent on evaluations and then asked to think about that as a percentage of their day.

There was consensus among administrators that the evaluation process takes up a significant part of their day; estimates ranged from 15% up to 40% of each day.

Mr. Kent stated: "I would say maybe 20–30% of my day if I really spread it across and added cumulative hours spent. Probably closer to 30%."

Ms. Kane had a similar estimate: "… about 35–40% of my day is connected to aspects of teacher evaluation."

Ms. Prince was on the lower end of the estimates of time spent on the evaluation process: "… about 15% to 20% of our time averaged over the year."

The amount of time administrators spend on the TE process is important to consider when weighing whether the evaluation process is worth the time.

The value of teacher evaluation in the context of time. Seven teachers commented that the evaluation process was not worth the required investment of time. In

these examples, some teachers talked about the evaluation process in general, while others cited specific components of the evaluation system that they did not believe warranted the time.

In speaking about the process in general, Ms. Green remarked, "I don't believe I'm getting bang for the buck in terms of time spent compared to the payoff."

Ms. Romanoff shared a similar perspective. "Not really. I get more out of what goes on daily in my classroom and what I reflect on compared to feedback through formal evaluations."

Other teachers cited specific components of teacher evaluation that they felt were not worth the investment of time.

In discussing the end-of-year reflection component of the teacher evaluation process, Mr. Rhodes stated: "No. I know reflection is an important piece, but I don't think the reflection at the end of the year is changing my instruction at the end of the year; meaningful reflection is done throughout the year on an ongoing basis."

Ms. DeMara remarked on the lack of meaningful feedback: "When I have somebody come in and I know we are going to schedule an observation because it has to get done and they tell me, 'Good job, you got a 4' — I feel like that wasn't really that meaningful because I'm not getting anything out of it."

Ms. Barton felt that SGOs were not a valuable use of her time. "I don't think I get anything meaningful out of my SGO. I feel it is checking a box."

Ms. Walters agreed. "SGOs — I don't think there's a lot of value in them."

Four teachers commented that specific components of the evaluation process were worth the investment of time. Interestingly, all four of the teachers cited the observation

and feedback process as being worth the time investment.

When asked if the evaluation process was worth the investment of time, Mr. Wilson answered in the affirmative. "Yes, I do. I think administrators' feedback is valuable; they often have more knowledge on topics due to their education and experience."

Ms. Barton talked about the value of observations. "… the observations I think are really beneficial if I have an administrator who is really putting the time into it."

Ms. Walters added, "As far as the physical classroom observations, I think it's definitely good to get some feedback."

When asked whether the evaluation process was worth the investment of time, administrators, for the most part, did not believe that the outcome of the TE process, or more specifically certain components of the process, was worth the required time. Administrators spend significantly more time on the evaluation process compared to individual teachers, which was likely a factor in their responses:

Mr. Wayne shared the following when asked if the impact of teacher evaluation was worth the time. "No. I think because of our evaluation system, I think it is not worth the time."

Mr. Kent provided a similar thought. "If you asked me overall if I think it is effective, I don't think so."

Ms. Kane explained that when teachers are not engaged in the process, it is not worth the investment of time. "For others, you give them feedback and you look back at other evaluations and see evaluators who provided the same feedback — but they don't put it into practice."

Ms. Prince talked more about specific components of TE that she did not feel warranted the investment of time. "Honestly, there are other evaluation methods such as SGOs and PDPs that I do not think are worth the time that teachers and administrators put into them."

When discussing examples of when the teacher evaluation process is worth the investment of time, administrators focused solely on the observation and feedback process.

Ms. Prince offered the following when asked if TE was worth the time. "When it comes to observations, specifically, when done right and done collaboratively in the spirit of improvement — yes."

Ms. Kane added a caveat to that. "For those who are open to learning and want feedback, it can make a difference."

The observation and feedback process was cited by both administrators and teachers as a component of TE that can be worth the required time. This finding is reinforced by the responses from teachers and principals regarding the most useful components of the teacher evaluation process, which will be examined next.

Perceptions about whether the teacher evaluation process impacts growth and improvement (RQ1c). Teachers were asked if they believe the teacher evaluation process impacts their growth and improvement as a teacher while administrators were asked if the evaluation process positively impacts teacher growth. Table 12 illustrates the responses from teachers and administrators.

Table 12

Does TE Positively Impact Your Growth and Improvement?

Does TE positively impact growth and improvement	Teachers	Principals
Yes	2/8 Teachers felt TE results in growth and improvement	1/4 principals felt that TE positively impacts teacher growth and improvement.
No	2/8 teachers felt it did not result in growth and improvement	0/4
Sometimes	4/8 teachers felt under certain conditions, TE could lead to growth and improvement	3/4 Principals felt TE positively impacts growth under certain conditions.

The responses to whether teacher evaluation leads to growth and improvement was split evenly among the teacher interview participants. Two teachers believed it did, two believed it did not, and four teachers felt that under the right conditions, it could lead to growth and improvement.

Ms. Richards shared the following about why she did not feel it led to growth and improvement. "Not really. I think sometimes you pick up some tidbits along the way; me personally, I don't work any differently from a regular lesson versus when I'm observed."

Ms. Walters had a similar sentiment. "I don't think I would do anything differently — so I'm not sure how much I would really miss them."

In contrast, Ms. DeMara commented, "I do, because even when I know I'm being observed I'll think more about a lesson than I normally would."

Mr. Wilson added, "Yes, I think it does. I have definitely benefited from the feedback and suggestions."

Four of eight of the teachers interviewed felt that the teacher evaluation process could lead to growth and improvement under certain conditions.

When asked whether the TE process contributed to her growth and development, Ms. Barton described how the process can be inconsistent: "Sometimes. I think it changes year to year. Some years I have great conversations with administrators where I still use the advice, and other years, I feel like it is luck of the draw."

Ms. Green shared a similar perspective. "I know there needs to be an evaluation process, but it is inconsistent. I think some observers take it very seriously and some don't."

Mr. Rhodes felt like the value in the process was connected more to the experience or inexperience of the educator. "I think it did — I don't know that it does now. When I was younger and less experienced, I improved."

Ms. Romanoff echoed this. "Sometimes. I think it depends on who is observing me."

All four of the principals felt that the TE positively impacts growth and improvement, or that it could under certain conditions.

Mr. Kent stated that he believed it does impact teacher evaluation, and alluded to the high quality of teachers and administrators the district attracts. "Yes, I do think we are making a positive impact because of the players."

Mr. Wayne agreed that it was possible to impact teacher growth. "If you do it right, you still could. It isn't all bad — you have to make it relevant and meaningful and actionable."

Ms. Prince also believed it could have a positive impact. "I think it can,

sometimes. I think it depends on the relationship between the administrator and teacher."

While Ms. Kane believed that the mindset of the teacher was critical, "It depends on the receptiveness of the teacher …"

In a similar question, interview participants were asked to think about the evaluation process as a whole and share how effective they felt it was at helping teachers grow and improve in general. The goal of this question was to move beyond the individual interviewer and consider the impact of TE on their colleagues and other educators in the school. The results from this question differed significantly from the question that targeted how TE impacted the individual. Table 13 illustrates the response from teachers and administrators.

Table 13

How Effective is the TE Process as a Whole at Helping Teachers Grow and Improve, in General?

Rating	Teachers
Effective	0/8 Teachers commented that the process was effective without any conditions
Not effective	6/8 Teachers shared it was mostly not effective.
Partially effective	2/8 teachers shared that it was partially effective or effective under certain conditions

In discussing why TE was not effective, teachers offered the following comments. Ms. Walters said, "I don't really think it's super effective. I think people go on either extreme and they say, 'Oh my God, I'm terrible and I need to improve' or 'I don't care; this means nothing.' Because, in the grand scheme of things, what does it mean for us?"

Ms. Romanoff commented, "I don't think it is that effective, I don't. I think if anything, collaborating or bouncing ideas off of colleagues is more effective."

Ms. Barton added the following perspective: "I think a lot of people look at the

85

process as time consuming and frustrating, especially if they are a tenured teacher. Most just look if they got a 3; if so, great and they move on. I don't think people are really reading feedback carefully."

Those who shared the TE process was partially effective or effective under certain conditions shared the following examples of when it works:

- The process is more effective for newer teachers

- While it is inconsistent, it does lead to some growth

- When both stakeholders take the process seriously, it can be valuable

Perceptions about accountability: the effectiveness of TE in identifying ineffective and effective educators (RQ1d). Teachers and administrators were asked about whether the teacher evaluation process was effective in identifying both effective and ineffective educators. Table 14 provides an overview of the responses that were shared during the interviews.

Table 14

How Effective is the TE Process at Identifying Effective and Ineffective Educators?

Rating	Teachers	Principals
Effective	1/8 Teachers commented that the process was effective in identifying the effectiveness of educators.	3/4 Principals believed that TE is effective when it comes to identifying the effectiveness of educators
Not effective	6/8 Teachers shared it was mostly not effective at identifying the effectiveness of educators.	
Partially effective	1/8 teachers shared that it was partially effective or effective under certain conditions	1/4 principals believed it was partially effective.

The majority of teachers felt that the TE process was not effective when it comes

to identifying effective and ineffective educators.

In sharing why they felt this way, Mr. Rhodes stated: "In talking to administrators, they are hamstrung by the system a little –short of going to a corrective action plan …which is that really the best way to help someone improve? I don't believe it does a great job of that."

Ms. Richards commented, "As a teacher, sometimes you scratch your head a bit and think … that person is still here?"

Ms. Walters, Ms. DeMara, and Ms. Green all shared that they did not believe it was effective.

In contrast, three of the four principals felt the process was effective in identifying effective and ineffective educators.

Mr. Wayne offered the following perspective on why he feels the process is effective at identifying effective and ineffective educators: "Very. I would say that within any model, there is a certain amount of subjectiveness. We all know when we have someone who is ineffective."

Mr. Kent added, "For the most part, it helps weed out effective and ineffective people."

Ms. Kane also felt it was mostly effective, commenting: "It isn't a 100%, but it does show generally where a teacher falls on the ineffectiveness to effectiveness spectrum."

Ms. Prince felt that the process was partially effective when it comes to identifying effective and ineffective teachers: "I think the framework itself is one thing, but it really depends on how the administrators use the framework and their mindset in

how they are using it to make it effective. We use a system that wasn't meant for the purpose that we are using it. I think the system itself leads to not always catching or validating something that is ineffective."

Summary of Findings for Research Question 1

A total of 98 teachers submitted completed surveys, which is a significant representation of the teaching staff in the four elementary schools (almost 60% of the certified teachers participated in this study). Most teachers who completed the survey (over 60%) had ten or more years of experience engaging in the teacher evaluation process.

Research Question 1 concerning the nature of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the teacher evaluation (TE) process accounted for ~43% of the data points on the electronic survey (15 questions out of 35). Of the 15 questions that focused on this research question, there were some positive takeaways from the data, including that most teachers believed the intent of teacher evaluation was improving instructional practice (81%) and promoting teacher growth and development (72%).

However, teachers were divided on whether the TE process was effective at identifying effective and ineffective educators. The survey showed that 54% of teachers strongly or somewhat disagreed that TE was effective at identifying effective and ineffective educators compared with just 36% who believed it was effective. Teachers were also split on whether the evaluation process was worth the investment of time; 47% of teachers felt it was not worth the investment of time while 50% believed it was worth the required time.

Both the surveys and the interviews revealed that teachers and administrators

agreed that the most useful component of the evaluation process was feedback on

classroom observations. However, there was some disagreement on whether the

evaluation process was effective at identifying effective and ineffective educators.

Principals, for the most part, stated the process was effective (3 out of 4), while the

majority of teachers interviewed felt it was not effective (6 out of 8).

Research Question 2: To what extent do teachers and administrators believe the

feedback received within teacher evaluation process in CTPS positively impacts

teacher growth?

Research Question 1c asked: *To what extent does the teacher evaluation process*

contribute to teacher growth? Research Question 1c was looking at the teacher

evaluation process holistically, including all the different components (PDP, SGOs, etc.).

Research Question 2, however, specifically examines how the feedback process,

following a classroom observation, impacts teacher growth. This question includes two

sub questions that break this out by teachers and administrators:

- Do administrators believe they positively impact teacher practice through the
  current evaluation process?
- Do teachers believe the evaluation process positively impacts their instructional
  practice?

There are many ways that administrators can provide feedback to teachers. For

example, they can provide feedback on lesson plans, parent communications, and

assessments. However, feedback in the context of this research question refers solely to

the feedback given to teachers by an administrator following a classroom lesson

observation. This observation feedback is typically provided in writing and face-to-face

during the post-conference.

Teacher evaluation survey findings (RQ2). The frequency of feedback was an important factor to consider in how feedback was perceived and valued by teachers. Table 15 displays how frequently teachers receive feedback from a variety of different sources. The sources of feedback include observation feedback through the formal evaluation system, informal observations and feedback provided by a coach or mentor.

Table 15

Question 1. Frequency of Receiving Feedback from Various Sources

Feedback Source	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often or Daily
Feedback from formal observation as part of evaluation system	11.22%	84.69%	4.08%	0.00%
Feedback from informal observation by other teachers	36.73%	38.78%	21.43%	3.06%
Feedback from informal observation by school leaders	31.63%	55.10%	12.24%	1.02%
Feedback from coach or mentor	61.86%	26.80%	9.28%	2.06%

The overwhelming majority of teachers said they "never" or "rarely" receive feedback from any source. Feedback from coaches or mentors was the least common, whereas informal observations from other teachers was most common.

To examine whether there were differences in perspectives based on years of experience, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The ANOVA indicates that the frequency of receiving feedback from a coach or mentor differs marginally depending on how long a respondent has been teaching (F=2.96 p<.10). Those teaching 0-5 years were more likely to say they had received this type of feedback (Q1_4 mean=1.93) compared to those with 6-10 (mean=1.50) or 10+ years (mean=1.43) of teaching experience. There were no differences based on years teaching for the other forms of feedback.

90

Overall, 95% of teachers reported that they never or rarely receive feedback as part of the evaluation system and 87% of teachers reported that they never or rarely receive informal feedback by school leaders.

The usefulness of feedback given by an administrator through the formal evaluation process is highlighted in Table 16. Two other components to this question were previously addressed under Research Question 1.

Table 16

Question 6. Perceptions of Usefulness of the Formal Observation System

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
The feedback I received from my administrator through the evaluation process helped me become a better teacher.	10.20%	6.12%	54.08%	29.59%	0.00%

When asked if the feedback received through the teacher evaluation process helped them become better teachers, most teachers (almost 84%) somewhat or strongly agreed that it did. This is a strong indication that they find value in the observation and feedback component of the evaluation process (See Table 17).

Table 17

Question 3. Evaluations of the Feedback Process

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
The feedback given to me was individualized and tailored for me.	2.04%	7.14%	40.82%	48.98%	1.02%
The feedback I was given was specific and focused with clear expectations and concrete examples.	2.04%	14.29%	43.88%	39.8%	0.00%
The feedback given to me was objective and nonjudgmental.	0.00%	2.04%	27.55%	70.41%	0.00%
My administrator was positive and compassionate while providing feedback.	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	92.86%	0.00%
I trust my administrator and felt safe and comfortable during feedback conversations.	0.00%	3.06%	17.35%	78.57%	1.02%
I get feedback from my administrator on a regular and ongoing basis.	11.22%	43.88%	30.61%	13.27%	1.02%
The feedback given to me was consistent.	1.02%	7.14%	29.59%	55.1%	7.14%
The feedback given to me was timely.	1.02%	6.12%	19.39%	73.47%	0.00%
My administrator followed up on feedback that was provided to see how I was doing, and they offered additional support if I need it.	27.55%	21.43%	25.51%	20.41%	5.1%
I had the opportunity to respond, reflect and contribute to the feedback conversation with my administrator.	1.02%	4.08%	22.45%	72.45%	0.00%

A factor analysis of this question (excluding "don't know" responses) indicates

that evaluations of the feedback process fit into 3 unique underlying dimensions.

Factor 1: Feedback was individualized (1), specific (2), felt safe and comfortable (5), and timely (8).

Factor 2: Feedback on a regular basis (6), feedback is consistent (7), administrator followed up (9), opportunity to reflect (10).

Factor 3: Feedback was objective (3) and administrator was positive (4).

A series of two-tailed t-tests indicates that the mean responses for each factor are significantly different from each other (p<.01). Factor 3 (objectivity and positivity) received the most positive evaluation (mean=3.81 out of 4). Factor 1 (individualized, specific, safe, and timely) has the second most positive evaluation (mean=3.50 out of 4). Factor 2 (regular, consistent, follow-up, and opportunities to reflect) received the least positive evaluation (mean=3.00 out of 4).

The usefulness of feedback from different sources is displayed in Table 18. The types of feedback include feedback given as part of the formal TE process, informal feedback by school leaders or teachers and feedback provided by a coach or mentor.

Table 18

Question 2. Usefulness of Feedback from Various Sources

Feedback Source	Not at all helpful	Mostly not helpful	Somewhat helpful	Extremely helpful
Feedback from formal observation as part of evaluation system (N=85)	1.18%	14.12%	57.65%	27.06%
Feedback from informal observation by other teachers (N=57)	1.75%	3.51%	26.32%	68.42%
Feedback from informal observation by school leaders (N=58)	1.72%	5.17%	53.45%	39.66%
Feedback from coach or mentor (N=34)	0.00%	0.00%	41.18%	58.82%

Note: Percentages only include respondents who selected at least "rarely" in Q1

Survey participants who responded to this question needed to respond to the prior question regarding the frequency of feedback with at least "rarely," which is why N=34 for feedback from a coach or mentor, as 61% of teachers reported they never received feedback from a coach or mentor.

Research Question 2 more deeply examined the perceived value of feedback given through the evaluation process. Most teachers (~85%) found the feedback provided as part of the formal evaluation system to be either somewhat helpful or extremely helpful. While the number of teachers (N=58) who responded to the feedback from informal observations was slightly more than half of the survey respondents, 93% found the feedback to be somewhat or extremely helpful. While this can certainly be viewed as a positive, feedback as part of a formal observation also had the highest number of respondents select not at all helpful or mostly not helpful (15%) as shown in Table 19.

Table 19

Question 6. Perceptions of Usefulness of the Formal Observation System (RQ2)

Statement	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
The feedback I received from my administrator through the evaluation process helped me become a better teacher.	10.20%	6.12%	54.08%	29.59%	0.00%
The teacher evaluation process is successful at identifying effective and ineffective teachers in my school.	17.35%	36.73%	23.47%	12.24%	10.20%
The teacher evaluation process is worth the investment of time.	13.27%	33.67%	39.80%	10.20%	3.06%

The general consensus among teachers is that the formal observation system helped them become better teachers; however, there is less consensus that it is successful at identifying (in)effective teachers or that it is a worthwhile investment of time.

A little more than one-third of teachers indicated some level of agreement that the observation system is successful at identifying (in)effective teachers, whereas 54% disagreed and 10% said they "don't know." It also appears that teachers become more skeptical about how effective the TE process is at identifying effective and ineffective educators the longer they have been teaching. Table 20 breaks down the responses to the statement regarding identifying (in)effective teachers, based on years of teaching experience.

Table 20

The teacher evaluation process is successful at identifying effective and ineffective teachers in my school.

Years Teaching	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
0-5 (N=14)	7.14%	35.71%	21.43%	28.57%	7.14%
6-10 (N=22)	18.18%	36.36%	36.36%	4.55%	4.55%
10+ (N=62)	19.35%	37.1%	19.35%	11.29%	12.9%

In Table 21, four statements were presented to survey participants that connect with the four ways of knowing: instrumental, socializing, self-authoring and self-transforming (Drago-Severson & Blum DeStefano, 2016). Teachers were asked to select the statement that matches the way they learn best from feedback.

Table 21

When my administrator provides feedback on an observation, I learn best when it includes (please select the response you most identify with)

Statement	Percentage
specific concrete examples and feedback with step-by-step support.	15.31%
praise and recognition followed by suggestions framed positively.	39.80%
a few suggestions or ideas presented as options, but I make the decisions about next steps and goals.	20.41%
collaboration and reflection on the lesson, but I identify ways the lesson can be improved and set goals.	24.49%

The results from this question reveal that teachers are very different in terms of how they prefer feedback to be delivered. Those who prefer specific concrete examples and step-by-step support make-up approximately 15% of those who participated in the survey while the largest percentage (~40%) of teachers prefer praise and recognition followed by suggestions framed positively. The division among teacher responses to this question show that one approach to delivering feedback may not be effective and differentiating feedback based on how a teacher best learns from feedback could lead to more meaningful and productive discussions (Drago-Severson & Blum DeStefano, 2016).

Interview Data (RQ2)

The impact of feedback on instructional practice and teacher growth. While a previous question looked at the teacher evaluation process as a whole, Question 2 focused on the feedback component of the observation process. The majority of teachers and all of the administrators reported that they believed feedback could positively impact instructional practice and lead to teacher growth (See Table 22).

Table 22

Do you feel that feedback given through the observation process positively impacts your instructional practice and contributes to your growth as a teacher?

Rating	Teachers	Principals
Yes	7/8 Teachers stated that feedback could, or has, positively impacted instructional practice and lead to growth.	4/4 Principals believed feedback given through the observation process contributes to improvement and growth.
No	4/8 Teachers shared an example of when feedback did not positively impact practice.	

Four teachers shared examples of when feedback had a positive impact on instructional practice or growth. Ms. Romanoff discussed the importance of specific feedback. "I think specific feedback is helpful. Don't give me a generalization about something — what did you see that you really liked — or I think this could have been better if you did this."

Ms. DeMara shared how the feedback motivates her as a teacher. "I think there are things on there, like if I get a 3 instead of a 4 in questioning, I will work on my questioning because I feel like I owe that to my students."

Ms. Green talked about how feedback impacts her. "I hold onto every word that is shared with me. I'll keep that feedback in my head moving forward with future lessons."

Mr. Rhodes discussed how feedback can help move instruction to the next level. "I'm doing this and it is proficient and the next step up is to take it to a four, and the administrator can provide some suggestions or feedback on how to take it to the next level. I do think that is beneficial."

Four teachers shared examples of when feedback did not have a positive impact

on instructional practice or growth.

Ms. Walters explained the challenge with feedback that is too specific. "Super specific feedback about one lesson I just taught — that's great for next year or the future, but it doesn't really help in the moment."

Ms. Richards discussed the awareness of the administrator as a possible issue to valuable feedback. "The administrator said, 'So what grade is this?' At that point I checked out; whatever he suggests to me, he doesn't even know what grade I teach; how valuable could his feedback be?"

Ms. Romanoff commented on the feedback or recommendations that are basic things all teachers do. "One person wrote they should do a thumbs up or thumbs down, which everyone does, and maybe the person didn't see it in the 20 minutes but it was kind of insulting."

There was consensus among the administrators that feedback through the observation process positively impacts practice and teacher growth.

Ms. Kane remarked that as long as feedback is approached the right way, it could have a positive impact: "I believe that as long as the administrator approaches the post-conference in a positive and professional manner, there is a strong likelihood of a positive outcome."

Mr. Kent believes that the feedback process was a strength of the teacher evaluation system in Chase Township Public Schools. "… this is the area where we are most effective in our evaluation process."

Ms. Prince agreed that it is impactful as long as there are relationships and trust. "I think it is effective if you have the improvement approach and the relationships so

teachers are open to honest conversations and feedback."

Teachers and administrators largely agreed that the feedback component of teacher evaluation was impactful. The follow-up question was what happens next; how common is follow-up and support after feedback has been delivered.

What happens after feedback? This follow-up question sought to examine what happens once feedback has been received or delivered.

The response from teachers regarding this question was consistent, very consistent. When asked what happened after they got feedback, all eight teachers responded with some variation of 'nothing.'

Mr. Rhodes stated, "I don't think I've ever had administration follow up on an observation after the post-conference. I think over the last decade, I don't know that anyone has ever followed up with me."

Ms. Walters echoed that sentiment. "Honestly, nothing. I think I take the feedback and I choose to do what I wish with it and then we wait for the next round of observations."

Ms. DeMara shared some frustration that the feedback loop is never closed. "The problem is it is short-lived. I wish there was some kind of follow-up to the feedback. I wish it was an ongoing process."

Mr. Walton agreed about the need for follow-up. "I think there should be more follow up, because that is not necessarily something I've seen."

When principals were asked what happened after they delivered feedback to a teacher, the answers fell into the two primary categories: providing resources/suggestions and following up with the teacher.

After providing a teacher with feedback, Ms. Prince stated she tried to complete "… an informal walk through, or talk to the teacher and let the teacher know you've seen him or her implement the strategy that was suggested."

Mr. Wayne believes it is important to provide some time to the teacher to implement the strategy. "You provide time and maybe even ask them to invite you in to see the progress."

Ms. Kane shared that she would follow up "… with some workshops or suggest a colleague who may be very skilled at a particular strategy for them to observe, or I might share a paper or article."

Summary of Findings for Research Question 2

Teachers and administrators agreed that the feedback process was the most likely component of teacher evaluation to have a positive impact on teacher practice and growth. However, teachers and administrators had differing perspectives about what happened following a feedback conversation. All eight teachers interviewed shared that they had not experienced follow-up after receiving feedback from an administrator. Principals, when asked this question, discussed the concepts of providing support through resources or suggestions and checking in with the teacher on progress.

The perceived value of the observation and feedback process was clear in both the survey and in the interviews with teachers and administrators. The majority of teachers participating in the survey found feedback from the formal observation process (85%) and informal observations by school leaders (93%) to be somewhat or extremely helpful. This finding was further substantiated in the semi-structured interviews when all eight teachers and all four principals stated that the observation and feedback process was the

most useful component of the teacher evaluation system.

Additionally, it was found that more than 80% of teachers somewhat or strongly agreed that eight of the ten research-based feedback strategies (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016) were consistent with the feedback process in Chase Township Public Schools. A few include specific feedback with concrete examples (90%), objective and non-judgmental (98%) ,and individualized and tailored (90%).

Two strategies teachers did not find as common in the feedback process were a lack of follow-up or support following an observation (49%) and not getting feedback on a regular or ongoing basis (55%). These themes are discussed further in Chapter Five.

- The majority of teachers found feedback from both the formal observation process (85%) and informal observations from school leaders (93%) to be somewhat or extremely helpful.

- Teachers reported that feedback from evaluations was:

  o Individualized and tailored (90%)

  o Specific with concrete examples (84%)

  o Objective and non-judgmental (98%)

  o Positive and compassionate (100%)

  o Safe and comfortable (96%)

  o Consistent (85%)

  o Timely (93%)

  o A dialogue where teacher had opportunity to respond, reflect, and contribute (95%)

However, the data in the survey regarding the frequency and consistency of observations was illuminating. The survey found that almost all teachers (96%) reported that they never or rarely received feedback through the formal evaluation system. So, while teachers found value in the observation and feedback process, the data suggests that the number of opportunities teachers had to engage in the observation and feedback process may not be sufficient.

Research Question 3: What changes (if any) do teachers and administrators suggest that could improve the teacher evaluation process?

The objective of Research Questions 1 and 2 was to better understand how teachers and administrators perceived the teacher evaluation process in Chase Township Public Schools. While this is important, it is equally important to provide a voice to stakeholders to share possible changes to teacher evaluation that could improve the process.

The data from Research Question 3 includes the final (optional) open-ended survey question as well as the final interview question to both teachers and administrators. The survey data is examined first, followed by feedback from the semi-structured interviews.

Teacher evaluation survey findings (RQ3). The last question on the teacher survey was, "Please share any additional thoughts or suggestions you have that may improve the teacher evaluation process (optional)." A total of 98 teachers submitted a completed survey and 25 teachers responded to the optional open-ended question.

An overview of the suggestions that were shared, as well as the number of references to that suggestion, is displayed in Table 23.

Table 23

Optional open-ended survey question: Please share any additional thoughts or suggestions you have that may improve the teacher evaluation process (optional)

Suggestion for Improvement	Number of Responses
Improve consistency in how evaluations are scored	5
Utilize teacher peer observations	4
Reduce stress	4
Differentiate options for how staff are evaluated	2
Eliminate the number scoring system — focusing on feedback	2
Increase the number of informal observations	2
No changes	2

Table 23 includes any suggestions that had more than one response. The most common suggestions for improvement included a focus on improved consistency from evaluators, including teacher peer observations in the evaluation system, and reducing stress.

Other suggestions included adding a follow-up component, ensuring observation feedback is timely, and using goal setting in the observation and feedback process.

On the topic of consistency, one survey participant shared the following: "I feel as though administrators all have different teaching styles and philosophies and their biases sometimes are reflected in their observations. If the teacher being observed does not match the observer's teaching style, the score is greatly affected."

A different participant added: "Often evaluators are either super tough or super easy going. I would like to see more consistency in the evaluations."

A third survey participant made the observation that "... not all administrators

approach the observation the same way."

Interview data (RQ3). The final interview question for participants of the semi-structured interviews asked: "Do you have any thoughts on possible changes to teacher evaluation that could improve the process?" A summary of the responses is displayed in Table 24.

Table 24

Do you have any thoughts on possible changes to teacher evaluation that could improve the process?

Suggestion for Improvement	Teachers	Principals
Eliminate the number scoring system and focus on feedback	3	1
Increase the number of informal observations	4	4
Prioritize follow-up	2	0
Utilize goal setting in the observation/feedback process	1	0
Utilize teacher peer observations	2	2
Incorporate more content area specialists	0	1
Differentiate options for how staff are evaluated	0	2
Eliminate Student Growth Objectives (SGO)	0	2

The three suggestions for improvement that had the most agreement among teachers and administrators include: increasing the number of informal observations, eliminating the number scoring system, and focusing on feedback and utilizing teacher peer observations.

Increasing the number of informal observations. All four of the principals interviewed and half of the teachers suggested increasing the number of informal observations. This is consistent with the findings from the survey that showed 96% of teachers reported that they never or rarely received feedback through the evaluation

process.

When asked to share how the TE process could be improved, Ms. Green offered the following: "I think if we could add one or two informal pop-ins from administrators, that would be valuable — especially with administration focusing more on a coach role than an evaluative role."

Ms. Romanoff agreed. "I'm so much more of a fan of a walkthrough or pop-in — I do not like planned observations."

Ms. Walters added to this perspective. "I think the more time administrators can spend in the classroom, the more valuable it will be."

Echoing the teachers, all four administrators stated they would like to see more informal observations.

Mr. Wayne commented he would like "… more frequent, lower stakes observations."

Ms. Prince also believed this was an area where the evaluation system could be improved. "I think it is really effective when there are more informal pieces to it: walkthroughs, check-ins, things like that."

Ms. Kane argued that informal observations are more meaningful. "I don't like announced observations — I don't think it is as impactful."

Eliminating the number scoring system and focusing on feedback. Three teachers and one administrator talked about eliminating the number scoring system from the evaluation process.

Ms. Barton explained why she believed numbers should be eliminated. "I think if we took away the numbers, if that was possible, that would allow us to focus more on the

feedback that was provided."

Ms. Walters concurred. "It would be more powerful if evaluation looked more like coaching compared to a formal process with scores."

Mr. Kent shared his philosophy from an administrative perspective on why he struggles with the number scoring system: "I struggle with my philosophy on rating or scoring a teacher versus the feedback piece. The feedback should be the most important thing but when we give a teacher a grade — a '20' on something and is so upset about the grade he or she doesn't want to hear the feedback, and when the teacher is given a really high grade, the teacher can be dismissive about the feedback. I think that is an inherent problem with the process."

Utilizing teacher peer observations. Peer observations was one of the more commonly cited suggestions on the teacher survey. It was also endorsed by two teachers and two administrators who participated in the semi-structured interviews. In utilizing teacher peer observations, a typical observation of a teacher by an administrator would be replaced by an opportunity for teacher colleagues to observe and provide feedback to one another.

Mr. Rhodes explained why this had value: "Teachers could learn a lot from watching their colleagues. If you have two highly effective teachers who are watching each other, they are probably going to learn more than the minor feedback they might get through the regular evaluation process."

Ms. Green also felt that teacher peer observations could be powerful. "I wish that instead of PDPs we had some sort of co-observation where you could observe another teacher and do a reflection on that."

Mr. Kent and Mr. Wayne both agreed that incorporating teacher peer evaluations could have value. Mr. Kent explained why he believed teacher observations can result in positive outcomes for staff. "We could improve instruction by setting up collegial ways for staff to observe each other and provide feedback to each other in a non-threatening and non-evaluative way so that teachers could learn good pedagogy from each other."

The concept of peer observations might also be a way to provide less stressful evaluation opportunities (reducing stress was one of the commonly cited survey responses).

Summary of Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked study participants how the teacher evaluation process could be improved. The survey data for RQ3 was just one open-ended question. While close to one hundred people completed the survey only a quarter of survey participants responded to the optional question at the end of the survey. The most commonly cited ways to improve the TE process that shared by survey participants included increasing the consistency among evaluators (some evaluators were seen as too tough and others too easy), allowing for teacher peer observations and making the process less stressful in general.

Peer observations was also mentioned by both principals and teachers in the semi-structured interviews. Eliminating the formal scoring for observations (number rating system) and increasing the quantity of informal observations were two of the more popular suggestions shared by interview participants to improve the TE process.

Chapter Summary

The data from both the quantitative survey (teachers) and qualitative semi-structured interviews (teachers and principals) painted a picture of the perceptions of teachers and administrators in Chase Township Public Schools. The survey provided the broad strokes by capturing the responses of nearly 60% (n=98) of the certificated teachers in the four schools included in this study, while the semi-structured interviews offered a deeper understanding of the 'why' behind the perceptions. After an in-depth analysis of the data, three themes emerged:

1. Observation feedback is valuable, but it does not happen enough.

2. Administrator follow-up after an observation and feedback conference is not a regular or consistent practice.

3. While the observation and feedback process are viewed as valuable by both teachers and administrators, related evaluation components (SGOs, PDPs, End of Year reflections) contribute to the belief that the teacher evaluation process is not worth the investment of time.

Chapter Five explores the three themes through the lens of my conceptual framework and the related research connected to adult learning and feedback. I offer four recommendations to the district leaders in Chase Township Public Schools to consider in addressing these themes.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Recommendations, and Action Communications

As an elementary school principal, I have engaged in the teacher evaluation process for many years. In that time, I have observed and evaluated hundreds of teachers in a variety of different subjects and grade levels. I have also participated in teacher evaluation as an elementary teacher and an elementary assistant principal. Throughout these combined experiences, I have witnessed the power and potential of the teacher evaluation process to support teacher growth and improvement, and I have also seen it fall far short of the goal of helping and supporting teachers. I believe teacher evaluation has the potential to positively impact all teachers; however, the realization of this potential, in my experience, has been inconsistent. The teacher evaluation process requires teachers and administrators to engage in a number of tasks at different times throughout the school year. These tasks vary in terms of the required time commitment and the perceived value they have for different stakeholders. The primary purpose of this study was to learn more about the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation system in Chase Township Public Schools and to offer potential solutions for improving this process. The end goal is to better align with the teacher evaluation objective of improving teacher practice and supporting teacher growth and improvement.

The quantitative survey, which included representation from almost 60% of the total teachers in the four district schools, as well as an interview with two teachers and

the school principal from each of the four school buildings, provided valuable insight in terms of what components of evaluation are meaningful and which evaluation practices might benefit from increased focus and consistency.

The discussion presented in the next section is organized into three themes that emerged from the data: the frequency of opportunities for teachers to receive feedback, follow-up and follow-through after classroom observations, and how ancillary components of the teacher evaluation process may be diminishing the perceived value of teacher evaluation. The discussion of these themes considered the data reported in Chapter Four and how it connects to adult learning theory literature and the conceptual framework. A discussion of each of these themes and connected recommendations is discussed.

Theme One: Frequency of Feedback Opportunities for Teachers

The frequency, or infrequency, of classroom observations and subsequently, opportunities to engage in the feedback process, was the first theme that crystalized as the data from this study was analyzed. Drago-Severson and Blum DeStefano, who compiled feedback research from top education scholars and organizations, speak to the significance of frequency and consistency in giving feedback: "Unlike feedback that happens only once per year, irregularly, or not at all, the most effective feedback, research suggests, involves continued and authentic communications, frequent check-ins, and multiple opportunities to learn and grow" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, p. 28, 2016).

The survey data found that nearly 96% of teachers responded that they never or rarely receive feedback as part of the formal evaluation system. The infrequency of

classroom observations was also confirmed during the semi-structured interviews.

Teachers cited the infrequent classroom observations as a primary reason why the teacher

evaluation process was not effective at identifying effective and ineffective educators.

One teacher, notably, discussed how you only need two good lessons all year to be rated

as effective or highly effective. In addition, half of the teachers and all four of the school

principals interviewed suggested increasing the number of observations as one of the best

ways to improve the teacher evaluation process.

In addition to the significance of frequent and ongoing feedback opportunities, the

importance of consistency cannot be overstated. "Indeed, consistency in one's feedback

can help allay ambiguity, bring needed clarity and focus to action steps, and give

feedback recipients the time needed to digest, reflect on, and take in new ideas" (Drago-

Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p. 29). Teachers that have consistent and ongoing

opportunities for feedback are also well prepared and informed for year-end summative

evaluations because they have a clear understanding of their strengths, needs and how

they have grown over the year (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016).

As stated above, research has suggested that increasing the opportunities for

teachers to engage in a consistent and ongoing feedback process supports the goal of

improved teaching and learning. In addition, the feedback currently being provided to

teachers following "… infrequent, full-lesson observations, because of its inauthenticity

and bulk, is a weak lever for improving teacher performance (Marshall, 2012). It is not

only true that additional opportunities for feedback are supported by research, but that the

value and meaningfulness of feedback under the current teacher evaluation model in

Chase Township Public Schools is weakened because of issues with frequency,

authenticity, and consistency (DuFour & Marzano, 2009).

The limited opportunities for classroom observations and feedback were consistent findings in this study. Curiously, data from the survey and structured interviews revealed that both teachers and administrators consider the observation and feedback process to be the most valuable part of teacher evaluation; nonetheless, these opportunities often happen just twice per year. If feedback is almost universally viewed as the most meaningful part of teacher evaluation, increasing the opportunities for feedback should be the primary focus of any proposed changes to the teacher evaluation process.

Theme Two: Administrator Follow-up on Feedback

The second theme that emerged from this study is that following up on feedback is not a common evaluation practice in Chase Township Public Schools. We know from adult learning research that sharing feedback with a teacher one time or in isolation, for example offering a suggestion or new strategy, does not typically or consistently result in meaningful changes or lead to growth and improvement: "It is usually not enough, for instance, to simply drop a suggestion, mandate, or new idea into a person's lap and then expect it to be implemented fully …" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p. 30). Research posits that to maximize the effectiveness of feedback it is important to have ongoing support with opportunities to check in, ask questions, and clarify objectives and expectations (Elmore 2005, 2008; Danielson, 2011; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016; Marshall, 2013).

The data from this study suggests that administrators following-up on classroom observations in Chase Township Public Schools is an uncommon practice at best, and

112

practically non-existent at worst. The survey data found that more than half of teachers

surveyed (excluding those who selected 'do not know') strongly or somewhat disagreed

that administrators followed up after a classroom observation and offered ongoing

support. The semi-structured interviews took this further as all eight teachers interviewed

confirmed that an administrator following-up on feedback was something they had not

experienced or may have experienced once in their entire teaching career. One of the

challenges that both teachers and administrators cited about following up on classroom

observations was that there are often multiple evaluators for a teacher each year. If the

school principal observes the teacher in the first observation window, the second

observation is often completed by a central office supervisor or administrator, which can

make following up on feedback more difficult.

Danielson (2016) contends that for teachers to grow and improve they need to be

challenged, but also supported. In the current teacher evaluation model in Chase

Township Public Schools, a teacher may be challenged to improve in a specific

instructional domain, but the component that is often missing is the support, the follow-

up to check on progress, and to collaboratively work toward the instructional

improvement goal. Research has shown that meaningful and lasting teacher growth and

improvement is more likely to occur when feedback is followed by check-ins, follow-ups,

and ongoing levels of support (Drago-Severson & Blum DeStefano, 2016). Embedding

the process of follow-up with a consistent administrator would not only increase the

probability that recommendations and suggestions are implemented; it would also build

trust and provide clarity for teachers who can be left confused by very divergent or even

conflicting feedback from two different supervisors.

Theme Three: The Value of Teacher Evaluation in the Context of Time

The perceived value of teacher evaluation related to the time required to complete all the necessary components was the third theme that emerged from this study. The survey found that almost 85% of teachers believed that feedback provided through the evaluation system was extremely or somewhat helpful. The semi-structured interviews also confirmed that both teachers and administrators considered the observation and feedback process, when it occurred, as the most valuable part of the teacher evaluation system. Despite these findings, almost 50% of teachers participating in the survey felt that the teacher evaluation process was not worth the investment of time and this was corroborated by the semi-structured interviews. In addition, seven of eight teachers interviewed commented that there are at least components of the evaluation process that are not worth the investment of time. It is significant to note that teachers distinguished between the observation and feedback opportunities and the teacher evaluation process as whole.

If stakeholders believe that the observation and feedback process is valuable, there must be components of teacher evaluation that are undermining the overall impact and perceived benefit as it relates to the investment of time. When examining the value of different components of the teacher evaluation process through the semi-structured interviews, Professional Development Plans (PDPs) and Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) were commonly cited as components that were not useful or that should be eliminated. These ancillary components of the evaluation process, which are likely contributing to the belief that teacher evaluation is not worth the investment of time, connect back to Knowles' (1968) principles of andragogy, or the science of helping

adults learn. One of the principles that Knowles discussed was the concept that adults

need to know why they need to learn something. The semi-structured interviews revealed

that there was a lack of clarity around why teachers needed to complete PDPs and SGOs.

The most common response was that it was simply expected; other terms used included

that it was a requirement or 'checking the box'. Teachers, for the most part, did not see

the value or meaning in completing SGOs or PDPs. Principals agreed. In the semi-

structured interviews, all four principals stated that SGOs are one of the least useful

components of teacher evaluation, and two of four principals acknowledged that PDPs, as

they are being used, were not meaningful or useful.

A second principle from Knowles' (1968) work on adult learning was that adults

want to learn content that is relevant to their lives and work. It was clear that most

teachers interviewed did not believe that SGOs or PDPs were relevant to their work.

Teachers commented that PDPs are "… a lot of fluff," "… not very helpful," and "not

that meaningful." In discussing SGOs, teachers shared they are "… such a silly waste of

time because we're in total control," and "the least useful part of the evaluation process is

easily the SGO." If there is value or relevance in these ancillary evaluation components,

teachers do not see it.

The finding that teachers value receiving feedback in Chase Township Public

Schools is significant and different from other studies examining teacher evaluation. For

example, Lane (2019) found that teachers were skeptical about the feedback process as

they "doubted the connection between the observation protocol and earning a high

relative evaluation score" (p. 22). He also found teachers did not believe that evaluation

rubrics necessarily require educational excellence and that you can spend energy on

getting a high evaluation score even if you are neglecting what you need to do to improve your instruction (Lane, 2019). While some of these beliefs may be shared by teachers in CTPS, most educators found value in the observation and feedback process and several of those who were interviewed suggested additional feedback opportunities as a way to improve the teacher evaluation process. It is important to understand the strengths of any system, as well as the weaknesses; teacher feedback is a strength in CTPS that should be leveraged to improve teacher evaluation and better support teacher growth and improvement.

Summary of Themes

The data from the teacher survey and semi-structured interviews was analyzed leading to the identification of three important teacher evaluation themes in Chase Township Public Schools:

1. Observation feedback, when it occurs, is viewed as important and meaningful by both teachers and administrators; but it does not happen often enough.

2. There is little evidence that follow-up on observation feedback is a common practice among administrators. It is also not an embedded expectation of the formal teacher evaluation system.

3. Ancillary components of teacher evaluation, such as student growth objectives and professional development plans, contribute to a large percentage of teachers believing that the teacher evaluation process is not worth the investment of time.

These three key findings form the basis for the teacher evaluation recommendations provided to Chase Township Public Schools.

Recommendations

  The data from the teacher evaluation survey and the qualitative interviews presented several positive findings relating to the teacher evaluation system in Chase Township Public Schools. The results from the survey revealed that teachers felt that eight of the top ten research-based feedback strategies (Drago-Severson, Blum-DeStefano, 2016) were effectively employed within the current evaluation system. In addition, 85% of teachers surveyed found that feedback given through the observation and feedback process was meaningful.

  The recommendations below are designed to address the three teacher evaluation themes that emerged from the data in this study. The research on feedback and adult learning theory will be connected to the recommendations with the goal of improving the process and the outcomes of teacher evaluation in CTPS. The researcher has intentionally focused on limiting recommendations to the four changes that could have the greatest positive impact while also ensuring that changes are manageable and practical without the need for significant additional training or resources.

  Recommendation 1: increase opportunities for classroom observations and feedback. One finding in this study was universal in the data: participants believed that the observation and feedback process was the most meaningful part of the teacher evaluation process. The data also clearly demonstrated that teachers have very few opportunities to engage in the feedback process.

  One of the ten research-based best practices for effective feedback, culled from prominent education researchers and organizations by Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano (2016), is that feedback should be regular and ongoing. Feedback that occurs

occasionally or irregularly has been proven to be far less effective (Buron & McDonald-Mann, 2011). The importance of making feedback regular and ongoing with frequent check-ins and communications is a pillar of supporting growth and improvement.

The reality of the current evaluation system is that tenured staff members (those with four years of experience) are only formally observed twice per year out of 180 possible school days, which equates to being observed 0.01% of the time they are teaching. If we look at non-tenured teachers (those in the first four years in the district), they have three observations over 180 days, which means they are observed 0.016% of the time they are teaching.

When asked about how the evaluation system could be improved, more than half of the teachers interviewed suggested additional observations.

Mrs. Green stated: "I think if we could add one or two informal pop-ins for administrators that would be valuable — especially with admin focusing more on a coach role than an evaluative role."

Mrs. Walters added, "I would much rather an administrator come into my room for ten minutes every day and say, 'Okay, this was great or this we can try differently'."

The data from the teacher evaluation survey also supported the lack of opportunities for teachers to engage in the observation and feedback process as 96% of teachers reported they never or rarely received feedback from the evaluation system. The elementary principals agreed with increasing the number of observations.

Mr. Wayne suggested "… more frequent lower stakes observations" as one way to improve our current evaluation model.

Mrs. Prince also suggested more informal observation pieces: "… walkthroughs,

check-ins, and things like that."

Classroom observations are viewed as meaningful, and the data shows they do not happen often enough. The recommendation is to, at a minimum, double the number of opportunities for teachers to engage in the observation and feedback process. Tenured staff members would receive a total of four observations per year and non-tenured teachers would be observed a total of six times each year. These additional observations would allow for more consistent and ongoing feedback over the course of a school year. It is recommended that the first observation include a goal setting pre-conference with the administrator and teacher where the teacher would identify the area they want to focus on for improvement and the first observation would be an informal observation that follows a coaching model and is less evaluative in nature. There would be no formal documentation or score connected to the informal observation other than the requirement that an informal observation is followed by a feedback conversation.

The second observation would be a formal written observation that would connect back to the same goal set in the pre-conference for observation one. In consideration of Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano's ten highly effective feedback strategies (2016), this would also address strategy 7 to be consistent. This framework would build trust with teachers as the administrator and teacher would work hand-in-hand with the first observation acting as a trial run for the second formal observation that would be scored using the district's evaluation rubric. The remaining observations would follow the same protocol: one informal observation that includes a feedback conversation between the teacher and administrator; it is key that the same administrator observe both the informal and formal lessons. These informal observations that are sandwiched between more

119

formal observations would require less time from administrators as they will not have to provide formal written documentation.

Recommendation 2: embed follow-up in the feedback process. "In both the business and education realms, following up on feedback remains a vital component of effective evaluation and professional learning" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016). The importance of following up on feedback can be seen in the work of prominent education scholars, including Danielson (2011), Elmore (2005, 2008), and Marshall (2013); however, data from this study showed that it is not a commonly employed evaluation protocol in Chase Township Public Schools. The practice of following up with teachers after the initial feedback conference is also not formally embedded in the district's evaluation system. The second recommendation to improve the teacher evaluation process is to codify the feedback follow-up protocols in the teacher evaluation system to ensure that following up on the initial feedback becomes an expectation and common practice in the district.

During teacher semi-structured interviews, participants were asked about administrator follow-up after an observation and all eight teachers shared similar responses: essentially that they had not experienced follow-up or that it just did not happen.

In talking about follow-up after observations Mrs. DeMara shared, "The problem is that it's short-lived. I wish there was some kind of follow-up to the feedback. I wish it was an ongoing process."

Mr. Wilson added, "I think there should be more follow up, because that is not necessarily something I've seen."

In addition, only 20% of teachers surveyed strongly agreed that administrators follow up with teachers on feedback following a classroom observation and post-conference.

There are a couple of possible reasons why follow-up is not a common feedback practice in CTPS:

1. It is not formally required or embedded in the district evaluation system

2. In many cases different administrators observe the same teacher in the same evaluation year, which reduces the opportunities to follow-up on feedback

The research on follow-up is clear: it is one of the most important and impactful feedback strategies when it is implemented effectively (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016). The fact that it is not currently utilized or a common expectation of the teacher evaluation system in Chase Township Public Schools is a missed opportunity to impact educators. If follow-up became an embedded piece of the teacher evaluation system, it would help teachers see that feedback is not a singular event, but an ongoing effort that can positively support teacher growth and improvement (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016). It would also help close the feedback loop provided to teachers; administrators could either recognize that a teacher has successfully implemented a suggestion or strategy or provide additional support or resources to help a teacher find success. Formalizing the expectation of follow-up as part of the evaluation system would increase the likelihood that suggested changes to instructional practice are implemented and sustained over time (Elmore, 2005; Elmore, 2008; Danielson, 2011; Marshall, 2013).

Recommendation 3: Redesign or eliminate ancillary evaluation components. As discussed in Recommendation 1, almost all teachers find value in the observation and

feedback process. In contrast to this finding, when survey participants were asked if the teacher evaluation process was worth the investment of time almost half of the teacher participants responded that it was not. In addition, during the semi-structured interviews seven of eight teachers felt that the time requirement for TE was not commensurate with the impact or benefit of going through the evaluation process. The conclusion drawn from this data: there are pieces of the teacher evaluation that require an investment of time that has very little or no impact on teacher improvement or growth; consequently, these ancillary components (e.g. Student Growth Objectives [SGOs] and Professional Development Plans [PDPs]) are diminishing the overall value of teacher evaluation.

Teachers and administrators agreed that SGOs are not an impactful component of the teacher evaluation system.

Mrs. Walters said this about SGOs: "SGOs to me are such a silly waste of time because we're in total control."

Mrs. DeMara added "… the least useful part of the evaluation process is easily the SGO."

The administrators all concurred that SGOs were not a useful part of the teacher evaluation process.

Mr. Wayne stated, "In terms of not meaningful — SGOs, they defy human nature — no one is going to score themselves a '2'on an SGO and lower their score."

Mr. Clark added, "I think that SGOs, my experience with SGOs from an administrative lens, have been a waste of time."

Professional Development Plans also had agreement from both teachers and administrators that they were not a meaningful or useful part of the evaluation process.

From the administrator perspective, Mrs. Prince shared that PDPs and SGOs "…have become really watered down, they become a clerical task to complete."

Mrs. Kane shared that it was a close call as to whether SGOs or PDPs were the least impactful part of the evaluation. "If you are asking me right now, I think SGOs are least impactful and PDPs follow closely behind."

Teachers shared similar sentiments about PDPs.

Mrs. Richards stated emphatically when asked about components of teacher evaluation that are not valuable: "PDPs out completely."

Mrs. Romanoff shared that PDPs were the least useful part of the evaluation process and Mrs. Walters added, "PDP is more like goal setting for us, so I don't think they're very helpful."

These ancillary components that form the comprehensive teacher evaluation system must be meaningful or they undermine the most important objective of teacher evaluation: teacher improvement and growth. In connecting back to Knowles (1968) and the principles of how adults learn, there are two principles of andragogy that are in conflict with these ancillary pieces of the teacher evaluation system:

1. That adults need to know why they need to learn something

2. Adults want to learn content that is relevant to their lives and work

In looking at both teacher and administrator interviews on the topic of SGOs and PDPs, the reason why teachers engage in the practice of completing SGOs and PDPs is unclear. It is an annual teacher evaluation requirement but there is no clear benefit or purpose that stakeholders can identify. It is also evident that stakeholders do not see a connection between SGOs and PDPs and their day-to-day work as educators.

It is recommended that Chase Township work with stakeholders, both teachers and administrators, to reimagine SGOs and PDPs so that they become a relevant and meaningful part of the teacher evaluation process. This would require an investment of time and ongoing professional development; in the absence of significant changes to these ancillary components they will continue to have a negative net impact on teacher evaluation. In their current form, eliminating SGOs and PDPs entirely would have a more positive effect than keeping them as part of the evaluation process. Teachers and administrators shared concerns about the amount of time that is invested in these ancillary components of the evaluation process; if these components are streamlined and more targeted, it would help offset additional time requirements due to the suggested increase in providing teachers with more feedback opportunities. This would also likely lead to an improved overall view of the teacher evaluation system while reducing the demands and required time from both teachers and administrators. If teachers do not see the value and meaning in these additional teacher evaluation components, it will continue to be viewed as a clerical task that detracts from the potential impact of teacher evaluation.

Recommendation 4: differentiate the delivery of feedback. Teachers have been asked to differentiate instruction for students based on their individual needs for years. The process of differentiation includes having a deep understanding of the student, determining the current strengths and weaknesses, and targeting instruction in a way that meets students where they are and helps them learn and grow to the maximum extent possible (Tomlinson, 2008). "As one educator noted, it's virtually impossible to make content relevant for learners whom you don't know" (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 27). While

differentiation is a relatively common practice for many educators, it is not as common when it comes to teacher evaluation and the observation and feedback process. Just like students, teachers are individuals with different strengths and needs. If the aim of teacher evaluation is to make feedback relevant and meaningful to every teacher, it is important that we differentiate the way we deliver feedback. "Understanding these differences, and their strengths and potential limitations, can help us enrich our own propensities for giving feedback so that colleagues can best take in and learn from it" (Drago-Severson & Blum DeStefano, 2016, p. 119).

One of the last questions on the survey included four statements about how teachers learn best from feedback. These four statements included characteristics of different ways of knowing (Drago-Severson & Blum DeStefano, 2016). The responses to this question demonstrate the importance of differentiating the delivery of feedback. Teachers revealed in this survey question that they learn best from feedback when it includes: praise and recognition followed by suggestions framed positively (40%), collaboration and reflection on the lesson, but they identify ways the lesson can be improved and set goals (24.5%), a few suggestions or ideas presented as options, but they make the decisions about next steps and goals (20%), and specific concrete examples and step-by-step support (15%). The significant percentages in each of these responses demonstrates that there is no singular approach to delivering feedback that would adequately address the needs of most teachers. However, if an administrator understands how a teacher prefers to receive feedback, it could help guide the feedback conversation in a meaningful and positive way (Drago-Severson & Blum DeStefano, 2016).

It is suggested that administrators learn about Ways of Knowing and then adapt

their feedback conversations with teachers to match how teachers learn best from feedback. One resource for this is Drago-Severson's short one page article titled: *How Do You 'Know'?* which was adapted from the book, *Leading adult learning: supporting adult development in our schools (Drago-Severson, 2010).* This short article (see Appendix J) is available to view online and includes an overview of each of the four ways of knowing, including guiding questions, concerns and ways to support each type of knower. This one-page document can be a springboard to a conversation where the administrator can gain a better understanding of how an individual teacher learns best from feedback.

Connecting to the Conceptual Framework
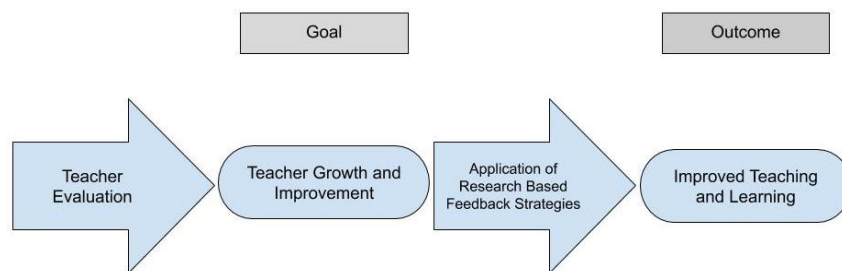
Figure 1. Teacher Evaluation Process

Figure 1 illustrates how the application of research-based feedback strategies can help better realize the goal of teacher growth and improvement when embedded in the teacher evaluation system and ultimately lead to improved teaching and learning. In the themes and recommendations offered in the previous section, the teacher evaluation findings in Chase Township Public Schools were filtered through the lens of adult learning theory, and more specifically, the top research-based best practices concerning adult learners and feedback.

In Theme 1, the study found that teachers and administrators valued the

observation and feedback process; however, there were few opportunities to engage in the feedback loop. The infrequency of feedback opportunities is in direct conflict with two of the top ten research-based feedback strategies: that feedback is regular and ongoing and is consistent (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016). In addition, Buron & McDonald-Mann highlight the cumulative benefit of ongoing feedback: "Because the benefits of feedback are accrued over time, you should give feedback often" (Buron & McDonald-Mann, 2011, p. 8).

In Theme 2, both the survey and interview findings suggested that once feedback had been shared with a teacher following a classroom observation the feedback loop would end and there was no further dialogue or discussion. There was little evidence of follow-ups or check-ins to provide ongoing support after feedback had been given to a teacher. However, adult learning theory and feedback research suggest that feedback in isolation, given one time without ongoing support, typically does not result in sustained changes to practice (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016; Buron & McDonald-Mann, 2011). Moreover, following up on feedback is one of the most impactful feedback strategies when it is employed consistently and in an environment where trust has been established (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016).

In Theme 3, there was an identified disparity between how teachers felt about teacher evaluation as a whole, compared to how they felt about the observation and feedback process. Teachers' responses were primarily positive regarding observations and feedback, while study participants had primarily negative responses when asked about whether the teacher evaluation process was worth the investment of time. The discrepancy in these two responses suggests that there are required components of teacher

evaluation where the investment of time does not align with the perceived impact or benefit. This connects back to Knowles' (1968) principles of adult learning theory — specifically that adults:

- need to know why they need to learn something

- want to learn content that is relevant to their lives and work

The additional requirements of teacher evaluation — for example, student growth objectives and professional development plans — violate these two core principles of adult learning for many educators. The study data indicated that most teachers did not see a benefit to these ancillary pieces of the evaluation process; however, the majority of teachers interviewed reported that SGOs and PDPs take a significant amount of time to complete.

Teacher evaluation should predominantly focus on supporting adult learners, which is why the recommendations provided in this section are grounded in adult learning theory and research-based feedback practices. The work of scholars in the field of education should serve as the impetus for changes to the teacher evaluation process in Chase Township Public Schools so that we can improve the process and help ensure that all teachers see the value and benefit of the teacher evaluation process.

Summary of Recommendations

Chapter Five offered four recommendations to improve the current evaluation system in Chase Township Public Schools. These recommendations were based on findings from this study and the literature on adult learning theory and feedback. Furthermore, the recommendations contained within Chapter Five were designed to require little in terms of human or physical resources so that they had the greatest

likelihood of becoming fully realized. For example, the recommendation to increase

classroom observations is counter-balanced by the recommendation to redesign ancillary

components of the teacher evaluation process so that the net impact on time required is

neutral or perhaps even reduced. The intention is to transition these concepts from

recommendations to practice; therefore, gaining the support of the leadership team in

Chase Township Public Schools is critical. The recommendations to be presented to the

leadership team include a commitment to increasing opportunities for classroom

observations, ensuring that follow-up is an embedded and consistent part of the

evaluation process, redesigning ancillary components of teacher evaluation (i.e. SGOs

and PDPs) and differentiating the way feedback is delivered to teachers. If these changes

to the teacher evaluation process are implemented, the teacher evaluation process would

better align with best practices and research in adult learning theory and feedback, as well

as increasing the likelihood that teacher evaluation is viewed in a positive light by all

stakeholders.

Action Communications

The next section includes the action communications used to convey the

recommendations presented in this study to the leadership team in Chase Township

Public Schools. The communications consist of a briefing memo and a slides

presentation.

Action Communication: Briefing Memo to Leadership Team

Intended audience. This memo will be emailed to the members of the district

leadership team, which include the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and director

of special services. This memo will also be shared with the principals of the four schools who participated in this study.

Purpose. The purpose of this memo conveys the studies major findings and connected recommendations with the intended goal of improving the process and outcomes of teacher evaluation in Chase Township Public Schools. This memo serves as a standalone reference document that can also be paired with the slides presentation.

To: CTPS Leadership Team

From: David Stratuik, Ed. D, University of Virginia

Date: July 1, 2021

Subject: Recommendations for changes to the Teacher Evaluation System based on research conducted December 2020-January 2021

Dear Chase Township Public Schools Leadership Team,

I have been an elementary school principal for the past six years serving at two different elementary schools. During that time, I have had many opportunities to engage in the teacher evaluation process. I am continually amazed by the incredible quality of the educators I observe, but I also know that these educators, like all of us in leadership, are committed to continuous growth and improvement. It was for that reason that I wanted to explore perceptions around the teacher evaluation process, better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and uncover possible ways it may be improved.

Teacher evaluation holds the potential to help almost every teacher improve and it is one of our most significant levers to positively impact teacher practice. Teacher evaluation also requires a significant investment of time on the part of both our teachers and administrators. It is for all of these reasons that teacher evaluation process should continually be evaluated and assessed to determine effectiveness.

I want to thank you for allowing me to conduct this study in your district. There were a number of positive findings that speak to the quality of educators and administrators you have in Chase Township Public Schools. One small example, in the teacher evaluation survey, which had very strong participation among your teachers (~60%), it was reported that eight of the top ten research-based feedback strategies are effectively employed within your district. The study also found that the majority of teachers found value in the observation and feedback process, half of the teachers interviewed even suggested adding additional opportunities for observation and feedback as a potential way to improve teacher evaluation. This is a strong indication that there is trust between your teachers and administrators and that the dialogue that happens after a classroom observation is positive and learning focused.

While there is much to celebrate in the data, there are always areas for improvement and growth. The recommendations below are based on the findings from this study. The recommendations connected to these findings are grounded in adult learning theory research with a focus on feedback.

Recommendations:

1. **Increase Opportunities for Classroom Observations and Feedback:** The study data revealed that teachers and administrators believed that the observation and feedback process was valuable. However, the data also showed that teachers have very few opportunities to receive feedback (as few as two times per year). Research has shown that in order to maximize effectiveness, feedback should be regular and ongoing (Marshall, 2012; Drago-Severson & Blum DeStefano, 2016). It is recommended that, at a minimum, opportunities for teachers to engage in the observation and feedback process are doubled. Tenured staff members would be observed four times and non-tenured or novice teachers would be observed six times per year.

2. **Embed Follow-Up in the Feedback Process:** When asked what happens after receiving feedback all eight teachers interviewed shared that there was no follow-up and that nothing happened following a post-conference where recommendations or suggestions were shared. Research tells us that following up on feedback is one of the most impactful feedback strategies that can be employed when it is utilized in an environment of trust (Danielson 2011; Elmore 2005, 2008; Marshall, 2013). It is recommended that follow-up is formally embed as part of the teacher evaluation process. It is also suggested that there is a consistent administrator who observes the same teacher over the course of the year so that follow-up dialogue is more meaningful, and the message and instructional focus remains consistent.

3. **Redesign Ancillary Evaluation Components:** While teachers found value in the observation and feedback process, when asked if they believe teacher evaluation was worth the investment of time, most teachers said it was not. It is notable that teachers distinguished between receiving observation feedback and the teacher evaluation system as a whole. Further, when teachers were asked about components of teacher evaluation that were not meaningful or useful, almost all teachers and all four principals pointed to student growth objectives. Professional Development Plans were also identified by teachers and administrators as a component of evaluation that is not very useful. It is recommended that CTPS redesigns and invests in professional learning around these ancillary pieces of the evaluation system with input from teachers and administrators. Two of the key tenets of adult learning theory are that adults need to know why they need to learn something and that it has to be relevant to their work and lives (Knowles, 1968). Teachers are currently unclear on the why behind PDPs and SGOs and interview responses indicate that they do not see the connection between these components of teacher evaluation and their work as educators.

4. **Differentiate the Delivery of Feedback:** Our teachers have been differentiating instruction for students for many years, yet as administrators, we often utilize the

same feedback approach with all teachers. Teachers, like students, are individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses, and teachers learn from and accept feedback in different ways. When teachers were asked to select a statement the best matches how they like to receive feedback the answers varied significantly. If administrators took the time to better understand the way a teacher best learns from feedback, it would result in more meaningful dialogues and a greater likelihood that observation feedback is implemented and sustained (Drago-Severson & Blum DeStefano, 2016).

In closing, Chase Township Public Schools has a lot to celebrate in examining the findings from this study. However, as a district that is focused on continuous growth and improvement, leveraging the aforementioned recommendations to improve the teacher evaluation system can lead to more positive outcomes for teachers and subsequently, students. Thank you again for allowing me to learn from the outstanding educators and leaders in Chase Township Public Schools, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you have about the findings or recommendations. I wish you all the very best.

Sincerely,

Dave Stratuik, Ed. D.

University of Virginia

Problem of Practice

Teacher evaluation has undergone significant reform over the past couple of decades; however, the changes (over several years) to the evaluation process have not had a clear impact on teacher growth and improvement, student learning, or teacher accountability (CTPS Evaluation Data 2015–18; Dynarski, 2016; Weisberg et al., 2009).

UNIVERSITY *VIRGINIA* | SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Problem of Practice

School districts have invested a significant amount of time and money on improving teacher evaluation. If we consider the two overarching goals of evaluation – accountability and teacher growth, are we closer to realizing these goals?

UNIVERSITY *VIRGINIA* | SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Purpose of Study

- To describe and understand teacher and administrator perceptions of teacher evaluation in CTPS
- To determine the extent to which teachers and administrators believe feedback helps to improve instructional practice.
- To consider how CTPS may improve the teacher evaluation process so that they are better able to support teacher improvement and growth.

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA | SCHOOL of EDUCATION and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the nature of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the current teacher evaluation process?

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA | SCHOOL of EDUCATION and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Research Questions

Sub Question A:
- *What aspect of the evaluation process are regarded as most and least useful?*

Sub Question B:
- *Does the impact of teacher evaluation warrant the amount of time spent on the evaluation process?*

Sub Question C:
- *To what extent does the teacher evaluation process contribute to teacher growth?*

Sub Question D:
- *To what extend do teachers and administrators believe the evaluation process is effective in identifying effective and ineffective teachers?*

UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA | SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Research Questions

Question 2: To what extent do teachers and administrators believe the feedback received within the teacher evaluation process in CTPS positively impacts teacher growth?

UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA | SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Research Questions

Sub Question A:
- Do administrators believe they positively impact teacher practice through the current evaluation process?

Sub Question B:
- Do teachers believe the evaluation process positively impacts their instructional practice?

UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA | SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Research Questions

Question 3: What changes (if any) do teachers and administrators suggest that could improve the teacher evaluation process?

UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA | SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Conceptual Framework

Research Design

- **Two-phase, mixed methods: electronic survey and qualitative interviews**
- **Phase 1: 4 schools**
  - All certificated teaching staff (171 teachers) were invited to participate in the K-5 elementary schools in district
  - 30 Question survey
  - ~ 60% of certificated teaching staff completed the survey
- **Phase 2: 4 schools – semi-structured interviews**
  - All 4 principals and two teachers at each school were interviewed.

Findings: Theme 1

Theme 1: Opportunities for Feedback are limited

The data from the study revealed that both teachers and administrators believe that the classroom observation and feedback process is valuable. However, the survey data showed that nearly 96% of teachers responded that they never or rarely receive feedback as part of the formal evaluation system.

Increasing opportunities for feedback was also one of the most common suggestions from teachers to improve the teacher evaluation process.

UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA | SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Findings: Theme 1

"I think the more time administrators can spend in the classroom, the more valuable it will be."

- CTPS Teacher

"I think additional observations, so that we can provide feedback over the year"

- CTPS Principal

"…having more frequent, lower stakes observations" would improve the teacher evaluation process.

- CTPS Principal

UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA | SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Findings: Theme 2

Administrator follow-up after initial feedback conversations is not a common evaluation practice.

The study found that all eight teachers interviewed agreed that there was no follow-up after an initial feedback conversation.

"The problem is that it's short-lived. I wish there was some kind of follow-up to the feedback. I wish it was more of an ongoing process"

- CTPS Teacher

"I think there should be more follow-up, because that is not necessarily something that I've seen."

- CTPS Teacher

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA | SCHOOL of EDUCATION and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Findings: Theme 3

Ancillary components of teacher evaluation (SGOs, PDPs) are contributing to the belief that teacher evaluation is not worth the investment of time.

- Almost 50% of teachers felt that the teacher evaluation process was not worth the investment of time (despite 85% believing that the observation and feedback process was valuable).

- In interviews, teachers and administrators suggested that SGOs and PDPs are not a valuable part of the teacher evaluation process in their current form.

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA | SCHOOL of EDUCATION and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Findings: Theme 3

"SGOs to me are such a silly waste of time because we're in total control…. I think it's more just checking the box."

- CTPS Teacher

"The least useful part of the evaluation process is easily the SGO."

- CTPS Teacher

"SGOs, they defy human nature – no one is going to score themselves a 2 on an SGO and lower their score"

- CTPS Principal

UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA   SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Increase opportunities for classroom observations and feedback

- Consider (at least) doubling the number of feedback opportunities for teachers
- Consider a mix of informal (not documented) coaching focused observations and formalized observations.
- Include a goal setting pre-conference at the beginning of the year where the teacher would identify an area of focus that would be a common theme throughout the year.

UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA   SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations

Recommendation 2: Embed follow-up in the Feedback process

- Formally embed follow-up, after an initial feedback meeting, as part of the districts evaluation system.
- Ensure that there is a consistent observer for a teacher over the course of a year.

UNIVERSITY VIRGINIA SCHOOL of EDUCATION and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations

Recommendation 3: Redesign ancillary evaluation components

- To create time for additional observations, consider redesigning and streamlining SGOs, PDPs and other ancillary evaluation components.
- Invest in ongoing professional learning, with input and feedback from teachers and administrators, so that each piece of the evaluation system is viewed as meaningful and relevant.

UNIVERSITY VIRGINIA SCHOOL of EDUCATION and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations

Recommendation 4: Differentiate the delivery of feedback

- Utilize Drago-Severson's 'Ways of Knowing' to assess the way a teacher learns best from feedback.

- If administrators understand how a teacher learns best, they can frame the feedback in the way that will be most effective and most likely to be implemented.

- Teachers absorb feedback very differently. Some teachers want concrete examples and directions on how to improve, while others prefer to have a dialogue where they take ownership of next steps.

- The survey data showed that there is no single approach to delivering feedback that would be effective for all teachers.

UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA | SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Questions

Thank you for the opportunity to work and learn from the incredible educators and leaders in Chase Township Public Schools.

Questions?

UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA | SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION *and* HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

References

Aaronson, D., Barrow, L., & Sander, W. (2007). Teachers and student achievement in the Chicago public high schools. Journal of labor Economics, 25(1), 95–135.

Alvarez, M. E., & Anderson-Ketchmark, C. (2011). Danielson's framework for teaching. *Children & Schools*, *33*(1), 61.

Attinello, J. R., Lare, D. W., & Source, F. (2006). The value of teacher portfolios for evaluation and growth. NASSP Bulletin, 90(2), 132–152.

Baker, B. D., Oluwole, J., & Green III, P. C. (2013). The legal consequences of mandating high stakes decisions based on low quality information: Teacher evaluation in the race-to-the-top era. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *21*(5).

Bergman, M. M. (Ed.). (2008). Advances in mixed methods research: Theories and applications. Sage.

Boone, H. N., & Boone, D. A. (2012). Analyzing likert data. Journal of extension, 50(2), 1–5.

Brandt, C., Mathers, C., Oliva, M., Brown-Sims, M., & Hess, J. (2007). Examining District Guidance to Schools on Teacher Evaluation Policies in the Midwest Region. Issues & Answers. REL 2007-No. 030. Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest.

Bryman, A. (2004). Social science research methods (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press.

Braun, H. I. (2005). Using student progress to evaluate teachers: A primer on value added models. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. Retrieved October 3, 2016, from http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICVAM.pdf

Buron, R. J., & McDonald-Mann, D. (2011). Giving feedback to subordinates (Vol. 86). John Wiley & Sons.

Coggshall, J. G., Rasmussen, C., Colton, A., Milton, J., & Jacques, C. (2012). Generating Teaching Effectiveness: The Role of Job-Embedded Professional Learning in Teacher Evaluation. Research & Policy Brief. National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Cousin, G. (2009). Researching learning in higher education: An introduction to contemporary methods and approaches. Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study.

Cross, K. P. (1981). *Adults as learners: Increasing participation and facilitating learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cruickshank, D. R., & Haefele, D. L. (1990). Research-based indicators: Is the glass half-full or half-empty? In Research-Based Teacher Evaluation (pp. 33–39). Springer Netherlands.

Danielson, C., & McGreal, T. L. (2000). Teacher evaluation to enhance professional practice. ASCD.

Danielson, C. (2007). Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Danielson, C. (2011). Evaluations that help teachers learn. *Educational leadership*, *68*(4), 35–39.

Danielson, C. (2013). The framework for teaching. *Evaluation Instrument. The Danielson Group*.

Danielson, C. (2016). Charlotte Danielson on rethinking teacher evaluation. Education

Week, 35(28), 20–24.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement. Education

policy analysis archives, 8, 1.

Darling-Hammond, L., Amrein-Beardsley, A., Haertel, E., & Rothstein, J. (2012).

Evaluating teacher evaluation. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *93*(6), 8–15.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2015). Can value added add value to teacher evaluation?

Educational Researcher, 44(2), 132–137.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2015). Want to close the achievement gap? Close the teaching

gap. *American Educator*, *38*(4), 14–18.

Dee, T. S., & Jacob, B. A. (2010). The impact of No Child Left Behind on students,

teachers, and schools. *Brookings papers on economic activity*, *2010*(2), 149–194.

Denner, P. R., Salzman, S. A., & Bangert, A. W. (2001). Linking teacher assessment to

student performance: A benchmarking, generalizability, and validity study of the

use of teacher work samples. Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 15(4),

287–307.

Derrington, Mary Lynne, and John W. Campbell. "Implementing new teacher evaluation

systems: Principals' concerns and supervisor support." *Journal of Educational

Change* 16.3 (2015): 305–326.

De Roche, E.F. (1987) An administrator's guide for evaluating programs and personnel.

Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Doherty, K. M., & Jacobs, S. National Council on Teacher Quality.(2013). State of the

states 2013: Connect the dots: Using evaluation of teacher effectiveness to inform

policy and practice.

Drago-Severson, E. (2009). Leading adult learning: Supporting adult development in our

   schools. Corwin Press.

Drago-Severson, E., Helsing, D., Kegan, R., Broderick, M., Popp, N., & Portnow, K.

   (2001). Three developmentally different types of learners. *Focus on basics*, *5*(B),

   7–9.

Drago-Severson, E., Blum-DeStefano, J., & Asghar, A. (2013). Learning for leadership:

   Developmental strategies for building capacity in our schools. Thousand Oaks,

   CA: Corwin.

Drago-Severson, E., & Blum-DeStefano, J. (2016). Tell me so I can hear you: A

   developmental approach to feedback for educators. Cambridge, MA: Harvard

   Education Press.

DuFour, R., & Marzano, R. J. (2009). High-leverage strategies for principal leadership.

   Educational leadership, *66*(5), 6268.

Duke, D. L. (1990). *Developing teacher evaluation systems that promote professional

   growth.* Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, *4*(2), 131–144.

Dynarski, M. (2016). Teacher observations have been a waste of time and money.

   Brookings Institute, report. December 8.

Elmore, R. (2005). Agency, reciprocity and accountability in democratic education. The

   institutions of American democracy: The public schools, 277–301.

Elmore, R. (2008). Leadership as the practice of improvement. Improving School

   Leadership, 37.

FCPS. (2012, August). Fairfax Teacher Performance Evaluation. Retrieved October 20,

   2016, from http://docplayer.net/9897695-Teacher-performance-evaluation-

program-handbook-2012-2013-fairfax-county-public-schools-department-of-human-resources.html

Feeney, E. J. (2007). Quality feedback: The essential ingredient for teacher success. The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 80(4), 191–198.

Fullan, M. (2014). *The Principal: Three Keys to Maximizing Impact*. John Wiley & Sons.

Gallagher, H. A. (2004). Vaughn Elementary's innovative teacher evaluation system: Are teacher evaluation scores related to growth in student achievement? Peabody Journal of Education, 79(4): 79–107.

Garrison, D. R. (1997). Self-directed learning: Toward a comprehensive model. *Adult education quarterly*, *48*(1), 18–33.

Goe, L. (2013). Can teacher evaluation improve teaching. Principal Leadership, 13(7), 24–29.

Goe, L., Biggers, K., & Croft, A. (2012). Linking teacher evaluation to professional development: Focusing on improving teaching and learning (Research & Policy Brief). Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. Retrieved from www.tqsource.org/publications/LinkingTeacherEval.pdf

Goe, L., Holdheide, L., & Miller, T. (2011). A practical guide to designing comprehensive teacher evaluation systems: A tool to assist in the development of teacher evaluation systems. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. Retrieved from http://www.tqsource.org/publications/practicalGuideEvalSystems.pdf

Goe, L. (2007). The Link between Teacher Quality and Student Outcomes: A Research

Synthesis. National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Goe, L., Bell, C., & Little, O. (2008). Approaches to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: A Research Synthesis. National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Goldrick, L. (2002). Improving teacher evaluation to improve teaching quality. Washington, DC: National Governors Association. Retrieved October 9, 2016, from http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/ 1202IMPROVINGTEACHEVAL.pdf

Goldhaber, D., & Anthony, E. (2007). Can teacher quality be effectively assessed? National board certification as a signal of effective teaching. *The Review of Economics and Statistics,* 89(1), 134–150.

Hanson, A. (1996). The search for a separate theory of adult learning. Boundaries of adult learning, 99–107.

Hallinger, P., Heck, R. H., & Murphy, J. (2014). Teacher evaluation and school improvement: An analysis of the evidence. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, *26*(1), 5–28.

Halverson, R. R., & Clifford, M. A. (2006). Evaluation in the wild: A distributed cognition perspective on teacher assessment. Educational Administration Quarterly, 42(4), 578–619.

Hattie, J.A. (2003, October). Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence? Background paper presented at the 2003 ACER Research Conference, Carlton Crest Hotel, Melbourne, Australia, October 19–21, 2003. Available at: https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=research_ conference_2003

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. Routledge.

Hazi, H. M., & Rucinski, D. A. (2009). Teacher evaluation as a policy target for improved student learning: A fifty-state review of statute and regulatory action since NCLB. *Education policy analysis archives*, *17*,5.

Heneman III, H. G., Milanowski, A., Kimball, S., & Odden, A. (2006). Standards-based teacher evaluation as a foundation for knowledge-and skill-based pay.

Hershberg, T., Simon, V. A., & Lea-Kruger, B. (2004). Measuring what matters: How value-added assessment can be used to drive learning gains. American School Board Journal, 2, 27–31.

Houle, C. O. (1961). The doctorate in adult education. Adult Education, 11(3), 131–134.

Hull, J. (2013). Trends in teacher evaluation: How states are measuring teacher performance. Center for Public Education.+3

Jensen, M. A. (1981). How teachers view teacher evaluation. *Education*, *102*(2), 130.

Keesler, V. A., & Howe, C. (2012). Understanding educator evaluations in Michigan: Results from year 1 of implementation. *Michigan Department of Education*.

Kersten, T. A., & Israel, M. S. (2005). Teacher Evaluation: Principals' Insights and Suggestions for Improvement. *Planning and Changing*, *36*, 47–67.

Kimball, S. M., & Milanowski, A. (2009). Examining teacher evaluation validity and leadership decision making within a standards-based evaluation system. Educational Administration Quarterly, 45(1), 34–70.

Knowles, M. S. (1968). Andragogy, not pedagogy. *Adult leadership*, *16*(10), 350–352.

Knowles, M. S. (1970). The modern practice of adult education: Andragogy versus

pedagogy.

Knowles, M. S. (1975). Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers.

Knowles, M. S. (1977). Adult Learning Processes: Pedagogy and Andragogy. *Religious Education*, *72*(2), 202.

Knowles. M. S. (1984) The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species. (3rd ed.) Houston: Gulf. 1984.

Knowles, M. S. (1989). The Making of an Adult Educator. *Chronicle Of Higher Education*, *36*(2), A15.

Kraft, M.A. & Gilmour, A.F. (2017). Revisiting the Widget Effect: Teacher evaluation reforms and the distribution of teacher effectiveness. Educational Researcher, 46(5), 234–249.

Kraft, M. A., Brunner, E. J., Dougherty, S. M., & Schwegman, D. J. (2018). Teacher Evaluation Reforms and the Supply and Quality of New Teachers.

Kupermintz, H. (2003). Teacher effects and teacher effectiveness: A validity investigation of the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System. Educational evaluation and policy analysis, 25(3), 287–298.

Kyriakides, L., Demetriou, D., & Charalambous, C. (2006). Generating criteria for evaluating teachers through teacher effectiveness research. Educational Research, 48(1), 1–20.

Lane, J. L. (2019). Maintaining the Frame: Using Frame Analysis to Explain Teacher Evaluation Policy Implementation. American Educational Research Journal.

La Paro, K. M., & Pianta, R. C. (2003). CLASS: Classroom assessment scoring system. *Charlottesville: University of Virginia.*

La Paro, K. M., Pianta, R. C., Stuhlman, M., & Hamre, B. (2002). Classroom assessment

    scoring system (CLASS). Charlottesville, VA*: National Center for Early*

    Development and Learning. University of Virginia.

Lavigne, A. L., & Olson, A. M. (2019). Teacher Evaluation Through the Eyes of the

    Principal: How Individual and School Contexts Shape Perceptions of Practice.

    Leadership and Policy in Schools, 1–22.f

Lovison, V., & Taylor, E. S. (2018). Can Teacher Evaluation Programs Improve

    Teaching?

Isoré, M. (2009). Teacher Evaluation: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a

    Literature Review. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 23. OECD Publishing

    (NJ1).

Little, O., Goe, L., & Bell, C. (2009). A Practical Guide to Evaluating Teacher

    Effectiveness. National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). School leadership that works:

    From research to results. ASCD.

Marzano, R. J., Frontier, T., & Livingston, D. (2011). Effective supervision: Supporting

    the art and science of teaching. ASCD.

Marzano, R. (2012). Teacher evaluation: What's fair? What's effective. *Educational*

    Leadership, *70*(3), 14–19.

Marshall, K. (2005). It's time to rethink teacher supervision and evaluation. Phi Delta

    Kappan, 86(10), 727–735.

Marshall, K. (2012). Fine-tuning teacher evaluation. Educational Leadership, 70(3), 50–

    53.

Marshall, K. (2013). Rethinking teacher supervision and evaluation: How to work smart, build collaboration, and close the achievement gap. John Wiley & Sons.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2011). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage publications.

Mathers, C., & Oliva, M. (2008). Improving Instruction through Effective Teacher Evaluation: Options for States and Districts. TQ Research & Policy Brief. National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

McCaffrey, D. F., Lockwood, J. R., Koretz, D., Louis, T. A., & Hamilton, L. (2004). Models for value-added modeling of teacher effects. Journal of educational and behavioral statistics, 29(1), 67–101.

McGrath, M. J. (2000). The human dynamics of personnel evaluation. School Administrator, 57(9), 34–38.

McGowan, J., Sampson, M., & Lefebvre, C. (2010). An Evidence Based Checklist for the Peer Review of Electronic Search Strategies (PRESS EBC). Evidence Based Library and Information Practice, 5(1), 149–154.

Medley, D. M., & Coker, H. (1987). The accuracy of principals' judgments of teacher performance. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *80*(4), 242–247.

Merriam, S. B. (2001). Andragogy and self-directed learning: Pillars of adult learning theory. *New directions for adult and continuing education*, *2001*(89), 3–14.

Merriam, S. B. (2004). The changing landscape of adult learning theory. In *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, Volume 4* (pp. 213–234). Routledge.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). Qualitative case study research. Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation, 39–54.

Milanowski, A. T., Kimball, S. M., & White, B. (2004). The relationship between standards-based teacher evaluation scores and student achievement: Replication and extensions at three sites. TC, 4(01).

Mujis, D. (2006). Measuring teacher effectiveness: Some methodological reflections. Educational Research and Evaluation, 12(1), 53–74

Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Basics of Social Research*. Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

Papay, J. (2012). Refocusing the debate: Assessing the purposes and tools of teacher evaluation. *Harvard Educational Review*, *82*(1), 123–141.

Peterson, K. D. (2000). Teacher evaluation: A comprehensive guide to new directions and practices (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Peterson, K. (2004). Research on school teacher evaluation. NASSP Bulletin, 88(639), 60–79.

Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2014). Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice. Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott/Williams & Wilkins Health.

Rand Education (2012). Teachers matter: Understanding teachers' impact on student achievement. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/corporate_pubs/CP693z1-2012-09.htm

Sanders, W. L., & Horn, S. P. (1998). Research findings from the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) database: Implications for educational evaluation and research. Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 12(3), 247–256.

Sanders, W. L. (2000). Value-Added Assessment from Student Achievement Data:

Opportunities and Hurdles. Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 14(4), 329–339.

Sawchuk, S., & Michigan, I. (2013). Teachers' ratings still high despite new measures. *Education Week*, 32(20), 18–19.

Sawchuk, S. (2016). ESSA loosens reins on teacher evaluations, qualifications. *Education Week*, *35*(15), 14–15.

Schardt, C., Adams, M. B., Owens, T., Keitz, S., & Fontelo, P. (2007). Utilization of the PICO framework to improve searching PubMed for clinical questions. BMC medical informatics and decision making, 7(1), 1.

Stecher, B. M., Holtzman, D. J., Garet, M. S., Hamilton, L. S., Engberg, J., Steiner, E. D., & Chambers, J. (2018). Improving teaching effectiveness: Final report. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Available at: www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2242.html (accessed January 6 2019)

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research*. Sage publications.

Stronge, J. H. (1995). Balancing individual and institutional goals in educational personnel evaluation: A conceptual framework. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, *21*(2), 131–151.

Stronge, J. H. (2005). *Evaluating teaching: A guide to current thinking and best practice.* Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Stronge, J. H. (2006). Teacher evaluation and school improvement: Improving the educational landscape. *Evaluating teaching: A guide to current thinking and best practice,* 2, 1–23.

Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., Tucker, P. D., & Hindman, J. L. (2007). What is the

relationship between teacher quality and student achievement? An exploratory study. Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 20(3–4), 165–184.

Stronge, J. H. (2012). Stronge teacher effectiveness performance evaluation system. *Alexandria, VA: Stronge & Associates. International Biometric Society*, *52*(1), 249–264.

Stronge, J. H (2012). Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers.

Stronge, J. (2013). *Evaluating what good teachers do: Eight research-based standards for assessing teacher excellence*. Routledge.

Stronge, J., & Tucker, P. (2017). *Handbook on Teacher Evaluation with CD-ROM*. Routledge.

Stronge, J. H. (2018). *Qualities of effective teachers*. ASCD.

Taylor, E. S., & Tyler, J. H. (2012). The effect of evaluation on teacher performance. *American Economic Review*, *102*(7), 3628–51.

Thomas, David. (2006). A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation. 27*, 237–246.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2008). Goals of Differentiation. Educational leadership.

Tucker, P. D. (1997). Lake Wobegon: Where all teachers are competent (or, have we come to terms with the problem of incompetent teachers?). *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, *11*(2), 103–126.

Tucker, P. D., Stronge, J. H., & Gareis, C. R. (2002). Handbook on teacher portfolios for evaluation and professional development (Vol. 1). Eye on Education.

Tucker, P. D., & Stronge, J. H. (2005). Linking teacher evaluation and student learning.

ASCD.

Taylor, E. S., & Tyler, J. H. (2012). Can Teacher Evaluation Improve Teaching?
Education Next, 12(4).

Toch, T., & Rothman, R. (2008). Rush to Judgment: Teacher Evaluation in Public
Education. Education Sector Reports. Education Sector.

Tough, A. (1971). The Adult's Learning Projects. A Fresh Approach to Theory and
Practice in Adult Learning.

Wise, A. E., Darling-Hammond, L., McLaughlin, M. W., & Bernstein, H. T. (1985).
Teacher evaluation: A study of effective practices. *The Elementary School
Journal,* 86(1), 61–121.

Weisberg, D., Sexton, S., Mulhern, J., Keeling, D., Schunck, J., Palcisco, A., & Morgan,
K. (2009). *The widget effect: Our national failure to acknowledge and act on
differences in teacher effectiveness.* New Teacher Project.

Yariv, E. (2004). "Challenging" teachers. *Educational Management Administration
Quarterly*, 32, 149–169.

Appendix A

Survey Construction

Survey Question	Research Question Addressed	Source	Comment
#1 Feedback from formal observation as part of evaluation	RQ2	[RAND Nationwide Look at Teacher Perceptions of Feedback and Evaluation Systems (2018)](#)	Block 1 (How often)
#2 Feedback from other teachers	RQ2	[RAND (2018)](#)	Block 1
#3 informal feedback from School Leaders	RQ2	[RAND (2018)](#)	Block 1
#4 Feedback from coach or mentor	RQ2	[RAND (2018)](#)	Block 1
#5 Feedback as part of formal observation	RQ2	[RAND (2018)](#)	Block 2 – How helpful for improving instructional practice
#6 Feedback (informal) from other teachers	RQ2	[RAND (2018)](#)	Block 2
#7 Feedback (informal) form school leaders	RQ2	[RAND (2018)](#)	Block 2
#8 Feedback from coach or mentor	RQ2	[RAND (2018)](#)	Block 2
#9 Feedback was individualized and tailored	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 3 – current implementation of research-based feedback strategies
#10 Specific and focused feedback	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 3
#11 Feedback was objective and nonjudgmental	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 3
#12 admin was positive and compassionate when providing feedback	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 3

#13 trust admin, felt safe and comfortable	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 3
#14 Feedback is regular and ongoing	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 3
#15 The feedback was consistent	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 3
#16 Feedback was timely	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 3
#17 There was follow up on feedback and offering of support	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 3
#18 I had opportunity to respond, reflect and contribute to feedback conversation with admin	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 3
#19 Trends in student achievement data for your students (student growth percentile/value added)	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 4- Which pieces went into your evaluation?
#20 Percentage of students achieving proficiency (or average student achievement level)	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 4
#21 Success with meeting learning objectives or student growth objectives (SGOs)	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 4
#22 Schoolwide student achievement	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 4
#23 Ratings from classroom observations	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 4
#24 Ratings from validated externally developed student surveys	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 4
#25 Informal student feedback (teacher developed surveys)	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 4

160

#26 Parent feedback	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 4
#27 Feedback from coach or mentor	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 4
#28 Feedback from admin through evaluation process helped me be a better teacher	RQ2	RAND (2018)	Block 5- Agreement with following statements regarding formal evaluation process.
#29 Teacher evaluation is successful at identifying effective and ineffective teachers	RQ1 (d)	RAND (2018)	Block 5
#30 teacher evaluation is worth investment of time	RQ1 (b)	RAND (2018)	Block 5
#31 Teacher evaluation is intended to promote teacher growth and development	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 6 – Indicate agreement about purpose of teacher evaluation
#32 TE is intended to help improve instructional practice	RQ1(c)	RAND (2018)	Block 6
#33 TE is intended to improve student learning	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 6
#34 TE intended to inform teacher promotion, retention and/or placement	RQ1	RAND (2018)	Block 6
#35 I learn best from feedback when…	RQ2	Drago-Severson & Blum – Tell Me So I Can Hear (2016)	Block 7
#36 Please share any thoughts or suggestions you have to improve the teacher evaluation process?	RQ3	Open ended	Block

Appendix B

Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation Survey (adopted from RAND)

Please click on this link to review the online informed consent agreement for this survey. This information was also included in the email sent to you with the link to this survey. Once you've reviewed the informed consent, please click the 'I Agree' button to continue with this survey.

Please note: Some of the questions in this survey will refer to "last regular evaluation cycle" or "typical evaluation", these terms refer to evaluations conducted prior to COVID-19.

Thank you!

○ I Agree

Please indicate how many years you have been teaching.

○ 0-5

○ 6-10

○ 10 or more

← →

In a typical month, how often do you receive feedback on your instructional practices from each of the following sources?

	Never	Rarely (approximately once per month or less)	Occasionally (approximately 2-3 times per month)	Often or Daily (approximately 1-5 times per week)
Feedback from formal observation as part of evaluation system	○	○	○	○
Feedback from informal observation by other teachers	○	○	○	○
Feedback from informal observation by school leaders	○	○	○	○
Feedback from coach or mentor	○	○	○	○

← →

Think about times during your teaching career when you have received feedback on your instruction. Looking at the possible feedback options below, how helpful was that type in improving your instructional practice? If you did not experience a certain type of feedback, please select n/a.

	Not Helpful at All	Mostly Not Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Extremely Helpful	N/A
Feedback from formal observation as part of evaluation system	○	○	○	○	○
Feedback from informal observation by other teachers	○	○	○	○	○
Feedback from informal observation by school leaders	○	○	○	○	○
Feedback from coach or mentor	○	○	○	○	○

Indicate your agreement with the following statements about the feedback process following formal observations in your school district during your **last regular evaluation cycle**.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	I Don't Know
The feedback given to me was individualized and tailored for me.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The feedback I was given was specific and focused with clear expectations and concrete examples.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The feedback given to me was objective and nonjudgmental.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My administrator was positive and compassionate while providing feedback.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

← →

Indicate your agreement with the following statements about the feedback process following formal observations in your school district during your **last regular evaluation cycle**.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	I Don't Know
I trust my administrator and felt safe and comfortable during feedback conversations.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I get feedback from my administrator on a regular and ongoing basis.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The feedback given to me was consistent.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

← →

Indicate your agreement with the following statements about the feedback process following formal observations in your school district during your **last regular evaluation cycle**.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	I Don't Know
The feedback given to me was timely.	○	○	○	○	○
My administrator followed up on feedback that was provided to see how I was doing and they offered additional support if I need it.	○	○	○	○	○
I had the opportunity to respond, reflect and contribute to the feedback conversation with my administrator.	○	○	○	○	○

←   →

Think about the last **regular** year-end evaluations of your teaching you received. To the best of your knowledge, which pieces of information went into that evaluation?

	Not Included	Optional	Included	I Don't Know
Trends in student achievement for the students you teach (e.g., value-added or student growth percentile)	○	○	○	○
Percentage of your students achieving proficiency (or the average student achievement level)	○	○	○	○
Success of your students in meeting student learning objectives (SLOs) or student growth objectives (SGOs)	○	○	○	○
Schoolwide achievement level (e.g., schoolwide value-added, schoolwide percentage proficient)	○	○	○	○

←   →

Think about the last **regular** year-end evaluations of your teaching you received. To the best of your knowledge, which pieces of information went into that evaluation?

	Not Included	Optional	Included	I Don't Know
Ratings from classroom observations	○	○	○	○
Ratings from validated externally-developed student surveys (e.g. Tripod)	○	○	○	○
Informal student feedback (e.g., teacher-developed student surveys, other feedback)	○	○	○	○

← →

Think about the last **regular** year-end evaluations of your teaching you received. To the best of your knowledge, which pieces of information went into that evaluation?

	Not Included	Optional	Included	I Don't Know
Parent feedback (e.g., surveys, other feedback)	○	○	○	○
Feedback from coach or mentor	○	○	○	○
Other (please specify)	○	○	○	○

← →

Thinking about your last regular evaluation cycle, *as part of* your school and/or district's formal teacher evaluation system, *how often* were you:

	Never	Once	2-3 Times	4 or More Times
...observed teaching your class?	○	○	○	○
...given feedback on your teaching?	○	○	○	○

← →

Thinking about your last regular evaluation cycle, *as part of* your school and/or district's formal teacher evaluation system, ***by whom*** were you: (check all that apply)

	Colleague or Peer	Mentor or Coach	Administrator
...observed teaching your class?	☐	☐	☐
...given feedback on your teaching?	☐	☐	☐

← →

Indicate your agreement with the following statements about the formal teacher evaluation system used in your school district during your last regular evaluation cycle.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	I Don't Know
The feedback I received from my administrator through the evaluation process helped me become a better teacher.	○	○	○	○	○
The teacher evaluation process is successful at identifying effective and ineffective teachers in my school.	○	○	○	○	○
The teacher evaluation process is worth the investment of time.	○	○	○	○	○

← →

Indicate your agreement with the following statements about the purpose of the teacher evaluation system in your district.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The teacher evaluation system is intended to promote teacher growth and development.	○	○	○	○
The teacher evaluation system is intended to help me improve my instructional practice.	○	○	○	○
The teacher evaluation system is intended to improve student learning.	○	○	○	○
The teacher evaluation system is intended to inform teacher promotion, retention, and/or placement.	○	○	○	○

← →

When my administrator provides feedback on an observation, I learn best when it includes (please select the response you most identify with):

○ specific concrete examples and feedback with step-by-step support.

○ praise and recognition followed by suggestions framed positively.

○ a few suggestions or ideas presented as options, but I make the decisions about next steps and goals.

○ collaboration and reflection on the lesson, but I identify ways the lesson can be improved and set goals.

← →

Please share any additional thoughts or suggestions you have that may improve the teacher evaluation process (optional).

← →

Semi-structured Interview Protocols

Principal Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in Phase Two of my study which will more deeply examine the perceptions of administrators regarding the teacher evaluation process. This interview should take approximately 30 minutes and if you are uncomfortable answering any of the questions, please just let me know and we will skip that question.

[For Committee Review Only: Numbers following each interview question show the applicable research question.]

1. Can you start by telling me a little about your experience with the teacher evaluation process and how you approach evaluations with your staff? [RQ #1]

2. Thinking about evaluation requirements over a regular school year, how much of your time is required to complete necessary components of the teacher evaluation process? Can you estimate this as a percentage of a regular work day? [RQ#1]
   a. Do you believe that the impact of teacher evaluation is worth the time?
      i. Why or why not?

3. When you think about the evaluation process as a whole, which pieces do you think are the most useful? [RQ#1]
   a. How about least useful?

4. Do you believe the evaluation process positively impacts teacher growth? [RQ#1]
   a. Why?

5. How effective is the teacher evaluation process at identifying effective and ineffective teachers? [RQ#1]
   a. (if answer is effective or not effective) – Can you tell me more about why you think that?

We are now going to turn our focus to the feedback aspect of evaluation and specifically teacher observations. Please share with me a little about how you approach giving feedback to teachers after an observation? [RQ#2]

6. Do you believe that feedback given through the observation process positively impacts instructional practice and contributes to teacher growth?
   a. Why or why not?
   b. (If yes) What percentage of teachers do you believe improve their instructional practice based on feedback provided through the evaluation process?
   c. (if no) What do you think would need to change to make the feedback process more impactful?

7. Can you talk about how you provide feedback to teachers? What is your process for delivering feedback? [RQ#2]

   a. Once you have provided feedback, what's next?

8. Thinking about the evaluation process as a whole, how effective do you feel it is in terms of helping teachers grow and improve? [RQ#1]

   a. Why?

9. Do you have any thoughts on possible changes to teacher evaluation that could improve the process? [RQ#3]

10. That concludes our interview. Do you have any questions for me or are there any questions you answered that you wanted to discuss further?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my study. As a reminder, your answers will remain confidential and a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity.

Teacher Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Teacher Interview Protocol
Thank you for agreeing to participate in Phase Two of my study which will more deeply examine the perceptions of teachers regarding the teacher evaluation process. This interview should take approximately 30 minutes and if you are uncomfortable answering any of the questions, please just let me know and we will skip that question.

1. Can you start by telling me a little about your experience going through the teacher evaluation process? [RQ#1]

2. Thinking about evaluation requirements over a regular school year, how much of your time is required to complete necessary components of the teacher evaluation process? [RQ#1]
   a. Do you feel that the impact of teacher evaluation is worth the time?
      i. Why or why not?

3. When you think about the evaluation process as a whole, which pieces do you believe are the most useful? [RQ#1]
   a. How about least useful?

4. Do you believe the evaluation process impacts your growth and improvement as a teacher? [RQ#1]
   a. Why?
   b. (if no) What do you believe positively impacts your growth and improvement as an educator?

5. How effective is the teacher evaluation process at identifying effective and ineffective teachers? [RQ#1]
   a. (if response is simply effective or not effective) – Can you tell me more about why you think that?

6. We are now going to turn our focus a little more to the feedback aspect of evaluation and specifically teacher observations. Can you share a little about how you approach receiving feedback from an administrator? [RQ#2]

7. Do you feel that feedback given through the observation process positively impacts your instructional practice and contributes to your growth as a teacher? [RQ#2]
   a. Why or why not?
   b. (If yes) Can you tell me more about the type of feedback you've been given? How was the feedback shared with you?
   c. (if no) What do you think would need to change to make the feedback process more meaningful for you?

8. You've been given feedback following an observation. What happens next? [RQ#2]

9. Thinking about the evaluation process as a whole, how effective do you feel it is in terms of helping teachers grow and improve in general? [RQ#1]
   a. Why?

10. Do you have any thoughts on possible changes to teacher evaluation that could improve the process? [RQ#3]

11. That concludes our interview. Do you have any questions for me or are there any questions you answered that you wanted to discuss further?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my study. As a reminder, your answers will remain confidential and a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity.

Informed Consent Agreement for Online Survey

INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT
Please read this carefully before you decide to participate in this online survey.

Dear Colleague,

I am conducting a confidential online survey about the teacher evaluation process. The goal of this survey is to better understand teacher perceptions of the teacher evaluation process, and hopefully, identify ways the process may be improved.

The survey is completely voluntary, and you may skip any of the questions. The survey is expected to take approximately ten minutes to complete. There are no anticipated risks; those who complete the survey will be entered into a draw for a 25.00 Amazon gift card.

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw from the study, simply close out of the survey without submitting your answers. If you have any questions about the purposes of this study or if you would like to withdraw after your survey has been submitted, please contact David Stratuik at dstratuik@mtps.org or capstone chair, Dr. Sandra Mitchell, at spm7b@virginia.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights in this study, please contact:
Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.,
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences One Morton Dr.
Suite 500 University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392 Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Telephone: (434) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb
IRB-SBS #2015-0494

I am looking forward to your feedback on the teacher evaluation process and I sincerely thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your participation confirms that you understand your rights and that you are 18 or older.

Agree Disagree
You may print out a copy of this page for your records.

Survey Email to Teachers

Email to Teachers

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this email finds you well.

For those of you I have not had the opportunity to meet, my name is Dave Stratuik; I am the principal of Defino Central and a doctoral student at the University of Virginia. My culminating research project is focused on teacher evaluation; specifically examining the perceptions of teachers and administrators as it pertains to teacher evaluation.

Teacher evaluation is something that we engage in each year and it is an exercise that takes time and energy from all stakeholders. My hope is to better understand the perceptions of teachers and to identify areas where the process can potentially be improved.

I anticipate the survey will require less than 10 minutes to complete. Those who participate in the survey will be entered in a draw for a 25.00 Amazon gift card. There are no known risks as the survey is anonymous. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you may choose to skip questions you do not wish to answer. You may also withdraw consent and discontinue your participation at any time.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions at dstratuik@mtps.org

The survey is open until **December 23rd**. I know how busy all of you are and it truly means the world to me that you are willing to give your time and share your feedback with me. Please click on the survey link below!

I look forward to learning from you.

Sincerely,

Dave Stratuik

Appendix G

Semi-Structured Interview Email to Teachers

Dear __,

I hope this email finds you well.

As you know, I am conducting research on the teacher evaluation process for my doctoral program with the University of Virginia. You may have already participated in Phase One of my research study which involved a short survey.

In Phase Two of my study, I am conducting phone or zoom interviews (whichever you prefer) with teachers and administrators in Chase Township to dig deeper into teacher perceptions of the evaluation process. Anything shared in the interview is kept completely confidential and will be reported anonymously. Pseudonyms will be used for names and any identifying information shared will be removed. Similar to Phase One of the study, your participation is completely voluntary.

I would be so grateful if you decided to participate in an interview. I anticipate our conversation will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. I do understand it is a busy time of year and would be happy to work around your schedule. Please indicate through the link below any times that would work for you. If you don't see a time that would work, please send me an email with a couple of dates and times and I'll do my best to accommodate.

The only thing I need from you is a signed copy of the informed consent form which you can scan and email or print and send over interoffice to my attention.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions at dstratuik@mtps.org. Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to learning from you.

Sincerely,

Dave Stratuik

Appendix H

Semi-Structured Interview Email to Administrators

Email to Administrators

Dear __,

I hope this email finds you well.

As you know, I am conducting research on the teacher evaluation process for my doctoral program with the University of Virginia.

In Phase Two of my study, I am conducting phone or zoom interviews (whichever you prefer) with administrators in Chase Township Public Schools to dig deeper into administrator perceptions of the evaluation process. Anything shared in the interview is kept completely confidential and will be reported anonymously. Pseudonyms will be used for names and any identifying information shared will be removed. Your participation is completely voluntary.

I would be so grateful if you decided to participate in an interview. I anticipate our conversation will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. I do understand it is a busy time of year and would be happy to work around your schedule. Please indicate through the link below any times that would work for you. If you don't see a time that would work, please send me an email with a couple of dates and times and I'll do my best to accommodate.

The only thing I need from you is a signed copy of the informed consent form which you can scan and email or print and send over interoffice to my attention.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions at dstratuik@mtps.org. Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to learning from you.

Sincerely,

Dave Stratuik

Informed Consent Agreement for Interviews

Please read this form carefully before agreeing to participate in the study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to better understand teacher and administrator perceptions of the teacher evaluation process. The knowledge gained from this study may help identify areas of the evaluation process that can be improved and also identify components that are most meaningful to stakeholders.

What you will do in the study: In this study, you will be interviewed about the teacher evaluation process. Your experiences and feedback may lead to a better understanding of how we can improve the teacher evaluation process. You can skip any question and stop the interview at any time.

- **Time required:** The interview will require approximately 30-45 minutes of your time.

- **Risks:** There are no anticipated risks in this study.

- **Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. However, your participation will lead to a deeper understanding of teacher evaluation and may help improve the process.

- **Confidentiality:** The information you tell me is confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity.

- In order to ensure accuracy and thoroughly analyze the content of the interview I am requesting to record the interview. If we conduct the interview via Zoom, I can record either the Zoom call, or just the audio. In a phone call, I would record the audio. I will not record the interview without your approval. If you do grant approval for the interview to be recorded, you have the right to revoke approval and/or end the interview at any time.

- This project is to be completed by May 31, 2021. All interview recordings will be stored in a secure workspace until (1 year) after that date. The files will be destroyed after that date.

- **Voluntary participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

- **Right to withdraw from the study:** You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

- **How to withdraw from the study:** If you want to withdraw from the study, tell the interviewer to stop the interview at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing.

- **Payment:** You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

If you have questions about the study, contact:

David Stratuik at dstratuik@mtps.org
Principal
Defino Central Elementary School

Or

Dr. Sandra Mitchell
Department of Administration and Supervision
Curry School of Education
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903.
Telephone: 703-303-7660
spm7b@virginia.edu

To obtain more information about the study, ask questions about the research procedures, express concerns about your participation, or report illness, injury or other problems, please contact:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences
One Morton Dr. Suite 500
University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Telephone: (434) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs
Website for Research Participants: http://www.virginia.edu/vpr/participants/

Agreement:

I agree to participate in the research study described above.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

How Do You 'Know' Article

https://www.yesmagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/51/51JustTheFacts.pdf

How Do You "Know"?

Each of us has a "Way of Knowing" that filters our experience of ourselves, others, and our relationships. This chart offers a framework based on Robert Kegan's constructive-developmental theory to understand how each of us, depending on our way of knowing, develops during adulthood. It also includes ideas about how we can challenge ourselves and support each other's growth. Use the top part of the chart to identify which "way of knowing" best describes you. The bottom part shows some ways you can further your development to incorporate other ways of knowing.
—*Ellie Drago-Severson writes, consults, and teaches about adult educational leadership at Columbia University.*

Stages:	I am rule-based.	I am other-focused.	I am reflective.	I am interconnecting.
The most important thing is:	Fulfilling my own needs, interests, and desires.	Meeting expectations and getting approval.	Staying true to my values, which I generate.	Reflecting on my identity, being open to others' views and to changing myself.
Concerns:	• Rules. • Clear definition of right and wrong. • Immediate self-interest. • Other people are either helpful or obstacles. • Abstract thinking has no meaning.	• Authority figures set goals. • Self-image comes from others' judgment. • Responsible for others' feelings and vice versa. • Criticism and conflict are threatening.	• Set goals based on own values and standards. • Self-image based on my evaluation of my competencies and integrity. • Contradictory feelings and conflict are ways to learn.	• Set goals in collaboration. • Share power. • Find common ground, even with seeming opposites. • Open to exploration, conflict, complexity, and others' perspectives.
Guiding questions:	• "Will I get punished?" • "What's in it for me?"	• "Will you like/value me?" • "Will you think I am a good person?"	"Am I staying true to my own personal integrity, standards, and values?"	"How can other people's thinking help me to develop and grow?"
Tasks at your "growing edge":	• Be open to possibility of new "right" solutions. • Take on tasks that demand abstract thinking.	• Generate own values and standards. • Accept conflicting viewpoints without seeing them as a threat to relationships.	• Open up to diverse and opposing views. • Accept and learn from diverse problem-solving approaches.	• Accept that some differences cannot be resolved. • Avoid insisting on absolutely flat, nonhierarchal approaches.
Learning exercises to try:	• Dialogues that offer multiple perspectives and go beyond "right" and "wrong."	• Dialogue that helps to generate and clarify one's own values. • Share perspectives in pairs or triads before sharing with larger groups and authority figures.	Facilitate dialogue, especially when perspectives are diametrically opposed.	• Affiliate with an authority or an impersonal system. • Commit to a project without a clear purpose. • Appreciate the time it takes to reach a conclusion when others may not move at the same pace.
Ways to support the growth of these folks:	• Set clear goals and expectations, agree on step-by-step procedures and specific due dates. • Offer concrete advice, specific skills.	• Invite to leadership roles. • Demonstrate ways to confirm, acknowledge, and accept others' beliefs. • Model disagreement without threat to relationships.	• Offer opportunities to promote, analyze, and critique one's goals and ideas. • Encourage consideration of conflicting or discordant ideas.	• Encourage refraining from taking over and rushing a process. • Model sensitivity to those who do not have the same capacity (e.g., for conflict).

Source: Adapted from Drago-Severson, E., *Leading Adult Learning: Supporting Adult Development in our Schools.* Thousand Oaks: Corwin/Sage Publications, (2010). www.yesmagazine.org/51facts for additional citations.

www.yesmagazine.org :: YES! Fall 2009   47