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An Elementary Perspective of the Value-Added Model

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Abstract

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Abstract

In a small, rural school district in the southeastern United States, elementary school teachers were receiving positive evaluation ratings while student proficiency on state assessments was below the state average. Due to changes in federal and state laws, school personnel evaluate methods have undergone significant reform. The purpose of this study was to answer the guiding research questions of teachers and administrators perceptions toward the value-added model (VAM) of evaluation and how those perceptions affect teacher performance. Taylor's scientific management theory, which suggests examining human productivity through the lens of applied science served as the conceptual framework. Data were collected from semistructured interviews with a homogeneous group of 4 elementary teachers and 4 principals. Thematic data followed an open-coding process to identify categories and emergent themes. The findings revealed that teachers believed VAM had little effect on their instructional practice and principals rarely used VAM data to recommend professional development to teachers. This study included the creation of a professional development project to provide a clear understanding of VAM and a method for analyzing student data to inform (a) instruction, (b) pedagogical and content knowledge in the area of balanced literacy and assessments, and (c) a summative review of student data related to VAM. The study and project have implications for positive social change by providing district and school-based leaders with insight into the effects of many decisions related to teacher evaluations.

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Dedication

This work would not have been possible without the love and support of my wonderful husband, Doug McCoy. For all of the hours he transported children, read and reread my proposal, and rubbed my back, I dedicate this study to him. Without him, this would never have been completed.

God has richly blessed my family. He has allowed my family a long heritage of public service in education. My grandmother, father, sister, aunts and cousins have spent their entire lives making the world a better place. This work is dedicated to the educators of the Raulerson family.

To my children, Brittany, Jay, Mamie, and Savannah, this study is dedicated as proof that with hard work and perseverance anything is possible. You can do anything.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Two major goals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which were amplified by the No Child Left Behind Act ([NCLB], 2002), were to improve the quality of K-12 teaching and to raise the academic achievement of students who fail to meet grade-level proficiency standards (Lomax & Kuenzi, 2012). In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the enactment of the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant competition funneled $4.35 billion into the U.S. Department of Education to support the restructuring of the American education system. Eligibility for Race to the Top funding was dependent on four broad areas of school reform: (a) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace; (b) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how to improve instruction; (c) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and (d) turning around the lowest-performing schools (Lomax & Kuenzi, 2012).

Since the beginning of the RTTT grant completion, the use of a value-added measurement tool has become a controversial topic (Ewing, 2011). Despite controversies surrounding RTTT eligibility, federal and state policies have referenced and even required the use of a value added model (VAM, Ewing, 2011). Similarly, many states have authorized policies that require the use of a value added measurement tool in annual, high-stakes teacher evaluations and in the evaluation of teacher preparation programs (Gabriel & Lester, 2013). Around the country, states and districts are searching

for an accountability system that would easily define teacher quality and effectiveness. Such a system might eliminate ineffective teachers while rewarding effective teachers. An accountability system has the potential of improving student learning and achievement (Holloway-Libell & Collins, 2014). Supporters of the VAM posited that the model is "the first reliable, objective method of separating the good teachers from the mediocre and poor ones" (Stewart, 2006, p. 6). Without value-added data, assessment is subjective and often inaccurate (Stewart, 2006). Opponents of the VAM questioned the accuracy the model as a means of accurately assessing teacher performance. Collins (2014) argued that the percentage of errors in the calculation of VAM could be significant, especially when data is gathered for less than 3 years or when the pool of scores is not substantial. Examining how VAM assessments impact performance from the teacher and principal's perspective is the basis of this project study.

According to scientific management theory of labor productivity (SMT, Taylor, 1911), analysis of a problem, habits of efficiency, and the use of best practices are important to increase productivity. According to this theory, education, including instruction and learning, would improve based on analysis of existing practices, retaining effective ones, and revamping or eliminating those practices that proved ineffective. As it pertains to instruction, standardization and curriculum alignment are the dominant curricular forces in education today and yet data has shown that using standardized testing does not increase student learning (Rubin & Kazanjian, 2011). Modern ideas about assessing instructors claim that the United States is a regimented and regulated educational system, eliminating individuality and creativity (Giroux, 2010). Based on

SMT, assessment of the educational system would offer insight into practices that would be more effective than standardized measurements. In this study, the foundational points of SMT were compared and contrasted with data gathered from interviews with principals and teachers about a value-added assessment tool.

Definition of the Problem

In a small, rural school district in the southern United States, students were not achieving at the same rate as students in other districts in the state, earning the district a "D" rating by the state, and thus triggering state involvement in the improvement process (Florida Department of Education, 2012). After a school-by-school review in academic year (AY) 2013, the State Differentiated Accountability (DA) Team found that all K-5 teachers in the district needed additional training in the state standards and pedagogy. Conversely, teacher evaluation results for this same AY, using the VAM for growth, indicated that 90% of teachers had a rating of effective or higher. Therefore, examining how teachers perceive and use their evaluation data to improve instruction could lead to a better understanding of the discrepancy in student achievement and teacher evaluation ratings. The problem addressed in this qualitative case study was to understand from the teachers' and principals' viewpoint how the VAM of teacher evaluation impacts teacher performance. The study identified evidence that could support high-stakes testing and the VAM of accountability could influence teachers' decisions about the content, design, and methods used for instruction.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The setting for this qualitative case study was a small, rural school district (the District) in the southeastern United States. Four of the five elementary schools in the District are currently working with a state DA team. One school in the district was on the state's list of the 100 lowest performing schools during the 2013-14 AY and another school was on the state's list of 300 lowest performing schools in the 2014-15 AY. The DA team is working in low performing schools and districts with a responsibility to raise student achievement. Teacher training in the state standards and pedagogy is paramount to the DA team's mission of increasing student performance on state assessments.

In 2011, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 736 (SB 736), the Student Success Act (SSA), which changed the teacher evaluation process and increased expectations for teacher productivity (Education Information and Accountability Services, 2011). Senate Bill 736 reinforced the RTTT initiative by mandating that teacher evaluations be based 50% on teachers' instructional practice as observed and evaluated by administrators, and 50% on student performance. Student performance in the District focused primarily on annual student growth evaluation as measured by statewide assessments. District assessments are required by state statute for courses not assessed by a statewide assessment. The VAM has caused the State Education Association to challenge SB 736 in court. The State Education Association argues that the law unconstitutionally strips teachers of their ability to negotiate pay (O'Connor, 2013). While teacher performance ratings appear effective, with 90% ranking effective or higher, students in the study

district scored at 46% proficiency in reading and 51% proficiency in math (Florida Department of Education [FLDOE], 2013).

ABC Elementary School is listed as a school in need of improvement under the state accountability system. The principal from ABC Elementary described the attitudes of teachers as apprehensive about the future structure of teacher evaluation, stating that "teachers have expressed a frustration and confusion over improving instruction" (Principal, personal communication, August 5, 2013). "Teachers say they implement each change given to them by the school or district, but see no improvement in student achievement" (Principal, personal communication, August 5, 2013). The superintendent believes that teachers, principals, and district leaders struggle to find a balance between making the best decisions for students and fulfilling the requirements of a complicated system of evaluation (Superintendent, personal communication, August 5, 2013).

The state's current personnel evaluation procedures allow school districts the option to use or modify the state model, or to develop models of their own based on the State Educator Accomplished Practices and contemporary research relevant to the purposes of instruction (Florida Statute 1021.3401, 2014). The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS), with partial funding from the State Department of Education, agreed to facilitate a performance appraisal system prototype. Education Management Consultant Services, Inc. (EMCS) joined with FADSS to produce a system that would minimize the fiscal impact on local school districts (Copeland, 2012). The District chose to use the EMCS model for the instructional

practice component of the evaluation system over the Marzano state model (Florida State Department of Education, 2012).

After the first year of implementation, a committee of District teachers and administrators revised the original EMCS form at the local level in an effort to make the length of the EMCS evaluation instrument more manageable and to clarify and strengthen the EMCS evaluation rubric (M. Brown, personal communication, 2014). Although the state approved the evaluation instrument, the District took more than a year to ratify a contract with the teachers' union in a dispute over the process of teacher evaluations (Murphy, 2012). In 2014, the state engaged several districts to make changes in the evaluation instrument as a contingency for approval. In 2015, the District again revised the evaluation instrument for clarity and efficiency. Many indicators were revised and some deleted to reduce the total number from 50 to 27. The revised rubric incorporated recommendations from Cambridge Educational Consultants, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation local project, and the Commissioners Leadership Academy participants (R. Green, personal communication, July 30, 2015). Table 1 provides a comparison of teacher performance ratings between the study District and similar districts within the same state. The results in Table 1 have raised concerns within state regulatory bodies because the performance ratings did not support the student performance outcomes.

Fink (2003) described the unintended consequences of top-down reform in the Ontario education system as "revolutionary changes—all instituted at break-neck speed" (p. 3). Due to the high importance placed on school reform, and the fast pace in which

changes were made, administrators in Ontario were left feeling the need to be more dictatorial rather than collegial in their leadership approach (Fink, 2003).

Table 1

2012 Performance Ratings of Classroom Teachers

	HE	E	NI	D	UN	NE	Total
District XYZ	5	405	0	0	0	47	457
District A	116	238	23	0	1	100	478
District B	181	163	1	2	0	76	423
District C	75	395	1	1	0	51	523
District D	66	265	30	6	9	40	416

Note. Total indicates total number of teachers in the District. HE=Highly Effective; E=Effective; NI= Needs Improvement; D= developing; UN= Unsatisfactory; NE= Not Evaluated.

The former assistant superintendent described a situation that appears as an unintended consequence for the District. In the late 1990s, the District was experiencing growing pains and the solitary District high school was over-crowded. Budgetary constraints and real estate limitations within the community prohibited building another local high school. In a resourceful move, the District relocated the freshmen to another campus to create a freshman-only school (Former Assistant Superintendent, personal communication, September 23, 2014). Changes to the school grade calculation caused the Freshmen Campus to receive a grade of its own rather than sharing in the high school grade. This meant the high school did not have the benefit of the Freshmen scores in the total points calculated for the school grade.

In 1999, the state began assigning letter grades to schools under the A+ Plan (Bush, 2014). As the state changed the grading formula of high schools to award bonus

points for accelerated courses, the District began to offer Algebra I in middle school so those schools could benefit from attaining bonus points. However, adding Algebra I to the middle schools had an unintended consequence for the high school. Students performing at the highest level on the state math assessment would enroll in Algebra I in middle school. The remaining students would enroll in Algebra I as ninth graders. Subsequently, students struggling with the content or needing remediation would enroll in Algebra I at the high school level and only those students' scores would count toward the high school teachers VAM scores and the school grade. The components for calculating state high school grades were: achievement scores for English Language Arts (ELA), math, science, and social studies; learning gains for students in ELA and math; learning gains for students in the lowest 25% in ELA and Math; 4-year graduation rate; and enrollment in acceleration courses which include advance placement , international baccalaureate, dual enrollment, or industry certifications (Florida Department of Education, 2013). The points earned for each component are added together and divided by the total number of available points to determine the percentage of points earned (Florida Department of Education, 2013). School Grading Percentages were: A = 62% of points or greater, B = 54% to 61% of points, C = 41% to 53% of points, D = 32% to 40% of points, F = 31% of points or less (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

Consequently, 19% of total points of the high school grade calculation was determined from Algebra I. This school grading formula caused the District to rethink the ninth grade center as a stand-alone school. The benefits of having a separate school with

only ninth graders superseded the need to improve the public perception of the high school grade.

On April 17, 2013, the State Education Association along with seven district teachers filed a federal lawsuit in protest of policies that linked their individual performance rating to test scores of students who were not in their classes. The foundation of the lawsuit was this state, like many other states, administers reading, math, and writing tests in designated grades. Not all students in all grades and subjects are tested. Therefore, some teachers are assigned ratings based on subject scores they do not teach and have student performance data assigned to them for which they are not responsible, making the VAM calculation irrelevant for teacher feedback or improvement (*New York Times*, 2013). Planning and preparation for the systematic changes and consequences of evaluation based on VAM could be as important as the evaluation instrument itself. The purpose of teacher evaluation is to measure a teacher's growth, yet evaluations should also promote teacher development (Marzano, 2012; Mielke & Frontier, 2012).

On February 24, 2014, the State Department of Education released performance scores for the teachers following a lawsuit instigated by a major newspaper (Bidwell, 2014). The lawsuit and public unveiling allowed performance scores for state teachers to be open to the public, and added additional anxiety and stress for teachers and administrators. In April 2014, a U.S. District Judge dismissed part of a federal lawsuit filed by the State Education Association (Kim Cook et al. *vs* Pam Stewart et al.,, 2015). The rationale for such evaluations could further the state's legitimate purpose of

increasing student achievement. However, U.S. Circuit Court Judge Jill Pryor ruled that the part of the lawsuit that challenged the way the law is applied could continue.

> While VAM may not be the best method or may even be a poor one for achieving this goal, it is still rational to think that the challenged evaluation procedures would advance the government's stated purpose to increase student academic performance by improving the instructional, administrative and supervisory services offered in its public schools. [citation needed, including page or paragraph number]

Judge Pryor further wrote that the state could reasonably believe that a teacher could improve student performance through his or her presence in a school and the VAM could measure those school-wide performance improvements, even if the model was not designed to do so (Kim Cook, et al., vs Pam Stewart,et al.,, 2015). Judge Pryor believed that tying teacher evaluation scores and teacher compensation to VAM scores was reasonable and could incentivize teachers to pursue more school-wide improvements, which would,in turn, improve students' academic performance (Pais, 2015). A gap in the district teacher performance ratings and student achievement scores coupled with multiple systematic changes and challenges to the system implied a local problem worthy of study. The findings of this study could inform state education policy makers of the unintended consequences of the current accountability policy. The resulting project could include a policy recommendation that advocates best practices for educational accountability. This study could lead to positive social change by providing district and

school-based leaders with insight into the effects of many decisions related to teacher evaluations.

Evidence of the Problem from Professional Literature

According to Danielson (2000), teacher evaluations have two principle purposes: quality assurance and professional development. Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2006) stated that nearly everyone points to teacher quality as the most significant key to student success. However, many studies have shown evidence of across-teacher variations in student achievement with no characteristics to account for this difference except student experiences (McBride, Dyer, & Laxman, 2013; Ruziek, 2015; London, Sanchez, & Castrechini, 2016). Collins (2014) found that teachers do not control all the variables associated with student learning. Nutrition, health, experience, and exposure to ideas and concepts cannot begin and end for students in the classroom. Newton, Darling-Hammond, Haertel, and Thomas (2010) believed that caution should be applied when using student achievement gains and VAMs to assess teacher effectiveness. Teachers of economically disadvantaged students generally receive a lower effectiveness rating than the same teacher teaching more advantaged students (Newton et al., 2010).

Ellison (2012) summarized the critics of accountability reform by charging that an overemphasis on easily defined standards—which are tied to standardized assessments—will narrow schools' curriculum to those skills that are easily assessed. In the long term, standardized assessments reenforce teachercentric pedagogies and provide very few opportunities for discovery learning and critical thinking. Teachers fall into planning for rote learning and feel bound to cover standards that will be tested. Gorard, Hordosy, and

Siddiqui (2013) believed that until the problems with value-added scoring have been resolved, VAM should not be used. Gorard, Hordosy, and Siddiqui (2013) argued that "if value-added scores are as meaningless as they appear to be, there is a serious ethical issue wherever value-added scores have been or continue to be used" (p. 4). Also, higher standarized test scores may not be the only vaulable attribute needed to be a successful teacher. Rothstein (2010) suggested that cooperative behavior and social skills are also crucial for success in adulthood. Many variables could be considered when placing a value on a teacher's contribution to student achievement.

Not all research on the new accountability practices has been negative. Judson (2012) found states that measured science scores as well as math and reading in the requirements for adequate yearly progress (AYP) had significantly higher science achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) than other states. Judson (2012) found that when testing emphasis is placed on a content area, the achievement levels rise.

VAMs evaluating a teacher's effectiveness based on student growth, are providing data that is being used in other manners. In Louisiana, VAMs assess the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs; in NewYork, VAMs help teachers improve instruction and performance; and in Knox County, Tennessee, VAMs are used to study the distribution of effective teachers in high-poverty schools (Armour-Garb, 2009).

The use of the VAM data for the purpose of providing data to problem-solve and organize instruction is not as controversial as its use for personnel evaluation. Graue,

Delaney, and Karch (2013) found that resources such as funding, leadership, and collaboration, play a large part in quality education. Rather than using the VAMs to predict single teachers' isolated effectiveness, the quality of resources, coherence, and leadership can greatly influence teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Value-added data could provide a basis for improvement or replication of schoolwide behaviors or activities. Data gleaned from standardized assessments can be powerful, but often teachers and administrators use of this data has been hindered by access issues (Miller, 2010). Understanding the relationship of systematic challenges, personal pressures, and the intent of the VAM may reveal whether the VAM of teacher evaluation impacts teacher performance and therefore, student achievement. Determining the teachers' and principals' viewpoint of how the VAM of teacher evaluation impacts teacher performance and if this knowledge leads to a change of practice which lessens the gap between high teacher performance ratings and low students achievement then, this problem is worthy of study.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms and definitions were used in the qualitative case study:

Ability grouping: The sorting of students with like skills into a single classroom or class group (Allan, 1991; Kim, 2012; Worthy, 2009).

Adequate yearly progress : The measure by which public schools are held accountable for student perfromance under Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011).

Curriculum narrowing: Also known as standardization or curriculum alignment. Educational quality control where the process of teaching and learning is predetermined, pre-paced, and pre-structured. Little room exists for orginality or creativity on the part of teachers or students and specific, corect answers are elicited to specific, direct questions (Marhiri, 2005).

Differentiated instruction: Instruction planned to address the varing readiness levels of all students in a single class. Differentiated instruction attends to modes of instruction, materials , and how students demonstrate learning. This approach tailors instruction to meet the learning needs of students (Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, & Hardin, 2014; Phan, 2012) .

Flexible grouping: The practice of placing students in groups according to their ability and allowing students to move up or down in the ability groupings across a grade level as their skill level changes in relation to the majority of the group (Slavin, 1988; Slavin, 2014; Tieso, 2003).

Multi-tiered system of supports (): Also known as response to intervention (RTI). A systematic use of assessment data to proficiently allocate resources in order to improve learning for all students using integrated academic and behavioral supports (Kaloi, 2014).

Performance pay: Pay tied completely to explicit measures of employee or group output (Adams, Heywood, & Rothstein, 2009)

Teacher evaluation: Instruments that measure a teacher's effectiveness in

relation to a given rubric. Evaluation instruments are used to ensure teacher quality and promote professional development (Danielson, 2010). Teacher evaluations can measure teachers and help to develop teachers (Marzano, 2012).

Value-added model (): VAMs are complex statistical models that attempt to predict the value a teacher would add to a student's achievement growth. VAMs attempt to measure a teacher's impact on student achievement apart from other factors. VAM's attempt to measure how much content students learn each year, regardless of the students characteristics (Adler, 2013; American Statistical Association , 2014)

Significance of the Study

Some teachers and administrators feel that the changes to the state's policies and procedures regarding assessment and accountability occurred rapidly. Teachers and administrators are conforming to the pace of implementing new accountability policies yet intensive remediation, a slower pace, differentiated material, and the possibility of many students not making a year's worth of progress in a calendar school year are strategies and realities that may not be addressed by VAM. Forty-seven states adopted the Common Core Standards for education (Common Core Standards, 2013). Alignment of materials, professional development for teachers, and shifts in teaching methods have been overwhelming for teachers and administrators (K.S., personal communication, August 5, 2013). For example, over the last 3 years, Florida has introduced computer-based testing required by RTTT (Florida Department of Education, 2012).

When computer-based testing began, problems with the state infrastructure and equitable availability of computers in many districts nearly crippled the state assessment

system. In 2011, the state of the study site increased the achievement level scale for reading, math, and writing, and experienced a dramatic downward turn in school grades. In 2012, the state of the study site pronounced commitment to begin with the new common assessment Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC, Ujifusa, 2014). However, in 2013 the state immediately withdrew from PARCC as a fiscal agent and requested the design and implementation of a new assessment. In March 2014, the state of the study site adopted new standards, which emphasized Common Core and additions made in algebra and handwriting, among other areas. In March 2015, the students took the new state assessment. Student assessment scores were released to local districts in October 2015, however, only T-scores and percentile ranks were sent instead of achievement levels. The teacher VAM scores were released before the end of 2015. In July 2015, the State Board of Education adopted a new formula for calculating VAM. The new rule set a statewide standard for all school districts. The new state law articulated that VAM data could count for only one-third of a teacher's evaluation (Postal, 2015).

Changes to the state evaluation system and policies have the potential to create a labyrinth of information that teachers and administrators must navigate. Teachers' primary responsibility is to instruct students using data about student performance to drive that instruction and to use data about their own performance to direct their professional development and hone their skills (Danielson, 2010; Marzano, 2012). Studying the effect of evaluation on performance may provide policy makers and

instructional leaders with information that addresses the relationship gap between teacher performance scores and student achievement.

Guiding Questions

In 2012, the study site earned a D rating in the state school grading system (Florida Department of Education, 2014). In that same year, 90% of teachers had an effective or highly effective rating on the instructional practice score. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate how the VAM of teacher evaluation affects elementary teacher performance at the study site. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions about how the VAM of teacher evaluation impacts teacher performance?

RQ2: What are principals' perceptions about how the VAM impacts teacher performance?

These RQs were supported by the following sub question:

SQ1: How has the VAM changed teacher practice?

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate how the VAM of teacher evaluation impacted elementary teacher performance at the study site. According to Merriam (2009), no problem or idea in a field of study exists in isolation. A comprehensive literature review revealed a gap in what is know about the topic and what areas require more research, in this instance, what is known about VAM and how it influences teacher performance. A review of recent literature on VAM identified

accountability and VAM, legal issues surrounding high-stakes testing and accountability, curriculum decisions and accountability, and school-based decisions.

The literature review is divided into four main sections. The first section, describes the conceptual framework about scientific management paralled with the current culture of educational accountability. The second and third sections describe the origins of the accountability movement and legal issues surranding high-stakes testing and accountabilty. The final section sought to understand the relationship between VAM and school-based decision making.

The review was based on peer-reviewed sources from EBSCO, ProQuest Central, and Sage databases. The following key words were used: *value-added model, teacher evaluation, educational accountability, elementary accountability, value-added model and professional development,tracking, student placement, and teacher accountability.*

Scientific Management Conceptual Framework

In the early 1900s, Fredrick Taylor introduced the theory of scientific management in labor productivity. Taylor's theory was one of the earliest attempts to apply science to human productivity. Taylor's work *The Principles of Scientific Management*, (1911) posited that the country was suffering from the inefficiency of even the daily acts of living. According to Taylor, (1911) the fix for inefficiency rested with scientific management and not with an extraordinary leader. Taylor (1911) believed that the best management was true science that relied on defined laws, rules and principles.

Today, business leaders and politicians may be viewing teacher evaluation in much the same manner. Scientific management is a theory of management that analyzes

and synthesizes workflows, with the main objective to improve efficiency, especially labor productivity. Current educational policies seem to mirror the tenets of Taylor's (1911) work: analysis compares to data driven instruction; efficiency and elimination of waste compares to computer-based testing and instruction; standardization of best practice compares to the move to common core standards and common assessment; and the idea to eliminate tenure and employ teachers on the merits of competency only align with Taylor's (1911) disregard for merely upholding tradition for traditions sake. Many of the themes of Taylor's theory are applicable to the current culture of educational accountability as a means to improve teacher performance and student achievement.

Analysis of a problem. Taylor (1911) believed in the act of analysis and applied the scientific method to study work and determine the most efficient way to perform tasks (Bell, Kennebrew, & Blyden, 2015). Detailed analysis can be compared to the emphasis of data driven instruction in today's accountability movement as required by the NCLB (2001). Inherent in the NCLB policy is the belief that student data are vital sources of information, which will guide academic improvement and can be used to hold individuals and groups accountable (Marsh & Pane, 2006). Sharrat and Fullan (2013) described how the increase in digital power provides educators a method to collect data quickly and efficiently, however, recognizing the value of identifying the students behind the statistics is valuable for overall academic performance and improvement. Sustained inquiry cycles and contextualized investigations of student learning seem to assist classroom teachers develop responsive pedagogy more than standardized test scores and mountains of disaggregated data (Pella, 2012). Statistical tools have the ability to

accurately assess performance quickly and efficiently, and inform on what tools improve student performance.

Efficiency and the elimination of waste. Taylor (1911) believed in efficiency and the elimination of waste in work and task production. These concepts coincide with the move in education toward computer-based testing and Taylor's idea of knowledge transfer from workers into tools was a theme that could be realized just as computerized instruction has become a staple of classrooms across the United States Although computerized instruction suggests students sitting at computers without direct instruction from a teacher, the evolution of technology has significantly shifted control of learning.

Technology in the classroom not only engages students, but also prepares them for the digital world. (Klopfer, Osterwell, Groff, & Haas, 2009). From business to industry, medicine to science and government, industries have integrated technology into their practices. Klopfer, et al. (2009) stated military personnel, pilots, and astronauts are all trained using simulators which mimic actual conditions. Video games and social networking have reshaped how people communicate, think, and live, collaborate, and form relationships. Teachers will need to adapt their teaching in ways that will respond to how students communicate, such as text messages, instant messaging, and email (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009). Teachers are charged with teaching students, but also preparing them for the future. Incorporative technology in the classroom is a vital part of that preparation (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009).

Sancar and Sancar (2012) discussed the lack of social interaction in computerized learning and a need for employees to have high-quality communication skills. While a

digital environment is appealing and engaging to students, the main aim is to produce students with the necessary skills to be a part of a qualified workforce as required by our global economy (Sancar & Sancar, 2012). Instead of a purely computer based instructional model, Sancar and Sancar (2012) suggested project based learning and believe that the web-environment should provide a basis for creativity, research, and project design. Instead of teachers being viewed as the keeper of all knowledge, there needs to be paradigm shift in regard to traditional culture of teaching and learning so that "students are empowered to take more responsibility for making important contributions to their own learning and their learning community" (November, 2010, p. 193). Increasing or decreasing the amount of time a student spends with a teacher versus a computer-based program may impact the VAM rating for a teacher.

Standardization of best practices. There are four principles in Taylor's SMT. First, scientific method should be used to study work and determine the most efficient options for task. Second, in order to optimize performance, workers should be matched to jobs and receive training for maximum efficiency. The third principle recommends performance monitoring, with instruction and supervision for efficiency. Finally, under SMT, managers are in charge of planning and training, so that workers are able to perform their jobs efficiently (Taylor, 1911).

The standardization of best practices can clearly be aligned with the push for common core standards and common assessment (Taylor, 1911). Tienken (2011) believed there was no empirical basis for the common core standards initiative. The idea

behind the common core is that education drives economics. Therefore, greater student achievement can lead greater contributions from these students later in their lives, and

> in nations with strong economies, the education system probably needs the economy more than the economy needs the education system. Competitive and expanding labor markets in countries with strong economies drive the citizenry to seek higher levels of education (Tienken, 2011, p. 60).

Montgomery (2012) studied how practicing teachers considered the standards when planning lessons or units, and found that the majority did not incorporate the standards while planning lessons. Teachers instead viewed themselves as the most important determiner of what constitutes meaningful instruction.

Tenure versus competency. Lastly, Taylor (1911) disdained tradition preserved merely for its own sake as paralleled in the current move toward the elimination of tenure. Nixon, Packard, and Douvanis (2010) studied the reasons school principals would most likely pursue non-renewal of a teacher's contract. Nixon et al., (2010) found that ethical violations and misconduct ranked as the highest reason for non-renewal and teacher incompetence was ranked second, and that the scientific management principals were likely to tolerate and protect incompetent teachers because of legal employment rights possessed by the teachers and the desire to avoid conflict. As annual contract employees themselves and having only recommending power for teacher renewal, principals are vulnerable. The elimination of tenure would remove one of the barriers in allowing principals to feel freer to non-renew incompetent teachers.

To help organize the discussion of the VAM and teacher accountability systems, the conceptual framework of scientific management by Taylor (1911) will be considered. Au (2011) described U.S. teachers as working under "New Taylorism", where "their labor is controlled vis-à-vis high-stakes testing and pre-packaged corporate curricula aimed specifically at teaching to the tests" (p. 25). Au (2011) believed that the structure of efficiency works to eliminate the collegial, collaborative efforts of educators to identify and meet individual student needs by applying the scientific management theory to the perceptions of current teachers and school leaders. Findings from this study may serve to inform policymakers of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the current accountability system. The current research literature on teacher performance appraisal falls predominantly into three distinct categories: (a) accountability and the VAM, (b) legal issues surrounding high-stakes testing and accountability, and (c) curriculum decisions and accountability. The following paragraphs attempt to summarize the literature as it relates to the accountability system and the VAM.

Accountability and the Value-Added Model

Hanushek introduced judging the effectiveness of teachers based on the learning gains of students into literature in 1971 (Green, 2014). Hanushek and Rivkin's (2010) approach has been used in a variety of different analyses to determine the variation in teacher effectiveness within schools, and the estimation has shown large and constant differences among teachers in the learning achievement of their students. Statistician William Sanders developed value-added models for schools in Tennessee and North Carolina (Sanders, 1998). Sanders' model was used in Tennessee beginning in the 1992

AY as a part of a statewide school reform package and has become more widely used with the passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation in 2002 (Hill, 2000; Ballou, 2004). The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation conducted a multiyear study of value-added modeling with their Measures of Effective Teaching program. The initial results, released in December 2010, supported value-added modeling as correctly identifying effective teachers (Rothstein, 2010). According to the aforementioned studies, value-added assessments are shown to be an effective means of evaluating teacher performance, as well as student achievement based on teacher effectiveness.

President Obama's RTTT competition encouraged states to search for methods to capture the value a teacher adds to student learning from one year to the next (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b). The teacher's value added to a student's achievement is a vehicle for measuring teacher effectiveness. Meyer and Dokumaci (2009) described the VAM as the difference between a student's predicted performance and the actual performance as depicted in Figure 1. As of July 2013, 18 states, the District of Columbia, and 16 school districts across the country have received funding for evaluation systems designed around the VAM (Amrein-Beardsley, Collins, & Polasky, 2013). Hill (2009) challenged policymakers not to assume a value-added score is an indicator of teacher quality or effectiveness. Instead, Hill (2009) encouraged educational leaders and policy makers to look at the bias that may be present; including student selection, the effect of other resources on student achievement and a generous amount of measurement error.

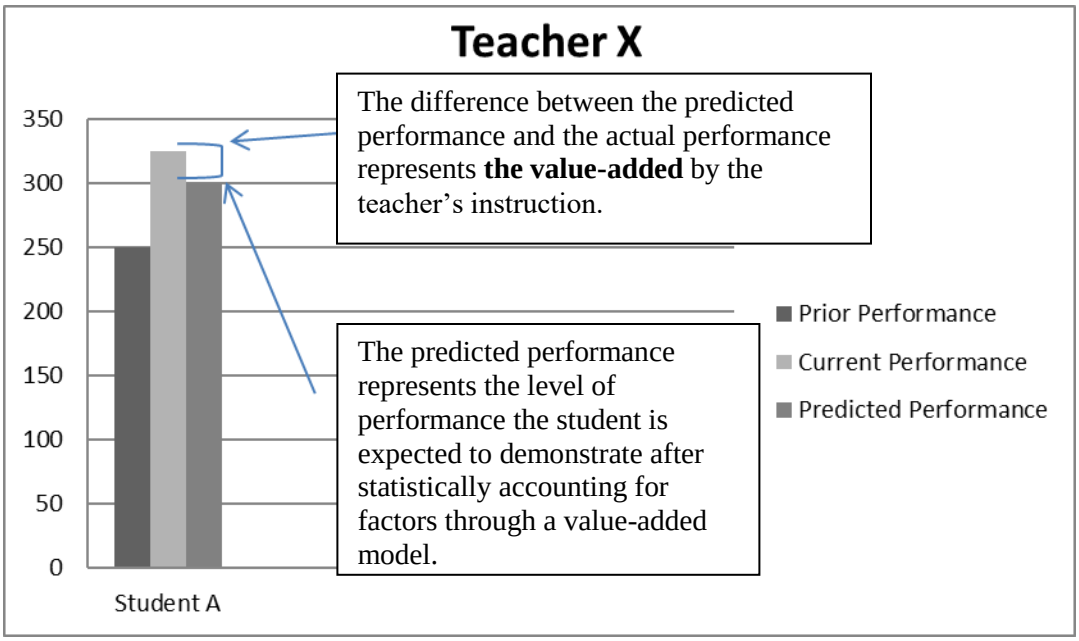

Figure 1. Value–added performance example. Adapted from "Value-Added Models and the Next Generation of Assessment," by R. Meyer and E. Dokumaci, 2009. Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Educational Finance and Policy, Seattle, WA. Adapted with permission.

Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardley, Haertel, and Rothstein (2012) emphasized the need to consider all the factors that contribute to student achievement and contended that student achievement is influenced by other factor than an individual teacher. Darling-Hammond et al., (2012) posited that other influences included school issues such as class size, curriculum materials, instructional time, availability of specialists and tutors, and other learning resources such as books, computers, and science labs. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) home and community support, individual student needs, abilities, health and attendance, peer culture and achievements, prior teachers and schooling, and the kinds of tests used to measure achievement might emphasize some kinds of learning and not others. State standardized tests may not adequately measure achievement that is well above or below grade level, making the assessment of the

progress of the lowest performing students the most difficult to calculate. Kersting, Chen, and Stigler (2013) found high levels of stability in value-added scores in their study of more than 3,000 fifth grade math teachers. However, Kersting et al. (2013) cautioned that more work was needed to determine if the student learning was stable or if the stability was a function of the test as a means of assessing validity and accuracy, as well as fairness of value-based assessments.

Legal Issues Surrounding High-stakes Testing and Accountability

In addition to questions concerning the validity of using high-stakes testing and VAMs for evaluating teachers, there are the civic and legal concerns of this form of statutory and regulatory policies concerning teacher evaluations, tenure, and employment decisions that exceed the statistical reliability and validity of teacher effectiveness measures. Furthermore, Baker et al. (2013) raised concerns about placing teachers in categories of effectiveness based on numerical cut-off points that are beyond the accuracy of the available data. In the study site state, each district uses slightly modified versions of the evaluation instrument and chooses a unique range of teacher proficiency scores. Identifying a teacher as *effective* in one district may not be the same as an effective rating in another district. Pullin (2013) agreed that many legal issues could arise as a result of the value-added measures, however, the VAM is consistent with the "highly publicized press from the business community and many politicians to make government services more like private business, data driven to measure productivity and accountability" (p. 3). Policy-makers have used VAM before the questions of validity or reliability have been fully determined and this provides potential for successful legal challenges to the method

(Pullin, 2013). As the VAM is based on performance and subject to opinion, issues arise of the fairness as an evaluation tool. Additionally, as education is state-regulated, assessment can be different depending on individual state policies.

Each individual state is charged with public education where most states have delegated authority for the use of state funding to individual school districts. Therefore, policy from the national level that standardizes the approach the United States deals with education and removes the authority from individual states and districts could be the basis for future court action. Duke, Tucker, Higgins, Lanphear, Levy, and Salmonowicz (2008) considered the idea of national influence in a study of 21 Virginia school districts. Duke et al. (2008) found that the schools adopted or amended policies related to instruction after the push for stronger accountability in 1995. Similarities and differences were found in each of the district's plan, but the differences did not appear to be significant. At the time of the Duke et al. (2008) study, local control did not appear to be in jeopardy and there was little evidence that local control caused a wide variation in practices or structures.

Curriculum Decisions and Accountability

Craig (2012) examined how a teacher's personal image changed from one of a curriculum maker to a curriculum implementer amid mandated accountability and curriculum reform. Craig (2012) noted that being a member of a profession "historically involved a knowledge specific to that profession that others outside of it would not possess" (p. 99). Teachers, through education and experience, are experts in their field and should have a depth of knowledge about teaching and learning that would invoke a

sense of trust to those outside the profession. However, Craig (2012) argued that in the age of accountability the belief is that someone in the publicly funded education system is doing something wrong for which they should be punished or corrected.

Instead of trusting teachers' expert knowledge, the NCLB Act (2001) requires educators to know how to use data to make informed decisions about teaching practices. These decisions should be informed by student learning and all areas of education, even professional development, by mandating testing of all students in grades third through eigth and selected grades in high school, and documenting the adequate yearly progress of those students (Love, 2009). Love's (2009) collaborative inquiry method takes schools drowning in data and implements a structure to build leadership and capacity, collaboration, data use, and instructional improvement that increases student achievement. Jackson and Lunenburg (2010) found support for collaboration by studying the differences of 24 middle schools. Academic excellence perpetuated by vibrant internal learning communities and their contacts with external networks made a significant difference in student achievement. Externally mandated accountability has lead to greater internal evaluation in most if not all publically funded schools and school districts. King and Rohme-Hirt (2011) believed that the kind of external accountability exerted by NCLB (2001) has the potential to lead to more defined district curricula, standardised assessment, and common formative and summative assessments that teachers can use to shape instruction.

Trujillo (2012) stated that policy analysts have found either weak or inconclusive evidence of high-stake policy effectiveness in boosting test scores. "Studies have

revealed the detrimental impacts of such pressures on instructional quality, particularly for poor children, children of color and English Learners in urban settings" (Trujillo, 2012, p. 335). Accountability mandates, standardized tests and standards shift the focus of local control to persons far removed from the school or school district (Duke et al., 2008; Trujillo, 2012). Palmer and Rangel (2010) identified teachers in bilingual classrooms in Texas and found that teachers struggled with the contradiction between their knowledge of the pedagogical and linguistic needs of the students, and the requisite in the field were held to standards and timetables that were unreasonable or developmentally inappropriate for their students. Teachers are required to provide individualized instruction, while adhering to state mandates, making it difficult to put students' needs first.

In high schools, standards-based reforms and accountability demands require teachers to collaborate across disciplines (Corcoran & Silander, 2009). Cross-discipline collaboration is foreign to many high school teachers who have traditionally worked independently and in isolation (Corcoran & Silander, 2009). Collaboration requires a certain confidence in subject area knowledge and pedagogy skills that novice teachers have not developed yet. Experienced teachers are more practiced in managing classrooms in schools with high populations of struggling students. However, in a five-year longitudinal study conducted by Martinez-Garcia and Slate, (2012), academically unacceptable schools had higher percentages of new teachers than did exemplary high schools in three of the five years. Minority students at underprivileged schools usually have the largest concentration of beginning teachers (Martinez-Garcia and Slate, 2012).

Performance of novice teachers requires monitoring due to inexperience, and helping to develop instruction skills.

Since public funds are used to for teacher salaries, the use of public funds is a significant reason for the new push in educator accountability. Yet, Danielson, (2011) argued two other very important reasons for teacher evaluation: (a) to ensure teacher quality and (b) to promote professional development. Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, and Keeling (2009) listed many other sources of documenting a teacher's effectiveness. Figure 2 shows six sources, which could be considered in equal measure when determining the effectiveness of a teacher's contribution to student growth. These studies suggest a need to concentrate on improving teacher quality while encouraging educators to hold themselves and their peers in high professional regard. The final category of literature for this review concerns school-based decisions related to the new system of accountability.

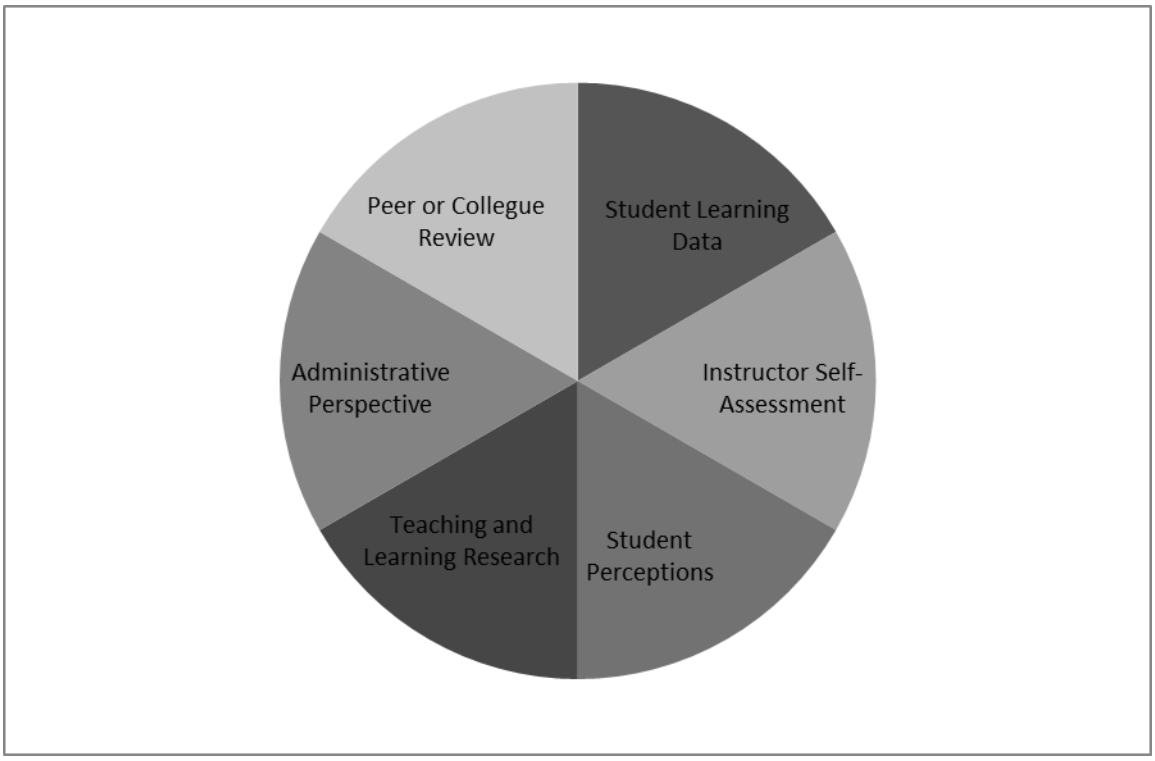

Figure 2. Sources of data for effective teacher evaluation. Adapted from "The Widget Effect Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness" by D.Weisberg, S.Sexton, J. Mulhern, & D. Keeling, 2009, The New Teacher Project. Adapted with permission.

School-based Decision Making

Cohen-Vogel (2011) found that school leaders are hiring and terminating staff in order to increase standardized test performance. Cohen-Vogel (2011) examined one low performing and one high-performing elementary school in five districts and discovered principals hiring, developing, and removing teachers in an effort to increase their schools' overall state assessment performance. School leaders report paying particular attention to student test scores in their decisions to reassign teachers within their school.

Danielson (2014) expressed concern for the pace at which teacher evaluations have been linked to the CCSS. Danielson (2014) asserted that the evaluation of teaching

practices deduces that teachers understand the criteria by which their practice will be judged, but most teachers and evaluators are actually oblivious of the demand of CCSS or what they mean for the teaching profession. Leading education researcher and leading expert in instruction, assessment, writing and implementing standards, Marzano suggested there is a difference in observations that measure teachers proficieny and observations dedicated to developing teachers (Quinn, 2010). Distingushing between observation to determine proficiency and obeservation for professional development may need a more specific deliniation.

Principals and district leaders affect student achievement by shaping teacher motivation, working conditions, and organizational structure (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Tracking or grouping students by ability is another factor for consideration in the quest to measure a teacher's impact on student achievement. LaPrade (2011) studied the practice of detracking as a means for narrowing the achievement gap. The expectations of teachers delineate content delivery and therefore, lower tracks may contain less of the intended curriculum (LaPrade, 2011). In a study of sixth grade teachers of regular language arts classes, Worthy (2010) found the descriptions teachers provided of their regular classes to be similar to negative descriptions used in ability grouping and tracking studies of the 1970s and 1980s. Worthy (2010), also found that the terms regular or grade level, have replaced the terms basic and low, making the leveling system vague. Worthy (2010) revealed that teachers' attitudes and mindset were important factors in the achievement of the students. Nomi (2010) asserted that ability grouping is an organizational response to problems of diversity in the student body. Nomi (2010) found

that some public, low-performing, low socioeconomic status and high-minority schools show no effects or even negative effects using ability grouping. However, Nomi, (2010) posited that ability grouping may improve achievement for schools with reduced inequalities and more useful characteristics. Organizational structures affect the social and learning environments of instruction.

The amount of influence teachers have about these organizational structures is limited and not a consideration of most VAMs. Working conditions and teacher motivation are linked as principals try to actively engage teachers in the process of evaluation. Derrington (2011) suggested "teacher self-reflection, conversational learning time with peers, student achievement data, and stakeholder feedback" as other sources for teacher evaluation and development (p. 52). In order to have a school climate where teachers and administrators have developed a relationship of trust that is conducive to self-reflection and honest evaluation, principals will need authority to implement the evaluations system and be able to judge what evidence measures each evaluation criteria (Derrington, 2011). Then, principals may build structures for improved instruction and make certain teachers have vital support for evaluation measures in which teachers fall below effective or where teachers believe they need more professional development.

Derrington and Larsen (2012) cautioned that a principal who is a middle manager instead of a decision maker may become a reactionary trying to protect teachers from external pressures. Historically, districts focus on the results of one test as a measure of students or teacher success, educators can surrender to pressure to focus on the test rather than on deep mastery of complex standards (Schlechty, 2011). Derrington (2011) also

suggested one possible change in the search for the right balance of autonomy and accountability would be for educators to see teachers as adult learners and actively engage them in the evaluation process and continue to foster positive professional relationships and trust. Fletcher, (2012) found the CCSS requires a different way of teaching, necessitating depth, complex problem-solving, more opportunities for writing, and the use of technology. To be successful, Fletcher, (2012) recommended teachers have time to experiment and fail in order to learn about the implementation of the new standards. Under the current environment of high-stakes accountability, teachers and administrators may not be given such an amenity.

Currently, education is straining between two theories of operation. The first and more traditional theory is the idea of schools and school districts, with guidance from the state, making decisions about how and what students should be taught under local control. Pullman (2012) stated that the "true local control would put the power in the hands of those closest to and most responsible for children: their parents" (p. 1). However, funneling money through a maze of agencies takes the power away from parents and local education officials, those who know the most about the needs of the individual children.

Under the NCLB Act (2001) another system has developed. Many states, pressured to secure funding from the federal government, have embraced a system that uses standardized test data to punish underperforming teachers, schools, and school districts. This qualitative case study will concentrate on gathering information from principals and teachers about how this new system of accountability influences school-

based decisions. Examining how teachers perceive and use their evaluation data to improve instruction may lead to a better understanding of the discrepancy in student achievement and teacher evaluation ratings.

This literature review has focused on factors concerning the VAM and the impact of this acountability model, including legal issues surrounding high-stakes testing and accountability, curriculum decisions, school-based decision making, and a foundational backdrop of the scientific management theory. A study of the perceptions of teachers and principals with regard to the VAM and its impact on teacher performance may offer the local education system ideas to improve teacher perfoamce and student achievement.

Implications

The goal of this qualitative case study was to identify information from teachers and principals that might help to inform the decisions about professional development for teachers in relation to VAM evaluation scores. From this local analysis, an understanding of the perceptions of teachers and principals and a strong review of literature brought about recommendations for practice and professional development, which link VAM evaluation scores, student data, teacher self-evaluation and the professional development offered to teachers to increase student achievement.

Discovery is when people take note of existing components of the world and create new social patterns (Moffitt, 2015). Studying the individual success and struggles of teachers and principals has helped to clarify the real outcomes of the shift to more intense accountability. Policy makers and educators may find information from this study

that will solidify their beliefs about teacher accountability measures and if those measures have a positive impact on student achievement and in the long run on our society.

The evidence from literature suggests that a focus on evaluation from two perspectives- evaluation to promote professional growth and evaluation for quality assurance could result in social change (Marzano, 2012). Understanding the association of evaluation for professional growth and evaluation for quality assurance, where administrators are working to promote professional growth and increase teacher retention at the same time assessing for quality instruction, is key in balancing feedback to teachers.

Focusing on a balance of feedback for professional development and quality assurance could inspire a positive, systematic change in teacher performance and possibly student achievement. The final product of the project study includes recommended changes in professional development for teachers in relation to the VAM data. A differentiated professional development guide based on individual teacher VAM and analysis of student data was the result of the data gathered in this study. The guide includes a purpose for the project, goals, learning outcomes and identifies the target audience. Included in the project are an outline of possible professional development components or a menu of professional development opportunities, a timeline for instruction, activities, trainer notes for delivery and module formats. The project also includes an implementation plan, training materials, and an evaluation plan. The project specifies hour-by-hour details for a minimum of 3 days of training.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to investigate how the VAM of teacher evaluation influences elementary teacher performance at the study site. In Section 1, a definition of the problem rationalized the need for the study. A discussion of the discrepancy between teacher evaluation scores and student performance scores on state standardized tests followed and gave a rationale and significance to the purpose of the study. A literature review, set within the conceptual framework of the scientific method, compared Taylor's (1911) proposal of efficiency, through the use of the scientific method of analysis, to the current procedures in educational accountability today. The review of current literature clarified the importance of the study of the state and local level. Implications about potential findings the study guided the next section on methodology.

Section 2 describes the qualitative methodology, which was used to examine administrators' and elementary teachers' perceptions of the VAM. The methodology may use interpretive policy analysis (Yanow, 2000) to examine VAM documents and artifacts. The effects of the policy and practices were described through interviews with teachers and administrators. Data from artifacts and interviews was used in order to answer the research questions. Section 3 describes the project, which was develop from the study findings, and Section 4 offers reflections on the study and conclusions.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators toward the VAM of evaluation, how those perceptions affect teacher performance, and how these perceptions might help inform the decisions about professional development for teachers in relation to VAM evaluation scores. In Section 2, the research design is identified and justified. Participant selection, access, and protection are discussed and the setting and participants are described. Finally, I describe the analysis of data, credibility and reliability of the research, and the assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study.

Research Approach and Design

As described in Section 1, using a VAM assessment tool in the District signaled the need for an investigation into the discrepancy between the VAM teacher performance ratings and student achievement scores on state standardized tests. The guiding questions in this study centered on the perceptions of teachers and principals about how the VAM of teacher evaluation affects teacher performance. These questions informed the selection of a case study as the design methodology for this project. Merriam (2009) described a case study as a concentrated, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. In this instance, the case of this particular District is of secondary interest because it plays a supportive role and facilitates understanding of the larger picture of how the VAM affects teacher performance. An instrumental case study is more appropriate than any other type of qualitative method because I wanted to

understand the perceptions of teachers and principals about how the VAM affects teacher performance in a particular bounded system, but also there can be such broad disparity between student achievement ratings and teacher performance ratings . Stake (2005) described an instrumental case study as "mainly to provide insight into an issue or redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest and plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else" (p. 437). Previously unknown relationships and variables can be expected to emerge from case studies leading to a rethinking of the experience being studied. Understanding how situations get to be the way they are can be expected to result from a case study (Stake, 1981). The purpose of this qualitative case study is to investigate how the VAM of teacher evaluation affects elementary teacher performance at the study site.

The following two guiding questions supported this study:

RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions about how the VAM of teacher evaluation impacts teacher performance?

RQ2: What are principals' perceptions about how the VAM impacts teacher performance?

These GQs are supported by the following sub question: How has the VAM changed teacher practice?

Understanding teachers and principals' perceptions of the effects of the VAM on teacher performance may lead to other discoveries about the problem.

Justification of the Choice of Research Design

Case study research is an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2008). Yanow (2000) believed that using quantitative tools from microeconomics and strategic analysis neglect the importance of the concept of local knowledge. Hancock and Algozzine (2011) described a case study as richly descriptive because it is grounded in deep and varied sources of information. Hancock and Algozzine (2011) further described case studies as "employing quotes from key participants, anecdotes, narratives composed from original interviews and other literary techniques to create mental images that bring to life the complexity of the many variables inherent in the phenomenon being studied" (p. 11). Case study research allows a detailed examination of various influencing factors associated the phenomenon under study.

The choice of qualitative methodology over mixed methods or quantitative is also related to isolating the location of the study. The District chosen for this study is in the southeastern United States By identifying one district, the study is limited to exploring the accountability system governed by one set of state laws and district polices. Each district in the state has a variety of options when implementing the accountability system and may develop its own polices relative to accountability. The effect of the existing accountability system on teacher performance may have multiple findings that differ from school to school within the district. A qualitative research design was chosen as opposed to quantitative research design because quantitative research statistically analyzes data and limits the participants' ability to provide full details. Qualitative

research allows participants to provide in-depth responses via semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2012). Through data collection consisting of interviews, artifacts, and observational notes, this method of research allows the researcher to analyze five different teachers' data to compare similarities and differences among the participants.

Participants

Description and Justification of Participants

Using a purposeful sampling method, a minimum of four elementary school teachers and four elementary school principals were chosen (Creswell, 2012). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend sampling until a point of saturation or redundancy is attained; typically this will occur with 8-12 interviews:

> In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational consideration. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary criterion. (p. 202)

The teacher participants were selected from those who teach in the state assessed Grades 3-5 and principal participants were chosen from those who have three or more years of elementary leadership experience. The sample was more likely to address the concepts of teacher performance in a climate of high-stakes accountability. All participants were volunteers solicited through District approved general email.

By limiting the study to elementary teachers only, comparisons were made with regard to elementary curriculum decisions and the attributes related to elementary teaching and decision-making. Principal participants were selected from those who have

three or more years of elementary leadership experience. The experience criterion for principals, in the participant sample, helped to ensure that the principal had enough experience to discuss the nuances of teacher performance.

Access to Participants

Access to participants for this study required permission from three levels. First, permission was obtained from the Walden Institution Review Board (IRB) to ensure that all ethical standards are adhered to in accordance with University standards. The goal of the IRB is to ensure that consent, equitable procedures, and that participant risk is minimized, while recognizing the probable benefits of the research, when compared with any possible risks. An application was submitted to the IRB including the research questions, relevant concerns, and how the research was to be disseminated. The IRB approval number is 09-28-17-0283300. The second level of permission was obtained through the District's Human Resources Director. The director was contacted via email with an introductory letter (see Appendix B) including the purpose of the study and a request to have invitations for participation sent to the identified participant sample via email addresses obtained from the Human Resources Director. Potential participants who responded to the email were chosen by lottery by a third party to protect from researcher bias. These participants were then contacted by email to set up a time, date and location for the interview, which was neutral and convenient for the participant.

At the appointed meeting, I began with a personal introduction and small talk, which helped to established positive communication and a convivial rapport with the participant. The purpose of the interview and assurances of confidentiality were

communicated and the participant was presented with the informed consent form. The participant was given an opportunity to read the consent and ask questions for clarification. The participant was asked to sign the consent form before any questions concerning the study were probed.

Protection of Participants

This study employed safeguards, as recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) before, during, and after the study. Bogdan and Biklen, (2007) outlined four safeguards to ensure participant protection in research studies, including: (a) in the invitation to participate, potential participants will be informed of the nature of the study and the procedures that will be used; (b) written consent will be obtained from each participant; (c) participants will be offered a neutral site as a meeting place for the interview; and (d) participants' identities will be made strictly confidential. Participants were randomly assigned a number and participant numbers replaced names in all transcripts.

Interviews were conducted in a quiet, comfortable location outside of the participant-contracted workday and away from the work site. Data was stored on a password-protected computer and recordings were collected and stored on a password-protected device. Data will be destroyed within five years of the completion of the study.

Informed consent (see Appendix C) for participants included providing each with a copy of the transcript to ensure that their responses are accurately represented (Creswell, 2012). The ethical treatment of the participants also included the ability for them to withdraw from the study at any time in the process. Participants were informed they may choose not to answer any questions that may make them feel uncomfortable.

Any revelations deemed harmful to the participant during the interview were omitted from the analysis (Creswell, 2012; Merriam 2009).

Setting and Sample Participants

Setting

The setting for this qualitative case study is a rural public school District. The District encompasses five elementary schools, Grade K-5, of approximately 3,000 students cumulatively. The community is economically dependent on agriculture. Dairy farming, beef cattle, citrus, and produce are the county's largest exports. The District is the largest single employer in the county. Three of the five elementary principals are graduates of the District and the teacher turnover rate is approximately 10% each year.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique was homogeneous and purposeful. Creswell (2012) stated, "In purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon" (p. 206). The sample was homogeneous because "in homogeneous sampling the researcher purposefully samples individuals or sites based on membership in a subgroup that has defining characteristics" (Creswell, 2012, p. 208). The principals and teachers selected were members of a group, the District, who experienced a phenomenon, the gap in teacher VAM ratings and student performance on state assessments. The teacher participants taught Grades 3-5, which are assessed with the state assessment.

Data Collection: Interviews

One-on-one open-ended interviews were used to gather data. In a qualitative study, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggested that research develops the focus of the study. Therefore, broad open-ended questions were posed and the research was developing as participant responses were reviewed, explored, and analyzed. Data originated from open-ended questions (see Appendix D) about teacher performance and school-based decisions relative to the current accountability system. As recommended by Creswell (2012) transcripts from the interviews were analyzed by constant comparison analysis across participant answers to code and categorize data. These codes and categories were used in describing and developing themes from data. These themes were used to write detailed descriptions to convey the thoughts of school-based administrators and teachers on how the VAM impacts teacher performance.

One hour was set aside for each interview and participants were informed of the anticipated interview length. As recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (2007), in the invitation to participate, volunteers were informed that an additional follow-up or clarifying interview may be necessary and could be conducted over the phone. The interview data was collected and recorded at a neutral location such as a local restaurant, coffee shop, or public library. An audio recording device such as an iPad or Chromebook was used to record each interview to ensure accuracy and the device was password protected for confidentiality. The audio recordings were transcribed into text transcripts within 48-72 hours by a transcriptionist to ensure accuracy.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered an instrument of data collection (Denzin, 2003). Data are manipulated through the human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires or machines. The participants may know the researcher and biases. Participants' characteristics may be known to the researcher (Creswell, 2012). My role in the District may directly or indirectly influence my interpretation of participant responses, as I have access to daily instruction through observation and evaluations of elementary teachers. I took measures, such as member checks and routine self-evaluation to minimize personal bias. I made certain I have never have been a supervisor of any of the study participants.

Data Coding

Data analysis is the procedure of making meaning out of the data (Merriam, 2009). The transcripts from the participant interviews were divided into segments that represent a unit of data which is the possible answer or portion of an answer to the question asked in research studies (Merriam, 2009). Rubin and Rubin (2005) found that "coding involves systematically labeling concepts, themes, events, and topical markers so that you retrieve and examine all of the data units that refer to the same subject across all your interviews" (p. 207). To create the codes I used NVivo software to look for patterns across all interviews and examine the literature review fo concepts that support the problem. These codes were analyzed and emerging themes used to form major ideas. Coding began as soon as the transcript of a single session was complete.

Data Analysis

Categories, which appear from the coding, were constructed using the following criteria suggested by Merriam (2009). First, categories are the answers to the research question and should be responsive to the purpose of the research. Second, the categories should be exhaustive and all data from the project should fit into a category or subcategory. Third, categories should be mutually exclusive and data should only fit into one category. Fourth, the naming of the categories should be sensitive to what is included in the category. "An outsider should be able to read the categories and gain some sense of their nature" (Merriam, 2009, p. 186). Finally, the categories should be conceptually congruent and make sense together. In a case study, conveying an understanding of the case is the most important consideration in analyzing the data (Merriam, 2009). I used NVivo, a software that supports qualitative research. The software is designed to help organize, analyze and find insights in unstructured or qualitative data like interviews. Discrepant data was analyzed as part of validity testing in qualitative research. Discrepant data will be examined to assess whether it should modify the conclusions or should be reported as discrepant evidence and allow the reader to draw their own conclusions (Bickman, 2009).

Credibility and Reliability of Research

Credibility for this study was reached through respondent validation or member checking. In this method, participants who provided data reviewed the transcripts and interpretations. Additions and corrections were made in the data until the participants agree their perspectives had been adequately represented. Data collected from principals

and teachers who are actively engaged in the current accountability process and information from the literature review was compared and analyzed to find evidence to support each identified theme. The study has the potential to be more accurate because the information is deemed credible and reliable by the participants (Creswell, 2012).

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope and Delimitations

Assumptions

Often there are beliefs in research that are necessary to conduct the research, but cannot be proven (Simon & Goes, 2013). In this study, it was assumed the participants answered honestly.

Limitations

Delimitations result from specific choices made by the researcher (Goes, 2013). The delimitations made in this study included choices made concerning the questions and participant selection. During the development of the study plan, other questions were considered, but are directly relevant to the discrepancy in teacher evaluation and student performance ratings data.

Scope and Delimitations

Participants of this case study were limited to elementary teachers and principals of the study District. A qualitative case study focuses solely on the bounded case itself (Creswell, 2012). The behavior of a single unit of analysis may or may not reflect the behavior of similar entities (Goes, 2013). The scope of this study included the perspectives of Grade K-5 teachers and elementary principals of the VAM and how the VAM score affects the teacher's performance**.**

Description of the Participants

Participants were employed as either an elementary teacher or principal with three or more years' experience. This criteria was based on participants having experiences receiving a VAM ratings and subsequent training based upon those ratings.

Table 2

Participants

Participant (pseudonyms)	Grade level	Years of experience
Tina	Fifth Grade	16 years
Mary	Third Grade	10 years
Amy	Fourth Grade	15 years
Sue	Fifth Grade	7 years
Principal Smith	Elementary	6 years
Principal Jones	Elementary	4 years
Principal Roberts	Elementary	5 years
Principal Daniel	Elementary	11 years

The themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis of data aligned with four tenets of Taylor's (1911) SMT. The following information is a synthesis of the teachers' and principals' perceptions as they aligned with the tenenants of (a) quantitative analysis of data and numbers to improve production effectivemness and efficiency, (b) scientifically select, train and develop each worker rather than passively leaving them to train themselves, (c) cooperate with workers to ensure scientifically developed methods

are being followed, and (d) mangers apply scientific management principles to planing the work and the workers actually perform the task (Taylor, 1911).

Data Analysis Results

This section contains the data analysis results.. The key points of the results are summarized at the end of the section. The findings were guided by the purpose and research questions. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to investigate how the VAM of teacher evaluation affects elementary teacher performance at the study site.

Findings

The findings are organized by themes as the responses relate to the tenets of Taylor's (1911) scientific management theory. The responses are also delineated by teacher and principal.

GQ1: What are teachers' perceptions about how the VAM of teacher evaluation impacts teacher performance?

RQ2: What are principals' perceptions about how the VAM impacts teacher performance?

First tenet of scientific management theory: Quantitative analysis of data and numbers to improve production effectiveness and efficiency (Taylor, 1911)**.**

Teachers. The teachers shared that analyzing data was an important part of what they do when planning for instruction. For example, Tina stated that she uses data to drive her instruction. Specifically, students take a standard based assessment after instruction and then Tina reteaches or enriches based on the assessment outcomes. Additionally, Amy talked about using a diagnostic tool to determine where students need

to begin instruction. Amy explained students would take progress-monitoring assessments along the way to help her know if the students were making progress, need remediation or enrichment. Mary summarized that analyzing data has made her a better teacher. When students did not master a concept, Mary had hard data to help her find misconceptions or as a starting point for remediation. Sue explained that state level testing results helped her at the fifth-grade level. Sue's students come with two years' worth of data on the state assessed standards. Therefore, Sue begins the year knowing where students have had gaps in their learning in the past and she can quickly plan instruction to help fill those gaps.

Although, all the teachers expressed that they used data to inform or drive instruction only three of the four interviewed believed the VAM had any real impact on their practice. Tina stated she has had low VAM scores in math in the past. The next year she made explicit changes in the way she taught math. Tina scaffolded less and put more of the cognitive load on her students. She also felt she spent more time on test-taking strategies instead of actual content. Ultimately, she was unsure whether this improved student achievement.

When asked how her VAM rating has affected her practice, Amy stated,

> It doesn't really because I'm going to do the best that I can do to the best for my kids regardless of what it is. It just kind of makes me more aware of what I need to use to guide my instruction. It doesn't necessarily mean I'm going to do less or more.

Sue explained she and her partner teacher usually review their student assessment data together and make adjustments and plans for changes in instruction based on what worked for the current group of students. However, when asked how her VAM rating has changed her practice, Sue stated,

> I don't allow it to bother me, I think. I don't even think about it. I know it's there. I know it's part of my evaluation. But I always will put it in the back of my mind because I'm always thinking about what's my purpose and what am I doing. However, when I look around and I see us discussing our evaluations and talking about our scores and all of that, then I start to see a little bit of a stress. And I think it, more than anything, stresses teachers out.

Mary is the only one of the four teachers who stated VAM has affected her practice. “I think about it all the time and I think it's made me a much better educator. I'm aware of in the words I say and the practices and the strategies.” stated Mary. Most teacher participants saw unintended consequences to using VAM for teacher evaluation. Tina felt teachers suddenly do not “give a damn about VAM.” She stated many teachers in the beginning wanted to give credibility to VAM, but after working very hard and doing everything they knew to do, the VAM score did not reflect the effort. So, teachers quit caring about the meaning of their score.

Principals. The principals reported that teachers were becoming more aware of the student data and were analyzing it more, but they did not see a definite change in practice because of data analysis. Principal Smith believes student achievement is stagnate across our state and nation because teacher practice has not shifted. Additionally,

Principal Smith stated VAM or any other data thus far has not been a driver of motivation for teachers to change. Principal Smith determined that teachers have become acclimated to the fact that VAM scores are a “roll of the dice” and teachers feel they have very little power over changing their own VAM score. Principal Smith stated VAM needs to be more transparent. Teachers should be able to see who made VAM growth and who did not. Currently, this information is not available to teachers, and it would be beneficial for teachers to know that achievement and VAM are not synonymous.

Principal Roberts agreed VAM has had little to no influence on changing teacher practice. Principal Roberts reported she hand-calculated student growth from the state and local assessments at the end of the school year last year. Principal Roberts had conversations with each teacher about this growth data, and then teachers immediately saw that, "Oh-oh, I'm in trouble," or "Yeah. It's looking really good." She believes more immediate feedback would be helpful. Principal Roberts stated, teachers do not receive VAM until the beginning of the next school year in September or October. At this point, no one remembers what he or she did with particular students the year before. Principal Roberts told of a situation with a team of teachers all new to the grade level and to her school. “This is where (with these new teachers) we have had the most meaningful conversations, but I honestly haven't seen that much change in practice.” Principal Roberts believes, it is not that the teacher does not want to; they truly honestly think that they have changed their practice, while they have not. Additionally, Principal Roberts reported that it really comes down to something that has nothing to do with analyzing

data, but teachers understanding pedagogy and how to effectively use best practices in their own classroom.

Principal Jones also believes the formula for VAM is overly complicated and teachers perceive it to be unfair. She feels teachers have put VAM ratings aside and have chosen to focus on standards-based instruction, believing "this is the only way I can get students there". Principal Daniel also believes teachers do not know how the VAM number is calculated or where it comes from, there for they do not trust and tend to disregard it.

Second tenet of scientific management theory: scientifically select, train and develop each worker rather than passively leaving them to train themselves (Taylor, 1911). Evaluation has the potential to provide meaningful feedback to teachers to improve teaching practice (Maslow & Kelley, 2012).

Teachers. Each teacher shared that she had had some beginning of the year training in VAM. None of the teachers know exactly how the VAM score was calculated and could not calculate her own score. Mary stated she had had "not much" training or orientation to VAM. She said she believe Google taught her more about VAM than her administrators. Tina noted that she had had some kind of PLC or orientation to VAM for the past three years. However, Tina stated she had never been shown the mathmatical formula.

I have asked for my VAM to be recalculated before though when my end-of-year evaluation came out low and it was very close. I would like to be able to calculate

my own VAM. I'd like to know how to do that so it's not a mystery to me. We have had training on it, but I don't know exactly how it is done.

Tina, Mary and Amy reported never having professional development recommended based on VAM or evaluation. Mary expressed that she considered a recommendation for professional development after an evaluation to be corrective action and she had "never been in that position". All teacher interview participants cited on-going, schoolwide professional development. Sue described a different approach. Sue explained after receiving her final evaluation rating, she and her teammates, analyzed their student performance data. As a part of the deliberate practice plan (DPP), she stated the teachers identify the lowest area of performance and "that helps us choose personally, our professional development, but also helps our principal choose what to bring that benefits us. So I think that the DPP does have to do with our evaluation and our VAM."

Principals. All of the principal participants stated at the beginning of each school year they presented a district standardized PowerPoint which review how the evaluation system for the district works. Principal Smith shared that it really was not enough training for teachers. He said there are at least 20 different methods for how student grouth is calculated based on what subjects, grades, and subgroup of students teachers teach. He tries to meet with each individual teacher and explain how the growth portion of the evaluation is calculated. Principal Roberts and Principal Jones reported holding annual planning conferences to help teachers develop the yearly deliberate practice plan. This plan is based on the prior years' student data and teacher instructional practice

evaluation data. Teachers develop two goals on which to focus his or her professional development for the year.

Third tenet of scientific management theory: Cooperate with workers to ensure scientifically developed methods are being followed (Taylor, 1911). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) defined best practices as existing practices that already possess a high level of widely-agreed effectiveness. An area that emerged as important to teachers, is the idea of best practices used to advance student growth.

Teachers. Tina stated, "My VAM is altogether a lot of things, but it is the growth students make that matters." Tina believes she has tried very, very hard to try to give students the skills they need through instruction so that they could make growth. Tina also reflected that one year when her VAM score in math was low, she made a point to change her practice to include more rigorous work and put more of the cognitive load on her students. Mary reported being much more aware of the strategies and practices she uses for instruction since VAM became part of her evaluation.

Amy equated best practices to classroom management. When discussing how teacher effectiveness should be measured, Amy stated that it should be based in part on student growth and "their classroom practices, the way they manage their classroom." She stated good administrators know what is going on in the classroom and don't have to be there all the time. So teachers should be evaluated on student growth and how they "handle" their classroom. Sue reported monitoring student progress and constanly trying to adjust materials and activities to help students be more successful, but she said no

matter what she tries the outcomes are influenced by other factors. Sue related a story about state testing,

> …then that one year I saw children walk in and look at me and say before they walked in, "I'm going to fail this, and I'm going to do it on purpose." And I remember saying, "What do you mean?" "I'm going to go in there and I'm going to fail this. I'll show you all." And I watched them sit down and do nothing. And the last five minutes of the test, click, click, click, click, click. And nothing that you said, no encouragement,- keep working, come on, try hard, this affects you. Nothing made those children try. And they bombed it. They literally bombed it.

Tina also believes other factors contribute to student learning and may out weigh best practices. “If there was an effective teacher that we know has good teaching practices and has been proven to have good teaching practices, and the students don't make the growth, there are other factors involved.”, she said. Socioeconomics, violence in the home, family status (married, divorced, single), education level of the parents, are all factors, Tina shared, as contributing to students lack of suceess. “All children can achieve, but I believe that some children are more likely to achieve because they don't struggle with those challenges.” In general, the teacher participants believe the use of instructional best practices will lead to student growth and an “easy to understand” student growth measure is how their teaching effectiveness should be measured.

Principals. Principal participants reported the use of best practices, for teachers who were stuggling to move students to demonstrate a years’ growth, were not consistant. Principal Daniel shared that she is focusing more professional development on

best practices rather than using evaluation data to indivualize PD. She linked professional development more toward research-based instructional practices: the anatomy of a lesson, academic learning time, and a structured reading block. Principal Roberts reported having very little funding for PD. Principal Roberts described having all of the PD offered for her teachers developed and delivered internally through the reading coach, assistant principal or herself. Ideally, Principal Roberts would like to have struggling teachers spend an entire day with an experienced, successful teacher. Principal Roberts believes in elementary school, teachers need to see how the entire day fits together. Teachers need to see social studies as an extension of ELA and to see, science, as it grows out of the math curriculum.

Fourth tenet of scientific management theory: Managers apply scientific management principles to planning the work and the workers actually perform the task (Taylor, 1911). This tenet is aligned with standards-based instruction. Standards-based teaching streamlines and eliminates random teaching practices that tap into the preferences of the teacher rather than the instructional needs of the student (Professional Learning Board, 2017).

Teachers. Tina described feeling the need to spend time teaching test taking strategies to her students in an effort to give them every possible chance of scoring well on the state assessment which ultimately determined her VAM score. In the year when her math VAM scores were low, she worried that the district adopted curriculum was not rigorous enough or covered the standards to the depth to which they would be tested.

Mary shared she measures student progress almost exclusively with a standards based assessment,

> We can test a standard. Let's say we test it in September, Standards Mastery. And then we can test that in two or three more months if we wanted to. Just recently, the students didn't do well on the Standards Mastery for main idea. So a second one was given and they did much better. So in that respect, in a short window of time, you can see if there's growth. I did some strategies for main idea with my small groups and some more remediation with main idea.

Sue shared her doubts about strickly sticking to identified standards. She believes some people will focus so much on the standard and not think outside the box. They'll get so focused on some sort of a trick or some sort of a thing that makes it work as opposed to, "Well, we're working on electricity now. So how do we have the kids think of that as global and think about this in their life? How's it going to affect them now? And how will it affect them when they're adults?"

Principals. When asked what kinds of professional development they have recommended to teachers based on VAM or other data collected, principals did not identify the need for more work in standards-based instruction. When Principal Daniel was assigned to a school in need of improvement, her first observations and data analysis indicated teachers in K-2 needed more PD in phonics and phonemic awareness and generally her teachers were not using research-based instructional practices. Principal Daniel stated teachers knew the content of the standards, but did not have solid strategies to deliver meaningful instruction. Likewise, Principal Smith expressed the need for

teachers to have more PD in teaching early childhood reading and more pedagological development. He also discussed the need for more work in classroom mangement and culturaly responsive teaching techniques. Principal Jones shared her teachers must focus more on building their capacity in content knowledge and hone their practice of research-based instructional practice. She reported her teachers currently are teaching standards in isolation and losing a lot of content and meaning derived from connecting and practicing the skills of the standards.

Summary of the Data

In general, the teachers felt VAM had very little effect on their instructional practice. For example, teachers described their confusion on how the VAM score was calculated. Therefore, educators had very little trust in the reliability of the score and discounted it as a measure of their effectiveness. Principals also recognized the formula for VAM is overly complicated and had difficulty explaining its significance to teachers.

Teachers reported aligning his or her deliberate practice plan with student data, but did not commonly make the connection of analyzing the VAM data as a possible indicator of where professional development was needed. Overall, teachers did not focus on VAM as a reliable source of data. Additionally, principals reported aligning very little professional development based on the VAM score. Principals expressed frustration in receiving the VAM scores too late to provide meaningful feedback.

Teachers agreed their effectiveness should be measured using some kind of growth model and indicated analyzing student data was a common practice. However, teachers could not name PD, which had been recommended based on his or her VAM

score, and principals shared individualizing PD based on VAM data was not a common practice. Instead, teachers and principals alike shared the use of best practices as a model for PD work. The theme of best practices permeated all the participant interviews.

Standards-based instruction is a theme that emerged as teachers and principals discuss accountability and assessment. Some teachers believed teaching standards in isolation were an unintended consequence of the VAM. Participants discussed using a standards-based, progress monitoring tool exclusively to measure student growth. One teacher described trying to follow a curriculum map based on the standards with a group of students who were reading below grade level. The teacher worried by following the map and teaching standards in isolation that she was leaving students behind and not meeting the individual student's needs. Another teacher believed VAM causes teachers a great deal of stress and has taken the joy of teaching from teachers and the joy of learning from students.

Outcome of the Study and Proposed Sessions

Based on a review of the data, an outcome of the study was the creation of a series of eight half-day professional development sessions and one full-day session of guided classroom observation sessions to meet teachers needs based on the data. The major objectives for the independent sessions will be to provide a clear understanding of VAM and a method for analyzing student data to inform instruction. In addition, elementary teachers will be provided pedagogical and content knowledge in the area of balanced literacy and assessments followed by a summative review of student data related to VAM.

Professional development session 1: Explicit teaching and VAM. This session will introduce the purposes and objectives of the professional development series. The objective for this session is for teachers to understand the elements included in calculation of his/her student growth score including the individualized method used for calculation, the formula and process used to calculate VAM, and the importance of roster verification and data matching. Participants will examine the District contract language related to his/her professional assignment; examine his/her students' data through the District data management system, and learn the importance of roster verification and data matching for accurate analysis.

Professional development session 2: Explicit teaching and balanced literacy. This next session defines explicit learning and the structures of balanced literacy. Participants will delve deeply into word study and phonics instruction. Teachers will explore the sequencing of District adopted materials and resources for word study and phonics instruction. Ample time will be given for teachers to investigate sample activities for word study, and teaching phonics and phonemic awareness.

Professional development session 3: Explicit teaching and reading assessment. Teachers will explore models for assessment; understand required assessments, and how assessments are used to inform instruction in this session. Teachers will examine the purpose of assessment and learn about assessments for specific areas of reading including: phonological and phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Teachers will be guided to District resources and suggested timelines for each type of assessment.

Professional development session 4: Guided reading, modeled and shared read alouds, and independent reading. Teachers will study the elements of the balanced literacy approach read alouds/modeled reading and shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading. Classroom management for these activities will be incorporate. Best practices for read alouds, shared reading and independent reading will be examined. Finally, a sample structure for the ELA reading block will be discussed.

Professional development session 5: Writing every day! This writing training will have teachers orient themselves with District curriculum materials that support writing instruction. Teachers will review the writing process and observe through video the guided writing process. An anchor chart is a tool used largely to support instruction and to move the student towards achieving success with lessons taught in class (Newman, 2010). Teachers will examine the use of anchor charts in writing instruction. Lastly, teachers will read and discuss modeling writing for students as a powerful best practice.

Professional development session 6: Guided classroom observation. Teachers observing teachers are the most powerful way for a teacher to improve their practice (ASCD IN Service, 2014). To see effective strategies in practice and give teachers an opportunity to ask questions of a highly effective practitioner, guided classroom observations will be organized for all PD participants. Teachers will spend a full day with a guide, who is a reading coach or administrator, observing multiple classrooms. While the guide directs their attention to best practice activities, participants will make notes of ideas to try in his/her own classroom and of questions to ask the classroom teacher.

Participants will be given the opportunity to talk with the teacher after the observation and will ask clarifying questions.

Professional development session 7: Specific strategy observation. In this session participants will choose a specific reading strategy or structure to observe. Setting a clear purpose for this observation will help participants to focus on the mechanics of a strategy that then may be replicated in his/her own classroom. Participants will again be given the opportunity to talk with the teacher and ask questions to help clarify purposes and procedures.

Professional development session 8: End of year data analysis. At the completion of the school year, when state assessment results have been received, participants will meet to analyze and disaggregate his/her students' performance data. Progression monitoring and student achievement data will be examined and teachers will be asked to hypothesize reasons for the data outcomes and plan changes in practice to improve student achievement. Data will also be used to predict a VAM score or growth measure for each participant.

Summary

In Section 2, an instrumental case study was identified as the methodology to be used in the project study. Justification for the design includes an isolation of the study site to limit the state laws and district policies related to the problem. Participants of the study included four elementary teachers and four elementary principals. Protection of the participants was emphasized on safeguards recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (2007). Interviews were used as the method for gathering data and a detailed description of the

interview protocol was discussed. A description of the setting and sample participants was provided. Data coding and analysis were also described as were the use of member checks and an audit trail to ensure credibility and reliability. Data analysis results were reported and outcomes of the study discussed. A professional development project was proposed and description of the proposed sessions detailed.

In Section 3 I present the project, which was developed from the study findings and in Section 4 I present reflections on, and the conclusions of, the study.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

As a result of the data analysis conducted for the study, I created the following professional development project. The project includes eight professional development sessions for teachers based on the balanced literacy approach. This approach serves as the foundation for the sessions based on the identified teacher needs. The goal of the series is to help teachers become more knowledgeable in best practices for elementary English Language Arts (ELA) and how to apply these practices based on analysis of student data. The sessions will be offered to District teachers and will provide an explanation of the VAM and common language, along with an overview of best practices and common expectations for the structure of the ELA block to help teachers increase student performance and, in turn, boost teacher evaluation ratings.

Rationale

The data analysis indicated a need for increased knowledge in the calculation of VAM, and how the analysis of VAM data could signal the need for change in teacher practice. The analysis also showed a need for purposeful professional development based on student data and best practices. One outcome of the study was the development of eight half-day professional development sessions. Although each session was designed to progressively build knowledge, they can all be delivered independently. The sessions will connect tenets of scientific management theory (Taylor, 1911) with modern best practices for ELA instruction. The sessions will also stress the importance of ongoing data analysis to guide instructional planning.

Research revealed that the teacher is probably the single most important factor affecting student achievement (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). Giving teachers examples of research-based best practices and structures will help increase teachers' capacity and communicate common the high expectations established by the District. In order to help teachers grasp these expectations, teachers will be given ample time to explore the resources provided by the District .

Observing highly effective teachers will give participants a solid vision of how to implement best practices while exploring curriculum materials. When an observer assumes the stance of a student of teaching, rather than an evaluator of teaching, great discoveries are possible (Richardson, 2000). Two sessions of professional learning will provide participants with (a) an overall observation with an expert guide and (b) an observation of a specific teaching strategy that the teacher is interested in implementing. The benefits for observers include learning about a new strategy and enhancing their confidence to try this strategy in their own teaching (Hendry & Oliver, 2012)

Review of Literature

Aligning teacher evaluation data with student achievement was the purpose of this professional development series. The tenets of scientific management theory (Taylor, 1911) were used to guide the design. The literature on each of the tenets—data analysis, worker training, best practices, and standardized protocols and standards—was reviewed to support and shape the design of each session.,.

The literature review is divided into four sections. The first section, describes the relationships between evaluation and teacher practice. The second and third sections

describe how using data analysis to drive instruction could be supported by professional development, and how balanced literacy could provide the content base for professional development.. The final section sought to understand how peer observation could enhance professional development.

The review was based on peer-reviewed sources from EBSCO, ProQuest Central, and Sage databases. The following key words were used: *teacher evaluation, educational accountability, elementary accountability, value-added model and professional development,data analysis to drive instruction, peer observation, balanced literacy, early reading instruction,teacher evaluation and teacher practice,* and *change in teacher practice.*

Evaluation and Teacher Practice

Evaluation has the potential to provide meaningful feedback to teachers to improve instruction (Kelley & Maslow, 2012). It is important to address the connection between evaluation and teacher practice when planning for professional development. Often teachers cannot separate the effects of direct instruction from other factors such as socioeconomic or environmental when analyzing student data. VAM has the potential to separate the effects of teachers on student performance from the powerful effects of non-educational factors (McCaffrey, Koretz, Lockwood, & Hamilton, 2004). Kelley and Maslow (2012) believed meaningful learning for teachers occurs when evaluation addresses a meaningful sample of teaching practice, is grounded in a specific model, provides information teachers can act on in collaboration with colleagues, the evaluator

and teacher have a relationship of trust and respect, and feedback is positive and supportive.

Darling-Hammond (2014) asserted teacher evaluation is just one piece of the whole. Evaluation should be considered as part of a comprehensive system for teaching and learning. Support for teacher learning and evaluation needs to be "part of an integrated whole that promotes effectiveness during every stage of a teacher's career" (Darling-Hammond, 2014, p. 6). Darling-Hammond's (2014) proposed framework for a comprehensive system of teacher learning and evlaution includes initial and continuing licensing, hiring and early induction, and granting tenure. Supporting teachers' professional learning and identifiying teachers who need additional assistance makes up the core of the system. Recognition of expert teachers who can contribute to the learning of their peers, both informally as colleagues and formally as mentors, coaches, and teacher leaders makes a powerful impact on the sytem of teacher learning and improvement (Darling-Hammond, 2014).

McCaffrey, Koretz, Lockwood, and Hamilton (2004) reported insufficient research to support the use of VAM for high-stakes decisions. However, Tuytens and Devos (2014) found teacher evaluation can stimulate teachers to undertake professional learning when they perceive feedback as useful. There are four problems that prevent evaluation from improving the instructional practice of teachers (Tuytens & Devos, 2014). First, meaningful feedback is not provided to teachers in order to improve their practice. Second, professional develoment is not aligned with teachers' needs identified through evaluation. Three, principals are reluctant to invest in teacher evaluation, and

fourth, incompetent teachers are granted good rating. Despite these issues, Tuytens and Devos (2010) reported leadership directly influences the feedback utility and teachers' professional learning. Under the scientific leadership tenet of data analysis, Taylor (1911) believed each workers actions should be scientifically studies to find the most efficient way of work. Then, the worker should be trained , not left to learn on his/her own, to peform in the most efffective manner possible. School leaders must be mindful to provide feedback sufficent to change teacher practice when necessary.

Analyzing Data to Drive Instruction

Research has shown that using data in instructional decisions can lead to improved student performance (Wohlstetter, 2008). Effective use of data analysis to drive instruction is an important part of professional development designed to empower teachers to combine the information provided by data, and best practices to improve student achievement and thereby improving teachers' evaluation rating. Earl and Katz (2002) reported the use of data for school improvement is no longer a choice, yet three barriers obstruct simple, trouble-free use: timely availability of data, accessibility to data, and teacher understanding of how to use the data for classroom instruction or differentiated instruction.

The results of state and national data are often not received until school has ended and students have moved on to the next level (Schifter, 2014). According Stiggins et al. (2004), formative assessment is the process that is used

> throughout teaching and learning to diagnose student needs, plan our next steps in instruction, provide students with feedback they can use to improve the quality of

> their work, and help students see and feel in control of their journey to success (p. 31)

Using short- term formative assess fills the gap of more formalized assessments whose results may take considerable time to receive. But when it comes to improving instruction and learning, it's not the quantity of the data that counts, but how the information is used (Hamilton et al., 2009).

Mandinach (2012) called the ability to use data to make informed pedagogical decisions "pedagogical data literacy" (p. 76). Mandinach (2012) emphasized that "effective data use requires going beyond the numbers and their statistical properties to make meaning of them" (p. 73), therefore, translating data into knowledge to inform instruction. Teachers bring with them knowledge of their students through observation data, teacher-made test data, project outcomes, and other products of learning to inform their practice. The mission, then, becomes fitting the pieces of the puzzle together to understand how to inform practice (Schifter, 2014). Just as school leaders must provide effective feedback, so too must teachers analyze data to make his/her own decisions about instruction needed to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers must also be cognizant to pursue professional development when his/her skills or knowledge demand refreshing or renewal (Taylor, 1911).

Balanced Literacy

Balanced literacy is an approach designed to help individual students learn how to process a variety of increasingly challenging texts with understanding and fluency (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Balanced literacy instruction teaches students skills in reading

and writing that are based upon their individual needs and within the context of appropriate leveled reading materials that are of interest to the student. Explicit instruction (Zygouris-Coe, 2001) is a critical component of a balanced literacy program and should to be evident in the areas of word study, guided reading, shared reading and read alouds, independent reading and guided writing activities.

In the *read aloud* strategy, the teacher reads aloud to the classroom. In this activity, the teacher can model the accurate strategies and behaviors. It is important that teachers read with expression, rhythm, and the proper intonation. Students can experience the joys of reading long before they can read on their own (K12 Reader, 2017).

Through guided reading teachers can work with students who are on the same level. Students are assigned to small groups, given their own book, and the teacher works with each student to help develop the skills they need. Guided reading is an effective strategy for helping students approach on grade-level text (Mermelstein, 2006). During shared reading the students and teacher read together. This is an opportunity for students to discover new words and their meanings. Interacting with the teacher and the text is a powerful way for students to build confidence as a reader (K12 Reader, 2017).

During independent reading students are allowed to choose the books they want to read. This is important for many reasons. When students have control of choosing their own text and topic, reading becomes a more enjoyable experience. In addition, when students realize teachers value reading time, they begin to realize that reading must be an important skill (The Access Center, 2017).

Through word study students learn letters and the sounds they make. They then move on to root words, suffixes and prefixes, and how to derive meaning of words (K12 Reader, 2017). Word study is an approach to spelling instruction that moves away from a focus on memorization. The approach reflects what researchers have discovered about alphabetic, pattern, and meaning layers of English orthography. Teachers use a variety of hands-on activities called word work, to help students actively explore these layers of information (Williams, Phillips-Birdsong, Hufnagel, & Hungler, 2017)

Balanced literacy is a recognized best practice for reading and writing instruction (Fresch, 2016). Many teachers feel that a balanced literacy approach enables them to do a better job of empowering studentsand teachers. This is accomplished in part by reading in real books, using explicit instruction in skills and strategies, teaching composition skills through the writing process, and generating speaking and listening experiences for all students (Zygouris-Coe, 2001).

Peer Observations

Peer observation is the process of colleagues observing others in their teaching, with the overall aim of improving teaching practice. Often peer observation is included as part of an introductory or foundation program in colleges of education, learning targeting new staff, or as an element in a postgraduate program (Hendry & Oliver, 2012). Teachers find benefits in peer observation in multiple ways. First, teachers learn how to use new teaching strategies by watching. There is affirmation of current teaching practice by watching a colleague. Occasionally, teachers may read a lesson or consider an activity as too difficult to do, but watching a peer deliver the instruction effectively can build

confidence or the observer (Hendry & Oliver, 2012). Finally, having a collaborative relationship with colleagues allows teacher to learn from feedback given by the observer in a non-threatening way.

The education profession views observation of teaching synonymous with evaluation of teaching (Richardson, 2000). However, peer observation allows teachers to glean from a wide variety of sources, fosters a sense of career-long learning, demonstrates to students that learning is an essential part of what teachers do, and promotes a environment to talk about good teaching (Richardson, 2000).

Educational leaders can promote learning through peer observation by purposefully planning the structure for observations to take place. This sense of organization follows the scientific theory of Taylor (1911). Before entering the observation, a clear focal point should be established. Observers or facilitators should decide what is to be observed such as teacher behaviors, student behaviors, or is he/she gathering specific data. For peer-to-peer observations to work there needs to be time. School leaders must provide time to meet and establish the goals of the observation; time to plan the observation; time to find/develop the protocols and tools to use during the observation; time to conduct the observation; time to debrief after the observation; and time to implement changes based on the evidence/knowledge gathered during the observation (Flom, 2014). Principals can provide facilitative leadership development for teacher leaders. Team leaders need an opportunity to build their capacity for leading professional learning communities. Learning to use protocols, engage participants,

effectively organize, brief, and debrief observations does not happen by chance. It requires forethought, intention, and follow-through (Flom, 2014).

Chapman and Muijs (2014) found collaboration and networking are seen as having advantages to schools moving into the school improvement process. School-to-school networking can allow schools to pool resources and improve professional development. Collaboration and networking may also allow schools to fill the gaps in their own expertise and skills. Peer observation does not need to be contained to a single school buildng. School leaders can find pockets of success for teachers to study and gather best pratices of instruciton to immulate. Networks of schools can mobilize a wider range of resources and expertise than single schools. They may provide greater opportunities for both self-reflection and collective reflection on practice (Prenger, Poortman, & Handelzalts, 2017).

Peer observations led by a content expert such as a reading coach, teacher leader or administrator, can provide observers a focus and guide for acquiring knowledge and skill (Varghese, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans., 2015). Guided observations involve facilitating observation to learn desired, exemplary practices, guiding well-planned prebriefing, classroom tours, debriefing, and interaction with host teachers to fully understand practices and outcomes, promoting conversation around lessons learned and developing strategies for successful transfer of promising practices, and developing implementation plans, and learning activities (Sahakian & Stockton, 1996). Merisuo-Storm and Sorininen (2015) found guided observations more fruitful than the observations teachers did alone. Teachers wrote that it was much easier to focus on

one aspect at a time than to observe a lesson as a whole. It seems that the guided observations improved their observation skills.

Project Description

The project series is designed be offered through the District's professional development system, and teachers will voluntarily enroll. The series is proposed as a way to help teachers understand how VAM and student data, as part of his/her evaluation, is affected directly through explicit instruction. Explicit instruction in this series is framed under the balanced literacy approach for elementary ELA. The delivery of these sessions can be tailored to meet the needs of the presenters, participants and District. One timeline scenario is to deliver each half-day session as part of summer professional development offerings with observation sessions occurring after school begins and the final session presented in the first week of summer after state assessment scores are received. Another timeline could be to deliver the sessions after-school once a week culminating with the final session in the summer. The sessions are divided into seven half-day sessions and a full day of observation. Teachers may enroll in one session or all sessions.

The sessions are designed for a content expert to act as presenter. The presenter could be the reading coach, teacher leader, or administrator and this person could conduct all sessions or the sessions could be divided among a group of knowledgeable educators. Copies of the PowerPoint and handouts will be produced by the District. Most of the materials used are District-adopted material and teachers should have access to these in their own classroom. The venue for the professional development will be a District auditorium or classroom space as dictated by the number of participants. The locations

and teachers chosen for observation will come from District leader and principal recommendations. Teachers selected for observation will participate voluntarily and will receive a stipend provided by the Educational Foundation.

The role of the presenter will be to actively engage the participants and provide teachers will ample time to discuss ideas and explore materials with their peers. All elementary reading coaches will be encouraged to attend. These coaches will then provide a stronger base of support, common language and understanding to reinforce and sustain improved instruction through the teacher participants. The role of the teacher will be to internalize and synthesize his/her new learning and devise an action plan to apply his/her new understanding.

Project Evaluation Plan

A formative assessment will be conducted at the conclusion of each professional development session. Teachers will complete a five-question assessment based on the content of that session. In addition, teachers will complete a satisfaction survey which will ask participants about the usefulness of the content, effectiveness of the delivery, pacing, and ask teachers for suggestions for improvement.

The content assessment will be based on the goals for each session and will determine if the session objectives were mastered. The presenter can use this information to revise or change future session content to remediate based on the teachers' needs. This assessment will also provide direction for future professional development series.

The satisfaction survey will serve to monitor the physical space, timing, and delivery method. Participate comments will help to engage the learner and provide useful

information which may not be captured in the formal questions of the survey. The presenter will use this data to make immediate adjustments to ensure a more satisfying experience in the next session.

Finally, the last session will give teachers an opportunity to analyze data of his/her students and make decisions based about the effectiveness of instruction. at this session participant will complete a final survey of the professional development experience. Similarly, the presenter will be able to analyze participates' student data and survey responses to determine the effectiveness of the professional development.

Stakeholders for the professional development will be teachers, reading coaches, and administrators. Teachers are the key stakeholders as they are the foundation of student learning. Knowledgeable reading coaches are vital to the success of the elementary reading program and serve as a support for classroom teachers. Administrators are a critical link between teacher evaluation, professional learning, and student achievement. This project will offer administrators core knowledge to build confidence and accuracy when observing and rating instructional practices. This project will also serve to build a collaborative culture with teachers, coaches and administrators opening their classroom doors and working together to establish best practices. The project presentation and evaluations will be shared with all stakeholders.

Project Implications

The implementation of this project may result in improved instructional practices, improved student achievement, and improved teacher evaluation ratings. A thorough understanding of the VAM and the process used to calculate a teacher's student growth

rating for the summative evaluation, may contribute to a healthy culture. This culture may foster an observation process which focuses on improving instruction and results in reflection and dialogue between teachers and observers. The realization of this project may clarify the elements of explicit instruction in reading and allow teachers to discuss, observe and practice the elements of balanced literacy in order to improve teacher performance and in turn, improve students' academic growth.

A single series of professional development will not reach all teachers or stakeholders. Therefore, it will be essential to continue the delivery of this series. As more stakeholders become familiar with the elements of balanced literacy and can connect his/her explicit instruction to student performance, District capacity will increase and ultimately student achievement will increase.

As other districts struggle with implementation of VAM and teacher evaluation, many may look for strategies to tie explicit instruction to VAM and student growth. These types of professional development sessions may offer a response to observation as only evaluation and observation as a method of collaboration and professional study.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

This project began with a desire to find an answer to a contentious and often confusing evaluation system. Dedicated, hardworking teachers often are discouraged by evaluation and student achievement results. This project was an effort to bridge evaluation with targeted professional development in order to alleviate some of that confusion and frustration. The information in this section provides a reflective summary of the final project.

Project Strengths and Limitations

The project is aligned with the tenets of the scientific management theory (Taylor, 1911). These sessions gives a focused approached to explicit instruction designed to increase student achievement in ELA. Balanced literacy is the vehicle used to focus the instruction and each session is dedicated to a component of balanced literacy. The project also uses materials adopted by the District, which should serve to increase teacher buy-in because they will not be asked to learn another new program. Simply, the project takes them deeper into material they already possess and demonstrates how the balanced literacy approach can be applied to the current curriculum materials and resources.

An additional strength of the project is the observation component. Participants will be observing in highly effective teachers' classrooms; however, an experienced instructional leader will guide them. This leader will be able to point to specific strengths in instruction, management, and arrangement of the model classroom, and link the learning of the professional development sessions to the classroom experience. One more opportunity to observe will be structured around the components of balanced literacy.

Participants will be able to specify a lesson component to observe. After each observation, the classroom teacher will be available to answer questions and describe her or his process.

The culmination of this series is a detailed data analysis of the participants' student data. Teachers will examine his or her own student data and make connections with the rating they have received as a part of the student growth portion of the evaluation. Teachers will then have an opportunity to discuss and plan for changes in practice to improve student achievement and thereby the teacher evaluation rating.

The limitations of this project include grade level specificity, breadth of resources needed, and lack of incentive for teacher participants. The project is designed to focus on the components of balanced literacy approach for grades K-5. This grade-level limitation eliminates or discourages the participation of middle school and high school teachers who could benefit from clarification of the evaluation process and reading the foundational content. The amount of resource materials required for the professional learning will be cumbersome. All elementary teachers in the target District have these resources, but if the training is held at a location other than his school, moving these resources may be problematic. Allocating time to organize the classroom observations, and question-and-answer sessions with the classroom teachers may be difficult. The target District is small and has only one person dedicated to the organization and delivery of professional development.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The design of this professional development is easily modified. The success of any alternative will depend on the cooperation of administrative leaders, reading coaches, and teachers. The first alternate approach would be to hold this series as a weeklong training in the summer when teachers could dedicate an entire day without being absent from his/her classroom. In this approach, the observations could be organized after the beginning of the school year and perhaps extended to more than two observations. Extending the observations to one each semester could help participants retain the focus of the learning and help make the project more successful.

Another approach may be extending the sessions to be delivered once a month with the observations reordered to be in the middle and close to the end of the series. This too would prolong the focus of the learning and provide time to practice new skills and strategies while being supported by the collaborative group.

The most extensive alternative approach would be to change the nature of the focused learning to another core subject, such as math or science. The organizational structure of the project could remain the same, but teachers would have an opportunity to focus their practice in one of these areas and then examine student data for growth and effects on the evaluation rating.

Scholarship, Project Developemnt, and Leadership Change

As an inexperienced researcher, I found the most difficult processes of research and development of the project to be scholarly writing, locating the correct theoretical framework, and narrowing the focus of the literature. The Walden Writing Center

provided me with necessary resources to improve my writing and advance the project. I participated in webinars, used the paper review service and accessed many resources through the Writing Center. My committee and the URR helped to grow my writing skills and served as a constant source of support and encouragement. Aligning my research question with a theoretical framework was problematic. I eventually came to realize my own biases were getting in the way of making a clear alignment to the question. This discovery sent me in another direction for my review of literature and eventually I could look at the problem in a more objective manner. After numerous stops and starts in my review of literature, I was able to focus on key themes surrounding the problem.

Upon completion of my research and data analysis, the direction of the project naturally developed. Because of the knowledge, I gained from the extensive literature review, the content of the project and its alignment to the problem easily developed into a cohesive plan. Researching and developing the content for the project was fun and empowering. The project is not perfect; however, the experience has strengthened my abilities as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

What I learned through the process was how to apply a framework of critical components successfully and communicate the importance of those components. As a lifelong learner, I am committed to repeating the process to improve my practice and the work of education in my community. I recognize other critical issues, and by analyzing current research in education, and advocating for positive social change, I believe I can make a difference for my teachers, students and their families. Additionally, by

examining this important issue through a critical and analytical lens, I learned there was a need clear and explicit communication and by changing the culture of our system to one of collaboration, teachers will be more successful and students will achieve more than we could ever imagine.

Implications, Applications and Directions for Future Research

The Network for Public Education (2016) published a list of six recommendation associated with teacher evaluations. The first was the immediate halt to the use of test scores as any part of teacher evaluation. In light of the findings of this study, this may seem a reasonable recommendation. Participants in this study reported a lack of understanding of the formula and process used for VAM. However, all of the participants reported using student data to plan instruction, and try to determine his/her effectiveness. Participation in this project may serve to change teachers and administrators perceptions of VAM and draw a tighter connection between teacher effectiveness and student acievment.

The second recommendation (Barrett, et al., 2016) was teacher collaboration not be tied to evaluation but instead be a teacher-led cooperative process that focuses on their students and their own professional learning. The project design includes opportunities for participants to collaborate and observe highly effective teachers in practice. The example set by the project, if successful, could influence administrators to embrace peer-to-peer observations and create a more collaborative culture in their buildings.

The last recommendation (Barrett, et al., 2016) was teachers not be scored on professional development activities nor that professional development be dictated by

evaluation scores rather than teacher needs. By analyzing student data and linking data to best practices, the score of teacher evaluation should become more discriptive of the teacher's practice. Including teachers in the analysis of data and ensureing teacher have a good understanding of best practices will create a clear sense of ownership of the students' achievement or performance.

Additional research connecting specific best practices to student achievement is necessary. In the age of standards based instruction, teachers and administrators understand unpacking standards to get to the essential pieces for understanding. The same logic and practice could be true for the stratrgies and practices teachers use in explicit instruction. Training teachers in the fundamental practices aligned to learning foundation skills is an area suitable for more research.

Conclusion

There is a plethora of information on VAM and teacher evaluation, and the foundational skills students need to be successful. This professional development series is an attempt to link data used for evaluation and data gleaned from student performance. The data used to inform instruction is the same data used to evaluate teachers. If the data holds reliable and valid for one purpose then, we could assume, the data would hold true for the other. As sentiment about VAM and teacher evaluation processes continues to decline, finding positive connections that focus on building strong teaching practices and advances student achievement is important.

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Appendix A: The Project

Purpose, Goals and Objectives

The purposes of this project are to explain the Value-added Model (VAM) and the process used to calculate a teacher's student growth score for the summative evaluation and clarify the elements of explicit instruction in reading and discuss, observe and practice these elements in order to improve teacher performance and in turn, improve a teacher's student growth score.

Objectives of Series

Participants will understand the elements included in calculating his/her student growth score including who uses what method of calculation for student growth, the formula and process used to calculate VAM, and the importance of roster verification and data matching.

Participants will study the elements of the *Balanced Literacy Approach (BLA)* including phonic/word study, read alouds/modeled reading and shared reading, guided reading, independent reading and writing.

Participants will explore models for assessment; understand required assessments, and how assessments can be used to inform instruction.

Participants will participate in field observations. Each teacher will choose the element(s) of *BLA* that he/she needs to observe to better his/her understanding: phonics/word study, read alouds/shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, writing, oral reading fluency check/running records, and letter/sound recognition running records.

Target Audience

The intended audience for the professional development will be teachers, reading coaches, and administrators. Teachers are the key stakeholders as they are the foundation of student learning. Knowledgeable reading coaches are vital to the success of the elementary reading program and serve as a support for classroom teachers. Administrators are a critical link between teacher evaluation, professional learning, and student achievement. This project will offer administrators core knowledge to build confidence and accuracy when observing and rating instructional practices. This project will also serve to build a collaborative culture with teachers, coaches and administrators opening their classroom doors and working together to establish best practices. The project presentation and evaluations will be shared with all stakeholders.

Note: This project series will be presented in eight sessions each for 3 hours (A half -day session from 8:00-11:00 am or 12:00 to 3:00 pm) and one full-day session of guided classroom observation. These sessions could be offered weekly over an eight-week period or the series could be combined into four full-day sessions and one full-day guided observation.

Format

The sessions are designed for a content expert to act as presenter. The presenter could be a reading coach, teacher leader, or administrator and this person could conduct all sessions or the sessions could be divided among a group of knowledgeable educators. Copies of the PowerPoint and handouts will be produced by the district. Most of the materials used are district-adopted material and teachers should have access to these in

their own classroom. The venue for the professional development will be a district auditorium or classroom space as dictated by the number of participants. The locations and teachers chosen for observation will come from district leader and principal recommendations. Teachers selected for observation will participate voluntarily and will receive a stipend provided by the Educational Foundation.

The role of the presenter will be to actively engage the participants and provide teachers will ample time to discuss ideas and explore materials with their peers. All elementary reading coaches will be encouraged to attend. These coaches will then provide a stronger base of support, common language and understanding to reinforce and sustain improved instruction through the teacher participants. The role of the teacher will be to internalize and synthesize his/her new learning and devise an action plan to apply his/her new understanding.

Evaluation Plan

A formative assessment will be conducted at the conclusion of each professional development session. Teachers will complete a five-question assessment based on the content of that session. In addition, teachers will complete a satisfaction survey which will ask participants about the usefulness of the content, effectiveness of the delivery, pacing, and ask teachers for suggestions for improvement.

The content assessment will be based on the goals for each session and will determine if the session objectives were mastered. The presenter can use this information to revise or change future session content to remediate based on the teachers' needs. This assessment will also provide direction for future professional development series.

The satisfaction survey will serve to monitor the physical space, timing, and delivery method. Participate comments will help to engage the learner and provide useful information which may not be captured in the formal questions of the survey. The presenter will use this data to make immediate adjustments to ensure a more satisfying experience in the next session.

Finally, the last session will give teachers an opportunity to analyze data of his/her students and make decisions based on the effectiveness of instruction. Participants will complete a final survey of the professional development experience. Similarly, the presenter will be able to analyze participates' student data and survey responses to determine the effectiveness of the professional development.

Outlines for Professional Development Sessions

Session 1

Slide 1: Explicit teaching and VAM

Presenter: XXXX, Instructional Coach

"The key to success is not innovation; it is *simplicity and diligence* applied with fierce devotion to our highest priorities (Collin, 2001b, p. 104).

Note: Archer and Hughes (2011) describe explicit instruction as structured, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic skills. Purposeful planning and delivery is the key to student success and thereby teachers' success because of students' growth.

Slide 2: Purpose

The purpose of this professional learning is to:

- Explain the Value-added Model (VAM) and the process used to calculate a teacher's student growth score for the summative evaluation.
- Clarify the elements of explicit instruction in reading and discuss, observe and practice these elements in order to improve teacher performance and in turn, improve a teacher's student growth score.

Note: Ask teachers, "Why is it important to understand how your student growth score is calculated?" (5 minutes for shoulder partner discussion)

Slide 3: Objectives of series

- Teachers will understand the elements included in calculating his/her student growth score including who uses what method of calculation for student growth,

the formula and process used to calculate VAM, and the importance of roster verification and data matching.

- Teachers will study the elements of the *Balanced Literacy Approach (BLA)* including phonic/word study, read alouds/modeled reading and shared reading, guided reading, independent reading and writing.
- Teachers will explore models for assessment; understand required assessments, and how assessments can be used to inform instruction.
- Teachers will participate in field observations. Each teacher will choose the element(s) of *BLA* that he/she needs to observe to better his/her understanding:
    - Phonics/word study
    - Read alouds/shared reading
    - Guided reading
    - Independent reading
    - Writing
    - Oral reading fluency check/running records
    - Letter/sound recognition running records

Slide 4: How is student growth measured for my students?

All teachers receive a student growth score as 33.3% of the summative evaluation (Where available, VAM/SGA calculations will be performed using up to the three most recent VAM/SGA values including two and three year aggregate calculations).

- Some get a state-issued VAM score
- Others get a score determined at the district level

Slide 5: District Performance Measures by Teaching Assignment

Teaching Assignment	Performance Measure(s) for Evaluation Purposes	Growth Indicator
Pre-Kindergarten • ACE teachers • VPK	 Unique Learning System Florida VPK Assessment	
Kindergarten-Second Grade	iReady Diagnostic- 50% ELA, 50% Math	One year's growth
Third Grade	FSA- 50% ELA, 50% Math	Level 3 or higher
Fourth – Fifth Grade • Three-year aggregate • Less than three-year aggregate	 FSA FSA	 VAM Level 3 or higher
Non-classroom Teachers (i.e. guidance counselors, deans, staffing specialist, speech therapist, social workers, etc.)	FSA and iReady Diagnostic- 50% ELA, 50% Math	VAM/ Level 3 or higher, One year's growth
ELA Coaches and Media Specialist	FSA and iReady Diagnostic- ELA	VAM/ Level 3 or higher, One year's growth
ESE (percentage of students assigned to each assessment category)	FSA, iReady Diagnostic, Unique Learning System	
Music or PE	FSA and iReady Diagnostic- 50% ELA, 50% Math	VAM/ Level 3 or higher, One year's growth
Science or Math Coaches	FSA and iReady Diagnostic- 75% Math, 25% Science	VAM/ Level 3 or higher, One year's growth

Slide 6: What is VAM?

Play video- http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7503/urlt/VAMFSBA-Presentation.pdf

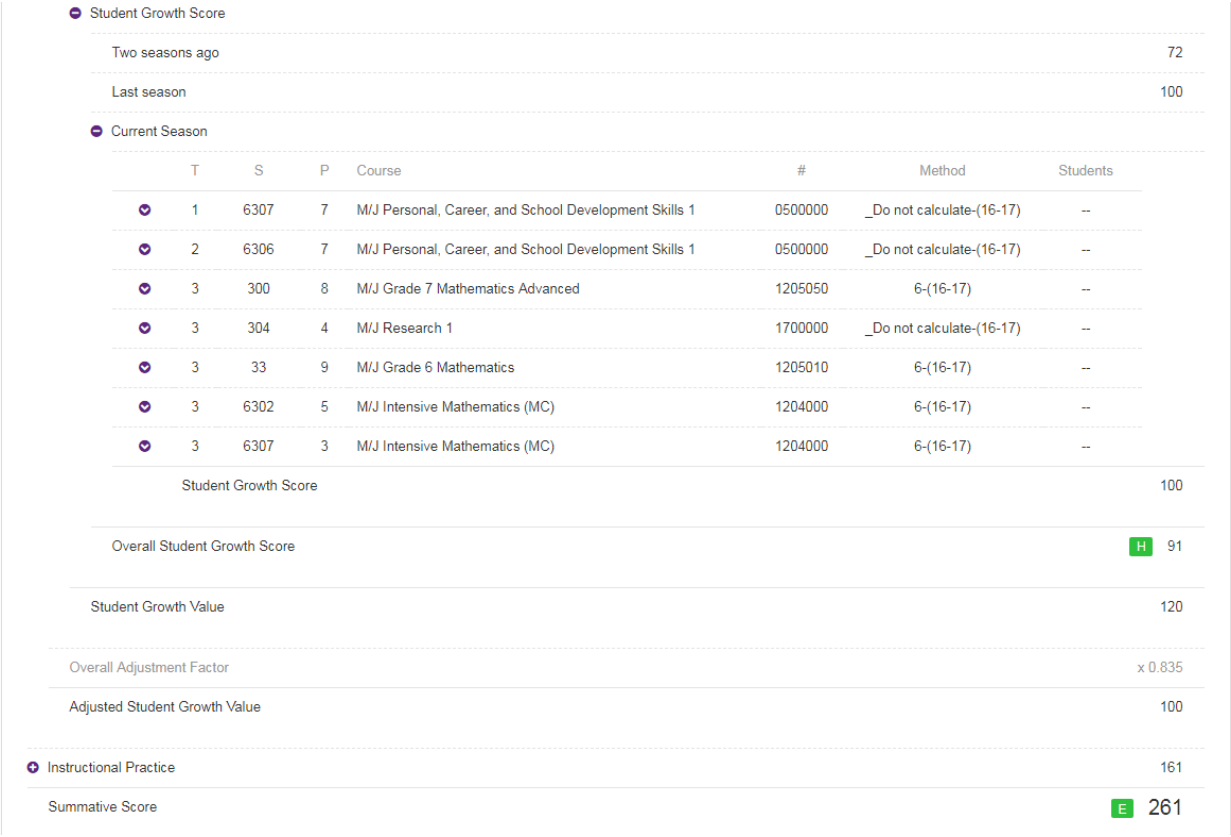
Slide 7: Local Data

Please sign in to your EDIS Account

- Click on the magnifying glass at the end of the row that begins with your name
- This is the VAM teacher report and we will now explore all of the data on this page

Note: Give teachers 5 minutes to sign-in to his/her account. Circulate through the room to help anyone who is struggling accessing the data.

Slide 8: Local Data (Continued)



Student Growth Score

Two seasons ago	72
Last season	100

Current Season

T	S	P	Course	#	Method	Students
1	6307	7	M/J Personal, Career, and School Development Skills 1	0500000	_Do not calculate-(16-17)	--
2	6306	7	M/J Personal, Career, and School Development Skills 1	0500000	_Do not calculate-(16-17)	--
3	300	8	M/J Grade 7 Mathematics Advanced	1205050	6-(16-17)	--
3	304	4	M/J Research 1	1700000	_Do not calculate-(16-17)	--
3	33	9	M/J Grade 6 Mathematics	1205010	6-(16-17)	--
3	6302	5	M/J Intensive Mathematics (MC)	1204000	6-(16-17)	--
3	6307	3	M/J Intensive Mathematics (MC)	1204000	6-(16-17)	--

Student Growth Score	100
Overall Student Growth Score	H 91
Student Growth Value	120
Overall Adjustment Factor	x 0.835
Adjusted Student Growth Value	100
Instructional Practice	161
Summative Score	E 261

Note: On this slide, you will see VAM data collected for the past three years (listed here as *season*). Two years ago this teacher's overall student growth score was 72. One year ago this teacher's score was 100. This year the teacher's student growth score is also 100. The overall student growth score is the average of all three years student growth score. This score is then compared to the cut scores chart Article XII f.23. As you can see there are four different cut score charts. The descriptions will help you decide which chart you should use for your data. These are cut score negotiated between the District and OCEA

(Teachers' Union). The Student Growth Value is the value assigned, in this case 120, to a highly effected rating. There for the Adjusted Student Growth Value is 100. Finally, this Adjusted Student Growth Value is added to the Instructional Practice Score to provide the teacher with the Final Summative Rating.

Slide 9: Which Students Count in my VAM Score?

P	Course	#	Method	Students
7	M/J Personal, Career, and School Development Skills 1	0500000	_Do not calculate-(16-17)	--
7	M/J Personal, Career, and School Development Skills 1	0500000	_Do not calculate-(16-17)	--
8	M/J Grade 7 Mathematics Advanced	1205050	6-(16-17)	--

		Full Year			Included		
	Grade	Teacher	School	District	Original	District	Expected Growth
	06	Y	Y	Y	YES	YES	○
ASTREJ	06	Y	Y	Y	YES	YES	○
	06	Y	Y	Y	YES	YES	○
	06	Y	Y	Y	YES	YES	○
	06	Y	Y	Y	YES	YES	○
	06	Y	Y	Y	YES	YES	○
	06	Y	Y	Y	YES	YES	○
	06	Y	Y	Y	YES	YES	○

Note: By clicking on the down arrow next to a course, you will see a list of students assigned to you during this year.

- Column 1- Student's grade
- Column 2- Was the student in this teacher's class the full year? Y or N
- Column 3- Was the student in this school a full year? Y or N
- Column 4- Was the student in the District a full year? Y or N
- Column 5- Was the student included in the original survey submission?
- Column 6- During the original survey submission was the student in the district?
- Column 7- Did the student reach the expected growth target? Red or Green

Give teachers 20 minutes to explore EDIS and his/her individual performance data. Tell teachers to make a note of any questions they have as they explore and they will be addressed after the break. This is a good place to give a 10-minute break.

Slide 10: Roster Verification and Data Matching

Student mobility can include any time a student changes schools for reasons other than promotion, but in general, it refers to students changing schools during the school year. School mobility refers to the frequency of such moves among students in a particular classroom, school, or district. Students who are enrolled in your class XXXXX are counted in your VAM score.

Note: Verifying your rosters gives you the opportunity to authenticate your records versus the registrar records that were reported by your district to the DOE. The students identified on your roster will be used in calculating the Value-Added Model (VAM) portion of your evaluation.

Slide 11: Questions?

Note: Give teachers 20-30 minutes for questions.

Slide 12: Next time: So, how do I improve my student growth/VAM score?

Note: The next five sessions will study the elements of balanced literacy and model how these could fit in your classroom.

Slide 13: Evaluation

- Please complete the short assessment and survey
- Please be sure you have signed in on the participant roster

Session 2

Slide 1: Explicit Teaching and Balanced Literacy

Presenter: XXXX, Instructional Coach

Research shows that explicit teaching offers a powerful way to structure your lessons. There are several models of explicit teaching (also known as direct instruction). However, the essential ingredients of explicit teaching always remain the same.

EXPLICIT TEACHING IN A NUTSHELL

1. **Be clear** about what you want your students to know and be able to do by the end of each lesson
2. **Tell** children what they need to know and **show** them how to do what they need to do

3. Give your students time to **practice** what they have learned

Note: These strategies are not based on personal opinion. Nor are they based on blind adherence to any educational theory. Rather, they come from a review of hard research on what works. In fact, research shows they each have more impact on student results than most other factors.

For detailed information on some of these models see Explicit Instruction: Effective & Efficient Teaching (by Anita Archer), Explicit Direct Instruction: The Power of a Well Crafted, Well Taught Lesson (by John Hollingsworth) and Clear Teaching: With Direct Instruction (by Shepard Barbash).

Slide 2: Purpose

The purpose of this professional learning is to:

- Explain the Value-added Model (VAM) and the process used to calculate a teacher's student growth score for the summative evaluation.
- Clarify the elements of explicit instruction in reading and discuss, observe and practice these elements in order to improve teacher performance and in turn, improve a teacher's student growth score.

Slide 3: Objectives

- Teachers will study the elements of the *Balanced Literacy Approach (BLA)* including phonic/word study, read alouds/modeled reading and shared reading, guided reading, independent reading and writing.

Slide 4: Why Balanced Literacy?

- **What does living a balanced life mean to you?**

Note: Tell teachers you will give them one minute to think about their answer. Have teachers turn and share w their answer with a shoulder partner. Hopefully, you will hear suggestions including work and fun.

Slide 5: Research shows that having students engaged and having fun while learning improves memory (Willingham, 2008).

Slide 6: Balanced Literacy Framework Guiding Principles

- Teachers believe the students in their classrooms are individuals with different needs.
- To improve skills, students must regularly engage in targeted instruction that demands an application of knowledge that challenges but does not frustrate them.
- Teachers see every encounter with a student as an opportunity to inform their instruction through assessment.
- A balanced literacy approach promotes a student-centered classroom.

Slide 7: A Day in a Balanced Literacy Classroom

- Please read pgs. 13-19 of *Strategies for Balanced Literacy,* Mary Jo Fresch,

Note: The District has purchased copies of *Strategies for Balanced Literacy,* Mary Jo Fresch, Shell Publishing for each teacher participant.

Slide 8: Word Study

- Phonics
- Spelling
- Vocabulary

Slide 9: Word Study: Kindergarten – Grade 2

In the primary grades, students are:

- Discovering language
- Learning the alphabet
- Developing phonological and phonemic awareness

Note: Providing opportunities to play with and manipulate the sounds of our language builds a solid foundation for reading instruction (Ehi , 2001).

Slide 10: What is phonics and phonemic awareness

- Phonics is a method of teaching reading based on the sounds of letters, groups of letters, and syllables.
- Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds-phonemes--in spoken words. Example: "cat" into three distinct phonemes, /k/, /æ/, and /t/.

Slide 11: What you will need

1. Sets of alphabet letters in both lower and upper case
2. A hanging pocket chart and individual file folder pockets
3. A collection of age-appropriate alphabet and rhyming books
4. A word wall placed at student eye level
5. A collection of pictures for sorting
6. A large area of white space for writing
7. Observational checklists for assessment purposes
8. A designated area for small-group word work
9. A designated area/learning center for independent word work

Slide 12: The elements of developmental word study

- Alphabet
- Pattern
- Meaning

Slide 13: Spelling and reading stages (grade level approximation)

Alphabet → → → → →	**Pattern** → → → → →	**Meaning**

Emergent Stage
Emergent Reading
PreK to early grade 1

Letter name-Alphabetic Stage
Beginning Reading
K to early grade 2

Within Word Pattern Stage
Transitional Reading
Late grade 1 to middle grade 4

Syllables and Affixes Stage
Intermediate Reading
Grades 3 to 6

Derivational Relations

Advanced Reading
Grade 5 and up

Slide 14: Beginning of the year instruction through ReadyGEN:

Kindergarten

- Letter recognition
- Letter sounds

First grade

- Consonants and short vowels
- Consonant pattern- *ck*
- Consonant Sounds- *x /ks/, s /z/*
- Plural *–s*
- Inflected endings *–s, -ing*
- Initial and final consonant blends

Second grade

- Consonant Digraphs
- *r*-Controlled
- Contractions
- Long vowels spelled VCe
- Consonant blends
- Ending *–s, -ed, ing*

Note: Have teachers divide into groups and chart similarities and differences in the progression of instruction from Kindergarten to grade 2.

Slide 15: Middle of the year through ReadyGEN :

Kindergarten

- Continue letter sounds

First grade

- Consonant digraphs – *sh, th, wh, ch, tch, ph*
- Long vowel sounds
- Long CVC*e* words
- Contractions
- Inflected ending –*ed*
- Syllables VC/CV
- Consonant patterns *ng, nk*
- Inflected ending –*es* and Plural –*es*
- Adding endings –*ed*, *-ing*
- *r*-Controlled *ar, er, ir, ur*
- Contractions *'s, 've, 're*
- Comparative endings –*er, -est*
- Consonant Pattern *dge /j/*

Second grade

- Long *a* spelled *a, ai, ay*
- Long *e* spelled *e, ee, ea, y*
- Long *o* spelled *o, oa, ow*
- Compound words

- Long *i* spelled *i, ie, igh, y* (words with V/CV)
- Comparative Endings *–er, -est*
- Final syllable *–le*
- Vowel patterns *oo, u*
- Diphthongs *ou, ow, oi, oy*

Note: Have teachers divide into groups and chart similarities and differences in the progression of instruction from Kindergarten to grade 2. Ask teachers to investigate the foundational activities provided in ReadyGEN this grade level.

Slide 16: End of year through *ReadyGEN*:

Kindergarten

- Continue letter sounds
- Long vowels patterns a_e, ee, ea, i_e, o_e, oa, u_e
- Review short and long vowel sounds

First grade

- Vowel digraphs *ai, ay, ea, oa, ow, ie, igh, ue, ew, ui*
- Singular and plural possessives
- Adding endings
- Three-letter consonant blends
- Consonant patterns *kn/n/, wr/r/,*
- Compound words
- Suffixes *–ly, -ful*
- Vowel sound in *moon*

- Diphthongs *ow, ou, oi, oy*
- Final syllable *–le*
- Vowel pattern *ou, ow*
- Syllables V/CV, VC/V
- Vowel Sound in *foot*
- Adding endings
- Suffixes *-er, -or*
- Vowel sound in *ball*
- Syllables patterns
- Prefixes *–un, -re*
- Long vowels *o, i*

Second grade

- Syllable patterns
- Vowel digraphs *oo, ue, ew, ui*
- Suffixes *-ly, -ful, -er, -or, -ish*
- Prefixes *un-, re-, pre-, dis*
- Consonant Patterns *kn, wr, gn, mb, ph, gh, -ck, -ng*
- Vowel patterns *aw au, au(gh), al*
- Inflected endings *(-s, -es, -ing, -er, -est)*
- Abbreviations
- Final Syllables *–tion, -ture, -ion*
- Suffixes *–ness, -less, -able, -ible*

- Prefixes *micro-, mid-, mis-, non-*

Note: Have teachers divide into groups of three and chart similarities and differences in the progression of instruction from Kindergarten to grade 2. (15 minutes)

Slide 17: Sample foundational word study activities from *Words Their Way*

Emergent stage:

- Pg. 120-144

Letter name- alphabetic stage:

- Pg. 175-196

Within word pattern stage:

- Pg. 224-239

Syllables and affixes stage:

- Pg. 265-275

Derivational Relations Stage:

- Pg. 299-313

Note: With a partner of like grade level, teachers will read one activity from an emergent stage of his/her choice and explain this activity to his/her partner (30 minutes). Whole group, volunteers will be asked to share an activity from each stage. (25 minutes)

Slide 18: Word study notebooks

Note: Teachers will read "Word study notebooks in the within word pattern stage" p. 222 from *Words Their Way Sixth Edition* (Bear, Ivernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2016)

Slide 19: Questions?

Note: Give teachers 10 minutes for questions.

Slide 20: Next time: Reading Assessment

Individual student needs can be determined by initial and ongoing reading assessments. These assessments provide teachers with the information needed to develop appropriate lessons and improve instruction for all students, including students with disabilities (Rhodes & Shanklin, 1993)

Slide 21: Evaluation

- Please complete the short assessment and survey
- Please be sure you have signed in on the participant roster

Session 3

Slide 1: Explicit Teaching and Reading Assessment

Assessment is an essential element of education used to form instruction (Wren, 2004).

Slide 2: Purpose

The purpose of this professional learning is to:

- Explain the Value-added Model (VAM) and the process used to calculate a teacher's student growth score for the summative evaluation.
- Clarify the elements of explicit instruction in reading and discuss, observe and practice these elements in order to improve teacher performance and in turn, improve a teacher's student growth score.

Slide 3: Objectives

- Teachers will explore models for assessment; understand required assessments, and how assessments can be used to inform instruction.

Slide 4: The purpose of assessment:

1. To identify skills that need review
2. To monitor student progress
3. To guide instruction
4. To demonstrate the effectiveness of instruction
5. To provide teachers with information on how instruction can be improved

Slide 5: Types of assessment:

- Diagnostic assessment – before teaching to give an indication of competence
- Formative assessment – during teaching to monitor for strengths and needs
- Summative assessment- after a lesson or unit to evaluate how well students learned or performed tasks (summative assessment)

Slide 6: Assessment for specific areas of reading: Phonological and phonemic awareness

Phonological and phonemic awareness (auditory discrimination) is the ability to hear the differences and similarities in sound, and identify and manipulate sound units in spoken words.

"…poor auditory discrimination can be a major factor in children's failure to reach reading targets" (Fresch, 2016).

Note: Share with teachers Unit I of *Core Knowledge Language Arts* (CKLA) teacher's guide (Core Knowledge Foundation, 2013). Highlight phonological awareness activities. file:///C:/Users/mccp0129.DISTRICT/Downloads/ckla_gk_u1_tg.pdf Discuss *ReadyGEN* (Allyn, Hiebert, Pearson, & Vaughn, 2016) rigor and lack of resources for this skill.

Slide 7: Assessment for specific areas of reading: Alphabet Knowledge

Alphabet knowledge is the ability to recognize letters and to connect the corresponding sound to each letter.

Note: The *ReadyGEN* Teacher Guide for Kindergarten gives a progress for teaching letter recognition and letter sounds p. FS1. Piasta (2014) gives another specific order for learning letter names and their sounds. Highlight running records for letter and letter sound recognition in *ReadyGEN* Kindergarten and the baseline assessment in *ReadyGEN* grade 1 and 2.

Slide 8: Assessment for specific areas of reading: Oral reading fluency

Oral reading fluency is the ability to read words in connected text. Students who read with automaticity and have appropriate speed, accuracy, and proper expression are more likely to comprehend material because they are able to focus on the meaning of the text (The Access Center).

Note: Teachers will read pg. 96-97 from *Strategies for Effective Balanced Literacy.* Each teacher, with a partner, will read and score a fluency passage (approximately 30 minutes).

Slide 9: Assessment for specific areas of reading: Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the act of understanding what you are reading.

Note: Teachers will read "Questions to Guide Comprehension" pg. 99-101 from *Strategies for Effective Balanced Literacy.* Teachers, with a partner, will analyze a lesson from *ReadyGEN* and rate question using Webb's Depth of Knowledge Scale (DOK), (Francis, 2016). (Approximately 30 minutes)

Slide 10: Questions?

Note: Give teachers 10 minutes for questions.

Slide 11: Next time: Guided reading, modeled and shared read alouds, and independent reading

Slide 12: Evaluation

- Please complete the short assessment and survey
- Please be sure you have signed in on the participant roster

Session 4

Slide 1: Guided reading, modeled and shared read alouds, and independent reading

The best advice I ever got was that knowledge is power and to keep reading.

- David Bailey

Slide 2: Purpose

The purpose of this professional learning is to:

- Explain the Value-added Model (VAM) and the process used to calculate a teacher's student growth score for the summative evaluation.
- Clarify the elements of explicit instruction in reading and discuss, observe and practice these elements in order to improve teacher performance and in turn, improve a teacher's student growth score.

Slide 3: Objectives

- Teachers will study the elements of the *Balanced Literacy Approach (BLA)* including phonic/word study, read alouds/modeled reading and shared reading, guided reading, independent reading and writing.

Slide 4: Guided Reading Video from the Teaching Channel

https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/teaching-guided-reading-groups

Note: Have teachers turn and talk- Does this lesson look and sound like lessons in your classroom? What is the same? What is different?

Slide 5: Why guided reading?

Fountas and Pinnel (1996) believed guided reading is essential in every classroom.

Guided reading:

- Allows students to develop as independent readers through supported activities.
- Provides teachers with opportunities to observe readers process text.
- Gives students opportunities to develop new strategies they can use when reading independently.
- Gives students an enjoyable, successful experience with on grade level text.
- Helps students understand how to approach new text.

Note: Teachers will read pg. 102-107 in Strategies *for Effective Balanced Literacy*.

Slide 6: Classroom management for Guided Reading

- Post a list
- Review what students must complete
- Make students accountable
- Teach students how to handle questions

Note: Kindergarten – grade 2 teachers will read pg. 108-111 and review K-2 mini-lessons. Third – Grade 5 teachers will read pg. 125-126 and review grade 3-5 mini-lessons in *Strategies for Effective Balanced Literacy.* All teachers will read Small Group Discussion Routine from *ReadyGEN* TR6. Form groups of 3-4 people and select one

person to be the teacher. Using an iReady lesson, the presenter will model leading a guided reading group using 3-4 volunteers. Using an iReady lesson, teachers will role play leading a guided reading group. (Allow 1 hour for this activity)

Slide 7: Benefits of Read Alouds

Reading to kids:

- Boosts their reading comprehension
- Increases their vocabularies
- Helps them to become better writers
- Motivates them to read themselves
- Increases the likelihood they will become independent, lifelong readers

Slide 8: Best Practices for Read Alouds

1. Share a book that is above the majority of the class's reading level
2. Share a book as an introduction to a theme or unit
3. Share a book that stimulates interesting discussion
4. Share a book you personally enjoy

Slide 9: Model reading skills through Read Alouds

Teachers can:

- Demonstrate mapping sounds with print and understanding complex ideas
- Stop, ask questions, and model what students should be doing independently
- Show how fluency, expression and the use of punctuation help readers understand the text
- Show enjoyment of reading

- Refer back to the shared reading

Note: Teachers will read Read Aloud Routine from ReadyGEN TR8

Slide 10: Shared Read Alouds

Shared read alouds allow for both the teacher and students to have access to the text while reading.

Before reading:

- Invite students to participate
- Activate prior knowledge
- Predict what the story may be about
- List what the know about the topic
- Ask question they hope will be answered

During reading:

- Read as a group or individually
- Meaning takes center stage
- Show how reading strategies help the reader understand the text
- Alternate between you reading and students reading to keep the text moving along
- Allow flexibility in what students are asked to read
- Read for a purpose

After reading:

- Were student predictions correct?
- Ask students to pose question to the group or write question for the group to consider

- Ask student to summarize what was read
- Discuss the text structures
- Discuss the text features
- Specifically analyze important words
- Find common features between this text and other texts
- Add words to the word wall or personal lists of words

Note: Teachers will read Shared Reading Routine from *ReadyGEN* TR10

Slide 11: Identify read alouds or shared reading to use with your next unit

Note: Give teachers time to work with a grade alike partner to identify appropriate read alouds for the upcoming unit of study on the ELA curriculum map. (Allow 15-20 minutes)

Slide 12: Independent Reading

Gladwell (2008) studies successful people and found compelling evidence that practice was the difference in moving someone form novice to expert.

Note: Teachers will read Independent Reading Routine from *ReadyGEN* TR12-TR19. Form three groups and jigsaw Best practices for Independent Reading pg. 164, Organization pg. 165 and how independent reading Informs Teaching pg. 166 from Strategies for Effective Balanced Literacy. Each group will chart main points and share with whole group. (Allow 20 minutes)

Slide 13: Sample Reading Block Structures K-2

Block Segment	Time Allotted	Description
Whole Group Instruction	30 minutes	This time should involve teachers and students utilizing close reading strategies with authentic text selections, emphasizing the week's focus skill. During this time, students should be working - with teacher questioning, partner talk, etc. - to read and discuss a complex text.
Foundational Skills	20 minutes	This time should involve whole-group phonics instruction and shared reading using a grade level text. This time should also include students practicing with decodable text.
Centers (Italicized Below)	60 minutes	During centers, students should be grouped based on like abilities. For the greatest level of efficacy, these groups should be flexible and should be adjusted depending on how students are mastering the week's skill. There are four centers, each with a 15-minute rotation interval: (1) guided reading, (2) iReady, (3) independent practice, and (4) writing.
Guided Reading	*15 minutes*	This center should utilize authentic text (e.g., leveled reader, novel study, poetry selection, etc.) and the teacher should utilize questioning based on the week's focus skill, but reinforced with questioning on prior/review skills, so that students are constantly using knowledge gained during the year. For instance, even though the focus skill may be character development, and while a majority of my questions would focus on this topic, there would also need to be questions on main idea, theme, character motivation, how text elements support or develop the text, etc. Just as in whole-group instruction, questioning should target the depth of the standard and students should justify their answers by citing text evidence. It may also be helpful to have students read aloud during guided reading so that you have the opportunity to diagnose reading deficiencies. It is also acceptable to have students read silently if you hear them read aloud elsewhere in your reading block. A third option is for students to do a combination of both. (Please remember you have access to paper versions of the guided reading books for students to practice text marking skills.)
iReady	*15 minutes*	This center should be, whenever possible, aligned to the focus

		skill for the week. If a student is in another lesson because he or she has already demonstrated mastery in the week's focus skill or is at a remedial level, which is alright, as long as you are monitoring their progress. Please note that, during ELA centers, students should only be completing iReady Reading lessons. (You can also use this time for students to complete Standards Mastery quizzes, if so desired, but please make sure that they are getting adequate time in iReady instruction.)
Block Segment	**Time Allotted**	**Description**
Independent Practice	*15 minutes*	This center should also be rooted in authentic text and practice the week's focus skill. Students should have a text and questions aligned to the week's focus skill. Teachers should ensure that students are demonstrating mastery in the skill by grading these center activities. Again, questions should target the depth of the standard and may need to incorporate writing, depending on what the test item specifications state for the focus skill in question.
Writing Center	*15 minutes*	The writing center should also be rooted in text. This center can take multiple days (e.g., students have to read and mark texts on day one, outline on day two, write/revise on days three through five), but should require students to read text samples that are on grade-level (samples may be listened to in grades K and 1, as appropriate for differentiated instruction) and write a grade-level appropriate response. This writing should take place using paper, even if you have the capacity for one-to-one. The expectation is that teachers utilize materials that are appropriate to prepare students for state testing.
Walk to Intervention	45 minutes	During Walk to Intervention, students will receive either remediation or enrichment. Teachers delivering remedial instruction will utilize the Fountas & Pinnell *Leveled Literacy Intervention* materials available in the Reading Coach's office. Teachers delivering enrichment instruction will utilize Literature Circles. Materials for literature circles are available in the reading coach's office.

Whole-class Wrap-up	5 minutes	During this time, the day's focus standard should be reviewed, as well as the activities students completed that supported this standard. The following day should be previewed, as well, in order to ensure students understand the curriculum's progression.
Writing	20 minutes	During writing, teachers should deliver explicit instruction in the writing process, including writing strategies. During writing, students should also have the opportunity to independently write a longer piece. During students' independent writing time, teachers should provide individual and small group feedback. Writing should be taught in units of study, such as informative/explanatory or argumentative. All writing should be formatted to FSA-style selections and prompts. Writing should be taught on a daily basis.

Slide 14: Sample Reading Block Structures grades 3-5

Block Segment	Time Allotted	Description
Whole Group Instruction	30 minutes	This time should involve teachers and students utilizing close reading strategies with authentic text selections, emphasizing the week's focus skill. During this time, students should be working - with teacher questioning, partner talk, etc. - to read and discuss a complex text.
Centers (Italicized Below)	60 minutes	During centers, students should be grouped based on like abilities. For the greatest level of efficacy, these groups should be flexible and should be adjusted depending on how students are mastering the week's skill. There are four centers, each with a 15-minute rotation interval: (1) guided reading, (2) iReady, (3) independent practice, and (4) writing.
Guided Reading	15 minutes	This center should utilize authentic text (e.g., leveled reader, novel study, poetry selection, etc.) and the teacher should utilize questioning based on the week's focus skill, but reinforced with questioning on prior/review skills, so that students are constantly using knowledge gained during the year. For instance, even though the focus skill may be character development, and while a majority of my questions would focus on this topic, there would also need

		to be questions on main idea, theme, character motivation, how text elements support or develop the text, etc. Just as in whole-group instruction, questioning should target the depth of the standard and students should justify their answers by citing text evidence. It may also be helpful to have students read aloud during guided reading so that you have the opportunity to diagnose reading deficiencies. It is also acceptable to have students read silently if you hear them read aloud elsewhere in your reading block. A third option is for students to do a combination of both. (Please remember you have access to paper versions of the guided reading books for students to practice text marking skills.)
iReady	15 minutes	This center should be, whenever possible, aligned to the focus skill for the week. If a student is in another lesson because he or she has already demonstrated mastery in the week's focus skill or is at a remedial level, which is alright, as long as you are monitoring their progress. Please note that, during ELA centers, students should only be completing iReady Reading lessons. (You can also use this time for students to complete Standards Mastery quizzes, if so desired, but please make sure that they are getting adequate time in iReady instruction.)
Independent Practice	15 minutes	This center should also be rooted in authentic text and practice the week's focus skill. Students should have a text and questions aligned to the week's focus skill. Teachers should ensure that students are demonstrating mastery in the skill by grading these center activities. Again, questions should target the depth of the standard and may need to incorporate writing, depending on what the test item specifications state for the focus skill in question.
Block Segment	**Time Allotted**	**Description**
Writing Center	15 minutes	The writing center should also be rooted in text. This center can take multiple days (e.g., students have to read and mark texts on day one, outline on day two, write/revise on days three through five), but should require students to read 2-4 text samples (as stated in the test item specifications) that are on grade-level and write either an opinion or informative/argumentative selection. This writing should take place using paper, even if you have the capacity for one-to-one, as this is the response method students will use on the FSA Writing exam. The planning pages and writing response pages that students will actually use on FSA Writing should be utilized whenever possible. This will get students used to the amount of space that they will have to respond to a prompt.

Walk to Intervention	60 minutes	During Walk to Intervention, students will receive either remediation or enrichment. Teachers delivering remedial instruction will utilize the Fountas & Pinnell *Leveled Literacy Intervention* materials available in the Reading Coach's office. Teachers delivering enrichment instruction will utilize Literature Circles. Materials for literature circles are available in the reading coach's office.
Whole-class Wrap-up	5 minutes	During this time, the day's focus standard should be reviewed, as well as the activities students completed that supported this standard. The following day should be previewed, as well, in order to ensure students understand the curriculum's progression.
Writing	25 minutes	During writing, teachers should deliver explicit instruction in the writing process, including writing strategies. During writing, students should also have the opportunity to independently write a longer piece. During students' independent writing time, teachers should provide individual and small group feedback. Writing should be taught in units of study, such as informative/explanatory or argumentative. All writing should be formatted to FSA-style selections and prompts. Writing should be taught on a daily basis.

Slide 15: Questions?

Note: Give teachers 10 minutes for questions.

Slide 16: Next time: Writing Every Day!

Slide 17: Evaluation

- Please complete the short assessment and survey
- Please be sure you have signed in on the participant roster

Session 5

Slide 1: Writing Every Day!

"While spinning the plates of writing instruction, teachers must have word knowledge plates spinning in the background. How do you spell that word? How do you select just

the right word to convey your meaning? Pointing out to students that what they learn in word study can help when writing enables them to cross their word knowledge over into real world application (Fresch, 2016)."

Slide 2: Guided Writing video from The Teaching Channel

https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/guided-writing-workshop

Note: Have teachers turn and talk about guided writing versus the writing instruction currently in his/her classroom? What are the differences or similarities?

Have you adopted or developed a plan for teaching writing?

Slide 3: Review ReadyGEN Writing Approach

Note: Divide teacher into grade alike groups. Ask teachers to open ReadyGEN teacher's manual to the module overview. Teachers will chart a summary of instructional writing focus for this module. Then, ask teachers to walk through Unit 1 together reviewing the writing lesson, independent writing practice task, and conventions mini-lesson. Ask how this writing progression will prepare student for the end-of-module performance task?

Slide 3: The writing process

View *How to teach writing: the writing process*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPUh9mfSqWU

Note: In a group of three, teachers will prepare an anchor chart depicting the 5 steps in the writing process

Slide 4: Resources

- *ReadyGEN Scaffolding Strategies Handbook* – Unlock the Writing
- State Writing Rubrics for grade 4-10

http://fsassessments.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EFL621_GR04_WRIT_SC_5081.pdf

- 30 Ideas for Teaching Writing - National Writing Project **https://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/922**
- **25 awesome anchor charts for teaching writing** **https://www.weareteachers.com/25-awesome-anchor-charts-for-teaching-writing/**

Note: Teachers will explore each on-line resource.

Slide 5: Be a writer!

To teach effective writing, model effective writing!

https://www.edutopia.org/blog/teach-and-model-effective-writing-david-cutler

Note: Teachers will read on-line article Teachers will discuss with a shoulder partner three activities or resources he/she will use when teaching writing this year.

Slide 6: Questions?

Note: Give teachers 10 minutes for questions.

Slide 7: Next time: Guided Classroom Observation

- You will choose your observation site and date using Google Forms
- This will be a full day event
- You will visit multiple classrooms
- You will be guided by a reading coach or administrator
- You will have an opportunity to meet with the teacher after the observation and ask questions

- You are expected to take notes and turn in a copy of your notes to the Staff Development Office

Note: Teachers will use Google Forms to choose from a list of observation sites and dates.

Slide 8: Evaluation

- Please complete the short assessment and survey
- Please be sure you have signed in on the participant roster

Session 6

Slide 1: Guided Classroom Observation

This session is a guided observation of highly effective elementary teachers who have volunteered for this activity. Observers will complete a Peer Observation Form and will have an opportunity to ask questions of the teacher after the observation. A reading coach or administrator will guide the observation by highlighting best practices and district protocols in reading instruction as they occur in the classroom. Multiple teachers will be observed as time allows. Observers will complete an evaluation survey.

Slide 2: Questions?

Note: Give teachers 10 minutes for questions.

Slide 3: Next time: Specific Strategy Observation

- You will choose your observation site and date using Google Forms
- This will be a half day event
- You will visit one classroom

- You will have an opportunity to meet with the teacher after the observation and ask questions
- You are expected to take notes and turn in a copy of your notes to the Staff Development Office

Note: Teachers will use Google Forms to choose from a list of observation sites and dates.

Slide 4: Evaluation

- A completed Peer Observation Form
- Please be sure you have signed in on the participant roster

Session 7

Slide 1: Specific Strategy Observation

This session is observation of a specific strategy in the classroom of a highly effective elementary teacher who has volunteered for this activity. Observers will complete a Peer Observation Form and will have an opportunity to ask questions of the teacher after the observation. Through a Google Form observers will choose a specific strategy from the Balanced Literacy topics. This activity is designed to be a half-day event observing in only one classroom.

Choose one of the following to observe:

- Phonics/word study
- Read alouds/shared reading
- Guided reading
- Independent reading

- Writing
- Oral reading fluency check/running records
- Letter/sound recognition running records

Slide 2: Questions?

Note: Give teachers 10 minutes for questions.

Slide 7: Next time: End of Year Data Analysis

The end of year session will meet on May X. You will receive an email detailing materials and documents needed for this session.

Slide 8: Evaluation

- A completed Peer Observation Form
- Please be sure you have signed in on the participant roster

Session 8: End of Year data analysis

Slide 1: Determining Student Growth

Materials:

- Student State Assessment Scores in Excel Spreadsheet
- State Scale Scores and Levels Reference Sheet
- Computer logged in to Performance Matters
- Sample data spreadsheet
- Sample Student Success Card

Slide 2: Using student data

- Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement
- Teach students to analyze their own data and to set learning goals

Note: Refer teachers *to Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making* (Principals, 2011)

http://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Student%20Achievement_blue.pdf

Slide 3: Digging into the data

1. Log-in to Performance matters https://unify.performancematters.com
2. Go to Reports on the menu bar
3. Choose Baseball Card Report (You should see only your students)
4. On the left side list, choose Sate/Local by Subject
5. Then, choose FSA-ELA
6. Then, choose Achievement level 15-16
7. Then , choose Achievement level 16-17

Note: Ask teachers-

- Can you tell if you students made learning gains based on this data?

Slide 4: Compare Progress monitoring to Achievement Test

1. Now, from the left side list, choose iReady Result
2. Then, choose Reading
3. Then, choose Overall SS Spring 16-17

Note: Ask teachers-

- Did the progress monitoring test predict student success on the state achievement test?
- How about the mid-year assessment to state assessment? (Overall SS Winter 16-17)

Slide 5: Comparing Progress monitoring Fall to Spring

1. From the left side list, choose iReady Result
2. Then, choose Reading
3. Then, choose Fall 16-17
4. Then, choose Overall SS Spring 16-17

Note: Using the iReady diagnostic growth chart, determine which students' showed a years' worth of growth. Then, divide the number of students making growth by the total number of students in this class. This is the percent of students making gains. Repeat this process for each course.

Slide 6: How do I use State Achievement data or Local Progress monitoring data to inform my instruction?

1. On your Excel spreadsheet, hide columns A-G, K-L, N-S.
2. Rename :
    a. Column U as Key Ideas and Details
    b. Column V as Craft and Structure
    c. Column W as Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
    d. Column X as Language and Editing
    e. Column Y as Text-based Writing
3. Average the values for each column.

Note: Compare the averages for each column to determine which content area students scored the lowest. With a partner, interpret the data and develop a hypothesis about how to improve student learning. What factors (that effect student learning) should be

considered when looking at each content area? Keeping asking why! Chart two discoveries and two changes in practice to improve student learning related to your discovery. (Allow 1 hour)

Slide 7: Repeat the process

Note: Ask teacher to identify what other kinds of data would be helpful to analyze in this manner. Chart other analysis common to the group.

Slide 8: Predict VAM or Student Growth Score

- Review VAM/Student Growth calculation method in Instructional Personnel Contract
- Review data (Achievement Year's Growth or Local Assessment year's Growth)
- Make a prediction on your evaluation score

Note: Give teachers copies of his/her Instructional Practice Evaluation form and have them add the student growth measure to find a summative rating.

Slide 9: Action Plan

Note: Explain Action Plan form and assist participants in completing the Action Plan.

Slide 10: Thank you and Evaluation

Note: Thank teachers for their participation and ask them to complete a final evaluation Google form.

Evaluation Materials

The following materials will be used for evaluation. The Participant Learning Measures forms are short assessments designed to evaluate the knowledge acquired by the participant at the end of each session. The Peer Observation Form will be used by the

participant when completing peer observations. The Participant Reaction/Satisfaction Survey will be used at the end of each session to measure to what degree participants react favorably to the training. The Action Plan will serve as a tool for participants to describe how participants will put the newly acquired knowledge into practice. The action plan will give detailed steps of how and when these activities will be implemented. The Summative Evaluation will collect participant reactions for the entire PD series.

Participant Learning Measures- Sessions 1-5

Session 1

Select True or False

1. VAM stands for Value Added Model. (T)
2. VAM and student growth assessment (SGA) are the same. (F)
3. The overall student growth score is the average of all three years student growth score. (T)
4. Cut score negotiated between the District and the Teachers' Union. (T)
5. Verifying your rosters gives you the opportunity to authenticate your records versus the registrar records that were reported by your district to the DOE. (T)

Session 2

Select True or False

1. The Balanced Literacy Approach (BLA) includes phonic/word study, read alouds/modeled reading and shared reading, guided reading, independent reading and writing. (T)
2. Word study encompasses phonics, spelling and vocabulary. (T)

3. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds-phonemes--in spoken words. (T)
4. Phonics is a method of teaching reading based on the sounds of letters, groups of letters, and syllables. (T)
5. There are no distinct stages of spelling and reading development. (F)

Session 3

Select True or False

1. The purpose of assessment includes to: (T)
    a. Identify skills that need review
    b. Monitor student progress
    c. Guide instruction
    d. Demonstrate the effectiveness of instruction
    e. Provide teachers with information on how instruction can be improved
2. There are assessments for specific area of reading. (T)
3. Diagnostic assessment is given before instruction to give a measure of competence. (T)
4. Formative assessments are given during instruction to monitor for strengths and needs. (T)
5. Summative assessments are given after the lesson to evaluate how well the students learned or performed the task. (T)

Session 4

Select True or False

1. Guided reading helps students understand how to approach new, on-grade level text. (T)
2. Reading to students Increases their vocabularies. (T)
3. It is a best practice of Read Alouds to share a book that is above the majority of the class's reading level. (T)
4. Through Read Alouds teachers can demonstrate mapping sounds with print and understanding complex ideas. (T)
5. Students' independent reading does not require a developed classroom routine.(F)

Session 5

Select True or False

1. Guided writing like guided reading, allows teachers to support students in writing development. (T)
2. ReadyGEN provides a focused writing activity for every lesson. (T)
3. The five sages of the writing process are: (T)
    a. Prewriting
    b. Drafting
    c. Revising
    d. Proof Reading
    e. Final Draft
4. Anchor charts can be an effective tool for teaching writing (T)
5. To teach effective writing, model effective writing. (T)

Session 6-7

Participants will use the Instructional Practice Guide from Achieve the Core to prompt observation points and note taking (Student Achievement Partners, 2017).

Peer Observation Form

Please complete the following observation form for each class observed.

CORE ACTION 1: Focus each lesson on a high-quality text (or multiple texts).

A. A majority of the lesson is spent reading, writing, or speaking about text(s).

    a. Yes- The lesson is focused on a text or multiple texts.

    b. No- There is no text under consideration in this lesson

B. The text(s) are at or above the complexity level expected for the grade and time in the school year.

    a. Yes- The text(s) are at or above both the qualitative and quantitative complexity expected for the grade and time in the school year.

    b. No- The text(s) are below both the qualitative and quantitative complexity expected for the grade and time in the school year.

C. The text(s) exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information.

    a. Yes- The quality of the text(s) is high – they are well written and/or provide useful information.

    b. No- The quality of the text(s) is low – they are poorly written or do not provide useful information.

CORE ACTION 2: Employ questions and tasks, both oral and written, that are text-specific and accurately address the analytical thinking required by the grade-level standards.

A. Questions and tasks address the text by attending to its particular structure(s), concepts, ideas, and details.
    a. 4- Most questions and tasks return students to the text to build
    b. understanding.
    c. 3- Many questions and tasks return students to the text to build
    d. understanding.
    e. 2- Few questions and tasks return students to the text to build
    f. understanding.
    g. 1- Questions and tasks do not refer to the text.

B. Questions and tasks require students to use evidence from the text to demonstrate understanding and to support their ideas about the text. These ideas are expressed through both written and oral responses.
    a. 4- Most questions and tasks require students to cite evidence
    b. from the text.
    c. 3- Many questions and tasks require students to cite evidence
    d. from the text.
    e. 2- Few questions and tasks require students to cite evidence
    f. from the text.
    g. 1- Questions and tasks can be answered without evidence

h. from the text.

C. Questions and tasks attend to the words (academic vocabulary), phrases, and sentences within the text.

a. 4- Vocabulary questions and tasks consistently focus students on the

b. words, phrases, and sentences that matter most and how they are

c. used in the text.

d. 3- Vocabulary questions and tasks mostly focus students on the words

e. that matter most and how they are used in the text.

f. 2- Vocabulary questions and tasks rarely focus students on the words

g. that matter most and how they are used in the text.

h. 1- No questions and tasks focus students on the words that matter

i. most and how they are used in the text.

D. Questions are sequenced to build knowledge by guiding students to delve deeper into the text and graphics.

a. 4- Most questions are intentionally sequenced to support

b. building knowledge.

c. 3- Some questions are intentionally sequenced to support

d. building knowledge.

e. 2- Few questions are intentionally sequenced to support

f. building knowledge.

g. 1- Questions seem random and are not intentionally sequenced to

h. support building knowledge.

CORE ACTION 3: Provide all students with opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson.

Rating:

4 – Teacher provides many opportunities and most students take them.

3 – Teacher provides many opportunities and some students take them; or teacher provides some opportunities and most students take them.

2 – Teacher provides some opportunities and some students take them.

1 – Teacher provides few or no opportunities, or few or very few students take the opportunities provided.

A. The teacher keeps all students persevering with challenging tasks. Students habitually display persistence with challenging tasks, particularly when providing textual evidence to support answers and responses, both orally and in writing.

B. The teacher expects evidence and precision from students and probes students' answer accordingly. Students habitually display persistence in providing textual evidence to support answers and responses, both orally and in writing.

C. The teacher encourages reasoning and problem solving by posing challenging questions and tasks that offer opportunities for productive struggle. Students persevere in solving questions and tasks in the face of initial difficulty.

D. The teacher demonstrates awareness and appropriate action regarding the variations present in student progress toward reading independently. When appropriate, students demonstrate progress toward independence in reading and writing.

E. When appropriate, the teacher explicitly attends to strengthening students' language and reading foundational skills. Students demonstrate use of language conventions and decoding skills3, activating such strategies as needed to read, write, and speak with grade-level fluency and skill.

Notes:

Please record any wonderings you may have: (Questions you may ask the teacher in during the debrief)

Please list activities, or ideas you want to use in your own classroom:

Sessions 1-7

Participant Reaction/Satisfaction Survey

Professional development title:

Date of professional development:

Please rate the following:

Strongly Agree Agree NeutralDisagree Strongly Disagree

1. I am satisfied with today's session.
2. Handouts were engaging and useful.
3. Time in the workshop was sufficient to allow learning and practicing new concepts.
4. The workshop was well planned and interactive.
5. The presenter was effective.

6. The atmosphere was enthusiastic, interesting, and conducive to a collegial professional exchange.
7. Session content and strategies will be useful in my work.
8. I would recommend this session to colleagues.

9. What is the most significant thing you learned today?

10. What support do you need to implement what you learned?

11. How will you apply what you learned today to your work?

12. How can we build on this session for follow-up learning?

13. If you were not satisfied with any part of today's session, please explain why.

14. Additional comments:

Action Plan- Session 8

Select the focus area(s) of the professional development action plan. The focus could be an academic subject, behavioral or increasing the capacity of teachers to address student learning needs.

□ Reading

□ Mathematics

□ Other

□ Reduce behavioral, social, or emotional concerns and disciplinary actions

□ Reduce achievement gaps between students with and without disabilities

□ Reduce achievement gaps between students of color and white students

□ Reduce graduation gap between students with and without disabilities

□ Reduce disproportionate special education identification of students of color

□ Increase capacity of all teachers to address the needs of students at risk for failure

□ Increase the number of families meaningfully participating in the problem-solving process

DIRECTIONS: Write your action plan question in the box below. Record the strategies/activities you will implement to reach your goal.

Then, decide on the timeline and staff needed for each strategy. Next, determine your evaluation criteria and what evidence you will use to evaluate whether the strategy is successful.

Action Plan Question:

Strategy/Activities

What steps will you take to reach your goal? What tasks will you complete along the way?

Timeline/Staff

What is your timeline to implement the strategies? With whom will you collaborate to reach the goal?

Evaluation Criteria/Evidence

What evaluation criteria or evidence will you use to show that strategies have been implemented are successful?

Summative Evaluation- Session 8

Professional development title:

Date of professional development

1. What was the impact of this training series on your school or classroom?
2. How was this training advocated, facilitated and supported at your school?
3. Were sufficient resources made available before, during and after the training?
4. How was your attempt at changing your instruction recognized and shared?
5. Describe your most effective application of new knowledge and skill from this training:
6. What impact did your participation in this training have on student achievement?

Appendix B: Request for Permission to Conduct Research in Schools

Dear_____,

My name is Pat McCoy and I am a student at Walden University. I would like your permission to conduct research for my Doctoral thesis in the _____ school district. The study involves the exploration of teachers' and principals' decision making and the value-added model of teacher evaluation. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Michelle McCraney of Walden University.

I hereby seek your consent and assistance to email elementary teachers and principals at four elementary schools asking for volunteers to participate in an individual, face-to-face interview with me. I am seeking a sample of four teachers and four principals. _____, the school at which I am assigned, will not participate in this research.

I have provided you with a copy of my project proposal, which includes copies of the interview questions; the Instructional Review Board approval and participant consent forms. Also included is a copy of the invitation to participate that I would like to email or have emailed to the four elementary schools' teachers and principals.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you by phone and to provide any additional information necessary. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Pat McCoy

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Introduction: Thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. You may decline to answer any question and you may choose to opt out of the interview entirely at any time with no professional or personal penalty. There are no risks to you personally or professionally.

Research Question 1: What are your perceptions about how the VAM of teacher evaluation impacts teacher performance?

Sub question 1: How has the VAM changed your practice?

Potential follow-up questions for teachers:

1. What kind of training or orientation have you had on VAM?
2. What assessment is used to measure achievement of your students? Is this a single score assessment or does it measure growth overtime?
3. What else is this student achievement data used for at your school?
4. Do you know your evaluation/accountability rating and please explain how it was calculated?
5. How does this rating affect your practice?
6. How has your practiced changed since this accountability policy has been in place?
7. How should teachers' effectiveness e measured?

8. Describe the professional development that has been recommended to you as a result of the evaluation process.
9. Are there any unintended consequences of using VAM?

Research question 2: What are your perceptions about how the VAM of teacher evaluation impacts teacher performance?

Subquestion 1: How has the VAM hanged teacher practice?

Potential follow-up questions for principals:

1. As a school administrator, how do you orient or train your teachers on the evaluation method?
2. How has the value-added model of teacher evaluation affected teacher practice?
3. How should teachers' effectiveness be measured?
4. Describe the professional development you have recommended to teachers as a result of this evaluation process?
5. How have your leadership or decision making practices changed since this policy has been in place?