TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR SUPERVISORS’ FEEDBACK ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND COLLABORATION THROUGHOUT THE TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS

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Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Supervisors’ Feedback on Their Professional Growth and Collaboration throughout the Teacher Evaluation Process

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Abstract

This qualitative research study examined teachers’ perceptions regarding the feedback provided by their supervisor on their instructional practice, the impact of the supervisory model on teachers’ professional growth, and the teacher-supervisor relationship. The participants were teachers from a district in southeastern Pennsylvania. There were 61 teachers that participated in this study. A researcher-designed survey, with Likert-scale and open-ended questions, was used to collect data. This survey was approved by an experienced educator panel. To further investigate participants’ perceptions, the researcher interviewed 12 teachers utilizing researcher-designed and experienced panel approved questions. The results of this study indicated that teachers perceived the dialogue component of the supervisory process to be valuable. The teachers, who took part in this study, found their most recent observational rating as an accurate representation of their performance. The perceptions of these teachers indicated that teachers valued the feedback from their supervisor because the feedback afforded an opportunity for self-reflection about their instruction or classroom environment. The results of this study also revealed that teacher-supervisor relationships varied for reasons beyond the supervision model in place. The data collected in this study may be helpful for administrators and teachers to analyze their current supervisory model and its subsequent impact on teachers and supervisors.
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Table of Contents

Abstract............................................................................................................................iv
Acknowledgements..........................................................................................................v
Table of Contents.............................................................................................................vi
List of Tables....................................................................................................................ix
Chapter One – Introduction...............................................................................................1
Overview...............................................................................................................................1
  Need for the Study..............................................................................................................4
  Statement of the Problem.................................................................................................6
  Definition of terms..............................................................................................................7
  Limitations.........................................................................................................................8
  Research Questions..........................................................................................................9
  Summary.............................................................................................................................9
Chapter Two – Literature Review....................................................................................10
  Introduction......................................................................................................................10
  Supervision......................................................................................................................10
    History............................................................................................................................10
  Supervision Today..........................................................................................................13
  Teacher Quality and Effectiveness....................................................................................15
  The Relationship between Supervision and Evaluation..................................................18
    Supervision...................................................................................................................18
    Evaluation.......................................................................................................................20
  Personnel Management.................................................................................................25
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Three – Methods and Procedures</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruments</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of the Study</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Four – Results</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compilation of Data</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question One</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys Responses</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended Survey Responses</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Responses</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

4.1 Demographic Question One.................................................................45
4.2 Demographic Question Two...............................................................46
4.3 Demographic Question Three.........................................................47
4.4 Demographic Question Four.............................................................48
4.5 Participants’ Responses to Research Question One..............................50
4.6 Participants’ Responses to Research Question Two............................55
4.7 Participants’ Responses to Research Question Three..........................63
Chapter One – Introduction

Overview

National interest about teacher evaluation remains at the forefront of education issues partly due to current research that examines teacher effectiveness as an indicator of student learning and achievement (Lefgren & Sims, 2012; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Because effective school leadership is a critical influence on the achievement of students within a school, attention has been placed on the instructional leaders of schools (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Urick & Bowers, 2013).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires the establishment of annual student testing and school-level reporting to determine adequate yearly progress (AYP), which indicates whether or not a school is failing or progressing towards established proficiency goals (Dee, Jacob, & Schwartz, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). One aspect of NCLB requires that teachers be considered “highly qualified,” which means that all teachers must be certified by the state, have the minimum level of a bachelor’s degree, and pass basic skill and subject area proficiency tests (Selwyn, 2007). As a result, the federal law NCLB also introduced the mandate that all public elementary, and secondary schools implement standardized test-based school accountability systems (Dee et al., 2012; Selwyn, 2007). Under this mandate, principals must provide educators with professional development opportunities focused on improving teacher quality, with the intention of subsequent student achievement improvement (Berube & Dexter, 2006). As a result of the NCLB mandates, some states began utilizing growth scores from standardized assessments as a component of their
teacher evaluation systems (Pomplun, 2009). In addition to the NCLB Act, the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant program has promoted the redesign and development of current teacher evaluation systems to incorporate measuring students’ performance as an indicator of teacher effectiveness (Harris, 2012).

In accordance with the NCLB Act, the Pennsylvania Department of Education established the educator effectiveness model (PDE, 2013). This model is a multi-phase plan used to develop a statewide policy to evaluate teachers and principals. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) implemented the model, which is known as Act 82, during the 2013-2014 school year (PDE, 2014). The model contains four components of measuring educator effectiveness, which include: (a) observation/evidence, (b) building level data, (c) teacher specific data, and (d) district determined elective data (PDE, 2013). A primary factor of the model is that student achievement data from the building level, as well as district determined elective data, will impact the performance ratings of teachers and principals. The building level data will be determined using the Pennsylvania School Performance Profile (SPP). The SPP will be used to represent the overall academic performance of each school in Pennsylvania. The PDE’s Educator Effectiveness Model incorporates Danielson’s Framework for Teaching (PDE, 2013). Danielson’s model provided detailed rating scales that offer guidance to the evaluator to impede subjectivity and to create common criteria to evaluate teachers’ effectiveness (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009).

Because research has established that student outcomes are dependent upon the quality of instruction provided by a classroom teacher, teacher evaluation is a predominate topic (Thoonen, Sleegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijsel, 2011; Weisberg,
Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009) and there is a growing consensus that teacher evaluation systems are not accurately measuring and developing teachers (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009; Weisberg et al., 2009). As a result, current research has indicated a need to reexamine teacher evaluation methods (Kane, Taylor, Tyler, & Wooten, 2011; Marzano, 2012; Palardy & Rumberger, 2008; Papay, 2012; Sledge & Pazey, 2013).

Despite the lack of agreement on how teachers should be evaluated, many agree that evaluation systems have two primary functions. The evaluation should be the measurement of a teacher’s effectiveness and a tool to improve his or her pedagogical skill set (Marzano, 2012; Papay, 2012) by providing feedback to foster professional growth (Papay, 2012). Furthermore, a greater goal of developing a teacher’s skills and effectiveness is to increase student achievement (Marzano et al., 2011). The traditional single observation evaluation often does not focus on the improvement of teacher performance; therefore, this type of evaluation remains unproductive in nature (Toch & Rothman, 2008). Some teacher evaluation models remain focused on measurement because of the need to show accountability in the educational system (Larsen, 2005).

Kersten and Israel (2005) conducted a study of K-8 elementary and middle school building administrators in a suburban county in Illinois. A survey was sent to 102 K-8 buildings to collect perceptions about the current system of teacher evaluations in the local school or district and the effectiveness of the evaluation on teacher improvement and increased student achievement. The researchers concluded that despite the challenges with current evaluation models, the teacher evaluation process has the potential to enhance teacher evaluation methods through the identification of teacher strengths and weaknesses (Kersten & Israel, 2005).
Principals are a significant factor in teacher evaluation models because these leaders focus on providing effective feedback to improve teachers’ instruction (Urick & Bowers, 2013). A survey study of 373 secondary school teachers conducted by Barnett and McCormick (2004) concluded that individual teachers were more likely to develop their own perceptions and opinions of an instructional leader, rather than be influenced by a group of teachers at the school level. Clifford, Behrstock-Sherratt, and Fetters (2012) synthesized research on factors that determined a principal’s influence and found several mutual practices related to student achievement and high-performing schools. Effective principals not only created and sustained a vision, but they also observed and provided feedback to teachers so teachers could improve their instructional skills. Effective instructional leaders also had a secondary impact on student achievement in schools (Clifford et al., 2012), which was setting the learning climate. Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) conducted a study that utilized administrative and test data along with survey data from over 3,000 participants to examine high school principals’ leadership influences on instruction, student achievement, and the learning climate. They found that in schools with established learning climates, it was more likely that teachers had strong instructional capabilities, which could increase student achievement (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012).

Need for the Study

Overall, teacher evaluation systems from the past 15 years have not greatly influenced school improvement or increased student learning and the lack of data to show improvement or influence may be attributed to a limited number of studies on the subject (Murphy, Hallinger, & Heck, 2013). There have been many efforts to measure teacher
effectiveness. These efforts have included subject matter exams, portfolios, and value-added measures; however, the observation-based model conducted by a supervisor has remained the most widely used and consistent measure (Hill, Charalambous, & Kraft, 2012). In addition, Hill et al. (2012) noted that in an effort for supervisors to have a greater impact on the instruction of students, it is important for supervisors to not only have reliable observation instruments, but observation rater training and appropriate scoring tools so that the observation ratings and instructional feedback rooted from the observation would be accurate and trusted.

Kersten and Israel (2005) conducted a study of 102 elementary and middle school building administrators in a suburban county of Illinois to examine different teacher evaluation approaches and the effectiveness of these evaluations in improving teaching and learning. They found that, when an evaluation process was comprehensive, the process could offer teachers and supervisors the opportunity to have a focused, professional conversation that could create a common language for teaching and learning within a school. Unfortunately, the researchers concluded that teacher evaluation models often included an unrealistic workload for supervisors; therefore, evaluations often lost their meaning or derailed the possibility for supervisors to work with teachers to improve instruction (Kersten & Isreal, 2005). It is important to reflect on how to design an effective teacher evaluation policy because of the knowledge that effective teachers can improve student achievement (Firestone, 2014).

Although it remains a challenge to measure effective and ineffective teaching based on student achievement, it is important that both teachers and supervisors find a way to converse about the improvement of teaching and student achievement (Berube &
Dexter, 2006). The time for teachers and supervisors to collaborate could provide opportunities to encourage teachers to reflect on their current instruction and try new instructional strategies, which could lead to improved teaching (Thoonen et al., 2011). Consequently, it is valuable to examine teacher evaluations because these documents have not traditionally been used as a means to promote professional growth (Papay, 2012).

Therefore, as districts throughout Pennsylvania must implement a new Educator Effectiveness System, it might be necessary to study teachers’ perceptions surrounding the supervisory process in an effort to determine the impact of this process on teachers and supervisors. Additionally, a study might determine teachers’ perceptions of their interactions with their supervisor to determine an effective measure to implement a teacher evaluation system in a school district.

**Statement of the Problem**

The change in access to student achievement information and the capability to manipulate the data warrant a need to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of teacher effectiveness as well as the process used to review a teacher’s work (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). In a longitudinal study, Palardy and Rumberger (2008) examined reading and math achievement gains in first graders with three teacher effects: teacher background qualifications, instructional practices, and teacher attitudes. The findings from the study revealed that there was a great level of uncertainty when determining ineffective teachers and background qualifications were not necessarily indicative of teacher effectiveness. The researchers recommended a two-step approach to improving teacher effectiveness, which included the first step of assessing a teacher’s effectiveness
and then the establishment of in-service training and mentoring to improve behavioral, attitudinal, and instructional insufficiencies (Paladry & Rumberger, 2008). Therefore, it is important to establish regular and objective evaluation systems to determine the effectiveness of teachers (Palardy & Rumberger, 2008).

A typical constant in teacher evaluation is the observation-based evaluation of teacher effectiveness that is usually carried out by a principal or supervisor (Hill et al., 2012). In an effort to improve the quality of teachers and instruction, with the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement, it is imperative to examine teacher evaluation systems (Donaldson, 2009). As a result, this study investigated teachers’ perceptions regarding the value of feedback from their supervisor to support teacher instruction and the impact of that feedback on teacher professional growth. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ perceptions about their professional relationships and their ability to collaborate with a supervisor as a result of the established teacher evaluation system.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the terms are defined as the following:

*Classroom Observations* — Should include multiple competency rating scales or rubrics, procedures for collecting evidence, a clear understanding of the observed instructional practices, trained observers, collection of artifacts, and multiple observations and observers (Milanowski, 2011).

*Evaluation* — “The formal process that is utilized by a district to meet state mandates and district policies to provide teachers with a rating of their performance at the end of a school year” (Berube & Dexter, 2006, p. 11).
Formative Evaluation — Often includes an evaluator’s final judgment of a teacher’s performance and is placed in a teacher’s personnel file (Attinello, Lare, & Waters, 2006).

Instructional Supervision — “Growth-orientated coaching conducted by administrators, supervisors, or peers…a process of observation and feedback aimed solely at developing teacher capacity” (Hallinger, Heck, & Murphy, 2014, p. 7).

Instructional Leadership — The time a principal spends with a teacher discussing the teacher’s instruction, observing the teacher’s classroom instruction, providing feedback to a teacher about instruction, and the time spent reviewing student work from a teacher (May & Supovitz, 2011).

Summative Evaluation — Is often referred to as a formal observation with a compilation of a year’s worth of informal assessments to indicate a teacher’s performance (Attinello, Lare, & Waters, 2006).

Teacher Quality — Associated with the qualities teachers maintain that may include personal resources, which influences day-to-day teaching in addition to a teacher’s impact on student achievement also known as teacher effectiveness (Kennedy, 2008).

Limitations

This qualitative research study was limited to teachers’ perceptions of the supervisory process in a single suburban and rural school district in southeastern Pennsylvania. The study only reviewed teachers’ perceptions of the supervisory process in one district committed to comply with the Pennsylvania’s Department of Education’s Educator Effectiveness Model. The researcher did not examine other public school
districts in Pennsylvania, parochial, charter, or private schools. Additionally, participation in the study was voluntary and the data collected may not be representative of all teachers in the participating district. Therefore, the limitations of this study may prevent the possibility to generalize the results to other school districts.

**Research Questions**

This study will concentrate on the following research questions:

1) What are teachers’ perceptions regarding the value of an evaluation of their teacher effectiveness?

2) What are teachers’ perceptions regarding the usefulness of the feedback received from their immediate supervisor on their instructional practices?

3) What are teachers’ perceptions regarding how their personal relationship with their immediate supervisor impacts the evaluation process?

**Summary**

Schools continue to be challenged with the necessity to raise the quality of its teachers. One purpose of utilizing a teacher evaluation model is to improve a teacher’s instructional abilities by providing specific feedback (Papay, 2012). For that reason, it is important to further research how to establish a fair and reliable teacher evaluation model (Sledge & Pazey, 2013). Overall, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers’ perceptions about feedback provided from their supervisor in regard to the teachers’ perceived value of the observational rating and the impact of the feedback on the teachers’ professional growth. In addition, the study evaluated the supervisory process and its impact on the teacher-supervisor relationship. A review of the literature related to this study was examined in Chapter Two.
Chapter Two - Literature Review

Introduction

Educational researchers have concluded that a teacher’s instructional quality and effectiveness can impact students’ achievement levels (Lefgren & Sims, 2012; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002; Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). One way to increase teacher quality and effectiveness is through the use of teacher evaluations, so that teachers can engage in meaningful conversations about instruction with their principal or supervisor (Weems & Rogers, 2010). However, teacher evaluation models are still being reformed because there is a need to create a reliable system to provide teachers with both an evaluation rating and effective feedback on their instructional practices (Hill, Charalambous, & Kraft, 2012). School districts should develop an understanding of how to create and implement a teacher evaluation system that can influence teachers’ practices (Range, Young, & Hvidston, 2013). In an effort to investigate the findings about teacher quality and effectiveness, this chapter will examine research findings surrounding the teacher supervision process, including an understanding of teacher supervision and evaluation, personnel management, the interactions between principals and teachers, leadership practices, and professional learning.

Supervision

History. According to Marzano et al. (2011), teacher supervision dates back to the early 1700s when education was not considered a professional discipline or field. During this time period local government officials or clergy members were charged with
the hiring, firing, and supervising of teachers. Furthermore, as society developed and the schooling movement evolved, there was an increased pressure for teachers to be experienced in content and teaching skills. Teachers were then evaluated based on these areas (Marzano et al., 2011). By the end of the 19th century and early 20th century, supervision was still considered to be evaluative and focused on how schools could develop active citizens. Schools were also influenced by the need to create efficient assembly line workers (Marzano et al., 2011). Society was concerned that schools were inefficient, so reformers put superintendents in place; therefore, superintendents were expected to inspect and ensure schools were being run efficiently and determine whether or not instructional standards were maintained (Gall & Acheson, 2011; Sullivan & Glanz, 2013).

Sullivan and Glanz (2013) stated that by the 1950s the concept of supervision had evolved with the goal of improving instruction based on observations of a teacher’s classroom instruction. Throughout the next decade it was clear that the previous means of supervision, as inspection and efficiency based, were no longer applicable (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). As a result, by the 1960s supervision as leadership emerged. It was believed that supervision should provide leadership through the improvement of instruction and the development of goals and that supervision would be cooperative and democratic (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). At this time, the seminal work by Goldhammer (1969) established the clinical model of supervision. Clinical supervision would later be redefined by Cogan (1973). The basis of the clinical supervision model was that a teacher’s instruction can be developed through the formal process of collaboration between a teacher and supervisor (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). By the early 1990s and into
the 21st century supervision was impacted by the standards-based reform movement, which included high-stake testing, common curricular standards, and raising the academic achievement of students (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Recently, supervision has been thought to be more effective when principals take specific actions that include: participating in curriculum planning, analyzing student data, utilizing rubrics for teacher evaluations, and partaking in feedback conversations following classroom visits (Marshall, 2013).

Supervision and evaluation are terms often used interchangeably despite having conflicting definitions, which continues to confuse policy makers and educators (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). The goal of supervision is to increase a teacher's instructional practices through the use of feedback and observations, which will result in an increase of a teacher's growth (Nolan & Hoover, 2008) and the engagement of teachers in a collaborative conversation about instruction with the overall intention to raise student achievement (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Most teachers often equate the term “evaluation” to the overall assignment of their performance rating, which determines a teacher as satisfactory or unsatisfactory (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). According to Sullivan and Glanz (2013), today’s supervisors are caught between the conflict of evaluation and supervision functions. Because of the high degree of accountability that schools are governed under and the aspiration to work genuinely with teachers to develop their instructional processes, the conflict remains an issue for supervisors. Furthermore, Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002) explained that the evaluation process also provides an opportunity for a teacher to remain employed within a particular school. This maintains the evaluation role of a supervisor and often limits the supervisory function because the focus is on the
judgment of teachers’ performances at the end of the evaluation process. However, the supervision process can serve as a mechanism for teachers to continue to work on their professional growth and development as a teacher, which promotes a supervisory function. Therefore, teacher supervision and evaluation have distinct, but complementary functions, which are often used together (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002).

**Supervision Today**

Instructional supervision has a goal of guiding teacher growth and professional development (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Federal legislation that includes the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (2001) and Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2009) has resulted in states and districts establishing evaluative systems that focus on measuring student growth to determine teacher quality (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). States that agreed to a Race to the Top grant or a No Child Left Behind waiver must have redesigned their current teacher evaluation system or piloted a new model that contained a student growth component by the 2012-2013 school year (Herlihy et al., 2014). These redesigned evaluation systems needed to contain an observation component and performance scores for individual teachers from multiple sources of data. As a result, Herlihy et al. (2014) examined how state education officials and districts planned to implement, evaluate, and validate teacher evaluation scores produced from the redesigned teacher evaluation systems. The researchers conducted 13 interviews with individuals from 12 different state departments to gain an understanding about how each state department defined reliability and validity, how the department determined score reliability and validity, how the observation instruments were selected, and how the raters would be trained. A theme that emerged from this study was that
teacher evaluation systems have remarkably changed in a brief amount of time. These changes included: increased rigor for teacher evaluation systems, the use of standard observation instruments, and the inclusion of student performance metrics in overall teacher performance ratings. Therefore, Herlihy et al. (2014) concluded that it was essential that as more states reevaluated their teacher evaluation system, state policy makers should refer to the experiences of other states to learn from their implementation and evaluation procedures; for example, states should continue to review and determine the number of observations that need to be conducted to gain a valid evaluation score for a teacher. Finally, refining teacher evaluation systems would result in changes with a district’s professional development needs, the skills required of instructional leaders, and the skills required of teachers. These changes would either negatively or positively impact student achievement gains based on the reliability and validity of the evaluation system rating scores (Herlihy, 2014).

During the 2013-2014 school year, Pennsylvania implemented The Teacher Effectiveness System (PDE, 2013). The goal of this model was to determine how effective a teacher was in each classroom through utilizing: classroom observations and practice evidence (PDE, 2013). Additionally, student performance data was utilized to rate a teacher’s performance. The student data used to determine a teacher’s rating included multiple measures, which were building level data, teacher specific data, and elective data to obtain a teacher’s rating (PDE, 2013). The classroom observation and practice data component of the system were rooted in Danielson’s (2007) work Enhancing Professional Practice: The Framework for Teaching. The framework specified areas of teaching that have been documented throughout her research to
increase student learning (Danielson, 2007). The four main domains focused on planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. In Pennsylvania, teachers received a rating in each domain to determine their classroom and observation ratings, which would then result in an overall rating (Danielson, 2007; PDE, 2013).

According to Sullivan and Glanz (2013), current attempts to restructure schools, classrooms, and instructional practices have increased the focus on instructional improvement and teacher evaluation. As a result, supervisors need to establish their practice of supervision on flexibility, a tolerance for ambiguity, collaboration, and ethics in effort to influence teachers’ instructional practices. A supervisor needs to understand the necessity for collaboration and the importance of working with teachers to reflect on their practice, despite the high level bureaucratic accountability schools maintain (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). A survey study of 100 principals and superintendents by Range, Duncan, Scherz, and Haines (2012) suggested three recommendations in regard to reforming a teacher evaluation system: (a) the evaluation system utilized multiple data sources from standardized observation instruments and less subjective conclusions about teachers’ performances, (b) principals needed professional development on how to fairly and legally work with ineffective teachers, and (c) principals needed appropriate professional development on instructional leadership skills that have been linked with schools that have increased levels of student achievement (Range et al., 2012).

**Teacher Quality and Effectiveness**

The term “teacher quality” remains ambiguous because the term is defined differently by various groups (Kennedy, 2008; Popp, Grant, & Stronge, 2011). However,
the research surrounding teacher effectiveness has shifted from an effort to determine the specific qualities or characteristics of an effective teacher to the relationship between teachers and student learning (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012; Imig & Imig, 2006).

According to Berliner (2005), good teaching and effective teaching are distinguishable actions. Good teaching may consist of greeting students at the door, assigning homework, providing students with timely feedback, and exhibiting fairness both in grading and in the classroom (Berliner, 2005). Berliner (2005) stated:

Good is normative. It is what is expected of people in a position. In contrast, effective teaching is about reaching achievement goals. It is about students learning what they are supposed to in a particular class, grade, or subject. A high-quality teacher shows evidence of both good and effective teaching. (p. 207)

Ding and Sherman (2006) stated that the relationship between teacher effectiveness and student achievement needed to be researched further. Teachers’ effects on student learning was not necessarily synonymous with teacher effectiveness. For example, a teacher may have possessed a great deal of content knowledge, which was his/her effect, but may have been ineffective in helping students learn. An additional factor that should be considered when examining teacher effectiveness was the role of student learning in the educational process. Disregarding the student and teacher relationship when researching teacher effectiveness may have led to minimal improvement for increased student achievement (Ding & Sherman, 2006). In a two phase study conducted by Stronge, Ward, and Grant (2011), the researchers examined over 300 fifth grade teachers from three public schools in the southeastern part of the United States. The results of this study indicated that more effective teachers had fewer student disruptions during
instruction, stronger classroom management skills, and stronger positive relationships with students. Moreover, Stronge et al. (2011) described in their study the debate as to whether or not a teacher’s competency included their teaching qualifications, teaching practices, and level of student achievement, or was a teacher’s abilities based on a blend of these competencies that ultimately affected a teacher’s effectiveness.

An outcome-based approach associated with teacher evaluation has become known as value-added analysis (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012). This model emphasized that a teacher’s effectiveness was determined by his/her ability to consistently get high achievement from students after ruling out extraneous factors such as prior teachers or family influence (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012). Bell et al. (2012) described a distinction between teaching quality and teacher quality, indicating that teaching quality was related to the interactions between teachers and students, whereas teacher quality included the traits that were linked to the teacher (Bell et al., 2012). Additional research highlighted the concern that a teacher’s effect was not necessarily stable from one academic year to the next because of the variety of situational factors that teachers encountered, which could influence a teacher’s behavior (Kennedy, 2010).

Teacher quality can also be improved through continuous professional learning with colleagues, which is known as a professional learning community (Hord, 2009). A principal’s leadership is an important component of a professional learning community because he/she is vital in providing the time and space to support teachers’ collaborative dialogue focused around students’ needs and how teachers’ learning contributes to students’ learning (Hord, 2009). Stronge et al. (2011) conducted a study to determine how teachers’ practices affected student achievement. Two years of student data were
examined and only students who could be linked with a participating teacher responsible for their instruction were included in this study. The main purpose for their research was to determine if teaching practices between effective and ineffective teachers were distinguishable. The study focused on two aspects of effective teachers, which were student achievement gains and the instructional practices of effective and ineffective teachers. Stronge et al. (2011) examined the relationship between student achievement and instructional practices, they found that teachers who were considered to be in the top-quartile of the study were more effective at managing classroom behaviors, had stronger classroom management skills, and had an increased level of fairness and respect for their students, which established stronger relationships with their students (Stronge et al., 2011).

The Relationship between Supervision and Evaluation

**Supervision.** Teachers relate supervision to an evaluation because their main interaction with their supervisor is to gain an evaluation rating (Holland & Garman, 2001). However, research on teacher evaluation suggested that it is important to create an evaluation system that focuses on the development of teachers as well as the need to garner an evaluation rating to hold teachers accountable for student achievement (Holland & Garman, 2001; Marzano, 2012; Papay, 2012; Weisberg et al., 2009). A teacher evaluation system should identify and measure a teacher’s strengths and weaknesses in an effort to provide teachers with feedback (Weisberg et al., 2009). Historically, observations of teachers were viewed as a tool to evaluate a teacher’s performance; however, the evaluation models that incorporated teacher observations offered little impact on the observed teacher quality (Hill & Grossman, 2013). Many
teachers did not believe that an evaluation was about their personal improvement and professional growth because of political reform models and, as a result, feared the model (Conley & Glasman, 2008).

A supervisor or principal has various roles to fulfill within a school. Administrators maintain managerial roles as well as the task to promote the development of teachers (Holland, 2004). As a result of this complex role, a supervisor needs to work with teachers to develop a process or understanding of current teaching practices and to provide teachers with the necessary opportunities for professional development (Holland, 2004). Many administrators and teachers believe that supervision is equivalent to evaluation and recognize it as a process required by law, which often supersedes the supervision of teachers for professional development and growth (Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004; Zepeda, 2006).

Range, Anderson, Hvidston, and Mette (2013) conducted a study in a large, urban Midwestern school district to determine teachers’ perceptions about their principals’ supervisory and evaluative behaviors. A Likert-scale survey with open-ended questions was utilized to obtain the data examined in the study. The researchers offered three main conclusions in regard to teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ supervision and evaluation methods. The study’s results revealed that a principal’s instructional leadership was essential to establish a positive instructional climate and that the positive school climate could be attributed to the frequent visits principals made to classrooms (Range et al., 2013). Range et al. (2013) also determined that a differentiated supervision and evaluation model was difficult to establish because it required principals to provide different resources to teachers of all levels; as teachers become more experienced, they
could become dissatisfied with the supervision and evaluation process because it did not meet their professional growth needs. Consequently, it was important for principals to support experienced teachers’ professional growth and to be responsive to the needs of teachers based on where they were on the continuum of teaching (Range et al., 2013; Zepeda, 2006).

The demand for increased accountability from public policies also warrants the need to determine effective supervision procedures. As a result, it is important that supervisors provide opportunities for teachers to reflect, discuss, and collaborate about their instruction throughout the supervision process (Zepeda, 2006).

**Evaluation.** Taylor and Tyler (2012) theorized that a well-structured and implemented evaluation model could improve teacher effectiveness and impact student achievement. In most cases, teacher evaluation models did not support or improve teacher performance. Far too frequently the summative evaluation model was present, and teachers were evaluated and provided with little to no feedback (Halverson & Clifford, 2006). Danielson and McGreal (2000) ascertained that evaluation could be separated into two general categories. The first category defined supervision as summative and it was used to make decisions about the competency of teachers and provide the evidence to support that decision. The second category established the formative function of supervision. This function offered teachers constructive feedback, guidance about professional development needs, and opportunities to foster a collaborative relationship centered on student achievement. Therefore, Danielson and McGreal (2000) stated, “the two principal purposes of teacher evaluation, then, are (1) quality assurance and (2) professional development” (p. 8).
Many evaluation systems are based on the satisfactory or unsatisfactory model. Within this model it is easy to rate a teacher as satisfactory without truly knowing if the teacher impacted student learning (Toch & Rothman, 2008). A report by Toch and Rothman (2008) identified the *drive-by* observation as an evaluator making a brief visit to a classroom to deem a teacher as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. In most cases, the principal did not even discuss the evaluation with the teacher. There was no discussion about improvement; therefore, the opportunity to improve instruction and increase student achievement was lost (Toch & Rothman, 2008). When evaluators are forced to use time-saving approaches, their evaluations could not identify the quality of a teacher’s instruction despite the observation model in place (Hill, Charalambous, & Kraft, 2012).

To improve student learning, the sole focus of teacher evaluations should not be satisfactory or unsatisfactory based, which is a measurement model; instead it is critical for the teacher evaluation debate to also include a development model (Marzano, 2012). Accountability is important, but the development of a teacher’s practice and effectiveness in the classroom also remains important (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). A standards-based observation model offers one avenue to provide specific and direct feedback to a teacher (Papay, 2012). The standards-based evaluation system requires the establishment of clear instructional standards and rubrics in order for a standards-based evaluation model to be meaningful (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). Recent research has established that instructional standards and rubrics could also provide guidance to evaluators, which can potentially decrease the subjectivity of teacher evaluations (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). The evaluation model should use multiple observations over the course of a
school year (Papay, 2012). Additionally, the evaluator must be ready and able to make judgments about a teacher’s practice (Papay, 2012).

Kimball and Milanowski (2009) studied how evaluators’ ratings in a large school district in the western United States might differ throughout the evaluation process as well as with the determination of the final observational rating. Some differences in evaluations may be attributed to the fact that some evaluators were more focused on instructional practices that relate to student achievement than other evaluators (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). In many schools, there was little emphasis on a uniform process, low accountability for accurate evaluations, and most evaluators did not receive follow-up training (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). Often teacher evaluation training remained focused on the management of evaluations versus how to provide feedback to teachers or the completion of an accurate evaluation. As a result of the research conducted by Kimball and Milanowski (2009), it was determined that identifying and implementing a good evaluation practice was complex. In order to identify an evaluation model that was more accurate, the model would need to involve more than the identification of instructional standards and rubrics. There is a need to examine the evaluation model implementation and to create a culture surrounded by consistency (Kimball & Milanowski, 2009). A study by Kane, Taylor, Tyler, and Wooten (2011) utilized data from classroom observations of teaching practices and found that classroom based evaluations focused on specific instructional skills could identify information about a teacher’s practice, which could increase student achievement.

In addition to evaluating a teacher’s performance, a common belief is that teachers should also be evaluated based on student growth. The value-added model is one way to
evaluate a teacher’s impact on student learning because it focuses on test-score growth and can be viewed as objective (Papay, 2012). The value-added model assumes that student growth has been measured by an accurate test. There is, however, a growing amount of research that a teacher’s effectiveness cannot be determined solely by a test due to additional factors in a classroom (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsly, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012; Hill, Kapitula, & Umland, 2011). Some of the additional factors that may have influenced a student’s growth included curriculum materials, instructional time, and student ability, as well as other factors (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). These other factors included: summer learning loss, individual student needs, home and community support, prior teachers and schools, and the types of tests used to measure learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). Additionally, these value-added scores often remained limited to grade levels or subject areas that were tested yearly. Therefore, the process cannot be widely implemented at all levels (Kane et al., 2011).

A study conducted by Hill et al. (2011) collected detailed data on 24 middle school teachers, which included interview, observation, and survey data. The researchers concluded that often teachers’ value-added score were correlated with an evaluator’s observational score, but there were times that observations of a teacher’s instruction did not match their value-added scores. As a result, it was difficult to determine the usefulness of the value-added scores (Hill et al., 2011). In a large urban school district in the northeast United States, Papay (2011) examined value-added models and how the use of value-added estimates provided information about teacher performance. The researcher concluded from the student, teacher, and test data collected that the type of assessment used to determine a teacher’s performance was not the only variable that
could cause different results about a teacher’s performance, but that the variation in a teacher’s performance could change depending on when the actual test was administered during the academic year. As a result, Papay (2011) indicated that value-added models should be further researched if these measures were intended to determine a teacher’s level of performance. The researcher concluded that using student achievement scores from various assessments could provide districts with more information about student achievement growth (Papay, 2011).

Provided with the current conclusions about teacher evaluations, it is inherent that despite the teacher evaluation model a district or state has in place, it remains important to reexamine the evaluation system to determine its effectiveness. Hill et al. (2012) emphasized that evaluation systems as a whole should maintain properly trained raters, quality observational instruments, and a scoring guideline that would produce reliable teacher ratings. They found there were some elements that influenced an evaluation beyond teaching quality, which included the curriculum covered during an observation, the students in the class, and the evaluator (Hill et al., 2012). These influences remained important because each factor impacted a teacher’s evaluation. Furthermore, many teacher evaluation systems did not create a sense of trust between an evaluator and teacher (Hill et al., 2012). Most models provided a summative judgment of a teacher’s ability versus the evaluator as a facilitator of a teacher’s growth (Larsen, 2005).

Evaluation models and the current emphasis on teacher evaluation have also created a level of fear (Conley & Glasman, 2008). Many evaluation models were used to find incompetent teachers, so many teachers feared that an evaluation was not used for personal improvement or growth. Conley and Glasman (2008) examined different
research conclusions that identified that teachers felt comfortable being evaluated in areas they felt they could control. The researchers identified that teachers maintained internal and external fears related to teacher evaluations. External fear was felt by stakeholders and included the fear of low student achievement, school violence, and poor teacher preparation. Internal fears focused on accountability models, the difficulty of meeting diverse student needs, and the limited control over their job (Conley & Glasman, 2008). According to their research, teachers believed they had more control over student motivation and classroom climate, but did not feel a great deal of control over materials and learning objectives. In addition, it was determined that teachers feared being evaluated because many current observation models were subjective and it was uncertain if the model could identify good teaching practices (Conley & Glasman, 2008).

As current teacher evaluation methods were further examined, it was thought that many current models did not meet the demands of teachers and supervisors. Weems and Rogers (2010) proposed a method of teacher evaluation that consisted of multiple measures that included principal observations, peer review or mentoring, teacher portfolios, and student evaluation. The use of multiple measures offered the opportunity for the teacher and administrator involved to not only improve instruction, but also to monitor student achievement and professional growth (Weems & Rogers, 2010).

**Personnel Management**

According to Nolan and Hoover (2008), teacher evaluation models have been adapted with the purpose to make a judgment about the quality of teachers’ performances and their ability to execute assigned duties. Teacher evaluation also provided a supervisor with an understanding of teaching performance among a staff (Nolan &
Research conducted by Brown and Wynn (2009) in a small urban district concluded that it was necessary for principals to encourage collegiality and offer teachers guidance and leadership. The 12 principals involved in this study maintained leadership qualities that balanced flexibility and support for their teachers with direction and guidance (Brown & Wynn, 2009). The researchers utilized semi-structured interviews to identify common characteristics and strategies executed by these principals to retain teachers at their schools. The findings from this study indicated that teachers remained at schools when they were supported by their principal (Brown & Wynn, 2009).

The traditional teacher evaluation model has been rooted in the obligatory classroom observation that consists of determining if a teacher has met the items indicated on a checklist in order to be considered an effective teacher (Derrington, 2011; Master, 2014). A principal’s role as a supervisor and evaluator is evolving beyond the traditional role (Derrington, 2011). Currently, the principal’s role is to implement a system to support the development of teachers’ instruction (Derrington, 2011). Horng and Loeb (2010) synthesized different research studies and determined that principals were more effective at improving schools when they focused on organizational management duties such as hiring, supporting, and retaining quality teachers. The researchers concluded that student achievement was generally not impacted when a principal had a narrow focus on classroom instruction. Instead, instructional leaders influenced student achievement when they were focused on supporting a school climate that was focused on teaching and learning. When principals’ or supervisors’ organizational management skills were strong, their impact on student achievement was more influential on the overall school culture (Horng & Loeb, 2010).
A report on how to implement teacher evaluation written by Donaldson (2013) affirmed that often principals and supervisors felt there were many factors that inhibited them from conducting meaningful teacher evaluations. Some of the inhibiting factors included: time, the limited chance to observe and document representative teaching, inadequate instruments, and the school culture (Donaldson, 2013). Therefore, the participating principals in this study did not believe they were able to obtain the two main goals of teacher evaluation: the improvement of instruction and the opportunity to identify and provide intervention for poorly performing teachers (Donaldson, 2013).

Also, it was important to consider that a principal’s ability to observe a teacher will vary and this may impact a teacher’s observational rating (Harris & Sass, 2014). Harris and Sass (2014) interviewed 30 principals from a mid-sized school district and found that principals were better at determining the ability of teachers to contribute to student growth with 11 or more years of experience or if principals have worked with the teacher for four or more years.

A further area of importance was noting a principal’s ability to create a school environment that was conducive to professional development because it was more likely to increase the effectiveness of the teachers at the school (Kraft & Papay, 2014). Research by Kraft and Papay (2014) examined how the effectiveness of a teacher was influenced by the school’s context over time. Teachers that were exposed to more supportive school environments were more likely to increase student achievement compared with teachers in a less supportive environment (Kraft & Papay, 2014). For instance, the degree of a principal’s leadership, a positive school climate, and peer collaboration often resulted in schools that had greater student achievement (Johnson,
Kraft, & Papay, 2012). These social conditions were often more important than physical conditions such as: building facilities, available technology, or other resources. The establishment of collegial relationships between a principal and teacher creates an environment where teachers could receive meaningful feedback that was supportive of students’ learning (Johnson et al., 2012). Kraft and Papay (2014) utilized data from a previously administered survey given to teachers along with previous student test score data attributed to individual teachers to examine teacher effectiveness and their work environment. The survey items were centered on the physical, social, and cultural aspects of schools. Their findings suggested that improving a teacher’s professional work environment could potentially increase the rate at which a teacher’s instructional growth develops (Kraft & Papay, 2014). Findings from this study described how offering teachers feedback targeted at their instruction, time for peer collaboration, the investment in a school culture, and the support of a disciplined school environment were more likely to increase a teacher’s growth (Kraft & Papay, 2014).

Harris, Ingle, and Rutledge (2014) used principal interviews to research why principals had different impressions of teacher effectiveness versus their value-added measures. An area of focus that this study emphasized was how principals rated the effectiveness of their teachers in both their overall contribution and their ability to increase student test scores. Harris et al. (2014) found that principals often differentiated between a teacher’s overall contribution to the building and his/her contribution to raising test scores. As a result, it was important to gain the perspective of principals as evaluation models were established because of the principal’s direct involvement in the measurement of a teacher’s effectiveness. These results indicated that no matter how
objective an evaluation model was a principal’s perspective of a teacher was involved (Harris et al., 2014). According to Harris & Sass (2014), it was important to maintain the use of principal observations as a component to determine teachers’ observational ratings. The researchers concluded that principals were often better able to determine teachers’ traits such as: subject knowledge, instructional skills, motivation, and interpersonal skills. As a result, the use of value-added measures from multiple years of test score data, along with principal evaluations, were more likely to provide teachers with specific feedback to improve a teacher’s instruction (Harris & Sass, 2014).

**Leadership Practices and Professional Growth of Teachers**

In a survey of approximately 600 primary school teachers, Cerit (2009) found that there was a relationship between teachers’ job satisfaction and a principal’s leadership style. The factors that influenced the principal’s leadership style included: (a) the development of teachers, (b) community building, (c) authenticity, and (d) shared leadership. A school culture that encouraged collaboration with administrators and other professionals was believed to result in an environment where teachers were able to develop their instructional strategies (Cerit, 2009). Sun, Frank, Penuel, and Kim (2013) examined longitudinal data from nine school districts in urban and suburban areas of California. In their results, they described the importance of shared leadership between formal and informal leaders within a school environment to assist in the development of external reforms at the schools involved in the study. Formal leaders were those that maintained a position which included: a principal or assistant principal, mentor, team leader, or instructional coach. Informal leaders were not defined by a specific title, but were individuals who teachers believed to provide others with expertise or resources.
The results of this study suggested that the collaborative effort of both formal and informal leaders were more likely to lead the successful development of an external reform at a school level (Sun et al., 2013). A current external reform that many districts were implementing was a redesigned teacher evaluation model. The results of Sun et al.’s (2013) study supported that both formal and informal leaders should have a role in the implementation of this reform effort (Sun et al., 2013).

Other studies supported the notion that effective principals often exhibited the ability to relate to teachers as individuals. The results of Cerit’s (2009) study concluded that teachers were more satisfied with their job when the relationship with their principal not only included shared leadership, but also when the teachers felt valued, believed there was a sense of community, and perceived their principal as authentic. Their results indicated that when a principal was involved in a teacher’s professional development, there was an increase in job satisfaction. Since an increase in a teacher’s job satisfaction can result in a positive effect on teacher performance in the classroom, this is an important leadership aspect for principals to consider (Cerit, 2009). In addition, Klar and Brewer (2013) found that principals were effective when professional development was tailored to meet the specific needs of their staff. Their results implied that effective leaders were aware of their school’s needs and teachers’ individual needs (Klar & Brewer, 2013).

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of 27 studies and determined that educational leadership was focused on the establishment of collegial teams, the development of a loyal and cohesive staff, and the determination of an inspiration vision. Robinson et al.’s (2008) research described five leadership
dimensions that were believed to make a difference in student outcomes. The third
dimension of leadership was focused on the planning, coordinating, and evaluating of
teaching and curriculum; it was established that when leaders were focused on working
with their staff by reviewing curriculum, visiting classrooms, and examining learning,
students often performed above expected levels (Robinson et al., 2008). The fourth
leadership dimension that had the strongest effect on student achievement was the
principal’s promotion and participation in student learning. This dimension included the
protection of teaching time as well as the establishment of an orderly and supportive
school environment. Consequently, it was important to examine the relationship between
the impact of leadership and the processes of teacher development that resulted in
increased student achievement (Robinson et al., 2008).

**Supervisor and Teacher Interactions**

**Collaboration.** Cosner (2009) completed a qualitative study of 11 high school
principals utilizing interviews and school documents. He surmised that the principals
involved perceived collegial trust with their teachers as an important aspect of their
school organization. He also concluded that a principal’s leadership actions have the
ability to determine the level of trust among the teachers in a building (Cosner, 2009).
Price (2012) found that supervisor-subordinate relationships encouraged attitudes that
stimulated an improved work environment. A principal’s relationship with his/her staff
could significantly increase teacher satisfaction, cohesion, and commitment, which were
influential to the overall climate of a school (Price, 2012).

Principals’ instructional leadership practices could often result in greater student
learning (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2009). Supovitz et al. (2009) used survey and
student achievement data from an urban school district in the southeastern part of the United States. According to Supovitz et al. (2009), principals who participated in this study maintained practices that led to teachers’ increased collaboration among themselves. These practices included: creating a community, nurturing trust, focusing on instruction, developing a school mission, and establishing building goals. Their results concluded that the most significant factor of a principal’s leadership was on peer influence. When these practices were in place, an environment was fostered where teachers worked together to focus on issues of teaching and learning. Therefore, a principal had an indirect influence on teacher instruction by creating an environment that allowed for collaboration, which had an impact on student learning (Supovitz et al., 2009). A longitudinal study with 51 schools conducted by May and Supovitz (2011) found that principals’ influence on instructional improvement was related to their interactions with individual teachers. It was concluded that the actual amount of time a principal focused on instruction was not as important as the time a principal spent on instructional leadership. Therefore, it was beneficial for a principal to know his/her staff and how to target his/her instructional leadership among teachers so that it yielded the greatest instructional improvement for the greatest number of students (May & Supovitz, 2011).

A study conducted by Barnett and McCormick (2004) examined the relationship between a principal’s leadership and the school’s learning culture. It was found using survey methods from 373 teachers in 41 different schools that teachers believed their principal demonstrated individual concern when the principal was respectful, fair, accessible, and provided direction based on individual needs. Barnett and McCormick
(2004) stated that a principal’s individual concern for a teacher could be demonstrated by being helpful or considerate. It was further determined, using data from principal web logs and teacher surveys, that when a principal interacted more frequently with an individual teacher, it was more likely that he/she would impact a teacher’s instructional practice. A principal’s effort to improve instruction could be linked to his/her ability to interact with an individual teacher (May & Supovitz, 2011). Therefore, a principal’s influence on a teacher was related to the interactions he/she had with individual teachers (May & Supovitz, 2011).

Students will have many different teachers over the course of several years. As a result of this system, student learning became reliant on the quality of teaching that occurred across the classrooms in a building (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Therefore, it is important to determine whether a school’s leader and teachers can have an impact on student achievement. In Hallinger and Heck’s (2010) longitudinal study, they concluded that collaborative leadership impacted the growth in student learning and the academic strength of a school building. Hallinger and Heck’s (2010) results indicated that collaborative leadership influenced student achievement when there was a focus on the identification of a school’s needs and the establishment of a plan to meet those needs. Some of the areas in this study that indirectly influenced students’ academic growth were a focus on improving the curriculum, the development of a school-wide focus on learning, progress monitoring of students, and providing individualized support for teachers and students (Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

A main challenge of instructional leadership is the interpersonal skill set that is necessary to assist teachers with their professional growth (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2015).
It is challenging to transfer the knowledge of the importance of instructional leadership with the actual capability to be an instructional leader in an established school culture (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2015). A challenge of instructional leadership is to determine the skills that influence and support teaching and learning and those skills that are not influential (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013). Hallinger (2005) reviewed 25 years of literature about instructional leadership and described an instructional leader as someone who established a school’s vision focused on student learning, professional development planning, curriculum planning, and the supervision and evaluation of instruction. A theme that emerged from the data collected by Grissom et al. (2013) highlighted that there was not a relationship between a principal’s time spent on instruction and a school’s effectiveness determined by student achievement levels. They concluded that when a principal spent time coaching or collaborating with teachers there were increased student achievement gains, when compared to the lack of achievement gains when a principal visited a classroom and did not provide feedback (Grissom et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to determine the quality of time principals spend on instructional leadership activities that influence student learning (Grissom et al., 2013).

**Summary**

Educational accountability policies have resulted in the need for states to examine their teacher evaluation models to create an evaluation model that will reflect a teacher’s quality and area of need for professional development. This has created a need to understand current evaluation methods along with the perceptions of teachers as participants in this process for professional growth. Papay (2012) suggested that further research on teacher evaluation not only focus on the assessment of teachers, but also
focus on how to incorporate teacher professional development in the models. The concept of teacher evaluation has evolved since its early definition. The current view about the purpose of a teacher evaluation is to determine the degree of a teacher’s competency and to encourage professional growth (Marzano et al., 2011; Papay, 2012; Weems & Rogers, 2010). Chapter Three will outline the methods and procedures used to investigate teachers’ perceptions regarding the value of feedback from their supervisor to support their instruction and professional growth and how the supervisory process impacted their relationship with their supervisor.
Chapter Three – Methods and Procedures

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine teachers’ perceptions about the feedback provided by their supervisor on their instructional practice, the structure of the current supervisory model on teachers’ professional growth, and how the supervisory process impacted their relationship with their supervisor. Teachers were surveyed and interviewed to investigate their perceptions about the supervision model utilized to determine their teacher effectiveness. The supervisory model’s impact on teacher’s professional growth and the supervisory model’s process on teacher-supervisor relationships were also addressed in survey and interview questions. This chapter will outline the methodology utilized in this study.

Participants

The participants of this study included certified teachers from a school district in southeastern Pennsylvania. At the time of this study, there were 512 teachers employed by the district and 61 teachers completed the online survey. Of those 61 teachers a total of 12 teachers completed in-person interviews with the researcher. The demographic survey results revealed that of the 61 participants, 25 (41.0%) were male, 32 (52.5%) were female, and four (6.6%) participants chose not to indicate their gender. There were two (3.3%) participants that taught for one to three years, 17 (27.9%) taught for four to 10 years, 18 (29.5%) taught for 11 to 15 years, 21 (34.4%) taught for 16 or more years, and three (4.9%) participants provided no response. The results from the demographic questions indicated that of the 61 participants, 12 (19.7%) participants taught at the elementary level, 36 (59.0%) participants taught at the junior high level, 10 (16.4%)
participants taught at the high school level, and three (4.9%) participants did not respond to this question. Of the participants involved in the study, 56 (91.8%) participants identified that they had one or more areas of certification and five (8.2%) participants did not identify an area of certification.

Setting

This study took place in a school district that was both rural and suburban, was located in southeastern Pennsylvania, and educated students from areas within two counties. The district was comprised of seven elementary buildings, which accommodated students in kindergarten through grade 6. Two junior high schools educated students in grades 7 through 9 and one high school instructed students in grades 10, 11, and 12. The district had a student population of just over 7,000 students. The district employed approximately 520 certified administrative and professional employees. Five of the district’s elementary schools received Title I funding during the 2014-2015 school year.

Instruments

This study included a researcher-designed survey, with Likert-scale questions and open-ended responses, and interview questions. These instruments were designed to gather teacher perceptions on feedback provided by their supervisor on their instructional practice as well as the impact of the supervisory model on teachers’ professional growth. The impact of the supervisory process on the teacher-supervisor relationship was also examined.

In order to investigate the research questions, the first source of data was a researcher-designed survey based on a recent review of literature (Appendix A). The
The survey consisted of 28 questions, which collected participants’ demographic information and their perceptions of the current supervisory model. The participants were asked to identify their gender, years of teaching experience, areas of certification, and the level they were currently teaching in an effort to analyze the research data that was collected. The survey questions utilized a 4-point Likert-scale with the following labels: (a) strongly disagree, (b) disagree, (c) agree, and (d) strongly agree. The survey contained four open-ended questions to provide participants with the opportunity to elaborate on their survey responses. These open-ended responses allowed the researcher to gain additional data to analyze and answer the three research questions. Survey questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 were written to collect demographic data about the study’s participants. Survey questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 were written to elicit responses related to research question one. Open-ended question number 25 was written to elicit responses related to the first research question. Survey questions 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 were written to answer the second research question. Open-ended questions 26 and 28 were designed to elicit responses to research question two. Survey questions 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 were constructed to elicit responses to the third research question. Open-ended question 27 was crafted to elicit responses related to research question three.

The researcher-designed and experienced educator panel-approved survey was administered using the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. The online survey tool, SurveyMonkey, provided participants access to a unique web address that collected their responses. The website collected the survey responses and reported participants’ responses by survey question.
At the conclusion of the survey participants were asked if they would participate in an in-person interview with the researcher at a location and time convenient to the participant. If the participant chose to volunteer for an interview he or she was redirected to a separate SurveyMonkey link to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participant. At this point, the participants were able to provide the contact information needed to schedule an in-person interview. The separation of the teacher survey and the interview consent form protected the confidentiality of the participants’ survey responses.

The seven interview questions (Appendix B) were researcher-developed and experienced educator panel-approved. These questions offered participants the opportunity to elaborate on their perceptions of their supervisor’s feedback on their instructional practices, professional growth, and collaboration throughout the teacher evaluation process. Interview question 1 was written to provide data for the first research question. Interview questions 2 and 3 were designed to answer the second research question, and interview questions 4, 5, and 6 were written to answer the third research question.

Reliability

According to Creswell (2011), reliability is understood as a measurement of consistency and reliable data is collected when instruments are clear and procedures are standardized. In an effort to increase the reliability, the researcher utilized a consistent method to collect data through the use of the survey with open-ended questions and throughout the in-person interviews. The researcher asked the participants the same questions through the use of the survey. During the interviews the researcher asked each participant the same set of questions in the same order. The researcher wrote notes about
the participants’ responses throughout the interview. At the end of each interview, the researcher summarized the notes taken and provided the participant with an electronic copy of the summarized notes within a week of the interview. The interview participants were asked to review the notes to ensure the accuracy of the data and to provide the researcher with any clarifications.

Triangulation is the process of collecting and analyzing different types of data about the same topic to develop themes (Creswell, 2011). In this study, triangulation was achieved by comparing participants’ survey responses, open-ended questions, and interview responses to develop themes. The Likert-scale survey included open-ended questions to allow participants to contribute additional information from their survey responses. All interview participants were asked the same questions and the same directions were provided at the start of each interview.

Validity

The survey instrument with open-ended questions and interview questions used in this study were evaluated by an experienced panel of educators with Doctorates in Education (Appendix C) who did not participate in the study. The experienced panel of educators were asked to review the Likert-scale questions, open-ended questions, and interview questions for readability and the probability to elicit responses related to the research questions. The panel members were asked to assign a ranking of a three, two, or one for each Likert-scale question, open-ended question, and interview question. The number rankings meant the following: three (the survey question was designed to adequately elicit a response to answer the research questions), two (the survey question will elicit a response to answer the research questions with a modification recommended
by the panel member), and one (the survey question will not elicit a response to answer
the research questions and the researcher must modify the question). The researcher
requested the panel members to provide a comment for questions they ranked as a one or
a two. The questions that were ranked as a one or a two were rewritten with the feedback
from the experienced panel. Then, these questions were resubmitted to the experienced
panel members for their review. The survey and interview questions were rewritten until
all panel members ranked each question as a three. Validity was achieved through the
use of an experienced panel of educators who aided in aligning survey, open-ended, and
interview questions with the three research questions that guided this study.

**Design of the Study**

Marshall and Rossman (2011) indicated that the benefits of a qualitative study
could be placed into three categories that focused on: “a) individual lived experience, b)
society and culture, and c) language and communication” (p. 92). Furthermore, a
qualitative study allows a researcher to focus on the setting and the participants’
experiences that are being studied (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this qualitative study,
the researcher used multiple methods of data to incorporate triangulation in an effort to
gather teachers’ perceptions of their supervisory process. A survey was created with
Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions. Additionally, interview questions were
written to gain more insight about participants’ survey responses. Both the survey and
the interview questions were reviewed by a panel of experienced educators to be
approved or modified before being utilized with the participants of the study. All
participants were asked to provide their consent prior to completing the online survey and
their consent was requested again before participating in an in-person interview.
Throughout the study, names were not attached to the survey or interview questions to ensure participant anonymity. The data was analyzed for themes and conclusions and represented in a narrative format.

**Procedure**

The researcher sent a letter of request to conduct the research study to the superintendent of schools where the study was conducted. Upon receiving permission form the superintendent, the researcher sought approval from the Research Ethics Review Board (RERB) of Immaculata University (Appendix D) to conduct the study. The researcher-developed survey and interview questions were reviewed by a panel of experienced educators. The survey and interview questions were revised and finalized by a panel of experienced educators. Once permission to conduct the study was obtained from RERB, the researcher called all building principals in the participating district to answer any questions or clarify the instructions regarding the study and the researcher provided the information to be disseminated to the qualifying participants in the building. In addition, the researcher e-mailed each principal a written letter explaining the study. The researcher used the Teacher Letter of Recruitment to invite all eligible participants to take part in the study. The researcher requested the principal or a designee to forward the Teacher Letter of Recruitment to his/her staff along with the survey URL address. Upon the receipt of the email, if the teacher chose to participate in the survey, he/she was instructed to follow the URL address to provide the researcher with his/her consent to take part in the study. Once at the URL address, each participant was presented with the Teacher Informed Consent for Survey and was asked to indicate “yes” if they chose to participate in the study. Participants were able to complete the anonymous survey, which
included Likert-scale and open-ended questions. The directions provided to all participants requested a completion date. The data was compiled and reported through the SurveyMonkey tool. At the conclusion of the survey, the participants were asked if they would consider participating in an in-person researcher led interview. At this point, if the participant agreed, he/she was redirected to a new URL address. If the participant agreed to participate in an in-person interview, he/she was asked to indicate “yes” on the Teacher Informed Consent Form for Interview and he/she was then able to provide the contact information needed to schedule an in-person interview. Two weeks after the initial invitation to participate in the study was sent, the researcher asked the principal of each building or a designee to distribute a second e-mail to all potential participants reminding them of the opportunity to take part in the study.

Once the researcher was able to determine the teachers who consented to participate in an interview process, they were contacted individually to determine a convenient time to host the interview. In the initial written request to conduct the study in the school district, the research asked for permission from the district superintendent or a designee to host the interviews at the participants’ school buildings. The interviews were conducted using the researcher-developed interview questions. To maintain the anonymity of each interview participant he/she was assigned a letter IA, IB, IC, etc. With the participants’ permission, the researcher took notes, to maintain the accuracy of the information received from each participant during the interview. The researcher reminded each participant that his/her confidentiality would be maintained and that the responses would be reported by themes to maintain anonymity. Each participant was
provided with a summary of notes taken during the interview for his/her review in an effort to ensure the accuracy of the data prior to the researcher’s analysis of the data.

**Data Analysis**

Upon the conclusion of the data collection period, the researcher compiled the data from the surveys and interviews. Consequently, the researcher sorted the data according to any observable patterns or themes. The data were organized to determine teacher perceptions about their current supervisory model according to the three research questions of the study. In an effort to create a triangulation of the data, the researcher used multiple sources to collect data, which included Likert-scale survey questions, open-ended responses, and interview questions. The Likert-scale survey results and open-ended responses were used to determine patterns or themes about teacher perceptions of the supervisory model. The responses collected from the in-person interviews were used to further explain the findings of the study.

**Summary**

This qualitative study gathered perception-based data from teachers in a southeastern Pennsylvania school district. The participants in this study completed an online survey that contained Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions, which gathered data to answer the three established research questions. The researcher conducted in-person interviews to gather perceptual data about teachers’ interactions with their supervisors. To strengthen the validity of the study, the researcher aligned the Likert-scale questions, open-ended questions, and interview questions with the three research questions. The data collected was analyzed for common themes and trends for each research question. Chapter Four will present the data.
Chapter Four – Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers’ perceptions about feedback afforded from their supervisor in regard to teachers’ perceived value of the observational rating and the impact of the feedback on teachers’ professional growth. The supervisory process and its impact on the teacher as well as the supervisor’s degree of collaboration with a teacher with whom he or she was working were also examined. The data were collected through a researcher-designed and experienced educator panel approved survey and interview questions. Teacher perceptions from the survey results were compiled and the responses from the open-ended survey questions and interview questions were classified by themes and patterns. The survey and interview questions were designed to elicit responses to the three research questions that were the basis for this study.

The first four survey questions were created to gather specific demographic information about the participants. Those questions obtained information about the participants’ gender, overall years of teaching experience, the level they instructed, and their area of certification. Sixty-one participants responded to the online survey. The data (N=61) will be reported using the raw numbers and percentages to represent participants’ responses to the Likert-scale questions. Twenty-two Likert-scale survey questions included the following options: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). The survey concluded with four open-ended questions. The participants were entitled to not respond to a particular question and an absence of response is noted as no response (NR). The results of the open-ended survey questions were categorized and reported by themes and patterns that were evident in the responses recorded by the participants.
There were seven researcher-designed and experienced educator panel approved interview questions. Twelve participants (N=12) completed the interview component of this study. To maintain anonymity, the individual interview participants were coded as: IA, IB, IC, etc. The interview responses were compiled and categorized according to prevalent themes and patterns.

**Compilation of Data**

**Demographics.** Sixty-one teachers responded to the Likert-scale survey. The first demographic question asked participants to indicate their gender. Fifty-seven (93.4%) participants identified their gender and four (6.6%) participants did not respond to the question. Twenty-five (41.0%) participants indicated they were male and 32 (52.5%) participants indicated they were female. Four (6.6%) participants did not respond to this question. Table 4.1 represents participant responses from the first demographic question on the survey.

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Question One: Gender</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25 (41.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32 (52.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4 (6.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* (N=61).

Table 4.2 illustrates the data collected from the second demographic question on the survey. This question on the survey asked participants to indicate the number of years they had in the education profession at the summation of the 2014-2015 school year. Two (3.3%) participants reported that they had one to three years of experience,
and 17 (27.9%) of the participants reported that they had four through 10 years of experience. Of the 61 participants, 18 (29.5%) participants had between 11 and 15 years of experience, and 21 (34.4%) participants reported they had 16 or more years of experience in the education profession. Three (4.9%) participants did not respond to this question.

Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3</td>
<td>2 (3.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 10</td>
<td>17 (27.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>18 (29.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
<td>21 (34.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3 (4.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* (N=61).

Question number three on the survey requested participants to identify the current area of instruction in which they were teaching during the 2014-2015 school year. There were some participants that indicated they were certified in more than one area of instruction. One (1.6%) participant was certified in business education, one (1.6%) participant in family and consumer science, one (1.6%) participant in speech pathology, and two (3.3%) participants were certified in technology education. Four (6.6%) participants were certified in art education (K-12), 10 (16.4%) participants were certified in elementary education (K-6 or K-8), and six (9.8%) participants were certified in English instruction. There were four (6.6%) participants that were certified in health and physical education and four (6.6%) in library science. Six (9.8%) participants were certified to teach secondary mathematics. In the area of music education (K-12) there was a total of six (9.8%) participants. Six (9.8%) of the participants were certified to
teach one or more areas of science. There were six (9.8%) participants certified to teach secondary social studies. A total of five (8.2%) participants were certified in special education. Five (8.2%) participants did not respond to this question. Table 4.3 includes a complete listing of the certification areas of the participants and the number of participants whom responded to that area of certification.

Table 4.3

Demographic Question Three: Area of Certification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Certification</th>
<th>Number of Responses/Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>2 (3.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art (K-12)</td>
<td>4 (6.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education (K-6, K-8)</td>
<td>10 (16.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>6 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Consumer Science</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>4 (6.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Science</td>
<td>5 (8.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>6 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music (K-12)</td>
<td>6 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Specialist</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>6 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counseling</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>6 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>5 (8.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech and Language</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Education</td>
<td>2 (3.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>5 (8.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. (N=61). Participants were able to indicate more than one area of certification.

The final demographic question asked respondents to indicate the level they currently instructed at during the 2014-2015 school year. Twelve (19.7%) participants instructed students at the elementary level. A total of 36 (59.0%) participants instructed
students at the junior high level and 10 (16.4%) participants instructed at the high school level. Three (4.9%) participants did not respond to this question. Table 4.4 shows the participant responses for their level of current instruction.

Table 4.4

Demographic Question: Participants’ Current Area of Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Instruction</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>12 (19.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>36 (59.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>10 (16.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3 (4.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. (N=61).

Research Question One. What are teachers’ perceptions regarding the value of an evaluation of their teacher effectiveness?

Survey responses. Survey questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 were written to elicit responses related to research question one. The responses to these questions are reported below in narrative form. Table 4.5 represents participants’ responses to the survey statements.

Participants were asked in statement number five to determine if their observational rating was an accurate reflection of his or her performance. Two (3.2%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement, nine (14.8%) participants disagreed, 33 (54.1%) participants agreed with the statement, and ten (16.4%) participants strongly agreed. Seven (11.5%) participants provided no response to this question.

In survey statement six, participants were asked if they believed that their supervisor’s observations were comprehensive and provided an accurate assessment of their performance. Of the participant responses one (1.6%) strongly disagreed, 10
(16.4%) disagreed, 33 (54.1%) agreed, and 10 (16.4%) strongly agreed with this statement. A total of seven (11.5%) participants did not respond to this statement.

Teachers were asked in statement number seven if their instructional practices changed based on feedback provided from an evaluation. According to the results, none (0.0%) of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement. Fourteen (23.0%) participants disagreed with this statement, 32 (52.5%) agreed, eight (13.1%) strongly agreed, and seven (11.5%) participants did not respond to this survey statement.

Asking participants if there was a direct relationship between their observation rating and their student’s achievement was addressed in survey statement eight. Of the participants’ responses, three (4.9%) strongly disagreed and 26 (42.6%) disagreed. Twenty-three (37.7%) participants agreed with this statement and two (3.3%) participants strongly agreed. Seven (11.5%) participants provided no response to this question.

Statement number nine asked participants whether or not the four domain rating indicators (failing, needs improvement, proficient, and distinguished) could adequately rate their performance. The participants responded accordingly: five (8.2%) strongly disagreed, 28 (45.9%) disagreed, 19 (31.1%) agreed, and 2 (3.3%) strongly agreed. Of the participants involved in the survey, seven (11.5%) did not respond.

In survey statement number 10, participants were asked if the frequency and timeline of their observational rating was appropriate. Of the responses two (3.3%) participants strongly disagreed, 13 (21.3%) participants disagreed, 37 (60.7%) participants agreed, two (3.3%) participants strongly agreed, and seven (11.5%) participants did not provide a response to this statement.
Survey question 11 addressed whether observations from multiple supervisors would provide a more accurate observational rating. Of the responses one (1.6%) participant strongly disagreed and 17 (27.9%) participants disagreed with the statement. Twenty-six (42.6%) participants agreed, 10 (16.4%) participants strongly agreed, and seven (11.5%) participants did not respond.

Table 4.5

Participants’ responses to survey statement questions related to research question one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. My observational rating is an accurate reflection on my performance.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.3%)</td>
<td>(14.8%)</td>
<td>(54.1%)</td>
<td>(16.4%)</td>
<td>(11.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Supervisor's observations are comprehensive and accurate assessment of my performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.6%)</td>
<td>(16.4%)</td>
<td>(54.1%)</td>
<td>(16.4%)</td>
<td>(11.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I changed my instructional practices based on feedback from my evaluation.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
<td>(23.0%)</td>
<td>(52.5%)</td>
<td>(13.1%)</td>
<td>(11.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. There is a relationship between my observational rating and students' academic achievement.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.9%)</td>
<td>(42.6%)</td>
<td>(37.7%)</td>
<td>(3.3%)</td>
<td>(11.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The four domain rating indicators can adequately rate my performance.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8.2%)</td>
<td>(45.9%)</td>
<td>(31.1%)</td>
<td>(3.3%)</td>
<td>(11.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Frequency and timeline of my observational rating is appropriate.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.3%)</td>
<td>(21.3%)</td>
<td>(60.7%)</td>
<td>(3.3%)</td>
<td>(11.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Observations from multiple supervisors provide a more accurate observational rating.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.6%)</td>
<td>(27.9%)</td>
<td>(42.6%)</td>
<td>(16.4%)</td>
<td>(11.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Participant Response (N=61). SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree, SA = Strongly Agree; NR = no response.
**Open-ended Survey Responses.** The survey contained four open-ended response questions to elicit more detailed responses. Open-ended item number 25 was related to research question one and stated is a description of the responses. Of the 61 participants, 35, (57.4%) participants responded to this question.

Open-ended survey question number 25 asked participants to describe their reaction to the supervisory process that resulted in their most recent observational rating. After the teacher responses were collectively reviewed some patterns emerged. These patterns included: (a) the current process was more time consuming compared to previous processes, (b) the current supervisory process resulted in a satisfied reaction in regard to their most recent observational rating, and (c) the process created an opportunity for administrators and teachers to interact with each other about classroom instruction.

Of the 61 participants, 11 (18.0%) mentioned that the process was overwhelming and much of their time was spent completing the observational rating forms. The participants were surprised with how much time was required filling out paperwork and that the end result of the rating was not comparable to the time spent completing forms. One participant stated, “[It] takes time away from students and puts it into filling out more paperwork.” Three (4.9%) of the participants described the observational rating process as stressful and discouraging. Additionally, participants wrote that the domain rating indicators were too specific and the indicators were not always representative of their overall teaching performance.

Nine (14.8%) participants mentioned in their open-ended responses that they were satisfied with the current supervisory process or believed that the process that resulted in their most recent observational rating was fair. The participants indicated that the process
was productive, generally positive, or went as well as it could according to the current mandated procedures. Furthermore, some teachers believed the process provided them with an opportunity to discuss areas of strength and gain suggestions for areas of improvement. A participant stated, “I felt it was productive and allowed me to show the improvement my students made throughout the semester.”

Six (9.8%) participants believed that the supervisory process that resulted in a recent observational rating provided them with an opportunity to have a professional dialogue with their supervisor. Participants believed the supervisory process provided an opportunity to converse with their supervisor about student progress, strengths in their instruction, and areas for improvement. One participant indicated “the process allowed me to present more information to my supervisor [and] that gave us the opportunity to dialogue in a more effective manner.”

**Interview Responses.** In interview question one, participants were asked to explain what they found as the most valuable aspect of observational ratings. Six of the 12 (50.0%) interview participants (IA, IB, IG, IJ, IK, and IL) identified the most valuable aspect of the observational rating process as the conversational component. The participants remarked that this process provided a designated time for them to interact with their supervisor and have a conversation about his or her instruction in the classroom. Five (41.7%) of the 12 participants (IA, IE, IF, IG, and IH) commented that a valuable component of the observational rating process was the time it offered them to reflect on a lesson their supervisor had observed.

The participants offered some additional aspects of the observational rating process. Participant IB shared that going through the formal observational rating process
provided an opportunity to interact and share specific examples of instruction that had been taught with an administrator. Participant IC made a similar comment that the process was an opportunity to take a look at a teacher’s instruction and how the instruction was executed to the students. Participant IE also mentioned that a valuable aspect of the process was the verbal feedback offered by the administrator during the post-observation process. In this instance, the administrator had posed valuable questions about the lesson that provided the participant with the opportunity to reflect and comment on the lesson. Another participant, IG, noted that a valuable aspect of this process was an additional perspective of the lesson offered by an administrator. The additional point of view highlighted aspects of the instruction that the participant had not thought of while teaching the lesson.

Research Question Two. What are teachers’ perceptions regarding the usefulness of the feedback received from their immediate supervisor on their instructional practices?

Survey Responses. Survey statements 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 were designed to elicit responses to research question two. The responses to these questions are reported and table 4.6 displays the statements and reports the responses of the statements related to the second research question.

Participants were asked in statement 12 whether their supervisor’s feedback was always related to at least one of the four domains (planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities). No (0.0%) participants strongly disagreed with statement number 12. Seven (11.5%) participants disagreed, 37
(60.7%) agreed, 10 (16.4%) strongly agreed, and seven (11.5%) did not respond to the statement.

In survey item number 13, participants were asked if feedback provided by their supervisor had helped identify an area for professional growth. According to the survey results, three (4.9%) participants strongly disagreed, 12 (19.7%) disagreed, 32 (52.5%) agreed, and eight (13.1%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. Six (9.8%) participants did not provide a response to statement 13.

Participants were asked to respond to survey statement number 14 which required participants to reflect on whether or not the feedback provided by a supervisor had resulted in constructive professional development conversations with their colleagues. Of the participants’ responses four (6.6%) strongly disagreed, 20 (32.8%) disagreed, 26 (42.6%) agreed, and four (6.6%) strongly disagreed with the statement. There were seven (11.5%) participants that did not respond.

Survey statement number 15 asked participants if they respected their supervisor’s professional feedback. In responding to this statement, one (1.6%) participant strongly disagreed, four (6.6%) participants disagreed, 30 (49.2%) participants agreed, and 20 (32.8%) participants strongly agreed. There were six (9.8%) participants that did not indicate a response for this statement.

In statement number 16, participants were asked if their supervisor’s feedback was directed towards improving student achievement. None (0.0%) of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement, eight (13.1%) disagreed, 32 (52.5%) agreed, 13 (21.3%) strongly agreed, and eight (13.1%) indicated no response to this question.
Participants were asked in survey statement number 17 to respond to the following statement: feedback from my supervisor was communicated in an effective manner. No (0.0%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement. Five (8.2%) participants disagreed, 36 (59.0%) agreed, 14 (23.0%) strongly agreed, and six (9.8%) participants did not respond to the question.

**Table 4.6**

*Participants’ responses to survey statement questions related to research question two.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. My supervisor's feedback is always related to at least one of the four domains.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>7 (11.5%)</td>
<td>37 (60.7%)</td>
<td>10 (16.4%)</td>
<td>7 (11.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Feedback provided by my supervisor has helped me identify an area for professional growth.</td>
<td>3 (4.9%)</td>
<td>12 (19.7%)</td>
<td>32 (52.5%)</td>
<td>8 (13.1%)</td>
<td>6 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Feedback provided by my supervisor has resulted in a constructive professional development conversation.</td>
<td>4 (6.6%)</td>
<td>20 (32.8%)</td>
<td>26 (42.6%)</td>
<td>4 (6.6%)</td>
<td>7 (11.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I respect my supervisor's professional feedback.</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
<td>4 (6.6%)</td>
<td>30 (49.2%)</td>
<td>20 (32.8%)</td>
<td>6 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. My supervisor's feedback is directed towards improving student achievement.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>8 (13.1%)</td>
<td>32 (52.5%)</td>
<td>13 (21.3%)</td>
<td>8 (13.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Feedback from my supervisor is communicated in an effective manner.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>5 (8.2%)</td>
<td>36 (59.0%)</td>
<td>14 (23.0%)</td>
<td>6 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Participant Response (N=61). SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree, SA = Strongly Agree; NR = no response.

*Open-ended Survey Responses.* Open-ended question number 26 asked participants to think about how their instructional practices had changed based on the
feedback provided from their supervisor. Of the 61 participants, 36 (59.0%) completed this question. Additionally, of the 36 participants that responded to this question, 13 (21.3%) participants indicated that their instruction had not changed or been impacted based on feedback from their supervisor.

There were 23 (37.7%) participants that indicated the feedback provided from their supervisor increased their self-reflection of a lesson or prompted them to change their instructional practices. According to four (6.6%) participants, an area that they had developed based on feedback from a supervisor was depth of knowledge questioning. Through the process of having a pre-conference, observation, and post-conference, participants indicated that their instructional questioning changed. Participants noted that they became more focused on higher level questioning during their direct instruction and often checked for student understanding more frequently throughout a lesson. One participant noted “My questioning techniques have changed. I take notice to how I word questions to ensure that I am guiding students to higher level thinking in order to answer those questions.” Two of the participants specifically mentioned that they were more focused on Webb’s Depth of Knowledge as a result of feedback provided from a supervisor.

Three (4.9%) participants made reference that after receiving feedback from their supervisor they considered different professional development opportunities to improve their instruction. The participants, however, did not provide a specific example of professional development in their open-ended response. Three (4.9%) participants commented that feedback from their supervisor influenced changes in their classroom
management. Participants described that they had made managerial changes to their classroom routines or how they provided directions to students.

In open-ended question number 28, participants were asked to provide an example of how the supervision process had impacted their professional growth. Of the 61 participants that consented to the survey, this question was completed by 32 (52.5%) participants.

Seven (11.5%) of the 61 participants reported that they did not have a specific example of how the supervision process impacted their growth. One of those participants shared that “the observation process is nothing more than a process.” Another participant shared that the current process has decreased his/her desire to work harder.

Seven (11.5%) participants, however, referenced the term self-reflection in their response. Participants shared that the process offered a chance to think about their current teaching practices more frequently than if they were not going through the supervision process. One participant commented “I have reflected more on how my students learn and what best practices are in my area of teaching.” Another participant stated “the supervision process allowed me to truly be reflective of my own practice and how I can improve my work.”

Six (9.8%) participants indicated that the supervision process had resulted in them adjusting or implementing new teaching methods or practices. These participants did not provide specific examples of how their teaching practice changed. There were two (3.3%) participants that indicated that the supervision process resulted in them trying out new technology in the classroom that they would not have otherwise implemented.
Two (3.3%) of the participants indicated that the supervision process positively impacted their confidence in the instructional strategies they had in place. Three (4.9%) of the participants noted that the supervision process influenced their professional growth because it challenged them to increase the rigor of instruction in their classroom.

**Interview responses.** The second interview question asked participants to identify the least valuable aspect of observational ratings. Six (50.0%) of the 12 interview participants (IA, ID, IF, IH, IJ, and IK) identified the paperwork and time required to complete the observational rating process as the least valuable aspect. The participants had indicated that the new model implemented by the state required more forms compared to previous models. The process was also taking teachers more time to complete because it involved getting acquainted with a new structure. Participant IJ noted that the new process was more stressful than the previous observation process.

Four (33.3%) participants (IG, IH, II, and IK) discussed the domain indicators in their response as a least valuable aspect of the observational rating process. These participants noted some type of dissatisfaction with receiving a rating of proficient or distinguished. None of these participants commented on the failing or needs improvement indicators. The discontent with the rating was because ultimately each teacher was still marked as satisfactory or unsatisfactory at the end of a school year; those ratings were the same ratings from previous observational models. The current model, however, required more paperwork and time than previous models. Participants IG and IK also commented that the criteria within the domains were “gray” and they felt it was difficult to be rated in this manner.
Additional comments about the least valuable aspect of the observational rating process were shared. Three (25.0%) participants (IB, IH, and IK) commented that a problem with the observational rating process was that they were observed by an administrator that did not have a detailed knowledge of their subject area. Therefore, these participants discussed how they did not get specific feedback about their instruction or were forced to make the domain indicators fit their area of instruction. Participant IH noted that “the process is focused on procedure and minute details versus the demands of teaching as a craft.” Participant IC shared that a frustration with the observational rating process was that it was often put off because of other initiatives going on in the building.

In interview question three participants were asked to provide an example of positive feedback from the observation process and how it influenced their professional growth. Ten of the 12 (83.3%) participants (IA, IB, IC, IE, IG, IH, II, IJ, IK, and IL) indicated that the feedback from their immediate supervisor was supportive and reinforcing about their instruction or interaction with students. However, many of these participants indicated that they could not recall a specific example of feedback that ultimately influenced their growth. These participants commented that the general positive reinforcement of their administrator approving what he or she saw in the classroom was what they viewed as positive. Participant IF indicated that he/she had an example of positive feedback that was a direct result of the new model. Since the model focused on planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities participant IF felt it provided a more thorough opportunity to reflect with his/her supervisor. From this reflection time participant IF was able to think about how using student data more specifically can improve his/her planning. Two
(16.7%) of the participants, II and IL, recalled that their supervisor provided positive and reinforcing feedback in the area of their classroom environment. Overall the participants that were able to indicate an example of positive feedback were happy with the reinforcement the feedback provided them and felt comfortable continuing with their instruction in the classroom.

Interview question number four asked participants to provide an example of constructive feedback and how it influenced their professional growth. Six (50.0%) of the 12 participants (IA, IB, IC, IF, IJ, and IL) were able to give an example of constructive feedback that had impacted their professional growth. The constructive feedback for these participants was focused on the assessment area of classroom instruction. Participant IB noted that a supervisor provided feedback in regard to setting clear learning targets for students as well as making the lesson’s objectives visible for students. Participant IF commented that this observational rating model provided an opportunity to discuss differentiation strategies to use with students. Two (16.7%) participants, IC and IL, indicated that the constructive feedback from their supervisor was focused around rigor and asking students higher level questions. Five (41.7%) participants (ID, IE IG, II, and IK) could not recall an example of constructive feedback that influenced their professional growth.

Some of the other comments that participants (ID, IE, IH, and II) shared were that the feedback was too specific towards a specific lesson to influence their overall professional growth. Participant IK highlighted that a specific piece of constructive feedback was not provided; however, there was a discussion about the participant’s future
goals and areas of own self-improvement and the time to have this conversation was not always there with previous models.

**Research Question Three. What are teachers’ perceptions regarding how their personal relationship with their immediate supervisor impacts the evaluation process?**

**Survey Responses.** Sixty-one teachers responded to the Likert-scale survey. The following survey items were written to elicit responses to the third research question: 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24. The responses of these survey statements are reported as well as in Table 4.7.

In survey item number 18, participants were asked if the supervision process had enabled them to interact with their supervisor more frequently about their professional growth. Two (3.3%) participants strongly disagreed and 22 (36.1%) participants disagreed with this statement. There were 25 (41.0%) participants that agreed, five (8.2%) participants that strongly agreed and seven (11.5%) participants left no response.

Participants were asked in statement number 19 to indicate if the supervision process had caused them to avoid their supervisor. Of the participants, 27 (44.3%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Twenty-two (36.1%) participants disagreed and four (6.6%) agreed with the statement. There were no (0.0%) participants that strongly agreed with this statement and eight (13.1%) participants did not respond to this statement.

Participants were asked to respond to survey statement number 20 which requested participants to think about whether or not the supervision process had caused them to have more productive conversations with their supervisor. There was one (1.6%)
participant that strongly disagreed with this statement. Of the other participants, 26 (42.6%) disagreed, 24 (39.3%) agreed, and three (4.9%) strongly agreed with this survey statement. Seven (11.5%) participants did not respond to this item.

Survey item number 21 directed participants to reflect on whether or not the supervision process had created a more collaborative relationship with their supervisor. Four (6.6%) of the 61 participants strongly disagreed with this statement. Of the remaining participants, 26 (42.6%) disagreed, 23 (37.7%) agreed, one (1.6%) strongly agreed, and seven (11.5%) did not respond.

Survey item number 22 proposed the following statement to the participants: their interaction with their supervisor was focused on student achievement. One (1.6%) participant strongly disagreed, 12 (19.7%) participants disagreed, 36 (59.0%) participants agreed, and five (8.2%) participants strongly agreed with this statement. There were seven (11.5%) participants that chose not to answer this question.

Statement 23 asked participants if their interactions with their supervisors were primarily professional. There were no (0.0%) participants that strongly disagreed with this statement and two (3.3%) participants disagreed with this statement. Of the participants, 44 (72.1%) agreed with this statement, eight (13.1%) strongly agreed, and seven (11.5%) did not respond.

Participants were asked in Statement 24 if their supervisor allocated an adequate amount of time throughout the supervision process. Three (4.9%) participants strongly disagreed, nine (14.8%) participants disagreed, 35 (57.4%) participants agreed, seven (11.5%) participants strongly agreed, and seven (11.5%) participants did not respond to statement 24.
Table 4.7

Participants’ responses to survey statement questions related to research question three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. The supervision process has enabled me to interact with my supervisor more frequently about my professional growth.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The supervision process has caused me to avoid my supervisor.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The current supervision process has caused me to have more productive conversations with my supervisor.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The supervision process has created a collaborative relationship with my supervisor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. My interaction with my supervisor is focused on student achievement.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. My interaction with my supervisor is professional.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. My supervisor allocates an adequate amount of time in regard to providing me with support through the supervision process.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. (N=61). SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree, SA = Strongly Agree; NR = no response.

Open-ended Survey Responses. Open-ended question number 27 was related to research question number three. The question asked participants how the supervision process had affected their relationship with their supervisor. Of the 61 participants, 37 (60.7%) participants answered this question. As the data were compiled and reviewed, patterns emerged: (a) no change in the relationship, (b) the relationship was positive
before and after the supervision process (c) the relationship was good, but the process has improved the relationship, (d) and the process had created more time for dialogue with an administrator. Some participants indicated their relationships with their supervisors had been affected in more than one way. As a result, the total number of responses exceeded the total number of participants.

Nineteen (31.1%) of the participants that responded to this question reported that their relationship with their supervision had not changed because of the supervision process. These participants did not elaborate on how the process had not affected their relationship with their supervisor. There were five (8.2%) participants that stated that their relationship with their supervisor remained the same after changes were made to the supervision process. Participants indicated that their relationship was positive prior to the changes made to the supervision process and it remained positive after the current process. Participants indicated that an area that the supervision process improved for them was that they felt their supervisor was there to support them and see them improve as an educator. One participant stated, “[this process] has given me a strong feeling of support from my supervisor and has made me feel more comfortable with my supervisor.”

There were six (9.8%) participants that believed they had a good relationship with their supervisor, but the supervision process had further improved their relationship. One participant indicated that the supervision process offered the chance for the supervisor to understand elementary instruction because the supervisor had not previously worked in the elementary setting. Another participant noted that the supervision process offered an opportunity for increased collaboration. Two (3.3%) of the participants indicated that the
supervision process has reduced their anxiety over being evaluated and that they believed their supervisor wanted to see them improve their instruction and as an educator.

Another theme that emerged from the results was that participants identified that the supervision process had positively affected their communication with their supervisor. Six (9.8%) of the participants mentioned that the supervision process increased their opportunity to dialogue with their supervisor. Participants shared that they were able to see their supervisor more often, discuss curriculum, and keep their supervisor up to date about what was happening in the classroom.

Two (3.3%) participants indicated that the changes to the supervision process further reinforced that the supervision process was nothing more than a process that was carried out. Two (3.3%) other participants commented that the process remained frustrating and put further strain on their relationships with their supervisor.

Interview Responses. There were three interview questions related to research question three. There were 12 participants who volunteered to be interviewed for this study. Interview question number five asked participants what were some general characteristics of a productive relationship with their supervisor. Three (25.0%) participants (IA, IB, and ID) mentioned that they believed reciprocity between a teacher and an administrator was an important characteristic of a productive relationship. These participants indicated that the willingness for a supervisor to share his or her ideas and also the teacher being able to share ideas with a supervisor was important. Two of the three participants (IA and ID) shared that being able to bounce ideas off of one another was an important characteristic of a productive relationship.
Another important characteristic noted by the participants was the importance of an open-door policy with their administrator. Three (25.0%) participants, IE, II, and IJ, commented that an important characteristic of a productive relationship with a supervisor was their ability to talk with their supervisor as needed. They indicated that a sense of an open-door policy was encouraging and increased communication between a teacher and an administrator. Furthermore, five (41.7%) participants (IC, IE, IG, IH, and IK) highlighted the word communication in their responses. These participants indicated that open communication was an important characteristic of a productive relationship. There were some additional comments made by participants about the importance of trust, knowledge of instruction, respect, clear communications, and honesty as other factors that positively influence a relationship with a supervisor.

Interview question number six inquired about the productive relationship characteristics they had with their current supervisor. Three (25.0%) participants, IA, IF, and IJ indicated that they felt there was a mutual level of respect between themselves and their current supervisor. Participant IA commented that it was the mutual respect that made the relationship productive in terms of sharing knowledge about instruction. Two (16.7%) participants, IF and IJ, commented that their supervisor was approachable and this made them feel comfortable expressing their thoughts or concerns about a situation. Four (33.3%) participants (ID, IF, IH, and II) used the word “transparent” as an important characteristic of their current relationship with their supervisor. Some other characteristics that were mentioned by participants were trustworthiness, honesty, personable, and supportive.
Interview question seven was also related to research question three. This interview question asked participants to identify some of the productive characteristics that they lacked with their current supervisor. Five (41.7%) of the participants (ID, IE, IG, II, and IL) shared that they did not feel there were any particular productive relationship characteristics that they lacked with their supervisor. Three (25.0%) participants, IA, IF, and IH indicated that they would like their supervisor to reflect more and gain more teacher input prior to the implementation of a new initiative. These participants shared that decisions were often made quickly and there was not a lot of opportunity to question or express concerns about what was being decided. Additionally, participants IA, IB, and IL expressed that there still is a need for the supervisor to maintain some content knowledge and to share responsibilities with teachers.

Summary

The data presented in this chapter were collected from participants in a school district in southeastern Pennsylvania. The purpose of this study was to review the perceptions of teachers about the value of their observation rating and its subsequent impact on their professional growth. The impact of the relationship between a supervisor and teacher was examined. There were 61 participants that completed the researcher-developed survey and 12 participants took part in face-to-face interviews. The data were categorized by themes and patterns and reported by the three research questions that influenced this study. Chapter Five will provide a summary of the study and an analysis of the data presented in Chapter Four.
Chapter Five – Discussion

Summary of the Study

This study was designed to elicit teachers’ perceptions about the feedback provided by their supervisor on their instructional practice as well as the impact of the structure of the supervisory model on teachers’ professional growth. Additionally, the impact of the supervisory process on the teacher-supervisor relationship was examined.

Sixty-one teachers from a district in southeastern Pennsylvania participated in the study. These participants voluntarily took part in an online survey that was comprised of four demographic questions, 20 Likert-scale questions, and four open-ended questions. There were 12 teachers who participated in face-to-face interviews. The interview consisted of seven questions that extended the opportunity for participants to elaborate on questions from the survey, which enabled the researcher to garner additional information pertinent to the three research questions.

The survey results were analyzed and reported for each research question. Raw numbers and percentages were utilized to represent teachers’ perceptions about the current supervisory model as it affected their instructional practice, professional growth, and the relationship with their current supervisor. Open-ended survey responses were organized by research question and analyzed to determine themes and common patterns. The interview responses were classified by themes and organized to determine commonalities among responses and were reported by each research question.

Summary of the Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine teachers’ perceptions about the feedback provided from their supervisor, the impact of the supervisory model on teachers’ professional growth, and how the supervisory process impacted their
relationship with their current supervisor. The data were collected and organized according to the three research questions that were the basis of this study.

Of the participants in this study, 25 were male (41.0%) and 32 were female (52.5%). By the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, 56 (91.2%) of the participants reported that they would have four or more years in the education profession. This led the researcher to surmise that teachers who have had experience with supervisory models were more inclined to participate. Twelve (19.7%) participants taught at the elementary level, 36 (59.0%) participants taught at the junior high level, and 10 (16.4%) participants taught at the high school level. As a result, the researcher surmised that the teachers at the junior high level in this district had a more defined interaction with the supervision model and were more inclined to share their perceptions.

Research question one was designed to determine teachers’ perceptions about the value of an evaluation on their teacher effectiveness. The results of the survey revealed that 43 (70.5%) of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that their observation rating was an accurate reflection of their performance and that their supervisor’s observations were comprehensive. The open-ended question and interview responses also revealed that participants were satisfied with their most recent observation rating. Participants indicated that the process established an opportunity to discuss classroom instruction with their supervisor, but the process was more time-consuming compared to previous models. However, data from the survey indicated that 29 (47.5%) participants either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that there was a direct relationship between their observation rating and their students’ academic achievement. Twenty-five (41.0%) participants strongly agreed or agreed that there was a relationship
between their observation rating and student achievement. This data suggested that participants perceived that their observation rating was an accurate reflection of their performance, but there was some discrepancy in how they viewed the relationship between their observation rating and their students’ academic achievement.

Forty (65.6%) participants either strongly agreed or agreed that they changed their instructional practices based on feedback that was provided to them through the evaluation process. Six (9.8%) participants indicated through the first open-ended question that they believed the supervisory process offered them an opportunity to discuss student progress, strengths in their instruction, and areas in need of improvement with their supervisor. The survey results strongly suggested that participants perceived the dialogue component of the supervisory process as valuable, and this perception was supported by the interview responses. Six (50%) of the interview participants specified that a conversation with their supervisor resulting from a recent observation was a beneficial aspect of the supervisory process and provided time to discuss instructional practices. The open-ended responses indicated that participants viewed the observation process as an opportunity to discuss areas of strength and determine areas for improvement with their supervisor. Five (41.7%) interview participants noted that they valued the opportunity to discuss pedagogy with their supervisor. This led the researcher to conclude that communication with their supervisor was perceived as a valuable component of the evaluation process.

There were 33 (54.1%) participants that strongly disagreed or disagreed that the four domain rating indicators of failing, needs improvement, proficient, and distinguished used in the current supervisory model were terminology that adequately rated their
performance. There were four (25.0%) interview participants who indicated they did not agree with these rating indicators or shared a concern that the rating indicators distracted them from the actual value of the supervisory process. Consequently, through an analysis of the data, it became evident that there were some reserved feelings among the participants about the value of the domain rating indicators.

Thirty-nine (63.9%) participants perceived that the number of their scheduled observations were appropriate. Data from the open-ended responses and interview questions confirmed this conclusion. The survey revealed that 36 (59.0%) participants indicated they strongly agreed or agreed that having multiple supervisors perform observations would result in more accurate observation ratings. Overall, participants were satisfied with their observation rating, but were unable to provide any consistency in the reasons for their satisfaction.

Participants’ perceptions of the usefulness of their supervisor’s feedback, with regard to their instructional practices, was the focus of research question two. An analysis of the data compiled from open-ended responses and interview questions suggested that the primary areas of discussion focused on the development of higher order thinking skills, classroom management skills, and teachers’ ability to set learning objectives. The results of the survey indicated that 47 (77.0%) participants strongly agreed or agreed that their supervisor’s feedback was always related to at least one of the four domains: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional development. The survey results also indicated that 40 (65.6%) participants strongly agreed or agreed that feedback provided by their supervisor had helped them identify an area in need of professional growth. A review of the open-ended responses
revealed that 13 (21.3%) participants indicated that they did not make changes to their teaching methodology based on their supervisor’s feedback. However, the open-ended responses indicated that 23 (37.7%) participants did incorporate the feedback provided by their supervisor to self-reflect and alter the manner in which they teach. Therefore, it is reasonable to contemplate that participants utilized their supervisor’s feedback when they believed it was pertinent to their instruction.

Further analysis of the survey data reported that 50 (82.0%) participants respected their supervisor’s professional feedback. Seven (58.3%) interview participants used the term “self-reflection” when responding about how the supervision process had impacted their professional growth. In addition, 10 (83.3%) of the 12 interview participants indicated that the feedback provided by their immediate supervisor was supportive and reinforcing in regard to their instruction or interaction with the students. However, most participants were not able to recall a specific piece of feedback that influenced their professional growth. This led the researcher to surmise that when teachers respected their supervisor’s feedback, they were more likely to utilize the supervision process as a time to reflect on instruction. Although they used this time to reflect, participants indicated that none of the specific observations impacted their professional growth.

The survey responses showed that 50 (82.0%) participants either strongly agreed or agreed that the feedback from their supervisor was communicated in an effective manner. The open-ended question about how participants’ instructional practices changed based on feedback revealed that participants made changes to their questioning techniques, classroom management procedures, or setting learning objectives for students. The open-ended responses indicated that seven (11.5%) of the 61 participants
did provide a specific example of how the supervision process impacted their professional growth. Similar to the interview responses, participants did not specify any particular feedback that influenced their growth. As a result of examining the data, the researcher noted that the participants in this study perceived that the feedback was clearly communicated, but the feedback itself was more generic or reinforcing. Participants could not recall specific instances of feedback that impacted their professional growth as an educator.

Research question three was developed to determine teachers’ perceptions of their personal relationship with their immediate supervisor and its impact on the evaluation process. The survey revealed that 49 (80.3%) participants strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that the supervision process has caused them to avoid their supervisor. Participants indicated they were not avoiding their supervisor, but there were 27 (44.3%) participants that strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that the current supervision process had caused them to have a more productive conversation with their supervisor. The data from the third open-ended question indicated that 19 of the 61 participants (31.1%) did not view a change in their relationship as a result of the supervision process. There were five (8.2%) participants that stated in the open-ended responses that their relationship with their supervisor remained the same after changes had been made to the supervision process. These participants indicated that they had a positive relationship with their supervisor before the changes were implemented and that their relationship remained positive. Six (9.8%) participants who had a positive relationship with their supervisor prior to the changes made to the supervision model, indicated that their relationship has been enhanced since the changes were implemented.
The range of responses yielded from the open-ended responses coupled with the discrepancy from the survey data led the researcher to conclude that participants’ views of their relationships with their supervisors varied and were influenced by tangential reasons beyond the supervision model in place.

An analysis of the data from the survey indicated that 30 (49.2%) participants strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that the supervision process has created a collaborative relationship with their supervisor, while 24 (39.3%) participants strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. Fifty-two (85.2%) participants suggested their interaction with their supervisor was primarily professional and 41 (67.2%) participants noted that their interactions with their supervisor were focused on student achievement. A theme that emerged from the results of the open-ended responses was that participants identified that the supervision process positively impacted their communication with their supervisor. Six (9.8%) interview participants noted that communication with their supervisor increased because of the supervision process. The interview responses related to research question three reinforced the importance of communication between a teacher and an administrator. Three (25.0%) participants stated that it was important to be able to communicate with their supervisor as needed. Additionally, five (41.7%) participants made reference to the word “communication” in their response as a characteristic of a productive relationship. Of the 61 participants, 42 (68.9%) either agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor allocated an adequate amount of time to support them through the supervision process. The findings about teachers’ perceptions regarding their relationship with their supervisor were similar to the findings about teachers’ perceptions of the value of their observation rating because
participants commented that the supervision process offered them a time to communicate with their supervisor.

Overall, an important theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was that participants valued the opportunity to communicate with their supervisor. The supervision process did provide participants with a time to reflect on their practice, but the participants were not able to clearly identify how the process impacted their individual professional growth. Furthermore, the characteristics participants identified for a positive teacher-supervisor relationship were similar to the perceived perceptions of what participants valued most about the supervision process.

Limitations

There were several limitations that may have impacted the results of this study. A limitation of this study was that the potential sample size of the study was more than 500 teachers; however, the participation in the study was 61 participants because of the voluntary nature of the study. Another limitation was a majority of participants were from the junior high level and there were fewer participants from the elementary and high school levels. Therefore, the teachers’ perceptions analyzed in this study may be more reflective of the junior high teachers in this district versus the elementary and high school teachers.

Relationship to the Research

This study investigated teachers’ perceptions about the feedback provided by their supervisor on their instructional practice and the structure of the supervisory model’s impact on teachers’ professional growth. In addition, this study examined teachers’ relationships with their supervisor.
The research of Weems and Rogers (2010) identified that one way to increase teacher quality and effectiveness was through the use of teacher evaluations, so that teachers and administrators had an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations about instruction. Nolan and Hoover (2008) stated that the goal of supervision was to increase the effectiveness of a teacher’s instructional practices through the use of observations and feedback, which could then influence a teacher’s professional growth. The data collected from this study showed that 40 (65.6%) participants changed their instructional practice based on feedback from an evaluation. Furthermore, 10 (83.3%) interview participants stated that the observation rating process had afforded them an opportunity to receive both supportive and reinforcing feedback from their supervisor. Interview participants shared that the feedback was encouraging, but they could not recall a specific example of feedback that changed their instructional practices. Therefore, the data from this study suggested that supervisors are providing feedback to teachers, but the implementation or usefulness of the feedback is not clear from participants’ responses. This finding is important because evaluations should measure teachers’ effectiveness and be used as a tool to further develop teachers’ pedagogical skills (Marzano, 2012; Papay, 2012). Additionally, a supervisor’s feedback should be aimed at increasing a teacher’s professional growth (Papay, 2012).

The current demand for an increase in accountability for schools established through regulatory policies has led to a different supervisory process. In the study completed by Zepeda (2006), the researcher concluded that it was important that supervisors provide opportunities for teachers to reflect, discuss, and collaborate about their instruction through the supervision process. The results of this study indicated that
42 (68.9%) participants viewed that the time allocated by their supervisor for the supervision process was adequate. Further, seven (11.5%) participants commented in the open-ended responses that a valuable aspect of the supervision process was the opportunity for self-reflection. The participants determined that the supervision process offered them more frequent opportunities to reflect on their instruction compared to when they were not going through the supervision process. Zepeda (2006) concluded that effective supervisors need to provide teachers with the opportunity for self-reflection. The results of this study indicated that participants felt they were supported throughout the supervision process.

In a study of how teachers’ practices affected student achievement, it was found that teachers who were considered more effective were stronger at managing classroom behaviors, overall classroom management skills, and were more fair and respectful of their students (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). Similarly, the survey responses from the current study identified that 47 (77.0%) participants either strongly agreed or agreed that their supervisor’s feedback was related to at least one of the four domains: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. A theme that emerged from the open-ended responses in the current study suggested that an area that participants’ supervisors most often commented on was related to the classroom environment domain. Therefore, the results of this study are consistent with previous research that supervisors utilize a teacher’s practice to determine his or her rating.

Brown and Wynn (2009) found that the 12 principals involved in their study maintained leadership qualities that were balanced with characteristics such as flexibility and support for their teachers in reference to direction and guidance about instruction.
Open-ended and interview responses indicated that the study’s participants viewed a display of support that was an important characteristic of a principal. In this study, support was generally described as reinforcement of pedagogy and a supervisor’s willingness to enter into a dialogue. This interpretation of support was inconsistent with the results of Brown and Wynn’s (2009) study where support included an open-door policy, a principal’s visibility, and the expression of gratitude and appreciation as important characteristics of a supervisor. The results of this study suggested that a supervisor’s support is an important element of a relationship, but how the support was defined is inconsistent with Brown and Wynn’s (2009) study.

The results of this study concurred with Danielson and McGreal’s (2000) statement that an important function of supervision is the time it allows a supervisor to provide constructive feedback, guidance about professional development, and opportunities to establish a collaborative relationship centered on student achievement. The survey responses from this study indicated that their interaction with their supervisor was focused on student achievement. The survey responses supported that the supervisory process has offered them an opportunity to identify an area for professional growth.

The research conducted by Kimball and Milanowski (2009), established that instructional standards and rubrics could provide guidance to evaluators and could potentially decrease the subjectivity of teacher evaluations. However, the data collected from this study indicated that teachers became disillusioned by the amount of rubrics and information that was cross referenced to determine their evaluation rating. In addition, there were some participants that noted that the required forms and rubrics used to
decrease subjectivity made it difficult to identify where they belonged on the rubric. Participants in this study commented that they had a difficult time distinguishing between a proficient or distinguished rating. Marzano (2009) stated that to improve student performance teacher evaluations should not be based on satisfactory or unsatisfactory models because these are solely measurement models. Based on the trends and themes in this study, the participants focused on the traditional model because the new teacher evaluation model still resulted in a satisfactory or unsatisfactory rating. The results of the research conducted by Kimball and Milanowski (2009), indicated that identifying and implementing a good evaluation practice was complex. These researchers found that often supervisors’ training was focused on the management of teacher evaluations versus on how to provide accurate feedback to a teacher. Kane et al. (2011) found that when classroom observations were focused on specific instructional skills, the observer was more likely to gather information about a teacher’s practice. The results of this study suggested that participants were more inclined to want a satisfactory or unsatisfactory rating because the teacher evaluation model is still primarily measurement based. Therefore, it is important to review the components of the evaluation model to determine whether or not the information collected about a teacher’s practice could result in useful feedback.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study focused on teachers’ perceptions about the feedback provided from their supervisor on their instructional practice as well as the impact on teachers’ professional growth. The relationship between a teacher and supervisor was also examined. This study did not address supervisors’ perceptions of the evaluation model
and how feedback affected teachers’ instructional practices and professional growth in their buildings. Therefore, further consideration could be given to gain a comprehensive comparison of teachers’ and supervisors’ perceptions of the supervisory model presently in place.

All certified teachers were included in this study, but some of the participants in this study often noted that their certification area made the supervision model in place difficult to utilize. Further research to examine special area teachers’ perceptions of the supervision model would be helpful to determine the different perceptions of the model among teachers certified in different areas.

Participants’ interview responses and open-ended responses indicated that the domain indicator ratings were not inclusive of all teaching styles or content areas. Therefore, further research could be focused on examining teachers’ perceptions of the domain rating indicators and their instructional practices.

The data collected in this study was prior to the implementation of an additional component of the Pennsylvania Educator Effectiveness Model, which includes student specific data known as Student Learning Objectives. Examination of this component may provide an additional measure to determine a teacher’s effectiveness rating. As a result of this change to the model, further research could examine teachers’ perceptions of this component and its impact on their instructional practices or professional growth.

**Conclusion**

This qualitative study examined teachers’ perceptions regarding the feedback provided by their supervisor on their instructional practices, the structure of the supervisory model on their professional growth, and the impact of the supervisory model
on the teacher-supervisor relationship. The participants in this study were 61 teachers from one school district in southeastern Pennsylvania. Twelve participants agreed to take part in face-to-face interviews. The study utilized researcher-designed Likert-scale questions, open-ended questions, and interviews to answer the three research questions that guided this study. The data were collected, reported, and analyzed in a manner that answered the three research questions.

The survey results and interview responses indicated that participants perceived the dialogue component as the most valuable aspect of the supervisory process. Participants viewed the observation process as a chance to discuss with their supervisor areas of their strength and areas in need of improvement. The results of this study indicated that 43 (70.5%) of the teachers who participated perceived their most recent observation rating as an accurate representation of their performance and that their supervisor’s observations were comprehensive. The data analysis indicated that participants did not perceive there was a direct relationship between their observation rating and their students’ academic achievement. It was evident by the participants’ responses and through the researcher’s conclusions that the participants valued the opportunity to meet with their supervisor about their instructional practice.

Analysis of the data revealed that the participants in this study valued the feedback from their supervisor because it offered an opportunity for self-reflection about their instruction or classroom environment. Some of the feedback that participants noted as valuable was focused on the following areas: depth of knowledge questioning, classroom management, and the establishment of learning objectives. The survey results indicated that 40 (65.6%) of the participants viewed feedback from their supervisor as
helpful in identifying an area in need of professional growth. Still, it is noteworthy that participants were often unable to recall a specific component of the feedback that impacted their professional growth.

There was a range of responses from the survey data and interview responses that indicated that participant views of their relationship varied for reasons beyond the supervision model in place. The results suggested that teachers viewed no change to their relationship, their relationship with their supervisor was good and has improved, or that the relationship remained positive despite the supervision model in place. The interview responses identified that participants valued reciprocity, communication, and transparency as key aspects of a productive relationship with their supervisor. A concern that interview participants expressed was that their supervisors often made quick decisions about school changes and did not consult with teachers to gain an additional perspective.

The purpose of this study was to collect data about teachers’ perceptions regarding the feedback provided by their supervisor on their instructional practices as well as how the supervisory model impacted their professional growth. Additionally, the researcher examined the impact the supervisory model had on the teacher-supervisor relationship. As school districts seek to implement effective teacher supervision models to meet the guidelines of the Pennsylvania Teacher Effectiveness Model, the results of this study provided teachers’ perceptions on the supervision model in a district in southeastern Pennsylvania. Therefore, the data collected in this study may be helpful for administrators and teachers to analyze their current supervisory model and its impact on teachers and supervisors.
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Appendix A

Teacher Supervision Survey

The purpose of this letter is to request your participation in a survey about teachers’ perceptions of their supervisors’ feedback on their professional growth and collaboration throughout the teacher evaluation process. I ask that you complete a survey that contains a total of 28 questions that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The content of the survey pertains to teachers’ perceptions about the current supervision model implemented in the district in which you teach.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. At any time, you may decline to answer questions or withdraw from the study without consequence. The data collected throughout the study will remain anonymous and confidential. Additionally, the information collected from your responses will be reported collectively with all other responses. At no point during the study will you be asked to provide personally identifiable information. There are no known or anticipated risks from participating in this study.

If you have questions that pertain to this study, please contact me at (610) 295-3679, or email jmiller9@immaculata.edu. You can also reach my supervisor, Dr. Joseph Corabi at (610) 647-4400 ext. 3288, or email jcorabi@immaculata.edu if you have any questions.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Immaculata University’s Research Ethics Review Board. Any questions about your rights as a research participant can be directed to Dr. Thomas F. O’Brien, Chair of the Research Ethics Review Board, at (610) 647-4400 ext. 3221, or email tobrien@immaculata.edu.

This consent form will be the first page of the online survey located at (website address). Prior to clicking “yes”, please review the form again. By clicking “yes” you will indicate that you are in receipt of the consent form and agree to participate in this study. This will offer the researcher with permission to use any information provided in the final report of this study. Please note that clicking “yes” you do not waive any legal rights, and can withdraw your consent at any point during the study. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Please complete the following demographic information.

Part I: Demographic Data

The following demographic information is necessary to determine the context of the participants in the survey.

1. Please indicate your gender.
   - Male
   - Female
2. Please indicate your total numbers of years in the education profession at the end of this school year.
   - 1-3 years
   - 4-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16+ years

3. What is your current certification area?

4. At what level do you currently instruct?
   - Elementary
   - Middle School

Section II: Survey (You will be redirected to a new link that contains the survey.)

Directions: Please review the following statements and select the appropriate response that best represents your current perception.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. My observational rating is an accurate reflection of my performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My supervisor’s observations are comprehensive and provide an accurate assessment of my performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I changed my instructional practices based on feedback from my evaluation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. There is a direct relationship between my observational rating and my students’ academic achievement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The four domain rating assignments (failing, needs improvement, proficient, and distinguished) can adequately rate my performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The frequency and timeline of my observational ratings is appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Observations from multiple supervisors would provide a more accurate observational rating.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. My supervisor’s feedback is always related to at least one of the four domains (planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities).</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Feedback provided by my supervisor has helped me identify an area for professional growth.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Feedback provided by my supervisor has resulted in constructive professional development conversation with my colleagues.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I respect my supervisor’s professional feedback.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. My supervisor’s feedback is directed towards improving student achievement.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Feedback from my supervisor is communicated in an effective manner.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The supervision process has lead me to interact with my supervisor more frequently about my professional growth.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The supervision process has caused me to avoid my supervisor.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The current supervision process has caused me to have more productive conversations with my supervisor.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The supervision process has created a collaborative relationship with my supervisor.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. My interaction with my supervisor is focused on student achievement.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. My interaction with my supervisor is primarily professional.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. My supervisor allocates an adequate amount of time in regard to providing me with support through the supervisory process.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Open Ended Questions:

25. Describe your reaction to the supervision process that resulted in your most recent observational rating.

26. How have your instructional practices changed based on feedback provided by your supervisor?

27. How has the supervision process affected your relationship with your supervisor?

28. Please provide an example of how the supervision process has impacted your professional growth.
Appendix B

Teacher Interview Questions

1. What do you find is the most valuable aspect of observational ratings?
2. What do you find is the least valuable aspect of observational ratings?
3. Give an example of positive feedback and how it influenced your professional growth.
4. Give an example of constructive feedback and how it influenced your professional growth.
5. What are characteristics of a productive relationship with a supervisor?
6. What are some of the productive relationship characteristics you have with your supervisor?
7. What are some of the productive relationship characteristics you lack with your supervisor?
Appendix C

Panel of Experienced Educators

Panel Member A
Current High School Principal

Panel Member B
Current High School Assistant Principal

Panel Member C
Current Special Education Supervisor

Panel Member D
Current Elementary School Teacher

Panel Member E
Current Elementary School Principal
Appendix D
RERB Approval Form

IMMACULATA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD
REQUEST FOR PROTOCOL REVIEW—REVIEWER’S COMMENTS FORM
(R1297)

Name of Researcher: Jennifer Miller

Project Title: Teachers’ Perceptions of their Supervisor’s Feedback on their Professional Growth and the Degree of Collaboration throughout the Evaluation Process

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
____ Expedited
____ Full Review

X Approved

____ Conditionally Approve

____ Do Not Approve

Thomas F. O’Brien, Ph.D., Ed.D.
Chair, Research Ethics Review Board

DATE

September 24, 2014