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Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions of Content-Specific Instructional Feedback

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

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by

Shernore Prince

MA, Southern New Hampshire University, 2013

BA, University of the Virgin Islands, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February, 2022

Abstract

The research problem for this basic qualitative study was that principals were not consistently providing content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices. This problem was important because principals, as instructional leaders, are responsible for giving feedback to teachers to support teachers' instructional practices. The purpose of this study was to investigate principals' and teachers' perceptions of content-specific feedback. Danielson's framework for teaching was the conceptual framework that linked the concepts and variables in this study. The research questions addressed how principals perceived that they provided content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practice, and how teachers perceived principals as providing content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit nine participants: two principals and seven teachers. The data was collected through interviews. The data were analyzed using an inductive approach. Two themes were used to convey the study's findings: (a) although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices; and (b) teachers received feedback and instructional support from principals but believed that principals' professional experiences, expertise, and the evaluation also influenced the specificness of the feedback. This study contributes to positive social change on the organizational, school, and individual levels because improved instructional leadership practices result in improved instructional practices by teachers and thus contribute to improving educational outcomes and life opportunities for students.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research study to my family, who have been very supportive throughout this process. My sons, J'Marr Robinson and Aiden Jackson, you all have been the primary source of my drive, motivation, and reason for this pursuit. Thank you for understanding the time I needed to dedicate to finishing this journey. My immediate family, I cannot express how thankful I am for supporting me by looking out for my boys and ensuring that I always took a moment to live and enjoy life. More importantly, thank you for understanding the deadlines I had to meet and my absences due to exhaustion, and for being a source of encouragement and prayers. My coworkers, every one of you believed in Princie. Thank you for your kind words, gestures, page edits, laughs, encouragements, and that push when I could not go anymore. You all contributed to the reason why I completed this journey. Lastly, my close friend, thank you for being my mental support, the voice of reasoning, and my friend. I am truly a blessed woman because God surrounded me with some of the most amazing people to support me through this journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

A school leader functions in many roles and completes many tasks within the educational institution. As an instructional leader, the high school principal's role is crucial to the school's academic success; hence, exploring potential challenges or hindrances to providing content-specific instructional feedback is beneficial to academically outcomes (Smith et al., 2020). One vital role the school principal plays which influenced the academic outlook of the educational institution is that of an instructional leader. As an instructional leader, a principal manages instruction, which indirectly influences the students' achievement (Boston et al., 2016; Lochmiller & Mancinelli, 2019). Additionally, in the instructional leader's capacity, school leaders must prioritize and communicate the school's goals and plans to help educators perform and meet content objectives. To prioritize and share the school's goals, school leaders and stakeholders analyze and evaluate data from several mediums to create processes and plans to meet the institution's goals and needs. Reevaluating how principals provide content-specific feedback to teachers is one way that school leaders can redefine how they use data to determine the school's priorities. But to do this, principals must be active participants in the classroom to influence instructional practices (Davis & Boudreaux, 2019). Thus, the findings of this study's may contribute to positive social change by providing insights into how content-specific feedback given from principals to teachers support teachers' instructional practices and thus improves teacher's instructional practices and contributes to the improvement of educational outcomes and life opportunities for students. In sum, actively participating in the school includes providing

teachers with instructional feedback to support and improve teachers' instructional practices.

Often, principals give teachers instructional feedback during phases of the evaluation process. The teacher evaluation process serves as one of the main tools that school leaders use to rate a teacher's performance (Lawson & Knollman, 2017). Furthermore, conclusions drawn in the evaluation processes can affect tenure, pay increases, training needs, and even promotion opportunities (Lawson & Knollman, 2017). Therefore, using the evaluation process effectively improves and changes instructional practice through feedback and professional development (Finster & Milanowski, 2018; Lavigne, 2020; Smith et al., 2020). Teacher evaluation systems also provide principals with opportunities to help teachers improve instructional practices. Teachers can improve instructional practices when principals give content-specific feedback coupled with actionable tasks (professional development, peer coaching, mentorship, and teacher collaboration; Boston et al., 2016; Rigby et al., 2017). In other words, when principals give teachers instructional feedback, it should help teachers improve instructional practices as principals share and lend support in acquiring and using research-based instructional practices (Davis & Boudreaux, 2019). In sum, principals enhance instructional practices by providing teachers with valuable and constructive feedback (Boston et al., 2016; Mireles-Rios et al., 2019).

This study contributed to the literature on practice in the field of education as it explored the concept of instructional feedback from the principal's and the teachers' perspective. Understanding how principals believe that they provide feedback and how

teachers receive feedback is essential to understanding how content-specific feedback influences teachers' instructional practices. The principal must know what quality instruction looks like across content (Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020). This knowledge is necessary especially because there are instances where there is an instructional leadership mismatch (the principal and teacher do not share common content expertise; Jimerson & Quebec Fuentes, 2020). The quality of feedback received impacts the teacher's quality of instruction. Therefore, school leaders must take a keen role and responsibility in providing feedback (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016).

In the upcoming sections of this chapter, I discuss major sections essential to understanding the dynamics of this study. Firstly, I discuss the background literature that supports the problem investigated in this study. Secondly, I state the problem that I aimed to investigate. Thirdly, after I discuss the problem, I describe the purpose of this study. In the fourth section, I state the research questions about that I aimed to provide insight and understanding. In the fifth section, I briefly explain the conceptual framework, which linked the key concepts and variables to the phenomena. Following the previously mentioned section, I briefly describe the research method that I used to conduct this study, the phenomena investigated, the participants, and how I collected and analyzed the data. Before summarizing this chapter, I also define important terms relative to this study, assumptions that I made, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the significance of conducting this study.

Background

A school leader's role as an instructional leader is crucial to the school's academic success. The principal's duties as instructional leader within the school are vital because their observation, evaluation, and feedback to teachers indirectly affect student performance (Pressley et al., 2018). In addition to managing the institution, school leaders in an instructional leader capacity must prioritize and communicate the school's goals based on data and plan how to aid educators and ensure that they can perform and meet objectives (Goldschmidt & Congdon, 2018). Moreover, to fulfil the responsibilities of a school instructional leader, a school leader must realize that the endeavor takes a collaborative, collective body of all stakeholders influencing and changing instructional quality (Davis & Boudreaux, 2019). Supporting teachers' instructional practices by providing feedback is one way that school leaders can redefine how they improve instructional quality (Davis & Boudreaux, 2019).

Therefore, to improve teachers' instructional quality, a principal in the instructional leadership capacity observes teaching practices and provides feedback (Boston et al., 2016; Dee et al., 2019; Gibbons et al., 2017). The observation of teaching practices can occur during any phase phases of the evaluation process. To support teachers' instructional practices, principals give teachers feedback. To truly support the teacher, the principal should give feedback that is specific, meaningful, and actionable (Dee et al., 2019; Donaldson & Woulfin, 2018; Mintrop et al., 2018). However, several studies have found that principals are not consistently providing content-specific feedback (Goldschmidt & Congdon, 2018; Mireles-Rios & Becchio, 2018). Goldschmidt

and Congdon (2018) drew this conclusion after examining documents collected from 42 teachers. The authors gathered documents to include written feedback that teachers received from principals and the teacher professional growth plan. On the other hand, Mireles-Rios and Becchio (2018) used random sampling to accrue participants for their study. Twenty-eight high school teachers (12 males and 16 females) from three high schools in California participated in a study to examine feedback that teachers received through the evaluation and teacher effectiveness. Even with different study populations, the authors' findings remained similar; principals' feedback was less about instructional practices.

Several studies have found that feedback given to teachers was often general about the instructional practices observed rather than content-specific to the content (subject area) observed (Boston et al., 2016; Brown & Bista, 2018; Smith et al., 2020). For example, Boston et al. (2016) studied 28 principals in an experimental research design. The authors used an experimental research design to test a professional development activity to measure the principal's ability to function in the capacity of an instructional leader. Prior to the professional learning activity, the authors interviewed the principals to collect baseline data to compare outcomes. Some of the findings indicated that the observation feedback was broad; the principals could not communicate the quality of instruction using academic content; and the principals did not know what to look for to constitute the observed mathematics instruction as high quality. After the professional learning activities, the authors documented an improvement in principals' ability to recognize low-level tasks, recognize and provide better feedback to teachers,

and identify features of high-quality feedback in mathematics instruction and increased confidence in their instructional leadership abilities.

On the other hand, using a qualitative case study research design, Brown and Bista (2018) explored 14 principals' perceptions of the teacher evaluation process in a Southern Louisiana school district. The authors drew their findings through seven themes: compliance, subjectivity, accountability, expectations, confinement, inconsistency, and helpfulness. Relative to this study, and in addition to the points mentioned, 50% of the participants found that teacher evaluation use was ineffective in improving instructional practices. Moreover, the components of the teacher evaluation were vague and subjective, which further limited how principals communicated performance to teachers. Lastly, and from a different perspective and participant population, Smith et al. (2020) investigated veteran teachers' perception of the teacher evaluation, feedback, and self-efficacy. The findings of this study were from 67 participants. This study indicated that 37 participants received high-specific feedback, whereas 30 participants indicated receiving low-specific feedback from principals. Additionally, this study found a relationship between teacher's self-efficacy and the value of feedback. In sum, the studies mentioned agree with the gap in practice and research problem addressed in this study: Principals are not consistently providing content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices.

Not only does feedback improve teachers' instructional practices, but feedback also improves teachers' self-efficacy and professional growth (Carreiro, 2020; Smith et al., 2020). Therefore, continuing the research around principals' and teachers'

perceptions of instructional feedback adds an understanding of how principals can improve and support teachers' instructional practices through feedback. Therefore, in this study, I investigated the principals' practices of content-specific feedback by exploring principals' and teachers' perceptions and how these perceptions influence teacher instructional practices. Wieczorek et al. (2018) made similar recommendations by suggesting that future studies could investigate principals' perceptions of the feedback provided to teachers.

Problem Statement

The research problem addressed in this study was that principals are not consistently providing content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices. The choice of research problem reflected a gap in practice: Principals who are responsible for managing the curriculum, instruction, and quality of teaching and learning within the educational institution are not supporting teachers' instructional practices by providing consistent content-specific feedback (Boston et al., 2016; Rigby et al., 2017). Principals support teachers' instructional practices through the teacher evaluation process, and therefore there are opportunities to influence instructional practices (Ford & Hewitt, 2020). Additionally, principals influence teachers' instructional practices by giving meaningful, actionable, and content-specific feedback (Dee et al., 2019; Donaldson & Woulfin, 2018; Mintrop et al., 2018). Evidence from one study found that principals are often vague when giving teachers content-specific feedback about the observed subject area (Boston et al., 2016). Additionally, other studies found that providing content-specificness in instructional feedback is essential to improving

instructional practices, even though teachers believed that principals had trouble doing so (Boston et al., 2016; Rigby et al., 2017). Furthermore, studies found that when teachers received feedback from principals, the feedback was on teaching strategies and less on the subject area content (Boston et al., 2016; Rigby et al., 2017). In sum, to support teachers' instructional quality, the principal must provide meaningful feedback regarding content after formal and informal observation.

When referring to the term "content-specific feedback" in this study, firstly, I followed how Boston et al. (2016) described and used the word. The authors used the term "content-specific" when describing the feedback that principals would give to teachers. According to Boston et al., content-specific feedback is the feedback that principals give to teachers that is specific to the content observed. Furthermore, when principals provide this feedback to teachers, principals use content-related academic language, content-area standards, and pedagogy. On the other hand, with a similar context, Rigby et al. (2017) found that "math-specific feedback" was vague. Moreover, Rigby et al. (2017) found that principals gave teachers feedback not directly aligned to content. Even though Rigby et al. did not explicitly state the term "content-specific" when referring to feedback that principals give to teachers, there is a close alignment to the way that Rigby et al. referenced feedback and the term used in this study, "content-specific feedback." For example, Rigby et al. stated, "teachers were more likely to change their practice if they received more specific feedback" (p. 481). Inferring from that statement as mentioned above and the surrounding context and similar to Boston et al., Rigby et al. believed that feedback should be specific to the content. To sum up the

difference in language and word choice, I use the terms “content-specific feedback” and “content-specific instructional feedback” in like context to mean specific, content-aligned feedback that principals give to teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of content-specific feedback provided by principals to support teachers’ instructional practices to understand why content-specific instruction is not being consistently provided. I used the basic qualitative research approach to investigate this phenomenon because it is a simple and less in-depth description of the researcher’s constructed interpretations of the participant’s lived experiences (see Caelli et al., 2003; Kahlke, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Percy et al., 2015). Additionally, for this study, I targeted principals and teachers as participants because these professionals have experience with the study’s problem and the central phenomena explored: principals and content-specific feedback.

Research Questions (Qualitative)

Through the research questions, I explored the most significant factors of the study by focusing on the idea that was central to gaining insight and or understanding the study’s problem (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The central phenomenon that I investigated in this study was principals’ content-specific feedback. To investigate this phenomenon, I collected data from individuals who had experience with the phenomenon. Principals and teachers have such experience but from different vantage

points. Therefore, the following research questions supported the study's purpose and were related to the conceptual framework:

- RQ1: How do principals perceive that they provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?
- RQ2: How do teachers perceive that principals provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?

Conceptual Framework (Qualitative)

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to investigate principals' and teachers' perceptions of the content-specific feedback provided by principals to support teachers' instructional practices in an effort to understand why content-specific instruction is not being consistently provided. The conceptual framework most appropriate for understanding this phenomenon was the framework for teaching (FFT; Danielson, 2007). The FFT is a rubric (measuring tool) used to coach and evaluate teacher instructional practices (Kettler & Reddy, 2019). Danielson (1996, 2007) created the framework for teaching in 1996, and it has since gone through three subsequent revisions. Many school districts across the nation use the FFT as a teacher evaluation tool. The FFT provides a roadmap for measuring teaching competencies in four domains and 22 components (Kettler & Reddy, 2019). Furthermore, the framework includes a categorical rubric and effective teaching descriptive samples.

In the FFT rubric, there are four domains, 22 components, and 76 effective practices (Kettler & Reddy, 2019). The domains are the broader hubs, containing effective practices to represent specific teaching conditions (Danielson, 2007). The four

FFT domains are planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Each domain describes a different teacher competency in becoming an effective teacher.

Domain 1 (planning and preparations) and Domain 4 (professional responsibilities) are the behind-the-scenes domains. These are the teacher's actions outside of the classroom. For example, the teacher demonstrates knowledge of the content to plan coherent lessons in Domain 1 (Kettler & Reddy, 2019), whereas in Domain 4, the teacher reflects on lessons, manages and maintains student records, communicates student progress, participates in the professional community, develops growth, and shows professionalism.

Contrarily, Domain 2 (classroom environment) and Domain 3 (instruction) are the teachers' on-scene and observable actions. Domain 2 (classroom environment) involves evaluation of the teacher on students' interactions, the culture for learning in the classroom atmosphere, the classroom procedures, student behavior, and classroom configuration (Kettler & Reddy, 2019). On the other hand, in Domain 3 (instruction), evaluators observe the communication and the questioning techniques used by the teacher, the delivery of the content, the instructional modalities used, and the teacher's ability to change and adjust the lesson. Thus, through the observation conducted in Domain 3, principals rate teachers' instructional practices.

When principals observe teachers' instructional practices in Domain 3 (instruction) from the FFT, they can rate teachers' performance on delivering the content and providing evidence-based feedback. The ratings can fall into four categories—

unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished—supported with observable actions and behaviors (Kettler & Reddy, 2019). Using an instrument such as the FFT to rate teaching practices, the principal relies on the evidence collected to provide a rationale for rating and feedback for the teacher's instructional practices improvement (Archer, 2016). Bear in mind, the FFT is only one example of a rubric used to evaluate teachers' content delivery; used correctly, the principal can support teacher's ratings based on evidence-based practices and provide evidence-based supporting feedback (Danielson, 1996, 2007).

The fourth FFT domain is titled "Professional Responsibility." The activities that the teacher demonstrates in this domain are described by Danielson (2007) as the off-scene activities to develop and improve the teacher's professional practices. Teachers can engage in activities to demonstrate practice within this domain. These include attending professional development workshops and seminars, reflecting on practice, taking advanced placement courses, community involvement and organization membership, communicating with family and stakeholders relative to the child, and maintaining student records. These practices help build a teacher's professional capacity and as described by Danielson (2007), capture the actual quality of a teacher's professionalism.

In summary, as an organized, hierarchical, practical, evidence-based set of teaching practices, the FFT can serve two purposes in supporting and improving teachers' instructional practices—coaching and evaluation (Danielson, 1996, 2007). The FFT domains and components are unique and different, but they are also interrelated and should not be singled out or used in isolation (Danielson, 2007). Because the FFT is a

comprehensive framework that outlines the onsite and offsite activities of teaching practices, applying the FFT premise aligns to all situations involving managing and rating teaching skills, quality, and achievement (Danielson, 2007). Moreover, the FFT used as the conceptual framework also connects the chosen participants because, through the evaluation process, principals observe teachers and provide feedback to support instructional practices. Therefore, to truly understand the phenomena explored in this study, I analyzed all the FFT domains to better interpret my study's findings. The structure of the FFT also supports principals in observing and evaluating the communication and the questioning techniques used by the teacher, the delivery of the content, the instructional modalities used, and the teacher's ability to change and adjust the lesson.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I used the basic qualitative research design. The basic qualitative study, also referred to as a traditional qualitative study, was most appropriate for several reasons. Firstly, as the researcher, I explored and interpreted the collected data in the basic qualitative research study to explain the participants' lived experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Therefore, the meaning of the lived experience was not discovered but instead created based on interpretation of the lived experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Secondly, the basic qualitative research study was a simple interpretative study interested in understanding the meaning of an individual's experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Thirdly, in basic qualitative research, the researcher constructs meaning from the social world (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Even though basic qualitative research design is not tied to

more advanced structures as in other qualitative studies, it is still best applied to research studies in education, administration, health, social work, counseling, and business (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study, I studied principals' and teachers' perception relative to an educational experience and, therefore, as recommended by Rahman (2016), the qualitative study was best suited to investigating the principals' and teachers' perceptions of content-specific instructional feedback. Additionally, the scholar's viewpoint that experiences from the fields of education, administration, health, social work, counseling, and business are socially constructed based on the individual and are changeable depending on the individual's perception, experience, feelings, and understanding aligned with and supported this study's research questions, conceptual framework, data collection, and overall development (Rahman, 2016).

As previously noted, in this study, I used interviews as the data collection method. Interviewing is the most accepted and widely used form of data collection in qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Using interviews, I collected information about each participant's lived experiences related to content-specific feedback. I collected data through interviews with five principals and five teachers. In the interviews, I collected data on principals' perceptions of how they provided teachers with content-specific feedback to support instructional practices and the teachers' perceptions of principals' content-specific feedback. From the individual interviews, I analyzed the data collected, created codes, identified patterns, and then used the patterns to illustrate the study's findings.

Definitions

Throughout this study, the following terms are used:

Content area: A now-preferred synonym for *subject* or *subject area* among educators, *content area* refers to a defined domain of knowledge and skill in an academic program. The most common content areas in public schools are English (or English language arts), mathematics, science, and social studies (or history and civics; Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020).

Content-specific feedback: Specific feedback that principals give to teachers that is aligned to the standards and pedagogy of the subject area (Cobb & Jackson, 2011; Nelson & Sassi, 2000, as cited in Boston et al., 2016).

Evaluation: The "assessment of ability" (Mette et al., 2017).

Instructional leader: The school principal, who has duties of supporting and monitoring instruction and addressing targeted instructional areas for improvement to be able to steer the academical environment of the institution (Mette et al., 2017).

Instructional leadership: The principal's management of curriculum and instruction (Hallinger et al., 2020).

Principal: The educational institution school building leader, who is responsible for managing and evaluating teacher instructional practices (Bush, 2018).

Assumptions

I made several assumptions. The first assumption was that all participants would be truthful in their responses. The second assumption was that using experienced teachers meant that the teachers understood the evaluation process and what constituted content-

specific feedback. Finally, the third assumption was that using experienced principals in the participant pool also suggested that the principals understood the evaluation process and had previously evaluated teachers and provided formative feedback. These assumptions were essential because participants' honest and informed responses were crucial to reporting accurate and credible findings.

Scope and Delimitations

As previously stated, a basic qualitative study is a research design that examines a participant's lived experience, and the researcher concludes by making interpretations to understand (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Additionally, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate principals' and teachers' perceptions of the content-specific feedback provided by principals to support teachers' instructional practices in an effort to understand why content-specific instruction is not being consistently provided. Therefore, I applied this study to two groups—principals and teachers—drawn from a national sample. Through the evaluation process, a principal can support teachers' practices by providing content-specific feedback on observable actions (Brown & Bista, 2018; Donahue & Vogel, 2018; James & Wyckoff, 2020; Lane, 2020; Lavigne, 2020; Pressley et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2020). This study adds understanding and insight into principals' perceptions of how they provided content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices and teachers' perceptions of how principals provided content-specific feedback to help instructional practices.

For this study, I investigated principals' and teachers' perceptions of content-specific instructional feedback. To examine this phenomenon along with key concepts

that are related, I explored three potential conceptual frameworks. The three frameworks explored were the Interstate School Leader's Licensure Consortium, the instructional leadership framework (ILF), and the framework for teaching. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium outlined school leaders' standards of effective practices and aimed to improve the quality of leadership and the educational leader's skillset (Frey, 2018). Even though the standards supported the practices of school leaders to include that of providing teachers instructional feedback, they did not provide a sufficiently holistic framework for the practices of both groups that I targeted in this study (principals and teachers). For similar reasons, I excluded the ILF because its premise was to build principals as effective instructional leaders by outlining the standard and practices to achieving such leadership behavior (California Charter Schools Association, n.d.). Although, as previously mentioned, this study investigated principals' and teachers' perception of content-specific instructional feedback, it was ideal to use a framework that combined teachers' and principals' actions as they related to the context. For this reason, I selected the framework for teaching by Danielson as the conceptual framework used in this study to link and illustrate the experiences of principals and teachers.

Delimitations for this study were the sample size, time of the study, and resources. The specific participation selection criteria narrowed the participants to those with several years of experience with the central phenomena; therefore, the findings did not mirror all principals' and teachers' general practices. Moreover, the study was delimited by time because the investigation occurred during an unprecedented time, the COVID-19 pandemic, when many school practices and norms had changed and educational

professionals were in survival mode. Lastly, as I was the sole researcher, this study was delimited by time and resources.

Because I narrowed the focus of this study to the perceptions of principals and teachers, the study's transferability might be limited. Authors have claimed that the transferability of qualitative research is criticized for the interpretive nature of the study's structure, and it is not easily transferable (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014; Toma, 2011). Transferability, which is the qualitative research analog to the quantitative research practice of generalizability, describes the application of one study's findings to different studies (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Ultimately, the reader of this study will naturally observe, dissect the relevant information, make sense of it based on their experiences, and apply anything learned if needed. But to help readers transfer or reapply aspects of this study, I include the following details within the context of this dissertation: the study's purpose, a description of the targeted population, a relevant and appropriate conceptual framework, potential limitations, my biases as the researcher, a description of the study's findings, and statements of how the findings of this study can lead to future studies. In sum, it is with this aim that this study's findings may be transferable to other potential educational institutions where other individuals other than the principal provide content-specific instructional feedback to teachers to support and improve instructional practices.

Limitations

Some factors present limitations that potentially influence the findings. The first limitation was the access to participants. Access to participants was a limitation to this

study because of the nationwide health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, I used online resources such as Walden's participant pool, social media, and snowball sampling to recruit participants. The second limitation of this study was the use of a single data collection method, interviews. Using a single data collection method is a limitation because using interviews as the only data collection method confines the interviewer's viewpoint without proof. Another limitation was that some participants might not be honest in their responses. I employed every effort to ensure that participants were comfortable when responding and assured that their responses would remain confidential. Lastly, the sample size was also a limitation of the study. The sample size was a limitation because it potentially minimizes the transferability of the study findings. Therefore, the data collected from a small sample size are the beliefs of those participants' lived experiences and do not represent all principals' or all teachers' viewpoints. To put it differently, a small sample size reduces the chances that the study's findings may be generalized to the actions of a larger, similar population.

As the sole researcher of this study, and according to the viewpoints of Given (2008) and Salkind (2010), I introduced some levels of bias to my research from the onset when designing my study. The researcher introduces bias at the beginning of the study, from selecting what topic to study, what conceptual framework to use, the choice of research questions, and even the interview questions (Given, 2008). Naturally, as a researcher, I relied on my personal and professional experiences, values, and beliefs to determine the best way to approach and conduct this study (see Given, 2008). Because bias in qualitative research is assessed through the procedures taken when doing the

research, I elaborated on potential biases that I introduced to this study (see Given, 2008). Therefore, I introduced potential bias to this study through my participant recruitment techniques, interview questions, and professional experiences.

Firstly, my choice of how I recruited and selected participants might have introduced bias to this study. In this study, I chose to do purposive and snowball sampling to recruit participants. To participate in this study, potential volunteers had to meet a set criterion. There are likely to be differences between principals chosen to volunteer for the study and those who do not choose to volunteer to participate, which also reduces the transferability of the findings (see Salkind, 2010). Participants needed to have experience with the study's central phenomena. Therefore, using a purposive sampling technique aided me in collecting data about their lived experiences to conclude findings relative to my study. Lastly, my choice of sampling technique was appropriate for this research design, qualitative research, because experience with the context of the study was essential to narrating the encounter (see Smith & Noble, 2014).

Secondly, I potentially introduced bias to my study through my research questions. Bias in my research questions would have become apparent if I asked biased questions that aimed to elicit a specific response or geared the participant to respond in a particular way during my interview (Salkind, 2010). Given (2008) explained that researchers must be careful of the wording of their interview questions. Being mindful of interview questions' language ensures that the questions are not worded with a preconceived bias or receive a biased response. Additionally, Given offered one best practice for addressing bias in research questions: conducting pilot interviews. To address

this bias, I completed two pilot interviews of my research questions with participants who shared similar experiences as the phenomena I was investigating in this study. From these interviews, I modified my research questions as needed.

The third bias that I potentially introduced to this study was because of my professional experience and views. Bias derivative of experience is a potential bias because all researchers bring some perspective, assumptions, experience, and knowledge to research (O'Sullivan, 2015; Smith & Noble, 2014). Due to my professional experience as an elementary education teacher and my experience with the central phenomena, I had a preconceived notion of content-specific feedback, as well as of how and why principals should give teachers content-specific feedback and how content-specific feedback improves instructional practices. Although it was not my intent to be impartial in my interpretations of the study's findings because my professional experience resonated more with that of a teacher than that of a principal, there was a possibility that my views and assumptions would enter the research (see Given, 2008). Moreover, my experience, ideas, and beliefs may have resulted in misinterpretation, misrepresentation, or omitting unilateral data from study findings. Therefore, being aware and self-assured that my status quo might influence how I conducted my study and interpreted my findings was one way to manage this bias in my research (see Given, 2008). Additionally, I make known my professional experience in Chapter 3. Another scholar has also explored my potential bias of professional experience.

Bias exists in all research (Given, 2008; Salkind, 2010; Smith & Noble, 2014). All researchers bring their experience, values, and assumptions to studies and therefore

should engage in strategies to minimize bias (Smith & Noble, 2014). One of the first strategies is to explain potential biases introduced and steps taken to circumvent possible bias. Explaining my potential biases in relation to the study's findings helps readers draw their conclusions on the validity of the study's findings (see Smith & Noble, 2014). Therefore, in this study, I identified three possible ways that I introduced bias to my study and actions that I took to ensure data validity. I employed strategies such as an audit trail and reflectivity to limit potential researcher bias and ensure data validity. The details and specificity of the strategies that I used to maintain my study's findings are further explained in Chapter 3.

Significance

This study was significant because it added valuable data to already-discussed education reformation and accountability topics. Teacher evaluation and performances are a vital part of the discussion as educational policymakers continue to address ways to improve teacher quality and student achievement (Cherng & Davis, 2019). Researchers attribute many successes to receiving instructional feedback. Instructional feedback helps teachers improve their teaching craft and brings awareness to practices (Archer, 2016; Boston et al., 2016; Rigby et al., 2017). Although other literature pieces (i.e., Brown & Bista, 2018; Damore & Rieckhoff, 2019; Lane, 2020) have already contributed knowledge on the topic of feedback, Smith et al. (2020) suggested that future studies explore the relationship between the feedback that teachers receive at evaluation and how teacher's belief in their abilities supports improved evaluation and instructional practices. Moreover, Rigby et al. (2017) asserted that little is known on whether a school principal's

observation and feedback influence the teacher's instructional practices improvement. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate principals' perceptions of giving and the teachers' perception of receiving content-specific feedback. In sum, this study's findings may contribute to positive social change by providing insights into how content-specific feedback given from principals to teachers supports teachers' instructional practices and thus improves teachers' instructional practices and contributes to the improvement of educational outcomes and life opportunities for students.

Summary

In summary, Chapter 1 introduced the topic of the study and situated the problem in the current literature. Firstly, in this chapter, I described my research topic by referencing literature that supported the gap in practice, which is that principals are not consistently providing content-specific feedback. Additionally, I addressed the possible implications for positive social change that may result from exploring this phenomenon. Secondly, I briefly summarized research literature related to the phenomena studied. I connected the brief literature review to the next section, the problem statement. In the section titled ''Problem Statement," I stated the problem that I investigated and used the literature to support my research problem: Principals do not consistently provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices. In the fourth section, titled "Purpose for this Study," I connected the problem and explained how I investigated this problem in my study. Moreover, this section also introduced the research paradigm (basic qualitative), the targeted sample population (principals and teachers), and the central phenomena explored (principals and content-specific feedback). As noted in the section

titled ‘‘Purpose of the Study,” the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of content-specific feedback provided by principals to support teachers’ instructional practices to understand why content-specific instruction is not being consistently provided. Furthermore, in Chapter 1, I stated the research questions that I answered by conducting this study. The research questions for this study were the following:

- How do principals perceive that they provided content-specific feedback to support teachers’ instructional practices?
- How do teachers perceive that principals provide content-specific feedback to help teachers’ instructional practices?

The fifth section of this chapter presented and summarized the chosen conceptual framework. The conceptual framework that I selected for this study was the FFT. In that section, I briefly described the conceptual framework used in this study to link and illustrate the experiences of principals and teachers. After the fifth section, I explained my reasoning for selecting the basic qualitative research design and described the data collection method used (interviews) to collect data on participants’ lived experiences, recruitment techniques, and data analysis. The final sections of Chapter 1 defined key concepts from my study, stated assumptions drawn, defined the boundaries and limitations of this study, and identified possible contributions that this study may make to the field of knowledge. In sum, the overall premise of Chapter 1 was to introduce and highlight the foundation of this research study and how I carried it out. The next chapter

presents an exhaustive literature review to support content-specific feedback that supports teachers' instructional practices.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In Chapter 1, I provided a brief synthesis of the literature to support the gap in practice addressed in this study. The research problem addressed in this study was that principals are not consistently providing content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices. This gap in practice was significant because principals are not consistently providing content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices as called for as best practices in the scholarly literature. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate principals' and teachers' perceptions of content-specific feedback provided by principals to support teachers' instructional practices to understand why content-specific instruction is not being consistently provided. Principals support teachers by providing actionable, meaningful, content-specific feedback (Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Pressley et al., 2018; Reid, 2019; Rigby et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2020). Thus, when principals give teachers inconsistent feedback, it becomes problematic for several reasons: For one, when principals give teachers inconsistent content-specific feedback, it stifles the teacher's professional growth (Smith et al., 2020). An additional problem resulting from principals giving inconsistent feedback to teachers is that they do not support below-average teachers who benefit from the principal's specific feedback (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019).

Furthermore, studies have shown that principals' content-specific feedback is essential to improving teachers' instructional practices (Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Smith et al., 2020; Wieczorek et al., 2019). In an instructional leader capacity, principals conduct teacher observations and use those observed performances to provide feedback

to improve of teaching and learning quality (Lavigne, 2020; Pressley et al., 2018). But not enough is known about how principals perceive the content-specific feedback that they use to support teachers' instructional practices and how teachers perceive content-specific feedback in support of teachers' instructional practices. Therefore, I dissected the literature to identify, examine, and explain key concepts and variables related to the phenomenon.

In this chapter, I rely on a significant number of scholarly articles to synthesize the conceptual framework that guided the study's argument. Additionally, in this chapter, I exhaustively review the literature to explain the key concepts and variables related to the central phenomenon—principals' content-specific feedback. Danielson's FFT supported the conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study. Furthermore, in later portions of this chapter, I rely on the literature to describe other aspects that played an integral part in understanding the conceptual framework and the phenomena to be investigated. To conclude this chapter, I summarize the main literature points, what was known and not known in the study, and how the present study fills literature gaps and extends the knowledge of practice in the discipline.

Literature Search Strategy

I conducted searches in the EBSCO, ERIC, and SAGE databases from the Walden University Library for this literature review. I also conducted online searches in Google Scholar, Academia, and the Research Gate website in addition to those searches mentioned earlier. In my searches, I used the following keywords: *teacher evaluation and instructional feedback, instructional feedback, instructional leadership responsibilities*,

content-specific feedback, teacher evaluation and instructional feedback, Charlotte Danielson and instructional feedback, the framework for teaching, Danielson framework for teaching, principal influence on classroom instruction, principals feedback and teacher instructional practices, principal impact on classroom instruction, principal's accountability to teachers, and *instructional feedback in education.*

Because I was looking for specific literature around a set subject, I limited my searches. Firstly, I limited my search to full text, peer-reviewed journals and articles. Then, I filtered the results to capture current research publications with years ranging from 2017 to 2021. In my second round of searches, I maintained my first search limitation—full text, peer-reviewed journals and articles—but I did not filter the years. I did this because capturing outdated material was essential to familiarizing myself with authors who explored the central phenomenon's context—principals' content-specific feedback. Lastly, I used the snowball strategy to examine full text, peer-reviewed journals and article reference sections to find additional literature to synthesize in this literature review. From the steps mentioned, I used 53 scholarly articles in this literature review. In the upcoming section I describe the organization of the literature review.

Literature Review

I have organized the literature review into two main sections: conceptual framework and literature review related to key concepts and variables. I have divided the two sections into smaller subsections. The first main section addresses literature on the conceptual framework. In this section, I split the literature on the conceptual framework in the following ways: (a) introduction, (b) FFT, (c) FFT domains, (d) benefit of the FFT,

(e) current research on the FFT, and (f) FFT and this study. The second main section is the literature review related to key concepts and variables. I have divided this section into seven smaller sections: (a) current research on principals as instructional leaders, (b) evolution of content-specific feedback, (c) implementation associated with content-specific feedback instructional feedback, (d) effects of the use of content-specific instructional feedback, (e) principals and content-specific feedback relationship, (f) teachers and content-specific feedback relationship, and (g) internal and external outcomes of content-specific instructional feedback. Lastly, this literature review concludes with a summary of the main points, patterns that emerged, and their relation to this study.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework, the FFT, helped me understand, describe, and create a link to examine the relationships between the phenomena investigated in this study and the key concepts and variables. Notably, in qualitative research, the conceptual framework creates a link between the study's context and structure (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). The conceptual framework, as a tentative theory, is a process that researchers use to support the study's argument, and this usually happens in a nonlinear fashion (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Because the conceptual framework is a tentative theory, the choice of which conceptual idea links the study depends on how the researcher develops the research questions and conveys the outcomes, making several conceptual theories easily applicable to a single research study (Burkholder et al., 2016). By the same token, before selecting a conceptual framework to link the central phenomena and the literature,

researchers consider their positionality, personal experiences, beliefs, and the literature; hence, I elected the FFT as this study's conceptual framework (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Framework for Teaching

As previously noted, the FFT was the conceptual theory that linked and built upon the relationship between the study's context and structure. The FFT is a structured, hierarchical, uniformed practice that guides what teachers should know and do (Danielson, 2007). Under those circumstances, the FFT describes the aspects of teaching and the teacher's responsibility, housed in four domains and 22 components, and rated on four performance levels. The domains are overarching hubs that describe the teacher's teaching responsibilities, whereas the components describe the activity that teachers engage in to demonstrate effective practice within each domain. Although the FFT divides domains and components by activity, they all relate to fulfilling the teaching responsibility and determining the teacher's performance rating.

It is not uncommon for a teacher's responsibility to extend into completing multiple activities inside and outside classrooms. As a result, making teaching is a complex practice developed by the interrelationships of many features (Danielson, 2007). Additional features included in education are student achievement, equity and equality, instructional modification and differentiation, instructional modalities, technology accessibility and engagement, inclusion, and even resource selection and use. These additional teaching features are evenly distributed throughout the FFT domains. In sum, even though the authors spread the different teaching features throughout the FFT

domains, domains are not practiced in isolation but instead rely on each's makeup to execute effective teaching.

Framework for Teaching Domains

The FFT domains house the four broad descriptions of developing and demonstrating effective teaching practices. Within these domains, effective teaching practices accomplish the FFT's primary purpose: to involve students in discussion and practice of the content to show ownership for understanding, critical thinking, and learning (Danielson, 2007). The four domains housed in the FFT are planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities (Danielson, 2007). Each domain is distinctively different but related to meeting the primary purpose mentioned.

Firstly, Domain 1 is where the teacher develops the instructional path. In Domain 1, the teacher prepares and organizes the content for learning through instructional planning (Danielson, 2007; Kettler & Reddy, 2019). Moreover, in this domain, teachers design the instruction and instructional delivery for the subject area and select materials and resources, instructional modalities, content standards, assessment, and progress monitoring strategies. The teachers' primary goal in this domain is planning how to arrange the scope for learning, and the teacher also functions as the source for students to access the content of the subject (Danielson, 2007). Furthermore, teachers who excel in Domain 1 understand the instructional content and the students (Danielson, 2007). Simultaneously, the teacher understands the students' academic, cultural, and learning abilities and needs and masters planning a seamless instructional design appropriate for

them, making the actions flexible across content areas and classrooms (Danielson, 2008). Meanwhile, as the teacher develops the instruction path, the teacher also considers the classroom environment where the lesson from the teacher is delivered and observed, thus describing FFT Domain 2.

Next, there is FFT Domain 2, which describes the classroom environment. In Domain 2, the teacher sets the stage for the instruction (Danielson, 2007). Not only is the focus of this domain about the layout of the furniture, but also it invokes the following components: the culture of learning in the classroom, the instructional routines and procedures, and student expectations and norms, and these factors improve the comfortability of the overall environment (Danielson, 2007). Therefore, the teachers who excel in Domain 2 create a sensitive, comfortable, rich learning environment, filled with a rapport and respect for the teacher as the authoritative figure in the classroom and respect for students' roles as the owner of their learning (Danielson, 2007). As a result of creating such an environment, students are not afraid to take risks in this learning environment through verbal or physical responses. In sum, the classroom environment helps the core of teaching succeed—instruction, which is FFT Domain 3.

FFT Domain 3 is the instruction domain. In this domain, principals observe the teacher's delivery of the content. Additionally, Domain 3 is where teachers develop, define, and evaluate instructional practices, considered the FFT's core (Morris-Mathews et al., 2021). To put it differently, Domain 3 is the execution of the instructional preparation and planning (Domain 1) in the classroom environment (Domain 2). Domain 3 describes the onsite aspects of the FFT to support students learning the content.

Therefore, in this domain, principals observe, evaluate, and rate teachers' content delivery. Meanwhile, the teacher demonstrates an understanding of teaching and considers the students' abilities and needs (Morris-Mathews et al., 2021). As a result, the elements of Domain 1, Domain 2, and Domain 3 work together to demonstrate effective teaching practice and professional growth (FFT Domain 4; Danielson, 2007).

The last FFT domain (Domain 4) is professional responsibilities. Domain 4 includes some of the offsite activities that teachers engage in, which prepare them to prepare, plan, and teach effectively (Danielson, 2007). These activities include the professional exercises that teachers engage in to prepare them to teach the pedagogy and skills needed to plan effectively, prepare, and design instruction (Domain 1); the creation of a classroom environment conducive to learning (Domain 2); and the practice of providing appropriate, equitable, and accessible education to suit the students' needs (Domain 3). Such activities include but are not limited to teacher reflection, professional developments, workshops, membership in professional organizations, and higher education advancements (Danielson, 2007). Besides those activities that teachers engage in to ensure personal growth of professional practices, Domain 4 includes how teachers communicate and maintain student records and communicate with families and their community. Therefore, teachers who excel in Domain 4 go beyond the classroom to demonstrate and advocate with colleagues for quality education. In turn, the teacher's effective practices bind the interrelatedness of components with all four of the FFT domains.

As mentioned previously, the FFT domains and components are unique and different, but they are also interrelated and should not be singled out or used in isolation (Danielson, 2007). Because the FFT is a comprehensive framework that outlines the onsite and offsite activities of teaching practices, applying the FFT premise aligns to all situations involving managing and rating teaching skills, quality, and achievement (Danielson, 2007). Other reasons school districts use the FFT are teacher retention and recruitment, professional learning, new teacher preparation programs, a pathway to build the competency of novice teachers, professional learning for teachers, professional growth plans, and even as a teacher evaluation rubric (Danielson, 2007). Additionally, teachers can self-evaluate, reflect, or guide their teaching practices using the FFT (Danielson, 2007). With all things considered, the flexible design of the FFT makes it applicable across grade levels and content areas for supporting and improving teachers' instructional practices and student achievement.

Benefits of the Framework for Teaching

Even with a flexible design, the FFT is a structured, uniform, hierarchical, comprehensive guide to effective teaching practices founded on empirical and theoretical research that outlines effective instructional techniques (Danielson, 2007; Morris-Mathews et al., 2021). The FFT is also broad, and therefore it is easily applicable to measure many different competency levels for teaching and learning across diverse classrooms. Furthermore, the FFT uses a standardized language, thus sending the same message when communicating effective teaching practices and learning (Danielson, 2007). It is important to note that this common language is descriptive for each

performance level and makes the FFT an ideal tool for teachers and principals. Illustratively put, teachers can compare their actions with that of the descriptions, and evaluators can use the FFT to rate and measure performance and support the teacher's professional growth (Danielson, 2007).

Because the FFT is a popular evaluative rubric (tool), all teaching performances can be described, coached, or evaluated (Danielson, 2007; Derrington & Martinez, 2019). Therefore, using the FFT allows the evaluator to standardize the institution's practices, especially when observing, evaluating, and rating teachers' instructional practices. Moreover, the FFT rates teaching techniques based on evidence of practice observed against four performance levels. The four performance levels in the FFT are unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished. The characteristics of the four performance levels are as follows (Danielson, 2007):

- Unsatisfactory teaching performance occurs when the teacher does not demonstrate and understand the content. In this situation, the overall observed instruction is inappropriate. The practical lesson may lack coherence, and there may be flaws in the instructional design, along with an unmeasurable objective. The classroom environment is not conducive to learning.
- Basic performing teaching demonstrates an understanding of the content, but some instructional elements such as lesson coherence, instructional delivery, or the selected activity and measurements may be inappropriate.

- Proficient teaching performance demonstrates that the teacher has mastered the art of teaching and instruction. The teaching observed includes the rich set components and execution of all of the distinct aspects of the domains.
- The highest performing rating is distinguished performance teaching. The distinguished teacher embodies the proficient teaching performance attributes, but the distinguished teaching performance has an added practice that contributes to teaching and learning.

By design, the FFT is a comprehensive and flexible tool suitable for measuring and evaluating teaching practices, and evaluators rely on the collected evidence of teaching practices to inform feedback (Danielson, 2007). According to Danielson (2008):

> Teaching must be grounded in actual events, inactions or statements, artifacts, or decisions the teacher made. Without such grounding, impressions of teachers' skills are based entirely on the observers' idiosyncratic views of teaching and their understanding of what has occurred and what those events mean (p. 12).

Therefore, the principal collects evidence throughout the evaluation phases to evaluate and rate teaching practices. For example, principals conduct pre-and post-conference to analyze the teacher's level of performance in Domain 1 (planning and preparation), Domain 2 (classroom environment), and Domain 3 (instruction) of the FFT (Danielson, 2007). During the preconference, the principal, and the teacher dialogue about the design elements of their teaching. This dialogue includes details about the basics, the subject area, standard, lesson objective, criteria, context, instructional modalities, assessment, materials, resources, and technology inclusion (Archer, 2016).

Although the principal and the teacher witnessed the same activity, this happened from different perspectives, therefore, infusing different meanings of the same interaction making the discussion that ensued in the post-conference the most crucial conversation to supporting and improving instructional practices (Danielson, 2008).

Furthermore, the discussion during the post-conference provides an opportunity to highlight the instruction's strengths and weaknesses, supporting and improving teacher's instructional practices (Danielson, 2008). Granted that the administration supports the teacher instructional practices through the post-conference, the principal also helps teachers give meaningful and timely feedback on observed teaching practices (Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Kettler & Reddy, 2019; Wieczorek et al., 2019). In sum, using the FFT as the guiding evaluation tool, the principal rates the domains' execution and provides feedback based on the observed practices to improve the quality of teaching (Danielson, 2008).

Current Research on the Framework for Teaching

As an evaluative tool and with the known benefits, the FFT is structured to help principals give teachers content-specific feedback. In one study, the authors built upon the empirical and theoretical premise of the FFT as an evaluative tool and found the fewer FFT elements scored, the more unsubstantial the feedback teachers received (Goldschmidt & Congdon, 2018). Subsequently, the findings indicated that principals' feedback lacked specificness to improving instructional practices, and the feedback was not concrete (Goldschmidt & Congdon, 2018). Additionally, the forenamed studied concluded that using the FFT increased the principal's ability to observe and identify a

broader range of effective practices (Goldschmidt & Congdon, 2018). Over time, this increased their ability to provide teachers with specific, concrete, helpful feedback. Furthermore, the FFT helped principals make the most accurate decisions during the evaluation process when giving teachers feedback (Kettler & Reddy, 2019). When principals used the FFT as an evaluation instrument, it allows them to provide feedback to teachers in a timely fashion meanwhile evaluating the educator's performance (Kettler & Reddy, 2019).

Additionally, as an evaluation tool, the FFT aids the principal in delivering actionable, meaningful, content-specific feedback that support the teaching observed (Damore, & Rieckhoff, 2019; Kettler & Reddy, 2019; Lane, 2020; Wieczorek et al., 2019). Like the points mentioned, principals use the evidence from classroom observations to give teachers feedback, set goals for classroom performance, and make decisions (Lawson & Knollman, 2017). Furthermore, as an observation instrument, the FFT aided principals in observing effective instructional practice. In doing so, the principal identifies what teachers should know and can do by observing teachers and then providing them with feedback, meanwhile comparing the practical to the evidence-based teaching practices descriptions outlined in the FFT (Kettler & Reddy, 2019).

Recent studies added evidence about the benefits of using the FFT as an effective evaluation instrument to the education community's body of knowledge. One study's findings implied that the teacher evaluation systems, such as the FFT, were crucial to providing teachers the evidence-based feedback needed to improve instructional practices (Derrington & Martinez, 2019). In a different study, the findings implied that the FFT

supported students' instructional needs as an observation tool (Morris-Mathews et al., 2021). Additionally, another study concluded that the FFT was a suitable observation tool for identifying evidence-based practices using teaching videos (Campoy & Xu, 2018). In sum, the FFT as an evaluative tool rates teacher performance and provides opportunities for principals to support teachers' instructional practices and students' growth.

Contrarily, other researchers explored the evaluation instrument's structural composition. One researcher studied the evaluation instrument structural composition from the teacher's perception and found that principals helped teachers improve instructional practices (Carreiro, 2020). On the other hand, another study supported that the teacher evaluation systems supported the principal's instructional feedback but found that completing the process was time-consuming, took away from the feedback, and subjective (Brown & Bista, 2018). When evaluating teachers, the principal's responsibility was to provide meaningful feedback to improve teacher instructional practices, even though teachers may not be confident in principals' feedback (Lane, 2020). In addition to feedback also enhancing the quality of teaching, it also improves teacher retention. Using the FFT or any other forms of a teacher evaluation system, principals use the evaluation and observation process to provide meaningful, content-specific feedback to support and improve instructional practices (Lane, 2020; Pressley et al., 2018; Wieczorek et al., 2019).

The Framework for Teaching and This Study

This study benefits from the conceptual framework (FFT) because providing content-specific feedback is fundamental to the FFT structure when rating teacher

performance. Additionally, as previously discussed, because teaching is an intricate art, the FFT provides a structured uniformed approach to observing what teachers should know and do with descriptors to compare these performances against (Danielson, 20008). This practice evidence allows the teacher and principal to examine the observed instruction from different perspectives and create teacher improvements and goals (Finster, & Milanowski, 2018). In sum, this professional dialogue support teachers' instructional practices and pathways to improving teaching quality, hence why the principals, as instructional leaders, are responsible for managing and evaluating instructional quality (Kettler & Reddy, 2019). The following section examines key concepts and variables related to the conceptual framework and the studied phenomena.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables

The upcoming section explores the literature related to key concepts and variables associated with the conceptual framework and the phenomena studied in this basic qualitative research. This section divides the literature related to key concepts and variables associated with the conceptual framework into seven subsections. To explain the literature related to key concepts and variables associated with the conceptual framework, first I synthesized studies related to the research questions and explain why the approach selected is meaningful. Then I provide an exhaustive review of the concepts and variables related to the phenomena supported by current and relevant literature. Lastly before concluding this chapter, I described strengths and weakness on how the researcher's approach the problem.

Studies Related to the Research Questions

The research questions which guided this study were the following:

- RQ1: How do principals perceive that they provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?
- RQ2: How do teachers perceive that principal provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?

Numerous studies proceeded my study and are related to my research questions. These studies not only contributed to the discussion on improving and supporting teacher's instructional practices, but they also added other factors to consider as to why principals might not be consistently providing content-specific feedback to support and improve teacher's instructional practices. From these upcoming studies, I concluded that even though the principal is responsible for managing the curriculum, instruction, and quality of teaching and learning in the given institutions, there are other contributing factors. Firstly, the principal functions as the instructional leader. This capacity also meant they were responsible for observing, evaluating, and rating performance outside of experience and expertise level, all whistly functioning in the cross-relationship between supervision and evaluation. Secondly, the evaluation process was timely, and subsequently, the time constraints add to the gap in practice. I synthesize some studies related to this study's research questions and understand principals' practices. In sum, in this part of my literature review, I synthesize 20 scholarly articles whose participants and or central phenomena were closely related to the conclusions I drew.

Principals' Instructional Leadership

Numerous studies highlighted the principal's functioning in the instructional leadership capacity. Lochmiller (2015) explored the principal's instructional leadership capabilities in mathematics and science. This qualitative study focused on the teacher and principal's perception of instructional feedback. The 51 participants in this study were from five high schools. This participant pool included 12 principals and 39 classroom teachers. The scholar concluded that most teachers perceived that the principal's feedback was on procedural aspects such as classroom management and general instructional practices. Teachers also perceived those principals did not know the content well enough to provide content-specific feedback. Principals relied on their experiences when giving feedback to teachers and even, so the feedback provided was on instructional methods and not on the content. In the capacity of instructional leadership, principals relied on leadership practices and past experiences, to include their background areas, to be able to evaluate teachers. Lochmiller (2015) concluded that principals, present and aspiring, should be provided the necessary professional development and support to improve instructional leadership abilities, including providing content-specific feedback to improve teaching practices.

Rigby et al. (2017) and Boston et al. (2016) study also drew similar conclusions. Firstly, Rigby et al. (2017) analyzed the relationship between instructional leaders' expectations and feedback administered to mathematics teachers. This study's participants were from four school districts (30 schools) and included 120 teachers and 60 principals. The researchers collected data over four years and analyzed the data during

the year last year. Many of the teachers said that feedback received was on procedural aspects—teachers whose instruction was inquiry-based received more instructional feedback than teachers whose teaching was less intricate. The authors found no relationship between teachers who indicate they received content-specific feedback and evaluative rating. Over the years of the study, 90% of the principals gave feedback, but only 14% of the feedback was content-specific, while 10% were procedural. Teachers need ongoing professional learning opportunities and support, and the principal's feedback support teachers as learners. The teacher's feedback was mainly on the visual aspects of the environment.

In another yet similar study, Boston et al. (2016) used an experimental research design to test a professional development activity to measure the principal's ability to function in the capacity of an instructional leader. The experiment aimed to analyze whether professional development influenced the principal's knowledge and practices as instructional leaders. There were 28 participants in the study. The study's findings contributed to supporting principals as instructional leaders by examining what they know before and after the pre-and post-professional experiences and how principals can build themselves in instructional leaders' capacity. This study's findings also suggested that school districts should focus principals' professional learning experiences on identifying high-quality instruction, providing content-specific feedback, and other ways to support principals in improving instructional leader practices. Contrarily, Jimerson and Quebec Fuentes (2020) studied the organizational elements that assisted school leaders in fulfilling instructional leadership responsibilities when leaders and teachers did not share

common expertise (leaders' content knowledge). The authors conducted this study with 15 school leaders and 16 teachers. Jimerson and Quebec Fuentes (2020) found that organizational elements and the content mismatch influenced school leaders' instructional practices and the principal's ability to support teachers in unfamiliar content areas. Furthermore, a school leader's instructional leadership practices manifested from teaching experiences and throughout principal preparation programs.

With a similar focus to Jimerson and Quebec Fuentes (2020) findings on principals' preparations programs, Damore and Rieckhoff (2019) conducted multi-case study research with 10 principals to gather their perceptions and interpretations instructional leaders' training and coaching tools to prepare principals as instructional leaders. The principals who took part in this study found that the coaching sessions were beneficial to their instructional leadership practices. Findings suggest principals' instructional leadership practices needed to strengthen, and one way to do it was through training, specifically coaching Damore and Rieckhoff (2019). Lavigne (2020) study added another viewpoint to principal's ability to support and improve teachers' instructional practices. Using a quantitative research design, Lavigne (2020) studied 78 principals in Illinois using a new district teacher evaluation program. A principal's preparation and training program can fill the gap for lack of content-area knowledge (Lavigne, 2020).

Mireles-Rios and Becchio (2018) scrutinized feedback teachers received through the evaluation and teacher effectiveness. Using random sampling, 28 high school teachers (12 males and 16 females) from three high schools in California participated in this study.

Interviews were the data collection method used. The themes and findings that emerged during the pre-observation were that two-thirds of the participants believed clear expectations for the evaluation process were necessary; participating teachers wanted more insight into motivating students. The meeting involved a checklist approach but no coaching or principal instructional leadership support. The three emerging themes and their teacher evaluation findings post-conference indicate that they received praised feedback, and the praised feedback boosted teacher confidence. Some feedback was constructive feedback combined with strategies for improvement, and some feedback targeted instructional strategies to enhance student success and professional growth. Pre- and post-observation meetings for the evaluation process are important moments for improving teaching self-efficacy and practices. Evaluation conferences were an important moment for principals to provide the teacher with instructional feedback. Smith et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between experienced teachers' perception of evaluation feedback and attitudes of their instructional practices. In this quantitative study, Smith et al. (2020) surveyed 98 teachers and found a relationship between the teacher's high levels of feedback and feedback value.

Mette et al. (2017) explored how eight principals balanced teacher supervision and teacher evaluation in the instructional leadership capacity. The results of this study emerged two themes. The first finding was there was a shared and cross-relationship between teacher supervision and evaluation. The second finding was principals as instructional leaders also become teacher coaches and therefore responsible for supporting teacher's growth and providing feedback. The authors provided insight for

pathways to future studies. One suggestive prospective study could examine the theory of supervision and feedback given to teachers with school accountability systems.

Contrarily in a different study, Davis, and Boudreaux (2019) studied charter high school teacher leaders' perception of principal's instructional leadership practices in a qualitative case study. The authors used a focus group as the data collection method. There were eight teacher leader participants in this study. The findings in this study supported practical instructional leadership practices following Mendel's instructional leadership model. School leaders (principals) leadership in charter schools were showing success as instructional leaders. However, many believe the charter schools' existence contributes to low performance in public education. Principals of charter schools are using research-based practices to fulfill the action of instructional leadership. In this study, the teacher leader participant believed that teacher evaluation was a tool to identify and provide growth feedback. Davis and Boudreaux (2019) concluded that the principal's effective instructional leadership practices contributed to teacher practices through supervision, evaluation, and meaningful feedback.

Intricacies of Evaluating

Noted previously, Boston et al. (2016) explicitly explained the principals are responsible for giving content-specific feedback during the evaluation process to influence, support, and improve the teacher's instructional practices. Campbell and Derrington (2019) studied 14 school principals over five years to collect the principal's perception of the new evaluation policies in Tennessee using a qualitative methodology. Some of the study's findings were time was a significant factor that added to the

evaluation process. Most (80%) of the principals in the study believed that the evaluation rubric was an added benefit supporting their ability to observe, rate, and provided teachers with instructional feedback. Even with the support of the evaluation rubric, school principals questioned the accuracy of the scores. Similarly, Ridge and Lavigne (2020) examined the principals' evaluation process and the increased demands on school leaders to observed and provided teachers with high-quality feedback. The authors found similar findings.

In a qualitative study, Derrington and Campbell (2018) examined 14 principals' perspectives on implementing restructured teacher evaluation systems in Tennessee. The authors found that although principals' duties included evaluation, the principal had minor effects on policy change and new evaluation instrument adoptions. Furthermore, one finding of Derrington and Campbell (2018) agrees with those of Ridge and Lavigne (2020) study. For example, the authors found that there was a time increase and demand to evaluate teachers effectively. Regardless, principals in the capacity of instructional leaders are responsible for the institution's curriculum. Subsequently, the authors implied several avenues for future studies. Some of these avenues include exploring the variation among the principal's implementation of observational structures, teacher's, and principal's perspectives during the execution of evaluation systems, clarifying principal's misunderstandings, exploring opportunities, if any, that affect policy. These suggestive future studies document how policy factors and teacher evaluation system affects principal practices.

Derrington and Martinez (2019) investigated teacher's perceptions of evaluation systems effectiveness and the evaluator's ability to rate instructional effectiveness and provide feedback in some Tennessee schools. There were 148 teacher participants with experience in secondary educational institutions. The authors found that the changed evaluation system was not adequate for teachers to effectively grow and improve instructional practices. The evaluation system created a strained relationship between principals and teachers as rating accuracy affects many other factors in a teacher's career (i.e., compensation, incentives, promotion).

Kraft and Gilmour (2016) used stratified random sampling to randomly select 46 participants for the study to create a diverse population. After contacting the participants, 24 out of the 46 participants agreed to participate. The participants were principals across urban school districts in the northeast United States. Kraft and Gilmour's (2016) study aimed to investigate principals' perceptions of new evaluation systems and collected data through interviews. A total of 70% of the participants stated the new evaluation system was an improvement as it provided a common framework for teaching practices and evaluation. Additionally, 67% of the participating principals indicated that the new evaluation system increased teacher involvement. Principals had some challenges implementing the new evaluation system, and that subsequently resulted in different usage. Additionally, 88% of the principals found that the new evaluation system required more time and attention, contributing to the feedback quality. Furthermore, the authors found that 90% of the principals believed that the time constraint impacted the types and kinds of feedback teachers given. Content (subject area) expertise also influenced how

principals evaluated teachers and based most evaluation communication on instructional practices and not content. Of the participants, 38% of the principals surveyed believed that they had limited training on the new evaluation process. Evaluation reform intended to provide an evaluation that was less subjective and more objective to improve teacher practices. Kraft and Gilmour (2016) concluded that addressing some of the challenges resulting in principals implementing teacher evaluation is important to improving the quality of instruction teachers deliver.

Although the literature synthesized support the gap in practice for this study: principals do not provide consistent content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices. It also supports that there are other contributing factors to the principal's inconsistent practices. The onus to support and improve teacher's instructional practices does not rely solely on the personal characteristics or practices of the principal but also other factors such as the evaluation rubric. In the upcoming sections, I describe key concepts and variables related to the conceptual framework of my study. These key concepts and variables are principals as instructional leaders, the evolution of content-specific feedback, implementation strategies, the effects of using content-specific feedback, the relationship between principals and teachers and content-specific feedback, and internal and external outcomes of the central theme.`

Emerging Concept of Instructional Leadership

Historically, principals did not always function in the dual capacities, as both administrators and instructional leaders in the past (Hallinger, 2010; Mette et al., 2017). Instead, the role of the principals was largely confined to organizational administration to

keep the school functioning, and they rarely ventured into issues of pedagogy, which was largely left to the teachers themselves (Honig & Rainey, 2019). However, in recent decades, principals have become tied to the concept of instructional leadership after some successful elementary principals were able to carry out their traditional administrative duties and still focus on supporting teachers' instructional practices and the learning in the classrooms (Hallinger, 2010). Thus, this change influenced a shift in the school principals' traditional duties, managerial and administrative, to include instructional leadership (Hallinger., 2010; Hallinger et al., 2020).

In addition, to the school principals' successes exhibited in earlier research of elementary schools, the global shift of education in the twenty-first century also contributed to the configuration of school principals as instructional leaders (Hallinger et al., 2020). With the arrival of the twenty-first century, educational systems were focused more on school accountability (Hallinger et al., 2020). The shift in education now made the principal responsible for student achievement and created a responsibility for principals to function as instructional leaders, essentially as the chief learning officer of the building (Hallinger et al., 2020). As the chief leaders of the educational institution, school principals now functioned in both the administrative and instructional leadership roles (Mette et al., 2017). This merge in roles, administrative and instructional leadership, meant that school principals' responsibilities not only included administrative duties, but they also were responsible for equipping teachers with best practices, managing the curriculum and instruction, and creating plans to improve student outcomes (Hallinger et al., 2020; Honig & Rainey, 2019). Today, it is widely accepted that school principals

should be the instructional leaders of educational institutions and are responsible for managing the institutions' curriculum and instruction (Derrington & Campbell, 2018; Hallinger et al., 2020). In sum, as the instructional leaders of the education institution, principals are expected to observe, evaluate, and give teachers feedback to improve instructional practices, thus connecting the principal's duty as an instructional leader and the central phenomena explored in this study, principal's content-specific feedback.

Principals as Instructional Leaders

The first concept associated with the conceptual framework that I discuss is principals as instructional leaders. The literature on instructional leadership informed this study by explaining the principals' relationship with content-specific feedback. In the instructional leadership capacity, the principal is responsible for managing the institution's curriculum, instruction, and teaching quality (Donahue & Vogel, 2018). Therefore, fulfilling the role effectively as an instructional leader leads the institution to better outcomes, which includes meeting the school's mission and goals, improving the quality of teaching and learning, and student achievement (DeMatthews et al., 2020; Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Jimerson & Quebec Fuentes, 2020; Pressley et al., 2018). Although the literature identifies how principals perform effectively as instructional leaders, other literature pieces add other reasons for principals' inconsistencies as instructional leaders (DeMatthews et al., 2020; Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Jimerson & Quebec Fuentes, 2020; Pressley et al., 2018).

Many factors prevent a principal from fulfilling instructional leadership duties effectively. The literature brought attention to the following factors: limited content

knowledge, content experience, or grade-level knowledge; time constraints; structure of observational rubrics, skills, and approaches to observation; and supervisory practices (Jimerson & Quebec Fuentes, 2020; Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020). Furthermore, school leaders' content knowledge helps the leader know and identify what to look for in good instruction qualities within and across content areas (Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020). Therefore, limited content knowledge makes it difficult for an instructional leader to provide content-specific feedback after observing quality instruction, which is necessary for supporting and improving teacher practices (DeMatthews et al., 2020; Jimerson & Quebec Fuentes, 2020; Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020). In sum, it is imperative to deepen principals' content knowledge and classroom practices to evaluate teachers, influence and support instructional practices effectively.

Meanwhile, and in line with some of the viewpoints from DeMatthews et al. (2020) and Jimerson and Quebec Fuentes (2020), content-area knowledge is vital to evaluating and providing content-specific feedback. Other authors asserted that this missing factor (content-knowledge) could be heighten through other avenues for principals to improve instructional leadership practices (Boston et al., 2016; Damore & Rieckhoff, 2019; Lane, 2020; Lavigne, 2020; Smith et al., 2020). One avenue by which principals can fill the gap for lack of content-area knowledge is through a short amount of professional development (Boston et al., 2016). Secondly, a preparation and training program for principals could fill the gap for lack of content-area knowledge (Lavigne, 2020). Therefore, preparing and training principals as instructional leaders is essential to evaluate and provide feedback effectively. Furthermore, principals' academic training

programs for instructional leaders should offer techniques and strategies for providing feedback and assessing teachers effectively (Damore & Rieckhoff, 2019; Lane, 2020; Smith et al., 2020). As seen from the points mentioned earlier, the principal support quality teaching and learning in the instructional leader's role.

As a result of the principal support teacher's instructional practices and the quality of teaching and learning, there were also intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes. Notably, the school districts have not relinquished principals from other responsibilities as the institution's leader (Jimerson & Quebec Fuentes, 2020). Principals are overworked, which affects the quality of feedback and how they approach the evaluation process (Campbell & Derrington, 2019; Ridge & Lavigne, 2020). The teachers' instructional practices were supported and improved through intrinsic and extrinsic teaching beliefs, experiences, and values (Lane, 2020). In sum, and because of principals supporting teachers' instructional practices and the quality of teaching and learning, the literature support that this alters teacher and school leaders' practices.

Understandably principals supporting teachers' instructional practices and the quality of teaching and learning is a leadership practice that is vital to influencing teachers' instructional practices. New principals, with teaching experience, instructional practices differ when evaluating teacher's quality of teaching and (Leggett & Smith, 2019). Unfortunately, one point overlooked is that although principals' duties include evaluation, the principals have minor effects on policy change and new evaluation instrument adoptions (Derrington & Campbell, 2018). Nevertheless, these factors (teaching experience and policy influences) add an element as principals aim to support

teachers' instructional practices and teaching and learning quality. Therefore, it is essential to strengthening principals' instructional leadership capacity (Damore & Rieckhoff, 2019).

Strengthening principals' instructional leadership capacity to support teacher instructional practices requires that principals collect evidence during classroom observations. As a result of principals collecting the evidence, they use the evidence collected during observation to influence instructional practices. They do this by offering professional development opportunities (collectively, subject area focused, or individually). Moreover, principals' also influence teachers' instructional practices by providing teachers with feedback, setting instructional goals, and making decisions regarding evaluation, retention, and even tenure (Donaldson & Woulfin, 2018; Lawson & Knollman, 2017; Wieczorek et al., 2019). Consequently, for these instructional leadership practices to support and improve teacher's instructional practices, these activities must work in tandem by collaborating with principals and teachers. Simply put, the principal is responsible for building a collaborative culture in the institution which support teacher improvement and student achievement, as this positively affects teachers' instructional practices (Damore & Rieckhoff, 2019; Jimerson & Quebec Fuentes, 2020). In essence, strengthening principals' instructional leadership capacity to support teacher instructional practices involves building collaborative cultures in institutions.

In most schools, the principal is the instructional leader and therefore is responsible for teacher evaluation and delivering instructional feedback to teachers (Rigby et al., 2017). Teachers' instructional feedback is vital for teachers to identify their

instructional delivery's strengths and weaknesses (Boston et al., 2016; Brown & Bista, 2018). Therefore, the instructional feedback principals give to teachers should be meaningful, actionable, and content-specific despite possible content-area mismatch and supervisory style (Boston et al., 2016; Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Hallinger & Hosseingholizadeh, 2020; Honig & Rainey, 2019; Lochmiller, 2015; Mireles-Rios et al., 2019; Neumerski et al., 2018; Wieczorek et al., 2019). In sum, principals in the instructional leadership capacity are responsible for giving teachers instructional feedback during the evaluation process.

During the evaluation process, the principal uses the evaluation instrument to evaluate and provide feedback to improve teaching practices. Although principals are overworked and their other duties and responsibilities have not changed or lessen, school districts require principals to spend more time observing and giving feedback to teachers (Campbell & Derrington, 2019; Ridge & Lavigne, 2020). Subsequently, to accomplish the tasks of spending more time observing and giving feedback to teachers, school districts must provide principals with the right tools to support the process, supporting principals as influential instructional leaders (Gilmour & Jones, 2020). Additionally, other ways school districts can support principals in becoming influential instructional leaders are by providing appropriate resources, descriptions of evidence-based practices, accountability measures that support professional judgment, and autonomy (Campbell & Derrington, 2019). The evaluation instrument's overall structural composition shares a relationship between the principal's effectiveness and instructional leadership abilities.

In tandem with the points mentioned earlier, the principals could engage in multiple teacher instruction delivery observations. The engagement in multiple observations affords the principal the ability to make better judgments, conclusions and deliver more effective detailed feedback (Johnson et al., 2019). Moreover, multiple observations can occur at different points in the evaluation process. Perhaps creating a separation between the formative and summative process's functionality provides avenues for a principal to engage multiple observations (Derrington & Martinez, 2019). Through this separation, the principal can evaluate effectively and support teachers by delivering more content-aligned feedback.

Evolution of Content-Specific Instructional Feedback

Through the teacher evaluation process, principals often provide teachers with feedback on the observed instructional delivery. How the teacher evaluation systems manifested themselves shares a relationship with the evolution of instructional feedback to teachers, and this manifestation also reveals the development of teacher instruction feedback (Mette et al., 2017). Because public scrutiny forced a merge between principals' practices, supervision, and instructional leadership, this also caused a merge of supportive instructional feedback and the evaluation process (Mette et al., 2017). In summary, complex education systems, education reform, policies, teacher demands, and student achievement were all related factors that influenced the evolution of teacher evaluation practices and supportive instructional feedback (Mette et al., 2017).

History

Notably, it is not just a single factor that influences principals' instructional leadership practices more than others. Some of the most notable factors are educational demands and scrutiny, and political involvement (Mette et al., 2017). This formative merge happened around the 1920s (Roberge, 2018). When evaluating educational effectiveness and progress, teacher accountability and student achievement are focal points in the discussion (Roberge, 2018)—therefore, merging the principal's responsibility for rating, and supporting teacher professional growth (Mette et al., 2017). This merge also changed how principals conducted teacher observation, the evaluation process, and the quality and types of feedback principals provided (Glickman et al., 2017; Mette et al., 2017). In the long run, these factors changed how principals supported teacher's professional growth and the evaluation process (Mette et al., 2017).

Description of Content-Specific Feedback

Principals support teacher's professional growth through the evaluation process by providing content-specific feedback. Content-specific feedback is verbal or written feedback relevant to the instruction observed (Boston et al., 2016; Lane, 2020; Rigby et al., 2017). Even though there are common factors observed in a lesson (such as lesson objectives, lesson standards, room configuration, policies, and procedures), feedback on these factors is not the type of feedback that coincides with the phrase, content-specific instructional feedback. The descriptions used by Boston et al. (2016) informed my understanding that content-specific feedback, is a style of feedback given to teachers by the principal which describes the subject (content) area observed.

To provide such feedback (content-specific), the principal collects evidence during the observation to give teachers individualized content-specific feedback and performance ratings (Archer, 2016). First, the principal observes the teacher's instructional delivery and then uses the evaluation rubric to describe and rate what was observed (Kettler & Reddy, 2019). The authors found that using the same evaluation rubric, the principal and teacher dialogue about the rating and use the evidence of the performance levels to support rating and improvement (Kettler & Reddy, 2019; Morris-Mathews et al., 2021). In doing this, the principal rates the teacher and uses evidence-based practices to support ratings and provides feedback specific to observed instruction (Kettler & Reddy, 2019; Morris-Mathews et al., 2021; Rigby et al., 2017). When principals apply clear criteria to rating teaching evidence, different observers can reach the same conclusions about the same lessons (Kettler & Reddy, 2019). In sum, when principals give content-related feedback, the principal demonstrates knowledge of the content and uses content-related terminology to describe the instruction's schematics (Hallinger et al., 2020).

Present-Day Use and Trends

At present, there is a responsibility for principals to give more frequent and content-specific feedback to support improvement to the teacher's instructional practices (Garet et al., 2017). Principals can give content-specific during any time of the teacher evaluation process. Through the teacher evaluation system, principals should give teachers meaningful, specific feedback, content-specific feedback, because this feedback is crucial to improving instructional practices (Derrington & Martinez, 2019; Garet et al.,

2017; Rigby et al., 2017). When feedback is specific and narrowed to the content, the teacher can identify how to improve instructional delivery (Smith et al., 2020).

Furthermore, providing teachers with content-specific feedback also helps teachers understand, identify, and connect with the instruction's strengths and weaknesses (Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Smith et al., 2020). Finally, when principals give teachers content-specific feedback, the principal support teacher instructional improvement, thus improving teaching and learning quality (Archer, 2016; Goldschmidt & Congdon, 2018; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Lane, 2020). Given these points, implementing content-specific feedback is an integral part of completing the teacher evaluation process and supporting teacher instructional practices.

Implementation Associated with Content-Specific Instructional Feedback

The first strategy to implementing content-specific feedback to teachers on observed instructional practices is to examine the principal's preparedness as an instructional leader. A principal in the instructional leader capacity monitors, evaluates, assesses the institution's curriculum and instruction (Donahue & Vogel, 2018). Furthermore, the preparation used to equip principals with the skillset to be influential instructional leaders does not look the same in every school district (Hallinger et al., 2020). Because principals are underprepared to perform as instructional leaders effectively; thus, examining preparation programs and or offer focus specific training, professional developments, workshops, and seminars on identifying how quality instruction looked within and around the various content areas (Boston et al., 2016; Campbell & Derrington, 2019). Given those points, preparing principals to implement

content-specific feedback support teachers' instructional practices across diverse content areas (Campbell & Ronfeldt, 2018). Furthermore, investing in the activities mentioned prepares principals to function as instructional leaders effectively (Ford & Hewitt, 2020). In summary, school districts investing in principals subsequently improve their ability to perform as instructional leaders and give content-specific instructional feedback effectively.

The second strategy to implementing content-specific feedback is the actual behavior of providing content-specific feedback to teachers. Once principals are prepared and equipped with the right tool to perform as instructional leaders effectively, they must follow through with such actions (Derrington & Martinez, 2019). Following through with providing content-specific is vital to influence instructional practices. Two studies found that teachers received feedback from principals, but the feedback was not meaningful to improving instructional practices (Boston et al., 2016; Reinhorn et al., 2017). Furthermore, the feedback was not specific, concrete, or meaningful. With the responsibility of monitoring, evaluating, and assessing the curriculum, instruction, teaching, and learning within the institution, the principal provides feedback on the observed content to support teacher instructional practices.

Additionally, teachers should receive feedback throughout the evaluation process: preconference, the observation of instructional delivery, or post-conferences (Archer, 2016; Morris-Mathews et al., 2021). Giving proper, frequent, timely feedback on instructional strategies is beneficial to teacher's instructional improvement practices

(Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Lane, 2020; Wieczorek et al., 2019). Thus, the implementation of content-specific feedback results in similar effects in and around the institution.

Effects of the Use of Content-Specific Instructional Feedback

Common effects of content-specific feedback include positive influences on teacher instructional practices and delivery, teacher self-efficacy, and student achievement. Principals giving content-specific instruction feedback embellishes a causal relationship between the principals providing teachers with content-specific instructional feedback and student achievement. This relationship exists because principals directly support and influence classroom teachers teaching practices through evaluations and feedback (Derrington & Campbell, 2018; Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Wieczorek et al., 2019). Furthermore, the principal's direct interaction with teachers' instructional practice results in an indirect effect on student achievement. Principals using content-specific feedback can also result in positive outcomes for teachers. Some of these positive outcomes as a result of principals using content-specific feedback are improved teacher self-efficacy, narrowed teacher focus on the strengthens and weakness of the instructional delivery, improved instructional practices, and student achievement (Derrington & Campbell, 2018; Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Lawson & Knollman, 2017; Pressley et al., 2018; Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2020; Wieczorek et al., 2019). The direct relationship with principals and teacher practices indirectly influences student achievement and changes the institution's academic narrative.

In contrast to positive outcomes of principals giving teachers content-specific, some factors change the results of content-specific feedback. Examples of these factors that can change the results of content-specific feedback are principals' background experience and the evaluation system (Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020). Thus, highlighting the importance of leadership content knowledge is important to evaluate teachers; the principals need to know what to look for and good quality instruction within that content (Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020). Principals using the evaluation instrument in a punitive manner takes away from the principals' intent to support teachers and provided content-specific feedback (Kim & Lowery, 2020). Therefore, it is worth exploring the formative and summative process's functionality and how best to give teachers content-specific feedback during any portion of this process. During the evaluation systems and process, principals have the perfect opportunities to provide teachers with meaningful feedback (Dee et al., 2019; Derrington & Martinez, 2019; Lavigne, 2020; Mireles-Rios & Becchio, 2018; Rodgers et al., 2019). Even though contributing factors potentially alters the effects of content-specific feedback, principals are still responsible for supporting teachers' instructional practices.

Principals and Content-Specific Instructional Feedback Relationship

Principals are the primary evaluator, and as the primary evaluator, the principal uses the evaluation process to observe and collect evidence to later rate teachers teaching performances (Derrington & Campbell, 2018; Ford et al., 2018; Lochmiller & Mancinelli, 2019; Ridge & Lavigne, 2020). Using the evidence collected during teacher instruction observation, principals provide teachers with frequent, timely, and meaningful

feedback (Donaldson & Woulfin, 2018; Reid, 2019). Even with this established relationship between principals and content-specific feedback, one study suggested that future research explore the principals' role as instructional leaders over time (Neumerski et al., 2018). In like manner, another study implored that future research should explore how principals give teachers feedback (Mireles-Rios & Becchio, 2018). In summary, principals as educational institutions instructional leaders are responsible for managing the curriculum and instruction. When principals observe or evaluate a teacher, there are opportunities to provide feedback which support and improves the teacher's instructional practices.

Teachers and Content-Specific Instructional Feedback Relationship

Teachers receive content-specific feedback from principals, thus fortifying the relationship between teachers' and content-specific instructional feedback. When teachers receive content-specific feedback, there is an opportunity for instructional improvement and professional growth (Mireles-Rios et al., 2019). This feedback occurs throughout the teacher evaluation process as principals give teachers this feedback to improve instructional practices (Finster & Milanowski, 2018; Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Ford et al., 2018). When principals give teachers content-specific feedback, they support and steer curriculum and instructional delivery in the institution (Donahue & Vogel, 2018). Because teachers want more detailed, supportive, constructive, specific feedback about their teaching practices, principals should give teachers feedback to improve teaching practices (Kim & Lowery, 2020; Smith et al., 2020). Besides, the feedback supporting and or improving teaching practices feedback also provides opportunities for the teacher

to reflect on practice. Feedback influences teacher retention, and high-quality instructional delivery is likely to be retained in an institution (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Poor-performing teachers benefit from receiving content-specific instructional feedback as it helps them understand their strengths and weaknesses (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). In sum, when principals give teachers content-specific feedback, it creates a relationship between the teacher and the feedback.

Outcomes of Content-Specific Instructional Feedback

There are internal and external outcomes to receiving content-specific instructional feedback. Internal outcomes affect the recipient of the content-specific feedback, and external outcomes affect someone other than the content-specific feedback recipient. For example, this can be the school district, the principal, and or the student. Some content-specific feedback's internal outcomes are improved teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, teacher instructional improvement, and professional growth (Mireles-Rios et al., 2019). In contrast, some external outcomes are school districts' re-evaluation of teacher evaluation instruments, training, and preparation programs, education instructional leadership reform, forcing school principals to provide meaningful feedback (Brown & Bista, 2018; Lawson & Knollman, 2017; Lochmiller & Mancinelli, 2019; Pressley et al., 2018; Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020). In conclusion, the literature supported that content-specific feedback improves teacher observation scores (Pressley et al., 2018). The internal and external outcomes mentioned may not be the results of only content-specific feedback.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Researcher's Approach

The various authors who contributed to this body of knowledge all approached the phenomena differently. I identify three strengthens in the researchers' approach. The first strengths were the researchers all shared the same type of participants (principals and teachers), whether this was collectively within the research or individually. For example, in Boston et al., 2016, Lochmiller (2015), and Rigby et al. (2017), the study's participants were both principals and teachers. Contrarily Damore and Rieckhoff's (2019), Lavigne's (2020), and Quebec Fuentes et al.'s (2020) study participants were solely principals, whereas Mireles-Rios and Becchio's (2018), Davis and Boudreaux's (2019), and Derrington and Martinez's (2019) research studies the participants were teachers. For me, the similar type of participants was a strong indicator of a relationship between the participants and the study's central phenomena (principals and content-specific feedback) and supported my choice of participants, principals, and teachers.

The second strength was the use of qualitative research as the research design used to study this phenomenon. Qualitative research focuses on the lived experiences of the participants (Caelli et al., 2003; Kahlke, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Percy et al., 2015). Most of the researchers use the qualitative research design alone or cumbersome with another research design. Nevertheless, a shared research design shows uniformity across the scholar's research design and understanding of these phenomena. This shared research design subsequently also support standard practices for collecting and completing data analysis. The qualitative research design produces data that describes the

participant's lived experiences, feelings, and opinions to understand human experiences, making the qualitative research design applicable across disciplines (Rahman, 2016).

The third and final strength of the researcher's approach is the data collection method. Correlating with the selected research design, the practices, and data collection methods of the qualitative research, many of the studies included using the data collection methods that interact with participants to explain the human experience (Rahman, 2016). The use of data collection methods, such as interviews and direct observations, illicit descriptions about the human experience individually.

With known strengthens, I also identified two weaknesses in some of the researcher's approaches. The first weaknesses were the use of the qualitative research design. Even though I identified qualitative research as a strength among the researchers in one of the earlier paragraphs, this research approach can also be a weakness. The weakness of the qualitative research design approach lies with its interpretive premise, therefore, making the data analysis subjective (Rahman, 2016). Because the findings are interpretive, the subjectivity within the research relates to the researcher's interpretation of the participant's account of the lived experience. The interpretivism of the research study also correlates with the smaller sample size of the qualitative research, which I also identify as a weakness of the researcher's approach.

The second weakness of my approach is the smaller participant group. The smaller participant group in qualitative research reduces the transferability of the study's findings (Rahman, 2016). Furthermore, researchers cannot claim larger transferability of the study's context in the findings, thus limiting the applicability across groups. The

transferability of the study's findings is left to the readers to determine how they relate to the study or aspects of the study related to them. Despite the known weaknesses of sampling, the qualitative research design is beneficial to explaining individual lived experiences and collecting descriptive data.

Summary and Conclusions

The focus of this chapter was the synthesis of the literature. First, I described the literature search strategy. I then led this chapter by a synthesis of the literature exploring the conceptual framework, FFT. The framework's premise centers around improving teacher instructional practices by using evidence-based practices and providing teachers with content-specific instructional feedback. Next, I synthesized the literature key concepts and variables linking the phenomena and the conceptual framework. Key concepts and variables pulled from the literature were current research on principals as instructional leaders; the evolution of content-specific instructional feedback; implementation strategies associated with content-specific instructional feedback; effects of the use of content-specific instructional feedback; the relationship between principals' and content-specific instructional feedback and teachers' and content-specific instructional feedback, and internal and external outcomes of content-specific instructional feedback.

As a result of synthesizing the literature, two themes related to the central phenomena, principals,' and content-specific feedback, emerged. The first is that it is the principal's responsibility is to give teachers specific, meaningful, concrete, and actionable feedback as this feedback improves teacher practices and indirectly influences

student achievement (Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Lane, 2020; Lawson & Knollman, 2017; Mireles-Rios et al., 2019; Pressley et al., 2018; Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020; Wieczorek et al., 2019). The second theme was that evaluation instruments and processes influence principals' instructional leadership practices. With the proper evaluation instrument, principals would provide the teacher with the feedback needed to improve instructional practices (Dee et al., 2019; Lavigne, 2020; Mireles-Rios & Becchio, 2018; Rodgers et al., 2019). This conceptualization of the literature agrees with the FFT as an evaluative tool. Principals use the framework to observe and gather evidence to engage in a professional conversation and provide feedback to improve instructional feedback.

Some of the literature investigated principals in the instructional leadership capacity (Brown & Bista, 2018; Lawson & Knollman, 2017; Lochmiller & Mancinelli, 2019; Pressley et al., 2018; Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020). Few researchers examined both the principals' and teachers' perceptions of content-specific feedback and how it supports and improves teachers' instructional practices. The principal is charged with managing the curriculum, instruction, and the quality of teaching and learning at education institutions. Although the evaluation process is not uniformed across all school districts and institutions, the evaluation process is part of the principals' performance as the instructional leader, allowing them to observe and provide teachers support. The principal support and improves teachers' instructional practices throughout the phases of the evaluation process. The literature conveyed that in supporting teachers' instructional practices, it is necessary for the feedback given to teachers to be meaningful, specific, and actionable. The feedback that is meaningful, specific, and actionable is the type of

feedback teachers need to identify strengths and improve instructional practices (Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Lane, 2020; Lawson & Knollman, 2017; Mireles-Rios et al., 2019; Pressley et al., 2018; Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020; Wieczorek et al., 2019. Therefore, this study investigates the gap in practice that principals do not provide consistent content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices. In the next section, I present a description of the research method used to conduct this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate principals' and teachers' perceptions of content-specific feedback provided by principals to support teachers' instructional practices in an effort to understand why content-specific instruction is not being consistently provided. To accomplish this study's purpose, I collected and analyzed data from two groups—principals and teachers. I collected and analyzed the data from principals on the principals' perception of how they provided content-specific feedback to teachers to support instructional practices. Similarly, the data that I collected and analyzed from teachers were on the teachers' perception of the principal's feedback to support instructional practices.

In this chapter, I describe the research methods that I used to conduct this study. This chapter describes the research design and rationale, the research questions, and my role as the researcher. Additionally, I describe the participants, instrumentation, participant recruitment techniques and selections, and my data collection plans. The final key element that I discuss in this chapter before I conclude is the steps that I took to ensure that this study maintained trustworthiness and that my participants' privacy and rights were protected.

Research Design and Rationale

I designed the following research questions aligned with the conceptual framework (FFT) and the literature review of this study (Chapter 2). The central research questions of this study were the following:

- How do principals perceive that they provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?
- How do teachers perceive that principals provide content-specific feedback in support of teachers' instructional practices?

There were several reasons for choosing a qualitative approach to study this phenomenon. Firstly, the qualitative study best aligns with the structure and style of research questions considering that qualitative research is an in-depth examination of an individual's lived experiences. Secondly, a qualitative research design was more appropriate than a quantitative research design for this study. In this study, I collected, interpreted, and analyzed principals' and teachers' lived experiences. I explained the data nonnumerically. Additionally, I used interviews to collect nonnumerical data. Then I created codes based on my interpretation of the data. Lastly, I analyzed the data using an inductive approach, which means that I examined the data and discovered meaning based on my interpretations. In sum, qualitative research designs are popular in the social science disciplines, education, anthropology, and sociology (Burkholder et al., 2016). This applicability makes the qualitive research design suitable for the nature of my study.

In addition to the points mentioned, a qualitative research design was suitable for this study because the purpose of this study was to investigate principals' and teachers' perceptions of content-specific feedback provided by principals to support teachers' instructional practices in an effort to understand why content-specific instruction is not being consistently provided. Additionally, this research design did not have to be grounded in theory. The research could be for the purpose of better understanding an

existing theory, creating a new idea, and or rebirthing a current theory (Burkholder et al., 2016). As there are multiple forms of qualitative research designs, a researcher can select any of them, depending on what outcome the researcher intends to communicate (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Therefore, before choosing the qualitative research design, I considered my positionality, epistemological and ontological perspective, the targeted participants, the research questions, the data collection methods, and the time available for conducting the research.

Even though there are multiple qualitative research study designs, I chose the basic qualitative approach because it involves a simple and less in-depth description of the researcher's constructed interpretation of the participant's lived experiences (Caelli et al., 2003; Kahlke, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Percy et al., 2015). Additionally, it is acceptable to analyze the data for codes and patterns to convey the study's findings through this approach. Furthermore, the study's findings are based on the researcher's interpretation of the collected information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Unlike other qualitative research approaches, the basic qualitative study is not bounded to time, people, program, place, or event (Burkholder et al., 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Moreover, I chose the basic qualitative design because I could study a small sample size to understand the phenomena. In that way, I could maximize the data's quality rather than quantity (Burkholder et al., 2016). For these reasons, the basic qualitative approach was most applicable to investigate the two groups, principals and teachers, and their perceptions of principals' content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices. The choice to focus on those participants was made

because their experiences were most applicable to the study's central phenomena. In most educational institutions, the principal is likely to conduct the teacher evaluation system's process. In all educational institutions, teachers are responsible for instructional delivery and are involved in the evaluation process.

Several other qualitative research designs were considered: case study, including narrative research study, phenomenology research design, and descriptive qualitative study. Like the basic qualitative research design, these other methods can also consist of descriptions and interpretations of the phenomena, but each provides a different description level. The first design considered was case study. Baškarada (2014) described a case study as an elaborate explanation of a phenomenon of a single case or multiple cases. Case studies are complex, richly descriptive, comprehensive analyses. The second research design considered was the qualitative narrative study, but this design was unsuitable for this study because it describes a story's events (Burkholder et al., 2016). Next, I considered using the phenomenology research design. However, I did not choose this research design because qualitative phenomenology describes participants' lived experiences more richly across a group of individuals with the same experience in the same context (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Lastly, I considered using a descriptive research study. With a similar premise as I had in relation to a phenomenological study, I did not select this research design because descriptive research involves in-depth description of phenomena, as its aim is to describe events in a natural setting (Ravitch & Carl., 2015). In sum, all qualitative studies share some similar attributes, but a basic qualitative design was best suited to this study.

Role of the Researcher

I have been an elementary educator for 10 years, 8 of which I spent teaching sixth-grade mathematics and science and 2 years of which I spent teaching third-grade mathematics and science. All my teaching experiences have been in the local area in a public elementary school. Over the past 10 years, I have engaged in the evaluation process as a teacher. These experiences supported my formulated notion to better understand how principals' observations support teachers' instructional practices through feedback. Additionally, my viewpoint on this phenomenon coincided more with that of a teacher than that of a principal, potentially introducing bias to the study's findings. Possible biases that my professional experience as an elementary teacher may have introduced are misinterpretation or omitting data to suit my preconceived notion and probing or asking leading questions to elicit specific responses.

The interpretative nature of the qualitative research design put me in a position to rely on experiences and my understandings to conclude my study's findings. This interpretivism also potentially influenced and introduced bias to my study's outcomes. According to some authors, to reduce researcher bias, I could have taken steps such as disclosing pertinent information about myself and describing what strategies were used to minimize my influence on the study's outcome (Clark & Vealé, 2018). In my first attempt to not affect my study's findings, I disclosed pertinent information about my professional experience in the aforementioned section titled ''Role of the Researcher." With this disclosure, I informed the reader of my dissertation about my experience, perspectives, and potential influential bias. Other potential biases mentioned earlier are

probing and asking thought-leading questions to elicit a specific response and misinterpretation or omitting data to suit my preconceived notion. I also used strategies to ensure that these biases were minimized. Firstly, some viewpoints of Bender et al. (2021) guided my actions when addressing the potential bias of probing and asking thought-leading questions to elicit a specific response. Although an interview is a collaborative discussion, I remained neutral in the discussion as best as I could (see Bender et al., 2021). To support me in maintaining a neutral position, I created an interview protocol and guided interview questions. Additionally, during the interviews, I did not divulge any information related to my personal experience with the context, nor did I respond in agreeance to participants' experiences, as I understood that this collaborative discussion might skew the participants' narrative (see Bender et al., 2021). Secondly, I addressed the potential bias of misinterpretation or omitting data to suit my preconceived notion by ensuring that my codes only condensed the data and did not create new information during data analysis (see Clark & Vealé, 2018). It is my hope that using these strategies minimized potential researcher bias that might have been influential over my study's findings.

Firstly, my professional experience introduced potential biases because I still function in an elementary education teacher's professional role. Secondly, and due to my professional role, I still engage in the teacher evaluation process with this engagement, including the FFT. Thirdly, due to my professional experience, I have a preconceived notion of what feedback teachers need from principals to support and improve instructional practices. Therefore, I used an audit trail and reflectivity to limit potential

researcher bias and ensure data validity. Moreover, to avoid any conflict of interest, one of my study's purposive sampling criteria was not selecting or reporting any participants in my school or who were otherwise known to me.

Methodology

The participants were principals and teachers in this basic qualitative study, pulled from a national sample. The choice of selecting principals and teachers as the participants of this investigation was because the data represented these specific users' direct relationship with the phenomena. Furthermore, I used purposive sampling to select participants who fit the preliminary criteria. Selecting participants who match requirements allows a researcher to intentionally choose a study's participants (Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). In sum, I used purposeful sampling because, with this sampling strategy, I could select participants meeting my set criteria.

Participant Selection

As mentioned, participants for this study were principals and teachers. Malterud et al.'s (2016) position on sample size inspired my choice of sample size. Sample size varies according to the research design but relying on *information power* is the best way to determine what sample size best fits a study. Information power refers to elements of a study when determining sample size, such as the study's aim, the established theory, and sample criteria, as these factors influence the findings (Malterud et al., 2016). Considering the previous position, I collected and included data from a total of eight to 12 participants for each participant group until data saturation was achieved (see Groenewald, 2004; Guest et al., 2006; Van Manen, 1990). Although the data set of eight

to 12 participants was small, Malterud et al. indicated that small sample sizes are appropriate when the target population meets a specific criterion.

To collect the data for this study, I disseminated an e-announcement (Appendix A) for this study, which advertised my research to recruit interested participants. I recruited participants through online resources such as Walden's Participant Pool, social media, and snowball sampling. On the e-announcement, I provided contact information for potential participants to use if they were interested in participating. Once prospective participants emailed me to indicate their interest, I responded to the same email that they sent with consent information and asked participants to please let me know the best date and time to conduct the interview.

I used purposive sampling coupled with snowball sampling to select which participants' experiences I included in the study's findings. The purposeful sampling technique is appropriate to collect data from a small quantity of the population with an interest and expertise in the studied content (see Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Additionally, when using the snowball sampling strategy, I asked recruited participants who met the study's participation criteria to refer my study to other possible participants (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Furthermore, using the snowball sampling strategy, the number of participants might increase as I gained access to more potential participants to collect new information until data saturation or redundancy occurred (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Participants needed to meet the following criteria. The principal participants must (a) have functioned in the capacity of a principal for 3 or more consecutive school years, (b) have conducted direct observation and evaluation of teachers, (c) not be a principal in

my local area, and (d) not be known to me. The teacher participants must (a) have taught for 3 or more consecutive years, (b) have been evaluated by a principal for 3 or more consecutive years, (c) not be a teacher in my local area, and (d) not be known to me.

Instrumentation

For this study, I collected data through interviews. Interviews are most appropriate for the qualitative research design as the data collected are a more meaningful, more in-depth representation of the phenomenon (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Furthermore, researchers use interviews when it is not possible to observe an individual's lived experience or attitudes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). Therefore, I designed the interview questions based on the suggestions of Lambert (2012) concerning elements for structuring interviews. Additionally, my doctoral committee, in the role of an expert panel, reviewed my interview questions and protocols.

Following Hurst et al. (2015), I used field testing to test my interview questions and improve quality and validity. Fielding testing is an excellent practice to detect errors, flaws, weaknesses, limitations, word ambiguity, and cross-cultural language biases (Hurst et al., 2015). In addition to the forenamed facts, I conducted field testing by administering the interview questions on a small scale to individuals with similar characteristics to the study's intended population (see Hurst et al., 2015). Therefore, to improve the quality validity of my interview questions, I field-tested my interview questions by conducting mock interview sessions with one principal and two teachers. Lastly, I used member checking once I formulated the study's preliminary findings. To conduct member

checking for this study, I selected three participants randomly and conducted validation interviews.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

As previously mentioned, I published an e-announcement to recruit participants from online platforms such as Walden's participant pool, social media, emails, and media advertisements. On the e-announcement, I included a description of my study's purpose, the criteria to meet to participate in the study, and information on contacting me. Participants shared their interest in participating by contacting me via email.

Once prospective participants emailed me their interest, I responded to the same email they sent with consent information and asked participants to please let me know the best date and time to conduct the interview. I gave the prospective participants 2 to 3 days to review the study's informed consent information. Prospective participants consented to participate and be audio recorded by responding, ''I consent to participate and being audio recorded." Obtaining formal consent was an integral part of this process. It ensured that the participants understood the study's nature, were aware of the risk they might be taking, and documented that no one was being forced to participate in the research study (see Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Furthermore, formal consent was required for recording, and it was necessary to record for easier transcription and to capture more accurate data (Burkholder et al., 2016; Lambert, 2012; Ravitch & Carl, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

During the interview, I disabled the use of video for every participant and started all interviews with interview protocol (Appendices B and C). Each initial interview lasted

approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Given that the interviews were virtual, I used the Zoom application to conduct interview. Although there are three common forms of qualitative research interviews: unstructured, semistructured, or structured, I used a semistructured interview structure (see Rubin and Rubin, 2011). Using a semistructured interview, meant that I did not stick to only asking the created set of interview questions or the order in which they were written but instead, as the interviewer, I added probing questions as a follow-up to collect more details as needed (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Therefore, the interview questions for the principal and teacher participants (seen in Appendices B and C) only served as a guide for how the interview occurred and the questions I asked. Depending on the participant's responses, I inserted more questions for clarity or elaboration.

In this study, I also considered and used some of the best before, after, and during interviewing practices suggested by Ravitch and Carl, 2015. For example, before the interview, some of the best practices are set up an environment free of distractions, testing and knowing how to use the equipment before the interview, reviewing materials ahead of the interview, and greeting the participant. Additional, best practices used during the interview included starting the interview with a discourse on a neutral topic, ensuring the participant was comfortable and understood the purpose of the study, showing appreciation for participation, maintaining meeting pace, listening attentively, avoiding verbal and nonverbal bias, and conducting the interview in the participant's language (see Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Finally, best practices when concluding an interview are thanking the participant, showing appreciation, adding time and date to the

recording, and sending a follow-up email to thank the participant. After the interview, I gave participants a nominal $10 gift card incentive.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis began after all interviews and transcriptions. Qualitative data analysis requires careful attention to text and symbols and thorough reflection (Saldana, 2015). First, I organized the interview transcripts based on the questions and responses (attribute coding) and store them in an Excel document. I formatted each question and related answers on a new page for easy navigation and created similar formats in the NVivo qualitative transcription data analysis software. Then, I analyzed the data to accrue enough basic codes.

Additionally, because coding is a method of analyzing qualitative data, it should not be confused with code used in semiotics (interpretive, metaphorical codes related to the representation and interpretation of social and cultural context symbols). Given that point, I did not preselect any codes. Instead, I captured the codes from transcribed data (see Saldana, 2015). Lastly, basic coding fitted with the nature of this study's research approach. It was suitable for data analysis because it is not a replica of the transcription but rather an interpretation of what stands out.

Furthermore, I did several coding trials before reporting any findings. I first pre-coded the data by highlighting words or phrases that stood out in the Excel document. Pre-coding helped to familiarize me with the data. I then used the NVivo software to conduct an inductive analysis of the transcripts to create a set of first cycle codes. After the first cycle of data coding, I compared the manual codes created to the software-

created codes to each other and the context. Then I made a code set. I compared the responses with the groups to categorize the data. From the coding and categorization, I analyzed the data for themes. Theming the data is ideal to express the big idea capture from the interviews as a friendly narrative (Saldana, 2015). The themes that appear formed the study's findings. I analyzed the themes against the study's research questions, conceptual framework, and literature review.

As explained in the previous paragraph, I compared codes to create categories by identifying similarities elicited in the responses. Furthermore, to analyze the data I also compared the responses across the two participating groups. To compare the responses across the groups, I connected the data to the overall context by identifying connecting statements, and concepts amongst the participating groups (see Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Thus, in employing that strategy, I connected the responses from the teachers to the principals and vice versa. In doing this, I established data triangulation of this study in two ways: by collecting data from more than one source that shares different perspectives of the context and using connecting strategies to analyze the data for commonality amongst the response for the two participating groups of my study, teachers, and principals.

Trustworthiness

I used specific strategies, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and member checking, to increase this study's trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of qualitative research has been controversial because authors debate the qualitative research study's validity and reliability because of its interpretive nature (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Therefore, the researcher is responsible for ensuring qualitative research's trustworthiness by reporting accurate participants' lived experiences. For this purpose, I described the strategies mentioned, which I used to increase trustworthiness in the following subsections.

Credibility

The first strategy I used to increase the study's trustworthiness is to establish credibility. I used triangulation to establish credibility. Establishing credibility ensured that the findings are believable. In qualitative research, reporting exact data is impossible because the researcher's interpretation is the basis for the study's conclusions (Burkholder et al., 2016). Therefore, the qualitative researcher increases credibility and establishes triangulation of the findings by using more than one data collection method or more than one source to answer the study's research question (Lambert, 2012). To be exact, for this study, I used more than one data source (two participant groups) who shared a similar experience with the context to establish triangulation. I also established data triangulation by examining and connecting the responses to the overall context of the study as a whole. To do this, I analyzed the data, and found responses that connected between the teacher and principal participants. Additionally, I increased credibility and established triangulation of the study's findings by comparing and contrasting the participants' data for commonality and differences.

Transferability

Secondly, I increased the study's trustworthiness by establishing data transferability. In a research study, transferability occurs when the findings can be

applied to another context (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015; Saldana, 2015). To establish the study's transferability findings, I included enough details of the data so that readers can apply and compare the results to similar outside contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). It is to be understood that establishing transferability does not mean duplicating or replicating the study's findings. Instead, the readers can transfer aspects of the research study to a similar context. For this study, I briefly described the setting, data analysis procedures, and results.

Dependability

Thirdly, to increase the study's trustworthiness, I reported consistent and stable participants' lived experiences to maintain dependability. Dependability is an argument for how data will be collected and how constant is the research process with the idea (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Two ways I achieved dependability are by using an expert panel and by using an external auditor. I used an expert panel (members of my doctoral committee) to confirm that the data collection methods aligned with the research questions. I used an external auditor to examine the data collection process, analysis, and results to confirm the accuracy of the study's findings.

Confirmability

The following strategy I used to increase this study's trustworthiness is confirmability. I established confirmability in this study using reflexivity and an audit trail to limit the researcher's bias. Confirmability, also known as objectivity, of qualitative research removes the researcher's ideas from the study's findings so that the results are free of the researcher's biases (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015).

Establishing confirmability means that a similar conclusion would be drawn if another researcher conducted the study (the study's results can be confirmed by someone else). To establish reflexivity, I reflected on my role as the sole researcher. With this point understood, in a previous section, ''Role of the Researcher," I described my biases, dispositions, and assumptions about principals providing content-specific feedback to teachers. Additionally, within the same forenamed section, I reflected on my personal and professional experiences that may introduce potential biases during data collection and analysis. In sum, I maintained an audit trail by journaling. My journals documented decisions made, interpretations, and thought processes used when analyzing the data.

Member Checking

Lastly, I used member checking to validate the findings of the study. My choice to use member checking to validate trustworthiness reflects the recommendation of Burkholder et al. (2016) and Hagens et al. (2009). Member checking is an excellent way to gain final insights on the participants' phenomena and clarify and finalize the study's conclusion (Burkholder et al., 2016). I used member checking once I formulated the study's preliminary findings. According to the viewpoints of Merriam and Tisdell (2015), member checks, also known as respondent validation, is done with some participants to rule out the possibility of misinterpretation, offering participants an opportunity to provide feedback and suggest ''fine-tuning" to capture their perspectives better (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To conduct member checking for this study, I selected three participants randomly and conduct validation interviews.

Ethical Procedures

Granted that participants are volunteering their personal information and the findings will be published on public domains, it is crucial to protect the participants' rights and welfare. To protect my participants' rights and interests, I first sought approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB reviewed my proposal to ensure that this study meets all requirements for protecting my participants' rights and welfare. Additionally, I obtained an informed consent response from all participants. Consenting to participant in the study means that the participants were given clear information about the research and their role as a participant and agrees and understands the circumstances behind participating (see Ravitch & Carl, 2015). The participants provided informed consent by responding ‘‘I consent to participate and being audio recorded" to the email to indicate their consent to an email. The participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and participants had the right to request to review and make changes to the transcription for clarity. Apart from those points mentioned, I protected my participants' privacy by using numbered code (ex. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.). in the place of the participant's identities. Lastly, to ensure participants' privacy, I removed any identifying information from final documents and stored it securely on the encrypted password-protected USB memory stick.

Summary

In conclusion, as previously noted, this study used a basic qualitative approach to investigate principals' and teachers' perceptions of principals' content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices. Accordingly, I used purposive sampling and

snowball sampling to select the final participants. My participants were limited to principals and teachers because their experience with the central phenomena essentially gave detailed, honest, informed information that would benefit this study's findings. Furthermore, I used a semistructured interview protocol to collect data on the central phenomena. I transcribed the data using NVivo software. Also, I manually created codes and used the NVivo software to generate codes. I also compared the manual and software created codes to create a code set with the accrued codes. Moreover, I analyzed the code set for patterns to communicate the study's findings.

Seeing that I was the sole researcher in this study, responsible for collecting and analyzing all data, I employed strategies to increase trustworthiness. Such strategies are credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and member checking. More importantly, to protect participants' rights and welfare, I sought Walden University IRB approval. I obtained informed consent from each participant and presented them with the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Additional measures included removing all participants' identifying information and securely storing all information related to this study on the encrypted password-protected USB memory stick. In sum, although the sample size for this study was small and its findings' transferability may be limited, this study adds insight to the existing knowledge on instructional content-specific feedback and the evaluation process. The next section describes the study results, including the setting, participants, and data collection and analysis processes.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate principals' and teachers' perceptions of content-specific instructional feedback provided by principals to support teachers' instructional practices to understand why content-specific instruction is not being consistently provided. Based on the purpose of this study, I selected my participants to be principals and teachers. The following research questions aligned with the study's purpose and were related to the conceptual framework:

- RQ1: How do principals perceive that they provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?
- RQ2: How do teachers perceive that principals provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?

In this chapter, I describe the research setting and the participants' demographics relative to this study. I also provide an overview of the data collection methods. I describe the data analysis procedures that led to the development of my study's findings and present a description of the evidence of trustworthiness. This chapter also includes the study's findings in relation to the research questions. I conclude by summarizing the results.

Setting

The setting for this study was a national sample of principals and teachers. In addition to gathering participants from a national selection, participants had to meet predetermined criteria because experience with the context was essential to sharing quality information. The principal participants needed to (a) have functioned in the

capacity of a principal for 3 or more consecutive school years, (b) have conducted direct observation and evaluation of teachers, (c) not be a principal in my local area, and (d) not be known to me. The teacher participants needed to (a) have taught 3 or more consecutive years, (b) have been evaluated by a principal for 3 or more consecutive years, (c) not be a teacher in my local area, and (d) not be known to me.

Participants' Demographics

Seven of the participants were teachers, and two were principals. There were variations in the content areas taught among my teacher participants. The content areas taught by teacher participants included mathematics, reading, special education, social studies, physical education, and the arts. Furthermore, only two principals volunteered to participate. Lastly, all participants indicated that they had served in their respective position (teacher or principal) for 3 or more consecutive school years and had been evaluated (teacher) or had evaluated teachers (the principal) for 3 or more consecutive school years.

Data Collection

I conducted participant interviews from July 2021 to August 2021. In total, I conducted nine interviews with seven teachers and two principals. All interviews were conducted and recorded using the Zoom platform. After completing each interview, I stored the file in a folder on my computer and a replica folder on my external hard drive. Furthermore, once the Zoom platform processed the web meeting into an audio transcription, I uploaded the audio file to the NVivo online transcription services. I used

NVivo to transcribe the audio into written text and then read through each transcription for accuracy.

I encountered two unusual circumstances during the data collection process. The first unusual circumstance related to the number of participants whom I intended to include in this study's findings. As initially outlined in Chapter 3, I planned to have eight to 12 participants, or to interview participants until I reached data saturation. I determined that data saturation was achieved after conducting my ninth interview; therefore, I did not collect more participants. Additionally, although I conducted interviews during the summer months, I found it challenging to gather an equal quantity of teacher and principal participants. This unavailability of teachers and principals appeared unusual to me because I perceived that teachers and principals were usually not working during the summer, making them readily available. Nevertheless, data saturation was reached, so I concluded the study's findings using the data of nine participants, seven teachers and two principals. I know that data saturation was met because no new information was revealed as I continued the interviews (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Saldana, 2015).

The second unusual circumstance only occurred one time, and this was during the interview with Participant 6. As I conducted the sixth interview, my electricity went off at about 11 minutes and 7 seconds into the discussion. With the electricity abruptly shutting off, the internet connection turned off and ended the Zoom meeting. To promptly address this mishap, I instantly changed internet connections to my mobile internet device. Additionally, because I left the meeting, the recording stopped, but Zoom automatically

processed the audio. I rejoined the Zoom meeting, where Participant 6 patiently waited; I apologized and continued the interview. For every interview that followed, Interviews 7 through 9, I used my mobile internet device as my network connection to avoid repeating the earlier circumstance.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process began once I completed the interview. Firstly, the data analysis began by journaling as a means of an audit trail. I documented what steps I took in analyzing the data. The data analysis process started with the coding of each interview individually. Using the transcripts, I read each interview several times to familiarize myself with the text. Guided by the suggestions of Saldana (2015), for my first coding cycle, I conducted a line-by-line coding to reduce the likelihood of inputting personal attributes into respondents' responses. With each read, I applied in vivo coding, which involves codes that arise in the data. In vivo coding can be further understood as using codes grounded in the participant's language (Burkholder et al., 2016; Saldana, 2015). As I completed an interview, I either added to the codes that I already had or created a new code describing the context. After nine interviews, I ended with about 102 codes for my first cycle of coding.

In my second cycle of coding, the primary focus was to make sense of the data. Therefore, reflecting on Saldana's (2015) guidance in this coding cycle, I condensed, collapsed, reorganized, and reevaluated the first cycle of codes. I also reflected upon the journals that I made throughout this process. In reducing this information, I grouped codes that were duplicates or shared similar meanings. I did several coding trials and

concluded with 35 codes. My next step in analyzing the data was to make meaning by interpreting and drawing conclusions about my participants' perceptions. Therefore, I categorized my codes before creating themes.

I created categories based on the similarities and relatedness of my codes. With the completion of my categories, I conducted several trials to formulate themes about the data. With each trial, I reflected on my codes and the original data and excerpts from the interviews to ensure that I conveyed the most accurate interpretation of my data. After further analysis, I found that I could further divide my themes into subthemes. To conclude my organization analysis, I ended up with 35 codes organized into nine categories, two themes, and seven subthemes. I illustrated my study's final codes, categories, themes, and subthemes reflective of my participants' perceptions in six tables.

I designed each table to reflect the data related to the research questions. Table 1 illustrates the data that support Research Question 1. Research Question 1 was as follows: How do principals perceive that they provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices? The source of the data was the interviews conducted with principal participants. Table 1 depicts 16 codes, five categories, one theme, and four subthemes. Firstly, I grouped Codes 1 through 5 to form the first category: useful and direct feedback. Secondly, I grouped Codes 6 and 7 to form Category 2: principals' additional assistance; I grouped Codes 8 to 11 as Category 3: nonadministrative assistance; I combined Codes 12 and 13 to form Category 4: experience and content knowledge. Lastly, I grouped Codes 14 to 16 to form Category 5: inadequacies of observation and evaluation. I grouped codes into categories based on their similarities

and relatedness. The 16 codes and five categories mentioned earlier were combined to form Theme 1: Although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices. Lastly, I divided Theme 1 further into four subthemes. These subthemes were as follows: (1a) principals' content knowledge enhances content evaluation, (1c) supplementals for the evaluator's skill set, and (1d) principals gave continuous feedback.

Table 1

Codes, Categories, Themes, and Subthemes for Research Question 1

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Subthemes
Code 1: Clear feedback Code 2: Examples of clear feedback Code 3: Examples of feedback after observations Code 4: Timely feedback Code 5: Stance on content-specific feedback	Category 1: Useful and direct feedback	Theme 1: Although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices.	(1a) Principals' content knowledge enhances content evaluation (1b) Rubrics not aligned to content (1c) Supplementals for the evaluator's skill set (1d) Principals gave continuous feedback
Code 6: Teacher support Code 7: Support teachers through observations	Category 2: Principal's additional assistance		
Code 8: District-level support Code 9: Appreciation for district support Code 10: Human resources support Code 11: Additional nonadministrative support	Category 3: Nonadministrative assistance		
Code 12: Professional experiences Code 13: Principals versatile in content	Category 4: Experience and content knowledge		
Code 14: Observations quantity Code 15: Observation an act by teachers Code 16: Evaluation rubric and feedback	Category 5: Inadequacies of observation and evaluation		

In like manner, Table 2 illustrates the data that support Research Question 2. Research Question 2 was as follows: How do teachers perceive that principals provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices? Table 2 includes 19 codes (17 to 36), four categories, one theme, and four subthemes. I grouped Codes 17 through 24 to form the sixth category: teachers' received instructional feedback from principals. Codes 25 to 29 were grouped to form Category 7: teachers' perception of principals' content knowledge and evaluation skill set. Codes 30 to 31 were grouped to form Category 8: Teachers receive support for improving instructional practices. Lastly, I grouped Codes 32-35 to form Category 9: teacher's perceptions of observations. Table 2 shows how I grouped codes into categories. I grouped codes into categories based on their similarities and relatedness. The 19 codes, four categories, as mentioned earlier, were combined to form Theme 2: Teachers received feedback and instructional support from principals but believed principals' professional experiences, expertise, and the evaluation also influenced the specificness of the feedback. Lastly, I divided Theme 2 further into three subthemes. These subthemes were (2a) helpful and specific instructional feedback, (2b) supplementals to improve instructional practices, and (2c) teachers believed inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback.

Table 2

Codes, Categories, Theme, and Subthemes for Research Question 2

Codes	Categories	Theme	Subthemes
Code 17: Example of feedback received Code 18: Helpful feedback Code 19: Helpful for improving instruction Code 20: Helpful for other reasons Code 21: Support for feedback being specific Code 22: Support feedback from principals Code 23: Never Received content-specific feedback Code 24: Opinion on content-specific feedback	Category 6: Teachers receive instructional feedback from principals	Theme 2: Teachers received feedback and instructional support from principals but believed principals' professional experiences, expertise, and the evaluation also influenced the specificness of the feedback.	(2a) Helpful and specific instructional feedback (2b) Supplementals to improve instructional practices (2c) Teachers believed inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback
Code 25: Content area knowledge Code 26: Teacher's opinion on principal's ability to effectively evaluate Code 27: Principal experience and expertise Code 28: Factor Code 29: Not a factor	Category 7: Teachers' perception of principal's content knowledge and evaluation skill set		
Code 30: Additional administrative support Code 31: Additional support nonadministrative	Category 8: Teachers receive support for improving instructional practices		
Code 32: Observations Code 33: Fewer observations Code 34: More observations Code 35: neutral position on observations	Category 9: Teachers' perceptions of observations		

Results

I created interview questions to elicit conversation around the central phenomena, principals and content-specific feedback, to gain insights and understand this study's research questions. The research questions which guided this study were the following:

- RQ1: How do principals perceive that they provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?
- RQ2: How do teachers perceive that principals provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?

I conducted several coding trials and concluded with 35 codes. I then organized my codes into nine categories. A category is a cluster of coded data that is organized by a particular feature (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Therefore, I grouped codes into categories based on codes similarities in context and relatedness. From the categories, I combined and used interpretation to illustrate the big idea of the data, thus developing two themes. The two themes were as follows: (a) although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices, and (b) teachers received feedback and instructional support from principals but believed that principals' professional experiences, expertise, and the observation also influenced the specificness of the feedback. In the upcoming section, I present the data organized around the two research questions. I narrate the data and use quotes as evidence to document how the themes and subthemes emerged.

Research Question 1

The first research question that guided this study was the following: How do principals perceive that they provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices? Using a semistructured interview design, I created 13 questions to ask principal participants about their perception of content-specific feedback provided to

teachers to support teachers' instructional practices to understand why content-specific feedback is not being consistently provided. Thus, through the conversation, I collected information from the principals to understand, interpret, and conclude my findings for Research Question 1. Table 3 illustrates the codes and categories, which merged into the broader theme that emerged. Additionally, in Table 3 I include excerpts from the participants' interviews to support the codes, category, and theme.

Table 3

Summary of Codes, Categories, and Theme for Research Question 1

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participants	Excerpts
Code 1: Clear feedback	Category 1: Useful and direct feedback	Theme 1. Although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices.	AP.4	"I don't give vague feedback."
			AP.9	''I give even clear examples for those teachers and how each indicator could potentially look in their class."
Code 2: Examples of clear feedback			AP.4	''If I just say, oh, nice job. Nice job on what ?"
Code 3: Examples of feedback after observations			AP.4	''How do you think the lesson went, what was effective, and what would you do differently?"
			AP.9	''If we saw a teacher was off there pacing, we might say we noticed that you were on lesson five, Unit three."
Code 4: Timely feedback			AP.4	''I'm pretty big on immediate feedback."
			AP.9	''The feedback should be immediate and tangible."
Code 5: Stance on content-specific feedback			AP.4	'If you're asking for replication of effective strategies, feedback should always be content-specific."
			AP. 9	''Specific feedback has to happen throughout the instructional year."
Code 6: Teacher support	Category 2: Principal's additional assistance		AP.4	''We have like an instructional coach on site. We have peer assistance."
			AP.9	''We may identify a specific teacher that is strong in one area than another teacher who has a weakness and needs support."
Code 7: Support teachers through observations			AP.4	''There are opportunities for growth in the informal observations."
			AP.9	''Open and honest, transparent feedback."
Code 8: District-level support			AP.4	''Monthly leadership meetings where we have the leadership teams"
			AP.9	''We use the instructional framework rubric, and the curriculum companioned and the Common Core standards."

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participants	Excerpts
Code 9: Appreciation for district support	Category 3: Nonadministrative additional assistance		AP.4	‘‘I really appreciate about my district is that they really try to build up the leaders.”
Code 10: Human resources support			AP.4	‘‘Human resources will come in and talk about general human resources strategies and things like that”
Code 11: Additional nonadministrative support			AP.4	‘‘Opportunity for principals to get support from other principals in our district.”
Code 12: Professional experiences	Category 4: Experience and content knowledge		AP.4	‘‘A principal really needs to be versed in certain content areas.”
			AP.9	‘‘I do feel that the experiences that I’ve had as a teacher and then transitioning into administration has provided me the experience, the knowledge, and the skill set to be able to effectively adequately provide evaluation with relevant feedback for my staff.”
Code 13: Principal versatile in content			AP.4	‘‘I think it would be difficult for a principal to be able to give feedback in a content area if they’re not truly comfortable with that content area.”
			AP.9	‘‘We should have a knowledge of what we are going in to observe and regardless of the grade level and regardless of the content.”
Code 14: Observations quantity	Category 4: Inadequacies of evaluation and observation		AP.4	‘Yes, the quantity of the observation matters to the quality of the feedback.”
			AP.9	‘‘I do feel that the quantity can have an impact.”
Code 15: Observation an act by teachers			AP.4	‘‘Formal evaluation process sometimes turns into a dog and pony show.”
			AP.9	‘‘There’s a reality that our formal observations, you’re going to see some teachers do their absolute very best.”
Code 16: Evaluation rubric and feedback			AP.4	‘‘The evaluation rubric is efficient in general areas, but when you talk about outside the content areas, I don’t feel like the evaluation in itself does that.”
			AP.9	‘‘The evaluation rubric is efficient with my content teachers.”

Theme 1: Although Principals' Content Knowledge Does Not Align with All Content Areas and Evaluation Rubrics Are Inadequate, Principals Still Give Teachers Content-Specific Instructional Feedback and Additional Supplements to Improve Teachers' Instructional Practices

Theme 1 reflects the perceptions of principals on how they provided content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices in an effort to understand why content-specific feedback is not consistently provided. I also subdivide Theme 1 into four subthemes and these subthemes will be used to interpret the study's findings. These subthemes are: (1a) principals' content knowledge enhances content evaluation, (1b) rubrics not aligned to content, (1c) Supplementals for the evaluator's skill set, and (1d) principals gave continuous feedback. In the upcoming narrative, I illustrate about the codes, categories, theme, and excerpts shown in Table 3. With this narration, I depict how they are related to Research Question 1, Theme 1, and Subthemes 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d in Table 3.

Firstly, the participating principal believed that professional experience, expertise, and the evaluation process and rubric influenced the quality of the feedback provided to teachers. Principal Participant 4 added to this data by stating the following: ''A principal really needs to be versed in certain content areas." Principal Participant 9 shared a similar belief and added to this notion from a different viewpoint. Principal Participant 9 shared that their teaching experiences prepared them to evaluate and give teachers feedback to support instructional improvement. Furthermore, their experiences as teachers prepared

them for the role of instructional leader, and this finding was similar in notion as the data collected from Principal Participant 4. An excerpt of this concurrence from Principal Participant 9's interview is as follows: ‘‘We should have knowledge of what we are going in to observe and regardless of the grade level and regardless of the content." The participating principal's experiences were similar and, therefore, aligned with the notion in Subtheme (1a) principals' content knowledge enhances content evaluation and with portions of Theme.

The rubrics used for observations and evaluations were another influential factor noted by participating principals. Firstly, principals believed the number of teacher observations they must complete influenced the feedback they give to teachers. An excerpt from Principal Participant 9's interview was: ‘‘I do feel that the quantity can have an impact if the evaluator did not plan accordingly and space or pace their evaluations." Both principals described observations as a performance by teachers. They believed that teachers chose ideal lessons and rehearsed them to offer stagged and canned performances at the time of review. Principal Participant 4 illustrated these actions in the following way: ‘‘Formal evaluation process, sometimes it turns into a dog and pony show, quote unquote, you know, where the teachers know that the principal is coming in. They got all the kids all cued up." Thirdly, the participating principals believed the evaluation rubric was not fully adequate to evaluating and providing feedback. Principal Participant 4 stated: ‘‘The evaluation rubric is efficient in general areas, but when you talk about outside the content areas, I don't feel like the evaluation in itself does that." Likewise, Principal Participant 9 expressed: ‘‘The evaluation rubric is efficient with my

content teachers." In sum, this data collected from the participating principal aligned with portions of Theme 1 and Subtheme (1b) Rubrics Not Aligned to Content.

The notion emerged from the data that participating principal provided resources to improve teacher's and instructional leadership practices. Participating principals asserted that they helped teachers by using the personnel the principals have on staff. For example, one principal participant stated they assisted teachers by using instructional coaches and content area specialists. These individuals were on campus and accessible for teachers to use their expertise as needed. Additionally, one participating principal believed the principal assisted with the improvement of teacher's instructional practices by relying on other excellent teachers to support colleagues who may be weak in another area for which one is stronger. Furthermore, participating principals believed they played their part in improving teachers' instructional practice throughout the observation process. During observations, principals gave teachers feedback to support improvement in teachers' instructional practices.

On the other hand, principals received some form of assistance to guide and improve their instructional leadership practices. Such aid came from the district, collegial and non-administrative support. Participating principals recalled receiving instructional leadership assistance from within their school district in the form of monthly leadership meetings, access to content-specific instructional support, instructional framework, and content standards guidance. Principal Participant 4 elaborated with an appreciation for the support received from the school district, saying: ''I really appreciate about my district is that they really try to build up the leaders." These data agree with portions of the

interpretations reflected in Theme 1 and Subtheme 1c; Supplementals for the evaluator's skill set.

Principals asserted that they provided teachers with clear feedback to support instructional practices. Principal Participants 4 and 9, both participating principals, similarly expressed that the feedback they give to teachers was the feedback they can replicate in their classrooms. Principal Participant 4 said: ''I don't give vague feedback like that. I would always give feedback on something specific because they are not able to replicate something if they don't know that what is good." Whereas Principal Participant 9 stated: ''I give even clear examples for those teachers and how each indicator could potentially look in their class." These data collected from participating principals agrees with the codes within the category, useful and direct feedback. Principal Participant 4 shared an example to illustrate clear feedback: ''If I just say, oh nice job. Nice job on what? What does that mean? Oh, nice job on having your standards and objectives posted and having it in kid language."

As the discussion developed around feedback, both participating principals stated that instructional feedback is crucial throughout the year. The principals shared examples of feedback they would provide to a teacher after an observation. Additionally, both principals asserted that timely feedback was valuable to change practices. Both participating principals believed that when teachers are given timely feedback, the teacher can reflect on said feedback and know their areas of strengths and weaknesses. An example of this code is reflected in the following excerpt from Principal Participant

9's interview: ''The feedback should be immediate and tangible. This way, the teacher has an opportunity to reflect."

Lastly, both participating principals expressed that they used content-specific feedback to assist teachers with improving teachers' instructional practices. Excerpts that supported such are as follows. Principal Participant 4 stated: ''If you're asking for replication of effective strategies, feedback should always be content-specific." Similarly, Principal Participant 9 informed: ''Specific feedback has to happen throughout the instructional year, not just during formal observations." I grouped these five codes to form the first category: useful and direct feedback. Thus, aligning portions of the interpretations reflected in Theme 1 and Subtheme 1d, principals gave continuous feedback.

Theme 1 to Subthemes. As illustrated in Table 4, I analyzed the data to provide insight and understanding for Research Question 1. Theme 1 states: Although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices. Although Theme 1 captures the big picture of the perceptions of the participating principals, it was important to divide the data into the main ideas for better interpretations of the study's findings in Chapter 5. Therefore, I broke Theme 1 into four subthemes. These subthemes are: (1a) principals' content knowledge enhances content evaluation, (1b) rubrics not aligned to content, (1c) Supplementals for the evaluator's skill set, and (1d) principals gave

continuous feedback. To maintain data alignment, I narrate the three subthemes in the order in which they are reflected in Theme 1.

Table 4

Research Question 1, Theme 1, and Subthemes

Research Question 1	Theme 1	Subthemes
RQ1: How do principals perceive that they provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?	Theme 1: Although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices.	1a.Principals'content knowledge enhances content evaluation. 1b. Rubrics not aligned to content 1c. Supplementals for the evaluator's skill set 1d. Principals gave continuous feedback

Subtheme 1a: Principals' Content Knowledge Enhances Content Evaluation.

The participating principals believed that their professional experiences and expertise influenced the feedback given to principals. As previously mentioned, Principal Participant 4 asserted that: ''A principal really needs to be versed in certain content area or do they just need to know what good teaching looks like." Likewise, Principal Participant 9 also expressed that content knowledge was essential to instructional leadership practices.

> We should have a knowledge of what we are going in to observe and regardless of the grade level and regardless of the content. So, our knowledge base, our expertise should be there so that we are able to provide adequate feedback and next steps and support, if necessary.

Furthermore, Principal Participant 9 believed that their teaching experiences sufficiently afforded them the knowledge necessary to evaluate and provided feedback to teachers.

> I feel that the experiences that I have had as a teacher and then transitioning into administration has provided me the experience, the knowledge and the skill set to be able to effectively, adequately provide evaluation with relevant feedback for my staff.

Therefore, this similarity in the participant's responses agrees with the finding that principal's professional experiences and expertise influence instructional leadership practices.

Subtheme 1b: Rubrics Not Aligned to Content. The second subtheme for Theme 1 was on how principals perceived the observation rubric's influenced practice. Illustrated in the earlier codes, principals believed the observation rubric influenced their instructional practices. Firstly, according to the participants, the evaluation rubric was inadequate for evaluating and providing feedback across all content areas. Principal Participant 4 expressed:

> The evaluation rubric is efficient in general areas, but when you talk about the content areas, I do not feel like the evaluation in itself does that. I would say it is mediocre and I would say, and the focus of the form is more on teaching strategies and not necessarily the content area.

Similarly, Principal Participant 9 stated:

> The evaluation rubric is efficient with my content teachers, I have noted, like when I look at my resource classes, my specials such as gym, art, music, those courses may become a little bit more challenging.

The inferences here is that evaluation rubric used by the participating principals were ideal for evaluating the mathematics, reading, social studies, and science teachers (referred to as the content-area teachers) but not adequate for evaluating other content areas. Secondly, the participating principals highlighted that the process (evaluation) was influential to principals' practice. This is reflected in the responses from the participating principal. For example, Principal Participant 4 said: ''The quantity of the observation matters to the quality of the feedback." Another example is from Principal Participant 6 who said:

> I feel that the quantity can have an impact if the evaluator did not plan accordingly and space or pace their evaluations. I say that it can have an impact because there is what we consider educators fatigue. So, if you are performing a number of evaluations or observations and a short amount of time, then you can become tired, you can become overwhelmed, you can get distracted and the feedback may not be as meaningful and as effective as it could be, as if you spread out the number of evaluations and formal observations over the period of time.

Therefore, from this data, I inferred that the quantity of observations a principal must complete influences the feedback the principal gives to a teacher. Moreover, principals were charged with many other duties thus the observation process was another duty which required time to complete. Thus, the overarching message inferred was the observation rubric was inadequate to demonstrate instructional leadership practices effectively.

Subtheme 1c: Supplementals for the Evaluator's Skill Set. Participating principals expressed that they relied on support. The participating principals used to support for improvement on their leadership practices and to support teacher's instructional practices. These supports were in the form of resources. For example, to improve leadership practices, principals received support for their leadership practices through monthly leadership meetings and professional learning workshops. Excerpts to support this data are as follows. Principal Participant 4 stated: ''We have monthly leadership meetings where we have the leadership teams from elementary, middle and high school, they also host a essentials operation every month." From the point of view of a different education institution Principal Participant 9 stated:

> So first we use the instructional framework rubric which allows us to measure the teacher's performance and their evaluative nature and then we use our curriculum companioned and the Common Core standards to assess what level of instruction is taking place at the time.

In contrast, participating principals expressed that they provided teachers instructional support. These instructional supports are in the form of professional developments, instructional coaches, and teacher experts. This data is reflecting in the following excerpts. Firstly, Principal Participant 4 expressed: ''We have like an instructional coach on site. We have a peer assistance review process, and we have a literacy specialist." Likewise, Principal Participant 9 asserted: ''We may identify a specific teacher that is strong and one area that another teacher has a weakness in or need

to support and we can direct those teachers to communicate and collaborate with one another." These findings agree with the subtheme principals use support.

Subtheme 1d: Principals Give Continuous Feedback. The last idea captured from the participating principals was principals give teachers instructional feedback. Principals give teachers feedback throughout the year. Principal Participant 4 asserted:

> Specific feedback has to happen throughout the instructional year, not just during formal observations like for us, my district, we give two formal observations, so, if we were to limit content specific feedback to just those two formal observations are missing a full year of feedback to coach and guide the teachers.

Moreover, the participating principals believed that the feedback is more meaningful when they give feedback throughout the year. Furthermore, they believed that feedback given during the year was more beneficial because the teacher had more opportunities to change practices. The data collected around feedback also highlighted that participating principal believed it was necessary to give specific feedback. Excerpts from participating principals which is compatible with this subtheme are as follows. Principal Participant 4 asserted:

> If you are asking for replication of effective strategies, feedback should always be content-specific. Teachers need to know what is effective and how it is effective. I think it would be difficult for a principal to be able to give feedback in a content area if they are not truly comfortable with that content area.

With similar thoughts, Principal Participant 9 expressed:

> Specific feedback has to happen throughout the instructional year, not just during formal observations like for us, my district, we give two formal observations, so, if we were to limit content specific feedback to just those two formal observations are missing a full year of feedback to coach and guide the teachers.

It is evident from the responses of participating principals that they give their teachers feedback. Moreover, from the data collected participating principals believed that feedback was beneficial when it is content-specific and given throughout the year. In sum, the overall idea illustrated thorough the responses was principals give teachers feedback. These data agree with codes, categories, and a portion of Theme 1 and Subtheme 1d.

Research Question 2

The second research question which guided this study was: How do teachers perceive that principal provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices? Using a semistructured interview design, I created nine questions to ask teacher participants about their perception of feedback received from principals to improve instructional practices. Table 5 illustrates the codes I interpreted from the data and categories I created from grouping related codes. I also include the theme that developed after combining the codes into categories and excerpts from the participants.

Table 5

Summary of Codes, Categories, and Theme for Research Question 2

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participant	Excerpts
Code 17: Example feedback received	Category 6: Teachers' account of instructional feedback received from principals	Theme 2: Teachers received feedback and instructional support from principals but believed principals' professional experiences, expertise, and the evaluation also influenced the specificness of the feedback.	TP.1	''The principal came to evaluate I incorporated a lot of literacy and numeracy at that time, so they were able into work with that information."
			TP.2.	''At my post conference, the principals said that she really liked my lesson."
			TP.3	''The principal loved the lesson. So, the feedback from her let me know that I found a way to be creative during a pandemic."
			TP.5.	''One time, in teaching a mathematics lesson, the principal told me that I needed to improve the way I engage all students, not just the ones who are smart."
			TP.6	''The feedback that I got was about how well they collaborated and how effective the lesson was in terms of rigor."
			TP.7	''One feedback I got was instead of focusing on having these kids create, let's say, five or six different writing throughout the year. Just focus on one piece of writing and use that one piece of writing to teach different mini lessons throughout the whole year."
			TP.8	''They appreciated how I was helping a kid that was struggling, and I was very patient with them. They provided very detailed feedback."
Code 18: Helpful feedback			TP.3	''It's good to get feedback from somebody on the outside looking."
			TP.5	''I have always received helpful feedback."
			TP.6	''The more specific the feedback is, the easier it is to go back and reflect."
			TP.7	''So, for them to give me feedback, I would value that because I'm thinking they know their content.'

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participant	Excerpts
Code 19: Helpful for improving instruction			TP.5	‘‘I have always received helpful feedback.”
			TP.6	‘‘I’ve gotten feedback on using manipulative in the classroom and how I can improve that.”
Code 20: Helpful for other reasons			TP.2	‘‘I think that the feedback was more helpful in relationship building.”
Code 21: Support for feedback being specific			TP.1	‘‘I welcome it. I welcome. We can all use constructive feedback.”
			TP.2	‘‘Obviously, you’re going to give me feedback when you observe my lesson, right, and so, it needs to be specific.”
			TP.6	‘‘The more specific the feedback is, the easier it is to go back and reflect on how I can improve that in the future.”
			TP.7	‘‘The feedback needs to be very specific in order for me to better myself.”
			TP.8	‘‘I appreciated specific feedback because it was like, oh, now when I go teach, I am able to take that feedback back.”
Code 22: Support feedback from principals			TP.1	‘‘To some extent.”
			TP.6	‘‘I think too often principals get busy like they just get bogged down with the day-to-day operational hoopla.”
			TP.7	‘‘First of all, they’re the leaders. They should be highly qualified to give specific feedback.”
Code 23: Never received content-specific feedback			TP.2	‘‘Not from the principal, no,”
			TP.6	‘‘Not necessarily to the content, no.”
Code 24: Opinion on content-specific feedback			TP.1	‘‘I welcome it. I welcome. We can all use constructive feedback.”
			TP.3	‘‘I welcome it, and I know being a content-specific teacher.”
			TP.6	‘‘I’ve never gotten content-specific feedback from a principal.”
Code 25: Content area knowledge	Category 7: Teachers’ perception of		TP.1	‘‘Most of the principals don’t know what they’re doing.”

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participant	Excerpts
	principals content knowledge and evaluation skill set		TP.2	‘‘How can you observe what I’m doing in my classroom and saying that I’m effective or not? If you’ve only ever taught middle school, for example. You don’t know what’s going on here.”
			TP.7	‘‘I’ve been teaching for a while, so I’ve had at least a dozen principals, and I would say almost all of them, if not all of them, we’re pretty confident as far as knowing how to teach kids and knowing content and being good in their field.”
Code 26: Teacher’s opinion on principal’s ability to effectively evaluate			TP.1	‘‘Evaluation would take an inordinate amount of time, and you just never know what might pop up in your school.”
			TP.2	‘‘I think it’s hard to say that you can effectively evaluate me if you never taught my area.”
			TP.5	‘‘Every principal I’ve had evaluated well.”
			TP.7	‘‘I’ve been teaching for a while, so I’ve had at least a dozen principals and. I would say almost all of them, if not all of them, you know, we’re pretty confident as far as knowing, you know, knowing how to teach kids and knowing content and being good in their field.”
			TP.8	‘‘I appreciate how their ratings were”
Code 27: Principal experience and expertise			TP.2	‘‘I’ve had principals that have observed but they have only ever taught middle school, for example.”
			TP.5	‘‘They met the requirements to be hired, so I’m ok.”
			TP.6	‘‘Knowing different instructional strategies is fine, but when you can give specific instructional strategies, that helps you build.”
Code 28: Factor			TP.6	‘‘I think my biggest concern has always been, how do you know that what I’m teaching or how do you know that the way I’m teaching is beneficial for students?”
			TP.7	‘‘Yes, I do have a problem with it. There was only one time that this wasn’t a factor for me. One

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participant	Excerpts
				time my supervisors had never been a teacher but had gone to school, gotten their education degree."
			TP.8	Yes, I have a concern if a principal, let's say, don't have knowledge of special education laws or practices, but they're evaluating me."
Code 29: Not a factor			TP.1	''I mean. Yes, it is a factor, it does come into play, but I really don't have any problems."
			TP.2	''How does a principal that doesn't know what they're looking at give somebody a bad score? So, I've never gotten a bad score, so no problem for me."
			TP.3	''Oh, actually, it has never been a problem for the most part. So, if they're not content specific, I'm fine with it doesn't bother me."
			TP.5	''They were hired to do this job because they met the requirements, so I trust them."
Code 30: Additional administrative support	Category 8: Teachers received support to improving instructional practices		TP.1	''Professional development seminars. Sometimes they'll have external seminars."
			TP.3	''Suggest certain classes or instructor provide instructional support from the district."
			TP.7	''We have ongoing professional development all the time."
Code 31: Additional support nonadministrative			TP.2	''My teammates, of course."
			TP.6	''I've gotten content-specific feedback and support from like other math teachers."
			TP.8	''People who are experts in certain subject matters"
Code 32: Observations	Category 9: Teachers' perception of observations		TP.1	''Observations are like those cookie cutters, but all cookie cutters do not apply."
			TP.2	''It's very subjective, so, like, I don't feel that it helps or improves."
			TP.6	''I think sometimes the observation just becomes like I need to check this off."

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participant	Excerpts
			TP.7	‘‘And I remember that one year I got a two. Which mattered to me because it didn’t show proficiency for differentiation.”
			TP.8	‘‘Definitely appreciate the fact that it is here so they can help more the novice teachers.”
Code 33: Fewer observations			TP.1	‘‘Less observation. This is my twenty-fourth year, so”
			TP.2	‘‘It’s very subjective, so, like, I don’t feel that it helps or improves.”
Code 34: More observations			TP.6	‘‘I feel like the more observations you get, the better your instruction gets.”
			TP.7	‘‘They just wanted to see what was going on in the classrooms, and that helped by telling me what to improve on.”
			TP.8	‘‘I feel like there should be some more observation to receive help to improve your instructional practices.”
Code 35: Neutral position on observations			TP.3	‘‘It depends. one principal, particular principal, she was not making observations for instructional purposes.”

Theme 2: Teachers Receive Feedback and Instructional Support from Principals but Believe Principals’ Professional Experiences, Expertise, and Evaluation Also Influence the Feedback’s Specificness

Theme 2 reflects the perceptions of how teachers believed principals provided content-specific feedback to support instructional practices. I also subdivided Theme 2 into three subthemes and these subthemes will be used to interpret the study’s findings. These subthemes are: (2a) helpful and specific instructional feedback; (2b) supplementals to improve instructional practices, and (2c) teachers believed inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback. In the upcoming narrative, I illustrate on the codes, categories, theme, and excerpts shown in Table 5. With this narration, I depict

how they are in congruence with the Research Question 2, Theme 2, and Subthemes 2a, 2b, and 2c in Table 3.

The data collected from the participating teachers supplied evidence that teachers received feedback from principals. Moreover, some participating teachers expressed that the feedback received from principals was helpful for instructional purposes and relationship building. Participating teachers also received instructional feedback guidance from principals and agreed that the feedback from principals needed to be content-specific. The following excerpt from Teacher Participant 1 is an example of feedback the teacher received from the principal. ‘‘The principal came to evaluate, and I incorporated a lot of literacy and numeracy at that time, so they were able to work with that information.” Furthermore, other participants reported experiences that were like that of Teacher Participant 1. For example, Teacher Participant 2’s experience was: ‘‘At my post conference, the principals said that. She really liked my lesson." Another example reflected Teacher Participant 6’s experience: ‘‘The feedback that I got was about how well the students collaborated and how effective the lesson was in terms of rigor and having the students still engage even though it was virtual.”

Five of the seven participating teachers believed that they received helpful feedback from their principals, which improved their instructional practices. An example of helpful feedback came from Teacher Participant 6, ‘‘I’ve gotten feedback on using manipulative in the classroom to improve my instruction.” Contrarily one participating teacher said they received valuable feedback but thought the feedback was useful for other reasons. Teacher Participant 2 expressed: ‘‘I think that the feedback was more

helpful in relationship building than it was for improving instruction." The data presented here is compatible with Codes 17-24 and Category 6.

The data collected from participating teachers also illustrated their beliefs on the specificness of feedback from the principal. Teacher Participant 1 stated, ‘‘I welcome it. I welcome. We can all use constructive feedback that is relevant, and that is objective, and that is geared towards helping you grow and become a better educator." Similarly, Teacher Participant 6 asserted, ‘‘The more specific the feedback is, the easier it is to go back and reflect on how I can improve." Additionally, Teacher Participant 7 added: ‘‘The feedback needs to be very specific in order for me to better myself."

Teacher Participant 7 further elaborated that principal should be able to give teachers specific feedback. As educational institution leaders, the principal should know what quality teaching and learning looks like. Furthermore, the participant accentuated the following:

> They should be highly qualified to give specific feedback, especially having been in the classroom for many years before becoming principals, and I'm assuming they were chosen to be principals or hired to be principals because they were exemplary teachers when they were in the classroom.

The big picture reflected in the participating teachers responses is that teachers feedback received feedback from principals. Furthermore, participating teachers asserted that the specificness of the feedback was important to improve instructional practices, thus aligning portions of the interpretations reflected in Theme 2 and Subtheme (2a) helpful and specific instructional feedback.

Just as participating teachers expressed that they received instructional feedback from principals, they also said that they received resources and resources for assistance with instructional practice improvement. All, in all, the teacher participants expressed that they received some form of instructional support. Some participating teachers received assistance from principals, whereas others received instructional assistance from other resources. Participating teachers who stated that they received help from principals received these assistances in the form of professional development, webinars, seminars, and suggestions for additional advanced courses. In contrast, a minority of the participating teachers expressed that they never received instructional assistance from their principals. Those participating teachers explained that the assistance came from other colleagues and instructional experts within the building. Teachers receiving some form of instructional support aligning portions of the interpretations reflected in Theme 2 and Subtheme (2b) supplementals to improve instructional practices.

On the other hand, differences emerged about the feedback and instructional support participating teachers received. Further differences emerged on what participating teachers believed influenced the instructional leadership capacity of a principal. Participating teachers believed principal's professional expertise, experiences, and the observation rubric influenced the specificness of the feedback. Firstly, some participating teachers perceived that principal's professional experience influenced their ability to provide feedback and evaluate. Some participating teachers believed that most principals lacked content knowledge and this lack affected their ability to provide meaningful feedback and assess instructional practices effectively. Furthermore, some

participating teachers thought that the lack of content-area knowledge made principals inefficient in assisting with improvement in instructional practices. A statement Teacher Participant 1 made in congruence with this notion was: “Most of the principals do not know what they’re doing. More principals should learn the content areas, so that way they can effectively evaluate teachers on the content that they are teaching.” Teacher Participants 2 also questioned the lack of content knowledge of principals and their inexperience with the content and the ability to evaluate. ‘‘How can you observe what I’m doing in my classroom and saying that I’m effective or not if you’ve only ever taught middle school?”

But with opposing viewpoints, Teacher Participant 7 stated that within their tenure in the teaching career, the principals knew the content, evaluated, and provided feedback effectively. This participant stated:

> I have been teaching for a while, so I have had at least a dozen principals, and I would say almost all of them, if not all of them, were pretty confident as far as knowing how to teach kids and knowing content and being good in their field.

Another idea which emerged was how participating teachers believed principal’s professional experience and expertise influenced the principal’s instructional leadership practices. Three participating teachers believed that their principals’ professional experiences and expertise were not a factor or something the teacher worried about. For example, Teacher Participant 1 said: “Yes, it is a factor, it does come into play, but I really do not have any problems. There is a grievance procedure, if necessary, but I have never had that issue. I have always had favorable evaluations.” In contrast, Teacher

Participant 5 expressed that because the principal met the requirements for the job and was hired, this made the principal competent enough to perform the job. Contrarily, three participating teachers questioned the principals' ability to evaluate effectively. The participants' concern revolved around the principals' content knowledge. The participating teachers believed that principals without experiences and those without content knowledge with the teachers' subject area could not evaluate effectively.

Secondly, participating teachers believed the evaluation process influenced the specificness of the feedback. Teacher Participant 1 believed that the evaluation process was time-consuming. Moreover, observing and evaluating took too much time for principals to do it with validity. Of the seven participating teachers, two participants shared their appreciation for the observation process being in place. Teacher Participant 8 added a more defined reason why the participant was in agreeance with the use of evaluation: ''Definitely, I appreciate the fact that it is here so they can help the more novice teachers." As reflected in Table 5, four other participants described observations as a subjective practice that had to be completed. Moreover, they believed that the observation or evaluation process was just a standardized activity that the principal had to complete.

Additionally, participating teachers also shared their opinions on the quantity of observations. There were differences among the participating teachers' views here as well. Some participating teachers believed that they needed fewer observations, whereas some participating teachers concurred that they required more observations. Participating teachers who indicated that they would rather have fewer observations gave reasons such

as the number of years in services and the fact that the observation is subjective, so it was not entirely beneficial for their growth. Contrarily, participating teachers who indicated that they would rather have more observations believed the more observations received more teachers can identify instructional strengths and weaknesses and improve practices. Teacher Participant 8 explained: ‘‘I feel like there should be some more observation received to help improve your instructional practices. Additionally, it [the observation] helps the teacher and students familiarized themselves with the principals’ presence in the classroom.”

Theme 2 to Subthemes. As illustrated in Table 6, I analyzed the data to provide insight and understanding for Research Question 2. Theme 2 states: teachers receive feedback and instructional support from principals but believe principals’ professional experiences, expertise, and observation also influence the feedback’s specificness. Although Theme 2 captures the big picture of the perceptions of the nine participating teachers, it was important to divide the data into the main ideas for better interpretations of the study’s findings in Chapter 5. Therefore, I broke Theme 2 into three subthemes. These subthemes are: (2a) helpful and specific instructional feedback, (2b) supplementals to improve instructional practices, and (2c) teachers believed inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback. To maintain data alignment, I narrate the three subthemes in the order in which they are reflected in Theme 2.

Table 6

Research Question 2, Theme 2, and Subthemes

Research Question 2	Theme 2	Subthemes
RQ2: How do teachers perceive that principal provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?	Theme 2: Teachers receive feedback and instructional support from principals but believe principals' professional experiences, expertise, and observation also influence the feedback's specificness.	2a. Helpful and specific instructional feedback 2b. Supplementals to improve instructional practices 2c. Teachers believed inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback.

Subtheme 2a. Helpful and Specific Instructional Feedback. Firstly, the data collected from the participating teachers expressed that they received instructional feedback from their respective principals. Evidence that participating teachers received instructional feedback are as follows: Teacher Participant 1 asserted: ‘‘I incorporated a lot of literacy and numeracy at that time, so they were able into work with that information.” A second example is reflected in Teacher Participant 6’s response: The feedback that I got was about how well I had them collaborate and how effective the lesson was in terms of rigor and having the students still do, even though it was virtual.

In some instances, the participating teachers expressed that the feedback they received was also helpful to improving the teacher’s instructional practice. Teacher Participant 6 asserted: ‘‘I have gotten feedback on using manipulators in the classroom, how I can improve that.” Similarly, Teacher Participant 3 said:

> It is good to get feedback from somebody on the outside looking in and using that information, whether it be constructive criticism or accolades to help you improve on your instruction. Sometimes a teacher gets caught up in doing their lesson. They may overlook or have oversight where a child does not understand.

Additionally, the participants supplied examples of feedback they received from their principal. Participating teachers also expressed opinions on content-specific feedback. Teacher Participant 6 said: ‘‘The more specific the feedback is, the easier it is to go back and reflect on how I can improve that in the future.” On the other hand, Teacher Participant 7 expressed: ‘‘The feedback needs to be very specific in order for me to better myself. To give my students what they need, so if it is just an umbrella statement, it would not help.” Another example is reflected in Teacher Participant 8’s response: ‘‘I appreciated that feedback because it was like, oh, now when I teach, I was able to take that feedback and say, you know what? Let me help differentiate for the students when I am teaching the second day.” Not all participating teachers said they received content-specific feedback. This inconsistency, not all participating teachers received content-specific feedback, also relates to the problem investigated in this study. In sum, the notion also fits into portions of the idea captured in Theme 2, thus creating Subtheme 2a.

Subtheme 2b. Supplementals to Improving Instructional Practices. In addition to instructional feedback, teachers also received instructional support. Teachers who participated in this study expressed that they received instructional support in resources and resources. Data which support this notion are as follows. Firstly, Teacher Participant 1 asserted: ‘‘Professional development seminars. Sometimes they will have external seminars that they will recommend or even pay for you to go to.” Moreover, Teacher Participant 2 stated that their principal would ‘‘Suggest certain classes or instructor

provide instructional support from the district." Lastly, Teacher Participant 7 expressed: ''We have ongoing professional development all the time."

In some instances, these resources and resources did not come from the principal. Some resources received to support teacher's instructional practices were the assistance of instructional coaches and other colleagues. For example, Teacher Participant 2 expressed: ''My teammates, of course, some other teachers in school that I have been there longer, you know, just using the resources, the people around me, not so much the principals." Another example of this notion was illustrated in Participant 6's response.

> I have gotten content specific feedback and support from like other math teachers who have come to observe me or who have asked to come observe. Also, the instructional coach has a great repertoire of like activities and strategies you can use, content, not so much. There are teachers in my building that knew more about how to teach content than he did.

In sum, some of the resources that the participants expressed they received as a means for instructional support are workshops, professional development, and advanced courses suggestions. All in all, the overall picture inferred here, which led to the creation of Subtheme 2b, was participating teachers received supplemental's to improve instructional practices.

2c. Teachers Believed Inexperienced Evaluators and Rubrics Influenced Instructional Feedback. The final subtheme I created describes the teacher's beliefs on what influenced principal's instructional leadership practices. The participating teachers believed that the principal's professional experience and expertise and the observation

rubric were influential to their principal's instructional leadership practices. Firstly, there was a difference in opinion from the participants regarding principal's professional experience and expertise being influential. Some participating teachers believed that their principals were ineffective evaluators. This notion is reflected in the excerpts of the following participating teachers. Teacher Participant 1 stated: ''Most of the principals do not know what they are doing. More principals should learn the content areas, so that way they can effectively evaluate teachers on their content that they are teaching." Teacher Participant 2 expressed: ''How can you observe what I am doing in my classroom and saying that I am effective or not? If you have only ever taught middle school for example. You do not know what is going on here?" These participants believed that the principal's professional experiences and expertise were not sufficient because they (the principal) lacked content knowledge.

Contrarily, some other participating teachers believed that their principals were versed enough to evaluate effectively and provided feedback needed to improve instructional practices. For example, Teacher Participant 7 indicated:

> I have been teaching for a while, so I have had at least a dozen principals and I would say almost all of them, if not all of them, were pretty confident as far as knowing, how to teach kids and knowing content and being good in their field.

Additionally, the data collected asserted that some participants did not care whether the principal's professional experiences and expertise agrees with their content areas. Teacher Participant 2 who is not concern with the principal's professional experiences and expertise stated:

> How does a principal that does not know what they are looking at give somebody a bad score? Right. Because then if they are questioned. How do they explain that they do not know what they are looking at? And I think that is kind of what happens. And so, because of that, like, it has never really been a concern.

From a different education institution, Teacher Participant 3 expressed: ‘‘Oh, actually, it has never been a problem for the most part. So, if they are not context specific, I am fine with it does not bother me.” In contrast, some participating teachers were concerned if the principal did not have experience or knowledge within the content area they are observing. Teacher Participant 6 said:

> I think my biggest concern has always been, how do you know that what I am teaching or how do you know that the way I am teaching is beneficial for students if you do not understand the content yourself, like, how do you know I am not teaching this wrong or how do you know I am not teaching this in a way that is over the student’s head.

Teacher Participant 7 also shared concerns on principals not having professional experience or expertise but evaluating them.

> Yes, I do have a problem with it. One time my supervisors had never been a teacher, but had gone to school, gotten their education degree and became a principal but had never actually spent time in the classroom teaching, and that did bother me. When I found out they had never been in the classroom, I was a bit confused as to how could you evaluate a teacher if you have never been a teacher.

Another influential aspect that participating teachers believed influenced principal's instructional leaders was the evaluation rubric. The participants believed that the evaluation rubric was time-consuming, and thus principals completed it just to have it done. Data which supply evidence of this notion are as follows. Teacher Participant 1 said: ''Observations are like to use those cookie cutters but all in a cookie cutter do not apply." Similarly, Teacher Participant 2 expressed: ''It is very subjective, so, like, I do not feel that it helps or improves." Likewise, Teacher Participant 6 indicated: ''I think sometimes the observation just becomes like I need to check this off so I can say I did it and they forget to give that meaningful feedback."

On the topic of observations, there were differing opinions on the number of observations. Some participating teachers believed more observations were needed, whereas some believed they should get fewer observations. Teacher Participant 8 believed more observations was needed. ''I feel like there should be some more on this observation to help improve your instructional practices." In contrast, Teacher Participant 2 believed teachers needed fewer observations.

> Less observations. It is very subjective, so, like, I do not feel that it helps or improves. I think it also can set a precedent of making teachers feel a certain way about their instructional practices rather than help promoting better instructional practices.

Likewise, Teacher Participant 1 also believed that there needed to be fewer observations. Teacher Participant 1 believed that there needed to be fewer observations because of the number of years the participants had already a been teaching (24 years). In

sum, the data described here is compatible with Subtheme 2c and portions of Theme 2 and will be used to interpret the study's findings further and see how it goes with or against the literature in Chapter 2.

The cumulative data reflected in Codes 17 through 36 and Categories 6 through 9 were merged to formulate the big idea illustrated in Theme 2. As previously stated, Theme 2 is as follows: Teachers accounted for receiving feedback and instructional support from principals, but perceived principals' professional experiences, expertise, and evaluation also influenced the specificness of the feedback. The data in this section reflected the perceptions of participating teachers on the central phenomena, principals, and content-specific feedback. Evidence from the data agree with the theme which emerged and for better interpretation was subdivided into three subthemes. These subthemes are: (2a) helpful and specific instructional feedback, (2b) supplementals to improve instructional practices, and (2c) teachers believed inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback. Lastly, participating teachers believed the principal's ability experiences and expertise effectively and the evaluation rubric influenced the specificness of the feedback principals gave. In sum, some of the emerging ideas from the participating teachers' data share some comparison with the data from participating principals. In the next section, I narrate the comparisons which emerged.

Similarities and Differences Among the Interviews

The results examined in the previous sections reflect the data collected from interviews with principals and teachers. I divide the previous sections, ‘‘Results,” into two parts: Research Question 1 and Research Question 2. Additionally, within each

section, I narrate on the themes that emerged from grouping codes into categories. In this section, I draw a comparison on some of the similarities and differences between the data collected from principals and teachers.

Firstly, the data reflected more similarities than differences from the participants' perceptions on the central phenomena: principals and content-specific feedback. I identified five comparisons among the data collected from principals and teachers. Firstly, both the participating principals and the teachers stated that principals gave continuous feedback. Additionally, participating principals expressed that they provided clear and timely feedback. For example, Participant 1 said: ''I do not give vague feedback like that. I would always give feedback on something specific because they are not able to replicate something if they don't know that what is good." Data from participating teachers also affirmed that teachers received some forms of feedback from the principal. An example of feedback received was described by Participant 7 is as follows: ''One feedback I got was instead of focusing on having these kids create, let us say, five or six different writing throughout the year, that is good. Just focus on one piece of writing and using that one piece of writing to teach different mini lessons throughout the whole year."

The second similarity from the data was that principals gave teachers assistance and resources, and teachers accounted for receiving some form of aid or resources from principals. Some of the assistance mentioned were similar, i.e., professional developments, workshops, and the paring of colleagues. The third similarity from the data was the participants' perceptions of the principals' content knowledge and feedback.

Principal Participant 4, a principal participant, stated: ‘‘I think it would be difficult for a principal to be able to give feedback in a content area if they are not truly comfortable with that content area.” On the other hand, Participant 1, a teacher participant, stated: ‘‘Most of the principals don’t know what they are doing. More principals should learn the content areas of areas, so that way they can effectively evaluate teachers on the content that they are teaching.” The fourth similarity within the data is that participants agreed that content-specific feedback is important to be able to replicate quality instructional practices.

The final similarity I found in the data was participants believed the observations as an influential factor in the principal’s feedback. The classroom observation conducted by the principals was also a topic that differed that. Participating principals’ perceptions differed also on this topic. This difference was recognized in the principals’ perceptions of observations. The participating principal believed formal and informal observations were an opportunity to help teachers improve instructional practices. Furthermore, the principals believed that formal observations were the least beneficial as they were not an authentic reflection of classroom practices.

On the other hand, some participating teachers believed that observations were subjective and just something principals needed to check off as completed. For example, Participant 2 expressed, ‘‘It is very subjective, so, like, I don’t feel that it helps or improves.” Likewise, Participant 6 explained, ‘‘I think sometimes the observation just becomes like I need to check this off so I can say I did it, and they forget to give that

meaningful feedback." Participants 1's experiences also agree with the notion that observations are subjective and something needing to be completed.

In sum, the results illustrated in this section are from the nine interviews I conducted from July 2021 to August 2021. The participants were seven teachers and two principals. From the data analysis process, I narrate the study's findings based reflective of 36 codes, nine categories, and two themes. The two themes were: (a) Although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices; (b) teachers received feedback and instructional support from principals but believed principals' professional experiences, expertise, and the observation also influenced the specificness of the feedback. I used the similarities in the data will be used to establish data triangulation. I also use the results from the data to interpret the findings of this study in Chapter 5. In the upcoming sections, I explain what steps I took to maintain my study's trustworthiness.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is important, especially in applied education fields, because teachers "intervene in people's lives" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 261). The researcher must establish trustworthiness by producing valid and reliable content (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Saldana & Omasta, 2017). In this basic qualitative study, I applied strategies to improve the trustworthiness of my study's findings. Such strategies were credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability of

the data, and member checking. In the following sections, I describe how I use these strategies to establish the trustworthiness of this study's findings.

Credibility

The first strategy used to establish the trustworthiness of the study's findings is credibility. The credibility of the research findings refers to the extent to which the researcher convinces readers of the study that the study was well prepared and captured an apparent reality of the participants' perceptions (Saldana & Omasta, 2017). In this study, I used the strategy of triangulation through multiple resources, interviews with principals and teachers. The use of more than one data source established triangulations because, with multiple data resources, I was able to identify similar perspectives amongst the participating principal and teachers' perceptions (see Saldana & Omasta, 2017). In the next section, I describe the similarities amongst the participants' perceptions.

There were five similarities reflected in the data. The first similarity that manifested in the data was that principals gave feedback, and teachers accounted that they received feedback from principals. The second similarity was both participants provided data that agreed with the notion that principals gave teachers instructional assistance, and likewise, teachers attested to receiving instructional aid. The third similarity reflected in the data was on the participants' perceptions of principals' content knowledge. The principals believed that it was important to know the content area when evaluating. Likewise, participating teachers believed that most principals lacked such content knowledge. The fourth similarity which emerged from the data was on the participants' perception of content-specific feedback. The concept of content-specific

feedback was agreeably similar among the participants' data. The participating principals and teachers expressed the importance of content-specific feedback to improve instructional practices. The fifth and similarity which emerged from the data were the observation/evaluation was influential to the feedback principals gave to teachers. In sum, I established triangulations through the data mentioned earlier as I presented data with similar perspectives from different vantage points.

Transferability

The second strategy used to establish the trustworthiness of the study's findings is transferability. Transferability of findings is established when the findings can be applied to other contexts (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015; Saldana, 2015). Establishing transferability of research findings can be achieved by including clear and rich details about data (Saldana & Omasta, 2017). With these details, the reader can apply or compare the results to similar relatable contexts. In this case, transferability was established when the purposive sampling technique was used to conduct interviews with a national sample of principals and teachers. I provided a narrative about my study's settings, participant demographics, data analysis procedures, and the results in previously mentioned sections. This narration allows readers of this study to determine which areas resonate with them or are transferable to similar contexts.

Dependability

The third strategy used to establish the trustworthiness of the study's findings is dependability. Firstly, dependable results are consistent and replicable **(**Saldana & Omasta, 2017). Employing an expert panel and an external auditor, I used two strategies

to establish the dependability of this study's conclusions. The expert panel included members of my committee. The expert panel confirmed that the data collection instruments agreed with the research questions. Secondly, I used an external auditor after drafting the data collection process, data analysis, and results. The external auditor holds a Ph.D. in administration and leadership and completed qualitative research within the last 4 years. Therefore, because this person was familiar with the process, I found the person suitable enough to analyze my drafts and provide feedback and guidance. The external auditor noted areas where my explanations were vague, providing suggestions on the arrangements of my categories and how to refine my themes.

Confirmability

The fourth strategy used to establish the trustworthiness of the study's findings is confirmability. Confirmability, also known as objectivity, of qualitative research establishes how the study's findings were shaped based on participants' responses and not the research's opinion, thus removing the researcher's bias (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Ultimately, establishing confirmability would mean that similar conclusions can be drawn if another researcher investigated the study. Therefore, to establish confirmability of the study's findings, I used two strategies, reflexivity, and an audit trail. Firstly, I used reflexivity to establish confirmability of my study's findings by reflecting on my role as a researcher. This reflection was narrated in a previously mentioned section titled ''Role of the Researcher." I described my biases, dispositions, assumptions, and experiences within that section to highlight my biases on the investigated central phenomena, principals, and content-specific feedback. The second

strategy I used to establish confirmability was by using an audit trail. I maintained a handwritten journal of my data analysis processes, interpretations, and thought processes which led me to the study's findings. I used the journals to explain the most accurate measures I took to creating the study's findings. Moreover, I used the journals to organize my thoughts when it came to grouping codes into categories. Lastly, I used my journals to jot preliminary interpretations of my study's findings.

Member Checking

The final strategy that I used to establish trustworthiness in my study's findings was member checking. I conducted member checking to review the study's preliminary findings and to capture participants' feedback on whether these findings presented captured their perceptions of the central phenomena. With school back in session, participants were not available for interviews but were willing to provide feedback via email. My goal was to gather feedback from at least three out of nine participants to support my findings before concluding Chapter 5. I contacted and emailed four out of nine participants and received responses from two. Three participants responded. The responding participants were two participating teachers and one participating principal. Two participants shared favorable responses to my preliminary results. One example of the feedback received was as follows. Participant 1, a participating teacher, stated: ''Your conclusions were on point in that they captured my innermost feelings regarding the topic and told the story of countless educators." Participant 4, a participating principal, expressed, ''As I reflect on my professional experiences, I agree with your conclusions. Educational leaders use a variety of methods to provide instructional feedback for their

teachers. Even when structured evaluation systems are provided, I have witnessed the subjectivity with the use of the rubrics and effective provision of feedback." This feedback, along with the feedback of the participating teachers, increased the trustworthiness of my study's findings as it depicts the essence that this study's results captured participants' perceptions.

Summary

In this study, I investigated the central phenomena, principals, and content-specific feedback by collecting data from principals and teachers from a national sample. The research questions for this study investigated how school administrations believed they provided content-specific to support teacher's instructional practices; and how teachers believed principals provided content-specific to support their instructional practices. I collected the data for this study through interviews. I collected the data from nine participants, seven teachers, and two principals. Once data was collected, transcribed, and analyzed, I organized the data into 36 codes. The 36 codes were grouped into nine categories, two themes and seven subthemes. I grouped Codes 1 through 16 into five categories. Whereas Codes 17 through 35 were grouped into four categories. The categories were then combined to form two themes. The themes were as follows: (1), Although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices; and (2) Teachers received feedback and instructional support from principals but believed principals' professional experiences, expertise, and the observation also

influenced the specificness of the feedback. I then divided my Themes into subthemes. I divided Theme 1 into four subthemes: (1a) principals' content knowledge enhances content evaluation, (1b) rubrics not aligned to content, (1c) Supplementals for the evaluator's skill set, and (1d) principals gave continuous feedback. On the other hand, I divided Theme 2 into three subthemes: (2a) helpful and specific instructional feedback, (2b) supplementals to improve instructional practices, and (2c) teachers believed inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback. I used Theme 1 and the correlating subthemes to provide insight and understanding to Research Question 1 and Theme 2 and its correlating subthemes to provide insight and understanding to Research Question 2.

Participating principals expressed that they provided teachers with feedback and assistance to improve their instructional practices. Likewise, participating teachers also accounted to receiving instructional feedback and assistance from principals. Thus, creating similarities amongst the interviews. The data from participating principals also explained that principals sought assistance to improve their own instructional leadership practices. Moreover, participating principals believed that professional experience, expertise, content knowledge, and the observation were influential to the specificness of the feedback. This notion was also compatible with the data collected from participating teachers. Another revelation from the participating teachers' data was teacher's perceptions on observations. Some participating teachers described observations as [cookie cutter] and subjective. Additionally, participating teacher beliefs differed on whether fewer or more observations were needed to improve instructional practices.

Before concluding this chapter, I described strategies I used to establish the trustworthiness of my study's findings. The strategy I used to establish trustworthiness were credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and member checking. Chapter 5 provided a detailed discussion of the study's findings, limitations, and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate principals' and teachers' perceptions of content-specific feedback provided by principals to support teachers' instructional practices to understand why content-specific instructional feedback is not being consistently provided. I collected data from a national sample of principals and teachers who met predetermined criteria. The principal participants needed to (a) have functioned in the capacity of a principal for 3 or more consecutive school years, (b) have conducted direct observation and evaluation of teachers, (c) not be a principal in my local area, and (d) not be known to me. The teacher participants needed to (a) have taught for 3 or more consecutive years, (b) have been evaluated by a principal for 3 or more consecutive years, (c) not be a teacher in my local area, and (d) not be known to me. By acquiring a better understanding of instructional feedback and related elements that influenced how principals provided instructional feedback and support to teachers, I was able to gain insight to understand why there are inconsistencies when providing content-specific feedback. It was also important for me to gain a better understanding of the effects of the inconsistencies because content-specific feedback results in improved teacher practices and indirectly influences student achievement (see Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Lane, 2020; Lawson & Knollman, 2017; Mireles-Rios et al., 2019; Pressley et al., 2018; Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020; Wieczorek et al., 2019).

As a result of data analysis, coding, categorization, and theming, I concluded data analysis with two themes. The first theme, Theme 1, which relates to Research Question 1, is that although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and

evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices. The second theme, Theme 2, which relates to Research Question 2, is that teachers received feedback and instructional support from principals but believed principals' professional experiences, expertise, and the observation also influenced the specificness of the feedback.

The themes are the overarching ideas captured from the participants' perceptions. To better interpret my study's findings. I divided my themes into subthemes. I divided Theme 1 into four subthemes: (1a) principals' content knowledge enhances content evaluation, (1b) rubrics not aligned to content, (1c) supplementals for the evaluator's skill set, and (1d) principals gave continuous feedback. Likewise, I divided Theme 2 into three subthemes. These subthemes are (2a) helpful and specific instructional feedback, (2b) supplementals to improve instructional practices, and (2c) teachers believed that inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback. Therefore, in the section on interpreting the study's findings, I organize the findings according to research questions, themes, and subthemes. In addition to using subthemes to narrate the findings, I also use the literature from Chapter 2 to confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge. Further along in this chapter, I explain how the findings relate to the conceptual framework. Additionally, I discuss the limitations to the trustworthiness of this study's findings, my recommendations for future research, the implications for positive social change, and practice recommendations. I complete this chapter with a strong conclusion that captures the essence of this study.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this section, I describe my interpretation of the key findings. I collected my findings from interviews with nine participants: seven teachers and two principals. As mentioned earlier, I have organized the section according to research questions, themes, and subthemes. The overarching research questions for this study were the following:

- RQ1: How do principals perceive that they provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?
- RQ2: How do teachers perceive that principals provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices?

The two themes are as follows: (a) although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices; and (b) teachers received feedback and instructional support from principals but believed that principals' professional experiences, expertise, and the observation also influenced the specificness of the feedback. To narrate my findings clearly, I subdivided my themes into seven subthemes for better interpretation. I also used the literature from Chapter 2 to confirm, disconfirm, and extend the knowledge of my study's findings. Furthermore, I describe how the results relate to the conceptual framework.

Interpretations for Research Question 1

The first research question of this study was the following: How do principals perceive that they provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional

practices? In the next section, to narrate my interpretations of my study's findings, I illustrate the four subthemes presented in Theme 1. These four subthemes are (1a) principals' content knowledge enhances content evaluation, (1b) rubrics not aligned to content, (1c) supplementals for the evaluator's skill set, and (1d) principals gave continuous feedback.

Theme 1: Although Principals' Content Knowledge Does Not Align with All Content Areas and Evaluation Rubrics Are Inadequate, Principals Still Give Teachers Content-Specific Instructional Feedback and Additional Supplements to Improve Teachers' Instructional Practices

Principals are the instructional leaders of educational institutions and therefore are responsible for managing the curriculum and instruction delivered by teachers. In managing the curriculum and instruction delivered by teachers, principals also support the improvement of teachers' instructional practices by providing feedback (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). When principals give teachers instructional feedback, it should help the teachers improve instructional practices as principals share and lend support in acquiring and using research-based instructional practices (Davis & Boudreaux, 2019). Furthermore, teachers can improve instructional practices when principals give specific feedback coupled with actionable tasks (professional development, peer coaching, mentorship, and teacher collaboration; Boston et al., 2016; Rigby et al., 2017). In the upcoming section, I narrate about the subthemes that provided me insight and understanding concerning Research Question 1.

Principal's Professional Experiences and Expertise. According to the participating principals, a principal's professional experiences or expertise influence the school leader's instructional leadership capacity. Firstly, participating principals believed that their experiences were meaningful and, therefore, they could provide feedback to teachers across all content areas. The results of Lochmiller's (2015) quantitative study go against the notion that principals can give valuable feedback to teachers without the experience or expertise of the observing content areas. Lochmiller found that even though the principals relied on their experiences, the feedback provided was on instructional methods rather than the content. In contrast to Lochmiller's findings, Jimerson and Quebec Fuentes (2020) found that teaching experiences and principal preparation programs were adequate for effective instructional leadership practices. Principals' content knowledge influenced the quality, deepness, examples, and directions of the feedback given to teachers. Therefore, school leaders who did not have the content expertise used the expertise of other content area leaders or in-house leaders as support for what to look for when observing and the kind of feedback to give.

Rubrics Not Aligned to Content. Participating principals also believed that the evaluation rubric was influential to the principal's instructional leadership practices. Specifically, participating principals believed that the evaluation rubric was not adequate for evaluating and providing feedback across all content areas, and it was also time consuming. Most evaluation rubrics outline the quality of teaching that can be observed during an observation. According to Derrington and Martinez (2019), the teacher evaluation system was crucial to providing teachers the evidence-based feedback needed

to improve instructional practices. During the evaluation process, teachers are given feedback at some point, but if the rubric is not designed to have the conversation across all content areas, there is a flaw in structure (Mireles-Rios & Becchio, 2018). Because the evaluation instrument is the mechanism used to document teachers' performance, it is also an avenue where principals provide feedback.

Nevertheless, Derrington and Martinez's (2019) and Mireles-Rios and Becchio's (2018) conclusions agreed with this study's findings; the evaluation rubric influenced the principal's ability to provide feedback, but other pieces of literature did not quite relate. Contrasting conclusions were illustrated in Lochmiller and Mancinelli's (2019) study. The authors concluded that the evaluation rubric did influence the principals' practice of providing feedback across content areas. Furthermore, new evaluation instruments, when used correctly, made it easier for principals to evaluate and provide feedback across content in a timely fashion.

The data collected in this study also indicated that the evaluation process was time consuming. Authors such as Brown and Bista (2018), Campbell and Derrington (2019), and Lavigne (2020) drew similar conclusions to this study's findings; the evaluation process was time consuming. Moreover, Brown and Bista found that the entire evaluation process took an excessive amount of time to complete. Campbell and Derrington had similar findings about the evaluation process. The time to complete the evaluation process was a significant factor needed to complete the process with validity (Campbell & Derrington, 2019). Likewise, Lavigne found that the demands of the evaluation process increased over the years; therefore, the time to complete teacher evaluations

increased for school leaders as in this process they were charged with observing and providing feedback.

Supplementals for the Evaluator's Skill Set. The results of this study also indicated that principals relied on support. The principal used support for two purposes: (a) to support their instructional leadership practices and (b) to support teachers' instructional practices. According to participating principals, they used support such as professional development, district meetings, other principals, instructional experts, the curriculum guide, and content standards. The participating principals expressed that they used the resources for various reasons. Firstly, the participating principals relied on the resources to support their instructional leadership practices. Furthermore, these resources were a source of understanding how to rate and evaluate teachers across all content areas. Secondly, the participating principals said that they relied on resources to support teachers' instructional practices by assigning experts to teachers who needed additional support.

Practices in education are constantly changing, and therefore the support that principals use to improve teachers' instructional practices is viewed in different ways by the literature. Firstly, findings drawn from Damore and Rieckhoff's (2019) study aligned with subtheme 1c of this study (Supplementals to evaluator's skill set as a resource.) In a naturalistic, holistic, multicase study research design, Damore and Rieckhoff (2019) found that although principals may have limited knowledge of the content areas, the use of coaches and other instructional experts aids the principal in providing resources and support for improving instructional practices. Therefore, when principals may not know

or be experts in the content, resources such as instructional experts and coaches can help them fill the knowledge gap. Damore and Rieckhoff's findings are in congruence with this finding in my study; principals used support as a resource to advance instructional leadership practices.

Contrarily, Honig and Rainey's (2019) conclusion partially went against the notion that principals should rely on resources to assist teachers in improving instructional practices. The help of instructional coaches and content-area experts should be available but should not be overly relied upon as a means for principals to strengthen teachers' instructional practices (Honig & Rainey, 2019). Although participating principals did not state that they overly relied on resources, it was necessary to note the unparallel conclusions between this study's findings and conclusions drawn from Honig and Rainey's reexamination of data from two studies, in addition to 344 interviews and review of documents. Honig and Rainey cautioned principals to avoid overreliance on available outside professional development resources, such as instructional coaches or seminar presenters, because there is no guarantee that using these resources will help improve the teaching and learning within the institution. Instead, principals should build their personal capacity as instructional leaders, as that investment helps the organization enhance teaching and learning internally. Principals grow in the instructional leadership capacity through professional development and time spent conducting observations and providing teachers feedback, not overreliance on outside resources (Honig & Rainey, 2019). Furthermore, school districts must provide principals with the right tools to help them in the process (Gilmour & Jones, 2020).

Principals Gave Continuous Feedback. When principals give teachers instructional feedback, it allows teachers an opportunity to reflect on and improve practice (Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). The works of Donahue and Vogel (2018) and Grissom and Bartanen (2019) agreed with this subtheme; principals give teachers feedback. Principals gave teachers continuous feedback, and this is also compatible with conclusions drawn in other literature pieces (Archer, 2016; Boston et al., 2016; Rigby et al., 2017). Although the authors mentioned earlier conducted different studies, they drew similar conclusions: Principals were charged with giving instructional feedback, and the quality of the feedback was essential to improving the teachers' instructional practices. For example, Archer (2016) concluded that one responsibility of principals was to provide instructional feedback and added that instructional feedback correlated with many instructional successes. Furthermore, instructional feedback helps teachers improve their teaching craft and brings awareness to practices. Similarly, Boston et al. (2016) conducted an experimental study and found that principals are responsible for giving content-specific feedback during the evaluation process. This feedback can influence, support, and improve the teacher's instructional practices. In comparison, Rigby et al.'s (2017) study agreed with my study's findings, as the authors concluded that principals must provide some form of feedback to teachers.

As the findings around the notion that principals give teachers feedback developed, two specific ideas manifested within the data. The first idea was the time in which feedback was given to teachers. The participating principals expressed that they provided this feedback during both the formal and informal evaluation process. One

participating principal said that if the principal did not provide feedback throughout the year, it was a missed opportunity to help teachers improve instructional practices. This notion also agrees with conclusions drawn in Kettler and Reddy's (2019) study, which asserted that feedback should be given through varied instances in the school year. Significantly, Kettler and Reddy (2019) stated that feedback given only during post evaluation is not as meaningful because this feedback is broad and not timely enough to provide support to a teacher who needs to improve instructional practice. The idea that principals should give teachers meaningful, specific instructional feedback to improve the teachers' instructional practices and students' performance was corroborated by several authors (Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Kim & Lowery, 2020; Smith et al., 2020; Wieczorek et al., 2019). For instance, Ford and Hewitt (2020) found that feedback helps teachers improve instructional quality throughout the year. Kim and Lowery (2020) and Smith et al. (2020) similarly concluded that teachers needed feedback during all phases of the observation process. Moreover, most teachers want more detailed, supportive, constructive, specific feedback about their teaching practices; therefore, principals should give teachers content-specific feedback to improve teaching practices (see Johnson et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2020).

The second idea about principals giving feedback was on the specificness of the feedback. Although in my study principals asserted that they gave teachers instructional feedback, the specificness of the feedback was sometimes limited. Other authors documented in their conclusions that content-specific feedback was essential to improving instructional practices (Lane, 2020; Pressley et al., 2018; Wieczorek et al.,

2019). Additionally, Ford and Hewitt (2020) found that when principals give teachers feedback, it can support and improve instructional practices when feedback is valid and meaningful. Moreover, Wieczorek et al. (2019) concluded that specific feedback from principals to teachers was important to supporting and improving instructional practices. Because principals are instructional leaders, they are the facilitators of this instructional feedback, and giving content-specific feedback can better support and improve teachers' instructional practices.

Summary of Interpretations for Research Question 1. In summary, I analyzed and reflected upon the data collected from participating principals to gain insight and understanding for this study's Research Question 1. From the big picture illustrated in Theme 1, I created four subthemes. I use the subthemes to interpret the study's findings. I found that principal's professional experiences and expertise were influential to the feedback they provided to teachers, but the literature did not fully agree with this finding. The literature also did not fully agree with the notion that the evaluation rubrics were inadequate. I also found that Supplementals to Evaluator's Skill Set in the form of resources and resources to assist themselves in the instructional leadership capacity and likewise assist the teachers instructional leadership practices. Lastly, I found that principals gave feedback to teachers. Furthermore, feedback should be given throughout the year and the specificness was crucial to helping teachers improve instructional practices. The subthemes outlined in this section were insightful to understanding why content-specific feedback was not being consistently provided to improve teachers' instructional practices.

Interpretations for Research Question 2

The second research question of this study is: How do teachers perceive that principal provide content-specific feedback to support teachers' instructional practices? In this next section, I narrate my interpretations illustrated in three subthemes presented in Theme 2. The three subthemes are: (2a) helpful and specific instructional feedback: (2b) supplementals to improve instructional practices, and (2c) teachers believed inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback. In the upcoming sections, I describe the findings and use literature to confirm, disconfirm or extend knowledge on the outcomes.

Theme 2: Teachers Receive Feedback and Instructional Support from Principals but Believe Principals' Professional Experiences, Expertise, and Evaluation Rubric also Influence the Feedback's Specificness

In most schools, teachers are the facilitator of content to students. Understandably, good teaching practices are directly related to student achievement (Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Lane, 2020; Lawson & Knollman, 2017; Mireles-Rios et al., 2019; Pressley et al., 2018; Quebec Fuentes et al., 2020; Wieczorek et al., 2019). Participating teachers of this study said that they received feedback from their respective principals which was helpful. Furthermore, participating teachers received resources as means to help improve instructional practices. Some resources mentioned by the participating teachers, were professional development, instructional coaches and help from expert teachers. Lastly, teachers believed that the evaluation rubric and principals' professional experience and expertise influenced instructional leadership practices. Participating

teachers believed that the school administrators without experience or knowledge of the teacher's content area influenced how the principal evaluated the teacher, the feedback, and the resources provided to support their instructional leadership practices. Likewise, participating teachers also believed the evaluation rubric influenced the principal's instructional leadership practices; because it was subjective, it was just something the principals had to get done, and it was time-consuming.

Helpful and Specific Instructional Feedback. Participating teachers said that they received instructional feedback from principals, but some participating teachers did not receive content-specific feedback. For example, one participating teacher noted that their principal could not give specific feedback on their lesson because the teacher was not teaching content areas with which the principals would be familiar with such as mathematics or reading; the teacher taught business. The business teacher believed it was difficult for the principal to provide feedback when teaching business content because the principal did not have the experience or knowledge with the content area. In contrast, another participant expressed that they always wanted this content-specific feedback from their principal. The teacher believed because the content area taught (mathematics) is not easily understood, it was challenging for their principal to evaluate and provide feedback because the evaluator did not have background knowledge of the mathematics content. With similar connotations, authors Boston et al. (2016) and Rigby et al. (2017) explored the principal's feedback to mathematics teachers. Using a quantitative research design, Boston et al. (2016) and Rigby et al. (2017) drew similar conclusions; principals had

difficulties providing content-specific, meaningful, and actionable feedback to mathematics teachers.

Furthermore, Donahue, and Vogel (2018), Pressley et al. (2018), Reid (2019), Rigby et al. (2017), and Smith et al. (2020) had similar findings: principals aided teachers to improve instructional practices by providing actionable, meaningful, content-specific feedback. When principals give teachers content-specific feedback, the teacher becomes aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the instruction, reflects on practice, and improves as needed. In like manner, Lochmiller (2015) stated that when principals provided content-specific feedback, the principal provided feedback that referenced content-related vocabulary, standards, pedagogy, and strategies. In comparison, Donahue and Vogel (2018), Pressley et al. (2018), Reid (2019), Rigby et al. (2017), and Smith et al. (2020) also described that when principals give teachers specific feedback, the quality of the feedback can support improvement in teacher's instructional practices. In sum, because participating teachers received content-specific feedback from their principal, this notion agrees with the problem explored in this study.

Supplementals to Improve Instructional Practices. In addition to receiving content-specific feedback from principals, participating teachers in this current study said that they had access to resources to help support and improve instructional practices. Some participants received instructional support from principals. Lochmiller (2015) asserted that the principal is a source to strengthen teacher's instructional practice through the evaluation and observation process. In comparison, Jimerson and Quebec Fuentes (2020) found that principals provide feedback to teachers during varied points of

the evaluation process and with feedback, the teachers learn how to improve instructional practice.

Participating teachers also said that they received assistance to improving their instructional practices from other resources. Additionally participating teachers mentioned that they received, professional development, webinars, instructional coaches, and other colleagues, as resources to aid in instructional improvement. Although it may appear that these resources are not directly from the principal, they are as a result of the principal's role as supervisor and instructional leader and thus responsible for the duties of the educational community in which the principal supervisors. Principals are using systems-level solutions to meet the needs of teachers rather than merely doing so individually (Fullan, 2011). System Learn is Fullan's sixth secret for how leaders can thrive and run a successful organization. Fullan (2011) asserted that when leaders think holistically and include talented people within the organization, they build future leaders and enhance the organization's learning and success. On the hand, Mette et al. (2017) asserted that the principals' supervisory and instructional leadership functions have a crossed relationship, for these practices are often not conducted in isolation but rather simultaneously. Furthermore, in most schools, the principals arrange the professional learning activities within the institution. Additionally, instructional coaches and expert teachers are a source for teachers to support and improve instructional practices and this is indirectly related to the principal's duties because the principal is the supervisor. Therefore, although the resources and additional resources documented by the participating teachers may not have come directly from the principal, the mere fact the

principal also functions in the capacity of a supervisor of the educational institution creates an indirect connection to the resources participating teachers mentioned they received.

Teachers Believed Principals' Professional Experiences, Expertise, and the Evaluation Were Influential to the Feedback Received. The data from the participating teachers revealed that those participants believed that principals' professional experiences, expertise, and observation were biased to the feedback. Firstly, participating teachers believed that the professional experiences and expertise of their principal were significant to the feedback received because some principals lacked the content knowledge and exposure to be able to critique, evaluate and provide meaningful feedback. Contrarily, according to Jimerson and Quebec Fuentes (2020), principals' instructional leadership practices result from training and preparation programs. In contrast to Jimerson and Quebec Fuentes (2020), Kraft and Gilmour (2016) concluded that content area expertise also influenced how principals evaluated teachers and principals based most evaluation feedback on instructional practices and not content.

On the other hand, principals cannot know all content areas, but Lochmiller (2015) asserted that principals needed the content knowledge to evaluate and provide feedback effectively. The difference in findings from the authors potentially opens this topic for further discussion. Extending the knowledge on this topic is necessary to understand whether principals' professional experience and expertise influenced feedback given to teachers.

Teachers who participated in my study also believed the limitations of the observation rubric were an influential factor in the process. Some participating teachers believed the observation rubric was subjective. Some believed the rubric was structured only to meet the needs of content area teachers such as reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. Thus, believing that the subjectivity of the observation rubric made it ineffective to evaluate teachers outside those content areas, as mentioned earlier. Even though principals are the users of the evaluation rubric, teachers are the recipients of the results.

Kraft and Gilmour (2016) found challenges with the evaluation process. These included an increased demand placed on the evaluation process, principals' requirement to complete more than one evaluation, and the use of broad, detailed rubrics. Furthermore, there was a need to address the subjectively of the rubrics to support principals' instructional leadership practices. In contrast, Brown and Bista (2018) concluded that the teacher evaluation rubric supported the principal's instructional feedback. In sum, the literature I presented here agrees with the findings revealed by my study participants. Therefore, exploring if the evaluation rubrics support principals' instructional practices is an avenue through which knowledge can be extended upon the future study.

Summary of Interpretations for Research Question 2. In summary, I analyzed and reflected upon the data collected from participating teachers to gain insight and understanding for this study's Research Question 2. I created three subthemes and used those subthemes to interpret and narrate the findings. The three subthemes are: (2a)

helpful and specific instructional feedback; (2b) supplementals to improve instructional practices, and (2c) teachers believed inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback. I found that teachers accounted to receiving instructional feedback from principals. Additionally, participating teachers had access to resources and additional resources to support and improve instructional practices. Participating teachers illustrated that they believed principals' professional experiences and expertise and the evaluation rubric were influential to the feedback given.

Conceptual Framework and the Relationship to the Findings

Danielson's (2007) framework for teaching (FFT) was used as the conceptual lens to interpret the findings of this study. The overarching premise of the FFT is it is a structured, hierarchical, uniformed practice that guides what teachers should know and do (Danielson, 2007). The FFT describes evidence-based practices, which can support principals and teachers in the evaluation process. Using the FFT, teachers can be evaluated or coached to improving the quality of their instruction. But for teachers to enhance the quality of teaching, principals must exercise their instructional leaderships practices and provide teachers support. The authors of the FFT housed the four domains into the framework. The four domains housed in the FFT are planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities (Danielson, 2007). Therefore, the FFT is compatible with the findings in this study because principals are users of the evaluation tools as they function in instructional leadership practices. In contrast, teachers are the recipients of the principal's actions, and the principal's actions

can improve instructional practices. In the upcoming section, I relate the concepts of the conceptual framework, the FFT, to the findings of this study.

Firstly, the findings of this study indicated that all participating principals said they give teachers feedback; likewise, all participating teachers said they received instructional feedback from principals. Several ideas with these findings relate to the FFT. For one, principals can provide feedback throughout any domain of the FFT, but within the instructional domain, Domain 3, principals give teachers instructional feedback on instructional practices. Another relation with the FFT, which relates to the interpretations of my study's findings, is that with the evidence-based practices, principals are guided on how to provide feedback. The evidence-based practices can aid and support principals in performing as instructional leaders. Moreover, the findings of this study supplied evidence that teachers received feedback from principals. The conceptual lens of the FFT is compatible with these findings because, whether used for formative or summative evaluation or coaching purposes, principals give teachers feedback to improve instructional practices during the evaluation process.

Secondly, the findings of this study also describe that participating principal provide resources and resources to teachers to improve instructional practices; similarly, participating teachers documented receiving resources and resources from their respective principals to improve instructional practices. The conceptual idea illuminated from the FFT, which helped me interpret this finding, was the framework's premise; it can serve as a resource and a source of evidence-based practices, whether as an evaluation rubric or a coaching tool. Although there a various resources and resources at

the disposal of the principals and teachers for instructional practices improvement, tools such as evaluation rubric are resources to be used by the principal, which outlines evidence-based practices used to provide feedback and instructional guidance to the teachers they supervise. Additionally, the tools such as the evaluation rubric are resources and resources used by the teachers to understand and compare instructional practices to evidence-based practices and thus use the tool to strengthen and support practices.

Thirdly, findings in this study also indicated that principals believed that the evaluation rubric was not applicable across all content areas, and participating teachers believed the evaluation rubric was subjective. The conceptual framework, FFT, helped me interpret this idea by seeing through the lens that evaluation rubrics are not meant to suit specific content area practices but rather the teacher's responsibilities and duties to delivering quality instruction. Therefore, agreeing with the subjectivity and the applicability belief of the participants. Thus, believing that ratings given from evaluations rubrics are subjective to teachers' instructional practices and applicable across content areas because the evaluation rubric's applicability depends on the teacher's instruction.

Lastly, the findings of this study indicated that participating principals and teachers believed that principal's professional experiences and expertise influenced the principal's instructional leadership practices. Using the conceptual framework, the FFT, specifically Domain 4, I interpreted that professional expertise affords one opportunity to stay abreast of pedagogy and evidence-based practices. Furthermore, principals' and teachers' professional responsibilities and practices influence the quality of teaching and learning.

In summary, the FFT is compatible with the findings of this study because it makes evident the vital role that principals play in supporting improvement in teacher's instructional practices. As the institution's instructional leaders, principals are responsible for observing, evaluating, and providing feedback to teachers. In relation to the use of the FFT and an evaluation rubric or coaching tool, principals are users of the evaluation tool. They can use the tool to support teachers by providing feedback. Moreover, in most educational institutions, teachers deliver the instruction, and thus they plan and prepare lessons and demonstrate these practices in the classroom environment. It is in the classroom environment that principals observe the teacher's instructional practices and provide feedback. Lastly, to stay abreast of pedagogy and deliver instruction that meets students' needs, the principal and teacher also have a professional duty to fulfill.

Limitations of the Study

The small sample size of this study could be seen as a potential weakness of this basic qualitative study. However, it met the requirements for qualitative research. Groenewald (2004), Guest et al. (2006), and Van Manen (1990). recommended data from eight to 12 participants for each participant group until data saturation is achieved. Furthermore, Burkholder et al. (2016) asserted that the number of participants is unpredictable in qualitative research. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research focuses on the wealth of the details in the data collected and the achievement of data saturation. This study included nine participants, seven teachers, and two principals from a national sample. It was not feasible to interview every principal and teacher across the

nation. Furthermore, data collection concluded after the ninth interview, when I determined that I reached data saturated.

Another limitation was the use of a single data collection method. I used interviews as the only method for data collection in this study. According to Burkholder et al. (2016), the data collection used should relate to whether the data collection methods help answer the research questions; the kinds of data intended to be collected; and whether the study is geared towards a targeted population for whom can provide answers to the study's research question, thus making the choice of a single data collection method for this study appropriate. This study targeted a specific audience, principals, and teachers, who met predetermined criteria. Moreover, the data I intended to collect was about the perceptions of individual experiences of the participants. Ideally, interviews, one of the most popular data collection methods, allowed me to collect perceptions based on firsthand experiences.

The final limitation was access to participants. Using methods such as Walden's participant pool, social media, and snowball sampling to recruit participants, I thought I would have collected more responses or an equal number of participants for each participant group (principals and teachers). I addressed this concern by coding after each interview to determine if data saturation was achieved. After the ninth interview, I decided that data was saturated and, therefore, there was no need to collect more participants.

Recommendations

As I developed the interpretations of the findings for this study, I realized that two sections needed further exploration, in an effort to extend the knowledge within education. One recommendation for future studies is to explore principals' perceptions of how their experiences, expertise, and content expertise influence their ability to provide feedback. From the finding of this study, and the literature, which drew different conclusions, I believed it would be beneficial to extend the knowledge on this topic. To expand the knowledge of principals' perceptions of how their experiences, expertise, and content knowledge influence feedback provided to teachers, principals could be interviewed. Conducting research of this nature can provide additional insight and understanding on how principals' professional experiences, expertise, and content knowledge influences feedback.

Another recommendation for future study, also influenced by this study's findings, is on the evaluation rubric. In future research, one can explore whether evaluation rubrics are applicable across content areas. The researcher can narrow the focus of this potential prospective study by focusing solely on school districts that use the FFT as an evaluation rubric and or school districts using another medium to evaluate teachers. The outcomes can spark discussion on whether there is a need for multiple or more defined evaluation rubrics to effectively evaluate across content areas.

Implications

The findings of this study provided insight and understanding as to why principals are not providing consistent content-specific feedback to support and improve teachers'

instructional practices. In this study, I found that the principals gave continuous feedback. Likewise participating teachers said that they received instructional feedback from their respective principals. Through this study, I also found that although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices. Additionally, teacher's received some levels of assistance and resources to help improve instructional practices. This study also brought to light that teachers believed that the school leaders' professional experiences and expertise influenced the specificness of the feedback.

Furthermore, participants believed there were some inadequacies with the evaluation rubric, and it influenced the feedback principals provided to teachers. Moreover, teachers believed the observation was subjective and appeared as a duty the principal just needed to complete. In summary, the findings from this study contribute to positive social change by providing considerations for implications on the organizational, the school, and the individual level. And these implications potentially contribute to positive social change by improving teachers' instructional practices and thus improving students' educational outcomes and life opportunities.

Social Change at the Organizational Level

The findings of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing insights and understanding at education organizational levels. From the findings of this study, I implied that there are three structures on the organization level which require attention or change to improve instructional leadership practices of principals. The three

implications are improving the instructional leadership practices of providing feedback for principals, the possible reconfiguration of evaluation rubrics, and possibly reconfiguring hiring alignment for principals.

The first implication of this study's findings is that there are inconsistent practices when it comes to principals providing feedback to teachers. Therefore, at the organization level, whether this is policy-driven or through professional learning activities, the organization should consider ways to improve principals' instructional leadership practices. The organization can provide tools and means by which principals can enhance their ability to provide feedback regardless of the content area observing. The organization can create a schematic of how feedback looks across content areas. With this schematic in hand, principals can use to improve and provide content specific feedback across varied content areas.

The second implication at the organizational level is the possible need for improving, reconfiguring, or changing the evaluation rubric. From the organizational standpoint, it might be ideal to have a standard evaluation rubric, but the evaluation rubric must meet the needs of the intended recipient. If the evaluation rubric is not applicable across all content areas, then there is a need to revisit the medium used (Derrington & Campbell, 2018). The evaluation rubrics should not be used merely for teacher ratings, as implied by the findings of this study, but also to support and improve instructional practices.

The last implication is that there may be a need to revisit the requirements when hiring principals at the organization level. The principal's actions are crucial to whether

the educational organization thrives (Smith et al., 2020). From this study's findings, professional experiences and expertise are in the conversation on whether principals can support teacher's instructional practices. Therefore, there is a need for possibly, realignment of principal's duties. Realignment of principal's responsibilities means placing principals in positions where their knowledge base or experience resides. For example, a teacher with experience teaching mathematics obtains the credentials to be a principal should be placed in an administrative position to supervise mathematics. Creating structures like this positively influences the organization; for now, principals can provide the meaningful, content-specific feedback needed to improve teacher's instructions.

Social Change at School Level

The findings of this study may contribute to positive social change as the findings also has implications at the school level. The possible implications from the findings of this study reflect the fact that there is a need for principals to be more aware of the quality of feedback provided to teachers. Firstly, it is worth noting that the results presented in this study documents that principals are providing feedback to teachers. Even though principals are providing teachers with feedback, the quality of the feedback is worth improving. According to the conclusions of Lane's (2020) study, when principals evaluate teachers, it is the principal's responsibility to provide meaningful feedback to improve instructional practices. Therefore, it was worth revisiting how principals provide feedback. For example, one way this can be done is by creating a set of questions that principals use as guidance when giving teachers feedback. In that way, the feedback

becomes specific and thus more meaningful to teachers and a positive social change for the educational institution. This positive social could result in improved instruction may translate into improved learning and, therefore, life chances for students and otherwise contribute to community improvement.

The second implication at the education institution level is clarifying how teachers access resources. Participating principals give teachers resources and access to additional resources to improve practices. Participating teachers accounted for receiving resources and resources to enhance instructional practices. Both participant groups are saying the same thing; therefore, clarifying the process makes it more straightforward. The educational institution can improve this process by creating a document that outlines the available resources and resources for instructional assistance. In making such a document or hierarchal structure, it becomes straightforward that the principal orchestrates instructional support within the educational institution to streamline the process as they support and improve teachers' instructional practices.

Social Change at the Individual Level

The implications of this study can also contribute to positive social change at the individual level for principals and teachers. These professionals (principals and teachers) can use the findings to reflect on current practices, their professional responsibilities, and how they can improve practices. Both professionals hold different stakes in the educational outcome of students. Therefore, it is vital to continue to improve practices. Individuals can improve professional practices through professional learning activities, reflecting on practices, and even taking advanced courses.

Conclusion

In this study, I investigated the perceptions of a national sample of principals and teachers on the central phenomena, principals, and content-specific feedback. According to Carreiro (2020), providing valuable instructional feedback correlates with improving teachers' instructional practices. In this study, I found that (a) although principals' content knowledge does not align with all content areas and evaluation rubrics are inadequate, principals still give teachers content-specific instructional feedback and additional supplements to improve teachers' instructional practices; (b) teachers received feedback and instructional support from principals but believed principals' professional experiences, expertise and the observation also influenced the specificness of the feedback. I subdivided the two themes into seven subthemes to convey a clear interpretation of my findings. The four subthemes which is compatible with Theme 1 are: (1a) principals' content knowledge enhances content evaluation, (1b) rubrics not aligned to Content, (1c) Supplementals for the evaluator's skill set, and (1d) principals gave continuous feedback. On the other hand, the subthemes which correlates to Theme 2 are: (2a) helpful and specific instructional feedback, (2b) supplementals to improve instructional practices, and (2c) teachers believed inexperienced evaluators and rubrics influenced instructional feedback. In addition, to using subthemes to narrate the findings, I also used the literature from Chapter 2 to confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge. Moreover, I used the literature to confer whether any comparisons could be drawn from conclusions in the literature.

After developing my findings, unparallel conclusions led me to areas which would be worthy of exploring. Two recommendations for future studies were if principals' expertise or experiences influenced their ability to provide feedback and the applicability of the evaluation rubric across content areas. Improvement of instructional leadership practices relates, and support improve teachers' instructional practices. Therefore, I made recommendations for implications on the organizational, school, and individual levels. In summary, this study added to the existing body of knowledge which support that principal are responsible for giving valuable, meaningful, actionable, content-specific feedback to teachers. Although the onus in improving teachers' instructional practices is not only on the principal's instructional leadership practices as other factors were influential, but the greater benefit is also improved education and life opportunities for students.

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Appendix A: E-Announcement

Volunteers needed for study

There is a new study called *''Principals' and Teachers' Perception of Content-Specific Instructional Feedback."* For this study, you are invited to describe your experiences and perceptions with content-specific instructional feedback.

This study is part of the doctoral study for Shernore Prince, Ed.D. student at Walden University.

About the study:

- Virtual Audio recorded 1 hour interview on Zoom
- Target Audience: Principals and Teachers
- Member checking via email to provide feedback on preliminary findings of this study (participants randomly selected)

Volunteers must meet specific criteria below:

Principals Criteria to Participate

- have functioned in the capacity of a principal for three or more consecutive school years
- have conducted direct observation and evaluation of teachers
- not be a principal in my local area, USVI
- not be known to me

Teachers Criteria to Participate

- have taught three or more consecutive years
- have been evaluated by a principal for three or more consecutive years
- not be a teacher in my local area, USVI
- not be known to me.

Appendix B: Principal Interview Protocols and Questions

Opening Script: Good day, my name is Shernore Prince, and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. Thank you very much for taking the opportunity to participate in my study for my dissertation at Walden University. The title of my study is Principals' and Teachers 'Perception of Content Specific Instructional Feedback. The purpose of this interview is to talk to you about your perception and experience with content specific instructional feedback and related variables. This interview should not last more than 60 minutes. It is within your rights to refuse to answer any questions. If you should choose to stop this interview. You're free to do so at any time. Your responses will be included in the findings of my final study unless you request otherwise. However, no one will be able to identify you in any document and no one will be able to identify you by any answer that you gave. Also, a friendly reminder that this interview will be audio recorded for later data transcription and analysis.

Warm up Questions:

1. Do you have any questions for me at this time?
2. Are you comfortable to begin?
3. What is your current position?

The criteria used to participant in this study for principals are:

- have functioned in the capacity of a principal for three or more consecutive school years
- have conducted direct observation and evaluation of teachers
- not be a principal in my local area

- not be known to me

4. Do you meet all criteria? … Ok great let us begin.
5. Please tell me a little about your educational background, credentials, and professional certifications?

Interview Questions:

1. Do you feel that your educational background , credentials, and all professional experiences makes you diverse enough to do evaluate and provide feedback to teachers? If so, why?
2. How does your expertise influence the quality of feedback you give to teachers ?
3. Please give me an example of the type of feedback you would give after an informal observation.
4. Can you give me an example of the type of feedback you would give after a formal observation?
5. Can you give an examples of content specific feedback that you've given?
6. What other support have you provided to teachers to aid in improving instructional practices?
7. Do you find that a quantity of teachers you evaluate affects the quality of feedback ? If so , why, or why not ?
8. How do you believe the evaluation rubric aids you in providing feedback to teachers across content area?
9. What additional support are provided to you as a principal to effectively evaluate and provide teacher's with content-specific feedback?

10. What additional support are provided to you as a principal to effectively evaluate and provide teacher's with content-specific feedback?

Closing: This concludes my interview. Thank you again for taking the time out to take part in this study. Your responses today will be used as part of this study's findings in my dissertation at the end of my tenure at Walden University. I ask that if you know of any teacher and or principal who would also be willing to take part, please share my contact information. Once I develop my study's preliminary findings, I will randomly select members from my participant pool and share the preliminary findings to gather initial feedback. Please check your e-mail for your nominal incentive. I am sending this incentive in about an hour after concluding this meeting. Lastly, I ensure you that I will maintain your confidentiality. No one will be able to identify you or your answers. All audio recordings, transcriptions and materials related to this study will be stored on an encrypted USB drive and stored in my locked home office cabinet. Thank you and enjoy the rest of your day.

Appendix C: Teacher Interview Protocols and Questions

Opening Script: Good day, my name is Shernore Prince, and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. Thank you very much for taking the opportunity to participate in my study for my dissertation at Walden University. The title of my study is Principals' and Teachers 'Perception of Content Specific Instructional Feedback. The purpose of this interview is to talk to you about your perception and experience with content specific instructional feedback and related variables. This interview should not last more than 60 minutes. It is within your rights to refuse to answer any questions. If you should choose to stop this interview. You're free to do so at any time. Your responses will be included in the findings of my final study unless you request otherwise. However, no one will be able to identify you in any document and no one will be able to identify you by any answer that you gave. Also, a friendly reminder that this interview will be audio recorded for later data transcription and analysis.

Warm up Questions:

1. Do you have any questions for me at this time?
2. Are you comfortable to begin?
3. What is the current position?
4. The criteria used for teachers to participate in this study are:

- have taught three or more consecutive years
- have been evaluated by a principal for three or more consecutive years
- not be a teacher in my local area, St. Thomas, USVI

not be known to

5. Do you meet all these criteria? … Ok great let us begin.
6. Please tell me a little about your educational background, credentials, and professional certifications?

Interview Questions:

1. What specific subject area you teaching?
2. How do you believe receiving instructional feedback helps improve instructional practices?
3. Please provide any examples of the type of feedback you have received from your principal.
4. Have you ever received instructional feedback after and observation that was specific to the content? If so, please provide an example?
5. What is your overall opinion on receiving content-specific feedback to support and improving your instructional practices?
6. Has it ever been a concern of yours that a principal without experience or expertise in the content area you are teaching being able to effectively evaluate you? Why?
7. Have you principal or school district provided you any support to improve or assist in improving your instructional practices?
8. Thinking about the evaluation rubric, do you feel the rubric support or guides your ability to improve instructional practices? If so, why? If not, why?
9. Do you find the more or less observation you received helped improved your instructional practices? Why?

Closing: This concludes my interview. Thank you again for taking the time out to take part in this study. Your responses today will be used as part of this study's findings in my dissertation at the end of my tenure at Walden University. I ask that if you know of any teacher and or principal who would also be willing to take part, please share my contact information. Once I develop my study's preliminary findings, I will randomly select members from my participant pool and share the preliminary findings to gather initial feedback. Please check your e-mail for your nominal incentive. I am sending this incentive in about an hour after concluding this meeting. Lastly, I ensure you that I will maintain your confidentiality. No one will be able to identify you or your answers. All audio recordings, transcriptions and materials related to this study will be stored on an encrypted USB drive and stored in my locked home office cabinet. Thank you and enjoy the rest of your day.