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Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Involvement in Transfer of Training

Stephanie Michelle Heflin
Walden University

Walden University

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Stephanie Heflin

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Dr. Elizabeth Warren, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Elsie Szecsy, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. John Hendricks, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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MS, California State University, Fullerton, 2006

BA, Sonoma State University, 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

This study district provides ongoing professional development for teachers; however, there was little evidence that transfer of training was occurring and it was unclear whether the administrator role could improve the implementation of learning from professional development. The purpose of the study was to examine teachers' perceptions of administrative involvement in professional development in order to identify indicators that could strengthen nonevaluative, collaborative relationships leading to higher rates of transfer. The central research question focused on teachers' perceptions of the roles of administrator-as-evaluator and administrator-as-collaborator and whether collaboration might influence transfer of training for teachers as they strive to improve their instructional practice. The conceptual frameworks that grounded this study were professional development and transfer of training. Participants in the study were a group of randomly selected secondary level teacher leaders in a school district (n = 10). An open-ended narrative questionnaire and focus group interview were used to collect data that were then open coded and thematically analyzed. A key finding was that these 10 teachers wanted administrative involvement in professional development; however, they wanted administrative oversight, coordination, and structure rather than side-by-side instructional collaborators. A white paper was created to assist local district administrators with addressing the transfer of training needs of teachers by outlining specific protocols and structures that will lead to systemic, on-going professional growth. A school culture that is characterized by structured collaboration will lead to positive social change in that instruction will meet the needs of all students and prepare them for life after high school.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my past students, my current students, and my future students. It is my sincere hope that the findings of this research not only serve to encourage and inspire your administrators in supporting and guiding their schools, but let this study also be proof that life is about continuous learning and personal growth. May you each continue to learn not just in academic settings but also in this great, big, wonderful world.

I would also like to dedicate this doctoral study to my brother, Michael Sean. Although we may not have always seen eye to eye, the one thing we always agreed on is the value of education and in seeing the good in the world. He was always supportive of my goals and pursuits in life, especially in education. No matter how long he may have been gone to travel the world, he was always present to celebrate each and every educational milestone until now. May he be looking down and smiling that beautiful older brother smile of pride.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to acknowledge the phenomenal teachers who served as my participants in this study. Their dedication to our profession and to their students is truly inspirational. I would also like to acknowledge my mentors within the school district who have guided me, taught me, and trusted me with so many amazing projects and positions. I am grateful every day to be working amongst some of the most respected educators in not only our county, but in the state of California. I am also indebted to my committee chair, Dr. Elizabeth Warren. Her humor and insight, along with constant encouragement and input was the key to my successful completion of this study. Rounding out my committee were committee member Dr. Elsie Szecsy and University Research Reviewer Dr. John Hendricks who provided an abundant amount of valuable insight and assistance.

To my wonderful parents, Mike and Linda, who continue to love and support me through all of my pursuits in life. My Aunt Susan and Grandmother Mercedes who have been my biggest cheerleaders in life, and to my dearest friend, Jennifer, for her constant love and support.

Finally, to my little family made up of one incredible little pup, Yahtzee, and the most amazing partner one could ask for, Terri. Yahtzee was a constant by my side throughout this process (literally!) which earned him the title of editor-in-chief during the writing of this study. Terri—You truly are a blessing to me and my life. Your love, encouragement, and optimism keep me going every day. I honestly do not believe that I could have completed this task without you, nor do I believe I would ever be as happy as I am with you by my side. I love you more than rainbows.

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Section 1: The Problem

More than ever before, district administrators are asking classroom teachers to know and do more and to consider opinions about pedagogy and curriculum that originate outside the school system that they may or may not agree with (Dufour & Marzano, 2011). States, sites, and districts are making changes to content standards, major shifts are occurring in the area of instructional paradigms, and more stakeholders are analyzing student achievement at a far deeper level (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Fullan, 2014).

The pressure to perform in this evolving and increasingly demanding climate means that districts and school administrators must find effective ways to support teachers as they learn and implement new curriculum and strategies into their classrooms. Additionally, they must provide this support with less time and an increasingly diverse student population (The Wallace Foundation, 2012). Unfortunately, the conflicting role principals and assistant principals play with regard to teacher evaluation can hamper administrative support. As noted in a hallmark report by Toch and Rothman (2008):

> The evaluations themselves are typically of little value—a single, fleeting classroom visit by a principal or other building administrator untrained in evaluation, wielding a checklist of classroom conditions and teacher behaviors that often don't even focus directly on the quality of teacher instruction. It's typically a couple of dozen items on a list: "Is presentably dressed," "Starts on time," "Room is safe," "The lesson occupies students.... But, in most instances, it's nothing more than marking "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory." (p. 2)

Hallinger (2011) asserted that today's administrators are not equipped to carry out the type of evaluations that lead to improve instruction in the classroom while building teachers' efficacy. Similar studies support the finding that evaluations are poorly designed and of little benefit to teachers (Louis, Leithwood, Wihlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Moonlenaar, Daley, & Sleegers, 2010).

In this doctoral study, I explored possible reasons teachers are hesitant to invite, or even allow, administrators to work alongside them as peer coaches as they identify areas for growth, attend professional development, and most importantly, as they struggle with the trial and error that takes place during initial attempts at implementing what they have learned. The social implication of this research is improvement of classroom practice as teachers and administrators work together to provide rich, meaningful, and effective instruction for the benefit of all students.

Definition of the Problem

A large urban school district in Southern California has encouraged secondary-level administrators to attend trainings alongside their teachers and to assist in facilitating classroom implementation of what teachers have learned. The goal is to have administrators and teachers work collegially with one another as instructional peer coaches for the purpose of improving instruction (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the word *administrator* refers to the highest-ranking supervisor on a school site, which includes principal, dean, and headmaster. Peer coaching, initially highlighted in seminal work by Showers and Joyce (1995), has proven

to be an effective support for helping teachers improve their practice (Allen, Pianta, & Mikami, 2011).

In this district, however, although administrators have attended the same trainings as teachers and have offered to participate as peer coaches alongside them, less than 10% of teachers have accepted the offer according to site principals (R. Patterson, personal communication, September 7, 2013). Peer coaching is a support structure teachers have embraced with one another but have not taken the opportunity provided by inviting administrators to join in. Therefore, reasons for the lack of administrative inclusion were the focus of this study. The first of two likely possibilities is that teachers have a difficult time seeing administrators as something other than their evaluator (Fullan, 2014; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2013). In addition, teachers assert that summative evaluations can lead to negatives feelings and apathy, resulting in teachers not willing to alter classroom behavior. Teachers in this case perceive administrators as judging their new strategy implementation in terms of accountability and evaluation rather than for support and problem solving. Platt, Tripp, Ogden, and Fraser, (2000) found that even administrators take this into consideration because they worry that their teachers will be hurt when confronted with areas of improvement through the evaluation process. A standard practice in schools is the evaluation of teachers' performance, which does serve a purpose; however, evaluation does not need to be the only time when administrators and teachers work together on instructional practice. Glickman et al. (2013) proposed that administrators can and should engage in two complementary types of teacher interaction. They referred to the practice of teacher evaluation as *directive supervision* and explained

that in this role the administrator "informs, directs, models, and assesses known standards and competencies of teachers" (p. 79). Glickman et al. called the second role *collaborative supervision*, which is when the administrator and teacher work together to solve problems, experiment, and implement teaching strategies that seem most likely to affect a change in teacher practice and student learning.

The second possible reason for lack of inclusion is that teachers may lack confidence in administrator feedback (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2011; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). Dufour and Marzano (2011) have found that a primary component teachers identify as crucial to any coaching relationship is trust. They asserted that focused feedback and practice are essential components for teachers to refine their expertise; however, teachers need to trust that the feedback given by any coach, including an administrator, will be genuine and beneficial to their practice (Marzano et al., 2011).

In this study, I explored the relationship between administrators and teachers in one urban unified school district, specifically relating to classroom observations and time to work collaboratively on improving instruction (intermediate and high schools only). The Orange Grove School District is located in Southern California. There are 18 secondary schools total: seven comprehensive high schools, one continuation high school, and 10 intermediate schools. Participants for this study were selected from the intermediate and comprehensive high schools who served in leadership roles or as department chairs on their campus and have participated in trainings focused on peer coaching and gradual release of responsibility.

Rationale

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of the relationship between administrators and teachers during implementation of strategies learned during professional development. The importance of gaining a greater understanding of this relationship is twofold. First, the administrative role is changing to now include going into classrooms to observe and give nonevaluative feedback to teachers after they have attended professional development, with the intention that the teachers work collegially with the administrator in an effort to improve practice. This approach in working with teachers differs from past practice in that while administrators have always been in teachers' classrooms, it was usually for evaluation purposes only. Administrators are now being asked to shift their roles and serve as peer coaches, working closely on lesson design and delivery with teachers in a collaborative relationship. In addition, administrators are still expected to go back into the classrooms and evaluate these same teachers for their annual performance reviews. This is a difficult transition for both parties, particularly for the teachers. Some teachers are more willing in today's educational culture to open their doors for administrators and peers to come in and observe, particularly within the school and district that this study is focusing on. However, the vast majority of these observations are still initiated by the site or district administrators, not by the teachers.

The second reason that this research is important is that with shifts in curriculum surrounding the transition to common core standards, teachers are being asked to a much greater extent to change instructional practices. These shifts require new ways of thinking

about instructional routines, student expectations, tasks, and ways to assess mastery (Fullan, 2014). One challenge inherent in these new ways of thinking and teaching is that teachers want and need experience behind the feedback they receive from administrators; they want to know that the feedback is based on more than just theory or research (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). For administrators to be able to work together with teachers in such a way that their knowledge and experience is valued, it will take more than just the administrators showing up on professional development days, participating in cursory classroom observations, and dropping in on department release days.

Examining how administrators and teachers can build instructional relationships apart from, yet alongside, the evaluation process is therefore not just valuable, but also critical to the success of a school. With curriculum and instruction becoming more sophisticated and complex, administrators and teachers can no longer function as two separate groups striving to serve two separate functions. A new paradigm and supporting structures must be identified that will bring these two together with one goal in mind, and that goal is increased student achievement leading to postsecondary success. This research was intended to identify that paradigm and those structures.

Special Terms

The following definitions apply to the terms used throughout this paper:

Administrative support: Providing teachers with the information, resources, and training necessary to achieve school and district goals, and giving them the time and structures that lead to high level instruction in the classroom (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2013).

Administrator: The highest-ranking supervisor on a school site, which includes principal, dean, and headmaster.

Gradual Release of Responsibility lesson design framework: A framework developed by Fisher and Frey (2013) that is a particular, structured way of teaching based on the process of shifting responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student through a series of distinct phases.

Instructional Leadership Team (ILT): is a select group of teachers on a school site who have been chosen by the administrator. Teachers on the ILT are department chairs and leaders within their departments, and participation is voluntary. There is at least one teacher from each department represented on the ILT at each school site.

Instructional Rounds: As described by City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel (2010) is "a model that embodies a specific set of ideas about how practitioners work together to solve common problems and to improve their practice" (p. 3).

Peer coaching: A structured process in which colleagues work together to build new skills, reflect on practice, share ideas, teach one another, and/or solve problems of practice (Gottesman, 2009).

Professional development: A wide range of formal interactions and activities focusing on one's teaching practice within the classroom and are implemented to assist in increasing student achievement. (Desimone, 2011; OECD, 2009).

Teacher evaluation: The summative judgments made by administrators that are placed in a teacher's personnel file for the purpose of documenting the quality of that teacher's performance (Marshall, 2009).

Significance of the Problem

Administrators have a finite amount of time to oversee the daily activities and logistics of running a school, but they must also find time to also be instructional leaders on their campuses (Marzano et al., 2011). Assuming that teachers are receiving quality professional development regarding both content and instructional strategies, the challenge then is to make sure that administrators are also competent and confident in these same instructional strategies in order to interact with teachers as instructional leaders. With this in mind, administrators cannot focus solely on working with each individual teacher on staff in a peer coaching setting. It is impossible with the scheme of time during a day. A system has to be developed that allows administrators to lead the staff instructionally, build respectful, nonevaluative relationships with each teacher, and ensure that teachers see the administrator as an instructional leader who understands not only the theory, but also what happens within a class period of instruction and the work and effort put into planning quality lessons for students.

Research Question

The problem that framed this study was how administrators and teachers can work alternately in a system that requires both evaluation of performance and collaboration to focus on improving instruction within the classroom. The perceived competing nature of evaluation and collaboration can oftentimes lead teachers to experience trepidation or feel anxious when working alongside administrators. For a school to reach maximum potential, administration and teachers must find ways to work together, capitalizing on each person's strengths and talents, regardless of title or position.

The central research question guiding this study was:

- How does the conflicting role of administrator-as-evaluator and administrator-as-collaborator hinder opportunities for site administrators to work as peer coaches with teachers as they strive to improve their instructional practice?

Two additional subquestions were:

- What are teachers' attitudes towards administrators observing and providing feedback during implementation of newly learned strategies?
- What practices currently exist that inhibit or encourage positive nonevaluative collaboration between administrators and teachers?

Review of Literature

The literature review is broken into two categories: problem of practice and conceptual framework. The problem of practice focuses on the competing role of principal as evaluator and principal as collaborator, followed by the conceptual framework of professional development and transfer of training. Figure 1 illustrates all areas within the literature review.

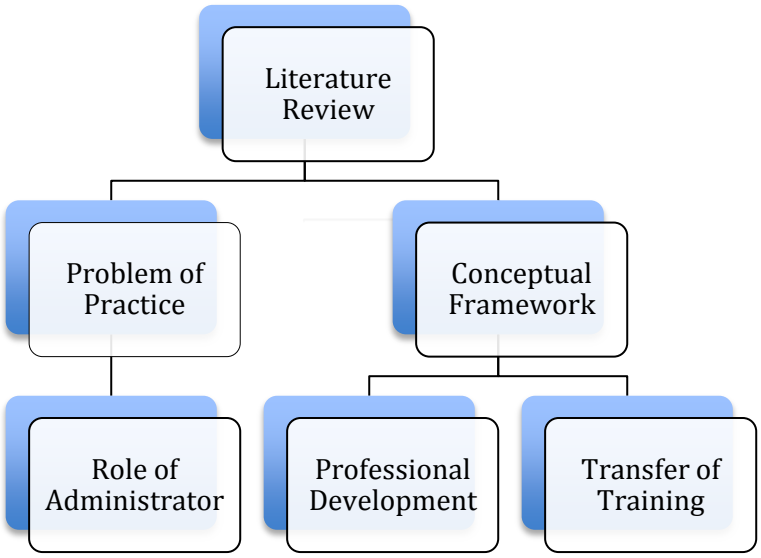


Figure 1. Elements of the literature review.

Problem of Practice

Competing Roles of the Principal

Not that long ago the job of a high school administrator was to make sure the school was operating smoothly and the students were safe. At the same time, teachers' doors were closed and they were the sole controller and instructor within those four walls. Especially over the past 15–20 years, these roles have shifted, the emphasis of administration moving from a role of supervision to evaluation (Marzano et al., 2011). Teachers' doors are open, collaboration takes place, and administrators are in and out of classrooms daily. However, the shift of administrators solely as evaluators to dual roles as evaluators and instructional leaders is a newer concept for teachers. The perception is often that the administrators do not know curriculum nor how to teach in the classroom. Administrators have such a wide variety of backgrounds, and often people forget they

used to be instructors, even if it has been so long since they were in the classroom; as a result, their opinions and feedback are not always taken seriously. Administrators who participate in professional development along with teachers and demonstrate that they are learners alongside their staff, engaging in conversation, may help foster the relationship between administration and teachers as one that is constructive without being evaluative (Fullan, 2013).

Administrative support can no longer be solely equated to the evaluation process. Administrators are instructional leaders and supervisors who must oversee quality practice in the classroom. Fullan (2014) identified the core work of the principal as learning leader (p. 56). With that charge, administrators have the responsibility to ensure that not only is quality instruction taking place, but also that teachers are incorporating skills and strategies into effective lessons. To do so, administrators, too, must be well trained and versed in instruction and strategies for support to take place. Palandra (2010) stated that in order for school reform to be effective, administrative instructional leaders must take an active role, ensuring that "students are taught consistently and effectively, that there are no major discrepancies between written and the taught curriculum, and that teachers receive the support they need to develop and enhance their professional skills" (p. 221). To be able to do this, administrators must be well versed in standards, lesson design, and instructional strategies along with the ability to be consistent with all of these components when working with a diverse faculty.

With such a leadership role for administrators, teachers may begin to think of administrators as not only connected to evaluation but to see administrators as

instructional leaders and allies in instruction when administrators can demonstrate their knowledge and passion of instruction and strategies because it is what is best for students. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) gave six guidelines to follow for administrators and districts to create positive, nonevaluative relationships with teachers: "1) Promote professional capital vigorously and courageously. 2) Know your people: understand their culture. 3) Secure leadership stability and sustainability. 4) Beware of contrived collegiality. 5) Reach out beyond your borders. 6) Be evidence-informed, not data-driven" (p. 165). Although these relationships will take time, and administrators must be the catalyst for this change, if approached with care and sensitivity, a nonevaluative, strong relationship built on learning and trust can develop.

Conversations with principals and personal observations of department meetings and collaboration have demonstrated that teachers in the district have positive and collegial relationships with administration; however, collegiality has not crossed over into the realm of inviting or even accepting administrators as instructional partners. Course-alike teachers and department colleagues have engaged together in several lesson studies over the past 2 years, without any of these groups initiating inclusion of administration, even though it has been offered (personal communication with principal, June 2014 and November 2014). Fullan (2014) argued that the principal has both the responsibility and the opportunities to impact teaching and learning, and yet at this school, as in many others, there seems to be a gap between what could be done and what is actually happening.

Conceptual Framework

Professional Development

There are many different perspectives on professional development in education, some seeing professional development as an opportunity, while others viewing it as wasted time away from classroom and students (Schmoker, 2011). However, as in many professions, on-going training and collaboration with colleagues is the primary method for teachers to stay current and improve instructional practice. Timperley (2011) asserted that engaging in on-going learning and inquiry is at the core of professionalism. Professional development, as defined in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of 90,000 teachers and administrators in 23 countries, is "activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher" (OECD, 2009, p. 49). However, simply attending training or a workshop is often only enough to provide foundational knowledge of new content or a skill, and not enough for teachers to effectively change practice in the classroom, especially systemic change. The actions that take place after training are critical and can be a determining factor regarding how well, or even if, true change in practice takes place. Implementation of the new knowledge gained from professional development is essential to creating learning environments that serve all students at a high level and requires the commitment of all stakeholders' teachers, administrators, and students (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Richardson, & Orpanos, 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Quick, Holtzman, & Chaney, 2009).

Principles or elements crucial to effective professional development are: active learning, attending to motivations of the learner, and development of frameworks that incorporate practice into the learning (Dumont, Istance, & Benavides, 2010) and characteristics of the participant, structure of the training, and support provided by the school site (Opfer & Pedder, 2010).

The need for active learning shares a theoretical background with constructivism, which asserts that knowledge is constructed by the learner, not by those who teach, and occurs most effectively in a social setting (Bhutto & Chhapra, 2013). In active learning, an emphasis is placed on the learner doing something, engaging with the content and the outside world; learning is not a passive process. Active learning also draws from situated cognition theory placing importance in the context of learning, acknowledging that people do not learn facts in isolation, but in relationship to what they already know and to their values and beliefs. Analysis of literature by Opfer and Pedder (2011) supported the findings of Dumont et al. and Bhutto and Chhapra by identifying several well documented factors that contribute to the success of teacher trainings: time for participants to collaborate, peer observation and feedback, and follow-up that is built into teachers' regular work days.

Motivations of the learner (Dumont et al., 2010) and characteristics of the learner (Opfer & Pedder, 2010) referred to recognizing and addressing the individual needs of the learners themselves and the role that each learner plays in the training process. Timperley (2011) saw this as being aware of and sensitive to the emotions of individuals and helping participants self-regulate their learning. With this in mind, it is essential for

the principal to set certain goals prior to training and have systems in place for follow-up afterwards.

Moreover, effective professional development, according to Dumont et al. (2010), recognized that the learning of factual knowledge and skills cannot be separated from how that knowledge is to be implemented into the classroom; learning and implementation must be incorporated into one process (Timperley, 2011) and must be supported by formal structures (Forte, Humphreys, & Park, 2012; Rutherford, 2010). Furthermore, Dumont et al. (2010) proposed that professional learning is most effective when incorporated into the regular practice of the school day, hence the necessity to have structures in place for before, during, and following training.

Research highlights an additional element necessary for effective professional development, which is the amount of time spent on training and multiple opportunities to practice (Blume et al., 2010; Timperley, 2011). Changing teachers' behavior and fostering long-term changes in practice is not a simple or easy process (Avalos, 2011). Learners must integrate new knowledge through the process of trial and error, with multiple chances to solve problems that arise. Opfer and Pedder (2010) argued that a change in teacher behavior due to engaging in some form of professional development depends upon a teacher's beliefs, experience, and practices. Consequently, a sustained change in teacher behavior cannot be viewed as a singular event, or even a sequential process. Changes in behavior must be coupled with a change in beliefs, which taken together make up a reciprocal relationship; practice changes belief, and belief changes practice (Opfer & Pedder, 2010, 2011).

Regarding professional development, O'Connell (2010) found that schools with a systemic program grounded in evidence with just a few strategic goals are more likely to achieve an improvement in teacher effectiveness and student achievement than those that have no focus. Professional development programs that center on a few high leverage strategies allow for stronger support mechanisms and purposeful follow-through (Avalos, 2011). Clear expectations, goals, and structure in place that is well communicated to the staff provide an environment in which professional development will be beneficial in the long term.

Professional development is not simply about increasing the knowledge base of teachers, but ultimately about creating learning environments where the final result is improved learning for students. In this way, the goal of professional development should not be the positive review of a workshop immediately following training, but whether or not it changes instructional practice in a way that benefits students (Hill, 2009; Sawchuck & Keller, 2010; Yendol-Hoppey, 2010). The process by which teachers take the newly learned content or instructional strategy and attempt to consistently apply that learning into their everyday practice is critical. However, there are times in which there is no follow up within the classroom. Administrators need to create formal structures that allow teachers to try new practices in their classrooms in a nonthreatening way. Administrators can play an integral part in that process and build strong relationships within departments and amongst individual teachers, as well as structure departments that work together collaboratively.

Transfer of Training

The missing link for much professional development is the step in which educators take what they have learned and apply it to practice, otherwise known as transfer of training. According to Kaiser, Kaminski, and Foley (2013), transfer of training is the ability to apply knowledge and skills learned in one setting to another. Without planned, strategic follow up, however, transfer of training often will not take place effectively when left only to the teacher to do on his or her own (Della Sala & Anderson, 2012).

The goal of professional development is a sustained change in teacher practice as a result of new learning (De Rijdt, Stes, van der Vlueten, & Dochy, 2013). Original learning is not enough, nor is the degree to which participants had a positive experience during training. The extent to which the learning leads to meaningful changes in performance is of paramount concern (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010). Blume et al. (2010) discovered that interest in transfer of training dates back to the early 1900s and that the research and literature on transfer of training has roots in several disciplines including psychology, business management, education, and organizational behavior. Laker and Powell (2011) defined transfer of training as the degree to which what is learned in training is implemented on the job and improves job-related performance.

A review of literature has revealed that transfer of training falls into several categories: hard skills versus soft skills (referring to the specific content), near and far (referring to the type of learning environment), and low road and high road (which applies to the degree of difficulty of transfer; Laker & Powell, 2011; Snowman &

McCown, 2012). Hard skills include those of a technical nature whereas soft skills refer more to those that are interpersonal and intrapersonal. Near transfer occurs when the learning takes place in a similar environment to where the skill will be implemented, such as a demonstration lesson or a coteaching situation in a classroom of students. Far transfer refers to a learning environment that is not similar to the environment in which the new skill will be used, such as workshops taking place in a large room of teachers where lectures and activities take place, with no students (Blume et al., 2010). Low road and high road transfers refer to the ease with which the skill can be transferred. If the skill is concrete and can easily be transferred into practice, it is low road transfer. High road transfer, in contrast, refers to types of skills that are presented in abstract ways, and transfer into practice takes interpretation and effort to apply (Snowman & McCown, 2012). Of each of these three categories of transfer, research supports the assertions that hard skills, near transfer, and low road transfer demonstrate higher rates of success with regard to training participants implementing and sustaining changes in workplace behavior (De Rijdt, 2013; Lake & Powell, 2011; Snowman & McCown, 2012).

The most generally accepted and cited model of transfer, originally proposed by Baldwin and Ford (1988), included three areas or aspects of training that can influence the transfer process: characteristics of the trainees, design of the training, and work environment (Blume et al., 2011; De Rijdt et al., 2013; Grossman & Salas, 2011). Characteristics of the individual include factors such as motivation, input into decisions, self-efficacy, cognitive ability, and locus of control (Addy & Blanchard, 2010; Archambault, Wetzel, Foulger, & Williams, 2010; Chitpin, 2011; Sarikaya, Kadaca,

Yeen, & Cali, 2010). Design of the training includes goals and objectives, content relevance, instructional strategies, and opportunities to practice (Blume et al., 2010; Wood & Chen, 2011). Work environment refers to the trainee's normal work climate, support provided by peers and supervisors, and operational constraints that could prevent the performance or practice of the learned behavior on the job (Chiaburu et al., 2010; Grossman & Salas, 2011).

Meta-analyses conducted by Blume et al. (2010) and De Rijdt et al. (2013) found that most research on the topic of transfer of training focuses on the actual design of training, whereas the least amount of attention is given to participant motivation. Regarding specific variables and their relationship to transfer, learning goals, content relevance, practice and feedback, and peer support show the greatest positive influence on transfer. Supervisor support, on the other hand, is identified as a factor that needs further clarification and study (Chiaburu et al., 2011; De Rijdt, 2013; Govaerts & Dochy, 2014), especially as it relates to teacher self-efficacy.

Two types of self-efficacy pertain to transfer of training, pretraining and posttraining self-efficacy (Gegenfurtner, 2011). The former relates to a person's confidence in their ability to learn the material being taught, the latter a person's confidence in their ability to implement what they have learned. Research has found that pretraining self-efficacy can be strengthened by peer and supervisor encouragement and feedback, while posttraining self-efficacy increases when trainees are given multiple opportunities to practice a skill during training (Gegenfurtner, Vauras, & Veermans, 2012). Supervisor feedback, according to Wood and Chen (2011), should be specific and

given face-to-face. Feedback from peers, reported Martin (2010b), can overcome the influence of an otherwise nonconducive work environment, and team meetings have been found to positively impact transfer (Martin, 2010a). Cianci, Klein, and Seijts (2010) cautioned that not all feedback is beneficial, suggesting that negative feedback or the perception of unfair management practices can interfere with transfer goals.

Research on transfer of training supports the assertion that different elements of a training, such as conditions, environment, presentation, and follow-up, do have an impact on the success of transfer and a sustained change in practice (Benseman, 2010; Kaiser et al, 2013). Ideally, the supervisor and participant should discuss, before training, the expectations for both learning and applying the training content as well as behavioral changes that should result (Weisweiler, 2013). Furthermore, Van den Bossche and Segers (2013) and Grossman and Salas (2011) concluded from analysis of literature that support of the supervisor and peer involvement have a powerful impact on successful transfer, pointing out that research suggests that these, of all environmental factors, have the strongest influence on improving rates of transfer.

Summary

A review of the literature on professional development, transfer of training, and administrative support coupled with observations of the study site show that there is a gap between how teachers see administrators' role in professional development and what that role needs to be. Professional development is more than just learning a concept through training; it is taking the newly learned strategy coupled with prior knowledge and strong collaboration environments in which transfer of the training will be implemented. This

scenario includes the teacher, peer group, and administrator. Successful professional development that includes a strong learning, nonevaluative collaboration between the teachers and administrators has great potential to create positive learning relationships as well as high-level instruction that will benefit all students. These relationships are nurtured when there is a collaborative culture (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), where there is an agreement on values as well as the agreement that disagreements will happen. Collaborative cultures foster environments of discussion, hard work, responsibility, and pride in the school as a learning environment (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Collaborative cultures are built on relationships, and these relationships must include administrators. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) stated, "getting behaviors going that demonstrate trust, and building new norms founded on trust, are perhaps the best ways to increase trust" (p. 114) within a faculty and administration.

Implications

To achieve the best instruction in classes, that of high quality and that meets the needs of all students, and if this type of instruction comes about by learning and practicing new instructional strategies, then teachers cannot just attend training, but must work in collaboration with administration to see that faithful and authentic implementation takes place. Teacher leadership must be fostered by the administration, while focusing in on the constant betterment of instruction (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Furthermore, if administrators are to be seen as competent and effective instructional leaders in this process, a relationship of trust must be built. Administrators can no longer be seen as just managers and evaluators. They must be

proactive in establishing and fostering trustworthy and valued relationships with teachers so that teachers feel empowered to try what they are learning without fear of judgment. Administrators must take risks, continue to seek new ideas, take advantage of instructional learning opportunities, and communicate with colleagues (Fullan, 2012). Just as teachers ask students to take risks with the teacher alongside to guide and help, educators must create systems that allow teachers and administrators to do the same.

Knowing that district and site administrators have limited time to read about current research, let alone to conduct their own, it seemed most likely that an appropriate project would be a white paper discussing the benefits of shifting paradigms with regard to administrator involvement in the implementation of professional development. A white paper is a type of report that is targeted to a specific audience and has a specific purpose, to advocate for a position or to take a certain course of action (Purdue Writing Center, 2010).

The white paper can be used as a foundation either at the district level or the site level to begin exploring different opportunities for administrators and teachers to work collaboratively. The white paper can provide information on how administrators can be more authentically involved with teacher trainings and how to create systematic structures that ensure school site collaboration includes all stakeholders in effective and meaningful ways. Although size of the study school district makes the use of a white paper particularly beneficial since it will allow for many variations of how to implement the findings, any district or individual site, regardless of size, would also find the information helpful as all educational institutions rely on teachers' professional

development and collaboration as means to increase student achievement. Additionally, a white paper could serve as the basis for future journal articles or conference presentations.

Section 1 of this project study identified the problem of practice, the rationale for choosing this particular problem, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that encompass it. Section 2 will identify and discuss the proposed research methodology, rationale for why this methodology was chosen, data collection and analysis, and treatment and protection of participants.

Section 2: The Methodology

I conducted research to explore potential reasons why there is often little to no long-term impact on instructional practice after teachers attend professional development and if there are ways that administrators can assist with a more successful transfer of training. Of most interest to me was the administrator's roles in assisting teachers achieve effective, long-term transfer. The participants of this study were a selected group of secondary teachers in one suburban school district. The main goal for carrying out this exploration was to better understand potential causes for failed implementation of strategies and where administrators can become an integral part in this learning process. It is this goal that drove the decision to collect rich and detailed qualitative data from a select group of teachers, designed to gain a deeper understanding of participant beliefs, feelings, and opinions, as suggested by Creswell (2012) for such research. The research question for this study was: How do the conflicting roles of administrator-as-evaluator and administrator-as-collaborator impact opportunities for site administrators to work as peer coaches with teachers as they strive to improve their instructional practice? This central question had two additional subquestions:

- What are teachers' attitudes towards administrators observing and providing feedback during implementation of newly learned strategies?
- What practices currently exist that encourage or inhibit positive nonevaluative collaboration between administrators and teachers?

Research Design and Approach

The methodology design chosen for this research was case study. The case study tradition involves the "in-depth analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam, 2009, p. 38). In case study research a *case* can refer to a single person, an event or activity, or even a process (Creswell, 2012). Bounded refers to the case(s) being "separated out for study in terms of a specific time, place, or physical boundary" (Creswell, 2012, p. 465).

I chose case study for this project because the research and subsequent findings are intended to "focus on the complexity within the case, on its uniqueness, and its linkage to the social context of which it is a part" (Glesne, 2011, p. 22). The case studied was a process, specifically the initial training and follow-up implementation of the gradual release of responsibility lesson design framework. Furthermore, with respect to the social context, there are many ways that teachers and administrators interact on a day-to-day basis, contributing to an overall cultural environment on a school campus. But it is the unique relationship of the administration to the teacher when the teacher is learning and experimenting with a new instructional strategy that requires investigation, all the while keeping in mind that this one particular aspect of the overall relationship is influenced, and can influence, all other aspects.

Justification of the Research Design

The case study methodology is appropriate when the researcher's goal is to emphasize detail and context about a bounded event or condition and the experiences and relationships of the people involved (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2013). Case study is of particular value when exploring real-life situations, problems, or issues (Yin, 2013).

Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) asserted that case study research is useful when seeking greater understanding of a situation, person, or group. Additionally, the purpose for choosing case study research was to use the findings from intensely studying a single unit to make generalizations across a larger set of units (Glesne, 2011).

I also considered the ethnographical tradition; however, I was not seeking to build a detailed record of beliefs or behaviors over time (Creswell, 2012). In addition, I was not looking for information related to culture sharing or relationships among the group participants. Narrative research was also an initial consideration; however, I rejected it because I was not intending to tell the individual stories of participants nor in capturing the ways the participants experience their environment as a whole (Merriam, 2009). Lastly, I contemplated phenomenology but also rejected it because at the heart of phenomenology is the interest in studying the perspectives of participants over an extended period of time as separate viewpoints of reality, placing value therefore on divergence.

Participants

The participants in this research study were 10 teachers from a suburban school district in Southern California, intermediate and high school level only. A homogenous, purposeful participant group determined by defining characteristics comprised the sample population (Creswell, 2012). The characteristics used to select the teachers was that they have all attended initial and follow up trainings on the use of the gradual release of responsibility lesson design with an expectation that the teachers were to integrate this framework into their daily lesson planning. Initial training involved one 7-hour session,

while follow up trainings consisted of 1- to 2-hour collaboration sessions spanning the course of the school year, approximately 1–2 sessions per quarter. In addition, all teachers in this participant group were instructional leaders and/or department chairs at their individual school sites and were members of their school site's Instructional Leadership Team.

Table 1 summarizes teaching experience for all teachers in the study, measured in number of years of experience. According to the data, teachers in this study were evenly distributed from 1–5 years of experience to 21 and more years. I collected this information to be used during data analysis when exploring possible patterns or connections between respondent answers and years of experience. I also collected gender information, summarized in Table 2, which shows that all of the participants except one were female.

Table 1

Years of Experience - Teachers

Years Teaching	*n*	%
1-5	2	20%
6-10	1	10%
11-15	2	20%
16-20	2	20%
21-30+	3	30%
Total	10	100%

Table 2

Gender of Teachers

Gender	*n*	%
Female	9	90%
Male	1	10%
Total	10	100%

In addition, the teacher participants were asked to report their primary content area so as to support the claim that the findings were not limited to teachers of any one particular subject. Table 3 includes detailed information about the content area of the teacher participants. All participants within this study taught in different content areas.

Table 3

Primary Subject Content Area

Subject Area	n	%
AVID	1	10%
English	1	10%
English Language Development	1	10%
Math	1	10%
Physical Education	1	10%
Science	1	10%
Social Studies/History	1	10%
Special Education	1	10%
Visual and Performing Arts	1	10%
World Language	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Justification of the Number of Participants

Ten classroom teachers participated in this study. All participants completed the initial questionnaire and participated in the focus group interview. In qualitative research, there are many factors to be considered when determining sample size; saturation is one of those factors and was the goal for this research. Saturation is commonly understood to be the point at which enough data has been collected to provide valid conclusions. Some researchers suggest standard guidelines regarding sample size (Mason, 2010), and others believe that a number of factors, apart from sample size, determine when a study has reached saturation (Rapely, 2011; Silverman, 2010). Additional factors that influence

sample size include expertise in the subject to be studied and the use of multiple and in-depth interviews with the same participant, both of which reduce the overall number of participants needed.

Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) analyzed their own work involving reproductive health care in Africa, specifically to determine at what point the data revealed no new codes, thus reaching saturation. They found that out of 36 codes resulting from 60 interviews, 34 of the codes emerged from the first six participants. What they concluded that for sample populations with a high level of homogeneity, a smaller number of interviews "may be sufficient to enable development of meaningful themes and useful interpretations" (Guest et al., 2006, p. 78).

Glesne (2011) concurred that a smaller sample size can be appropriate for qualitative studies when "for depth of understanding you repeatedly spend extended periods with fewer respondents" (p. 46). Creswell (2012) asserted that the fewer participants a researcher studies, the richer the data can be. Accordingly, this case study was limited to 10 teachers and three administrators for the express purpose of spending more time with each participant to collect elaborate and detailed information. This number was justified since the information sought was specific to a single event involving this particular group of people.

To strengthen the generalizability of the findings for this particular research study, I ensured that each content area at the secondary level was represented in the participant group as well as variation in gender, age, and experience, as recommended by Lodico et al. (2010) and Merriam (2009). Furthermore, Merriam proposed that arguments against

case study based on limited generalizability fail to recognize the point of doing this type of research where detailed information related to beliefs, opinions, and feelings are explored. Merriam proposed that formal generalization is overvalued in qualitative research and the importance of a single example is underestimated. Silverman (2010) supported Merriam's arguments, proposing that to make data analysis more effective, the body of data collected should be limited. Silverman cautioned, however, that when working with a smaller sample population, the findings of a study should be expressed as exploratory rather than definitive, with the focus more on the specific population and setting, limited as it may be, thus opening up further analytical possibilities (p. 37).

Therefore, while the number of participants in this study was limited to 10, research supports the use of smaller participant pools when the purpose of the study is to seek in-depth and detailed information that requires more time to be spent with each participant, especially when the findings depend upon personal opinion, feelings, and perceptions and are exploratory in nature.

Access to Participants

The community partner involved in this study requiring a letter of cooperation was the school district; therefore, I obtained approval to conduct the study and access participants from the assistant superintendent of secondary education at the district level. A copy of the letter of cooperation is included as Appendix B. All potential participants received a letter inviting them to participate, included as Appendix C. The letter of invitation described participant involvement including purpose and scope of the study, confidentiality, and data collection procedures. The letter solicited questions or points of

clarification and encouraged participants to take time to consider whether or not they want to participate before returning their consent form.

Researcher–Participant Relationship

I am currently an assistant principal at one of 18 secondary schools in the district in which this research took place; however, no participants were from the site at which I work. While the participants may have worked with me in some capacity throughout my past 15 years in the district, none of the participants were formally evaluated by me. In addition, I oversee instruction and professional development at my current campus, which allows me to work and communicate with some participants on a regular, nonevaluative basis during district workshops and trainings throughout the school year. I considered this relationship to be a benefit, rather than a hindrance to the data collection process, often referred to in research as the researcher–participant relationship (Creswell, 2012; Marvasti, 2011). As many of these teachers are familiar with me, know and understand my desire for teachers to be trained well and adequately supported, and all have a positive working relationship, it is my sincere belief that the participants would trust that this study is of value to them as professionals and would be administered in a confidential and purposeful manner. Christian and Holland (2009) have found that when participants have a high topic interest, they tend to have higher response rates and greater depth in their answers.

Researcher's Experience and Bias

I have been in education for a total of 15 years, seven as a classroom teacher, two as a district program facilitator, and six as a high school administrator. As part of my

responsibilities at each level, I have both participated in and facilitated teacher trainings, classroom coaching, and instructional improvement efforts. In order to stay current in my practice, I belong to professional organizations, read current books and journals on the topic of education, and attend professional conferences and workshops. In addition, I work closely with site principals at the secondary level and district office administration to provide teacher support.

All of the foregoing experiences, in fact, are key motivators in why I chose this particular topic of study. Knowing that improving instructional practice in the classroom is critical to providing students with a rigorous and meaningful education, and also knowing that teachers should not be expected to make these improvements on their own, I believe that ways to support that growth must be explored. These beliefs and motivations are personal, no doubt, but rather than bias or skew the research, they create a willingness to invest in and study for the sole purpose of advancing education, in whatever direction that may be. That said, however, Briggs and Coleman (2012) argued that it is difficult for researchers to remain completely bias free when working within their own system, but acknowledge that surfacing and confronting those biases enables the researcher to develop countermeasures against them.

Countermeasures taken to mitigate bias, which will be discussed more in depth later in this paper, were to peer audit and member check. Peer audit involved the two teachers who participated in the questionnaire pilot in reviewing and giving feedback on my questions and the analysis of data (Merriam, 2009). These teachers were chosen because they have general knowledge of the training that participant teachers attended as

well as their school site environment, but not specific knowledge or experience. Member checking involved sending preliminary data analysis to a few participants and asking if the inferences and conclusions had merit and were logically drawn from the data (Creswell, 2012).

Participant Protection and Participants' Rights

Any time people are being asked to share personal feelings and opinions, as is the case in qualitative research, there will always be a certain amount of risk (Briggs & Coleman, 2012; Creswell, 2012), especially when participants in the study are connected to a specific event or place as this makes it difficult to achieve complete anonymity when the findings are reported (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Keeping this in mind, careful attention was paid at all times to balancing the need to collect and report enough data to ensure credibility of findings (Briggs & Coleman, 2012) and the privacy rights of participants.

The purpose and research design of the study was explained to participants, as well as the method and audience for reporting the findings. Once notified, participants were asked to read and sign a detailed consent form, Appendix D, acknowledging that they are voluntary participants. Information on the consent form included the participant's right to ask questions at any time during the study, the right to withdraw at any time, and the policy for confidentiality. In addition, participants were made aware that during qualitative research there is no way to anticipate how each participant will respond to questions and that not all participants may agree on any given topic. Therefore, the ultimate findings of the study as a whole may or may not represent that

participant's viewpoints. Finally, participants were made aware that during the analysis and recording phase of the work, their names would be disassociated from their responses by using codes only as identifiers, as recommended by Creswell (2012).

Notification of Unforeseen or Adverse Findings

Qualitative research, by nature, involves open-ended questions that have the potential to lead in any and multiple directions. This is particularly the case when initial questioning is followed by questions that probe for elaboration and clarification (Marvasti, 2011; Silverman, 2011). It is not uncommon for participant responses to vary greatly from one another, which can be troubling for some. These differences, furthermore, could lead those participants who hold a disparate or minority viewpoint to feel uncomfortable if the overall findings of the study do not reflect what they expressed or how they feel.

Due to the potential for this type of discomfort or anxiety, participants were kept abreast of emerging patterns throughout the data analysis phase using a process called member-checking or respondent validation (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Participants were also reminded throughout the data collection and analysis phases that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time should they choose.

Withdrawal From Study

Participants of any research study have the right to withdraw from involvement at any time during the process without having to justify their reason. I explained this right to participants before the study began and included a statement about the right on the

informed consent. In addition, I also communicated procedures for how to withdraw from the study.

Not all research institutions adhere to the same policies regarding data retention once a participant has chosen to withdraw their participation. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) forbids their researchers from destroying study-related data already collected whereas the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) allows a researcher to honor a participants request to have all data destroyed. For this research study, participants who chose to withdraw had the option to have all data removed and all related paperwork destroyed, all data removed and all paperwork sealed, or they could elect to allow all data collected up to that point be used without any further involvement in the study. A copy of the intent to withdraw letter is included as Appendix F.

Data Collection

General Plan

Merriam (2009) described qualitative data as "data conveyed through words" (p. 85) consisting of direct quotations about people's feelings, opinions, and knowledge of an experience. Fink (2012) identified questionnaires as "information collection methods used to describe, compare, or explain individual and societal knowledge, feelings, values, preferences, and behavior" (p. 1). Fink acknowledged that they can be self-administered by a participant completing it alone or with assistance and can be done on paper or online.

Data for this study consisted of participant answers to a series of open-ended questions distributed via the Internet, as well as from semistructured questions asked during a focus group interview. The general data collection design is shown in Figure 2.

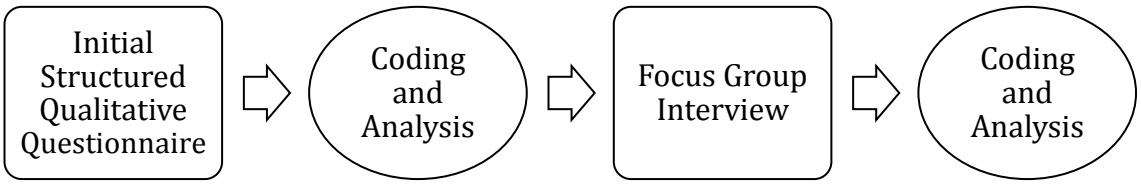


Figure 2. General data collection sequence.

I chose to use written questionnaires because they allowed participants to be more thoughtful and take more time with their responses, leading to data that were rich and detailed (Denscombe, 2010). Participants had the opportunity to be reflective with their answers, as they were not limited to a specific timeframe such as the case with face-to-face interviews or focus groups.

Another consideration when choosing the written questionnaire was that the participants would be able to maintain anonymity throughout the process, facilitating a more open and trusting environment where they felt free to reveal truthful answers without fear of reprisal. Fink (2012) has found that anonymity is a critical factor in cases where participants have feelings, opinions, or ideas that are or may be contrary to an institution, program, or group of people they are associated with. Furthermore, written questionnaires allow participants to answer openly without being influenced by reactions or perceived reactions of the interviewer (Merriam, 2009; Seale, 2012).

Written questionnaires have many benefits; however, there are potential limitations as well, though these limitations can be ameliorated through design (Fink, 2012; Seale, 2012). Limitations include the possibility that participants could be deceptive and dishonest, as well as the inability of the researcher to immediately clarify or seek elaboration about an answer. In addition, some researchers have found that written questionnaires produce poorer response rates, and if the questionnaires are e-mailed between researcher and participant, it nullifies anonymity (Briggs & Coleman, 2012).

Included in the protocol, I anticipated potential challenges, including technical difficulties that could arise when using the Internet to distribute or collect questionnaires. The protocol included a strategy for distributing and collecting questionnaires, timeframes for participants to return written answers, symbols or ways to express emotions, and finally, avenues for participants to ask questions or seek direction apart from answering the questionnaire. Lastly, to address the issue of anonymity, participants were provided alternate methods for returning their questionnaires, or they could return them via e-mail through a third party (Flick, 2014; Seale, 2012).

At the conclusion of gathering data from the individual questionnaires, all teachers were asked to join the researcher in a focus group. According to Merriam (2009), focus group participants are able to hear each other's responses and are able to engage in continued, thoughtful discussion with one another on a topic they are all familiar with. Focus groups can be beneficial in that the discussion between participants allows them to elaborate on one another's comments, leading to more in depth insight.

Often times, an abundant amount of data is collected when the topics that are discussed are understood and known by participants but are often not discussed in day to day interactions (Glesne 2011; Lodicio et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009).

Focus group interviewing relies on the skills of the facilitator and the interactions between the group members. The facilitator poses the first question as an experiential question to gain a baseline and to help get everyone talking and feeling comfortable in the group.

Although focus groups can be used at any time during the data collection process, they can be very beneficial to use after the administration of individual questionnaires to gain further insight into the data, to member check the findings, and to explore and better understand the depth of the findings (Glesne, 2011, p. 134). In this study, focus group questions were designed prior to the initial questionnaire coding and analysis of responses and additional questions were designed after coding and analysis to aid in seeking further clarification and elaboration in responses.

Specific Plan

Specific data collected for this project study included (a) an initial questionnaire, and (b) a focus group interview. Appendix G contains a sample initial questionnaire. A visual representation of the data collection process is shown in Figure 3.

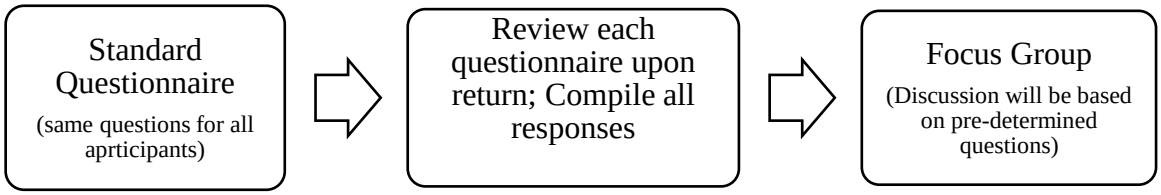


Figure 3. Specific data collection sequence.

Instrumentation and Tools

Initial Structured Questionnaire

The initial questionnaire consisted of eight open-ended narrative questions related to the research topic, with all questions the same for each participant. Behr, Kaczmirek, Bandilla, and Braun (2012) found that the longer a questionnaire is, the less detail respondents provide in their answers. Silverman (2011) stressed that then when the aim of research is to gather an authentic understanding of people, ideas, and experiences, open-ended questions are the most effective method. Therefore, what was specifically asked on the questionnaire related to but was not specifically the research questions for this study and was limited in number. The amount of time that it took participants to complete the questionnaire was estimated at 1 hour.

Particular care was used when creating the initial questions. Attention was paid to how questions were worded making every effort to avoid ambiguity, leading, and presumption, as recommended by Briggs and Coleman (2012) and Hancock and Algozzine (2011). Precise wording was used when possible, terms that had the possibility of being misunderstood were defined, and questions that included more than one element were avoided. Lastly, the order of questions were purposefully designed to ask less sensitive items first leading up to more personal or value-oriented ones. Glesne (2011) used the term *warm-up* questions for those asked at the beginning of an interview and suggested their purpose is to ease participants into feeling more comfortable with the process. For example, questions seeking information about a participant's educational demographics preceded those about how the participant feels regarding an activity or program, or their opinion about the effectiveness of an institutional practice.

I e-mailed the questionnaire to each participant along with a detailed description of how to respond, including directions for expected length of answers, writing format (handwriting or typed), how to get clarification or ask questions, and how to return the questionnaire. In addition, I provided participants with definitions for any potentially ambiguous terms as well as specific explanations for event timelines or parameters (Fink, 2012). In order to mitigate the possibility of respondent answers being too short or too general, the answer space provided was a full page, with directions to use a second page if necessary. Response boxes that begin with limited space but expand as they are typed in often result in answers that simply fit the size of the initial box (Couper, Kennedy, Conrad, & Tourangeau, 2011; Emde & Fuchs, 2012). I therefore chose to create larger

response boxes over expanding ones to demonstrate that answers were expected to be detailed narratives rather than brief statements.

The questionnaire and participant responses were distributed and collected using Microsoft Word unless a participant chose to return their answers in handwritten form. Each initial questionnaire was labeled with an identifier, which includes a number assigned to each participant and *IQ* for initial questionnaire. The number was simply a two-digit number assigned sequentially as questionnaires are returned, the first being 01 and the last being 10. The purpose of the identification number is anonymity during analysis.

Participants were given 7 days to complete this initial questionnaire; however, they could return it any time during that period. At the end of the 7 days, participants who had not yet returned their questionnaire were sent a reminder and given 3 additional days to return. At the end of the additional 3 days, any participant who had still failed to return their questionnaire was e-mailed one last time to let them know that if their answers were not received within 3 days of notice, they would be dropped from the study and would receive no further correspondence. In addition, they were given a copy of the intent to withdraw letter to sign and return. With each e-mail, the participant was given the opportunity to ask questions, express concerns, or request an extension. At all times the tone of correspondence was friendly and appreciative, with no hint of annoyance or reprisal.

Instrument Rigor and Piloting

For this study, a pilot questionnaire was distributed to two teachers, one at a district school site and one who is a Teacher on Special Assignment at the district office. These two teachers were chosen because both participated in the same gradual release of responsibility training as the sample teachers. Pilot teachers were asked to sign a letter of confidentiality (Appendix E) agreeing to not disclose any part of the research project in any way, whether in detail or in general.

The questionnaire was given to the pilot teachers with the same directions and timeframe expected for the sample teachers. After completion of pilot questionnaires, I collaborated with the two pilot teachers to determine possible confusing or weak questions, questions that should be rewritten or deleted, and questions that should be added. Specific questions asked of the pilot teachers were:

1. How long did it take to complete?
2. Were the instructions clear?
3. Were any questions ambiguous?
4. Were any questions objectionable?
5. Was the layout clear and easy to follow?
6. Were any topics omitted?

From this review, I developed a new questionnaire. Briggs and Coleman (2012) advise that a pilot instrument allows the researcher to identify inappropriate, poorly worded, or irrelevant questions, and suggest that most novice researchers fail to also pilot procedures and directions. I report the results of this pilot later in the study narrative.

Focus Groups

The primary goal of a focus group is to understand the thoughts and experiences of a select group of people to gain understanding of an issue from the perspective of the participants in the group (Liamputtong, 2013). Focus groups are beneficial when a researcher's desire is to surface factors that may influence opinions or behaviors and/or when seeking to gain a clearer understanding of different perspectives (Glesne, 2011). Advantages of using a focus group include widening the scope of responses, activating forgotten details, and bolstering confidence to share ideas and opinions.

The focus group interview conducted for this study took place after all questionnaires had been collected and analyzed, was facilitated by me, included as many of the 10 participant teachers as possible, and was transcribed by the Teacher on Special Assignment that who participated in the pilot questionnaire. The focus group met at the staff development room at one of the high schools in the district. I decided to use an outside recorder so that I could focus on listening to participant conversations in order to ask more purposeful and effective probing and follow-up questions, as recommended by Creswell (2012) and Glesne (2011). An audiotape of the interview was also made to assist the transcriber as necessary in filling in missing sections of the conversation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The transcriber had no supervisory relationship to the participants, did not work directly with any of the participants, and although she works in the district office, still carries the classification and standing of a teacher.

Methodology for conducting the focus group interview was based on work by Glesne (2011) who suggested scheduling 1 to 2 hours with the participants, but planning

for the actual conversation to last about 90 minutes to allow for extended discussion as necessary. Glesne also suggested preparing four or five good questions, broadly stated, so as to encourage open discourse and elaboration. Lodicio et al. (2010) proposed that qualitative interviews are, by nature, flexible and that the interviewer's questions merely serve as a starting point; however, key questions based on data from previous phases of the study should be identified before the focus group meets. For this study, a set of open-ended questions were drawn from the structured and unstructured questionnaires to be used as starting points during the focus group interview. These question prompts sought to clarify, probe, and fill in any remaining gaps in the data. Additionally, questions during the group interview addressed areas of divergent opinion or thought.

Data Analysis

Glesne (2011) describes data analysis as "organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can figure out what you have learned and make sense of what you have experienced" (p. 184). Creswell (2009) describes data analysis as "collecting open ended data, based on asking general questions and developing an analysis from the information supplied by participants" (p. 184). Hancock and Algozzine (2011) propose that data analysis for case study research is the recursive process of making sense of information as it is being collected, differing from other types of data analysis where data is only examined at the end of the process. Merriam (2009) takes the stance that when conducting qualitative research, analyzing the data simultaneously with collecting the data is actually the preferred way. Saldana (2009) concurs, characterizing data analysis as a cyclical process (p.8). Data analysis for this study, therefore, was recursive, and

followed the open coding and axial coding method outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2008) in their book titled: *Basics of Qualitative Research; Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory.*

Open coding, as defined by Corbin and Strauss (2008) as "the process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in the data" (p. 102), is the first phase of analysis for this project study. This initial phase involved carefully reading through all of the answers submitted by each participant in order to break the data down into discrete parts which could then be examined closely for similarities and differences (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Throughout this work, ideas, behaviors, events, and opinions that were conceptually similar or were in some way related in meaning were grouped together into concepts and were identified by a code or name. Creswell (2009) refers to this part of the coding process as organizing the material into smaller parts or segments and Marvasti (2011) refers to this as content analysis and describes it as the process of simplifying and reducing large amounts of data into organized segments.

A code in qualitative research is typically a word or phrase that assigns a descriptive, inclusive attribute for a section of data (Saldaña, 2009). The code given to each concept can either come from the analyst or from the actual words or phrases given by the participants themselves through both the initial questionnaire phase and the focus group responses. Codes that are derived from participant answers are referred to as in-vivo codes. I determined which type of code to use as the data was analyzed and concepts began to surface. Furthermore, throughout the course of this initial phase of analysis, all

succeeding data that was similar to or relates to previous data in an established concept would likewise be placed into and coded as belonging to that concept (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p 109).

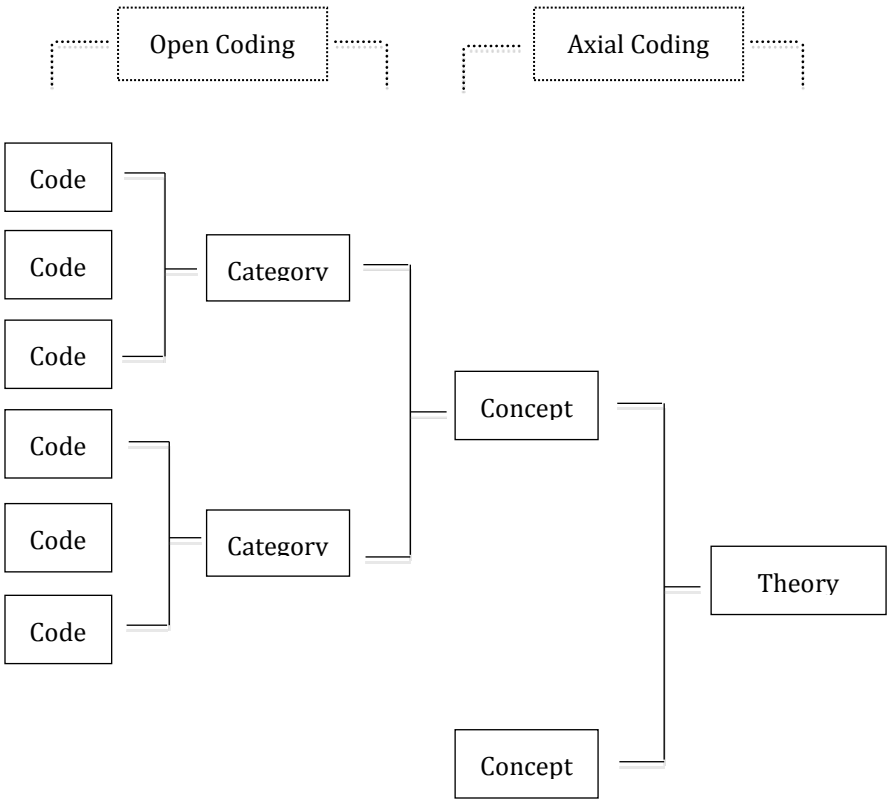
During the open coding process and throughout all data analysis, analytic memo writing was used to "document and reflect on the coding process, code choices, how the process of inquiry is taking shape, and the emergence of categories and patterns" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 32). Specifically, a spiral bound journal was kept to record activities, conversations, type and amount of work completed, and detailed information related to coding and my resulting thoughts.

Once all data had been collected and initially conceptualized, a detailed line-by-line examination took place, a process known as *microanalysis*. According to Corbin & Strauss (2008) the purpose of microanalysis is to group similar concepts into *categories* (p. 58).

Combining like concepts into larger categories is a crucial step in the analytic process because it reduces the overall number of units the analyst must work with. Corbin and Strauss (2008) further assert that categories have greater analytic value because they represent phenomena, which in turn serve to answer the question "what is going on here?" (p. 119). By answering this question, the researcher begins to frame an understanding of the ideas, problems, and concerns that matter most to participants. In addition to categories, subcategories arise from the data that shed light on dimensions and degrees within the phenomena. These subcategories provide greater detail regarding when, where, why, and how a phenomena may occur.

At this point, once all data had been categorized, the second phase, or axial coding, began. Axial coding is the process of "reassembling data that were previously fractured during open coding" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 124). Axial coding involves relating categories to subcategories specifically focusing on properties and dimensions. During axial coding, it is the answers to the questions who, what, when, why and how that the researcher is looking for. The answers to these questions, argue Corbin and Strauss (2008) allow the researcher to attach structure, and structure uncovers the circumstances in which "problems, issues, and matters pertaining to the phenomena arise" (p. 127).

The goal of axial coding is to look for repeating patterns that represent what people say or do in response to situations in which they find themselves. These patterns, referred to by Sadaña (2013) as theories, are what lead to the formation of *hypotheses* (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 135). A hypothesis connects two or more concepts attempting to answer the questions of when, where, why, or how. Creswell (2009) describes this last phase as making sense of the organized data, or making assertions, the process that Merriam (2009) suggests, is used to answer your research question. Figure 4 graphically depicts the data analysis process.



(Graphic adapted from Saldaña, 2013, p. 13)

Figure 4 - Data Analysis

In summary, I coded and aggregated the data I collected from participants and then sorted it into concepts and categories, before grouping the results into themes and patterns (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I reported the data both in narrative and table format. The narrative was illustrated by direct quotes from participants gathered from both the questionnaire and focus group formats that detail the themes and patterns coded.

Threats to Quality

Briggs and Coleman (2012) define validity as the ability of research to accurately describe the phenomenon it is intended to describe. Merriam (2009) stresses that, unlike quantitative research where reliability is based on replication, reliability of qualitative

studies should be a reflection of whether or not the findings are consistent with the data presented. She also suggests that a researcher can increase reliability of findings through the use of strategies such as member checks, inclusion of negative cases, peer review, and triangulation of data.

For this research study, validity was fostered with triangulation, member checking, peer review, and inclusion of discrepant and divergent responses. In addition, I was solely responsible for distribution and collection of participant questionnaires and analyzing all data.

Triangulation is the collection of multiple sources of data to confirm emerging findings (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Triangulation will be achieved in this study by establishing three points of data collection, all of which will be compared among and between one another. Figure 2.4 graphically depicts the three points of data and how they interact.

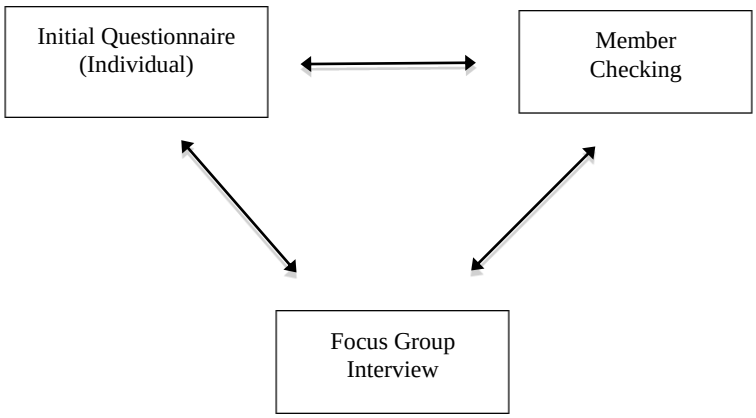


Figure 5 – Triangulation

Member checking was used throughout the process. As themes and patterns begin to emerge and inferences become necessary, researcher notes and tentative findings were sent to select participants to review and comment on. The benefits of member checking are an unbiased confirmation that the research is moving in the right direction, possibly even gaining suggestions for new directions of inquiry (Marvasti, 2011; Silverman, 2011). The purpose of this process is to ensure that inferences drawn from the raw data align with what the participants think and feel, even if the participant's explicit information is not specifically recognizable. Procedures for member checking included an e-mail being sent to the selected participants asking them to read through the provided analysis and responding back with whether they agree, disagree, or have suggestions.

Peer debriefing, also called external auditing (Creswell, 2012) includes the process of using outside persons reviewing and commenting on the researchers interpretations, inferences, and tentative findings in order to ensure that all relevant questions are being asked, to check for potential researcher bias and to make sure that all possible directions are being explored (Merriam, 2009).

Finally, all responses from participants were included and considered in the data analysis process as well as reported in the final study, even those that were not in alignment or coherence with all other responses. Creswell (2009) encourages researchers to include all information, especially that which is contrary to other respondents or emerging themes as a means to strengthen credibility. Data of this type is commonly referred to as discrepant data or deviant cases (Silverman, 2010). In qualitative research the goal is to explore open-ended research questions with no expectation of where that

data may lead. People, by nature, have differing perspectives, opinions, and feelings based largely on background and past experience. A possible result of this type of data collection is that some participant answers, or participants themselves, may fall outside the opinions, feelings, or beliefs of all others in the study. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011) argue that discrepant data is not negative, rather it can lead a researcher to consider new directions or viewpoints, ultimately creating a deeper and richer narrative. All discrepant data collected in this research study was explored further (Lodico, Spaulding & Voestle, 2010; Silverman, 2010) by asking additional or clarifying questions seeking to unearth potential contributing factors such as past experience or personal history, with the results of that exploration included in the overall findings of the report. Care was given, however, to use this new information for purposes of explanation rather than to negate it.

Findings for Research Questions

Enumerative Data

Analysis of the data to examine the frequency by which ideas and concepts appeared was done through the enumeration of the data. According to Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2011), enumeration is the process of quantifying data by identifying the number of times particular themes, codes, or ideas show up in responses. Table 4 displays a summary of the enumerated data, sorted by highest to lowest rate of incidence for each code. The scope refers to the number of participants whose responses fit into the specified code.

Table 4

Coded Data by Incidence and Scope, Highest to Lowest

Code	Code Descriptor	Incidence	Scope
+PS	Positive Peer Support	30	10
EVAL	Evaluation	26	10
+ASF	Positive Administrative Support	25	6
-ASF	Negative Administrative Support	22	10
-PD	Negative Professional Development	22	10
+TOT	Positive Transfer of Training	16	10
+PD	Positive Professional Development	15	10
CP	Confidence in Peers	14	6
TLC	Teacher Lack of Confidence in Administrator	14	6
ROA	Role of Administrator	13	8
FLU	Follow-up	13	2
TRT	Trust in Peers	10	3
TRA	Trust in Administrators	10	6
RLP	Relationships	10	7
LS	Lesson Study	10	7
-TOT	Lack of Transfer of Training	9	4
INT	Intrusion	9	5
ACT	Administrator Confidence in Teacher	8	3
COM	Communication	7	3
-PS	Negative Peer Support	5	2
SKP	Teacher Skepticism	3	2
DEM	Demonstration Lessons	3	1
CO/CO	Co-plan/Co-teach	2	1

Looking at the number of incidences as well as the scope allowed a thorough examination of all codes. Codes with higher number of incidences but a low scope showed that the code was of high concern for a few participants. Codes with a high incidence and high scope indicated that the issue was of high concern for many participants. For example, all ten participants expressed having positive peer support for a total of 30 incidences, however three participants made comments regarding

administrators' confidence in teachers a total of eight times. Indicating the scope alongside the codes and incidents allowed for a closer examination of data.

Data results then allowed me to group the codes into themes and categories, as well as see the hierarchy of the themes using the enumerative data as displayed in Table 5. Two of the three themes were broken down into the same categories, and then broken down again by code. The enumerative data within the categories demonstrated which categories were most significant to each theme and included 1) hindrance to implementation, 2) promotion to implementation, and 3) neutral factors. The theme of promotion to implementation had the highest number of incidents within the data.

Table 5

Incidence by Theme

Theme	Category	Code
Hindrance to Implementation (Total Number of Incidences = 110)	Relational (36)	-ASF = Negative Administrative Support (22) INT = Intrusion (9) -PS = Negative Peer Support (5)
	Structural (57)	EVAL = Evaluation (26) -PD = Negative Professional Development (22) -TOT = Negative Transfer of Training (9)
	Beliefs (17)	TLC = Teacher Lack of Confidence in Administrator (14) SKP = Skepticism (3)
Promotion to Implementation (Total Number of Incidences = 143)	Relationships (89)	+PS = Positive Peer Support (30) +ASF = Positive Administrative Support (25) CP = Confidence in Peers (14) TRT = Trust in Peers (10) TRA = Trust in Administrator (10)
	Structural (46)	+TOT = Positive Transfer of Learning (16) +PD = Positive Professional Development (15) LS = Lesson Study (10) DEMO = Demonstration Lessons (3) CO/CO = Co-plan/Co-teach (2)
	Beliefs (8)	ACT = Administrator Confidence in Teacher (8)
Neutral Factors (Total Number of Incidences = 43)	Neutral (43)	ROA = Role of Administrator (13) FLU = Follow-up (13) RLP = Relationships (10) COM = Communication (7)

Based on the data, the factor that most strongly related to the promotion to implementation is the relationships that administrators have with teachers and teachers have with teachers. Conversely, the strongest factor hindering implementation is a lack of structures and systemic accountability measures. Sorting participants' responses according to each research question would develop a deeper understanding of teacher beliefs and feelings regarding this issue.

After all data had been gathered into groups and categorized into themes, ranked by frequency, analysis of individual questions from the initial Transfer of Training Questionnaire and of the focus group discussion took place. The following is an examination of each research question with corresponding participant responses.

Questionnaire Question 1

Questionnaire Question 1 asked, "How do you feel about the instructional support provided by your site administrator? Describe ways that you feel supported in the classroom, during department collaboration, and during and after district trainings, and ways, if any, that you do not." Gaining a general sense of teacher perceptions of the administrators in terms of overall support was important; therefore, this question was asked in order to establish a foundation. Responses to this question from all 10 participants varied, some indicating that the support of the administrator at individual sites is strong:

- "Instructional support has been fantastic!" (HS00).

- "I feel supported in collaboration because when she visits she listens and tries to understand us if we have an issue. She leaves us alone when necessary, and supports us when needed" (IE01).
- "I feel respected as a teacher as well as a person. She makes me feel as if my opinions and experience are of value to her and the school as a whole" (IS07).

In contrast, other responses reflected a more negative experience, where teachers do not feel supported.

- "Administration has limited understanding of what I do" (HA04).
- " I feel supported in trying things within Common Core, but my administrator makes promises and does not keep them or follow thru with them" (IM02)
- "Teachers don't feel comfortable going to ask for help. We hardly go to our administrator and discuss curriculum or instruction" (HH03).
- "I do not feel supported instructionally by my administrator. It is not my administrator I go to for support, and she definitely does not come to me" (HL06).

In looking more closely at the statements participants made, those who spoke highly of their administrator's support tended to be referring to personal and environmental issues that support the collaborative work necessary to accomplish the work undertaken in the classroom. However, when participants made statements that were negative in nature, they were detailed and specific about why they did not feel supported. Statements were specifically related to the administrators' understanding of and participation in dialogue around curriculum and instructional practices. The details of how participants did not feel

supported were rooted in the participants and their colleagues not feeling comfortable approaching the administrator.

Questionnaire Question 2

Question 2 asked, "What are your thoughts and opinions about professional development in general, as well as regarding workshops and trainings you have attended relating to your present school environment?" This question was included to establish a foundational understanding of how the participant teachers feel about professional development and the experiences they have had, a contributing factor to whether or not transfer occurred. Participants work in a centralized district, with teachers from all 18 secondary sites attending the same trainings for district-wide initiatives. Responses for this question were mixed ranging from very positive:

- "In general, all the professional development I have done has been extremely helpful and beneficial to myself and my students" (IS07).
- "Since coming to this district, I believe I have experienced some of the best trainings and professional development of my career," (HA04).

To others being more critical:

- "Some professional development is ineffective as it does not honor the skills of the teachers, so they disconnect when they walk in the door," (HS00).
- "I wish (professional development) were more 'real.' Professional development tends to live in the world of the theoretical rather than the practical," (IE01).

Several of the participants not only expressed their displeasure, but also offered suggestions for which they felt would be more effective facilitators:

- "I would love to see the trainers be teachers instead of people who have been out of the classroom for years," (HH03).
- "We have yet to have a single ELD specific training conducted by an actual ELD teacher who has used the strategies. I am frustrated because we are required to differentiate within our classrooms but our professional development is not. We all have different needs, especially by content and we want to hear from experts in the classroom," (HL06).

The above statements demonstrate that teachers do in fact want professional development and see value in it, but have strong ideas about how it should be conducted and by whom.

Questionnaire Question 3

Question 3 asked, "What are the expectations that your district and/or site administrator have regarding what you learn in workshops and how that learning is integrated into your classroom?" While the question states specifically "you," all teachers spoke of both themselves and their colleagues as a whole. All ten respondents stated that the district and the site administrator do expect new learning and strategies to be implemented into the classroom. However, the breakdown of the expectation seems to happen with the follow-up.

- "I do not believe that what is being learned in the trainings is explicitly being looked for in teacher practice consistently," (HA04).

- "They say they want you to use it, but there is no formal means to check on you," (IM02).
- "There is an expectation that teachers will apply what is learned by both the district and administrator but there is little follow-up. Teachers offer a half-hearted or sloppy execution of the strategies from trainings believing they are doing it correctly, when they really are not," (HA04).
- "Implementation is expected, but when the teacher get back into their classes, it is just too easy to keep doing what you have always been doing. After all, who will really notice?" (HV09).

Based on the responses, when teachers participate in professional development, they are not fully engaged or committed due to a consistent lack of follow-up. Therefore, teachers may be more likely to be disengaged, not getting the entire idea of the training at hand. Moreover, they are also less likely to volunteer to attend professional development, which results in being assigned to attend the training by their administrator. Responses to Question 2 acknowledge that participants feel that professional development is necessary in this day in education, however answers to Question 3 indicate that there is no formal accountability system, allowing teachers to stay with the status quo.

- "The district and site administrator expects implementation. What would be a good idea is to teach the strategy, let us try it out and return one to two weeks later, allowing us to come back and discuss any questions, struggles, and ideas that came up during implementation. This would give

> us the ability to try it out, knowing there is a structured follow-up that allows us to collaborate with our colleagues," (HH03).

Ideas such as the one previously stated point to possible structures that would allow follow-up to happen, and not just that the administrator goes into classrooms to see that a new strategy is being implemented.

Questionnaire Question 4

Question 4 asked participants to give examples of administrator support received both during and after trainings. The responses provide a clearer picture of what teachers define follow-up to be and what is currently taking place at school sites within the district. Four of the participants stated that they are supported both during and after trainings with their administrators.

- "My administrator supports me during trainings by encouraging me to go and provides me with a substitute teacher. She is also very good at getting coverage for my class for lesson studies," (IE01).
- "There is usually an administrator or a delegate, such as an assistant principal, at trainings. When the initiative includes the entire staff, the administrator is usually sitting in on those meetings and directing them as well," (HV09).

The previous responses are common of the four respondents who stated they feel supported. Structures are in place to encourage attending the training along with opportunities to continue to collaborate with colleagues in regards to the newly learned skill or content. However, they do not specifically identify if the administrator provides

anything else outside of the structure for learning opportunities to take place. Other participants more strongly connected support to principal attendance at each training.

- "I have had administrators in the past initiate collaborative conversations about how trainings have gone and others who have never said a word to me before or after the trainings," (IS07).
- "There have been times where administrators have attended and engaged in the trainings, however this is not common practice. After trainings, I was typically left to practice my newly learned material alone," (HS00).
- "The site administrator is usually not at the training but when she does, it is a drop by and she will ask me what I think about the training," (IM02).
- "I do not believe that we have support from the administrator during or after trainings. With their multitude of responsibilities, they seem distracted in the trainings," (HA04).

The participants, who commented that they have received limited to no support during or after trainings, suggested that it is because the administrator is distracted by other school business. An inference that can be drawn from Question 4 is that the type of follow-up and accountability structures for teachers who participate in trainings needs to be explicit. Teachers should not feel as though they are solely responsible for their own learning and implementation of the newly learned material.

Questionnaire Question 5

Question 5 investigates the degree to which teachers will work through implementation of newly learned strategies. The question asks, "After returning to your

classroom following a workshop or training, to what degree do you persist with implementation of the new learning? Discuss what you do if the strategy does not go well at first or when implementation feels awkward or uncomfortable." Nine of the ten participants said they try to implement the newly learned strategy immediately with different variations.

- "I begin to implement aspects of the training immediately into my daily routines that do not demand too much planning," (HS00).
- "I usually will try out new material immediately," (IM02).
- "I come back and implement new strategies immediately in its entirety. Then I begin to take bits and pieces out if necessary. I continue to only use it if it benefits my students immediately," (HH03).

When implementation does not go as planned or seems awkward, five of the participants stated that they seek the advice of their colleagues and get feedback on how their implementation is going in hopes to find ways to make it work.

- "If it feels awkward, I will talk to other teachers who are implementing the new strategy and find out how they are doing. If it still feels awkward after making some adjustments based on peer feedback, I usually discard it unless it is absolutely mandatory," (IM02).

Seeking advice and support from peers had a high rate of incidence in the enumerated data. Teachers go to their peers to seek help and to confirm if they are doing things as they are supposed to. Another factor that seems apparent in responses to this question is

that collaboration seems to be organic, with teachers initiating collaboration and looking for assistance from their peers in an informal rather than formal manner.

Questionnaire Question 6

Question 6 asks participants how they feel about receiving feedback from colleagues when practicing new strategies. Eight of the ten participants noted that they like getting feedback from colleagues, however prefer when it is self-initiated rather than imposed.

- "I do not mind getting feedback, however my openness has a lot to do with my perception of them as an effective teacher," (HS00).
- "I like to receive feedback from my colleagues but I usually seek their help out," (IM02).
- "I feel most comfortable receiving feedback from a colleague when I initiate it," (HA04).
- "I love any type of feedback. It has always been a positive experience for me," (HP05).
- "I welcome and value feedback from a colleague much more than an administrator who in most cases never have actually used any of the strategies or methods," (HL06).

While peer feedback is often welcome by the participants, there were two who were adamant that peer feedback was not effective for them.

- I get nervous when being observed by colleagues which makes it inauthentic because I begin to teach in a different way," (HH03).

- "I HATE getting feedback from my colleagues- I know I should be open to it and see it as a growth experience, but it is embarrassing," (IE01).

However, while the two participants said that they prefer to not have peer feedback, there is still much openness to collaborating and working with colleagues.

- "However, I do like Lesson Studies. It is way less stressful and more productive. We are working together on a new strategy, like professionals I do not feel as though I am being judged," (IE01).

When participants speak of receiving feedback from peers, it is often in terms of one teacher coming into a classroom and observing another teacher, then giving feedback based on what was observed. It appears that this could be the source of stress and nervousness that is mentioned. Feedback from peers can be structured in a variety of ways where it is safe and comfortable, such as, is mentioned above, in the form of lesson studies.

Questionnaire Question 7

Question 7 investigates the participants' thoughts on evaluations. The purpose of this question was to gain insight into the relationship of teachers with the administrator-as-evaluator. In this district the evaluation process is dictated by the teacher contract with strict guidelines regarding how they are conducted. Answers to this question show that there are mixed feelings regarding evaluations. Some participants see evaluations as a positive experience:

- "Evaluations are motivation for me. They force me to ensure that I am prepared and my lesson plans are complete," (IM02).

- "I look forward to any constructive feedback I can get from my evaluator," (IS07).

Others feel that the evaluation process has no impact on their teaching or instruction. As one teacher put it, "Evaluations are like a test- anyone can study for it and pass," (HS00). This idea is more indicative of the lack of confidence teachers have in the benefit of the evaluation process. Other responses include:

- "I do not feel evaluations drive my instruction in any way- I feel goal setting and reflection would be more appropriate," (HS00).
- "Evaluations do not impact my practice because every evaluation I have ever received has been positive," (IE01).
- "As an experienced teacher, with all of my administrators younger than me, I believe that they may be reluctant to be honest or critical of my instruction. Evaluations do make me reflective, however, of my own teaching strategies even if I am not getting feedback," (HA04).
- "I do not believe evaluations give a true depiction of what is really happening in the classroom," (HV09).

While most participants indicate that the evaluation process is not something to be valued, one participant indicated that they would like to work with their evaluator as a collaborator and get feedback that really would impact instruction, however, they feel it could be a risk that might impact their evaluation.

- "I feel teachers cannot use new strategies in evaluations because it could result in a 'needs improvement'. This takes away the possibility for collaboration with your administrator on new strategies," (HH03).

The majority of participants do not see evaluations as a tool for improvement as they are fearful of trying new things and working with their administrator on new strategies because they do not want the feedback to show up as a needs improvement on their evaluation.

Questionnaire Question 8

Question 8 asks, "what do you feel is the role of the site administrator with regard to instructional supervision and support of teachers with implementation of new strategies?" Answers to this question suggest that participants are looking to site administrators to provide support and accountability structures to help with the implementation of newly learned strategies.

- "The administrator's role is to not only provide and organize professional development, but support with ongoing training and release time," (HS00).
- "Administrators' role is to provide the time and encouragement to implement new strategies. I would love to also see administrators learn the strategies and practice them as well," (IE01).
- "Administrators should know how to implement general strategies. They do not have to be experts in everything, but they should be capable of finding others to help teachers when needed," (HH03).
- "Administrators need to be better instructional supervisors," (HA04).

- "Administrators' role is to support the teachers. Find resources, arrange for substitutes, seek TOSA (Teacher on Special Assignment) support, provide staff development, etc.," (HP05).
- "Engage me in collaborative conversations about instructional strategies and implementation," (IS07).
- "The role of the administrator is to be sure that what we are being trained for and the new ideas given are being implemented in the classroom," (HV09).

Instructional supervision is mentioned in all responses, but participants indicate that they want support from someone who understands their content and/or the complexities of the new strategy. If the administrator is not an expert, they prefer someone who is to assist if needed. Encouragement and motivation are a large part of what participants are looking for, which they feel helps increase the odds that implementation will take place.

After all of the initial questionnaires were collected from all participants, a focus group was brought together to build upon the initial responses. Of the 10 participants, five were able to join the focus group, which was guided by the Transfer of Training Focus Group Interview Guide (Appendix H).

Focus Group

This study focuses on the role of administrator-as-evaluator versus the role of administrator-as-collaborator. Therefore, because the responses from the initial questionnaire provided foundational data on training experiences, the first two pre-planned questions for the focus group were postponed until the end of the discussion if

time permitted, therefore the focus group discussion started with the third question of the of the interview guide, “What role(s) do administrators typically play in guiding follow-up/implementation after initial training?” This question allowed the group to focus in on the follow-up provided by principals that many of the participants had alluded to as lacking in the initial questionnaire.

FG01: My principal will sometimes ask me how a training went or what I got from it, most of the time they ask me to share the information with my department members or sometimes, not often, at a staff meeting.

FG05: Our principal usually stops by our on-site meetings and trainings, but doesn’t always stay for the whole thing. The follow-up is minimal. I think their feeling is ‘we gave you the information, now you go and do it in your classroom, figure out how to implement what you have learned”.

FG04: I think the follow-up is minimal by our principal because they usually handpick the people to attend major training, and their confidence in the people they choose is high, therefore they just expect the teachers who attend to implement and/or to share with others.

FG01: I think principals are good at empowering key people. Those are usually the people who feel it is their professional obligation to learn and grow and who will naturally share what they learn with others.

These responses highlight that follow-up is different by site and that the support provided by each principal influenced different perceptions amongst the participants. As the conversation progressed, participants shared that they are sometimes asked by their

principal to share information with their peers and how they feel their peers perceive this information.

FG02: Sometimes when we are sent to trainings that aren't popular, the principal makes us share the information with our peers because they think it will be accepted better. They don't realize that we have no authority and people just think 'that's nice, thanks for sharing'.

FG05: I have never been told by my principal to go and share what I have learned at training, I just do it because I want others at my site to benefit from what I have learned.

Participants do not feel as though their peers truly learn from what is shared after training and believe that this type of dissemination is not effective for the teachers who were not sitting in the training itself. At this point the conversation deviated slightly and a participant pointed out how the teachers in their department change when a principal enters the room.

FG01: Our department is small, so when the principal walks into our department meeting most people just get quiet or don't seem to speak openly and honestly. We don't feel that we are being spied upon; it's just sort of awkward when they just walk in and sit down. We sort of feel that they are intruding on a private conversation.

This statement served as a natural transition into the next question, "What would be the ideal role of a principal? Do you want them involved?"

FG02: I think a principal should set and communicate clear expectations on what to do after a training or workshop. Expectations are good because they provide accountability and help the conversation between peers. What I mean by that is if everyone knows what to do after a training and is actually trying out a new strategy, then there can be a conversation. If only one person or a few are trying it our, then its difficult to help each other or problem solve.

FG05: Principals need to take control of the situation. I agree, they can do this by setting expectations for everyone to follow. If you are going to have a training, or send teachers to trainings, then hold everyone accountable for implementing what they learn, or at least try to. Don't just hold some accountable and let others get always with not. It's difficult to move forward during collaborations when not everyone is on the same page. Principals should be diplomatic, but consistent.

FG03: I agree. If teachers need to be consistent when working with students, then principals need to be consistent when working with teachers.

FG01: Principals need to be flexible with teacher when they are trying a new strategy. They need to understand that sometimes things don't always work they way they are supposed to. Sometimes it takes problem solving and modifying, it isn't just black and white. Principals need to know that sometimes changes need to be made when implementing a strategy. The problem is that the principals don't know the strategies well enough.

As this thread of discussion progressed, the group started to discuss how principals need to be in the classroom, teaching and trying new strategies so that they can experience what works and does not work, and be able to speak empathetically with teachers regarding strategies. Participants feel as though the principals cannot be effective instructional. For that mindset to shift, participants believe that the principal needs to be in a classroom teaching lessons on a regular basis.

> FG01: I think that the ideal role of a principal would be for them to come and demonstrate a strategy or lesson in my classroom. They are too far removed from the day-to-day setting. When they come and do an observation and then give feedback, that is not a true sense of what it feels like to be teaching every day. They can't truly be empathetic on how different it is to implement a new strategy.

When this statement was made, it is seemed that the other four participants were in agreement, which leads to the next question, "How do all of you feel about working alongside principals?"

> FG03: I'm open to it. If I can relate to the principal more on an even level, that makes them more approachable, not just evaluative. If feels more like peer to peer.
>
> FG04: I have reservations. I am open to working with the principal in my classroom, but I am apprehensive because they are black and white, not flexible. Things need to be done a certain way or they don't think it is being done correctly.

FG05: I would like to say I'd like working alongside the principal on instruction, but I think they would frustrate me. They don't know my subject. I'd love to say I am willing to try, but I already have an issue with how evaluations are done, I think they are dog-and-pony shows. Not reality. When the principal comes into my classroom, they need to experience it over time. They don't have that kind of time.

FG04: Principals forget what goes on in a classroom, that is one reason many teachers don't want to administrators. They lose touch with students… too many other responsibilities.

As the discussion continued, the focus shifted more to what the role of the principal is.

FG01: Is it their [principals] role to work with teachers on instruction? To me, this is about re-defining their role. We have never really had this experience in the past. We have always just had one-day drop-ins, observations, and evaluation. Not on-going working together relationships, that's what true peers do. I am open to working with the principal, but this is a huge mind shift. This isn't currently their job. They also have a school to run.

This participant's statement began a discussion into relationships that principals build and their role in working with teachers regarding instruction.

FG01: Sometimes principals have strong personalities. When they attend a teacher meeting they can prevent honesty, true sharing of ideas or problems. This stifles real growth.

FG05: When the principal walks into a meeting, teachers begin to act differently.

FG01: Teachers need to speak their mind during collaboration. Not all teachers will do this when the principal is present. Some teachers are intimidated or afraid that something will happen.

FG03: I think principals feel they are being supportive and don't feel that they are judging. They are sometime just there to see what is going on.

FG05: Teacher might be more open to collaborating with principals if they worked on creating more relationships.

FG04: Principals need to make an effort. Teacher can't be the ones who seek it out. Principals need to build the relationships.

FG03: Having better personal relationships breaks barriers, builds trust. New principals can sometime do this better because they are trying to get to know their new staff.

FG01: At the end of the day, it doesn't bother me when the relationship between me and my principal is more formal. I don't need familiarity to do my job well.

Participants stated that they want principals involved; yet they do not want them in meetings. Participants also indicated that they want better relationships with their principals. As stated in the last comment, one participant felt that he/she did not need a relationship with their principal beyond a professional one to get her job done. Collaborating with principals appeared not to be a strong motivator for whether or not a strategy is implemented but instead the relationship between colleagues and working

side-by-side with them in different settings would be more beneficial. The follow-up question was asked, "How do you feel about coaching and getting feedback from your peers?"

FG01: I don't want feedback from coaches. Who ARE THEY anyway? How did they get chosen? I don't mind if I am doing a co-plan/co-teach with another colleague, or some other type of common experience, lie a lesson study, but I don't want feedback if they [coach] are just in the classroom to see me – that feels more judgmental. It's just too personal.

FG05: I don't care what another colleague thinks if they didn't help plan the lesson.

FG01: How does the coach know what I really want or need with regards to feedback?

FG04: When someone else comes into my classroom, they don't know *why* I am doing something so how can they give true, meaningful feedback?

Lesson studies, which more and more school sites within the district are doing, began to be discussed in comparison to coaching. According to the participants, lesson studies provide opportunities for peers to co-create a lesson with both parties equally invested in its success. Participants feel as though lesson studies provide an opportunity to work together in a way where evaluation, judgment, and pressure are not there and teachers are able to try things out and problem solve in a safe environment.

FG01: I prefer lesson studies to coaching. It feels more authentic when two or three people actually work together: plan together, try something together,

problem solve together. The mistakes or things that don't go well are then "we" – mistakes belong to both/all involved in the planning.

FG04: It's better to work on something together if you are going to observe and give feedback.

FG01: Lesson studies are a team effort, it's not about critiquing, it's about collaboration, a joint effort. We plan together and we fix together.

FG02: Coaching is one-sided, it feels evaluative. Lesson studies or something similar are better than coaching.

Participants were then asked if they thought lesson studies were a more productive way to work with peers and what they believed the role of the principal would be within this format.

FG01: I have not experienced principals involved in a lesson study. They arrange for the time and subs, but they aren't involved in the planning time. Teachers are expected to take ownership and I feel that many teachers don't want principals to be a part of it. The principals' role should be in setting up the structure and creating a framework for teacher to conduct lesson studies. They should identify goals of the study based on the school plan.

FG05: Then the principal can come in during the pre-brief and debrief so they know what teachers have learned, but they don't need to be part of the actual planning.

FG04: It's nice to not have the principal hovering over us when we work.

FG02: Teachers want principals to be aware of what is going on and empathetic, but they don't need them to be *in* the process of a lesson study.

FG01: Principals should create the structures that facilitate independence so that teachers will professionally work together and learn together without always having to be told to do so.

Participants indicated that they would like to work in small peer groups for lesson studies, with the administrator establishing and communicating the expectations, the structure, and the goals of the process. The participants agreed that it would be appropriate and sufficient for the administrator to come into the pre-brief and debrief sessions, without having to be part of the lesson design or execution in the classroom.

Summary of Findings

Data gathered from the questionnaire and focus group showed that what teachers believe they want in support from administrators is not always what they actually want to see in action. Participants stated that though their administrators are personally encouraging, when it comes to interactions regarding instruction in the classroom, they often feel judged in an evaluative manner, rather than assisted.

Participants revealed that in order to gain a deeper appreciation for and trust in administrator participation during the implementation phase of learning a new strategy they would need for the administrators to spend more time in the classroom instructing and teaching or co-teaching classes. Having administrators in the classroom on a more regular basis would allow them feel more confident about the feedback offered by the administrator.

Within the area of administrator feedback, the data revealed that professional development opportunities are perceived as an assignment for teachers and not something that the administrator feels is necessary for them to be a part of. Participants expressed that this lack of first hand participation in the initial training itself makes it difficult for the administrator to truly understand the sophistication of what needs to be done to successfully implement the strategy. Feedback given by the administrator feels more judgmental and evaluative rather than collaborative in these circumstances.

In addition, with regard to systemic implementation of new strategies, participants indicated that clear expectations are often not set and there is little to no authentic accountability leading teachers to be confused about how to proceed after training. Participants noted that while there are general expectations from the district and site administrators to try new learning, there is inconsistent follow-up in terms of problem solving and refining.

Teachers stated that when they return to their classroom after attending a professional development activity, they typically try the newly learned strategy. If they struggle, they look to colleagues for help with implementation and solicit feedback from others who have also been attempting the strategy. When implementation becomes too awkward or is just is not working as well as what they perceive it should be, participants state that they let the strategy go, at best keeping bits and pieces as appropriate. Feedback and collaboration regarding newly learned strategies is most typically informal and is initiated by the participants themselves, stating that it is much more useful than feedback from an administrator.

The role of an administrator, according to the participants, should be to facilitate resources and structures necessary for teachers to attend training, systemically collaborate with peers, and establish and maintain accountability measures to ensure that successful implementation takes place. Contrary to common belief, these teachers did not feel that the principal needed to be a co-collaborator in learning and using strategies in the classroom. The administrator should be encouraging and thoughtful, interested in and moderately knowledgeable about what teachers are doing and explicit about expectations. Administrators should be the ones responsible for establishing peer partnerships and the formal structures that would support consistent collaboration.

During the focus group the participants discussed their apprehension of the administrator being in their classroom as a collaborator when they are also required by the district to act as their evaluator. Though they would like to see the administrators in the classroom more often as a means to build greater understanding and empathy, these teachers do not believe that it is a best practice to have the administrator work alongside them as a peer collaborator.

Conclusion

The central research question of this study was, "How does the conflicting role of administrator-as-evaluator and administrator-as-collaborator hinder opportunities for site administrators to work as peer coaches with teachers as they strive to improve their instructional practice?" The two sub-questions were, "What are the teachers' attitudes towards administrators observing and providing feedback during implementation of newly learned strategies?" and "What practices currently exist that inhibit or encourage

positive non-evaluative collaboration between administrators and teachers?" Throughout the initial questionnaire and the focus group it became clear that the word "support" has many different definitions. However, the data also shows that the teachers are looking for something from the administrators even when they do not have a clear understanding of exactly what that is. When teachers consider the word "support" they often think of an administrator in a classroom who is judging their instruction, perhaps because this is what they have experienced as support. Unfortunately, this is also what they think of regarding evaluation and evaluator.

Administrator support will always be multifaceted. Administrators are responsible for the day-to-day organization and running of a school campus, which means they cannot be in every teacher's classroom often enough to act as an instructional partner or coach. With that being said, they can show obvious support to teachers by setting clear expectations for professional growth, giving words of encouragement, and building relationships that foster open and trusted conversations. Administrators can also show support by becoming familiar with new instructional strategies even when they cannot take the time to learn the intricacies of those strategies. Moreover, administrators can also demonstrate support by setting up formal structures that enable all teachers to work as partners or teams to foster problem solving and continued growth.

Administrators need to establish a culture of collegiality and collaboration. For this to take place, the administrator does not need to be involved in the actual planning of lessons or participating in classroom observations. Administrators can show support by setting up formal structures that allow professional discussions to take place. Lesson

study, for example, is one way that administrators can support teacher collaboration without themselves having to participate as a coach. Administrators can arrange for substitutes so that teachers can be out of the classroom to work in small groups. Lesson studies, or co-planning/co-teaching allows teachers to plan, execute, reflect, and try again new strategies. These types of formal interactions allow teachers to open up without judgment and try things without feeling fear and apprehension. Administrators can initiate this support, and then they can come in and out of the discussions throughout the process to keep abreast of what is happening school wide. Teachers are supported, yet are not in fear of being evaluated.

Section 2 contains the data collection methods along with the findings of the research using questionnaires and focus groups with teacher leaders. Section 3 includes a literature review to support the use of a white paper to disseminate data and information to stakeholders regarding the impact administrators can have on schools and student achievement by ensuring structures are in place to promote collegial, collaborative teacher groups.

Section 3: The Project

This doctoral study was undertaken to identify and better understand teachers' perceptions of administrators' involvement in professional development. A key finding was that teachers interviewed do not believe that it is the responsibility of a principal to work alongside teachers as partners in improving instructional practice in the classroom. What they do believe is that principals are responsible for establishing and communicating school wide goals, for creating and maintaining structures that enable stakeholders to meet those goals, and for monitoring progress toward meeting those goals. As such, I make recommendations in this project with those priorities. To best support teachers after they learn a new strategy principals provide the following: (a) a cohesive theory of action that describes why and how that strategy will benefit students, (b) an in-class teaching and coaching lesson study structure that facilitates deliberate practice and accountability, and (c) Instructional Rounds as a means of systemically collecting and analyzing school wide data to measure impact of incorporating these strategies.

The following literature review provides justification for the use of a white paper and for recommendations contained in the white paper. These recommendations are those included in the conclusion of Section 2 of this doctoral study.

Literature Review

White Paper

The desired outcome of this research was to communicate my findings to district office and site administrators so that they could effectively support teachers after they have learned a new instructional strategy and move into implementation. As is often the

case with communicating research findings my intention was to inform my target audience for the purpose of policy and decision-making. My challenge, however, was to design an appropriate delivery method knowing that policy makers seldom have the time or the expertise to search for or interpret the growing body of research on complex issues they encounter (Hines & Bogenschneider, 2013). Nelson, Leffler & Hansen (2009) found that policy makers they interviewed identified personal lack of experience in acquiring and interpreting research as well as the sheer volume of information, confusing presentation formats, and time constraints as barriers to the application of that research to their needs. This particular study, conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in partnership with the Center for Knowledge Use in Education, focused on ways to help practitioners and policy makers effectively use research evidence. Participants in the NWREL study reported that they preferred reports that are brief, written in nontechnical language, and provide an interpretation of the findings.

Tseng (2012) asserts that efforts have been made to improve moving research to practice, with the most common method being written and verbal formats that provide accessible information to the end-users. She specifically identifies executive summaries and policy briefs as examples that are designed to be short and read quickly by people who have limited training, if any, in how to read and interpret scientifically-based research.

Based on the findings in the NWREL and Tseng studies I decided to create a white paper as the project for this doctoral study. I believe that a white paper will be the

most effective and efficient means for distributing the findings of my research as well as specific and practical means for addressing these issues.

White papers are generally understood to be informational documents issued by companies, research institutions or government agencies to highlight or promote a methodology, a solution, a product, or a service. In addition, white papers are often intended to persuade or influence the reader to make a decision based on the paper's recommendation when addressing a problem, need, or challenge. According to Sakamuro, Stalley and Hyde (2011) of the Purdue University Writing Center, the purpose of a white paper is to "advocate that a certain position is the best way to go or that a certain solution is best for a particular problem," (owl.english.purdue.edu). While there are no formally agreed upon conventions or norms for the structure of a white paper, Sakamuro et. al (2011) suggest that a white paper should be broken down into the following sections: 1) introduction, 2) background of problem, 3) proposed solution, 4) conclusion, and 5) works cited.

Theory of Action

Empirical research confirms that successful school leaders are those who use their time and resources to create structures and conditions that build capacity for professional learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). To accomplish this capacity-building, schools must focus on strategic school-wide actions that become shared among administrators and teachers and that foster a culture of continuous learning for all. Fernandez (2011) asserts that it is this type of formal planning that enables schools to better navigate the complexities of an ever-changing climate of reform.

Traditional planning, the type that involves evaluating priorities, setting goals, and determining strategies for meeting those goals may no longer be good enough as current research suggests that it is a school's capacity for genuine reflection and problem solving that is essential to successfully meet the learning needs of students (Fernandez, 2011). Structured planning assists a school staff to become more introspective, and helps them in developing structures and procedures for ongoing analysis, but identifying the beliefs and values of a school is crucial to the process because the way we act is typically an outgrowth of what we believe or think (Knight, 2011). One method for moving from the traditional planning/evaluation cycle to a deeper understanding of beliefs and values is for a school to develop a Theory of Action.

A Theory of Action describes what an organization believes and values through what is referred to as the *strategy* the organization plans to adopt and links the strategy to the organization's overall vision (Robinson & LeFevre, 2010). The benefit of a Theory of Action is that it helps an organization better understand and communicate why it is undertaking something and how it believes those actions will lead to change, optimally that change being an improvement in student learning. A Theory of Action is expressed as an if/then statement such as, "if teachers are provided with targeted professional development followed by in-class implementation support, then students will receive classroom instruction that results in increased achievement."

Measuring a Theory of Action is of most benefit to an organization and is accomplished through what Argyris and Schon (1974) described as double-loop learning. Single and double loop learning are two ways that organizations learn from their

experiences. Double loop learning is a process that involves thinking more critically about assumptions and beliefs around *why* actions are proposed and undertaken. It goes beyond just fixing a problem or even finding a new way to fix a problem. Double loop learning requires an openness to consider *why* something is not working by focusing on personal and cultural issues and causes. Single loop learning, in contrast, focuses on technical issues or causes, potentially hindering long-lasting systemic change (Caldwell, 2012).

In single-loop learning, an organization observes data and evidence, considers feedback, and then attempts a solution, or different approach to the problem through technical means. With single loop learning, the process of trying new strategies to achieve a desired outcome may result in many attempts at a solution without ever achieving success (Caldwell, 2012; Mano, 2010). Double-loop learning is a more complex way of approaching a desired outcome at it involves re-evaluating and reframing the values, beliefs, and goals of the organization and the individual people involved. Double-loop learning takes into consideration that the organizations choice of strategies is strongly tied to its values, beliefs, and assumptions, which are in turn deeply rooted in cultural background and experiences (Caldwell, 2012; Mano, 2010). Double-loop learning allows an organization to assess *why* it believes a particular strategy will be successful, as well as looking at the goals and beliefs of all those involved. By doing so, the organization is better equipped to modify or adapt, if needed, variables that have an influence on the outcome.

Administrators can use the process of developing a school-wide theory of action to communicate and measure the strategies they believe will move a school forward in terms of student achievement and preparation for life after high school. When this process is done in collaboration with teacher leaders, the structures and accountability measures adopted become joint ventures that feel less imposed and more shared.

Lesson Study

When accountability measures and the assessment of teaching practices are focused on student achievement, not only does student learning improve, but the time and effort put into the process by administrators and teachers is also seen as valuable and desirable (Reeves, 2010). A common and frequently used process employed by school administrators for the purpose of monitoring and improving teaching practice, presumably leading to higher student achievement, is that of classroom observation.

Most will agree that the intention of classroom observations is to improve student learning by focusing on teacher practice. However, the means for achieving this are not always clear or well communicated. This lack of clarity can lead to feelings of anxiety and stress on the part of the teacher, rather than to growth and refinement (Downey, Steffy, Poston, and English, 2010). Practices that lead to a culture of judgment and fear serve to undermine the very goal of informal classroom observations, and yet observation and feedback are the cornerstones of uncovering ineffective practice and refining or exchanging them for practices that are effective.

School sites must therefore develop a system where teachers feel safe and supported while participating in opportunities to be observed and receive feedback,

especially when implanting new strategies. This type of system may not rest solely on the administrator doing the observations and can be achieved through a process like Lesson Study.

Lesson Study is a form of professional development that originated in Japan for the purpose of systemically examining teaching practice. A lesson study group is made up of a small number of teachers working collaboratively focusing on a particular strategy or method (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). The general structure of a lesson study involves planning, teaching, observing, and refining a lesson or lessons, however the true aim of the process is not limited to the betterment of this one lesson or set of lessons, but to improve teaching practices that lead to increased student achievement.

To keep the lesson study focused, the teachers in the group agree on an overarching goal expressed as a research question (Cheng & Yee, 2012). Once a goal has been established, the teachers collaboratively create a lesson, which one of the group members teaches in his or her classroom while the other group members observe and collect data. At the conclusion of the lesson a group discussion commences for the purpose of analyzing the data and as deemed necessary, revising that same lesson. A second group member then teaches the modified lesson in his or her classroom while once again the remaining group members observe and collect data (Doig & Groves, 2011). After the second implementation, the group meets for a final time to discuss effectiveness of the lesson, impact on student learning, and insight gained from the experience. A short report is produced of the findings (Cheng & Yee, 2012).

A typical lesson study group consists of 4 to 6 teachers who work on an average of 2 to 3 lessons per year. It is not required that a principal or administrator participate in all aspects of the study. However, it is beneficial for them to be present during the debrief sessions to hear, and possibly guide, new learning.

The most notable feature of lesson study is that teachers are engaged in collaborative action research for the purpose of improving the quality of instruction (Ono & Ferrier, 2010). All participants in the group are expected to take an active role and contribute to the experience during all phases, even those that do not actually teach the lesson in their classroom.

Findings from studies conducted on the effectiveness of lesson study acknowledge that while teachers who were involved in the process did in fact show improvement, establishing a formal, sustainable structure is challenging. Additionally, study findings show that teachers find it difficult to initiate interest among their peers; therefore it is crucial that administrators take the lead in building capacity (Ono & Ferrier, 2010; Doig & Groves, 2012).

A distinguishing characteristic of lesson study is that the intent is not to perfect a single lesson or use of one strategy, but contribute to the larger knowledge base of all teachers with respect to pedagogy and approaches to teaching (Doig & Groves, 2012). Teachers who engage in lesson study gain a greater sense of working as a community and are willing to expose their teaching practices to those around them. This vulnerability and risk taking is an important component to learning and implementing new strategies and methods.

Instructional Rounds

Schools, like all organizations, need formal structures in place to determine whether or not they are meeting their goals, and if not, why not and where. Establishing goals, however, whether through developing a Theory of Action or by some other means, is of no value without mechanisms in place to evaluate both if the goals are being met and if by meeting those goals intended outcomes are realized. In the educational setting, a non-judgmental and data-driven way to examine progress is through the use of Instructional Rounds.

Instructional Rounds is a long-standing practice in the medical profession but has only recently been implemented in education, and even then only sporadically and with limited understanding. When practiced in the medical field, Instructional Rounds is a proven way to engage participants in the learning process by facilitating purposeful conversations about authentic problems of practice (Akhter, 2010). The hallmark of Instructional Rounds is that it creates a structured way of dialoging about collective work through the use of first-hand observation and data collection (Chew, 2013). The strength of Instructional Rounds is that participants are able to see firsthand the instructional strategies used by teachers across the school and to discuss, in a non-evaluative way, the effectiveness of these strategies individually and as a part of a collection.

When used in education, Instructional Rounds is focused, systemic, and can lead to a culture of open classrooms and shared responsibility for improvement. With a greater emphasis on job-embedded and contextual professional development with meaningful teacher collaboration, Instructional Rounds can help provide a non-evaluative process for

collecting and analyzing data on teacher practice (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Baringer, et al. (2010) describe Instructional Rounds as focused classroom walk-throughs that allow educators to observe student performance for the purpose of making more informed pedagogical decisions.

Four key elements that determine the success of Instructional Rounds are: 1) a network of participants made up of administrators and teachers, 2) a long-term commitment to the process, 3) multiple experiences, and 4) adherence to the protocol (Petti, 2010). The four phases of Instructional Rounds are: 1) identifying a problem of practice, 2) classroom observations, 3) data analysis, and 4) determining next steps (City, et al, 2010). By having a group of committed participants who believe in the process and are willing to engage in difficult, but data-supported conversations about what is actually occurring in classrooms, schools can tackle the challenging work of improvement and reform.

Summary

The project literature review produced the following key findings: 1) school goals and action steps to meet them must be accompanied by a process that allows for uncovering and dealing with participant values and beliefs, otherwise true change cannot take place, 2) classroom observation and feedback are not just the role of the administrator and can benefit greatly when structures are in place that provide opportunities for teachers to observe and problem solve together, and 3) accountability and assessment of classroom practice needs to be part of a formal, on-going, and transparent protocol involving administrators and teachers.

The aforementioned findings support the creation and distribution of a streamlined document that would not simply expose the need for such structures, but would also identify and explain how to create and maintain them. A white paper would be an effective way to communicate considering the amount of information principals receive and the little time they have to conduct research on their own.

Resources, Supports, and Barriers

The project artifact for this study is a white paper with planned distribution via the Internet; therefore there are no material resources anticipated. Hard copies can, however, be printed and distributed as necessary. Formal support needed for an administrator or teacher leader to implement some or all of the elements included in the paper would need to come from their direct supervisor: the principal if it is a teacher-leader or the district office if it is a principal, depending upon the autonomy afforded in each district.

In the case of a principal adopting these structures, the most critical support they must obtain is from their teachers, as these processes are intended to be and depend on teachers being invested in and committed to success, which may require problem solving along the way. The same could be said of a department or grade-level chair, if they intend to establish a Theory of Action, want to engage in lesson study, or propose the use of Instructional Rounds. Teacher buy-in is crucial in each of these areas in order for the work to be authentic and to become systemic.

Implementation and Evaluation

Spring 2015 Pilot

Implementation of recommendations outlined in the project white paper will take place in spring of 2015. During this pilot phase, teachers and administrators will be trained on and practice with writing a Theory of Action, participating in Lesson Studies, and conducting Instructional Rounds. This pilot will allow for systems to be established heading into the 2015–2016 school year.

Upon approval of this study, findings and implications of this doctoral study, along with the initial draft version of the white paper, will be shared at a district administrators' meeting. This meeting includes all district principals and assistant principals, along with the Directors of K-6 and 7-12 Instruction and the Assistant Superintendents of Elementary and Secondary Education. Findings will be shared along with a proposed implementation schedule, and the researcher will also offer opportunities to meet in small groups and with school sites to help draft a plan as requested. The researcher's school site will move forward with implementation and will offer meetings, trainings, etc., to other school site administrators and teacher leaders for observation.

Pilot implementation will begin with the training of teacher leaders on the process of Instructional Rounds. Teachers included will be current department chairs and additional teacher leaders who are on the already established school Leadership Team. Dates will then be determined to conduct actual Rounds. Data gathered from the initial Instructional Rounds will then assist the team in determining a problem of practice, which will then lead into the creation of a theory of action. The school Leadership Team

and administration will share finding of the Instructional Rounds and the Theory of Action with the entire staff. The administration will then ask for course-alike volunteer groups to take part in the initial training of lesson study. Each course-alike volunteer group will be asked to complete at least one lesson study in the spring of 2015, and to share their experiences and findings within their own departments and to the entire faculty. Department chairs will gather input from the volunteer lesson study groups and come back to the school Leadership Team to develop an implementation plan based on findings and experiences of the teams.

2015–2016 Full Implementation

Full implementation will occur in the 2015–2016 school year. This format will allow all teacher voices to be heard and allow teacher leaders to take the lead in presenting information on behalf of their colleagues.

The administration will present the initial findings and experiences from the spring pilot and share the implementation plan for the 2015-2016 school year with the Office of Secondary Education and interested site principals. Administrators will continue to share progress as the implementation continues. Prior to the 2015-2016 school year, a designated professional development day will be used to train site teachers who were not formally trained in Lesson Study in the spring so that all course-alike groups can participate in the Lesson Study process throughout the school year. Administration will set a schedule for course-alike groups to work together throughout the year, as well as strategically place two formal Instructional Rounds, one in each semester, to continue to gather data. The gathered data will continue to provide evidence

on the impact of Lesson Studies and Instructional Rounds on the previously identified Problem of Practice and eventually help determine a new Problem of Practice for the following year's theory of action. As data is collected, administration and the school Leadership Team will evaluate and refine practices and structures as needed during implementation, a process known as formative evaluation (Guskey, 2000). Concurrently, other site administration and their teams who are interested can seek training in Lesson Study and Instructional Rounds from the researcher.

Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation of recommendations outlined in the white paper will take place at the end of the 2015–2016 school year. On-going, job-embedded professional development that is specifically intended to bring about systemic change requires the measurement of progress (Guskey, 2000). Evaluation of programs, policies, and practices not only provides accountability that can be shared with all stakeholders, but also signals to all involved that what is being undertaken has value and is worth the effort. Guskey (2000) acknowledges that there are many forms of evaluation, but emphasizes the importance of those that are formal and systemic and include formative and summative.

For this project, formative evaluation will take place in the form of Instructional Rounds. These Instructional Rounds will measure what Vella, Berarndinelli, and Burrow (1998) refer to as utilization and Guskey (2000) call assessing participants use of new knowledge and skills. Initial rounds will act as immediate evaluation, whereas subsequent rounds will provide longitudinal evaluation data (Vella, et al., 1998).

Lastly, the summative evaluation will be outcomes-based and will involve teachers and administrators being asked to reflect on the degree to which each elements: Theory of Action, Lesson Studies, and Instructional Rounds, had on solving the identified Problem of Practice. Teachers and administrators will be asked to identify strengths of each element and where necessary, suggestions for improvement. Information from these reflections will be used by site administration and school leadership to improve the processes and structures for the following year and by the researcher to refine contents of the white paper. A second, improved version of the white paper will then be ready for wider distribution via the internet and/or professional conferences. Table 3.1 displays the implementation and evaluation process.

Table 6

Summary of Implementation and Evaluation

Action No.	Action Step	Type	Audience or Participants
1	Spring, 2015: Dissemination of findings to 7-12 District Personnel	Implementation	Director of 7-12 Instruction, Assistant Superintendent of 7-12 Schools
2	Spring, 2015: Leadership Team trained in Instructional Rounds and baseline observation conducted	Formative Evaluation	Leadership Team and Site Administration
3	Spring, 2015: Identify Problem of Practice and develop Theory of Action	Implementation	Leadership Team and Site Administration
4	Spring, 2015: Dissemination of findings from baseline Instruction Rounds and Theory of Action for the 2015-2016 school year	Formative Evaluation	All school site teachers
5	Spring, 2015: Volunteer course-alike groups trained in process of Lesson Study (1-day training). Each group will complete one Lesson Study series	Implementation	Course-alike groups
6	May, 2015: Share out of experiences and findings of Lesson Studies from course-alike groups to departments and faculty	Implementation	Course-alike groups & site teachers

7	June, 2015: Department Chairs being findings of Lesson Studies to Leadership Team to develop implementation plan for 2015-2016 school year	Implementation	Instructional Leadership Team
8	June: 2015: Share findings from pilot and explanation of the 2015-2016 implementation plan with Office of Secondary Education and interested 7-12 site principals	Formative Evaluation	District Personnel
9	Summer, 2015: Professional development day focused on Lesson Studies for all site teachers who were not formally trained in spring	Implementation	School site teachers
10	August, 2015: Schedule set by administration for course-alike groups to collaborate and conduct Lesson Study series and calendar two formal Instructional Rounds (one per semester)	Implementation	Administration
11	September, 2015: Initiation of the 2015-2016 implementation plan	Implementation	Administration, Leadership Team, all school site teachers
12	September, 2015 – May, 2016: Communicate progress and data of Lesson Studies and Instructional Rounds to school site and district personnel	Formative Evaluation	Administration and Leadership Team

13	May, 2016: Use findings of Lesson Studies and Instructional Rounds to evaluate and determine new Problem of Practice for Theory of Action for the 2016-2017 school year.	Formative Evaluation	Administration and Leadership Team
14	June, 2016: Administration and Leadership teams from other school sites who are interested in process can seek and participate in training in Lesson Study and Instructional Rounds	Implementation	Administration and Leadership Teams from other school sites
15	Formal evaluation of White Paper (impact of Theory of Action, Lesson Studies, and Instructional Rounds on solving Problem of Practice) Findings used for second edition of White Paper for wider distribution	Summative Evaluation	Researcher

Project Implications

Successful classroom instruction and school wide achievement is dependent upon structures that include expectations for all stakeholders. Due to the abundant amount of educational research and the ever-increasing number of strategies that come along with it administrators and teachers alike are often overwhelmed and not sure how to proceed. Administrators, rather than being helped by the research, can become hampered and not clearly establish or articulate goals, yet they are given the responsibility of leading the

instructional practices at their sites. On the other hand, teachers feel that their administrators are too far removed from the classroom yet do not always want them to work side-by-side with them in their own classrooms for fear of being judged or evaluated.

Administrators have numerous responsibilities, each requiring time and attention. It is essential, therefore, that administrators have access to synthesized and concise resources that describe how to create structures that empower teachers to take more ownership with respect to the instruction taking place in classrooms across the school, not simply their own. Once this type of culture is established the work becomes shared and attainable, which in turn leads to meaningful changes for students.

Data from this study supports the above assertions and gives clear direction for administrators to create a sustainable theory of action and goals that are challenging, yet achievable. Empowered teachers who trust their administrators will be more willing to work and strive for strong implementation of strategies that will then benefit the students. The fact that the students are the ones who receive the increased benefit of empowered teachers who feel supported by their administrators is what drives this important work. Implications support that administrators, along with support from district officials, must set a clear schedule and expectations, look to teacher leaders to help support it, and be sure to continue to implement the plan. Through implementation, administrators must continue to collect data, reflect, gather insight from teachers and teacher leaders, and redirect if needed, so that time is not wasted and teachers can move forward in their own practice.

Section 3 contained a literature review of theory of action, lesson study, and Instructional Rounds and the impact they can have on classroom instruction. Additionally, Section 3 described a white paper and how this format will be used to efficiently disseminate the findings and recommendations of this study. Lastly, section 4 includes self-reflection, self-analysis, and suggestions for further study.

Section 4: Reflection

This study was conducted to collect and analyze information that administrators and school leaders could use to increase the effectiveness of teacher professional development, specifically in the area of transfer of training and improved classroom practice. Focus areas included initial training, teacher collaboration, and the roles administrators can and should play in assisting teachers learn and implement new strategies. This section is a reflection on the study itself, including strengths and weaknesses, and on my own learning and growth.

Project Strengths

The overarching goal of this study was to identify and propose best practices for site administrators in assisting teachers with implementation of new strategies, ultimately for the purpose of improving classroom practice. The problem that guided this study was the exploration of potential reasons why there is often a lack of administrative inclusion with teachers implementing newly learned strategies. The purpose of the study was to gather data to assist administrators build collaborative, collegial, non-evaluative relationships with teachers to help assist in improving instructional practice. The goal was accomplished by using a qualitative structure that included a questionnaire and focus group. Strengths of this study include: focusing on one particular strategy, rich and detailed data from the purposeful use of a questionnaire and focus group, and choosing participants from a variety of school sites.

One Focus Strategy

In qualitative research, focus is usually placed on a single concept or process, as opposed to quantitative research, which often relates two or more ideas or groups (Creswell, 2012). Though relationships or comparisons may arise from the data, Creswell argues that the qualitative researcher begins with a "single idea, focus, or concept to explore" (Creswell, 2012, p. 129). Given that qualitative researchers seek to collect information on a single concept or idea, in this case, administrative influence on the transfer of training, I chose to focus my research on the training teachers received on one particular "strategy", the *gradual release of responsibility lesson design framework*" and its subsequent implementation, thus eliminating the potential for competing variables that may have arisen if multiple strategies were considered.

A strength of this research, therefore, was that the implementation of only one strategy was examined, and the strategy chosen is a district initiative. The significance of this is that with district initiatives there is a great deal of support behind initial training as well as follow-up assistance with implementation, which is not the case for all trainings. The terminology for *gradual release* is consistently used at each site and at the district office, the concepts are systemically embedded into other site and district trainings, and the district has made many resources available to teachers. In addition, there is a district-wide expectation that all teachers utilize this lesson design format when planning for classroom instruction. Therefore, this is a high stakes initiative as opposed to an isolated strategy, or collection of strategies, that teachers could choose to adopt or not. In other

words, all teachers in this district had every reason to invest in learning and implementing the strategy.

Richness of Data

A second strength of this research is the use of the questionnaire and focus group in the data collection process. Using a questionnaire that encouraged in depth, multi-faceted responses as well as facilitating a focus group, data collected were rich and detailed. Creswell (2012) asserts that the more detailed the data is when collected and reported, the more credible the findings are that are drawn from that data.

Focus group questions were asked in order to get as much information as possible regarding participant thoughts, opinions and feelings on each topic, as well as to ensure that accurate and appropriate findings could be drawn without me having to interpret the meaning behind what a participant answered. Probing questions allowed me to get beneath the surface in hopes of finding out why participants thought or felt as they did, enabling me to develop stronger hypotheses and recommendations.

Use of Multiple School Sites

Including teachers from various school sites, at both the high school and intermediate level, is also a strength of the study. The participants in this study were chosen based on homogenous sampling, with the similar "membership or characteristic" (p. 208), being all had participated in training on *the gradual release of responsibility lesson design framework* (Creswell, 2009). In order to ensure, however, that the data was not skewed by the culture of a single site or administrator's practice, participant teachers were randomly selected from each of the seventeen schools in the district.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include small sample population, which may hinder the ability to generalize the data, and having a population from only one school district, which could mean that certain cultural norms may exist, even site-to-site. Each limitation is discussed in the following section.

Small Sample Population

Sample population was kept small because it is a qualitative study. A small sample population allowed for open-ended questions to be asked for the purpose of gathering in-depth responses. Merriam (2009), Creswell (2009), and Saldana (2009) all encourage small sample populations for novice researchers providing the opportunity to gather rich data from participants, along with the ability to keep it balanced. Participants all attended the same trainings, along with being identified as a leader on their school site, yet the participants were varied in age, gender, years of experience, and content area. The participants all participated in the questionnaire, and half of the population participated in the focus group. The focus group was an opportunity to hear further explanations and thoughts regarding the issues that were being discussed and allowed for participants to have a professional conversation regarding questions that were posed. Having only half of the total sample population participate in the focus group limited the scope of data.

One Sample School District

The sample population all came from the same centralized school district. Drawing data from just one centralized school district could possibly result in data that

does not represent the diversity of viewpoints in education as a whole as the culture within a centralized district can be similar from site to site. Often times, while there can be differences from school to school, large central office training and cross-site collaboration can result in the participants experiencing similar feelings and thoughts towards professional development opportunities since they are participating together in large cross-district groups.

Recommendations

Based on the limitations aforementioned, the following are recommendations that address possible ways to improve the work that was completed within this study: (a) expand sample size studied, (b) create a participant pool that goes across more than one district. In addition, administrators could be included in addition to teacher in order to examine the thoughts and feeling of administrators trying to build collaborative relationships at their own sites. Categories and codes used for this study could be used in further research to expand the details of the data already collected and used in analysis.

Self-Analysis

Self-analysis is the ability of a person to reflect on their own beliefs and who they are. When I began this study, I felt that I could foresee what my findings would be and anticipate responses because of the experiences I have undergone in my career prior to starting this study. However, through this process, I have been able to look at different perspectives and belief systems and build a stronger outlook on collaborative relations between administrators and teachers. This perspective has helped strengthen my own

belief system and practice. The areas in which growth occurred are scholarship, project development, and leadership.

Scholarship

My intended paradigm at the beginning of this study was the advocacy/participatory worldview. Creswell (2009) explains that in advocacy/participatory research, "inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda" (p. 9) and it strives for action that can change the lives of participants, institutions, or the researcher. Creswell (2009) goes on to state that issues need to be addressed specifically, such as "inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation," (p. 9). However, as I began drafting my proposal and questions for my questionnaire, I struggled with falling back on a post positivist view.

Post positivists believe that problems need to be examined and studied, and how the findings can produce an outcome, much like a science experiment (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Due to my educational experiences and learning, I found myself formulating hypotheses in my head and then looking for answers that resulted in a direct solution to the problem. The conflict I faced was that I wanted to present open-ended questions for my participants that allowed me to gather divergent data to build my findings, which meant I had to focus consistently on not creating a hypothesis that may sway my results.

The goal and intention of my research and study was to further strengthen the collaboration between administrators and teachers, but furthermore, the end goal being what is best for students. The advocacy/participatory research stance, according to

Creswell (2009), "contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life," (p. 9). Creswell (2009) goes on to explain that research from a advocacy/participatory worldview stems from specific issues that impact society, such as empowerment, oppression, and domination (p. 9). The research conducted in this study is rooted within positive change in relationships between administrators and teachers, working towards stronger instruction, which directly impacts students, as well as the professional growth of administrators and teachers. This study has strengthened my appreciation for the advocacy/participatory approach to research while also making me more aware of the post positivist influences that exist.

Project Development

I began as a classroom teacher at a time where it was common practice to lesson plan and create independently with little input from colleagues. Conversations were just beginning about what collaboration in education was. After seven years in the classroom, I took on the role of program facilitator in the Office of Secondary Instruction at the district level. That is where I discovered just how little time there was in the day after being given the charge along with a few colleagues to serve many teachers. Projects and professional development were often created in a vacuum with very little input and feedback from those who were being served. I then stepped into the role of assistant principal where I had hoped to be able to work alongside teachers on instructional practice, but found that I spent most of my time managing programs, again with little to no collaboration.

Fullan (2014) often refers to administrators needing to be lead learners. While it is the administrators' role to lead the charge, administrators cannot be solely responsible for creating, implementing, and working in each facet of the implementation process. Due to what I have learned throughout my research, it is evident to me that the input and thoughts of teacher leaders can help shape possible next steps and structures to be put into place to assist with the collaborative relationship between administrator and teachers.

Leadership and Change

The term "instructional supervision" often comes with the assumption that the principal is the one who oversees the instruction of a site, spending much time in classrooms, and working one-on-one with teachers (Fullan, 2014; Kirtland, 2013). This was my initial thought when entered administration as an assistant principal. Stepping into an assistant principal role at the high school, I had grandiose ideas of how I was going to work side-by-side with all of the teachers, inspiring them through rich conversations, collaboration, and observation. While I was able to do that with a few teachers, I still had a staff of 75 other teachers that I was not making solid connections with. I struggled with my role, and how I could say with confidence that I was an instructional leader when I was connecting with less than 10% of the staff in a way that I felt was meaningful. Over time I was able to examine the structure, or lack thereof, that existed not only at my site, but also at other sites within the district and surrounding areas. I realized that a mind shift needs to happen regarding the definition of an administrative instructional leader while at the same time structures need to be put into place that values the knowledge of administrators and of teachers letting the idea of "a

village" allow administrators and teachers to work together in a safe learning environment towards the same goal. The educational system is in a pivotal spot in which standards and the way teachers instruct are being scrutinized and refined. Administrators and teachers must work together in a collaborative setting with fears of evaluation put to the side in order to get through this critical time of educational reform.

Teachers look to administrators to be a wealth of knowledge, knowing all of the facets of the instructional strategies that are being learned and used. Administrators however find it difficult to be an expert in every area because there simply is not enough time in the day. Not wanting to be the administrator that tries so hard to keep up with all of the demands of leading a school plus trying to be an expert in all areas that I become tired and unmotivated, I chose to continue my education seeking to find ways I can be a more effective administrator and impact education at large.

Self-Reflection

This section is a detailed description of the self-reflections I had throughout this study. The ability to reflect allows for growth and strengthens decisions and next steps built upon the past. Reflection aids in deeper learning and stronger decision making for the future based on the experiences of the past and is a critical part of being a life-long learner. The main areas I have reflected on during this study fall under the categories of being a scholar, practitioner, and project developer.

Scholar

A scholar is a person who has studied a subject for a long time, and knows a lot about the subject, (Merriam-Webster, 2014). However, through this process of inquiry, I

have come to believe that a scholar is one that studies a variety of areas that impacts their knowledge of one subject. In the educational school setting, numerous factors play into what most people simply consider school: students, staff, faculty, families, facilities, health, safety, etc. The list could go on, and being a practitioner at a school requires in-depth knowledge of all of these things.

My belief is that a school helps students become well-rounded members of society, and the responsibility of the school hinges on quality instructional delivery, however instructional delivery itself is multifaceted. I chose to conduct a study based on qualitative research to allow me to explore attitudes and beliefs of current teacher-leaders in connection to professional development and administrative leadership hoping that the consideration of many views would strengthen my understanding of this one area. Quantitative data would not have given me the ability to look deeply into the thoughts and perceptions of teachers as qualitative data would since qualitative inquiry allows research involving open-ended questions, finding themes, and interpreting the data (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) states that, "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world," (p. 13). This point of view has helped me keep an open mindset to what teachers feel and believe.

This study has allowed me to become comfortable with the term "scholar" while being able to identify with it. I have often thought that my inquisitive nature was nothing out of the ordinary; just a simple curiosity that helped shaped my own practice. However, this curiosity and inquisition is not simplistic by any means; they result in scholarly

habits that have pushed me into understanding different perspectives, challenging my own thoughts and beliefs.

Practitioner

I decided to pursue a Doctorate in Education to deepen my understanding of administrative leadership and to conduct action research that would be specific to the district that I work in. As an administrator, it is very easy to become swept up in the current issues within just my school site and my district, however I wanted to explore policies and practices outside of my own district's bubble. This program has given me the opportunity to see outside allowing me to grow as a leader. By continuing to engage in inquiry and research, I hope to become a leader that inspires and motivates those around me. Simon Sinek (2009) states:

> There are leaders and there are those who lead. Leaders hold a position of power or influence. Those who lead inspire us. Whether individuals or organizations, we follow those who lead not because we have to, but because we want to. We follow those who lead not for them, but for ourselves, (p. i).

In the near future, I hope to be on a site where I am looked at as a caring professional and a skilled leader, and also hope as someone who builds and encourages others to be leaders. I hope to be a lead practitioner helping to build teacher leaders so that they can lead collaborative groups. Best scenario, according to Kirtman (2013) is that principals do not lead many groups, teacher leaders do; but principals participate (p. 86). It is my goal to work alongside these collaborative groups, learning along with the teachers.

Due to the educational reform taking place in America and, more specifically, California, teachers are finding themselves working more and more in collaborative groups, but finding that the effectiveness of those groups in not automatic. Administrators play a critical role that empowers teacher leaders to run succinct, professional groups that positively impact instructional practice resulting in an increase in student mastery of the standards. Kirtland (2013) states, "the key to generating widespread impact on student learning resides in mobilizing the group to work in specific, intense, sustained ways on learning for all students," (p. 67). The administrator cannot be the sole person on a campus to take the lead in mobilizing each group; the administrator, along with teacher leaders, must work together in order to help move the school site forward. I cannot make this impact immediate in every secondary school in my current district; however, I can begin building the relationships and groups within my own school site while communicating with other administrative teams about the progress we are making by sharing my action research.

Project Developer

Early on in the beginning of my study, I knew that I would want to share my findings and possible next steps with my colleagues in the district, however the deeper I got into the work the more interested I became in sharing my data beyond just my district but also possibly in journals and by participating in conferences. I needed to be careful, however, not to focus on the project too early and let my data influence how best to proceed. I needed to be sure to keep an open mind and allow the data drive the direction.

Once the data was collected and analyzed, I could move onto the next steps that were best fit for the findings.

Conducting qualitative research means letting the data evolve over time regardless of the direction it takes you. Having an open mind, however, also applied to the resulting project, as I needed to let the data determine the best method of vehicle for communicating the findings and/or taking action.

Overall Reflection

I am currently in the middle of my 15th year in education. During this time, I have found myself constantly wanting to learn and deepen my understanding of instruction, learning, and leading. As I transitioned from teacher leader to administrator, I left a classroom and school site that I was passionate about, however I knew that becoming an assistant principal would allow me to further my learning in leadership along with instruction. I am grateful for the experiences that my current district has given me but I realize that in a centralized school district, experiences can be sheltered. My project study allowed me to look beyond my own school site and district and deepen my understanding in administrative leadership. Though I work in a district that receives accolades from around the nation, there is always room for improvement. The role of administrator as lead learner who creates a systemic approach to helping guide and support the teachers is as example of improvement. I have learned that, even though administrators are solely responsible for what happens on their campus, including learning, that there are ways to have shared leadership with teachers in guiding collaborative groups while building trust and respectful, professional relationships.

The administrator is the overall leader of a school site. There is a huge responsibility that comes along with the position. Kirtman (2013) states that, "the principal is the overall leader of instruction but needs to have time and skills to motivate and build teams," (p. 8). Time must be used wisely, with relationships and trust developing over time. Kirtman (2013) goes on to say, "people misunderstand 'instructional leader' to mean spending much time in classrooms working directly with teachers," (p. 64). As I continued my research, I found that participants agreed with Kirtman in that they would rather work alongside colleagues but led by the principal, not teaching side by side with the principal. Teachers want principals to be involved and to be educated on best instructional practices, however they also want administrators to provide the system and structures to be able to work in collaborative groups with their colleagues both in and outside of the classroom.

Implications, Applications, and Direction for Future Research

Data from this study shows that teachers want administrative support, but not necessarily as collaborators in planning, implementing, and revising lessons. According to Kirtland (2013), administrators need to spend just enough time within classrooms to help develop and maintain expertise in instruction, as well as in professional development opportunities. This will help gain trust and build collegial relationships with teachers. In addition, another finding was teachers want to know the "why" of what they are doing. Honesty and transparency with the "why" will help foster and build trusting relationships (Sinek, 2009). These established relationships will allow for the administrator to establish professional capital in teachers (Fullan, 2014). Fullan (2014) goes on to explain that

"developing professional capital develops leadership across the school which means that more gets done in the short run – because there are many leaders with a common focus – as sustainable leadership for the future is cultivated," (p. 87). If administrators cannot foster a community with many leaders with a common goal in mind, there is very little hope that the school as a whole will move forward in instruction, which in turn will impact students and their learning.

The implications of my findings are that administrators can better understand the wants and needs of teachers, along with establishing systematic procedures that encourage collaborative relationships and improve instruction. In response to themes and patterns that arose, during analysis of the data, I conducted a thorough literature review of theory of action, lesson studies, and instructional rounds. These three processes can contribute to a system of collegiality with honest conversations between administrators and teachers about what is happening in classrooms and school wide. Successful implementation of strategies and continued reflection on both teacher and student progress are what will move students further on the continuum of learning and mastery.

Future research could be carried out using a qualitative study occurring after a site has established a Theory of Action and implemented Lesson Study and Instructional Rounds. Participants in the study would be teachers and administrators. Data from this study would give insight into how the teachers feel about working alongside their colleagues whether or not the systems put in place by the administrator, such as lesson studies and Instructional Rounds are impacting student learning. The data could further

guide administrators in refining and building their practice and leadership, along with building stronger relationships amongst faculty.

Conclusion

The focus of this study was to examine the relationships between teachers and administrators-as-collaborator versus administrator-as-evaluator. The research was based off of the implementation of a common instructional strategy by teacher leaders and the involvement of the site administrator. Sections 2 shows the data gathered and analyzed, and concluded that teachers are not looking for administrators to be partners in the classroom but to set clear expectations for professional growth, praise, and build relationships that foster trust and openness. Administrators can show support to the teachers by keeping abreast and familiar with instructional strategies and by setting up formal structures for teachers to work in teams to problem solve and collaborate regarding newly learned strategies.

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Appendix A: White Paper

September 2015

Ms. Kelly McAmis
Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education
Garden Grove Unified School District
10331 Stanford Ave.
Garden Grove, California 92840

Dear Ms. McAmis,

As you know, the Garden Grove Unified School District is moving into a time of new state standards and instructional shifts requiring an increased commitment on the part of both teachers and administrators to learning and implementing rigorous and supportive instructional strategies. Additionally, administrators are increasingly being asked to take on the role of lead learner at their school site, no longer simply "sending" teachers to professional develop but participating with them. It is more important than ever that teachers make the most of professional development and that principals take an active role in ensuring that classroom practice reflects what they learn.

Knowing that there is not enough time in the day to effectively accomplish all of the tasks and responsibilities of managing a school *and* working individually with each teacher, it is crucial that site principals establish school wide systemic structures that provide teachers with the training and support they need, the time and resources to integrate that training into everyday practice, and the accountability that signals value and longevity.

Attached is a white paper that I developed as a result of my doctoral work examining the principal's role in facilitating teacher transfer of training. This paper includes the findings of my research as well as recommendations for how principals can provide the type of support that teachers find beneficial.

I sincerely hope that you find the information contained in this paper worthwhile to your work. If you have any questions or would like clarification on anything contained in this paper or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at sheflin@ggusd.us or (714) 663-6457.

With highest regard,

Stephanie M. Heflin
Assistant Principal
Los Amigos High School

Creating a culture of collaboration & collegiality on secondary campuses through systematic, administrative support

Stephanie Heflin
March 2015

Focus Question

How do principals create a school environment where teachers collaborate, respect one another, and work as a team to deliver rigorous and meaningful instruction for ALL students?

Background

This white paper is the result of a research study conducted in a large urban school district in Southern California that examined teacher perceptions of administrative support with respect to implementation of newly learned strategies. The overarching goal of the study was to identify effective ways that administrators can help teachers transfer into the classroom what they learn in training.

The research study included ten secondary level classroom teachers, each of whom is an instructional leader on their campus. The methodology used was a qualitative case study with data collected using an open-ended questionnaire and a focus group interview. Findings and recommendations from the study are contained in this paper.

The social implications for studying this aspect of the educational system suggests that improvement of classroom practice leads to rich and meaningful experiences for students which better prepares them for life after high school.

Problem of Practice

General Background

Gone are the days where a secondary principal's main duty was to ensure that their school site was running smoothly; children were safe, teachers were teaching, and staff members were completing their jobs. Teachers were able to go into their own classrooms and close the door, having complete control over what and how curriculum was being taught. Over the past 20 years, the administrative role has shifted and principals are now asked to be instructional leaders as well as evaluators, yet many teachers still see principals solely as evaluators (Marzano, Frontier, Livingston, 2011). While it is more common in today's schools that teachers instruct with doors open and meet with colleagues, it is also common that when a principal walks into a room, teachers believe they are there to evaluate and judge, rather than as an opportunity to openly discuss instructional strategies in a collaborative, non-judgmental conversation.

Principals have been given the responsibility of "lead learner" but can only fulfill that requirement if sitting in trainings alongside teachers (Fullan, 2014). In addition, principals are held responsible for student achievement, which in turn means professional, collegial, non-evaluative conversations must happen between principals and teachers to ensure that students are receiving the best instruction possible. According to Palandra (2010), principals as instructional leaders must be heavily involved with the development of instructional strategies, making sure that "students are taught consistently and effectively, that there are no major discrepancies between written and the taught curriculum, and that teachers receive the support they need to develop and enhance their professional skills," (p. 221). With a finite amount of time in the day, how can principals make sure that the school is running smoothly, students are safe, paperwork is complete, teachers are feeling supported, and most importantly, students are learning rigorous curriculum and developing critical thinking skills in their classes?

Principals, as they have always been, are responsible for managing the systems and daily activities of their school sites, however in the current culture of school reform with the demand for an increase in student achievement, they are also being asked to become instructional leaders (Marzano, Frontier & Livingston, 2011). It is no longer sufficient for principals to simply ensure that their teachers are receiving quality professional development on new instructional strategies; they too must find ways to take part in the process of learning and implementing these strategies. It is unrealistic,

however, to think that principals have the time to work with each individual teacher as a collaborative partner in the process of improving instructional practice. Therefore, systems must be developed that enable principals to take the lead with regard to creating structures that build trust, collegial sharing, and a commitment to student learning. Structures that include teachers, but also allow teachers to see their principal as a confident and competent instructional leader who not only understands the generalities of classroom practice, but also has empathy for the intricacies of what goes on in the classroom day-to-day.

Local Problem

The specific local problem examined was that a large urban school district in southern California has encouraged secondary-level administrators to attend trainings alongside their teachers and to assist in facilitating classroom implementation of what teachers have learned. Peer coaching, initially highlighted in seminal work by Showers and Joyce (1995) has proven to be an effective support for helping teachers in this district improve their practice and was hoped to also be a structure that would work for creating collaborative dialogue between administrators and teachers.

In this district, however, although administrators have attended the same trainings as teachers and have offered to participate as peer coaches alongside them, less than ten percent of teachers have accepted the offer according to site principals (Personal communication, September 7, 2013). Teachers stated that they believe administrators will judge their new strategy implementation in terms of accountability and evaluation rather than for support and problem solving. Platt, Tripp, Ogden & Fraser, (2000) found that even administrators take this into consideration because they worry that their teachers will be hurt when confronted with areas of improvement regardless of how graciously the recommendations are made.

Summary of Research Findings

Support According to Teachers

Data collected from a focus group of teachers revealed that they believe the role of an administrator should be to facilitate resources and structures necessary for teachers to attend training, systemically collaborate with peers, and establish and maintain accountability measures to ensure that successful implementation takes place. Contrary to common belief, these teachers did not feel that the principal needed to be a co-collaborator in learning and using strategies in the classroom. The administrator should be encouraging and thoughtful, interested in and moderately knowledgeable about what teachers are doing and explicit about expectations. Administrators should be the ones responsible for establishing peer partnerships and the formal structures that would support consistent collaboration.

Hargreaves & Fullan (2012), propose that principals can build these types of strong, non-evaluative relationships with teachers by:

- **Building respectful relationships**
- **Knowing the staff and the culture of the school**
- **Becoming a lead learner with knowledge of instructional strategies**

Principal support will always be a key factor in the successful implementation of new initiatives and programs, with teachers wanting to feel as though their principal is working with and supporting them outside of the evaluation process. Support, however, does not have to be one-on-one lesson planning between principals and teachers or the attendance of principals at every meeting or collaboration. There are ways in which the principal can be supportive within a professional, collegial culture that encourages teachers to work together in improving instruction, which in turn will benefit students. Elements of establishing a supportive learning environment include:

1. **Teachers want clear, concise goals and expectations for what is expected of them and how to achieve those goals.**
2. **Formal structures are necessary in order to foster systemic and meaningful teacher collaboration.**
3. **Transparency facilitates trust.**

Related Research and Recommendations

1

Finding: Teachers want clear, concise goals and expectations for what is expected of them and how to achieve those goals.

Recommendation: Develop a Theory of Action to Support Communication.

Theory of Action

Research supports the claim that those who create systems, structures, and conditions to build capacity for professional development are successful school leaders (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). It is critical that principals and teachers work together to focus on strategic school-wide actions through formal planning and implementation (Fernandez, 2011). Formal, structured planning should allow for school personnel to become more introspective as well as creating the space and time for constant individual and team reflection. Schools must move away from traditional planning and evaluation cycles and adopt a process that enables deeper understanding of beliefs and values school wide by developing a Theory of Action.

A Theory of Action involves the analysis of what an organization believes and values leading to the development of specific and measurable school goals. In addition, A Theory of Action clearly communicates what the school believes will improve student achievement and how they plan to accomplish this (Robinson & LeFevre, 2010). A Theory of Action is often stated as an "if/then" statement. When the process of developing a Theory of Action is a shared effort including all stakeholders, teachers take greater ownership because they feel that the effort was inclusive and not imposed.

Specific details on how to create a Theory of Action can be found in the book "*Theory in Practice, Increasing Professional Effectiveness*" by Chris Argyris and Donald Schon (1974). A general summary of the process follows:

1. **Develop a long-term vision of success. What do you want your organization to be like and/or to achieve?**
2. **Formulate short-term, or outcome, goals.**
3. **Uncover the underlying values and beliefs that are held by teachers and staff members.**
4. **Discuss contributing and external factors (both positive and negative).**
5. **Identify and align activities/strategies to achieve the short-term goals - keeping in mind the underlying values and beliefs and the external factors.**
6. **Test your assumptions using people that were not involved in the process. Ask if the work is logical and makes sense.**

2

Finding: Formal structures are necessary in order to foster systemic and meaningful teacher collaboration.

Recommendation: Embed regular Lesson Studies into the school's professional development plan.

Lesson Study

Lesson Study is a type of professional development that originated in Japan that is a structured, systematic way to examine teacher practice. A lesson study is conducted by a small group of teachers who work together focusing on an agreed upon strategy (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). The structure of the lesson study incorporates all stages of lesson design from planning to execution in a collaborative setting, improving teaching practice that leads to student achievement.

Principals should take responsibility for establishing the structure of the lesson study, but teacher groups, focusing on a particular strategy, should conduct the lesson study itself. The planning and execution of a lesson study does not require the principal to be in attendance, however it is beneficial for the principal to attend the debrief session to hear the outcomes and, if necessary, guide discussion toward new learning. A notable characteristic of lesson study is that it is not intended to perfect one lesson or strategy, but to build the knowledge base of teachers with respect to pedagogy and instructional delivery (Doig & Groves, 2012). Once teachers begin to participate in lesson study, not only do they grow from the experience, but peers who see them go through the process often become more willing to exam their own practices. Lesson study can help create a safe, collaborative school culture. The basic steps for conducting a lesson study are as follows:

- **Form groups of four to six teachers.**
- **Teachers in the group agree on one specific and measurable goal that is stated as a research question.**
- **Teachers collaborate and create a common lesson.**
- **One member of the group delivers the lesson while other group members observe instruction and collect agreed upon data.**
- **The group reconvenes to discuss the data and modify the lesson, as necessary.**
- **Another member of the group delivers the modified lesson while the rest of the group observes and collects data.**
- **The group meets after the second implementation for a final time to discuss lesson effectiveness, impact on student learning, and insight gained from participating in the lesson study.**
- **Dissemination of findings to teachers who did not participate.**

(Cheng & Yee, 2012; Doig & Groves, 2011)

3

Finding: Transparency Facilitates Trust

Recommendation: The use of Instructional Rounds makes data collection transparent and meaningful.

Instructional Rounds

Like any organization, it is a necessity that schools have a formal process in place to evaluate if they are meeting goals, and if they are not, examining possible reasons why. Developing a Theory of Action or use of another goal setting process is of no benefit if there is not a process to examine if goals are being met. Instructional Rounds is a non-evaluative, data-driven process that enables a school to analyze school-wide practices and their impact on student achievement.

Instructional Rounds is based off of the medical practice of doctors going from patient to patient, presenting the facts and determining next steps for the patient's care based on the findings. Instructional Rounds, in an educational setting, accomplishes a similar goal by looking from class to class with a pre-determined focus and collecting data to share with the group (City, et al., 2010). Baringer (2010) explains that Instructional Rounds are focused classroom walk-throughs that allow teachers to observe student progress and performance to inform next steps.

According to Petti (2010), the four key elements of successful Instructional Rounds are:

1. **A network of participants made up of administrators and teachers**
2. **A long-term commitment to the process**
3. **Multiple experiences**
4. **Adherence to the protocol**

City, et al (2010) go on to explain that the four stages of Instructional Rounds are:

1. **Identifying a problem of practice**
2. **Classroom observations**
3. **Data analysis**
4. **Determining next steps**

Instructional Rounds are best when the structure is established by the principal, but are conducted by teacher leaders.

Related Case Studies

Case studies highlighted below are examples of how Theory of Action and Instructional Rounds have helped schools move forward.

Case Study #1

LaFollette High School is located in Madison, Wisconsin and has a student population of approximately 1,500. In 2013 LaFollette demographics included 50% students of color and 50% economically disadvantaged. In addition, LaFollette consistently had some of the lowest student achievement rates in the district. As a result, faculty at the school had the belief that there was little hope for improvement leading to poor morale.

A complete turn around has occurred at LaFollette, resulting in the school becoming a model for other sites and districts, as well as one that is studied by educational researchers interested in school improvement. Their success has been attributed to three key factors: a committed team of site leaders comprised of administrators and teachers, school wide systems and structures, and a theory of action to guide their work.

The school leadership team developed a problem of practice and accompanying theory of action that frames all LaFollette's improvement efforts. Since 2011, the LaFollette leadership team has created and implemented structured supports based on this theory of action, which allow teachers to examine their own and each other's practices. Teachers now report that these experiences have transformed the school's culture as well as improved instructional practice.

Anderson, Steffen, Wiese & King, 2014

Case Study #2

The Farmington School District in Connecticut, with a student population of 4,000 is now in its ninth year of implementing Instructional Rounds. They began the use of Rounds in hopes of addressing their students' passive attitude toward learning and the inability to explain their thinking. Kim Wynne, district superintendent reports that since the implementation of Rounds, students have gone from having "great recall skills" but lacking critical thinking to increasingly being able to provide high-level answers to questions about what they are learning and why. Students have also gone from being passive in the classroom to being motivated and independent learners. As for the teachers, she reports that they are seeing greater ownership of school improvement.

Gillard, 2014

Suggested Timeline

June 2015 - School Leadership Team receives training on how to conduct Instructional Rounds.
Data from Instructional Rounds is used to identify problem of practice and develop Theory of Action.

August 2015 - Site teachers are trained on Lesson Study and how to conduct them.

September 2015 - Site teachers form Lesson Study teams and develop a calendar of Lesson Study dates (suggested, one per quarter).
School Leadership Team conducts *baseline* Instructional Rounds gathering initial data on problem of practice.

Sept/Oct 2015 - Lesson Study teams conduct quarter 1 lesson studies; write and disseminate findings at department and school meetings.

Nov/Dec 2015 - Lesson Study teams conduct quarter 2 lesson studies; write and disseminate findings at department and school meetings.

January 2015 - School Leadership Team conducts mid-year Instructional Rounds; shares findings with whole faculty.

Feb/Mar 2016 - Lesson Study teams conduct quarter 3 lesson studies; write and disseminate findings at department and school meetings.

Apr/May 2016 - Lesson Study teams conduct quarter 4 lesson studies; write and disseminate findings at department and school meetings**.**

June 2016 - School Leadership Team conducts end-of-year Instructional Rounds; shares findings with whole faculty.
School Leadership Team uses data to review and revise 2016/2017 Theory of Action.

Conclusion

Principals' jobs are multifaceted. The success of the entire school, systems, teachers, and students falls upon the shoulders of the principal. While there are many different areas that deserve attention, research supports the area with the greatest impact on student achievement is teacher practice. Teachers have consistent interaction with students, with their focus being on their success in school and preparing them for life beyond secondary school. In order to provide rigorous, meaningful, sustained instruction benefitting all students, teachers need to be supported by the administration beyond the evaluation.

There are ways to interact with teachers outside of evaluative classroom visits. When the principal is mindful and strategic, includes all stakeholders in creating the vision for the school, communicates expectations, and is transparent with what is happening on the campus, a culture of collaboration, collegiality and trust between the principal and teachers will follow. Principals must be lead learners, and become familiar with instructional strategies alongside their teachers. They must set up and support structures that allow teachers to collaborate together, and take part in important instructional conversations, listening to the input of teachers and determining next steps along with teacher leaders.

Schools are much like orchestras, and the principal is the conductor. As a conductor must do with their orchestra, the principal must understand and have knowledge of all, including instructional strategies. The principal must build trust with the teachers, just as an orchestra trusts the decisions and directives of a conductor. While it is the conductor's role to coordinate all instruments to work synergistically, it is the role of the principal to develop and commit to sustainable, strategic professional development that will in turn benefit all students.

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Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation

Authorizing Agent: Ms. Kelly McAmis; Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education

Date: TBD

Dear Ms. Heflin,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled A Study of Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Involvement in Transfer of Training at the secondary sites in the Orange Grove School District. As part of this study, I authorize you to conduct personal interviews with the sample population teachers and to administer and collect written reflections following the interviews. I further authorize you to code and analyze the data, and to include the raw data, summary data, and your findings in the above mentioned doctoral project study. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Ms. Kelly McAmis
Assistant Superintendent

Appendix C: Sample E-Mail Invitation to Participate

From: stephanie.heflin@waldenu.edu Date:

TBD

To: stephanie.heflin@waldenu.edu

Subject: Doctoral Study Questionnaire

Greetings TBD,

Now that the school year is over and the summer is upon us, I hope that you will be able to enjoy some family time and recharge your batteries. I do also hope however, that you will be able to find some time this summer to reflect upon the year you had to celebrate the successes and learn from the things that didn't go as well as you had hoped. It's always nice to start a new school year with fresh ideas and exciting lessons.

The reason for this e-mail is to solicit your help. Just as I hope you will be able to reflect and grow, I too am working on a project to explore the way that we in education conduct professional development. As you are aware, I have been working on my doctorate for a few years now and am in the process of completing my dissertation. As such, I would like to collect data on the experiences of ten teachers who attended district-sponsored professional development and the follow-up implementation afterwards.

Your participation would entail completion of one initial online questionnaire, answering a series of follow-up questions, then a reflection on the entire dialogue to make sure you have been represented correctly in your answers.

I have attached to this e-mail a more detailed description of the project and a letter of consent should you choose to participate. If you have any questions regarding the scope or nature of the research, or if you have any concerns, please feel free to e-mail or call me (714) 663-xxxx and we can discuss your questions.

Please know that my high regard for you as a person and as a colleague is independent of this project whether or not you decide to participate.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Heflin

Appendix D: Consent Form

Date: _____ Researcher: Stephanie Heflin .

Participant: _____Location: _____Orange Grove School District

General Research Topic: Implementation of Strategies After Training

CONSENT FORM - REVIEWED WITH PARTICIPANT

You have been invited to take part in a research questionnaire regarding the transfer of training after learning a new strategy or program. You were chosen for the study because you attended the training on *Gradual Release of Responsibility* and have been asked by district and site administrators to adhere to that lesson design framework in your classroom. Please read this form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be part of the interview.

This interview is being conducted by a researcher named Stephanie Heflin, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. Ms Heflin is also an Assistant Principal at Los Amigos High School in the Garden Grove Unified School District.

Background Information: The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data on professional development outcomes.

Procedures: If you agree, you will be asked to respond to one online questionnaire and several follow-up questions, as well as participate in a focus group interview.

Voluntary Nature of the Interview: Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. If you feel stressed during the process, you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Interview: There is the minimal risk of psychological stress during this process. If you feel stressed at any time, you may stop. The benefits of you participating in this study are that your feelings and opinions concerning what makes professional development workshops effective or ineffective will be heard and reported in a scholarly and potentially publishable format.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this interview.

Confidentiality: Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this interview project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher's name is Stephanie Heflin. The researcher's committee chairperson is Dr. Elizabeth Warren. You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone (714) 663-6288 or stephanie.heflin@waldenu.edu or the instructor at elizabeth.warren@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Director of the Research Center at Walden University. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

☐ I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I have at this time. I am 18 years of age or older, and I consent to participate in the interview.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Participant's Written or Electronic* Signature _____

Researcher's Written or Electronic* Signature _____

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix E: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer: _____

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: "A Study of Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Involvement in Transfer of Training", I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher: Stephanie Heflin, Walden University Date: _____

Appendix F: Sample of Intent to Withdraw Letter

To: Ms. Stephanie Heflin; Researcher

From: _____

Date: _____

Dear Ms. Heflin,

I am sending you this letter to notify you that I wish to withdrawal from your study. I choose to:

❑ Leave the data I have previously submitted in the study.

❑ Have all of my data and any reference to my participation destroyed and deleted from all records. I understand that this will mean my information will not be used in the final analysis of data or the findings that result from it.

I further choose:

❑ Not to see a draft of the final report of findings before it is submitted to the University for approval. By choosing this option I realize that I will not receive any further correspondence regarding this study.

❑ To see a draft of the final report of findings, before it is sent to the University for approval to ensure that I am in no way represented.

_____

Electronic Signature (E-Mail Address of participant)

Appendix G: Initial Sample Questionnaire

Initial Question

Please tell me about your background and experience as a teacher. Be sure to include years of teaching, subjects and grade levels taught, and any other responsibilities or duties held.

Response boxes were one full page on actual questionnaire.

1. In general, how do you feel about the instructional support provided by your site administrator? Please note that the term "administrator" for this question, as well as the entire questionnaire, will refer to the highest ranking supervisor on your school site, which includes principal, dean, or headmaster. Describe ways that you feel supported in the classroom, during department collaboration, and during and after district trainings, and ways, if any, that you do not. Please be specific.

2. What are your thoughts and opinions about professional development in general, as well as regarding workshops and trainings you have attended relating to your present school environment?

3. What are the expectations that your district and or site administrator have regarding what you learn in workshops and how that learning is integrated into your classroom?
4. Please give examples of the administrator support you received both during and after the training.
5. After returning to your classroom following a workshop or training, to what degree do you persist with implementation of the new learning? In your answer, discuss what you do if the strategy does not go well at first or when implementation feels awkward or uncomfortable.
6. When practicing new strategies or methods how do you feel about receiving feedback from a colleague? What experience do you have with providing or receiving feedback? Have you held the role of Peer Coach at your site? If so, how was that received by your peers? If you have received support from an onsite Peer Coach, was it helpful? Why or why not?

7. What are your thoughts and feelings about teacher evaluations and the impact they have on instructional practice (your own and in general)?
8. What do you feel is the role of the site administrator with regard to instructional supervision and support of teachers with implementation of new strategies?
9. **Wrap up Question**: Is there anything that you have not had the chance to answer completely or anything that I have not asked you about that you would like to talk about further?

Appendix H: Sample Focus Group Questionnaire

Initial Question Please introduce yourself to the group. Tell us about your background and experience as a teacher. Be sure to include years of teaching, subjects and grade levels taught, and any other responsibilities or duties held.
1. What are some of the trainings that you have attended in the district within the past 5 years? Did you ask/volunteer to attend or were you instructed to attend by site/district administration?
2. Looking back on trainings involving Gradual Release of Responsibility and Peer Coaching, what follow up training or support occurred?
3. What role(s) did administrators play in guiding the follow up/implementation after the initial training?
4. If administration had no role in support or implementation, did you take the challenge on at your site or in your department to help assist peers in knowledge and implementation?
5. What would be the ideal role that administrators would play in follow up and support of implementation of new strategies at your site? Do you want them involved? Why or why not?
6. Do you or your peers at your site feel either sensitive or apprehensive to work side by side with a site administrator in implementation of Gradual Release of Responsibility or any other instructional strategy in a non-evaluative setting? Why or why not?