

Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*  
Supervisory Process

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Faculty of Immaculata University

by

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In partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Immaculata, Pennsylvania

March 10, 2014

**TITLE OF DISSERTATION:**

Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of Danielson's Framework for Teaching Supervisory Process

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## Abstract

This study examined teachers' and administrators' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process. Three suburban public school districts in southeastern Pennsylvania were the focus of this study. Teachers (48) and administrators (24) were questioned through online questionnaires with Likert-type scale statements, open-ended questions, and individual interviews. The research instruments enabled the researcher to focus on the following topics: (a) the benefits of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, (b) the impact of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, and (c) improvements that can be made to Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*.

The findings of this study indicated that Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* is a supervisory process that encourages academic achievement and professional growth. Teachers and administrators reported being much more comfortable with this supervisory process when compared to those that were used previously. In addition, participants indicated the Framework provides for common language and objective components, which allow for professional discussion focused on student achievement and professional growth. An area of concern that was revealed in the study is the substantial time commitment required for the Framework to be implemented with fidelity in all schools with all professional staff.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education piloted the new teacher evaluation system called the Teacher Effectiveness Project over three years starting with the 2010-2011 school year. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the four domains indicated in Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process account for 50% of each teacher's evaluation in the new system. With Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*

being such a new process, teachers and administrators must understand the most recent research in this area to increase its effectiveness on student achievement and professional growth. However, further research is still needed in Pennsylvania to identify the Framework's strengths and weaknesses over time.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend special thanks to my dissertation chair and committee. My dissertation committee made the completion of this dissertation possible. From the onset, they supported my topic and guided me through the process with support and encouragement. To my chairperson, Sister Carol Anne Couchara, thank you for your drive and dedication. Thank you for your realistic expectations, honest feedback, and your time spent reading my work. To my committee members, Dr. Peggy Schooling and Dr. Maria Schwab, thank you for your valuable time and direction with this lengthy process. Your expertise and insight helped to improve the quality of my work; I am grateful for all of your feedback. I have learned so much from all three of you and am blessed to have had you on my committee.

To Dr. Thomas Compitello, Chairperson of the Education Division of Immaculata University, from day one, I was impressed and inspired by your professionalism and unique leadership style. It was an honor to be part of the Immaculata University doctoral program. The professionals that I came in contact with certainly inspired me to achieve my highest educational goal.

Thank you to Dr. Gerard Egan, my fourth reader, for your suggestions and feedback during my study. His support was admired and respected.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to Dr. Tina Sweeley, for granting me permission to use a revised version of her instruments in my study. I truly appreciate her willingness to support my study.

Finally, I thank God everyday for blessing me with such a beautiful family. My three sons, Ian, Quinn, and Braden, thank you for always finding a way to bring a smile to

my face. Words like “unwavering” and “steadfast” are inadequate when I consider the support of my wife, Amy. You always knew when I needed time to study and were able to keep everything else running smoothly in my absence. This was no easy task with three very active boys and a career of your own. This dissertation and doctoral work would not have been possible without your flexibility and understanding. I love you!

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## Chapter One - Introduction

### Overview

The empirical revolution that has overtaken education in the past several years has dramatically improved the profession's knowledge about the quality of public school teachers. Available tools provide estimates of just how wide and meaningful the variation in teacher quality is in school districts across the country. Whether the teacher is an exemplar teacher or one who struggles, the research specific to the impact of teachers is in line with what the Hamilton Project (Gordon, Kane, & Staiger, 2006) indicates; teacher quality is the single most important school variable affecting student achievement. Devising strategies to provide all students with skilled teachers by improving the effectiveness of teachers working in schools is at the core of recent school reform efforts.

Teacher evaluation features prominently in proposals to transform the nation's public schools. To be eligible for additional educational funding from the *Race to the Top* program, states must permit the use of student test scores in teacher evaluation and allow charter schools to expand and play a central role in efforts to turn around low-performing schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). One method to insure fair and equitable delivery of services is through the teacher evaluation process. The unfortunate reality is that many teachers believe that the feedback provided to them through a teacher evaluation by an administrator results in very little, if any, information useful for them to improve their teaching practice (Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

The weaknesses of teacher evaluation systems are documented. Exerting limited influence on instruction, they tend to have little effect on student learning or achievement

(Danielson, 2007). According to Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, and Keeling (2009), the consequences of a poor teacher evaluation process are two-fold: little improvement in teachers' instruction in the classroom and the continued employment of weak teachers. Given the influence that teachers have on student achievement, accurately evaluating their performance is essential.

The importance of meaningful teacher evaluation is receiving national attention from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) union. AFT President Randi Weingarten (2010) described a need for major changes in teacher evaluation and pledged support from the national union in this endeavor.

The National Education Association (NEA) along with the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) supports strengthening Pennsylvania's system of teacher evaluation. It is their belief that when assessment is a component of teacher evaluation, multiple measures of student learning must be used. In addition, these measures of student learning should include: curriculum-based assessments, teacher-created assessments, and other reliable measures (PSEA, 2013).

In order to be successful in supporting quality teaching as well as to remedy the problematic characteristics of ineffective instruction, one must attend to some basic principles. According to Danielson (2007), these basic purposes are: credibility in an evaluation system and commitment to professional learning.

Credibility in an evaluation system is essential. A principal or a superintendent must be accountable to the school board and the public. According to Danielson (2007), a teacher evaluation system that satisfies this requirement will include the following:

- *A consistent definition of good teaching.* To assess the quality of teaching

practice, it is essential to *define* it. One of the most widely used systems that define good teaching is the *Framework for Teaching* which describes not only the teaching that occurs in the classroom but also the behind-the-scenes work of planning and other professional work, such as communicating with families and participating in a professional community.

- *A shared understanding of this definition.* Everyone in the system including, teachers, mentors, coaches, and supervisors, must possess a shared understanding of this definition. Having a common language to describe practice increases the value of the conversations that ensue from classroom observations.
- *Skilled evaluators.* Those who support teachers, mentors, coaches, supervisors, and so on must be able to recognize classroom examples of the different components of practice, interpret that evidence against specific levels of performance, and engage teachers in productive conversations about their practice. (Danielson, 2007, pp. 2-3)

No matter how good a lesson is, it can always be better. Just as in other professions, every teacher has the responsibility to be involved in a career-long journey to improve their practice (Nolan & Hoover, 2011).

### **Need for the Study**

In 2007, the U.S. Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) projected that the nation's public schools would serve over 49 million children and would employ over 3 million teachers (Grigg, Donahue, & Dion, 2007). In addition to the apparent school-age population increase, districts are also faced with the demands of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) and the expectation that all students

achieve academic proficiency. Parallel to these growing demands, as Hazi and Rucinski (2009) indicated, an effective teacher supervisory process that each school is committed to is necessary for student achievement and professional growth to occur on a consistent basis.

If teacher evaluation systems are to be meaningful and useful, then the processes must not only be rigorous, valid, and reliable, but also engage teachers in activities that promote learning, namely self-assessment, reflection on practice, and professional conversation (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Evaluation practices are typically locally determined and vary widely across districts. They most commonly consist of an observation by an administrator, and most district evaluation policies provide little guidance on how often to observe, what criteria to follow, and how to use and share feedback from the process. Even less attention is typically paid to systematically training or calibrating administrators to ensure reliability and reduce bias in scoring. The inadequacy of this approach is apparent, as evidenced by studies showing that over 90% of teachers are classified as top performers and only a tiny percentage are denied tenure or dismissed due to evaluation results. This trend prevails even in schools with dismal student achievement scores (MET Project, 2010; Weisberg et al., 2009).

In the *Excellence in Teaching Project*, a two-year pilot program, researchers at the University of Chicago aimed to accurately measure a teacher's classroom performance (Sartain et al., 2011). The project replaced a 30-year-old teacher evaluation checklist used in Chicago Public Schools with Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* to guide their classroom observations concurrently with the required pre-observation and post-observation conferences (Sartain et al., 2011). The Chicago Public Schools' pilot



provides an insight into the perceptions of participating teachers and administrators, who signaled specific areas as being crucial to effective teacher evaluation. For teacher evaluation system to be transparent and credible, all professionals must understand what constitutes good practice. Additionally, teachers and administrators must be provided an opportunity to focus on the important issues of teaching and learning (Sartain et al., 2011).

A credible system of teacher evaluation requires higher levels of proficiency of evaluators than the old checklist, observation model. Evaluators need to be able to assess accurately, provide meaningful feedback, and engage teachers in productive conversations about practice (Danielson, 2007).

When conducted around a common understanding of good teaching and around evidence of that teaching, evaluator-teacher conversations offer a rich opportunity for professional dialogue and growth. Setting of priorities can make the best use of the time available (Downey, Steffy, Poston, & English, 2010).

As Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston's (2011) research supports, through the effective supervision of instruction, administrators can reinforce and enhance teaching practices that will contribute to improved student learning. By skillfully analyzing performance and appropriate data, administrators can provide meaningful feedback and direction to teachers that can have a profound effect on the learning that occurs in each classroom. Because student learning is the primary function of the schools, the effective supervision of instruction is one of the most critical functions of the administrator. If schools are to provide equal access to quality educational programs for all students, administrators must hold teachers accountable for providing an appropriate and well-

planned program. These programs include a variety of teaching strategies designed to meet the diverse needs of all students.

Beginning in the 2010 school year, several hundred school districts in Pennsylvania were part of a three-year pilot study specific to Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* for the design, implementation, and evaluation of a teacher and principal evaluation system. According to PDE (2013), the primary goal of the *Educator Effectiveness Project* was to develop an educator effectiveness model that will reform the way teachers and principals are evaluated, as well as to identify the critical components of training and professional growth. It was undertaken in response to the U.S. Department of Education's *Race to the Top* initiative. Under the *Race to the Top* initiative, states are required to 1) measure individual student growth, 2) design and implement transparent evaluation systems for teachers and principals that can differentiate effectiveness and take into account student growth, and are designed with principal and teacher involvement, 3) conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals, and 4) use the results of the evaluations to inform decisions (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Learning how to continually improve practice should be part of the ordinary operations of a school. Schools need to be learning communities for teachers as well as students. Creating a culture which focuses on professional inquiry is important to school improvement (Joyce & Showers, 2002).

In 2003, Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton distributed a questionnaire to 86 educators and found several key characteristics to a successful evaluation process, such as interaction between principal and teacher and consistency of the evaluation process. On the contrary, Peterson (2004) described a number of deficiencies with the teacher

evaluation process, such as inadequate feedback and lack of follow-up by the evaluator. Teachers support evaluation systems when they are involved in the criteria used to develop them (Milanowski, Heneman, & Kimball, 2009).

Sinnema and Robinson (2007) argued that the design of teacher evaluations has not been aligned in such a way as to focus on the improvement of instructional practices and student learning. The Chicago school system conducted a study that concluded no teacher was found unsatisfactory, which would be the lowest rating possible, yet over 85% of the schools were found to be failing students academically according to state standards (New Teacher Project, 2007). Principals believed that lack of sufficient time was a huge barrier to an effective teacher evaluation system (Kersten & Israel, 2005). Marshall (2009) argued that the conventional process of teacher evaluation (administrator-only evaluation of teachers) rarely changes what teachers do in the classroom.

Evidence from both informal observation and formal investigation indicates that a thoughtful approach to teacher evaluation, one that engages teachers in reflection and self-assessment, yields benefits far beyond the important goal of quality assurance. Such an approach provides the vehicle for student achievement and teacher growth by providing opportunities for professional conversation around agreed-on standards of practice (Darling-Hammond, Bransford, LePage, Hammerness, & Duffy, 2005).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Empirical evidence now supports what parents, students, and school administrators have always known: quality teaching matters (Gordon, Kane, & Staiger, 2006; Mathers & Olivia, 2008; Tucker & Stronge, 2006). However, the methods to

determining quality teaching have been under debate and vary widely depending on the particular philosophical, empirical, or political perspective. Political rhetoric has focused on getting rid of bad teachers rather than focusing on ways to improve teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Educational researchers have focused more on improving the quality of teaching through the recruitment and selection of quality teachers, professional learning communities, professional development, and developing frameworks for teaching aligned to methods of evaluation. Because teaching is complex, aligning effective teaching practices with methods to evaluate teachers presents challenges, particularly in a high stakes environment when such tools may be used to make employment decisions.

In Pennsylvania the effectiveness systems for teachers, educational specialists, and principals include a method to assess teaching and leadership practice that demonstrates impact on student achievement. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Educator Effectiveness Evaluation System for professional employees holding instructional certificates has been implemented beginning with the 2013-2014 school year using an observation instrument derived from Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. PDE has not mandated any specific edition of the *Framework for Teaching* (PDE, 2013). The initial training on the Framework for teachers and administrators was based on the 2007 edition. Nonetheless, as with any new system, especially one that impacts students, it is imperative to have a genuine understanding of how Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* is being utilized and the perceptions of this tool specific to student achievement and professional growth. This study is designed to measure teacher and administrator perceptions of Danielson's Framework specific to student achievement

and professional growth. The perceptions revealed in this study may assist school districts in planning professional development opportunities as well as curriculum revisions.

Given the upcoming implementation in Pennsylvania, it is important to study teachers' and administrators' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* because this research can inform school district policy and procedures related to student achievement and professional development. In addition, if used in conjunction with other measures, the supervisory process can support teacher effectiveness.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms have specific meaning for this study:

*Accountability* - the act of judging the effectiveness of educational services; often viewed as summative (Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

*Adequate yearly progress (AYP)* - under No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001), each state establishes a definition of "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) to use each year to determine the achievement of each public school district and individual school. AYP is diagnostic in nature, and intended to highlight where schools need improvement and should focus their resources. In Pennsylvania, AYP determination is based upon student performance in reading and mathematics on state standardized tests called the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment or PSSAs, student participation on those state standardized tests, and the attendance or graduation rates of schools.

*Formative Evaluation* -- an ongoing review to describe and analyze how an activity is carried out and to interpret the outcomes for the purpose of enhancing the professional skills of teachers; includes providing constructive feedback, acknowledging

outstanding practice, and providing assistance with professional development (Danielson & McGreal, 2005).

*The Framework for Teaching* - aspects of a teacher's responsibilities that have been documented through empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting improved student learning (Danielson, 2007).

*No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* - No Child Left Behind, or NCLB, is the common term used for the landmark federal education legislation passed in 2001 and signed into law in 2002. The purpose of the legislation is to ensure that all students are proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014 (No Child Left Behind, 2001).

*Observation* - a critical evaluation methodology for those aspects of teaching that may be directly observed; a way to witness essential aspects of teaching (Danielson, 2007).

*PDE 426, 427, and 428* - in 2003, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) adopted new teacher evaluation forms. PDE 426 is the teacher evaluation form intended for teachers with an Instructional I certificate, PDE 427 is the form that must be completed in order for teachers with Instructional I certification to apply for Instructional II certification, and PDE 428 is the teacher evaluation form intended for teachers with an Instructional II certificate. Each of the evaluation forms is based upon Danielson's Framework (PDE, 2012).

*Professional Growth* – process or processes by which teachers achieve higher levels of professional competence and expand their understanding of self, role, context, and career (Joyce & Showers, 2002).

*Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)* – organizational models of learning

intended to stimulate significant improvement in the ability of schools to achieve their objectives where schools are characterized by a shared mission, vision, and values; collective inquiry; collaborative teams; an orientation towards action and a willingness to experiment; commitment towards continuous improvement; and a focus on results (DuFour & Eaker, 2005).

*Rubric* - a guideline for rating the performance of a teacher (Danielson, 2007).

*Student Achievement* - a method by which educators evaluate the proficiency of a student, provide feedback, and plan for future lessons (Marshall, 2009).

*Summative Evaluation* – the assessment of the learning which summarizes the development of learners at a particular time for the purposes of making consequential personnel management decisions such as hiring, terminating, promotion, and tenure (Danielson, 2007).

*Teacher Effectiveness* - a method of evaluating teachers by characterizing a complex set of skills which includes dispositions of an array of planning, organizational, instructional, and assessment abilities (Danielson, 2007).

*Walk-Throughs* - a technique of frequent, focused, brief visits to classrooms that allow principals to observe first-hand the teaching and learning that are occurring in the classroom. This technique offers a time for reflection during a follow-up conference with a focus on curriculum and instruction (Downey, Steffy, Poston, & English, 2010).

### **Limitations**

There were three school districts involved in this study. The researcher depended on participation from all three levels (elementary, middle, and high school) from each school district. In addition, the accuracy of the results from the survey and personal

interviews depended on the participants' willingness to participate and their honesty. While this study was intended to provide a deeper understanding of teacher and administrator perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, these limitations should be considered when applying the results to the general population.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher and administrator perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. The following questions were explored:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process regarding effects on student achievement?
2. What are administrators' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process regarding effects on student achievement?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process regarding effects on professional growth?
4. What are administrators' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process regarding effects on professional growth?

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' and administrators' perceptions about Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. Studies have demonstrated the need for a deeper, clearer understanding of teacher evaluation systems and the inclusion of more opportunities for collaboration between administrators and teachers (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009; Weisberg et al., 2009). A study of the perceptions of teachers and administrators and their roles in assisting teachers may determine methods that positively impact student achievement and professional growth through the supervisory process.



This chapter introduced the need for the study, statement of the problem, definitions, limitations, and research questions. A review of the literature is compiled in Chapter Two.

## Chapter Two - Literature Review

### Introduction

The United States must go beyond a collection of shifting reforms to a thoughtful, well-organized set of policies specific to teacher evaluation that will enable students to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The goal of teacher evaluation is to boost student achievement and to provide feedback to teachers to improve the quality of their instructional practices. Danielson (2007) suggested that by using research a solid evaluation system could be put in place that would contribute greatly to the teaching profession as well as increase student achievement. According to Darling-Hammond (2010), the teacher evaluation process needs to become “more rigorous, and rewards for effectiveness should be encouraged using strategies that are embedded in a system of universal high-quality preparation, mentoring, and support that allow and enable good practice” (p. 14).

Howard and Gullickson (2010) emphasized that sound evaluations of teachers and principals are those that meet the *Joint Committee Standards for Educational Evaluation* (JCSEE). Personnel evaluation is defined by the JCSEE (1988) as “the systematic assessment of a person’s performance and/or qualification in relation to a professional role and some specified and defensible institution practice” (p. 27). Six major assumptions provide the foundation for the development of the standards (2008) and are summarized by Howard and Gullickson (2010, p. 343):

- Personnel evaluation must be an integral part of any educational organization’s attempt to provide effective services.
- Personnel evaluations need to be constructive in nature, causing no harm or demoralization of the person being evaluated.

- Personnel evaluations need to consider the diversity of educators.
- Personnel evaluations will be used to guide professional development.
- Standards provide guidance on how to evaluate not what to evaluate, recognizing that many theories, approaches, and philosophies of teaching and learning underlie specific criteria of performance expectations.
- The standards that apply are dependent on the purpose of the evaluation.

This chapter of relevant literature provides insight and information into the current teacher evaluation system in the United States as well as the disparity seen in the process. The topics examined in this chapter include (a) history of teacher evaluation, (b) supervision and evaluation of teachers, (c) purpose of teacher evaluation, (d) perceptions of teacher evaluations from past studies, and (e) concerns with teacher evaluations from previous research of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*.

### **History of Teacher Evaluation**

Throughout the history of the United States, schools and school districts have seen teacher supervision and evaluation evolve. In the 19th century, a teacher or administrator was designated to supervise teachers across large geographical areas. This era was referred to as the scientific phase in which the quality of teaching was evaluated by an educator who completed an evaluation checklist (Nolan & Hoover, 2011).

The early part of the 20th century saw school standards based on hierarchical models from religious institutions, the military, and the government. As a result, the supervisor was required to fulfill and support the needs of the teacher. This time period was referred to as the human relations phase (Badiali, 1998). Until the 1950s, teacher quality was judged from a moralistic and ethical perspective, with judgments based on

the grounds of teachers' personal traits (Ellett & Teddlie, 2003). Since the 1950s, these influences have led to measures of performance based on observable behaviors, although the linkage between these behaviors and student outcomes was tenuous. Over time, the accumulated knowledge from these efforts came to form the criteria used in many teacher evaluation systems today, which, in essence, consisted of an administrator evaluating a teacher by conducting brief classroom observations one or two times a year to complete a checklist or ratings form (Peterson, 2004). Brief classroom observations have continued to be the dominant approach to teacher evaluation in the 21st century (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009).

The school reform efforts of the 1980s and 1990s brought about increased attention to teacher evaluations as a critical lever for improving the quality of teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). This period saw a sharp increase in the number of states enacting laws directed at systematizing the practice of teacher evaluations.

Building on previous efforts, the National Commission on Educational Excellence published *A Nation at Risk* (1983). This document identified teacher competence and student learning as areas for reform. The Bicentennial Commission (Howsam, Corrigan, Denmark, & Nash, 1985) published a postscript to *A Nation at Risk*, which declared:

A nation is at risk when any of its professions is severely weakened. Teaching is such a profession...the basis for the genuine, sound practice of pedagogy is substantial and growing dramatically. If the nation wants to reduce its risk, it must upgrade the teaching profession and the conditions under which teachers practice. The achievement of one goal is inextricably linked to the other. (p. 77)

Madeline Hunter (1982) outlined a model that specifically described steps that

teachers should take in order to effectively deliver a lesson to students. Hunter's model was intended to guide teachers' behavior, predict outcomes, and stimulate further research. While some schools and districts turned this model into a form for teacher evaluation, Hunter (1985) stated that this model was not created to evaluate teachers but to create excellent teachers and turn marginal teachers into effective ones. The model was developed to allow observers and teachers, with knowledge and skills, to achieve excellence.

Since the turn of the 21st century, emphasis has shifted from supervision to evaluation, as well as from teacher behavior to student achievement. In their 2005 book *Linking Teacher Evaluation and Student Learning*, Tucker and Stronge discussed the importance of student achievement as a criterion in the evaluation process. Specifically, they argued for evaluation systems that determine teacher effectiveness using evidence from student gains in learning as well as observations of classroom instruction. To study how both of these components can be valued concurrently, they examined the supervisory systems in several different school districts that used data on instructional practices and learning gains. They drew a series of recommendations supporting the use of both types of data. However, their recommendations regarding the use of student achievement data were the most significant: "Given the clear and undeniable link that exists between teacher effectiveness and student learning, we support the use of student achievement information in teacher assessment. Student achievement can, and indeed should be, an important source of feedback on the effectiveness of schools, administrators, and teachers" (p. 102).

More recently, the *Race to the Top* legislation allowed for states to receive federal

funding should they create teacher evaluations that include student achievement results that inform teachers and principals on how instruction can be improved (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The initiative also provides guidelines for recruiting, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers.

### **Supervision and Evaluation of Teachers**

The concepts of teacher supervision and evaluation are similar in nature but different by definition. Nolan and Hoover (2011) defined supervision as an “organizational function concerned with promoting teacher growth, leading to improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning” (p. 6). The supervision process does not yield decisions on performance, but rather encompasses many different activities designed to enhance teacher growth. Meanwhile, teacher evaluation is defined as “an organizational function designed to make comprehensive judgments concerning teacher performance and competence for the purposes of personnel decisions such as tenure and continuing employment” (Nolan & Hoover, 2011, p. 6). This evaluation process requires a school administrator to look at instructional duties and other responsibilities and make a summative evaluation on the quality of the teacher’s performance. Thus, the two functions of the school district are complementary. Supervision models provide opportunities for teachers to produce minimally acceptable levels of performance; evaluations ensure that all teachers function at least at a minimum level or satisfactory level of performance (Nolan & Hoover, 2011).

Teacher evaluation should improve student learning in the classroom. It must analyze teaching on the basis of what students are learning as well as effectively integrate the teacher evaluation and staff development processes with school improvement.

According to Iwanicki (2001), “schools that use teacher evaluation in these ways make good progress in the quest to meet high student learning standards” (p. 57). Marzano (2007) indicated, since change is slow, especially in schools, it will take a commitment by teachers, administrators, and the board of directors to change the nature of conversations that currently exist in teacher evaluations. However, Nolan and Hoover (2011) suggested that supervision models should give a teacher an opportunity to take risks and experiment with different approaches to improve instruction. In addition these models must take place in a safe and supportive environment.

Over the years, teacher supervision and evaluation have become synonymous through different courses of action. As new research on teacher supervision and evaluation in the 21st century becomes available, many of the methods of the clinical supervision model have been modified. According to Marshall (2009), this is due to “human failings, bureaucracy, interpersonal dynamics, and politics that prevent collegiality” (p. 21). For instance, many times novice teachers are given mentors and engaged in direct supervision models to foster improvement. However, experienced teachers are given more latitude in their own supervision models such as developing plans for improvement or creating portfolios to demonstrate professional growth.

### **Purpose of Teacher Evaluation**

According to Boykin and Noguera (2011), addressing the effectiveness of teachers must be an essential part of educational reform in this country, especially in the area of teacher evaluations. The most frequently cited purposes of teacher evaluation are for quality assurance, student achievement, and professional growth. Legislators and policymakers tend to value the summative accountability of quality assurance measures

as a way to ensure the public of the quality of teaching in local schools (Danielson & McGreal, 2005).

Peterson (2000) offered these purposes of teacher evaluation in order of importance: (a) reassure teachers of good work; (b) inform others of teacher performance such as parents, non-educators, and legislators; (c) limit bad teacher evaluation practices; (d) make staffing decisions; (e) identify best practices; (f) provide examples for professional development; (g) provide data for researchers; and (h) improve performance of teachers. Additionally, because principals influence the practice of teaching through supervision and evaluation, evaluation was seen as a method to communicate goals and standards to teachers (Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

Teacher evaluations were designed in such a way that they were intended to improve a teacher's practice and provide feedback (Danielson & McGreal, 2005). Tucker and Stronge (2005) also described the purpose of evaluation as documenting and improving overall teacher performance. They defined documentation as the accountability piece that relates to judging the effectiveness of the service provided while the improvement factor relates to professional growth and assistance to teachers in reflecting on their practice. According to Marshall (2009), teacher supervision and evaluation and the link with student achievement is for "teaching teams to work collaboratively toward common curriculum expectations and using interim assessments to continuously improve teaching and attend to students who are not successful" (p. 731). Looking at documentation as one factor in teacher evaluations, Barton and Shana (2010) conducted a qualitative study that investigated principals' (K-12) perceptions of teacher evaluation practices in an urban northern California school district. Data collected



through the administration of a survey (52 returned) found that over 70% of administrators perceived the purpose of teacher evaluation was to improve instructional practices, while 6% felt it had no purpose at all, mainly because of the amount of documentation required. The inductive analysis approach was used to code open-ended responses. The results demonstrated that principals found formative and summative evaluation approaches were more effective for non-tenured teachers. Additionally, the study found the evaluation process was more supportive of tenured teachers when only formative approaches were applied. Principals found the process time intensive and lacking a clear purpose. Additional barriers ranged from teacher unions, to a lack of district support and inconsistency of implementation among principals (Barton & Shana, 2010).

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project to test new approaches to measuring effective teaching. The goal of the MET project was to improve the quality of information about teaching effectiveness available to education professionals that will help them build fair and reliable systems for measuring teacher effectiveness that can be used for a variety of purposes. The project included nearly 3000 teachers who volunteered to help identify a better approach to teacher development and evaluation, located in six predominantly urban school districts across the country. As part of the project, multiple data sources were collected and analyzed over two school years, including student achievement gains on state assessments and supplemental assessments designed to assess higher-order conceptual understanding, classroom observations and teacher reflections on their practice, assessments of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, student perceptions of

the classroom instructional environment, and teachers' perceptions of working conditions and instructional support at their schools (MET Project, 2010). The results indicated a need to focus on: working with teachers to develop accurate lists of the students in their care, so that value-added data are as accurate as possible; using confidential surveys to collect student feedback on specific aspects of a teacher's performance; retraining principals and instructional coaches to do classroom observations in a more meaningful way; and delivering such data in a timely way to school principals and teachers (MET Project, 2010).

#### **Impact of Educator Evaluations on Student Achievement.**

In an attempt to close the achievement gap among students, Marshall (2009) suggested that principals need to go beyond classroom inspections and actively engage teachers in curriculum planning, assessment analysis, and follow-up with student learning at the center of every conversation. Hence, principals can assist by "orchestrating a creative, low-stakes, collegial process that gets teacher team deeply invested in continuously improving their teaching and the students' success allowing for student achievement to be the cornerstone of learning through the evaluation process" (Marshall, 2009, p. 206).

According to Tucker and Stronge (2006), there are many reasons for including student academic progress in achievement information as part of the teacher evaluation process. Their model strongly supports using student academic progress (as one measure of student achievement) to inform teacher evaluation. Furthermore, their model strongly supports the argument that ineffective teachers negatively impact students' learning while effective teachers drive higher student achievement. In addition, Tucker and Stronge

(2005) indicated that linking student academic progress with teacher evaluation offers significant potential because progress: (a) provides an objective measure of teacher effectiveness and recognizes that students bring different levels of achievement to each classroom; (b) can serve as meaningful feedback for instructional improvement; (c) can serve as a barometer of success and a motivational tool; and (d) is derived from student assessment and is an integral facet of instruction. There are several other compelling findings related to the impact a teacher's effectiveness has on student achievement:

- A teacher in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of effectiveness can achieve in half a year what a teacher at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile can do in a full year (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004).
- The variance of teacher effects in mathematics is much larger than that in reading, possibly because mathematics is learned mostly in school and, therefore, may be more directly influenced by teachers. This finding might also be a result of greater variation in how well teachers teach mathematics (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004).
- Teachers who were highly effective in producing higher-than-expected student achievement gains (top quartile) in one end-of-course content test (reading, mathematics, science and social studies) tended to produce top quartile residual gain scores in all four content areas. Teachers who were ineffective (bottom quartile) in one content area tended to be ineffective in all four content areas (Tucker & Stronge, 2006).

Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Hedges (2004) wanted to determine the actual degree of teacher effects on student achievement. They defined teacher effects as the portion of

student achievement that remains unaccounted for after controlling for student demographics, class size, and school fixed and random effects. To examine achievement gains, the study controlled for lagged test scores and used data from the four-year Tennessee Project STAR (Student Teacher Achievement Ratio) experiment in which students and teachers were randomly assigned to classrooms with a range of teacher-pupil ratios. Their sample included 79 elementary schools in Tennessee. They found that between-classroom effects on achievement gains ranged from 0.123 (third grade) to 0.135 (second grade) for mathematics tests and from 0.066 (first grade) to 0.074 (third grade) for reading tests. All effects were significant. The between-classroom effects on achievement status were similar.

Palardy and Rumberger (2008) further pointed out that when teacher effects are separated from school effects, the effect size estimates for the teacher are substantial. The reason is that between-school variance can be attributed to the heterogeneity of teacher effectiveness across schools. The research usually assumed that the source of between-school effects on student achievement to be principal leadership, school climate, and other non-teacher factors. However, teachers are not randomly assigned to schools. Thus, the difference in the mean effectiveness of teachers across schools also contributes to the between-school variance.

Value-added assessment is defined as any method of analyzing student test data to ascertain students' growth in learning by comparing students' current level of learning to their own past learning. The use of value-added achievement test scores to evaluate teachers may be applied to recognize and reward teachers' contributions to student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2009). This concept reflects a desire to acknowledge a

teacher's contribution to student progress by taking into account where a student originates academically once entering their classroom. Value-added assessment is valuable for research on the effectiveness of specific populations and on the outcomes of various curriculum and teaching interventions by using data to make decisions. This model requires scaled tests that evaluate content measured along a continuum from year to year.

For instance, the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) was developed using a statistical model based on growth in student achievement scores rather than fixed standards (Ross et al., 2001). Pennsylvania has a similar model, Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS), which was piloted by approximately 276 school districts. Using this system, teachers are able to compare individual student growth based on the previous year's assessments, allowing each student to be used as his or her own control for learning gains. The data serves as a model for student growth but also allows for teachers to disseminate the data to create professional growth plans for the upcoming school year (PDE, 2013).

In these systems, student achievement is directly linked to teacher evaluation. Although observation and evaluation is essential for all instructional leaders, now principals and other evaluators focus on teaching practices and their effects on student learning in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As Tucker and Stronge (2005) suggest, this practice allows for the support of professional growth and ensures accountability for the school. More systematically organized information on student learning can support both goals as well as enhance the evaluation process.

Heneman, Milanowski, Kimball, and Odden (2006) conducted a multiyear mixed-

methods study investigating the validity of teacher evaluation systems in four sites throughout the country. The instruments they examined were modifications of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. They used a value-added model in which achievement was estimated based on prior achievement and other student characteristics and found positive relationships between teacher evaluation scores and student achievement gains.

Another study, conducted by Holtzapple (2003), used Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* to compare student achievement with teachers' evaluation scores using a value-added model of predicted achievement versus actual achievement in Cincinnati. The author found a relationship between the observation scores and the value-added scores for teachers.

A similar study by Kimball, White, Milanowski, and Borman (2004) examined the relationship between teacher evaluation scores and student achievement in nine grade-test combinations. Using an adaptation of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, this study estimated teacher effects on student achievement and determined that teacher practices contributed slightly to student achievement. This finding suggests that there is still much to learn about what value-added models are actually measuring.

Student ratings of teachers have been found to correlate with measures of student achievement and can serve as a useful source of feedback on teacher practice (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2010). The researchers stated that when using student surveys for evaluation purposes it may require multiple years of data collection in order to yield stable results. Another caution is that research on using student surveys for teacher evaluation is in its infancy. Furthermore, surveys differ greatly in focus and

quality and may also vary in how useful they are to teachers in terms of improving their practice.

The goal of Ferguson's (2008) research, *The Tripod Project*, was to enhance school-level capacity to attend to all three legs of the tripod - content, pedagogy, and relationships by addressing tasks of social and intellectual engagement in the classroom. In addition, this research aimed to refine our understanding of the ways that particular classroom conditions affect achievement among students of particular racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The findings from this study led to four recommendations for policy and practice: assume no motivational differences; address specific skill deficits; supply ample encouragement; and provide access to resources and learning experiences (Ferguson, 2008).

#### **Impact of Educator Evaluations on Professional Growth.**

While acknowledging that other mechanisms exist to promote growth beyond adequate competency, Stiggins and Duke (1988) indicated that the evaluation process can make a significant contribution to professional growth due to its inherent component of systematic feedback on performance. Additionally, they reported that evaluation which encompassed opportunities for individual awareness building, the setting of goals, and professional development were beneficial for experienced teachers (Stiggins & Duke, 1988).

Joyce and Showers (2002) offered an additional perspective: the importance of philosophy and purposes for evaluation serving as the system foundation to delineate clearly why teachers are evaluated and to underscore the importance of the role of the teacher evaluation system in the decision-making process. They also stressed the

importance of alignment between these purposes and performance expectations. In their viewpoint, the teacher evaluation process could serve as a natural complement to the school improvement process and thereby serve a purpose beyond an individual professional growth goal.

According to Danielson and McGreal (2005), evaluation for professional growth and development is concerned with formative purposes. Danielson and McGreal (2005) have listed (a) acknowledging and reinforcing best practice, (b) providing constructive feedback, (c) establishing direction for staff development, and (d) focusing on student learning as formative examples. In addition, they have stressed that experienced practitioners argue that professional dialogue about teaching, in a safe environment, managed and directed by teachers, is the only means by which teachers will improve their practice (Danielson & McGreal, 2005).

The role of the supervisor in formative evaluation is more of a coach or mentor than a judge. Danielson and McGreal (2005) stated that reviewing the literature over the past thirty five years has consistently supported that formative evaluation techniques have produced higher levels of satisfaction and more thoughtful and reflective practice while still being able to satisfy accountability demands.

Recent research has suggested particular features of professional development that are most effective. Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, and Goe (2011) summarized these features as follows: alignment with school goals, state, and district standards and assessments, and other professional learning activities including formative teacher evaluation; focus on core content and modeling of teaching strategies for the content; inclusion of opportunities for active learning of new teaching strategies; provisions of



opportunities for collaboration among teachers; and inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous feedback. Further, Carr and Harris (2001) emphasized the point of professional development linking directly with standards to increase academic performance for all students.

The work of teaching requires extensive knowledge of learners and learning, teaching techniques, behavior management, and the content itself. Such professional knowledge requires not only years to master fully but also the willingness to change as the evidence base of effective teaching grows, as curricula change, and as the needs of learners evolve. Given the imperative for teachers to continually hone their knowledge, skills, and practices, teaching has been aptly called the learning profession (Croft, Cogshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010).

### **Perceptions of Teacher Evaluations**

With the increasing demands placed on principals, teachers frequently perceive the evaluation process as an exercise that often does little to improve practice or instruction (Logue-Belden, 2008). In 2003, Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton studied perceptions of teacher evaluations. They surveyed 86 educators from five northwest Florida counties. Results reflected that teachers focus on principals' knowledge, skills, and abilities when accessing feedback from them. The study demonstrated that interaction between principal and teacher; consistency of the evaluation process; a principal's commitment to professional evaluation; and a principal's knowledge in pedagogy, content, and evaluation were perceived as key characteristics of a successful teacher evaluation process.

Lasswell, Pace, and Reed (2008) stated that part of NCLB (2002) has been the

higher expectations for teachers and increased accountability in reforming the teacher evaluation process. Their study highlighted principals' perceptions in Iowa of the teacher evaluation process as it related to the Iowa Teaching Standards (ITS). Furthermore, their research examined how the ITS and the Iowa Evaluator Approval Training Program (IEATP) influenced the way teacher evaluations were conducted. The results indicated that both the ITS and IEATP helped principals feel adequate about performing teacher evaluations. The results also showed that this new system had changed the way teachers were evaluated and that the framework provided by legislators and Iowa's Department of Education had a positive impact on principals and teachers in determining teacher quality.

Similarly, Nicholson-Turpin (2005) reviewed a school system in Georgia to determine if the new system of teacher evaluation, Teacher Appraisal Process (TAP), was designed appropriately and increased the effectiveness of instruction. TAP was an extensive and comprehensive assessment of the system's ability to sustain positive change over time. In Nicholson- Turpin's (2005) survey of 170 randomly selected teachers of the 487 employed in the system, the teacher evaluation process was seen as one that promoted continuous growth and allowed teachers to reflect on professional growth. Teachers also believed that designing goals and working collaboratively with each other, which were characteristics of the process, benefited their practice in the classroom as well as their ability to establish collegial relationships with administrators (Nicholson-Turpin, 2005).

A study conducted in a Missouri school district to determine a relationship of job satisfaction with evaluator perceptions, feedback received, personal attributes, evaluation

procedures, and the context of the evaluation found a positive correlation with the evaluator's perceptions and a teacher's job satisfaction, thus impacting student achievement and professional growth (Hughes, 2006). Additionally, teachers' attitudes in high and low achieving middle schools based on the state standardized assessments were examined in a study conducted by Logue-Belden (2008). This study was designed to determine if there was a link between teachers' attitudes toward their evaluations and test scores, specifically if the school met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a method through NCLB that determines if schools are meeting academic success. Logue-Belden (2008) used a modified version of the teacher evaluation profile created by Stiggins and Duke (1988) to gather information from 79 teachers, 51 from a school that had met AYP and 28 from a school that had not met AYP. Results showed that teachers did not have negative feelings toward the evaluation process in either school. Teachers in non-AYP schools believed that their evaluators spent more time examining classroom records as opposed to those in AYP schools. All teachers in the study believed that the teacher evaluation process had little effect on professional development and a significant portion of the teachers saw their evaluation as completely independent of state standardized test scores and did not see the process as one that would improve student test scores (Logue-Belden, 2008).

Researchers have suggested that teacher evaluation and student achievement have to be linked (Reeves, 2010). Myricks (2009) studied principals' perceptions in five school districts in Georgia regarding the use of formative evaluations to assist marginal teachers. This study used a questionnaire to gather data from 25 principals, out of an original 54 who received the questionnaire. As a follow up, 5 principals were

interviewed to gather more information. Overall, principals seemed to agree that formative evaluation was useful in assisting marginal teachers when multiple sources of feedback were used, including student achievement data. Myricks stated that this feedback could consist of walk-through observations, formal observations, and other anecdotal information. The principals within Myricks' (2009) study also recognized that immediate feedback was necessary as well as extending the length of observations for gathering information.

Gathering information pertaining to the perception of principals' perceptions of the teacher evaluation system in an urban school system was the focus of a study conducted by Henry-Barton (2010). For her research, Henry-Barton (2010) surveyed 52 principals from the school district after having invited a total of 79. Results suggested that principals believed that both formative and summative evaluation instruments work well with non-tenured teachers. The study found that teachers believed the system to work when presented with immediate, specific feedback regarding their teaching practices. Finally, principals in this study targeted five benefits of the current evaluation system used in their district: (a) communication, (b) record of documentation, (c) acquisition of tenure, (d) maintaining a consistent tool, and (e) instructional accountability.

### **Concerns with Teacher Evaluations**

According to Donaldson (2009), analyses of summative evaluation ratings of teachers showed that the vast majority of teachers in any school, district, or state are rated above, sometimes well above, average. Although it is possible that all teachers are above average in some schools, there is generally more variation in teacher effectiveness within

schools than between them (Donaldson, 2009).

Weisberg et al. (2009) suggested that there is a disconnect between teacher evaluation systems and actual teacher performance. Their research stated that it is illustrated by the wide gap between student outcomes and teacher ratings in many districts. Though teachers included in the report teach in schools where high percentages of students fail year after year to meet basic academic standards, less than one percent of surveyed teachers received a negative rating on their most recent evaluation.

Danielson and McGreal's (2005) findings indicated that teachers believe that the evaluation provided to them by an administrator gives them very little, if any, information useful to help them gain improvement in their classroom. Teacher evaluation systems have demonstrated that an administrator's observation causes disruption in classrooms and that the checklists administrators are required to complete have little effect on improving teachers' professional practice (Danielson & McGreal, 2005; Peterson, 2004). Peterson (2004) described that at the middle and high school levels the administrator may not have the expert knowledge in the subject material for the class being observed and they will often complain they lack the time necessary to conduct the observation to help the teachers grow professionally. The evaluations typically are of little value as they consist of one visit to the classroom by a principal who is often untrained in the evaluation process and is completing a checklist of classroom conditions and teacher behaviors that do not focus on the quality of teacher instruction (Toch & Rothman, 2008).

The problems administrators face when making evaluative decisions may have accrued through prior issues that were already present with the teacher prior to the

administrators' taking over the duties of evaluation (Goldstein, 2007). Goldstein (2007) stated that principals do not have ample time to spend on evaluations and are not involved in the professional development process in a substantive manner. Because of this, they are often uncertain that teachers have been provided the appropriate amount of time to improve as well as not having established standards in which to rate the teacher. The lack of collaboration with other administrators in evaluation procedures, as well as the thought that a negative evaluation can turn into a time consuming battle with teacher unions, can deter an administrator from issuing an honest, in-depth evaluation (Goldstein, 2007).

According to Hazi and Rucinski (2009), a study in the Chicago school system reported in 2007 by New Teacher Project found that 87% of the city's 600 schools did not issue one unsatisfactory teacher rating between 2003 and 2006. However, among that same group of schools, 69 of those schools were declared to be failing educationally. As a result of the NCLB demand for highly qualified teachers in every state, existing statutes and regulations relating to standards of evaluation were changed to hold principals and teachers more accountable. Hazi and Rucinski (2009) stated that through this procedure, an already flawed practice would be further complicated. According to Sinnema and Robinson (2007), legal complexity and the possibility of defensive behavior of both the teacher and administrator currently surround any type of evaluation procedure used in school systems. The authors stated that the lack validity of the criteria of the tools used in evaluation, along with both teachers' and administrators' acknowledging that far more teachers receive a satisfactory rating as opposed to an unsatisfactory rating, are growing concerns among many educators.

A study conducted by Kyriakides, Demetriou, and Charalambous (2006) concluded that teachers supported teacher effectiveness research models when they were involved in the development of the criteria to be used. Among the models teachers supported were: (a) setting specific outcomes; (b) using resources provided to meet outcomes; (c) judging methods used by teachers and educational results; (d) satisfying parents, students, and board members; (e) having little to no classroom issues; and (f) linking professional development to school improvement. The only model that was not supported was the accountability model, which was previously described as a model that suggested teachers demonstrate evidence of competence and responsibilities in accordance with their teaching duties (Kyriakides et al., 2006). In the same way, Marshall (2009) stated that there are many reasons conventional evaluation systems do not work. He mentioned that evaluations often fail to provide objective and actionable feedback, teachers are observed for a small amount of time, and the lessons administrators see are often atypical.

Kocak (2006) stated that the occupation of teaching is different than many other occupations, such as that of a physician, salesman, or saleswoman. Teachers face different student populations from year to year and do not have a clear description of what is expected of them nationally.

According to Braun (2005), using student achievement in the ratings of teachers is controversial. Braun discussed the complexity of this method because of the concept of turning state standards into test specifications that in turn are developed into an operational assessment. Braun suggested demonstrating good practice by reviewing characteristics of the test, such as the nature of the scaled score and the validity of the

test, in relation to the proposed use of the scores.

Myricks' (2009) study demonstrated that principals felt that lack of sufficient time was a huge barrier to an effective teacher evaluation system. The study also demonstrated that principals held different views of what made a teacher incompetent, while a few principals felt that the lack of alignment of the current evaluation system to state standards was a factor as well. Lastly, Henry-Barton's (2010) study supported five concerns with regard to the teacher evaluation system: (a) unions, (b) the evaluation process overall, (c) inconsistent implementation of the process, (d) time, and (e) lack of meaning for teachers. Myricks' and Henry-Barton's studies supported the many concerns schools and districts face regarding teacher evaluation systems.

As noted by Mathers and Olivia (2008) in a report entitled *Improving Instruction Through Effective Teacher Evaluation: Options for States and Districts*, teacher evaluation has been identified as a possible remedy to increase student achievement. In addition, teacher evaluation has surfaced recently as a tool to promote teacher professional growth. As educators and school districts research to find programs to meet the needs of their students, the one constant variable that all programs hold in common is the need to have effective teachers in the classrooms. The success and failure of programs can be traced directly back to the implementation integrity and ability of the teacher to carry out the program's goals and initiatives. Thus, improving teacher effectiveness holds the key to success for all of our schools and educational programs. Improved teacher supervision and evaluation may be the vehicle to improve the effectiveness of our teachers. As supervision and evaluation models evolved, researchers have struggled to create a systematic process that generated usable feedback that



addressed the complexities of teaching. Donaldson (2009) agreed that while historically supervision and evaluation have failed to make a significant impact on either teacher practices or student achievement the time and conditions may finally be right to improve the evaluation process. Donaldson (2009) stated:

Historically, teacher evaluation has not substantially improved instruction or expanded student learning. The last major effort to reform teacher evaluation, in the 1980s, petered out after much fanfare. Today there are reasons to believe that conditions are right for substantive improvements to evaluation. Important advances in our knowledge of effective teaching practices, shifts in the composition of the educator workforces, and changes in the context of public education provide a key opportunity for policymakers to tighten the link between teacher evaluation and student learning. (p. 1)

Finally, in a study of principal ratings of teacher performance, Nelson and Sassi (2000) found that principals tended not to delve deeply into issues of content-specific pedagogy. Instead, principals focused classroom observations on more generic teaching processes. The authors suggested that, in order to assess teacher performance accurately on standards-based instruction, evaluators must understand content matter thinking in which students engage and methods by which teachers can foster content knowledge skills.

### **Danielson's *Framework for Teaching***

Danielson and McGreal (2005) advocated the development of a rubric that can be used to measure teacher effectiveness. A rubric allows for a principal to make a professional judgment based on a deep understanding of pedagogy and explicit standards.

Rubrics explicitly describe the characteristics at each level of performance within components of a complete framework. According to Marshall (2009), when “rubrics are used in individual end-of-year evaluations of teachers, they can have a powerful impact on performance” (p. 170). The *Framework for Teaching* as developed by Danielson in 1996, adapted in 2007, and again in 2011, has many uses. For example, the Framework allows for professional preparation of new teachers, the recruitment of highly qualified teachers, a road map for novice teachers, a structure for focusing on improvement, and communication with all stakeholders.

Sweeley’s (2004) quantitative study compared the attitudes of 230 elementary, middle, and high school teachers in Pennsylvania. Her research found that, on average, a majority of teachers responded positively, agreeing or strongly agreeing with all four domains of Danielson’s (2007) *Framework for Teaching*. Sweeley (2004) determined that teachers in Pennsylvania, where Danielson’s model will eventually be mandatory, believed that the Framework was an effective instrument to increase student achievement and move teachers to opportunities to learn new strategies and methods of instruction.

According to Lane et al.’s (2013) research, there were a total of 664 teachers and 293 principals from Pennsylvania who participated in the Pennsylvania pilot study specific to Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. The results of the surveys indicated that teachers and principals were in favor of many of the aspects of the teacher evaluation rubric. In particular, they valued the domains and criteria reflected in Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* and its comprehensiveness. However, some comments indicated that not all criteria can be evaluated accurately and that the criteria. Lane et al.’s (2013) findings point to some specific recommendations:

- More extensive training with follow-ups during the year
- Spend more time on the distinction between the rubric levels
- More information on the nature of evidence for each Domain Component
- Reduce the verbiage in the criteria and redundancy across the criteria
- Clarify the distinction between Proficient and Distinguished
- Provide clear examples of the type of evidence for the Domain Components at different levels
- Start the evaluation process at the beginning of the academic year with a goal setting conference between teacher and supervisor
- Provide documentation on the evaluation process and steps required
- Have multiple formal observations (some unannounced) with conferences
- Specify more than one walk-through and more condensed rubrics for their use (and how the results from the walk-throughs would be combined with the results from the formal observations)
- Use multiple observers. (pp. 32-33)

In 2007 Danielson published the second edition of her book *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. Based on empirical studies and theoretical research in the constructivist view of quality teaching and student learning, the Framework provides a type of roadmap for both teachers and administrators by defining “what teachers should know and be able to do” (p. 1). Danielson’s teaching framework applies to all instructional levels - early childhood, elementary, middle school, or high school. Danielson’s (2007) Framework divides the act of teaching into 22 components organized into four broad domains, which are: Domain 1: Planning and Preparation,

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment, Domain 3: Instruction, and Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities.

### **Domain 1 - Planning and Preparation.**

Domain 1 defines how the teacher organizes the content they teach, and differentiates instruction based on their knowledge of their students. According to Danielson (2007), the components of a teacher's planning and preparation are: demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, demonstrating knowledge of students, setting instructional outcomes, demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, and designing student assessments.

Danielson (2007) discussed her first component of Domain 1, Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy, affirming that teachers must be knowledgeable about the content matter they are teaching. Another educational expert who supports Danielson's belief that teachers must be content experts was Erickson, author of *Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction for the Thinking Classroom* (2006). Erickson (2006) emphasized that effective teachers understand their subject matter and discipline thoroughly and can differentiate between what students must know and demonstrate. It should not be surprising that for students to build deeper understandings and retain those understandings, they need educators who are able to manipulate curriculum into essential and retainable understandings.

Besides being knowledgeable in content and pedagogy, Danielson (2007) believed teachers must also know those they teach. David Sousa, author of *Learning Manual for How the Brain Learns* (2011), and Eric Jensen, author of *Teaching with the Brain in Mind* (2005), claimed that effective educators must understand the functional

processes of human brains. Jensen (2005) believed that because students take in information through multiple senses, effective teachers work to activate multiple senses in the classroom for maximum retention. Likewise, Sousa (2011) explained the brain “chunks” working information, so teachers are wise to group similar groups of information together, building connections that help students retain information.

Jensen’s (2005) work emphasized the need to categorize information for students, and reported that effective teachers remember the physical needs of the brain, such as the brain’s need for stimulation and the cycles of the brain. Jensen (2005) contended that teachers encourage their students to stretch if they feel drowsy to get blood flowing back into the brain and to hydrate themselves regularly. Additionally, Jensen advocated other brain-friendly strategies such as activating students’ brains with humor, movement, repetition, music, and emotion.

Also important to planning and preparation is deciding upon specific daily teaching objectives. When selecting instructional goals, Martin-Kniep, author of *Becoming a Better Teacher: Eight Innovations That Work* (2000), emphasized that educators must begin planning by asking essential questions. Martin-Kniep (2000) defined essential questions as:

Their answers appear obvious at first, as with the question how far is far?

However, as the pondering begins, it becomes clear the answer is not simple at all, but rather subject to multiple perspectives and interpretations. Essential questions lead to the realization that knowledge is a growing search and one that makes life worth living. (Martin-Kniep, 2000, p. 2)

Teachers who can answer the question “Why do we need to know this?” and make

learning measurable and relevant for their students are more effective. This means that effective teachers plan each day with essential questions and objectives in mind.

Preparing to teach content often involves gathering resources that exist outside of the traditional texts and classroom for students to utilize. Danielson (2007) believed that effective teachers must both be aware of the resources available to assist teachers in teaching and resources available to help students. Danielson (2007) pointed out that:

Resources can include aids outside the classroom, such as museums, concert performances, and materials from local businesses. Teachers can draw from a wide variety of human resources, from experts within the classroom community, to those from the larger business and civic world. (p. 71)

While effective educators know their content, they are not experts of every discipline, and so knowing where to obtain the most current, accurate information is critical.

Additionally, Danielson (2007) noted that effective educators ensure that a concept makes sense for students with different learning styles by carefully planning the order and methods of instructional concepts. David Lazear's (1999) *Eight Ways of Knowing* emphasized the importance of remembering "multiple intelligences" in classrooms. Lazear (1999) believed it critical that teachers provide different methods of presenting information, different means through which students can learn information, and find different ways students can prove their understandings of the objectives.

Lazear's (1999) eight intelligences included: (a) Verbal/Linguistic, (b) Intrapersonal, (c) Interpersonal, (d) Logical/Mathematical, (e) Naturalist, (f) Visual/Spatial, (g) Bodily/Kinesthetic, and (h) Musical/Rhythmic. Because students learn differently, Lazear (1999) advocated that teachers design instruction with their students' varying

learning styles in mind.

Well-planned teachers not only plan lessons around objectives but also plan lessons with assessments in mind and have numerous ways of assessing students. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) believed in beginning with end goals in mind, posing the question, “What knowledge is worth understanding?” (p. 23). Like Martin-Kniep (2000), they recommended designing lessons around essential questions and emphasized beginning with unit outcomes in mind. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) advised teachers to ask what would be sufficient and revealing evidence of understanding. Designing meaningful lessons with end objectives in mind, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) advised, helps students retain their learning and understand the importance of what they have learned.

### **Domain 2 - The Classroom Environment.**

Domain 2 addresses the teaching and learning exchanges between teacher and student as well as between student and student. According to Danielson (2007), the components of a teacher’s classroom environment are: creating an environment of respect and rapport, establishing a culture for learning, managing classroom procedures, managing student behavior, and organizing physical space.

Danielson’s (2007) Framework noted that an effective classroom is one that displays respect and rapport between the teacher and the students, and among the students themselves. In addition, when clear procedures are in place so students know what to expect from each other, boundaries and fairness are established and everyone is ready to learn. Danielson (2007) adds that effective teachers anticipate problems and manage student behaviors, and have many models to choose from. When students’ brains are

activated and their physical needs are met, the classroom is comfortable, and the expectations are clear; there is little need for students to behave in distracting or undesirable fashions.

Danielson and McGreal (2005) suggested that effective teachers daily design the seating of classrooms around various activities. They also noted that seating arrangements send messages to students about what they must do the moment they walk in the door. Of course, the classroom must be a safe, usable environment each day as well, allowing for basic functions (i.e., sharpening pencils, getting materials, moving around). Nevertheless, classroom management experts note the classroom should reflect a different look, depending on the expectation for the day's lesson.

Danielson's (2007) research revealed that when students remember their teachers later in life, it is often for the teacher's skill in Domain 2:

According to Danielson (2007), students recall the warmth and caring their favorite teachers demonstrated, their high expectations for achievement, and their commitment to students. Students feel safe with these teachers and know that they can count on the teachers to be fair and, when necessary, compassionate. Students also notice the subtle messages they receive from teachers as to their capabilities; they don't want their teachers to be "easy." Instead, they want their teachers to push them while conveying confidence that they know the students are up to the challenge. Students are also sensitive to teachers' own attitudes toward their participants and their teaching; they are motivated by teachers who care about what they are doing, and who put their heart into their teaching. Teachers who excel in Domain 2 create an atmosphere of excitement about the importance



of learning and the significance of the content. They care deeply about their subject and incite the students to share the journey of leaning about it. (p. 28)

### **Domain 3 - Instruction.**

Domain 3, the primary function of the classroom is to promote learning through various instructional practices that include presentation, questioning and discussion techniques, and experiences that engage all students in challenging, meaningful, and applicable learning. In addition to planning and management, Danielson (2007) believed that effective teachers are effective instructors. According to Danielson (2007), the components of a teacher's instruction are: communicating with students, using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning; using assessment in instruction, and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness.

Sax (2005) maintained that effective teachers know how to communicate with boys and girls differently. He began by explaining how the genders genuinely hear differently, as girls hear sounds much more loudly than boys. Also, Sax (2005) indicated that girls are more likely to look at people and read expressions from infancy than are boys, who from infancy prefer looking away from faces. Similarly, boys preferred action and verbs, even drawing verbs with one color at early ages, while girls drew nouns using complementary colors. When communicating directions, more girls used landmarks and pictures, while boys used absolutes and directional signals. Effective teachers are aware of these differences in communication techniques and use them to enhance communication with their students. While there are numerous other areas to consider when communicating with students besides gender differences, certainly keeping in mind individual differences between students helps aid in proper communication.

When an effective teacher sees that students are especially interested in a particular concept, the teacher reroutes the lesson to capitalize on the motivation of his/her students and presents the lesson in another context (Danielson, 2007). Similarly, if a teacher sees that students are learning at a rate that is faster or slower than was originally anticipated, the effective teacher is flexible enough to accommodate the learning styles of his students (Danielson, 2007).

According to Danielson (2007), Domain 3 represents the implementation of the plans designed in Domain 1. As a result of success in Domain 3, teachers demonstrate, through their instructional skills, that they can successfully implement those plans. Their students are engaged in meaningful work, which carries significance beyond the next test and which can provide skills and knowledge necessary for answering important questions or contributing to important projects.

#### **Domain 4 - Professional Responsibilities.**

According to Danielson (2007), Domain 4 encompasses skills associated with being a teaching professional (e.g. verbal and written communication skills, record keeping, and reflective practice). The components of a teacher's professional responsibilities were defined by Danielson (2007) in her fourth and final domain as: reflecting on teaching, maintaining accurate records, communicating with families, participating in a professional community, growing and developing professionally, and showing professionalism.

Stronge (2002) believed that effective teachers are unique in their styles and personalities. Stronge's (2002) research found that all effective teachers reflect either formally or informally, and that teachers with the highest achievement rates frequently

cite reflection as a means of achieving their successes. Additionally, Stronge (2002) found that teachers with the highest rates of reflection are most likely to believe that all students can learn. Stronge's (2002) research clearly indicated that effective teachers see teaching not as a job, but as a responsibility and a calling. He indicated that effective teachers rise to the challenge of caring and holding high expectations not only for their students but also their co-workers. Stronge's research found that the most effective teachers possess similar attitudinal traits. Stronge (2002) cited these traits as:

- Exuding positive attitudes about life and teaching
- Extra hours spent preparing and reflecting upon instruction are well worth the student outcomes - specifically achievement
- Promoting and participating in a collaborative work environment results in more positive attitudes in teachers
- Effective teachers do not make excuses for student outcomes; they hold their students responsible while also accepting responsibility themselves.

According to Danielson (2007), Domain 4 consists of a wide range of professional responsibilities, from self-reflection and professional growth, to participation in a professional community, to contributions made to the profession as a whole. The components also include interactions with the families of students, and advocacy for students.

The skills in Domain 4 are demonstrated through interactions with colleagues, families, and other professionals. Some of these interactions may be documented in logs and placed in a portfolio. It is the interactions themselves that must be observed to indicate a teacher's skill and commitment (Danielson, 2007).

## Summary

Teacher evaluation systems have changed over the years. These changes have taken place because of evolving philosophies, research, and legislative mandates. The purpose of teacher evaluation has varied as well. In some systems, decisions regarding a teacher's retention, termination, or compensation received can be a result of the evaluation process; while in others it is not. More recently, the purpose of teacher evaluation has been about professional growth and accountability (Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

The vast body of research on teacher effectiveness has demonstrated that the quality of instruction provided by the teacher is the most powerful influence on student achievement (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Finding ways of accurately determining teacher effectiveness is a top priority for many states and districts because student achievement and professional growth matter. The urgency of this need has pushed ahead of research on the subject, and states and districts are now attempting to find a balance between moving forward quickly but also fairly (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010). Therefore, a quality teacher evaluation system that has support and is perceived as effective is crucial. Throughout this chapter, key components relating to teacher effectiveness and more specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* were described. These components are the foundation for the study design that is described in Chapter Three.

## Chapter Three – Methods and Procedures

### Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teacher and administrator perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* within three suburban school districts in southeastern Pennsylvania. Questionnaires as well as interviews were utilized to obtain pertinent information. This research study focused on two aspects of teacher evaluation: (a) teachers' and administrators' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* regarding student achievement, and (b) teachers' and administrators' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* regarding professional growth.

### Setting

The research sites were selected for this qualitative study because of their involvement with and implementation of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* for at least two years. For the purpose of the study, pseudonyms "A, B, and C School District" were used in place of the actual name of the study sites. The public school districts are all suburban school districts located in southeastern Pennsylvania.

### Participants

To be included in the study, each teacher and administrator must have had experience using Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* as an evaluation tool. It was a goal of the researcher that the participants represented a cross section of years in education as well as teaching assignments across elementary, middle, and high schools.

Forty-eight teachers (elementary, middle school, and high school) and 24 administrators were the responding population in this study for the questionnaire portion. In addition, seven teachers (elementary, middle school, and high school) and five

administrators who had previously completed the questionnaire volunteered for the interview.

### **Demographics.**

Table 3.1 reflects the participant demographic data for the teachers from the three school districts participating in the study. The data are specific to those who responded to the questionnaire.

Table 3.1

#### *Demographics for Teacher Questionnaire*

	School A	School B	School C
Teachers	N=11	N=10	N=27
Years in profession			
1-5 years	0	1	2
6-10 years	4	4	2
11-15 years	5	4	9
16 or more years	2	1	14
Highest level of education			
Bachelors	0	0	1
Bachelors plus 24	1	1	0
Masters or Masters Equivalency	10	9	24
Doctorate	0	0	2
Educational position			
Elementary teacher (K-6)	4	7	8
Middle school teacher (7 & 8)	4	1	11
High school teacher (9-12)	3	2	8

N=48

As indicated by the demographic information in Table 3.1, a wide range of teacher experiences was represented. Twelve participants had 10 or fewer years of

experience and 35 participants had more than 10 or more years of experience. In addition, there was equal representation of participants' educational position. As indicated by the participants, 19 teach elementary, 16 teach middle school, and 13 participants teach high school. Based upon the results of the questionnaire, 11 of the respondents were male and 37 were female. Forty-five of the participants had at least their master's degree. The years of experience ranged from one to more than 30. Of the 48 teacher participants, an average of 37 teachers responded to the four open-ended questions.

Table 3.2 reflects the participant demographic data for the administrators from the three school districts participating in the study. The data are specific to those who responded to the questionnaire.

The demographic information for the questionnaire indicates all levels of administrator experiences were represented. Eighteen participants had 10 or fewer years of experience and six participants had more than 10 or more years of experience. In addition, there was equal representation of participants' administrative position. As indicated by the participants, three are in central office, eight are elementary, three middle school, three high school, and seven are assistant principals. Based upon the results of the questionnaire, 12 of the respondents were male and 11 were female and one skipped the question. The years of administrative experience ranged from 1 to 25. Seventeen of the 24 administrator participants responded to the four open-ended questions.

Table 3.2

*Demographics for Administrator Questionnaire*

	School A	School B	School C
Administrators	N=11	N=6	N=7
Years in profession			
1-5 years	5	4	6
6-10 years	2	0	1
11-15 years	2	1	0
16 or more years	2	1	0
Current Administrative Assignment			
Central Office (Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent)	2	1	0
Elementary Principal (K-6)	4	2	2
Middle School Principal (7 & 8)	2	1	0
High School Principal (9-12)	0	1	2
Assistant Principal	3	1	3
N=24			

**Instruments**

This study used a qualitative case study approach to provide an understanding of administrators' and teachers' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, the evaluation tool used within each district. One of the most common types of data collection used to gain an individual's perception toward a particular issue is the questionnaire (Glanz, 1998). Marshall and Rossman (2010) concurred that the most appropriate method of inquiry for making inferences about a large group of people is data drawn from a small number of individuals in that group. For this study, the following instruments were used: questionnaires, which included Likert-type scale and open-ended



questions, as well as interviews.

### **Questionnaire.**

The researcher received approval from Sweeley (2004) (Appendix A) to utilize a modified version of a researcher-developed questionnaire consisting of Likert-type scale statements, followed by open-ended questions. This modified version was used as the initial data collection instrument (Appendix B). Prior to gathering data for the study, the researcher piloted the teacher and administrator questionnaires in a district not included in the study sample. However, the feedback was incorporated into the formats of the questionnaire and the interview. Specifically, a few of the questions were revised to add clarity and more focus on the research questions identified in the study. A total of 21 questions were included on the questionnaire. General demographic information was collected from teachers including gender, age, level of education, years of teaching experience, and grade-level taught. In addition, teachers' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* regarding student achievement and professional growth were obtained. The general demographic information collected through a questionnaire of the administrators also included gender, age, level of education, current administrative position and total years of administrative experience. In addition, administrators' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* regarding student achievement and professional growth were obtained. The questionnaires, which were completely anonymous and confidential, required 10-15 minutes to complete.

### **Interviews.**

The second data collection instrument consisted of teacher and administrator structured interviews (Appendix C) to gather more detailed information related to the

research questions. Glanz (1998) noted that the goal of an interview is to understand a participant's experiences related to a given situation in a non-threatening way. Glanz continued by stating that from these interviews various meanings emerge and develop, thereby shaping the discourse.

Prior to gathering data for the study, the researcher piloted the teacher and administrator interview questions with several teachers and administrators in a district not included in the study. The actual interview responses were gathered from participants who volunteered to be interviewed after completing the questionnaire. All of the teacher and administrator interviews were completed by phone. A total of seven teacher interviews were conducted with three interviews from School A and two interviews each from School B and C. In addition, a total of five administrator interviews were conducted with two interviews each from School A and C and one interview from School B. The teachers and administrators who were interviewed represented various years of experience. Interview participants were coded in an effort to maintain participant confidentiality and for data collection and organization purposes. Each interview, which required 15-20 minutes to complete, was digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed by the researcher. Each written record from the interviews was coded to ensure confidentiality.

#### **Reliability and Validity.**

Reliability is the extent to which there is consistency in one's findings and that those findings can be replicated (Merriam, 2009). Merriam also suggested that multiple methods of data collection and analysis be incorporated to gain results that are reliable. Validity is addressed by checking for the interpretation by participants who are surveyed

and interviewed to involve them in all phases of the research (Merriam, 2009). The researcher piloted the teacher and administrator questionnaires as well as the interview questions with several teachers and administrators in his own school district.

The research design of this study incorporated multiple types of data collection and methods that assisted in answering the research questions. In addition to the questionnaires, the interviews offered a way to gain an understanding of how the participants felt about the study and its impact on their profession. By combining the above methods for data collection, a comprehensive examination was conducted that utilized rigorous standards for research. Rich, thick description was used to help keep the narrative interpretation close to actual data collected. Lastly, a conscious effort was upheld throughout the study to keep the reporting of findings factually accurate and to portray accuracy in meaning given by the participants.

Triangulation is a validity procedure in which researchers search for common themes among multiple sources of information in a study (Cresswell & Miller, 2000). The use of Likert-type scale statements and open-ended questions on both the teacher and administrator questionnaires along with interview questions in multiple districts established triangulation for this study.

### **Design**

The research design involved collecting multiple forms of data to assist in the investigation, to provide depth, and to assist with triangulation. This study used a qualitative case study approach employing two instruments: a questionnaire for teachers and administrators as well as interviews of both teachers and administrators in three suburban school districts in southeastern Pennsylvania. The research focused on all three

levels (elementary, middle, and high school). The participants, teachers and administrators, from each level were asked to complete a questionnaire that included an open-ended portion. The questionnaires were designed to gain an overall understanding of administrators' and teachers' backgrounds as well as their perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* specific to student achievement and professional growth. No names were included on the questionnaires to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the process.

The interview portion of the study provided teachers and administrators an opportunity to further elaborate on their perceptions and experiences with Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. The participants who were interviewed were asked the same questions.

### **Procedure**

Permission for this study, via a formal letter, was secured from three school district superintendents. After receiving permission from each of the three participating school district superintendents, the study was submitted for approval to Immaculata University's Research Ethics Review Board (RERB) (Appendix D) to ensure that the participants' rights were protected. After receiving written approval from Immaculata's RERB, permission was requested, via email, from the participating districts' administrators to access potential teachers as well as the administrators within each school district. The communication included a consent form and web-link to the questionnaire via *SurveyMonkey*. Participants had three weeks to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to a total of 125 teachers and administrators. Forty-eight teachers and 24 administrators completed the questionnaire.

The consent form that invited each participant to voluntarily complete the questionnaire also contained the consent for participation in the interview portion of the study. Those who were interested in volunteering for the interview, as indicated at the end of the questionnaire, contacted the researcher by email. Questions for the interview emphasized teacher and administrator perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* and its perceived effectiveness specific to academic achievement and professional growth. The results were tabulated, analyzed, and are reported in Chapter Four. Data from the research instruments were analyzed and synthesized from the questionnaire and organized according to the following three topics: (a) the benefits of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, (b) the impact of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, and (c) improvements that can be made to Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. Lastly, a copy of the results of the research will be sent to all participating district superintendents.

### **Data Analysis**

The results of the data collection were analyzed to describe the perceptions of the participants regarding Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* and the perceived effectiveness specific to academic achievement and professional growth.

The six phases defined by Marshall and Rossman (2010) were used to analyze the data: (a) organize the data, (b) code the data, (c) generate themes or patterns, (d) test emerging understandings, (e) search for alternative explanations, and (f) write the report/report the results. Specifically, the researcher organized and separated the data by teacher and administrator as well as each school district that participated in the study. The data was coded to assist the researcher in the organization of the data, which also

helped to maintain the confidentiality of each participant. The themes became apparent as the researcher organized the data from the questionnaire and were further emphasized from the data collected from the interviews. Connections to the research questions were established. Perspectives of the participants will be presented in Chapter Four.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine teacher and administrator perceptions regarding Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* and its perceived effectiveness specific to academic achievement and professional growth. Teachers and administrators at all levels (elementary, middle school, high school, and central office) were invited to participate in this study. A questionnaire, which included both Likert-type questions and open-ended questions, was used. In addition, personal interviews were conducted with volunteer participants. Chapter Four presents the results of this research study.

## Chapter Four – Results

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher and administrator perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process concerning the effects on student achievement and professional growth. This chapter analyzes the data collected from researcher-designed instruments including questionnaires (with Likert-type and open-ended responses) and interviews. The questionnaire respondents, 48 teachers and 24 administrators, used *SurveyMonkey*. The questionnaire (Appendix B) consisted of 21 Likert-type scale items. As part of the questionnaire, the researcher used four open-ended questions to increase internal reliability and validity by offering a means for participants to further explain their opinions regarding the topics covered in the questionnaire. The open-ended questions were the same for both teachers and administrators. In addition, the seven teacher and five administrator interviews (Appendix C) consisted of ten questions, which were the same for each group. The research instruments focused on the following topics: (a) the benefits of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, (b) the impact of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, and (c) improvements that can be made to Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. These topics helped the researcher organize the data to be analyzed based on the study's four research questions.

### Research Question One

What are teachers' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process regarding effects on student achievement?

Interview question #3 asked the participants their perspective on the purpose(s) or

function(s) of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process, if any, during instruction. All seven teacher participants felt that there is purpose and value in Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process. Teacher A commented:

the Framework makes it very easy for a teacher to know what to focus on, which increases the chances of being effective in the classroom thus impacting student achievement. Also, when looking at the various domains, teachers and administrators can speak the same language.

Teacher B indicated that the Framework "strives to make everybody become a better teacher, by focusing on the classroom environment, instruction and reflection." Teacher B went on to highlight the value of the structured conversations between the teacher and the administrator, which is guided by the Framework. Teacher C commented "the Framework not only raises that bar for each professional but also standardizes professional practice." Teachers D and E believed the Framework provides teachers with a greater understanding about how and what they are being observed on based upon the four domains.

Interview question #4 asked the participants to identify and comment on the benefits of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process. Teachers F and G believe the four domains provide multiple areas to support a teacher's practice and that will in turn support academic achievement. In addition, Teacher A stated "self-reflection that is encouraged and supported by the Framework seems to be more directed by the four domains. What happens off-stage by proper planning and preparation on the instructional outcomes unfolds on-stage."



**Impact of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*.**

Table 4.1 analyzes the responses from the questionnaire that focused on teacher-perceived impacts of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. The questionnaire assessed each teacher’s beliefs on the degree to which the Framework is a component of increasing student achievement and the intended role of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. Questions 15 and 17 served as the data source for this topic.

Table 4.1

*Teacher Questionnaire – Impact (Student Achievement) of Danielson’s Framework for Teaching*

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15. Danielson’s <i>Framework for Teaching</i> is a significant component of increasing student achievement	9	20	15	4
	Student Achievement	Professional Growth	Mostly Student Achievement but some Professional Growth	Mostly Professional Growth but some Student Achievement
17. The intended role of Danielson’s <i>Framework for Teaching</i> is:	5	9	13	21

N=48

Responses to questionnaire item #15 regarding the teachers rating on their recent experiences with Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* indicate that 60% (N=48) of the teachers surveyed indicated that the supervision process is a significant component of increasing student achievement. Fifty-three percent (N=17) of the teacher participants with 16 or more years of service reported that the Framework is a significant component

of increasing student achievement.

Regarding questionnaire item #17, 38% (N=48) of the teachers surveyed responded that the intended role of supervision was mostly student achievement, while 63% (N=48) of the teachers surveyed indicated that the intended role of supervision was mostly professional growth. Seventy-nine percent (N=48) of the surveyed teachers responded to item # 16 indicating that the supervision process has a strong-to-average impact on a teacher's professional practice, while 21% felt there was little-to-no impact on a teacher's professional practice.

An examination of the teachers' responses to open-ended question #18 showed that 75% (N=48) of the respondents believe the supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) has contributed to student achievement. The teachers indicated the Framework encourages teachers to focus on all aspects of their classroom/teaching styles thus impacting student achievement. Specifically, two teachers' open-ended responses stated "it holds teachers more accountable for planning for student success" and "Danielson's Framework emphasizes planning backwards, so that instruction and assessments match which forces teachers to be intentional and helps focus students on the essentials. When students and teachers are clear about the intended outcomes of each unit, instruction and achievement are improved." Other participants explained the Framework allows for more reflection allowing for instructional changes to improve achievement. Still others mentioned the Framework highlights the use of assessment data in a way that addresses the specific assessment and student outcome. One participant realized the Framework, "forces us to engage in more data-driven goals to further student achievement."

Interview question #6 asked the participants their perspective on the impact of the Framework on student achievement. All seven teacher participants felt that the Framework supports and directs student achievement. Teacher A indicated that with “the planning and preparation evident in Domain 1, it is hard not to positively impact student achievement.” Teacher F commented, “the Framework forces teachers to reflect and think of ways to improve their teaching. When instruction improves, the achievement of the students improves due to more effective strategies being utilized.” In addition, Teacher G reported “the greatest influence of student achievement is due to the classroom environment and the instructional capabilities of the teacher which are promoted by Danielson’s Framework.” Two teachers indicated that an effective teacher must first have a command of classroom management strategies. Otherwise, the students will have a difficult time mastering the material. Three teachers reported that those who are able to establish a good rapport with their students tend to see higher academic achievement when compared to teachers who struggle in this component of the Framework.

#### **Suggested Improvements to Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*.**

Responses to questionnaire item #20 regarding the teachers’ recommendations on improving the supervisory process, specifically Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*, indicate the need for ongoing updates and a continued shared ownership of the process that is transparent and connected to student achievement and/or professional growth.

One teacher commented on questionnaire item #20:

the wording for a distinguished teacher involves the students driving the instruction after the teacher has carefully planned. This is extremely difficult to do with primary students. We are the ones who teach the students how to interact

and take charge of their learning. But it is more difficult to achieve the highest scores since our students cannot be as independent as older ones.

Interview question #10 asked the participants to report on any additional impact the Framework had on student achievement. Teacher G commented that the Framework “forces more parent-teacher communication, encourages teachers to be more involved in the school community and with more school activities that helps to build better relationships with students.” The same teacher stated “the Framework puts the ownership on each teacher to show evidence of what is occurring in the classroom as well as outside of the classroom to support student learning.”

As reported by five of the teachers who responded to this question, due to the Framework being a new tool in Pennsylvania, it is going to take time for teachers and administrators to fully comprehend the nuances of the system and adjust accordingly to support student achievement and professional growth. Nonetheless, all seven teacher interviewees believe that Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* is a step in the right direction.

### **Research Question Two**

What are administrators’ perceptions of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process regarding effects on student achievement?

Interview question #3 asked the participants their perspective on the purpose(s) or function(s) of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process, if any, during instruction. All five administrator participants felt that there is purpose and value in Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process. Administrator A commented, “the Framework is both formative and summative which guides good teaching

throughout the school year.” Administrator B indicated that the purpose of the Framework is it allows for reflection and directs professional growth. Further, Administrator C commented, “the purpose of the *Framework for Teaching* is that it creates a common language for the supervision of teachers. It also gives greater ownership and responsibility to the teacher to justify ratings based on performance and evidence.” Administrator C stated “the beauty of the *Framework for Teaching* is that it creates a common language for effective teaching with a rubric to go with it. We have never had this before so this is a game changer. It allows teachers and principals to engage in a richer discussion regarding the unique aspects of teaching.” Administrator D reported that the function of the Framework was to create positive collaboration among teachers and administrators. The participant went on to say the Framework allows for “the reflection and metacognition that is critical in the process.”

Interview question #4 asked the participants to identify and elaborate on the benefits of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process. Administrator A indicated that the consistent vocabulary that is included in the Framework was the major benefit of the Danielson supervisory model. Administrator B commented, “the process a tangible, living document that is formative in nature designed to support professional growth.” Furthermore, Administrator E commented:

the biggest benefits are the evidence collection process being shared by teacher and supervisor, and the ongoing shared dialogue in the process between the teacher and supervisor. It is also designed to occur over a relatively short length of time around a lesson observation, which is helpful for the most accurate evaluation as well as most meaningful feedback provided to the teacher.

### Impact of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*.

Table 4.2 displays the responses from the questionnaire that focused on administrator-perceived impacts of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. The questionnaire assessed each administrator's beliefs on the degree to which the Framework is a component of increasing student achievement and the intended role of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. Data sources included questions 13 and 15.

Table 4.2

*Administrator Questionnaire – Impact (Student Achievement) of Danielson's Framework for Teaching*

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13. Danielson's <i>Framework for Teaching</i> is a significant component of increasing student achievement	7	17	0	0
	Student Achievement	Professional Growth	Mostly Student Achievement but some Professional Growth	Mostly Professional Growth but some Student Achievement
15. The intended role of Danielson's <i>Framework for Teaching</i> is:	3	4	7	10

N=24

Responses to questionnaire item #13 regarding the administrator's rating on their recent experiences with Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* indicate that 100% (N=24) of the administrators surveyed indicated that the supervision process is a significant component of increasing student achievement.

Regarding questionnaire item #15, 42% (N=24) of the administrators reported that

the intended role of supervision was mostly student achievement, while 58% indicated that the intended role of supervision was mostly professional growth. An examination of the administrators' responses to open-ended question #18 showed that (N=24) of the respondents indicated that Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* has contributed to student achievement. Administrators indicated the Framework enhances dialogue between the teacher and supervisor thus impacting student achievement. Specifically, one open-ended response stated:

rubrics clearly define good teaching that positively impacts student achievement. All educators are using the same definition and language, making communication, collaboration, and PD around the teaching behaviors more meaningful and as students are more cognitively engaged in relevant and respectful material, they will be more successful in making achievement gains.

Two participants explained the rubrics clearly define good teaching that positively impacts student achievement. Another mentioned, "an examination of the distinguished category has helped teachers understand that they must go above the currently accepted expectations in their preparation and instruction." As reported by all five administrator interviewees in this study, the Framework appears to have a significant impact on both instruction and student achievement.

#### **Suggested Improvements to Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* by Administrators.**

Responses to questionnaire item #20 regarding the administrators' thoughts on improving the supervisory process identified a concern with time, specifically, the amount of administrator time it will consume for those responsible for conducting the

formal and informal observations. Many respondents highlighted the need for more professionals to be engaged in the process to fully impact student achievement. As experience with the supervisory tool increases for administrators, a comfort level with the Framework is also achieved, which benefits students, teachers, and administrators. One administrator commented on questionnaire item #20 that there is a need for “more ‘evaluators’ so that the process was a yearly process that benefits staff with consistency. The process is very long for an administrator to do with all staff every year.” Administrator E commented “the process is a little cumbersome at first, having so many steps. Once teachers and administrators get familiar with the process and with the domain components, it will be easier to complete with fidelity.”

### **Research Question Three**

What are teachers’ perceptions of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process regarding effects on professional growth?

#### **Benefits of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*.**

Table 4.3 analyzes the responses from the questionnaire that focused on teacher-perceived benefits of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. The questionnaire assessed each teacher’s: feeling of empowerment, the degree to which the Framework allows for more control over classroom decisions, and whether or not the Framework is individualized to meet a teacher’s needs. Questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 17 served as the data source for this topic.

Responses to questionnaire item #8 regarding the teachers’ rating on their recent experiences with Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* indicated that 73% (N=48) of the teachers reported that the supervision process was at least an above average experience.



Table 4.3

*Teacher Questionnaire - Benefits of Danielson's Framework for Teaching*

Item	High Quality Exper.	Above Average Exper.	Average Exper.	Poor Exper.	No Response
8. Rate your most recent experience Danielson's Framework for Teaching	11	24	12	0	1
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
9. Danielson's Framework for Teaching allows teachers to feel a sense of empowerment	8	28	12	0	0
10. Danielson's Framework for Teaching is individualized to meet a teacher's needs	12	24	11	0	1
11. Danielson's Framework for Teaching allows teachers to have more control over classroom decisions	7	23	16	1	1
12. Danielson's Framework for Teaching is clearly explained to teachers	22	23	2	0	1
17. I would like to continue with Danielson's Framework for Teaching	9	32	5	1	1

N=48

Questionnaire item #12 showed 94% (N=48) of the teachers surveyed “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the supervision process was clearly explained in their school district.

Furthermore, 75% (N=48) of the teachers surveyed indicated that Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* allows teachers to feel a sense of empowerment, responding either that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with questionnaire item #9. Similar results were found in response to questionnaire item #10, which was designed to determine if the supervision process (specifically Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*) is individualized to meet a teacher's needs. Seventy-five percent (N=48) of the surveyed teachers responded they either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the supervision is individualized to meet a teacher's needs, while 23% disagreed. In questionnaire item #17 it was found that 85% (N=48) of the teachers surveyed “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they would like to continue with the current supervision model, specifically Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. Questionnaire item #11 found that 63% (N=48) of the teachers agreed that the supervision process (specifically Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*) allows teachers to have more control over classroom decisions.

Table 4.4 displays the responses from the questionnaire that focused on teacher-perceived impacts of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. The questionnaire assessed each teacher’s beliefs on the intended role of supervision and how the teacher supervision process has contributed to a teacher's professional growth. Data sources included questions 14,15, and 16.

Ninety percent (N=48) of the teachers surveyed indicated that Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* encourages professional growth, responding either that they

“strongly agreed” or “agreed” with questionnaire item #14. Similar results were found in response to questionnaire item #16, which was designed to determine if the teachers felt the Framework impacted professional practices. Seventy-nine percent (N=48) of the

Table 4.4

*Teacher Questionnaire – Impact (Professional Growth) of Danielson’s Framework for Teaching*

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. Danielson’s Framework for Teaching helps teachers to grow professionally.	14	29	5	0
	Student Achievement	Professional Growth	Mostly Student Achievement but some Professional Growth	Mostly Professional Growth but some Student Achievement
15. The intended role of Danielson’s Framework for Teaching is:	5	9	13	21
	Strong Impact	Average Impact	Little Impact	No Impact
16. Rate the overall impact of Danielson’s Framework for Teaching on teachers’ professional practices.	13	25	10	0

N=48

surveyed teachers responded that the supervision process had at least “average impact” on their practices. Questionnaire item #15 was designed to measure the teachers’ perceptions on the intended role of the Framework, to which, 63% (N=48) of the teachers felt it was mostly professional growth, while 37% felt the intended role of Danielson’s

Framework is student achievement.

When teacher respondents were asked in open-ended question #19 how the supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) has contributed to a teacher's professional growth, strong opinions were expressed. Eighty-five percent (N=48) of the respondents mentioned the Framework plays an integral role in supporting professional growth. One respondent stated, "teacher along with the administrator identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement and work together towards growth." Another respondent specifically commented, "teachers develop target specific goals for growth. The goals also require evidence for teacher implementation and success." Teacher responses to open-ended question #19 also identified several other key aspects of professional growth, including: collaboration, research, and encouragement. Some teachers surveyed indicated the Framework allows teachers to have a say in what areas to improve and therefore grow. One teacher commented "Danielson's Framework raises the standard when it comes to formulating questions for assessments, preparing engaging and relevant activities, and fosters 'quality' not 'quantity' of instruction. It allows teachers to move beyond covering the curriculum so they can dig deeper with core content."

The last interview question asked the seven interviewees to describe the impact of Danielson's Framework on a teacher's professional growth. Teacher A indicated that the Framework sets specific goals and measurable outcomes that can be monitored and subsequently supported. Teacher B further elaborated on the Framework stating the process is "quite transparent and directs and supports each teacher's professional growth...it is done with the teacher as opposed to done to the teacher." Teacher D

reported “the Danielson model redefines the past supervisory model and categorizes each of the four areas of evaluation, now teachers have a greater awareness of what is being observed/evaluated.” Two elementary teachers reported further in the interview that they felt as if it was more difficult to achieve a Distinguished rating in Danielson’s Framework because the rubric requires the students to be leading their learning, which can be more of a challenge for them compared to a secondary teacher.

#### **Research Question Four**

What are administrators’ perceptions of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process regarding effects on professional growth?

##### **Benefits of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*.**

Table 4.5 displays the responses from the questionnaire that focused on administrator-perceived benefits of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. Questions 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 17 were used as the data source for this topic. The questionnaire assessed each administrator’s beliefs: on the feeling of sense of empowerment, the degree to which it allows for more control over classroom decisions, and whether or not the Framework is individualized to meet a teacher’s needs.

Questionnaire item #7, which asked each administrator to rate their experience with Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*, indicated that 83% (N=24) of the administrators reported that it is an “above average” or “high quality experience.” Responses to questionnaire item #8 indicate that 100% (N=24) of the administrators indicated that the process is an appropriate use of an administrator’s time.

One hundred percent (N=24) of the surveyed administrators reported that Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* allows teachers to feel a sense of empowerment,

Table 4.5

*Administrator Questionnaire - Benefits of Danielson's Framework for Teaching*

Item	High Quality Experience	Above Average Experience	Average Experience	Poor Experience
7. Rate your most recent experience Danielson's <i>Framework for Teaching</i>	6	14	4	0
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. The supervision process is an appropriate use of my time as an administrator	16	8	0	0
9. Danielson's <i>Framework for Teaching</i> allows teachers to feel a sense of empowerment	8	16	0	0
10. Danielson's <i>Framework for Teaching</i> is individualized to meet a teacher's needs	3	21	0	0
11. Danielson's <i>Framework for Teaching</i> allows teachers to have more control over classroom decisions	3	15	6	0
12. Danielson's <i>Framework for Teaching</i> is clearly explained to teachers	11	13	0	0
17. I would like to continue with Danielson's <i>Framework for Teaching</i>	11	13	0	0

N=24

responding either that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with questionnaire item #9.

Similar results were found in response to questionnaire item #10, which was designed to determine if the administrators felt the supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) is individualized to meet a teacher's needs. Thirteen percent (N=24) of the surveyed administrators responded they "strongly agreed" that the supervision is individualized to meet a teacher's needs, while the remaining 87% responded they "agreed." In questionnaire item #17, it was found that 100% (N=24) "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they would like to continue with the current supervision model, specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. However, questionnaire item #11 found that 75% (N=24) of the administrators agreed that Danielson's Framework allows teachers to have more control over the decisions they make in the classroom. Further, questionnaire item #12 showed that 100% of the administrators "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the supervision process was clearly explained in their school district.

Table 4.6 displays the responses from the questions that focused on administrator-perceived impacts of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. The questionnaire assessed each administrator's beliefs on the intended role of supervision and how the teacher supervision process has contributed to a teacher's professional growth. Questions 14, 15, and 16 were used as the data source for this topic.

Questionnaire item #14 indicates that 100% (N=24) of the administrators reported that they either "strongly agree" or "agree" that the Framework encourages professional growth. The responses to questionnaire item #15 indicate that 58% (N=24) of the administrators reported that the intended role of the Framework is mostly professional growth, while 42% felt the intended role of Danielson's Framework is student

Table 4.6

*Administrator Questionnaire – Impact (Professional Growth) of Danielson’s Framework for Teaching*

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. Danielson’s Framework for Teaching helps teachers to grow professionally.	13	11	0	0
	Student Achievement	Professional Growth	Mostly Student Achievement but some Professional Growth	Mostly Professional Growth but some Student Achievement
15. The intended role of Danielson’s Framework for Teaching is:	3	4	7	10
	Strong Impact	Average Impact	Little Impact	No Impact
16. Rate the overall impact of Danielson’s Framework for Teaching on teachers’ professional practices.	9	14	1	0

N=24

achievement.

Ninety-six percent (N=24) of the administrators indicated that Danielson’s Framework has either a “strong impact” or “average impact” on teachers’ professional practices. Similar data emerged about how Danielson’s Framework has contributed to a teacher’s professional growth, as 88% (N=24) administrator respondents commented on open-ended question #19. One respondent commented on open ended question #19, “teacher ownership of the process to identify strengths and areas for improvement have



led to more focused areas for professional growth.” Another respondent indicated, “the Framework provides detailed language for teachers to utilize as areas of strength and growth are each identified which corresponds to professional development targets.” Still another administrator indicated that “Danielson’s Framework allows for conversation and most professional growth comes through teacher reflection, staff development, and supervision (not evaluation).” Four of the five interviewed administrators commented on the time commitment that was required to implement this supervisory process with fidelity. Although they agreed that it was time well spent, these administrators questioned if it can be done effectively with all staff.

The final interview question prompted the five administrators to describe the impact of Danielson’s Framework on a teacher’s professional growth. Administrator C commented:

the impact on a teacher’s professional growth is significant, particularly as specific component areas of need are identified. Thus allowing the supervisor to support and engage the teacher with a specific focus. The Framework includes indicators and examples of distinguished so it explicitly defines a path for teachers looking to improve.

Administrator E further elaborated on Danielson’s Framework by stating:

it provides a very strong type of formative assessment for professional growth – if the process is done correctly, supervisors can help teachers specifically identify areas for growth base on weaker domains or components which lack evidence as observed by the principal or shared by the teacher. Nonetheless, there is a great need for more information and data to see the actual impact of Danielson’s

### *Framework for Teaching.*

A major theme that emerged from four of the five administrator interviews was they believed that there is a need for additional data to see the actual impact of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* on student achievement and professional growth.

### **Summary**

The data collected and analyzed in Chapter Four represented the results of a qualitative research study on the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* and its impact on student achievement and professional growth. In the study, 48 teachers and 24 administrators from three public school districts participated. All of the participants completed a questionnaire using a Likert-type scale with open-ended questions. Interviews were conducted with volunteer participants from each group. A total of seven teachers and five administrators were interviewed.

For the four research questions, the results from the questionnaire, open-ended questions, and interviews were analyzed using the following three topics: (a) the benefits of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, (b) the impact of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, and (c) improvements that can be made to Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. The results indicate that teachers and administrators see Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* as an effective tool in the supervisory process that supports student achievement and guides professional growth.

Common themes regarding the perceptions of each group emerged during the analysis. The results reveal similar perceptions about Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* between teachers and administrators. Chapter Five includes a discussion of the

results. In addition, the limitations of the study and implications for further research are presented.

## Chapter Five – Discussion

### Summary of the Study

The demands of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) challenge public schools to guide professional growth in ways that improve academic achievement. The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher and administrator perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* within three suburban public school districts in southeastern Pennsylvania.

This study provided qualitative results regarding teacher and administrator perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process. Forty-eight teachers and 24 administrators participated in the questionnaires. The breakdown of the teacher respondents included 19 elementary, 16 middle school, and 13 high school teachers. The administrator respondents included seven assistant principals, eight elementary principals, three middle school principals, three high school principals, and three central-office administrators. The electronic teacher questionnaire included six demographic questions, 10 Likert-type scale items, and four open-ended questions. The electronic administrator questionnaire included five demographic questions, 11 Likert-type scale items, and four open-ended questions. Both questionnaires took approximately 10-15 minutes for the participants to complete. Data gathered by the researcher for each teacher and administrator were analyzed from each of the instruments and compiled on a *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheet. In addition to tables, the data is reported in a descriptive narrative summary.

The researcher also interviewed participants who were willing to elaborate on their responses to the electronic questionnaire. Seven teachers (three elementary, one

middle school, and three high school teachers) agreed to participate in an interview. Five administrators (two elementary principals, one middle school principal, and two high school principals) also agreed to participate in the interviews. Teacher and administrator interview participants were asked 10 questions related to the questionnaire. The interview participants were given the interview questions in advance of the interview. All study participants were volunteers, and the researcher had no contact with them prior to or following their participation in this study.

### **Summary of the Results**

This study examined the perceptions of 48 teachers and 24 administrators regarding Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* and its impact on student achievement and professional growth. Overall, both teachers and administrators indicated that Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* has positively impacted student achievement and professional growth. Additionally, respondents indicated that more professional experience with the Framework and more definitive data are necessary to substantiate the specific effects on these areas. The results, which are summarized in relation to the four research questions, include demographic information analysis for both teachers and administrators as identified on the teacher and administrator questionnaires.

Demographic information was collected from teachers using the questionnaire, including years of teaching experience, highest level of education, teaching assignment, age, and gender. Although both genders were represented and a wide range of teaching experience was evident, the researcher could not discern a difference between the responses from the male participants and those of the female participants. The researcher also compared the results of the three levels (elementary, middle school, and high school)

and was able to identify one difference between the elementary teachers and the secondary teachers. Specifically, the elementary teachers felt as if it was more difficult to achieve a Distinguished rating in Danielson's Framework due to the fact that the wording in the rubric requires the students to be leading their learning.

The administrator questionnaire requested several pieces of personal information including years of experience, administrative assignment, age, and gender. Both genders were represented and a wide range of experience was evident, the researcher could not discern a difference between the responses from the male participants and those of the female participants. Unlike the teacher portion of the study, the researcher could not identify any differences between administrators at various levels.

The data revealed a discrepancy in the perceptions of the teachers and administrators specific to student achievement. The data revealed that 40% (N=48) of the teachers surveyed indicated that the Framework was not a significant component of increasing student achievement compared to 0% of the administrators.

Research Question One asked, "What are teachers' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process in regard to effects on student achievement?" An analysis of the data surrounding the 48 teacher participants for this portion of the study appeared to demonstrate purpose and value in Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process as it relates to the practice. Seventy-three percent (N=48) of the teachers surveyed believed that the supervision process was at least an above average experience, meaning they felt as if there was value in the supervisory process specific to instruction. In addition, the seven teachers who were interviewed overwhelmingly felt that the Framework supported and directed student achievement.

Three major themes emerged from the questionnaire: 1. the teacher and administrator conferencing before and after the formal observation; 2. the follow-up walk-throughs that were focused on one or two components of the Framework that both parties agreed were areas of strength and in need of growth and; 3. the targets that emerge from the formal and informal observations. Another emerging theme included the common language that is at the core of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, which respondents indicated keeps the conversation focused on student achievement.

Research Question Two asked, "What are administrators' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process in regard to effects on student achievement?" An analysis of the data surrounding the 24 administrator participants portion of the study appeared to demonstrate the purpose and value in Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process. One hundred percent (N=24) the administrators felt that Danielson's Framework was a significant component of increasing student achievement. Although the data in Table 4.2 seems to have contradictory information the interview data revealed that the administrators in this study felt all four domains reflect areas that greatly impact student learning. However, they felt the greatest influence of student achievement is due to the classroom environment (Domain 2) and instructional capabilities (Domain 3) of the teacher in the classroom.

Research Question Three asked, "What are teachers' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process in regard to effects on professional growth?" The majority of the teacher participants, 63% (N=48), reported that Danielson's Framework was effective in supporting and directing professional growth. The teachers also reported that the Framework encourages teachers to become more

involved throughout the school community and with more school activities that can help build better relationships with students. In addition, the teachers responded that goal setting was a positive outcome of the Framework that assisted teachers to grow in areas that they may not otherwise be interested in learning.

Research Question Four asked, “What are administrators’ perceptions of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process in regard to effects on professional growth?” The data collected for this question revealed that administrator participants believed that Danielson’s Framework had a positive effect on professional growth as defined for this study. The study participants agreed that the *Framework for Teaching* helped teachers to be more effective educators through thoughtful discussions about teaching best practices with not only their administrators but also with other professionals. The administrators responded that Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* fostered a community of learning by inspiring conversation about how students learn and how teachers can adjust their practice to meet the needs of each learner. An essential data indicator asserted as a concern from four of the five administrator interviewees was the substantial time commitment required for Danielson’s Framework for consistent implementation across all schools. Another finding of this study was that there is still a need for longitudinal data to see the actual impact of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* on student achievement and professional growth in order for educators to fully embrace the supervisory process.

### **Limitations Found in the Study**

This study sought to determine the perceptions of teachers and administrators on Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process from multiple districts in



southeastern Pennsylvania. Although Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* became one of the approved supervisory tools in Pennsylvania at the start of the 2013-2014 school year, very few school districts had experience with the Framework as a basis for supervising teachers prior to the mandate. After contacting 10 public school districts in southeastern Pennsylvania, the researcher discovered that only a few had been using Danielson's Framework as their supervisory process more than two years. Due to this lack of understanding and experience with the Framework, this study was limited to three public school districts in southeastern Pennsylvania.

The invitation to participate, done via email, included a link to an electronic survey. Although the electronic survey provided the researcher with a very efficient method of collecting and analyzing the data, some individuals may not have been comfortable completing the electronic survey.

The research instruments were developed by the researcher and checked for reliability and validity (piloted) by a panel of educators selected by the researcher. The use of the instruments was limited to this study. Although the researcher used consistent sampling techniques, the participants that were made available to the researcher limited the total number in the study. This convenience sampling could lead to an over or under representation of groups within the population.

This study only focused on the perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* by 48 teachers and 24 administrators. Due to the fact that only perceptions were used and not actual student achievement data is a factor that should be considered in this study. In addition, since the participation of teachers and administrators in three public school districts was central to this study, the interview portion was limited to

seven teacher volunteers and five administrator volunteers in order to be respectful of each district's time. This limited number could have influenced the results. Therefore, the perceptions may not be generalized to teachers and administrators in other public school districts. Lastly, the relationship of the administrators to the teachers may have skewed the perceptions for this study. Specifically, if administrators only contacted teachers who felt obligated to speak highly of the Framework, the data could be slanted in support of the Framework.

Having unlimited access to all teachers and administrators in many districts across Pennsylvania would produce a larger sample size for the study. This unrestricted larger sample size would generate more data to assist the profession in making informed decisions related to the Framework's impact on instruction and supervision.

### **Relationship to Other Research**

Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* is a tool, which supports administrators in supervising teachers in their practice. A teacher's job is complex and skillful practice requires considerable time and support to acquire. Once a teacher attains a certain level of proficiency, professional growth takes a different form from that experienced earlier in the process, and can be more self-directed (Danielson & McGreal, 2005). This suggests that the procedures used in Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process may be flexible for those at different stages of their careers. An effective system both motivates educators to strive for higher levels of knowledge and performance and provides the necessary support to make continuous professional growth attainable (Carr & Harris, 2001). As supported by this research, there is a continuum of professional growth and educators are at different stages on this continuum. In addition, it is

important to consider the perceptions of the professionals in the field as they learn more about the supervisory process and how this may impact student learning.

The New Teacher Project (2007) suggested that supervision should provide all teachers with regular feedback that helps them grow as professionals, no matter how long they have been in the classroom. Feedback allows teachers and schools to build strong instructional teams and holds administrators accountable for professional development. As reported in this research on Danielson's Framework for Teaching, the supervisory process seems to produce results that are accurate and easy to understand. Furthermore, the evidence-based results can be empowering.

Seventy-seven percent (N=17) of the teacher participants with 16 or more years of service indicated that their experience with Danielson's Framework is at least above average. Similarly, 77% (N=17) of the teacher participants in this study with 16 or more years of service believe the Framework has an average to strong impact on teachers' professional practice. As the data suggests in this research, the 22 components within the four domains of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* is perceived as a comprehensive supervisory process and one that differs positively from those previously used in the three public school districts that participated in this study.

There were several similarities between previous research (Kimball, White, Milanowski & Borman, 2004; Lane, Stone, Draper, Scott & Krost, 2013; MET, 2010; Sartain et al., 2011; Sweeley, 2004) on Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* and this study. Such as, the majority of teachers believe that the Framework is effective in supporting student learning. Also, as was the case in Sweeley's (2004) study, which highlighted teachers' overall agreement that Danielson's Framework was an indicator of

good instruction, respondents in this study agreed that the components within Danielson's four domains were effective in supporting student achievement.

Two of the five administrators interviewed for this study believed that one way to provide support for teachers who may be struggling with this new supervisory tool is to provide uniform support and predictable feedback. This thinking is consistent with previous research indicating that evidence does exist, which shows that evaluation systems can improve instruction (Milanowski & Heneman, 2009; Danielson & McGreal, 2005) and positively impact student achievement (Holtzapple, 2003) if properly designed and implemented.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Teacher supervision has evolved over the years to include a variety of models. Although Pennsylvania public schools are bound by the state to follow certain procedures in the supervision and subsequent evaluation process, that does not preclude districts from attempting to refine the process. This process requires consistent and ongoing professional development time.

As this research indicates, Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* is a supervisory process that enables teachers to focus on academic achievement and seek out professional development that can strengthen and enhance their practice. Further research is needed on Danielson's Framework to identify specific characteristics that can contribute to the body of knowledge about best practices in education, such as research on teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the Framework in both urban and rural public school districts in Pennsylvania.

Additional comparative research is needed to explore teacher supervision models

in other states. Tucker and Stronge (2005) wrote about teacher evaluation and student achievement in *Linking Teacher Evaluation and Student Achievement*. However, they did not provide empirical evidence that one model is superior to another.

Eighty-eight percent (N=17) of the teacher participants with 16 or more years of service reported that the Framework is a significant component of professional growth. As this data suggests, a comparative study may benefit the profession to identify how teachers at various stages of their careers perceive the Framework and their perception specific to professional growth.

The data obtained in this study correlated with the information from the MET Project (2010) study. Specifically, the administrators revealed that those who are responsible for classroom observations must deliver the data in a timely fashion to encourage and support good instruction as well as focus areas in need of growth.

An unexpected finding that was highlighted by this research, conducted in three public school districts in southeastern Pennsylvania, was that elementary teachers felt that it is more difficult to achieve a rating of Distinguished in many components due to the amount of student involvement that is required for this rating. Further research is needed at each of the three levels (elementary, middle, and high school) to get a comprehensive look at how the Framework's rating system may impact those professional staff members differently.

Further research is needed in urban and rural districts across Pennsylvania that may highlight other key aspects of the supervision process. In addition, a longitudinal study of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* may be beneficial to identify strengths and weaknesses over time.

## Conclusion

This study revealed the perspectives of teachers and administrators using Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, teacher effectiveness in Pennsylvania based upon classroom observations will comprise 50% of the rating in each of the following Domains: 1. Planning and Preparation; 2. Classroom Environment; 3. Instruction; and 4. Professional Responsibilities. In addition, student performance based upon multiple measures will account for the remaining 50% of the overall performance rating. This study provided evidence of the effective elements of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* as well as other considerations that are necessary to support student achievement and professional growth. In addition, this study identified areas of focus for administrators charged with the supervision of teachers, such as, the need for continued support of resources and ongoing professional development specific to Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. In addition to being transparent, to reap the benefits of the Framework, teachers and administrators must understand the domains and components and how they are evident in practice.

According to this study, Danielson's Framework is a much needed and welcomed change from the prior supervisory processes in place in the three public school districts that were part of this study. Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* is a supervisory tool that requires empirical evidence that allows for focused and systematic professional conversation. Administrators in this study reported that the Framework provides the necessary guidance to professionals who are charged with increasing classroom rigor and relevance as well as driving student achievement.

This study also revealed the importance for teachers to continue to understand and demonstrate best practice on-stage and off-stage which all contributes to student achievement. Additionally, administrators must stay current with the Framework and all other supporting research in order to support and direct good instruction.

One of the most important recommendations emerging from this study is the need for further research on the characteristics of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. Longitudinal research on teachers' and administrators' perceptions of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* specific to the impact on practice may be beneficial to identify the Framework's strengths and weaknesses over time.

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*of Secondary School Principals, 87(636), 28-37.*

**Appendix A**

**From:** Tina Sweeley [tsweeley@mnsd.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 04, 2013 12:37 PM  
**To:** Dana Edwards  
**Subject:** RE: Approval

Hello Dana,

It was a pleasure to speak with you about your doctoral studies at Immaculata University. I am happy to grant you permission to use and/or modify my survey instrument. I wish you much luck with writing your dissertation and finding your results. I would be interested in learning more about your discoveries when you finish. Please feel free to contact me if you need any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tina Sweeley

**Tina Sweeley, Ed.D.**  
**Assistant Principal**  
**Marple Newtown High School**

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**From:** Dana Edwards [mailto:dedwards1@mail.immaculata.edu]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 04, 2013 10:37 AM  
**To:** Tina Sweeley  
**Subject:** Approval

Good Morning Dr. Sweeley,

I am presently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at Immaculata University and a middle school principal in the Penn Manor School District (Lancaster, PA). I am conducting research and writing my dissertation on teachers' and administrators' perceptions of Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching.

The purpose of this communication is to respectfully request your permission to use and/or modify your instruments that were utilized in your dissertation "Teachers' Attitudes Towards Charlotte Danielson's Four Domains of Teacher Evaluation" at Widener University.

If you would prefer to speak in person regarding my request, please feel free to call me on my cell @ (717) 468-5946.

Thank you!

Mr. Dana J. Edwards

## Appendix B

### Teacher and Administrator Questionnaire

We are currently engaged in a study of teacher and administrator perceptions regarding Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process. To help us gain further insights into this area, teachers and administrators are being asked to participate in this study.

The data collected will be held in the strictest confidence. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Data will be reported in aggregate form and no statements will be used that could, in any way, identify any individual or individual school. All researcher notes and participant responses will be stored in a locked cabinet and destroyed by shredding after five years.

Your participation in this study is on a voluntary basis, and you may refuse or withdraw from participation without consequence or prejudice. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me, Dana Edwards, or the dissertation chairperson, Sister Carol Anne Couchara. Feel free to contact us at:

- Dana Edwards - dedwards1@mail.immaculata.edu or (717) 468-5946
- Sister Carol Anne Couchara - CCouchara@immaculata.edu or (610) 647-4400, ext. 3281.

We welcome questions about the study at any time. Any questions about your rights as a research subject may be directed to Dr. Thomas F. O'Brien, at 610-647-4400, ext. 3221 or tobrien@immaculata.edu. Thank you for considering participation in this research project.

### Teacher and Administrator Questionnaire

1. I hereby voluntarily agree to participate in this study with the understanding that every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of my responses to this questionnaire.

- Yes
- No

2. School district of employment during the 2013 - 2014 school year (the appropriate selection choice is specifically identified in the email invitation):

- "A" School District
- "B" School District
- "C" School District

3. Gender:

- Male
- Female

4. Highest level of education during the 2013 - 2014 school year:

- Bachelors
- Bachelors Plus 24
- Masters or Masters Equivalency
- Doctorate

5. **(Teacher Only)** Including the current year, how many years have you been teaching?

- 1 – 5 years
- 6 – 10 years
- 11 – 15 years

- 16 – 20 years
- 21 – 25 years
- 26 – 30 years
- More than 30 years

6. **(Teacher Only)** Grade-level of instruction during the 2013 - 2014 school year (select the answer that

best describes your current position):

- Elementary (K-6)
- Middle School (7 & 8)
- High School (9-12)

7. **(Administrator Only)** Your current administrative assignment (select the answer that best describes your

current position):

- Central Office (Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent)
- Elementary Principal (K-6)
- Middle School Principal (7 & 8)
- High School Principal (9-12)
- Assistant Principal

8. **(Administrator Only)** Including the current year, how many years have you been an administrator in your

current district?

- 1 – 5 years
- 6 – 10 years

- 11 – 15 years
- 16 – 20 years
- 21 – 25 years
- 26 – 30 years
- More than 30 years

9. **(Administrator Only)** The supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) is an appropriate use of my time as an administrator.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. Please reflect on and rate your most recent experience with the teacher supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) in your school district (consider the entire process including Domain 1-Planning and Preparation, Domain 2-The Classroom Environment, Domain 3-Instruction, and Domain 4-Professional Responsibilities).

- High Quality Experience
- Above Average Experience
- Average Experience
- Poor Experience

11. The supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) allows teachers to feel a sense of empowerment.

- Strongly Agree

- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. The supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) is individualized to meet a teacher's needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. The supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) allows teachers to have more control over the decisions they make in the classroom.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14. The supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) is clearly explained to teachers in my school district.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. The supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) is a significant component of increasing student achievement.



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. The supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) helps teachers to grow professionally.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

17. I believe the intended role of supervision (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) is:

- Student Achievement
- Professional Growth
- Mostly Student Achievement but some Professional Growth
- Mostly Professional Growth but some Student Achievement

18. Rate the overall impact of the supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) on teachers' professional practices.

- Strong Impact
- Average Impact
- Little Impact
- No Impact

19. How has the teacher supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for*

*Teaching*) contributed to student achievement?

20. How has the teacher supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) contributed to a teacher's professional growth?

21. How can the teacher supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) within your school district be improved?

22. What additional information would you like to share about the teacher supervision process (specifically Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*) within your district?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

The author (indicated below) has approved the use of and/or modification of the instrument.

Sweeley, T. (2004). *Teachers' Attitudes Towards Charlotte Danielson's Four Domains of Teacher Evaluation*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Widener University. Available from Proquest Dissertations and These database).

**\*Interviews are used as part of the regular process of collecting accurate data.**

**Your participation in this interview is optional and would be conducted by telephone or in person and is directly related to the study. If you would be willing to participate in this brief, optional interview, please feel free to contact Dana Edwards at (717) 468-5946 or by email at [djedwards1@mail.immaculata.edu](mailto:djedwards1@mail.immaculata.edu)**

## Appendix C

### Teacher and Administrator Interview Questions

During the following questions, I will ask you to consider your beliefs regarding Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. If you have something to add beyond the scope of the question, please feel free to extrapolate. Also, if you are unclear as to the meaning of any question, please ask for clarification.

This is Interview Project ID# \_\_\_\_\_. You've indicated that it's okay for me to record this interview. May we now begin?

1. Please state your name, the district you work for, and the position you currently hold?
2. Have you been able to attend any training specific to Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*?
  - If so, how has this training been useful to you?
  - If so, would you change about the training?
3. What do you see as the purpose(s) or function(s) of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process?
4. What do you see as the benefits of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process?
5. What do you see as the impediments (weaknesses) of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process and what would you suggest for improvement to the process?
6. How would you describe the impact of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process on student achievement?
7. Beyond the four domains indicated in Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*

supervisory process, give me a few strategies that you believe an effective teacher utilizes to increase student achievement.

8. How would you describe the impact of Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process on a teacher's professional growth?

9. Beyond the four domains indicated in Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process, give me a few strategies that you believe an effective teacher utilizes to support their own professional growth.

10. Before we end, do you have anything further to add specific to Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process? Is there anything you feel I missed when asking about Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* supervisory process? Do you have any questions for me regarding this process and/or my research?

## Appendix D

### IMMACULATA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD REQUEST FOR PROTOCOL REVIEW--REVIEWER'S COMMENTS FORM (R1297)

Name of Researcher: Dana J. Edwards

Project Title: Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of Charlotte Danielson's  
*Framework for Teaching*

#### Reviewer's Comments

Your proposal is approved. You may begin your research or collect your data.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS APPROVAL IS VALID FOR ONE YEAR (365 days)  
FROM DATE OF SIGNING.

#### Reviewer's Recommendations:

Exempt

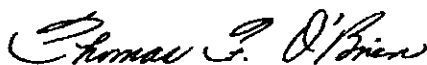
**Approved**

Expedited

Conditionally Approve

Full Review

Do Not Approve



April 2, 2013

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Thomas F. O'Brien, Ph.D., Ed. D., RERB Chair

Date