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Elementary School Principals' Utilization of Walkthroughs in the Role of Instructional Leaders

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ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS' UTILIZATION OF WALKTHROUGHS IN THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

by

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(Under the Direction of Linda M. Arthur)

ABSTRACT

Principals now find themselves in the age of accountability and improvements with the expectation that they will function as instructional leaders. Walkthroughs provide a vehicle for principals to step into the role of instructional leaders. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how elementary principals utilized walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders. The researcher conducted the study in five elementary schools in a Georgia school district, located east of Atlanta, which invested resources to develop principals as instructional leaders by providing specific training in conducting walkthroughs. To accomplish the purpose of this study, the researcher analyzed the interview responses from the 20 participants of whom five were elementary principals and fifteen were elementary teachers. Documents related to walkthroughs, such as walkthrough forms and school improvement plans, were also analyzed. Using the basic interpretive approach, the researcher identified common themes that emerged from analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

Findings of the study were congruent with the literature in terms of the purpose and benefits of walkthroughs. Elementary principals and teachers identified walkthroughs to be an instructional leadership strategy that provided a snapshot of the teaching and learning that occurred in the school. Principals and teachers reported that

principals conducted walkthroughs to monitor the instructional program and student progress. Principals and teachers found walkthroughs to be beneficial. Walkthroughs allowed principals to maintain visibility, provide data driven professional learning, foster professional learning communities, promote individual teacher growth, and acknowledge teachers. The data also revealed that by conducting walkthroughs, principals were able to perform six of ten instructional leadership functions identified by Hallinger.

Data suggested that the way walkthroughs are implemented in schools matters. All participants must have an understanding of the purpose and process of the walkthrough and the relevance of the data collected. Including teachers as walkthrough partners and focusing on student learning can have a positive impact on the school's learning climate. Implications of the study provided contributions to the literature on walkthroughs and suggested ways that principal walkthroughs can be used to promote continuous school improvements.

INDEX WORDS: Walkthroughs, Instructional leadership, Informal observations

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Janice W. Stodghill, who has encouraged me throughout my educational journey. Thanks for always believing in me. Your faith and encouragement have motivated me to pursue my dreams. I will forever be grateful for the many sacrifices that you have made for me. Your love, guidance, and support have been constant sources of inspiration in my life and have helped shape me into the person I am today.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my loving husband, Thomas, who has given me support, love, and encouragement throughout this endeavor. You have witnessed the long hours and hard work that I have put into this dissertation. Thanks for being patient with me and sacrificing our time together so that I could focus on completing this dissertation.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, Mia. I am sure there were times when you did not understand why mommy had to do homework instead of play with you. I pray that this dissertation shows you that all things are possible.

I love you, and I thank God for each of you.

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INTRODUCTION

"The purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance"- Richard Elmore (Schmoker, 2001, p. 126).

In the era of accountability, administrators "are being called upon to exercise strong instructional leadership in their schools. They are expected to coach, mentor and support teachers as they approach the difficult task of promoting high levels of student achievement in a standards-based, accountability-oriented environment" (Johnston, 2003). In the pursuit to focus on teaching and learning, administrators are using the Management by Wandering Around (MBWA) technique from the business world (Frase & Hetzel, 1990). Principals have started conducting walkthroughs, frequent, brief and focused visits to classrooms, for the purpose of observing, first hand, the instruction that is provided and the needs of staff and students in the school (Hopkins, 2007). The purpose of this study was to understand how elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders.

Background of the Study

The changing conditions and rising expectations for student achievement, driven by state education reform and the national *No Child Left Behind* mandate, have changed the work of principals (Page, 2004). The days when principals managed the school building, dealt with discipline, balanced budgets, and monitored schedules while the teachers handled instruction are gone (Page, 2004). Traditionally, supervision of teachers has been viewed as a managerial function, with emphasis on doing things right (Andrew, Basom, and Basom, 1991). However, in 1991, Andrew et al. presented supervision of teachers as an act of instructional leadership. In this role, the principal focuses on doing

the things he/she knows can help improve student achievement (Andrew et al., 1991). In 1995, Tracy reports that the intention of supervision practice in schools today is to improve classroom instruction through observation of classroom teaching, analysis of observed data, and face-to-face interaction between the observer and teacher.

Marzano, McNulty, and Waters (2005) identify visibility as a responsibility of the school leader. According to Marzano et al. (2005), visibility is commonly associated with instructional leadership, and principals demonstrate this responsibility when they make daily visits to classrooms simply to ask teachers and students how things are going.

In today's climate of high standards and accountability, it is important that instructional leaders are able to spend considerable time in the classrooms collecting data, coaching, and supporting quality classroom instruction (Johnston, 2003). According to Johnston (2003), the "Learning Walk" or "Walk Through" is one of the most promising strategies for providing instructional leadership. Glatthorn (1997) encourages principals to make frequent and informal visits to classrooms in order to scan the learning processes at work, note to what degree students are on task, and observe what the teacher is doing to facilitate learning (p. 19). ". . . these visits drive home the message that learning is the purpose of school- for teachers and students" (Schmoker, 2001, p. 117).

"Whether referred to as instructional walks, learning walks, or data in a day, the pattern of walkthroughs is roughly the same" (Richardson, 2001). They all include frequent, focused, brief visits that allow firsthand observations of teaching and learning that is occurring in the classroom (Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Richardson, 2001). However, walkthrough models vary in the type and frequency of feedback provided, method of gathering data, length of visit, and focus (Downey et al., 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990).

There are several classroom walkthrough models. Some of the models described in the literature are School Management by Wandering Around, The Learning Walk, the Downey Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through, and the Five-By-Five Walkthrough.

Several benefits of walkthroughs have been reported. According to researchers, walkthroughs promote reflective dialogue and professional and collaborative learning communities, provide a positive impact on student achievement, and foster data driven professional development (Anderson & Davenport, 2002; Black, 2007; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Keruskin, 2005; Rossi, G. A. 2007). Cervone and Martinez-Miller (2007), along with the UCLA School Management Program, state that walkthroughs can be a catalyst for improvement. According to Cervone and Martinez-Miller (2007), the UCLA School Management Program classroom walkthrough protocol can be used to analyze evidence collected during a walkthrough to drive a cycle of improvement.

Although valuable data can be gathered during walkthroughs, Cervone and Martinez-Miller (2007) and Rossi (2007) argue that no amount of data by itself will move a school toward improvement. Rossi (2007) states that having a visible presence and conducting walkthroughs is not enough to assure quality instruction. It is what the principal does with the observational data that will make the difference. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) proclaims that walkthroughs are a vehicle for leaders to step into the role of instructional leadership in service to increase student achievement.

Data collection and analysis is not a one time event; it must be a habit (Danielson, 2002). Research suggests that walkthroughs provide invaluable data (Archer, 2005;

Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007). Cervone and Martinez-Miller (2007) suggest that most schools collect and analyze student assessment data. However, the observing and collecting of data on how students understand and embrace the content and skills is missing in schools. A practical way principals could use the data gathered during walkthroughs is to encourage reflective dialogue, which in turn would cultivate a cycle of continually improving instructional practices (Bushman, 2006; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Downey et al., 2004; Skretta, 2007). Skretta (2007) suggests that walkthrough data be used to make better instructional decisions, evaluate the school improvement process, and monitor the implementation of instructional interventions.

Statement of the Problem

The role of the principal has changed from that as manager to instructional leader. In the era of accountability, the role of the principal as instructional leader results in a focus on teaching and learning. The task of conducting walkthroughs is one of the most promising strategies for providing instructional leadership.

The majority of the literature on walkthroughs described the various models of walkthroughs and discusses the types, purposes, and benefits of walkthroughs. Researchers agreed that walkthroughs can yield valuable information to improve student achievement, promote reflective dialogue and professional and collaborative learning communities, and foster data driven professional development. However, it is what the principal does with the observational data from walkthroughs that will make the difference in teaching and learning.

After reviewing the literature, there is little reported on how principals use walkthroughs to promote continuous school improvement. Data-driven decision making is essential in school improvement. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand how elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders.

Research Questions

The researcher considered the following overarching question in this qualitative study: How do elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders? The study was guided by the following sub-questions:

Sub-question 1: Why do principals conduct walkthroughs?

Sub-question 2: How do principals and teachers describe the benefits of principal walkthroughs?

Sub-question 3: How do principals and teachers describe the principal's role as an instructional leader?

Significance of the Study

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) sets demands for states and schools to improve student achievement. The focus is on closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers by encouraging schools to set higher expectations and to provide support and quality instruction for all students. Principals must know what is happening in the classroom in order to determine if quality teaching and learning are occurring. Research indicates that walkthroughs are an instructional leadership strategy that allows firsthand observations of teaching and learning that is occurring in the classroom (Johnston, 2003).

While researchers have described the various models of walkthroughs and cited benefits of walkthroughs, little is known regarding how principals use walkthroughs in their instructional leadership role. Documenting what principals do with observational data from walkthroughs may provide insight to the professional literature information concerning how elementary principals use walkthroughs to promote school improvement.

The principal participants in this study conducted walkthroughs in their schools. This study revealed how elementary principals use walkthroughs in their role of instructional leaders. Providing evidence of how walkthroughs are used as an instructional leadership approach by elementary principals may offer additional strategies to other principals on supporting teaching and learning.

This study had personal significance to the researcher. The researcher is an administrator in a district that requires principals to conduct walkthroughs. However, it was not known how principals were using walkthroughs to promote instructional leadership in their school. The researcher gained an understanding of how elementary principals used walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders to promote continuous school improvement.

Research Procedures

The researcher's purpose for this qualitative study was to understand how elementary principals use walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research takes place in the natural setting, uses multiple methods of data collections that are interactive and humanistic, generates theories and hypotheses from data that emerges, and requires researchers to make an interpretation of the data. The basic interpretive approach will be used to conduct this study.

Participants for this study were employed in elementary schools in a Georgia school district that has invested resources to develop principals as instructional leaders by providing specific training in conducting walkthroughs. The school district, Achievement School District, is located east of Atlanta. Purposive sampling was used to select five elementary principals and fifteen elementary teachers from five schools within Achievement School District. According to Nardi (2006), purposive sampling is appropriate when there is a specific reason to select a unique sample on purpose because of some characteristics or traits that will be analyzed.

The researcher was the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. According to Merriam and Associates (2002), since the primary goal of the study was to understand, the human instrument would seem to be the ideal means of collecting and analyzing data, because the human instrument has the ability to be immediately responsive and adaptive. The human instrument, the researcher, used principal interviews, teacher interviews, and document analysis as the means to collect data.

A 60-90 minute semi-structured interview was conducted with each elementary principal, and a 45-60 minute semi-structured interview was conducted with each elementary teacher group. This type of interview allowed the researcher to develop a general set of questions and format to follow and use on all participants. However, it allowed the researcher to vary the questions as the situation demands (Lichtman, 2006).

The researcher also used document analysis for data collection. Document analysis allowed the researcher to obtain data that already exists through an unobtrusive method (Creswell, 2003; Merriam and Associates, 2002). The researcher collected and

analyzed documents gathered from the selected schools relating to walkthroughs (i.e. walkthrough forms and school improvement plans).

Interviews and document analysis were the data collection methods used by the researcher throughout this study. Interviews were used as the first instrument of data collection. The researcher used a semi-structured format to interview each principal and teacher group in their natural setting, the elementary school. The principal interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes, and the teacher interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded, and the researcher used an interview protocol during the interview. The researcher transcribed the interviews.

The researcher also gathered and analyzed documents provided by the participants. The researcher analyzed the documents to capture the thoughts, ideas, and meanings of the participants regarding walkthroughs.

Data analysis and data collection occurred simultaneously throughout the study. Merriam and Associates (2002) state that simultaneous data collection and analysis is beneficial because it allows the researcher to make adjustments throughout the study and to test emerging concepts, themes, and categories against subsequent data. The researcher coded and categorized reoccurring patterns/themes that emerged from interview transcripts and document analysis.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to the following:

1. The study is delimited to five elementary principals and fifteen elementary teachers in a select Georgia school district east of Atlanta who met the set criteria.

Limitations

Some limitations identified by the researcher were as follows:

1. Results of the study may not be generalized to school systems that do not use a walkthrough checklist.
2. The availability of a variety of applicable documents was few. Therefore, the researcher was limited to walkthrough forms and school improvement plans.

Summary

School principals have changed their focus from managerial tasks to instructional tasks. In an attempt to increase instructional leadership, principals are conducting classroom walkthroughs (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007). There is extensive research on models of walkthroughs and benefits of walkthroughs. However, little is known regarding the utilization of walkthroughs. Therefore, the researcher will conduct this qualitative study to understand how principals use walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders. The researcher will be the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. Interviews and document analysis will be the data collection methods used. Data analysis and data collection will occur simultaneously. Documenting how principals use walkthroughs in their instructional leader role may close the gap in the professional literature.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The No Child Left Behind Act sets demands for states and schools to improve student achievement. The focus is on closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers (2002). "This new law requires states to use academic content standards to benchmark federally mandated 'adequate yearly progress' toward ambitious school improvement goals" (O'Shea, 2005, p. 1). In 1995, Tracy reports the intent of supervision practice in schools today is to improve classroom instruction through observation of classroom teaching, analysis of observed data, and face-to-face interaction between the observer and teacher.

In the era of accountability, administrators "are being called upon to exercise strong instructional leadership in their schools. They are expected to coach, mentor and support teachers as they approach the difficult task of promoting high levels of student achievement in a standards-based, accountability-oriented environment" (Johnston, 2003). In an effort to increase student achievement, administrators are beginning to use the Management By Wandering Around technique from the business world to promote continuous school improvement.

Elementary principals in Achievement School District (pseudonym) developed a walkthrough form (see Appendix A) for the elementary schools in the district. These principals agreed on the "look fors". Now they have started conducting walkthroughs,

frequent, brief and focused visits to classrooms for the purpose of observing first hand the instruction that is provided and the needs of staff and students in the school.

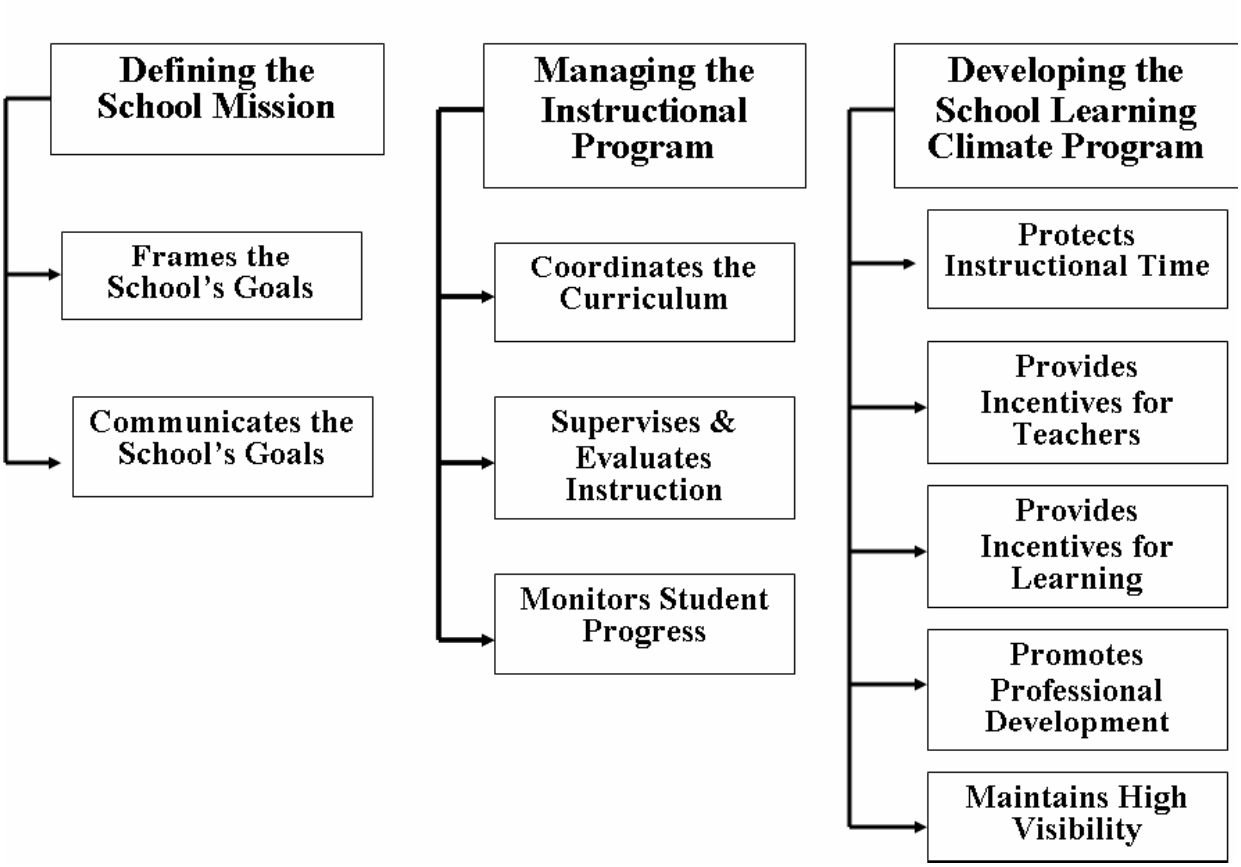
The Shift from Administrator to Instructional Leader

According to Page (2004), the changing conditions and rising expectations for student achievement, driven by state education reform and the national *No Child Left Behind* mandate, have changed the work of principals. The days when principals managed the school building, dealt with discipline, balanced budgets, and monitored schedules while the teachers handled instruction are gone (Page, 2004). Andrew, Basom, and Basom (1991) state, "Traditionally, we have thought of supervision of teachers as a managerial function, with emphasis on 'doing things right'. . ." In 1991, Andrew et al. presented supervision of teachers as an act of instructional leadership. "As an instructional leader, the principal focuses less on doing things right and more on 'doing the right things,' the things we know can help improve student achievement" (Andrew et al., 1991, p. 97).

Hallinger (2003) proposes three dimensions of instructional leadership: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate. Each dimension encompasses a number of specific instructional leadership functions. There are a total of ten essential instructional leadership functions in Hallinger's instructional leadership model: framing the school's goals, communicating the school's goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing

incentives for learning (Hallinger, 2003). Hallinger's instructional framework is represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Hallinger's instructional leadership framework



(Hallinger, 2008, p. 6)

Marzano, McNulty, and Waters (2005) identify visibility as a responsibility of the school leader. According to Marzano et al. (2005), visibility is commonly associated with instructional leadership, and principals demonstrate this responsibility when they make daily visits to classrooms simply to ask teachers and students how things are going. Skretta (2008) finds that principals believe establishing visibility is an important purpose of conducting walkthroughs. Fullan (2008) concurs that principals must spend the majority of their time dealing with instructional issues.

The article, Our Challenges, Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) also, notes that changes in expectations and student achievement have dramatically impacted the roles and responsibilities of educational leaders. The author of Our Challenges reveals that the Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) provides support in the shift from administration to instructional leadership in order to bring about continuous improvements in teaching and learning.

Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) uses research to identify the following eight roles that are required of school leaders to lead to school improvement.

- Data Analysis Leader – demonstrates the ability to lead teams to analyze multiple sources of data to identify improvement needs, symptoms and root causes;
- Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction Leader – demonstrates the ability to implement a systems approach to instruction in a standards-based environment prioritizing curriculum standards, developing aligned assessments and planning instruction to improve student achievement;
- Performance Leader — demonstrates the ability to strategically plan, organize and manage school systems and processes necessary to improve student achievement;
- Operations Leader- demonstrates the ability to effectively and efficiently organize resources, processes and systems to support teaching and learning;
- Relationship Leader – demonstrates the ability to identify and develop relationships among customer and stakeholder groups and communicate school goals and priorities focused on student learning;

- Process Improvement Leader – demonstrates the ability to identify and map core processes and results to create action plans designed to improve student achievement.
- Change Leader – demonstrates the ability to drive and sustain change in a collegial environment focused on continuous improvement in student achievement;
- Learning and Development Leader – demonstrates the ability to guide the development of professional learning communities to develop leaders at all levels of the organization (Brown, 2004; Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement, 2006).

Davis (2006) reports that the eight roles of school leaders are interrelated; therefore, the roles overlap. ". . . for a leader to be effective as a 'Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Leader', they will also need skills associated with 'Data Analysis Leader', 'Performance Management Leader', 'Relationship Leader,' and others (Davis, 2006, p. 15).

Although GLISI identified eight roles for leaders to improve expectations for student achievement and school performance, Downey, English, Frase, Polston, and Steffy (2004) note that ". . . principals and other administrators must come to view their primary roles as one of an instructional leader promoting improved student achievement" (p. 7). Page (2004) and Hulme (2006) agree that principals must be instructional leaders. Marzaro et al. report (2005) that the involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment is considered critical to the concept of instructional leadership.

In today's climate of high standards and accountability, it is important that instructional leaders are able to spend considerable time in the classrooms collecting data, coaching, and supporting quality classroom instruction (Johnston, 2003). According to Johnston (2003), the learning walk or walkthrough" is one of the most promising strategies for providing instructional leadership. Glatthorn (1997) encourages principals to make frequent and informal visits to classrooms in order to scan the learning processes

at work, note to what degree students are on task, and observe what the teacher is doing to facilitate learning (p. 19). ". . . these visits drive home the message that learning is the purpose of school- for teachers and students" (Schmoker, 2001, p. 117).

In the Implementation Resource Guide, the Georgia Department of Education (2007) provides a collection of best practices that support school improvement. The Georgia Department of Education (2007) identifies awareness walks, focus walks, and/or learning walks as successful actions to promote leadership that reinforces a commitment to high expectations for student achievement while promoting the school as a true community of learning. Classroom visits allow school leaders to monitor instructional practices and student learning (Georgia Department of Education, 2007).

Frase and Hetzel (1990) stated, "It doesn't take extensive observations nor elaborate data gathering to identify critical strengths and weaknesses; it does take a well-focused visit" (p. 75). The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007) acknowledged that walkthroughs work best when the observer and observed know and understand its purpose and focus. It was also suggested that teachers be involved in determining the "look fors" and "listen fors" that principals use during observations to ensure that there is a common understanding (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007). Keruskin's study (2005) reveals that teachers worked collectively to determine the look-fors for the walkthrough tool used in their school district. Rossi (2007) finds that principals considered the need to establish look fors to be a consensus theme in his study. Frase and Hetzel (1990) suggest that principals look for established routines, minimal confusion, and clearly communicated directions. Frase

and Hetzel (1990) provided the following look for questions that can be used to diagnose classroom problems:

- Do the students know what to do?
- Are all materials readily available?
- Do students know what to do upon completing assignments?
- Is the climate orderly and business-like?
- Did instruction begin within seven minutes of the bell or transition?
- Are students engaged in learning?
- Do students who finish early go on to the next task? (p. 75).

During walk-throughs, Spokane School District's administrators look for three Cs and an E -the curriculum content being taught, the level of expected cognitive ability according to Bloom's taxonomy , the classroom and lesson context, and evidence of student engagement (http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/re-engineering/SpokaneSD/WalkThrough.asp). Keruskin (2005) finds that teachers and principals believe that revisiting look-fors to address weaknesses and adding new look-fors as needed improves instruction.

"School leaders who are determined to increase student achievement know that we must change instruction" (VonVillas, 2004). Israel (2006) notes that the most effective teacher observation is student-focused. Black (2007) suggests that walkthroughs should be non-evaluative and should focus on student learning and teaching. According to Downey et al. (2004), walkthroughs are a principal's best chance of improving teaching and learning.

Walkthrough Models

Walkthroughs are a vehicle for leaders to step into the role of instructional leadership in service to increase student achievement (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001). "Whether referred to as 'instructional walks,'

'learning walks,' or 'data in a day' the pattern of walk throughs is roughly the same" (Richardson, 2001). They all include frequent, focused, brief visits that allow firsthand observations of teaching and learning that is occurring in the classroom (Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Downey et al., 2004; Richardson, 2001). School Management by Wandering Around, The Learning Walk, The Downey Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through, and Learning-Focused Five-By-Five Walkthroughs are described below:

School Management by Wandering Around

The classroom walkthrough concept is an extension of the Management by Wandering Around (MBWA) technique that was developed by executives at Hewlett-Packard in the 1970s, but became highly popularized in a book written by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman in the early 1980s, *In Search of Excellence*. Peters and Waterman's research (1980) reveals that the managers of the most successful companies in America stay close to the customers and the people doing the work; they are involved in rather than isolated from the daily routines of the business.

In 1990, Frase and Hetzel formally introduce MBWA as an educational management theory. "MBWA is not simply walking about aimlessly. It must be well-planned and purposeful" (Frase & Hetzel, 1990, p. 75). Boyd and MacNeill (2007) report that the strength of MBWA lies in informal communication and getting management out to the office. Frase and Hetzel (1990) note that practicing supervision in classrooms is a key characteristic of effective schools.

In 2007, Boyd and MacNeill re-examined MBWA. Boyd and MacNeill (2007) recognize that the modern principal's job is a combination or leadership and management; therefore, they deemed it more appropriately to refer to the concept as

L&MBWA (Leadership and Management by Walking Around). "The two facets of a principal's role can be understood in terms of the Baconian aphorism: knowledge is the driver of leadership, and power underwrites management" (Boyd & MacNeill, 2007).

The Learning Walk

The Institute of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh developed a walkthrough process to support a systemic focus on instructional improvement. According to the Institute, the heart of all walkthroughs was to improve learning and instruction. However, a walkthrough could be varied to serve different educational needs. Therefore, the Institute for Learning developed three walkthrough modes: observational, collegial, and supervisory.

According to the Institute for Learning (1999), the observational walkthroughs are conducted by the school principal and a person(s) from outside the school district. The outside observer needs to be knowledgeable of the Principles of Learning in order to identify their presences as they examine student work and talk with students and teachers.

Collegial walkthrough is the second mode. The Institute for Learning (1999) describes this mode as walkthroughs that are conducted by the school principal's colleagues who have a shared commitment to the improvement of instruction and learning in the school. The purpose of the walkthrough is to observe and gather evidence on the use of the principles to engage student learning and discuss ways in which staff can use resources, collaboration, and professional development to improve their content knowledge.

The final mode describe is supervisory walkthroughs (The Institute for Learning, 1999). This type of walkthrough is conducted by the school principal and his or her

immediate supervisor. The purpose of this walkthrough is to examine the learning or instruction process as it relates to the content in which students are engaged. Student work serves as evidence of learning and instruction. The progress made from previous walkthroughs is discussed and professional development needs to show continued learning and instruction improvement are determined.

In 2001, The Institute for Learning began referring to walkthroughs as Learning Walks. Although the name changed, the focus remained on teaching and learning. LearningWalks are led by administrators or by teacher leaders, and the participants spend five to ten minutes in each of several classrooms observing and collecting evidence about learning as well as teaching and about how the teacher's work impacts student learning. At the end of the Learning Walk, participants work with the leader of the walk to discuss what they observed and ask questions, to look for patterns within the school, and to think about next steps for the school, particularly next steps for professional development. The Learning Walk can be an invaluable catalyst and learning experience for enabling educational reform (Institute for Learning-The Learning Walk, http://ifl.lrdc.pitt.edu/ifl/index.php?section=learningwalk).

The Downey Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through

The Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Through was developed by Carolyn Downey over a 40 year period. "Downey and her research team have shown that, with training and practice, principals and other instructional leaders can observe a teacher's critical teaching decisions. . . in as little as three minutes" (Black, 2007).

The Downey Walk-Through involves five key ideas (Downey et al., 2004). First, walkthroughs are short, focused, yet informal observation. The classroom visit lasts for

two to three minutes. It is not meant to evaluate the teacher, but it is time to gather information about curricular and instructional teaching practices and decisions teachers are making.

Second, the major goal of the visit is to activate a thought that might be useful for teachers to reflect on. Opportunities are provided for teachers to think about their instructional decisions and practices (Downey et al., 2004).

Third, during the walkthrough there is a focus on curriculum as well as instruction. During the classroom visit, the observer should gather data about the curriculum and instructional decisions being made and notice their impact on student behavior. The focus is on curriculum and pedagogy (Downey et al., 2004).

Fourth, follow-up occurs occasionally. Feedback does not take place after every visit. The observer should determine if a follow-up conversation is needed with the teacher to discuss the decisions that the teacher is making. Downey et al. (2004) suggest that feedback is given only when it will be received in a meaningful and timely manner.

Last, the walkthrough should be informal and collaborative in nature. The observation is informal. There is no checklist of thing to look for. This approach is not about judging a teacher's effective use of a given teaching practice. It is about colleagues working together to help each other think about practices.

Learning-Focused Five-By-Five Walkthroughs

According to Thompson and Thompson (2003), Learning-Focused monitoring and walkthroughs are tools for providing high accountability and support. Thompson developed the Five-by-Five walkthrough supervision tool for school leaders. Thompson suggests that school leaders spend at least five minutes in five classrooms everyday in

order to determine if the school's focus is consistent, pervasive, and being implemented with quality. Thompson provides an observational checklist for principals to utilize during walkthroughs.

Thompson identifies four essential steps that school leaders should follow when implementing the five-by-five walkthrough model. First, school leaders must provide teachers with clear understanding of school wide initiatives and the initiative components that he/she will be looking for during classroom visits. Second, a rubric for the specific strategies of the initiatives should be provided to the teachers. Next, school leaders should visit five classroom everyday for a minimum of five minutes each, and the school leader should look for specific examples of the agreed upon initiative. Last, the visit should be recorded on the monitoring guide (Thompson & Thompson, 2003).

Training

While the literature describes the walkthrough process in detail, the literature is scant regarding effective training for principals and teachers who utilize walkthroughs in their school. Downey et al. (2004) suggest that to effectively implement the walkthrough process one should consider attending a formal training. Although David (2007/2008) does not describe a formal training on walkthroughs, he states the importance of ensuring that everyone has an understanding of how the walkthrough process connects to improvement efforts before starting any type of walkthrough process in schools. The literature clearly states the need to train the teachers on the importance of the walkthroughs and the relevance of the data collected (David, Dec. 2007/ Jan. 2008; Downey et al., 2004; Hopkins, 2007; Thompson & Thompson, 2003).

Benefits of Walkthroughs

Reflective Dialogue and Professional and Collaborative Learning Communities

According to Damon and Ginsberg (2002), principals who are instructional leaders work with teachers to create an environment that promotes dialogue centered about teaching and learning. They must be the force that creates collaboration focused on improving instruction and student achievement (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001). Downey et al. (2004) argues that when the Downey Walkthrough process is fully implemented in a school, a collaborative and reflective school culture is fostered.

According to Craig (2005), walkthrough observations paired with conversations regarding the visits are powerful. Craig (2005) also adds that school improvement is lost without feedback, and feedback is most powerful when teachers are clear on the expectations ahead of time and the feedback is expressed in terms of the expectations. Although researchers agree that feedback is essential, the type and frequency of feedback provided to teachers varies depending on the walkthrough model. A checklist is used in the Five-by-Five walkthrough. However Downey disagrees with the use of checklists (Downey et al., 2004; Thompson & Thompson, 2003). Despite the debate regarding the format of feedback, the models discussed in the literature suggest that instruction should be the focus of the walkthrough and some dialogue should occur as a result of walkthroughs (Downey et al., 2004; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003).

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007) states dialogue between the principal and teacher is a common feature of a well-designed walk-

through. Johnston (2003) encourages administrators to use walkthroughs to promote dialogue with teachers on research based strategies and how they are implemented in the classroom. Archer (2005) adds that a school climate in which teachers can work collaboratively to solve problems must be promoted by school leaders. Skretta (2007) proclaims that the greatest value of walkthroughs is the data that is gathered which can be used to prompt and provoke dialogue about instruction between teachers and administrations. Downey et al. (2004) describes dialogue as a professional, nonjudgmental conversation that is interactive and thought-provoking. "This approach requires trust between the principal and the teachers and also enhances that trust when used appropriately" (Downey et al., 2004, p. 79).

The dialogue serves two purposes: to encourage teachers to reflect on their classroom practice and to inform the principal about how that practice can be supported (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007). During dialogue, "the focus is on the curricular or instructional teaching practice decisions, not on the teacher behavior observed in the walk-through" (Downey et al., 2004, p. 51).

Focus or reflective questions are often used to guide dialogue (Downey et al., 2004; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007). Downey et al. (2004) note that the purpose of reflective questions is "to enhance a person's thinking on the journey and quest to learn about how he or she makes particular decisions and choices" (p. 79). Teachers' input is integral in improving teaching and learning (Downey et al., 2004). Ongoing dialogue enables teachers and school leaders to make meaningful and timely curriculum connections for students (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker and

Karhanek, 2004). Hopkins (2005) suggests that any question that causes teachers to reflect and has potential to result in improved student achievement can be used as a focus question.

Brown recognizes (2005) the importance of principals possessing the knowledge and skills to lead schools to high levels of achievement for all children. However he stated the reality is that the principal's job of improving student achievement has become simply too big to be accomplished alone. "… Administrators must be able to equip teachers and supervisors with the means to transform schools to improve student achievement by becoming more of an educational leader who is able to build networks within the school to enhance instructional practices" (Keruskin, 2005). Bushman (2006) suggests using teachers as walk-through partners to improve instructional practices. Bushman (2006) describes how a high school principal implemented collaborative walk-throughs that allowed teachers to use a collegial walk-through model to discuss instruction in a nonthreatening way and create a collaborative professional culture. Israel (2006) discusses a variety of approaches of "teachers observing teachers" that could be used to foster collaboration and improve student achievement.

Ziegler (2006) notes that instructional walkthroughs aided a school in moving from a culture of isolation to a culture of collaboration and support. Professional learning communities (PLC) are developed in a culture of collaboration and support which allow for ongoing dialogue and reflections. VonVillas (2004) finds that, "Discussions revealed that the observers recognized the traditional skills of effective teaching, but they had not yet internalized the research-based techniques that we believed would make a difference in student achievement" (p. 53). According to DuFour et al. (2004), "The Big Idea, or

guiding principle, of schools that operate as PLCs is simple: The fundamental purpose of the school is to ensure high levels of learning for all students" (p. 135) which is also the fundamental purpose of walkthroughs (Black, 2007; Downey et al., 2004; VonVillas, 2004).

DuFour et al. (2004) find that clarity of purpose, collaborative culture, collective inquiry into best practice and current reality, focus on results, and empowerment of teachers are a fewer commonalities of schools that improvement student achievement. These concepts (clarity of purpose, collaborative culture, collective inquiry into best practice and current reality, focus on results, and empowerment of teachers) can all be achieved through the use of walkthroughs (Bushman, 2006; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Downey et al., 2004).

Improved Student Achievement

The National Association of Elementary School Principals' (NAESP) third standard for effective school leadership reads, "Effective principals demand content and instruction that ensures student achievement of agreed-upon academic standards" (2001, p. 29). Successful schools placed student learning as priority (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001; VonVillas, 2004). As schools began to focus on closing achievement gaps, there is an increasing pressure for school leaders to bear the primary responsibility for school and instructional improvement (GLISI, NAESP, 2001). The ability of school leaders to guide instructional improvement is essential to creating change (NAESP, 2001). Marzano (2003) ranks a guaranteed and viable curriculum as the first school-level factor. A guaranteed and viable curriculum has the most impact on

student achievement (Marzano, 2003). VonVillas (2004) suggests that improving student achievement "beyond typical expectations requires a focused change in classroom instruction and a corresponding commitment of administrative time to monitoring and evaluating".

Several authors and researchers report that the instructional walkthrough strategy had a positive impact of student achievement (Anderson & Davenport, 2002; Brazosport, 2002; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Keruskin, 2005). Skretta (2007) reports that walkthroughs are used in his school to regularly monitor how teachers are using identified instructional strategies to improve student achievement in reading across the curriculum. Skretta (2007) finds that the walkthrough data helped teachers connect research and their instructional practices to understand how the connection could be used to improve reading achievement.

Anderson and Davenport (2002) report how the Brazosport Independent School District used the Eight-Step Process to improve student achievement. The Eight-Step Process is as follows:

> Step 1: Test Score Disaggregation (Plan)
> Step 2: Time Line Development (Plan)
> Step 3: Instruction Focus (Do)
> Step 4: Assessment (Check)
> Step 5 and 6: Tutorials and Enrichment (Act)
> Step 7: Maintenance (Check)
> Step 8: Monitoring (Check) (Anderson & Davenport, 2002, pp. 49-51)

Step eight, monitoring, is the primary role of the principal and can be accomplished through walkthroughs. This step requires the principals to regularly visit classroom as well as meet with individual teachers, teacher teams, and individual students. Anderson

and Davenport (2002) found that this process guaranteed that the primary focus remained on student learning. Anderson and Davenport (2002) state, "It helps foster improved student performance, better discipline, and higher teacher moral."

Keruskin (2005) and Rossi (2007) studies also find that the walk-throughs have a positive impact on instruction and student achievement. Kerskin (2005) reports that test scores increased and student engagement and on-task time increased. Rossi's (2007) study confirms Kerskin's (2005) findings.

Data Driven Professional Development

"Walkthroughs provide 'real time data' on classroom instruction and student learning" (Black, 2007, p. 40). The Institute for Learning suggested that a learning walk itself is a professional development experience for the walkers, but true learning walks are always accompanied by other professional development opportunities—e.g., study groups, studying student work—for the teachers whose rooms will be visited. These informal observations can serve as vehicles for professional growth as a form of collaborative professional development and vehicles for a positive relationship with teachers and principals (Israel, 2006; Skretta, 2008). Walkthroughs are a way to determine what additional support teachers need in order to achieve the school's goals (Archer, 2005; Richardson, 2001).

According to Rossi (2007), having a visible presence and conducting walkthroughs is not enough to assure quality instruction; however, it is what the principal does with the observational data that will make the difference. Cervone and Martinez-Miller (2007) echo this by stating, ". . . no amount of data, or understanding will, by

itself, move a system toward improvement in a purposeful way." According to Fullan (2008), a culture of improvement can be developed when learning to improve things is a part of the day-to-day work.

Cervone and Martinez-Miller, along with the UCLA School Management Program, state that walkthroughs can be a catalyst for improvement. Cervone and Martinez-Miller (2007) discuss how the UCLA School Management Program classroom walkthrough protocol provided both a process and a tool for inquiry-based professional development.

UCLA School Management Program identifies the following stages that can be used to analyze evidence collected during a walkthrough to drive a cycle of improvement by focusing on the effects of instruction (Cervone and Martinez-Miller, 2007). First, the desired future should be clearly defined by realistically. Defining the desired future includes describing what all students are capable of achieving, explaining expectations for improving achievement, and depicting quality expected of teachers.

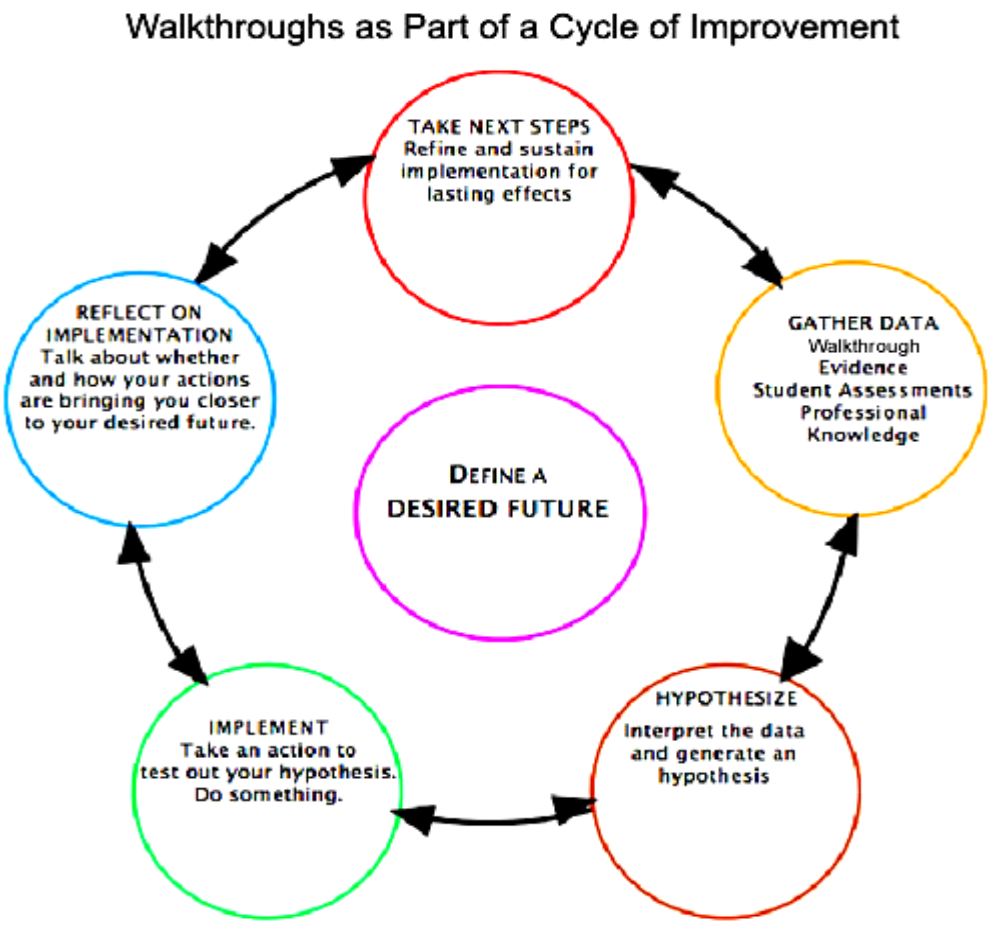
Second, data must be gathered. In order to advance successfully in the direction of the desired future, an understanding of the current state of being is needed. By examining test scores, teachers' instructional methods, and students' work samples, it is possible to gain an understanding of the current state on teaching and learning. The evidence of student engagement, students' work sample, and instructional methods can be gathered in walkthroughs to construct a baseline for improvement.

Next, after the data has been interpreted, it is time to generate different strategies that could have a positive influence on the desired future. Groups of teachers should determine which strategies would have the best chance of improving teaching and

learning. Then teachers should implement the new strategies in their classrooms in order to test possible solutions. Once the strategies have been implemented, reflection on the strategies that have been implemented is needed. Teachers and administrators should discuss if the new strategies are assisting to meet the desired future. More walkthroughs should be conducted in order to gather more student-based data to assist in determining if the new strategies are working as planned which in terms will enhance the reflection.

Finally, the next steps should be determined. If the school is progressing toward the desired future, recommendations for changes in practice should be made and supported. However, if the school is not moving toward the desired future, a new strategy should be selected and implemented again (Black, 2007; Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007). Figure 2 illustrates the stages of the walkthrough cycle of improving teaching and learning.

Figure 2. Walkthroughs as Part of a Cycle of Improvement



(Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007)

Conclusion

Walkthroughs are an instructional strategy that can serve as a vehicle to support improved teaching and learning in schools (Anderson & Davenport, 2002; Center for Comprehensive Reform and Improvement, 2007; Downey et al. 2004; Johnston, 2003; Keruskin, 2005; Rossi, 2007; Skretta, 2007). Several walkthrough models are described in the literature, but it is not revealed in the literature if there is a particular model that is practiced more frequently in schools. Researchers agree that the walkthrough must be purposeful and focused (Center for Comprehensive Reform and Improvement, 2007; Downey et al. 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; VonVillas, 2004). On the other hand, researchers debate regarding the length of time for the walkthroughs and the type of feedback provided (Downey et al. 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; the Institute for Learning, 1999). Despite these differences in opinion, effective walkthroughs result in increased dialogue and reflection about teaching practice and supports improved teaching and increased student achievement (Center for Comprehensive Reform and Improvement, 2007; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Hopkins, 2005).

Skretta (2007) says, “Saying that principals should conduct walkthroughs is one matter; actually conducting the walk-through and providing teachers with the kind of feedback they need and deserve is another” (p. 18). Although many researchers have found walkthroughs to be beneficial (Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Hopkins, 2005), Bushman (2006) and Ziegler (2006) warned school leaders that there are challenges and roadblocks associated with walkthroughs. Skretta (2007) provided the following ten tips to assist in overcoming the challenges and roadblocks for successful walkthroughs:

1. Talk to teachers beforehand about the importance of informal observations so they are not alarmed by your presence and do not assume that your visit is for student disciplinary reasons.
2. Schedule walk-throughs just as you would any other part of your day. Approach walk-throughs with the commitment you make to getting into classrooms for formal teacher observations.
3. Track the frequency of your visit to specific teachers and content areas by maintaining a spreadsheet or electronic folder that lets you know whose classrooms you've visited and helps ensure that you don't leave anyone out.
4. Use a laptop or PDA to record feedback while you observe so you do not have to rewrite of finalize your walk-through when you return to your office.
5. Get your walk-through memos back to teachers within 24 hours at the most.
6. If you use a checklist, ensure that it is composed of criteria that are familiar to all members of your faculty.
7. Capitalize on areas of strength to challenge teachers to continue to grow.
8. Use the strength of individual teachers for professional development for the entire staff.
9. Provide feedback via email or a follow-up conservation.
10. Trust is established and maintained through consistency (Skretta, 2007).

Walkthroughs can provide valuable information that has potential for improving teaching and learning (Black, 2007; Downey et al., 2004). It is how the principal uses walkthroughs as instructional leaders and what he/she does with the observational data that will make the difference (Rossi, 2007).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Increased accountability for student achievement has changed the work of school principals. In an effort to increase achievement for all students and to reduce achievement gaps, school principals are focusing more on instruction and learning. Principals are no longer leaving instruction to the teachers. Principals are beginning to use the management by wandering around technique from the business world to promote instructional leadership. Instructional leadership is needed in schools for purposes of continuous school improvement and ongoing professional development. One of the strategies being used by principals in their function as instructional leader is the walkthrough which is described in literature as frequent, focused, brief visits that allow firsthand observations of teaching and learning that is occurring in the classroom (Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Downey et al., 2004; Richardson, 2001).

As instructional leaders, principals are conducting walkthroughs which enables them to spend time in the classrooms, collect data, coach, and support quality classroom instruction (Johnston 2003). The purpose of this study was to understand how elementary principals utilized walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders. In this chapter, the researcher focuses on research methods by presenting research questions, research design, participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Questions

The researcher designed the qualitative study to answer the following overarching question: How do elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders?

The study was guided by the following sub-questions:

Sub-question 1: Why do principals conduct walkthroughs?

Sub-question 2: How do principals and teachers describe the benefits of principal walkthroughs?

Sub-question 3: How do principals and teachers describe the principal's role as an instructional leader?

Research Design

This was a qualitative study to understand how principals used walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research takes place in the natural setting, uses multiple methods of data collections that are interactive and humanistic, generates theories and hypotheses from data that emerges, and requires researchers to make an interpretation of the data. The basic interpretive approach was used to conduct this study. In the interpretive approach, "the researcher is interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon, this meaning is mediated through the researcher as instrument, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive" (Merriam, 2002, p. 6). According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), the goal of this type of study is to provide an understanding of direct lived experience. Through this approach, the researcher gained an understanding on how elementary principals used walkthroughs in their instructional leadership role.

Participants

The participants that were involved in the study were employed in elementary schools in Achievement School District (pseudonym). This school district invested resources to develop principals as instructional leaders by providing specific training in conducting walkthroughs

The school district, Achievement School District, is located east of Atlanta. The school district was comprised of twenty one public schools: thirteen elementary schools; four middle schools; three high schools; and one alternative school. In addition, there was one charter school in the district. There were over 19,200 students enrolled (approximately 50% African American, 4% Hispanic, and 45% White) and 2,100 school and system level instructional support and administrative staff (teachers, paraprofessional, media specialist, psychologist, social workers, counselor, nurses, and administrative staff members) employed in the school district. Approximately 50-51% of the total student body was categorized as economically disadvantaged due to the fact that they received free or reduced lunch.

Purposive sampling was used to select elementary principals and teachers from five elementary schools within Achievement School District. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants that would best help the researcher understand how elementary principals use walkthroughs in their role of instructional leaders. According to Nardi (2006), purposive sampling is appropriate when there is a specific reason to select a unique sample on purpose because of some characteristics or traits that will be analyzed. In order to be selected, the participants had to meet the following criteria:

1. The participants participated in the initial training held in October 2007 provided by the selected district on conducting walkthroughs.
2. The participants participate in ongoing trainings provided by the selected district on conducting walkthroughs.
3. The participants conduct walkthroughs in their school.
4. The participants have served a minimum of three years as an elementary principal in the current school.

Five of the thirteen elementary principals in Achievement School District met the predetermined criteria. Since the principals met the set criteria, the researcher believed a rich source of data would be gained from these elementary principal. These five principals, Principal Park, Principal Cook, Principal Smith, Principal Jackson, and Principal White (all pseudonyms), were asked to participate in the study.

The five principals who participated in the study attended the initial walkthrough training and on-going walkthrough trainings provided by Achievement School District. Each principal participant attended initial walkthrough training in October 2007. Dr. Peek (pseudonym), Achievement School District's Elementary Curriculum Director, conducted the training. During the initial training, Dr. Peek communicated the purpose of the walkthroughs to the principals. The walkthroughs were not to be evaluative in nature, but instead a tool to monitor the implementation of instructional best practices that teachers learned through district wide professional learning (i.e. standards-based classroom and learning focused schools strategies). Walkthroughs would allow principals to identify teacher gaps in knowing and doing – meaning, were teachers using what they were taught or had they simply "put it on the shelf". The information gathered

would be useful in developing future professional learning for teachers. The proposed walkthrough form to be utilized in the district was presented to the principals during the initial training. Principals worked in small groups to review the components of the suggested form. They discussed potential problems or issues with the form and strengths of the form. Revisions were made to the walkthrough form based on the discussions held during the initial training. The form was used for the first time by the elementary principals as a group on October 23, 2007 at Excellence Elementary School (pseudonym). Immediately following the walkthroughs at Excellence Elementary School, principals discussed how they used the form in terms of the kinds of activities or strategies that constituted them marking whether or not an item on the form was present in a classroom. Subsequently, walkthroughs and critical discussion has been a part of every elementary principals' meeting since the form was initially used at Excellence Elementary. The interpretation of walkthrough form data and discussion of how the walkthroughs are providing principals with opportunities to see gaps, strengths, and where professional learning is needed has been an integral part of the on-going "training" on the use of the walkthrough forms.

During the 08-09 school year, Achievement School District implemented eWalk, a data system to collect, analyze and store walk-though data. The school district's walkthrough template was loaded on the personal digital assistant (PDA). On October 22, 2008 a half day eWalk training session was provided for school administrations. The focus of the training was a) accessing the eWalk website, b) downloading the templates, c) practice doing the walkthroughs, d) uploading to the website, e) producing reports, and

f) emailing teachers. The elementary five principals who participated in the study also attended the eWalk training.

A second group of participants consisted of fifteen teachers, three teachers from each selected school. The researcher used purposive sampling to select three teachers from each school who had a minimum of three years experience as a teacher with the principal participant.

A summary of the elementary schools, principals and teachers represented in the study is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Selected Schools, Principals and Teachers Represented in the Study

Elementary Schools	**Principals**	**Teachers**
Star Elementary	Principal Park	1. Sue
		2. Beth
		3. Carol
Excellence Elementary	Principal Cook	1. Mary
		2. Ann
		3. Tonya
Students First Elementary	Principal Smith	1. Rebecca
		2. Marie
		3. Sandra
Accomplish Elementary	Principal Jackson	1. Louise
		2. Sara
		3. Kathy
Soar Elementary	Principal Smith	1. Holly
		2. Shelia
		3. Lauren

Instrumentation

The researcher was the primary instrument for data collection for the qualitative study. According to Merriam and Associates (2002), since the primary goal of the study is to understand, the human instrument, would seem to be the ideal means of collecting and analyzing data, because the human instrument has the ability to be immediately responsive and adaptive. The human instrument, researcher, used principal interviews, teacher group interviews, and document analysis as the means to collect data.

The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with each elementary principal. Creswell (2005) suggests that one-on-one interviews are ideal for participants who are comfortable sharing ideas. The researcher used the semi-structure interview approach. This type of interview allowed the researcher to develop a general set of questions and format to follow and use on all participants. A semi-structure interview also it allowed the researcher to vary the questions as the situation demands (Lichtman, 2006). The researcher used the literature to develop the interview questions.

The second method for data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews with teacher groups from each school. The teacher group interview consisted of three teachers at each school. The group interviews provided opportunities for members of the group to interact with each other and stimulate each other's thinking (Lichtman, 2006). The researcher developed a general set of interview questions that were asked of all participants. The researcher conducted interviews with the questions; however the researcher was flexible enough to follow the conversation of the interviewee (Creswell, 2005).

Document analysis was used as the third method for data collection. Document analysis allowed the researcher to obtain data that already exists through an unobtrusive method (Creswell, 2003; Merriam and Associates, 2002). The researcher collected and analyzed documents gathered from the selected schools relating to walkthroughs (i.e. walkthrough forms and school improvement plans). By analyzing the documents, the researcher gained deeper understanding of how principals utilized walkthrough in their role of instructional leader. The document analysis also allowed the researcher to collect data on how walkthroughs impacted school improvement, professional development, staff collaboration, instruction strategies and student learning.

Through the eyes of the researcher, data was collected and realties were constructed (Merriam and Associates, 2002). By examining evidence from different sources and using it to build justification for themes, the strategy of triangulation was used to promote validity and reliability of the study (Creswell, 2003; Merriam and Associates, 2002). Validity of the 20 principal interview questions and 18 teacher interview questions was established through the examination of the interview questions prior to implementation. The researcher analyzed each interview question to ensure that they were related to the review of literature and the research questions.

Data Collection

The researcher requested permission to conduct the study in Achievement School District. After gaining informed consent from the school district (see Appendix B), the proposed interpretive study that employed a qualitative method to collect and analyze data was sent to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. A copy of the

approval letter to conduct this study was placed in Appendix C as verification of approval from the IRB regarding procedures, protocol and methodology for this study.

After obtaining IRB approval to conduct the study, the researcher used principal interviews, teacher interviews, and document analysis as the major data collections methods. The researcher identified elementary principals who met the criteria for participation, and the researcher contacted the prospective participants by phone or face-to-face visit to ask them to participate in the study. The researcher discussed the purpose of the study. The researcher also discussed the principals' role in the study. The researcher explained that the principals would assist the researcher by agreeing to be interviewed, providing the researcher with a list of teachers in the school with a minimum of three years teaching experience, and providing the researcher with school documents relating to walkthroughs. The researcher informed the principals that their responses to the interview questions would be kept confidential. However, if they agreed to participate in the study, the researcher would be allowed to use the data collected. Once principals gave informed consent (see Appendix D), the researcher scheduled interviews at times which were convenient for each principal participant. The researcher also requested that each principal provide a list of teachers with a minimum of three years experience in the school.

After obtaining the list of potential teacher participants, the researcher emailed the teachers to ask him/her to volunteer to participate in the study (see Appendix E). The researcher discussed the purpose of the study with the teachers and informed the teachers that there will no penalty if they decided not to participate in the study. However, their responses to the interview questions would be kept confidential and their participation in

this study would provide valuable information. Once three teachers from each school agreed to participate, the researcher scheduled a time to conduct the group interview.

Principal interviews were used as the first instrument of data collection. After reviewing the literature, the researcher composed interview questions for the study. The researcher used a semi-structured format to interview the elementary principals in their natural setting. Each principal interview was conducted in the principal's office. The interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded, and the researcher used an interview protocol (see Appendix F) to take notes during the interviews.

Teacher interviews were used as the second instrument of data collection. On the day of the interview, the researcher reminded the teachers of the purpose of the study with the teachers and asked the teachers to read and sign the informed consent form (see Appendix G). After the researcher obtained the signed informed consent form, the researcher proceeded to conduct a semi-structured interview with each group of elementary teachers in their school. The interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. The utilization of a tape recorder to record all interviews alleviated the need for the researcher to take extensive notes during the interviews. The researcher used an interview protocol (see Appendix H) during the interviews.

Document analysis was used as the final instrument of data collection. During the study, the researcher gathered and analyzed documents provided by the participants. These documents provided useful information to answer the research questions. The researcher analyzed the documents (i.e. walkthrough forms and school improvement

plans) to capture the thoughts, ideas, and meanings of the participants regarding walkthroughs. The researcher used a document analysis worksheet (Appendix I) to record information from the documents.

Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the school district, selected elementary schools, and participants. The researcher transcribed the interviews within 48 hours after the interview. Each interview was transcribed verbatim. The researcher began data analysis after the initial interview was conducted. The researcher analyzed the data. Through the process of reading and thinking about the data, themes and codes emerged (Lichtman, 2006). As more data were collected, the researcher refined prior analyses and understandings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis and data collection occurred simultaneously. Merriam and Associates (2002) state that simultaneous data collection and analysis is beneficial, because it allows the researcher to make adjustments throughout the study and to test emerging concepts, themes, and categories against subsequent data. Each data collected provides additional information that helps the researcher to identify recurring themes (Airaasian & Gay, 2000). Therefore, the researcher looked for common patterns while comparing data gathered. The recurring patterns/themes that emerged from interview transcripts and document analysis were coded and categorized in relation to the three research sub-questions. Finally, the researcher analyzed the coded data in relationship to Hallinger's ten instructional leadership functions to examine the utilization of principals' walkthroughs in the role as instructional leaders to examine the utilization of principals' walkthroughs in the role as instructional leaders: (1) framing the school's goals (2)

communicating the school's goals (3) supervising and evaluating instruction (4) coordinating curriculum (5) monitoring student progress (6) protecting instructional time (7) promoting professional development (8) maintaining high visibility (9) providing incentives for teachers (10) providing incentives for learning.

The interview grids (see Tables 2 and 3) below illustrate which interview questions will be used to answer the research questions. The interview grid also aligns the research questions and interview questions with the literature.

Table 2

Item Analysis: Principal Interview Grid

Research Question	Principal Interview Question	Research Literature
3	1. Principals have so much to do. What do you see as your major role in this school?	Andrew et al., 1991, Davis, 2006; GLISI, 2006; Johnston, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Page, 2004; Tracy, 1995
3	2. How much time do you spend in the instructional leadership role?	Andrew et al., 1991; Fullan, 2008; Johnston, 2003; Page, 2004
3	3. What activities do you consider most important in the instructional leadership role?	Downey et al., 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Hulme, 2006; Johnston, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Page, 2004; Skretta, 2008; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003
3	4. How do you think teachers would describe your role as an instructional leader?	Downey et al., 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Hulme, 2006; Johnston, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Page, 2004; Skretta, 2008; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003;
3	5. As part of that role, how often do you conduct walkthroughs? When? Using what forms?	Downey et al., 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Johnston, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Page, 2004; Skretta, 2008; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003
1	6. What are your purposes for completing walkthroughs? Does the same purpose work for every walkthrough? How do teachers know and understand what the purpose is?	Black, 2007; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Downey et al., 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; GDOE, 2007; Glatthorn, 1997; Keruskin, 2005; Rossi, 2007; Schmoker, 2001; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003; Tracy, 1995; VonVillas, 2004
1	7. Describe the focus of a typical walkthrough. What would be considered a typical walkthrough?	Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Downey et al., 2004; Skretta, 2007; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003
1	8. What happens after conducting walkthroughs?	Black, 2007; Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007
2	9. Is all of the information you've gathered from walkthroughs used individually or collectively?	Black, 2007; Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Downey et al., 2004; Hopkins, 2005; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003

Table 2 (continued)

Research Question	Principal Interview Question	Research Literature
1	10. What process do you use in the follow-up? Forms, plans?	Downey et al., 2004; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003
1	11. What methods do you use to share the feedback?	Downey et al., 2004; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003
2	12. What value do you gain professionally from walkthroughs?	Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Downey et al., 2004; Skretta, 2007;
2	13. What added value do you think teachers would describe from walkthroughs?	Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Downey et al., 2004; Skretta, 2007
2	14. Tell me some things that happened at this school that you think are a direct result of walkthroughs.	VonVillas, 2004; Zieglar, 2006
2	15. Describe succinctly-- uses of walkthrough data?	Archer, 2005; Richardson, 2001
2	16. What impact has the walkthroughs had on teachers and students?	Center for Comprehensive Reform and Improvement, 2007; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Hopkins, 2005; Marzano, 2003
2	17. What impact does the evidence gathered during walkthroughs have on school improvement?	Archer, 2005; Richardson, 2001
2	18. If I asked your teachers to discuss the benefits of principal walkthroughs, what would they tell me?	Anderson & Davenport, 2002; Black, 2007; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Keruskin, 2005; Rossi, 2007
2	19. What do you view to be the benefits of walkthroughs?	Anderson & Davenport, 2002; Black, 2007; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Keruskin, 2005; Rossi, 2007
1	20. What advice would you give an administrator who chooses not to conduct walkthroughs in his/her school?	Center for Comprehensive Reform and Improvement, 2007; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Hopkins, 2005

Table 3

Item Analysis: Teacher Interview Grid

Research Question	Principal Interview Question	Research Literature
3	1. Describe the activities that you have observed of your principal in his/her role as instructional leader.	Downey et al., 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Hulme, 2006; Johnston, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Page, 2004; Skretta, 2008; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003
3	2. How often do you actually see the principal in his/her role? Under what conditions would you want to see more of the principal in the instructional leader role?	Downey et al., 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Johnston, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Page, 2004; Skretta, 2008; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003
2	3. As a teacher, what's your view of the principal walkthroughs? Helpful, or not? Why or why not?	Anderson & Davenport, 2002; Black, 2007; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Keruskin, 2005; Rossi, 2007
1	4. How are you prepared for administrator observations, walkthroughs, evaluations, etc.?	Black, 2007; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Downey et al., 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; GDOE, 2007; Glatthorn, 1997; Keruskin, 2005; Rossi, 2007; Schmoker, 2001; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003; Tracy, 1995; VonVillas, 2004
1	5. Is there a difference in administrator observation and walkthrough? If so, what is it?	Black, 2007; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Downey et al., 2004; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; GDOE, 2007; Glatthorn, 1997; Keruskin, 2005; Rossi, 2007; Schmoker, 2001; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003; Tracy, 1995; VonVillas, 2004
2	6. What feedback do you get from your principal after a walkthrough?	Downey et al., 2004; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003
2	7. What kind of information would you want to receive?	Black, 2007; Craig, 2005; Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Downey et al., 2004; Hopkins, 2005; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003

Table 3 (continued)

Research Question	Principal Interview Question	Research Literature
2	8. How does the school culture differ because of walkthroughs?	Black, 2007; Bushman, 2006; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Dufour et al., 2004; VonVillas, 2004; Zieglar, 2006
2	9. How do you use the feedback provide from walkthroughs?	Center for Comprehensive Reform and Improvement, 2007; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Hopkins, 2005
2	10. How does the school use the data from walkthroughs?	Archer, 2005; Richardson, 2001
2	11. Tell me something that happened at this school that you consider to be a direct result of walkthroughs.	VonVillas, 2004; Zieglar, 2006
2	12. How do students respond to walkthroughs? Are they ever disruptive? Why, or why not?	Anderson & Davenport, 2002; Brazosport, 2002; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Keruskin, 2005
2	13. How has walkthroughs impacted teachers?	Center for Comprehensive Reform and Improvement, 2007; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Hopkins, 2005; Marzano, 2003
2	14. So, share with me the real deal—what is major value to you professionally?	Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Downey et al., 2004; Skretta, 2007
2	15. Has any of your instructional practice changed as a result of walkthroughs? If so, please describe.	Archer, 2005; Center for Comprehensive Reform and Improvement, 2007; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Hopkins, 2005; Keruskin, 2005; Marzano, 2003; Richardson, 2001
2	16. In your opinion, what are the pitfalls of walkthroughs?	Anderson & Davenport, 2002; Black, 2007; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Keruskin, 2005; Rossi, 2007
1	17. What advice would you give an administrator who chooses not to conduct walkthroughs in his/her school?	Center for Comprehensive Reform and Improvement, 2007; Frase & Hetzel, 1990; Hopkins, 2005
1	18. And finally, what is said in the public about principal walkthroughs?	Black, 2007; Damon & Ginsberg, 2002; Downey et al., 2004; Hopkins, 2005

Summary

Chapter 3 presented an overview and discussion of the methodology that was used in this dissertation study. The methodology was characterized as a qualitative study design for understanding how principals utilize data from walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders. The research design allowed the researcher to hear what the participants had to say about walkthroughs and review school based documents relating to walkthroughs. The researcher used a purposive sample consisting of five elementary principals and fifteen elementary teachers in Achievement School District east of Atlanta, Georgia. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to understand how elementary principals used walkthroughs. Through the data analysis of the interviews and documents, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of how elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leader.

Chapter 4

REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how elementary principals utilized walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders. To accomplish the purpose of this study, the researcher analyzed the interview responses from five elementary principals and fifteen elementary teachers about the utilization of principal walkthroughs. Documents related to walkthroughs, such as walkthrough forms and school improvement plans, were also analyzed. Using the basic interpretive approach, the researcher identified common themes that emerged from analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

Research Questions

The researcher designed the qualitative study to answer the following overarching question: How do elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders?

The study was guided by the following sub-questions:

Sub-question 1: Why do principals conduct walkthroughs?

Sub-question 2: How do principals and teachers describe the benefits of principal walkthroughs?

Sub-question 3: How do principals and teachers describe the principal's role as an instructional leader?

The researcher used principal interviews, teacher interviews, and document analysis as the means to collect data. The data from the interviews and from the review of documents were sorted in relation to the three research sub-questions. Coded data, trends, and patterns gathered from transcribed interviews and data collected from documents were analyzed by the researcher to develop an understanding of how principals used walkthroughs in the role of instructional leaders. The documents reviewed during the research consisted of walkthrough forms and school improvement plans.

Demographic Profile of the Selected Schools

The study took place in a Georgia school district that invested resources to develop principals as instructional leaders by providing specific training in conducting walkthroughs. The school district, Achievement School District (pseudonym), is located east of Atlanta. There were thirteen elementary schools in the district. Each elementary school served pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Participants from five elementary schools (Star Elementary, Excellence Elementary, Students First Elementary, Accomplish Elementary and Soar Elementary-all pseudonyms) in this district participated in the study.

Star Elementary, located in the rural part of the district, was a relatively small school with a student enrollment of 525. The school had a diverse student population (approximately 35% Black, 60% White, 2% Hispanic and 3% Multiracial) that was largely poor. Sixty percent of the students participated in the free and reduced lunch program. There were 45 certificated teachers. The staff attributed the family oriented, warm environment to the low teacher attrition rate. In 2007-2008, only two teachers

(4%) left the profession or transferred to another school. Star was recognized as a Title I Distinguished School for achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for six consecutive years.

Excellence Elementary was located in the rural part of the district. The school's student population of 670 had become increasingly diverse. The racial-ethnic make-up of the school was 22% Black, 70% White, 2% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 5% Multiracial. Forty percent of the students participated in the free and reduced lunch program. There were 50 certified teachers. Excellence Elementary had a reputation for being among the top performing schools in the district. This reputation explained the low teacher attrition rate. In 2007-2008, no teachers (0%) left the profession or transferred. Each year, Excellence Elementary consistently achieved AYP.

Students First Elementary was a small school located in a rural setting away from the mainstream. The student population of 550 consisted of 15% Black, 81% White, 1% Hispanic, 1% American Indian, and 2% Multi-racial. Only 30% of the students participated in the free and reduced lunch program. There were 40 certified teachers. Student First's school community was described as a close, caring atmosphere. In 2007-2008, no teachers (0%) left the profession or transferred. Each year, Students First Elementary consistently achieved AYP.

Accomplish Elementary was located three miles outside of the city limits. The student population of 680 consisted of 55% Black, 31% White, 7% Hispanic, 1%, Asian, and 6% Multiracial. Seventy-five percent of the students participated in the free and

reduced lunch program. There were 60 certified teachers. In 2007-2008, eight teachers (15%) left the profession or transferred to another school. Accomplish Elementary was in Year 3 Needs Improvement Status.

Soar Elementary was located in the city limits. The student enrollment of 930 was comprised of one of the most diverse student bodies in the district (42% Black, 40% White, 14% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 3% Multiracial). Approximately 59% of the students participated in the free or reduced lunch programs. There were 70 certified teachers. In 2007-2008, seven teachers (10%) left the profession or transferred to another school. Soar achieved AYP for six consecutive years. As a result, Soar Elementary was designated as a Distinguished Title I School.

A summary of the demographic information of the selected schools in this study is provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Demographic Data of the Schools Represented in the Study

	Star Elementary	**Excellence Elementary**	**Students First Elementary**	**Accomplish Elementary**	**Soar Elementary**
Student Enrollment	525	670	550	680	930
Black	35%	22%	15%	55%	42%
White	60%	70%	81%	31%	40%
Hispanic	2%	2%	1%	7%	14%
Asian	0%	1%	0%	2%	1%
American Indian	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Multi-racial	3%	5%	2%	5%	3%
Economically Disadvantaged	60%	40%	30%	75%	60%
Certified Teachers	45	50	40	60	70
07-08 Attrition Rate of Teachers	2%	0%	0%	15%	10%
Title I Status	*	X	X	*	*
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Status	2006- Y 2007- Y 2008- Y	2006- Y 2007- Y 2008- Y	2006- Y 2007- Y 2008- Y	2006- N 2007- Y 2008- N	2006- Y 2007- Y 2008- Y

Note: Numbers have been altered to protect the anonymity of the schools.

Title I Status

* indicates school wide Title I

X indicates No Title I Program

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Status

Y indicates Met AYP

N indicates Did not Meet AYP

Demographic Profile of the Participants

Participants for this study were employed in elementary schools in a Georgia school district that invested resources to develop principals as instructional leaders by providing specific training in conducting walkthroughs. The five principals who participated in the study attended the initial walkthrough training and on-going walkthrough trainings provided by Achievement School District. Each principal participant attended initial walkthrough training on October 3, 2007. Dr. Peek (pseudonym), Achievement School District's Elementary Curriculum Director, conducted the training. Dr. Peek received walkthrough training from Dr. Max Thompson for Learning Focused Schools as well as training from various Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) consultants regarding walkthroughs. He also had nine years of on-the-job training as a building level principal in which walkthroughs were conducted on a daily basis. Dr. Peek had 21 years of educational experience.

During the initial training, Dr. Peek communicated the purpose of the walkthroughs to the principals. The walkthroughs were not to be evaluative in nature, but instead a tool to monitor the implementation of instructional best practices that teachers learned through district wide professional learning (i.e. standards-based classroom and learning focused schools strategies). Walkthroughs allowed principals to identify teacher gaps in knowing and doing – meaning, were teachers using what they were taught or had they simply "put it on the shelf." The information gathered would be useful in developing future professional learning for teachers.

Dr. Peek and a committee of administrators developed a walkthrough form (see Appendix A) to be utilized in the district. That proposed walkthrough form was

presented to the principals during the initial training. Principals worked in small groups to review the components of the suggested form. They discussed potential problems or issues with the form and strengths of the form. Revisions were made to the walkthrough form based on the discussions held during the initial training. The form was used for the first time by the elementary principals as a group on October 23, 2007 at Excellence Elementary School. Immediately following the walkthroughs at Excellence Elementary School, principals discussed how they used the form in terms of the kinds of activities or strategies that constituted them marking whether or not an item on the form was present in a classroom.

During the 08-09 school year, Achievement School District implemented eWalk, a data system to collect, analyze, and store data collected during walkthrough observations using a handheld device such as a PDA. On October 22, 2008, the Georgia Learning Resources System Coordinator conducted a half day eWalk training session for school administrations. The training was hands-on. The principals learned how to access the eWalk website, download the templates, upload to the website, produce reports, and email walkthrough forms to teachers.

Elementary Principal Participants

Principal Park

Principal Park (pseudonym), a Caucasian male, was the principal of Star Elementary School. He was the youngest participant in the study. He had 15 years of educational experience. Principal Park had six years of administrative experience at Star Elementary, a rural elementary school with 43 certified teachers and 513 students. He served two years as an assistant principal and four years as principal. Principal Park's

school was the smallest elementary school in the school district. Principal Park had an Educational Specialist degree. He participated in walkthrough trainings provided by the district. He also served on the committee that created Achievement School District's walkthrough form. Principal Park attended Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) workshops to learn about instructional leadership. When asked what motivated him to become a principal, he replied, "Good question! I've always enjoyed leading other people to complete tasks from high school through college. When I became a teacher, I served in leadership type roles on a variety of committees. These experiences lead me to pursue a degree in leadership." Principal Park described his major role as principal in the quote below.

> My favorite thing to do is curriculum and instruction. So, I feel like my major role is to monitor teachers to make sure that they are teaching the standards and elements and monitoring student academic achievement and to make sure that they are progressing and to monitor the school improvement plan and make sure that I am seeing that those strategies are being used and doing benchmark assessments and just making sure that if students are not achieving then we are changing strategies and we are looking at and trying to think outside the box and making some changes to our curriculum and to our strategies in order to make sure that our students are achieving.

Principal Cook

Principal Cook (pseudonym), a Caucasian female, with 28 years of educational experience, was the principal of Excellence Elementary School. She had spent seven years as an administrator, three years as an assistant principal and four years as principal

at Excellence Elementary. Principal Cook had an Educational Specialist degree, and she was the only principal participant of this study who was pursuing a Doctorate degree in Administration. She participated in walkthrough trainings provided by the school district and local RESA. Her instructional leadership training included GLISI's Leadership Performance Coach Training, district level trainings, Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL) workshops, courses for Ed.D, and various workshops, such as Teacher Expectation and Student Achievement (TESA) and Coaching and Supervising Teachers (CAST). When asked what motivated her to become a principal, she replied,

> My former principal convinced me to apply for Instructional Lead Teacher, and he selected me for the position. I realized that I enjoyed working with teachers. Therefore, I got a Master's degree in Educational Leadership, and ended up as an assistant principal. I decided to apply for a position as principal because I felt—and still feel—that a principal is the position in education where a person can make the biggest difference. I am passionate about helping children and about curriculum and instruction. It was just a natural progression for me to become a principal.

According to Principal Cook, her major role as principal was to make sure that instruction is happening- teachers are teaching and students are learning.

Principal Smith

Principal Smith (pseudonym), a Caucasian male, was the principal of Students First Elementary, a public rural school with a student enrollment of 500. Principal Smith had more years of administrative experience than any other participant. He had 21 years of administrative experience, and he had served the past sixteen years as principal at

Students First Elementary School. Principal Smith had an Educational Specialist degree. Principal Smith viewed his major role as principal was to see that the children had the opportunity to learn as much as they could.

Principal Jackson

Principal Jackson (pseudonym), a Caucasian female, with 28 years of educational experience was the principal of Accomplish Elementary. Principal Jackson had nine years of administrative experience. She served as principal for four years at Accomplish Elementary. Prior to her principalship at Accomplish Elementary, she served as an administrator in another school district. Principal Jackson is the only participate who had administrative experience in another school district. She had a Masters degree in educational leadership. She participated in walkthrough trainings provided by the school district, and she received instructional leadership training through GLISI, America's Choice and Learning Focused Schools. When asked what motivated her to become principal, she replied, "The county requested my consideration and put me through county leadership academies for that purpose." Principal Jackson discussed her major role as principal in the quote below.

"My major role is to be involved in the classrooms, with the teachers, so that we know what we are accomplishing instructionally to make student performance happen for our students."

Principal White

Principal White (pseudonym), an African American female, with 34 years of educational experience was the principal of Soar Elementary where she taught for more

than 25 years. Principal White had seven years of administrative experience. Her administrative experiences consisted of assistant principal, Pre-K and Reading First Coordinator, and principal. She had a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership. Principal White's school was the largest elementary school in the study. All of her walkthrough training was obtained from the district or local RESA. She received instructional leadership training through numerous conferences and workshops at the local RESA. When asked what motivated her to become principal, she replied, "I was motivated to become a principal because of the leadership positions that I held in my school and the belief that my principals saw me as a leader. I was seen as someone who could motivate others to complete projects, persuade them to change their way of thinking and to keep the main thing the main thing. Principal White discussed her major role as principal by saying, "Well, my major role would be as the instructional leader to set the tone, the expectations for getting work done, for teaching children; being a support to the teachers and parents and students."

A summary of the elementary principals' profiles is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Summary of Elementary Principal Participants' Profiles

	Principal Park	**Principal Cook**	**Principal Smith**	**Principal Jackson**	**Principal White**
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female
Race	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	African American
Years of Educational Experience	15	28	36	28	34
Years of Administrative Experience	6	7	21	9	7
Years as Building Principal	4	4	16	7	3
Years in Current Position	4	3	16	4	3
Degree Level	L6	L6	L6	L5	L6

Degree Level L5 indicates Masters Degree

L6 indicates Educational Specialist degree

Elementary Teacher Participants

Fifteen elementary teachers participated in the study. Three teachers from each school were selected to participate in a group interview. All selected teachers had a minimum of three years experience as teacher with the principal participant. The total years of teaching experience ranged from 5-24 years. The teacher participants represented teachers from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, special education and academic coach. The teachers' degree level ranged from bachelors to educational specialist. Thirteen of the fifteen teachers served in a teacher leadership role in their school. A summary of the elementary teacher participants' profiles is provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Elementary Teacher Participants' Profiles

Teachers	Grade Level/ Area	Degree Level	Total Years of Teaching Experience	Number of Teaching Years at Current School	Leadership Role
Sue	2	5	5	5	
Beth	5	6	13	15	Teacher Leader
Carol	3	4	13	13	Grade Level Chair; Leadership Team; Teacher Induction Coordinator; Teacher Support Specialist
Mary	5	4	8	8	Grade Level Chair; Leadership Team
Ann	2	4	10	10	Grade Level Chair Leadership Team
Tonya	2	5	19	11	
Rebecca	Pre-K	4	5	5	Grade Level Chair; Leadership Team; Teacher Leader
Marie	1	4	18	4	Outdoor Education Chair
Sandra	3	4	9	5	Grade Level Chair; Leadership Team
Louise	Academic Coach	4	9	6	EBIS Coordinator; Leadership Team; Professional Learning Coordinator; Teacher Induction Coordinator
Sara	Sp. Needs Pre-K	6	24	12	Teacher Support Specialist
Kathy	5	4	12	12	Teacher Support Specialist
Holly	2	4	11	11	Grade Level Chair; Leadership Team
Shelia	Pre-K	5	9	9	Grade Level Chair
Lauren	2	5	11	3	PTO Teacher Representative

Degree Level 4 indicates Bachelor Degree

5 indicates Masters Degree

6 indicates Educational Specialist degree

Findings

In order to present the findings, the researcher analyzed and organized data from the principal interviews, teacher interviews, and examination of documents. The researcher examined the utilization of principal walkthroughs in the role as instructional leaders. Data analysis and data collection occurred simultaneously. Therefore, the researcher looked for common patterns while comparing data gathered. The recurring patterns/themes that emerged from interview transcripts and document analysis were coded and categorized in relation to the three research sub-questions. Finally, the researcher analyzed the coded data in relationship to Hallinger's ten instructional leadership functions to examine the utilization of principals' walkthroughs in the role as instructional leaders to examine the utilization of principals' walkthroughs in the role as instructional leaders: (1) framing the school's goals (2) communicating the school's goals (3) supervising and evaluating instruction (4) coordinating curriculum (5) monitoring student progress (6) protecting instructional time (7) promoting professional development (8) maintaining high visibility (9) providing incentives for teachers (10) providing incentives for learning. Findings presented in this chapter are organized and discussed by the following three sub-questions that guided the study:

Sub-question 1: Why do principals conduct walkthroughs?

Sub-question 2: How do principals and teachers describe the benefits of principal walkthroughs?

Sub-question 3: How do principals and teachers describe the principal's role as an instructional leader?

The overarching research question, How do elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their roles as instructional leaders?, was then discussed and a summary was included at the end of this chapter.

Response to Research Questions

Sub-question 1: Why do principals conduct walkthroughs?

The purpose of the first question was to understand why principals conducted walkthroughs. This research question was answered by participants' responses to ten interview questions (See Table 3 & Table 4) and document analysis. The initial reason principals conducted walkthroughs was very clear from their responses. The principals' responses revealed that the practice of conducting walkthroughs was a district directive. Principal Smith stated, "Okay, I won't lie about this. One reason I do them is because I'm told to do them and if I'm told to do something I try to do it." The other principals also mentioned that principal walkthroughs were mandated by the district. Although, principal stated the practice of conducting walkthroughs was a district directive, further data analysis revealed that elementary principals used walkthroughs to exercise the following instructional leadership functions identified by Hallinger- supervising and evaluating instruction and monitoring student progress. As a result, two themes, monitoring and focusing on student learning, emerged from the coded data.

Monitoring

The analysis of the principal interviews, teacher interviews and documents revealed that the walkthrough form (see Appendix A) aided in managing the instructional program. The county mandated walkthrough form was used during the walkthroughs. The walkthrough form is presented in the format of a checklist. "Look-fors" are listed,

and the observer checks observed or not observed for each item. These "look-fors" inform teachers and principals of the best practices that should be occurring in a standards-based classroom. Principals and teachers agreed that the walkthrough form provided clear expectations for teaching and learning.

As principals spoke of why they conducted walkthroughs, it was evident that principals used walkthroughs to monitor expectations and the instructional program. Principal Jackson stated, "Well, one of the privileges of a walkthrough is that I get to see all of the great things that are going on and I continue to learn as an instructional person. It helps me to know who has strength . . . . I can send other teachers to observe what's really great." The other principals agreed that walkthroughs helped them to monitor what was going on in the building. Principal Jackson added, "I want to do a walkthrough to make sure that the teachers know that I'm continuing to look for those things that our county says are important and that we know are important for students to achieve, and perform, and learn." Sara, a teacher, stated that a walkthrough form is used and the purpose of the walkthroughs is to see what teachers and students are doing to ensure teachers were implementing best practices on a daily basis. The interview responses revealed that walkthroughs were used in supervising and evaluating the use of instructional best practices. According to principals and teachers, walkthroughs provide a snapshot of what is going on in the building, and they help keep "everyone on the same page."

Focusing on Student Learning

An analysis of data from the principal interviews and teacher interviews revealed that principals not only look for best practices during walkthroughs, but they also monitor

student progress. Principals engaged in conservations with students in order to informally assess their understanding and progress towards standards, and teachers discussed how walkthroughs impacted their instructional practices. Through the participants' responses it was evident that walkthroughs helped principals and teachers focus on student learning.

Principal Park stated, "Walkthroughs allow me . . . to monitor student academic achievement and to make sure that they are progressing. If students are not achieving, then we . . . try to think outside the box and make some changes to our curriculum and to our strategies in order to make sure that our students are achieving." Principal Jackson identified student learning as her major role. According to Principal Jackson walkthroughs allowed her to be involved in the classrooms with the teachers so that she could focus on student performance.

As teachers discussed the principals' role during walkthroughs, teachers described how principals focused on students learning during the walkthroughs. Sara said, "She [Principal Jackson] talks to the kids and she asks them what they are doing and why they are doing it. She wants to make sure the kids know what they are doing and they know their goals." Teachers from every school indicated that their principal interacted with students to see if students knew what they were learning and why they were learning it. According to the teachers, students were not distracted by the principals talking to them about what they learned, but this type of interaction rarely occurred during a formal observation.

The focus principals placed on student learning impacted the way teacher taught students. Many teachers stated that their instruction is more student focused. Ann stated,

> I've become more aware of making sure my students understand what they are learning and why they are learning. As before, I just kind of taught it. I focused on the teaching side of it and not really the learning side of it. So, now I really do focus more on learning and making sure my students understand what all this is for.

Several teachers discussed how they now make sure students are aware of what they are learning. They require student to be able to identify, verbalize, and model what they learned. Sandra added, if students can verbalize what they are learning that is a big clue that they really do understand. According to Carol, the walkthroughs increased teacher expectations and student expectations. The teachers agreed since principals focused on student learning during walkthroughs, it made them better teachers because they now focus more on student learning rather than teaching.

Summary

Through data analysis, the researcher identified two major reasons why principals conducted walkthroughs. The data revealed that principals conducted walkthroughs to monitor the instructional program and to focus on student learning.

Sub-question 2: How do principals and teachers describe the benefits of principal walkthroughs?

Question two sought to understand the benefits of walkthroughs from the principals' and teachers' points of view. This research question was answered by participants' responses to twenty-one interviews questions (see Table 3 & Table 4) and document analysis. Data analysis revealed walkthroughs were beneficial in assisting elementary principals to promote a positive school learning climate. Hallinger's

instructional leadership functions of maintaining visibility, promoting professional development, providing incentives for learning, and providing incentives for teachers were evident. The themes, maintaining visibility, data driven professional development, opportunity to foster professional learning communities, opportunity for individual teacher growth, and opportunity to acknowledge teachers, emerged from the coded data.

Maintaining Visibility

The participants' responses revealed that walkthroughs allowed principals to maintain visibility in the school. Maintaining visibility was cited as a benefit of walkthroughs. Principals indicated that the length of walkthroughs ranged from five to ten minutes and walkthroughs were conducted frequently during various times of the day. Principals and teachers indicated that principals used walkthroughs to be visible in the school.

Teachers reported that their principals were very visible in the school. As a result of the walkthroughs, principals are getting in the classroom more often to observe. Teachers indicated that principals are in the classrooms enough to know what is going on. The teachers' responses revealed that principals are in classrooms daily.

The principals' responses verified what was reported by the teachers. Principals were visible. Principals Park stated, "I am visible. I am doing walkthroughs. I am definitely in the classrooms." According to Principal Jackson, walkthroughs are critical; therefore she tries to do about four a day. It was evident that the principals in the study visited classrooms often.

Further data analysis of principal and teacher interviews revealed that principals and teachers perceived maintaining visibility through principal walkthroughs

communicated the importance of learning to students. Principal Cook and Principal Park stated that walkthroughs show teachers and students that they care about instruction. According to Sara, a teacher, principal walkthroughs allow students to see that the principal is interested in the students' learning. Ann added, "They [students] want to see the principal come in. It lets them know she cares about their education."

Although walkthroughs allowed principals to maintain visibility, data revealed that other tasks that principals were required to deal with made maintaining visibility challenging at times. Principals acknowledged that due to other tasks they did not spend as much time as they wanted to in the instructional leader role. These challenges were revealed through the participants' responses. Principal Cook shared that visiting classrooms is the key to knowing what's going on. However, sometimes things take her away from visiting classrooms for a few days. Ann, a teacher at Principal Cook's school, acknowledged the challenges that her principal faced with maintaining visibility by saying, "She tries to be visible, but she is pulled so much. She is doing things at RESA. I don't think she is as visible as she would like to be."

Principal White stated, "On a day to day basis, my plan could be to do five walkthroughs, one or two evaluations, and then something could come up. A parent could come in. A child might have a problem. So, you don't always get to what you need to get to in the course of a day, but I try to prioritize and use my time wisely and try to get to the important things." According to Principal Smith, there are weeks when he is able to do five walkthroughs a day. However, he seldom does more than five a day, because "it burns him out". On the other hand, Principal Smith added there have been times when he went a week without doing walkthroughs. Data revealed that all principals

were faced with the challenge of maintaining visibility while attending to numerous tasks. Although getting into the classrooms was a challenge at times, all of the principals in this study agreed that it is important for them to be visible in the classroom. Principal Smith suggested the importance of a leader being able to balance everything.

Data Driven Professional Learning

Data on teaching and learning was collected during the walkthroughs. The data gathered during the walkthroughs was beneficial in providing data driven professional learning for teachers. The analysis of the interviews provided insight on how the data from walkthroughs was used. Principals revealed that data from the walkthroughs were primarily used collectively to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses within the school in order to determine the next steps for instructional practices and professional learning. Participants explained how walkthrough data was used in their school.

Principals stated that they analyze walkthrough data to identify common patterns and trends. Principals shared that they can quickly generate walkthrough reports using the eWalk software to look for areas of strength and weakness. When areas of weaknesses are notice, principals and teachers discuss them and determine the type of professional learning that is needed. Through the analysis of the walkthrough data, Principal Smith and Principal Cook were able to determine teachers were not differentiating instruction. As a result, differentiated instruction became a focus for professional learning at their school. Principal Park stated teacher commentary was identified as an area of weakness for his staff; therefore, professional learning on using teacher commentary was provided for teachers.

Teachers indicated that they analyzed the walkthrough data to determine specific grade level strengths and weaknesses. After analyzing the walkthrough data, Carol's grade level realized they were not using graphic organizers often. Carol's grade level began to incorporate more graphic organizers into their lessons.

Data gathered from walkthroughs were used to identify professional development needs and frame school goals. The goals were communicated in the School Improvement Plan. School Improvement Plans from each school were analyzed. Each school listed walkthroughs/ classroom observation as an artifact for ensuring that agreed upon strategies from professional learning activities were being implemented in the classrooms.

Opportunity to Foster Professional Learning Communities

Interviews from three of the schools, Star Elementary, Students First Elementary, and Accomplish Elementary, revealed that principals were not the only ones conducting walkthroughs in the schools. Teachers conducted walkthroughs too. The theme of professional learning communities emerged from the practice of teachers conducting walkthroughs. In these schools, teachers used the following words to describe their principal- encourager, supporter, and coach. Principals and teachers indicated that including teachers in the walkthrough process increased teacher collaboration, reflection, dialogue, sharing, and teamwork thus providing incentives for learning. Providing incentives for learning is one of Hallinger's instructional leadership functions.

The concept of teachers observing other teachers was initiated by an administrator at each of the three schools. A discussion of the "look fors" listed on the county walkthrough form occurred with the teachers prior to them conducting walkthroughs.

However, the approach used to initially include teachers as walkthrough partners was slightly different in all three schools. At Star Elementary, members of the leadership team were the first teacher group to conduct walkthroughs. Each grade level representative from the leadership team trained members on his/her grade level to do walkthroughs and by the end of the year all teachers were involved in conducting walkthroughs.

At Students First Elementary, the administrators initially included teachers as walkthrough partners by going with a grade level during their common planning time to do walkthroughs. At the end of the day, the administrators met with the grade level that was observed and the grade level that observed to debrief. Principal Smith stated he used the group approach to get teachers started "because we [administration] were afraid that they would be uptight about it and they would be hesitant to do it. So the first time it was almost like I'm making you do it. We're coming to you today and we are going to go do walkthroughs." Teachers at Students First Elementary are now conducting walkthroughs individually.

At Accomplish Elementary, the academic coach assisted in getting the process started. Teachers were divided into four vertical teams. The first team was comprised of teachers who were "on board" with the purpose and focus of walkthroughs. This team conducted walkthroughs in every classroom in the building. Each teacher on the team was assigned classrooms to observe, and when all walkthroughs were conducted, the team provided the feedback to the whole school. Kathy, a teacher at Accomplish Elementary, summarized the initial feeling of most teachers regarding becoming walkthrough partners.

> At first everybody was really freaking out because they thought that it was an evaluation. It was like your peers coming in to evaluate you. Like I said before, it was hard for a lot of people to be open in what they're doing and welcome someone else in their classroom to give them feedback. A lot of people just want to shut their door and do their thing regardless of… they don't want to face up to the fact that they may have something to learn. I think teacher walkthroughs really brought professional learning. I've seen a change. Teachers are now more willing to go to other teachers even across grade levels.

Principals and teachers discussed how including teachers in the walkthrough process impacted the school culture. Data revealed that teacher collaboration, reflection, dialogue, sharing, and teamwork increased as a result of including teachers as walkthrough partners. The concept of a professional learning community was evident through the responses of the principals and teachers.

According to Principal Park, teachers saw instructional strategies and got ideas. So, there was more teamwork, more getting together, and more discussion in his school. Principal Smith said, "Teachers are observing each other. There's dialogue and learning. They now see, having the opportunity to do the walkthroughs that they have done, they've seen what other teachers are doing, and it's helped them understand how to do some things. I think learning from each other has been a positive outcome." Principal Jackson also reported that teachers were sharing more. Principal Jackson stated, "The power goes from when everyone is doing the walkthroughs not just administration or other people."

Although teachers were hesitate about observing each other in the beginning, data revealed that teachers found the experience to be beneficial. Several teachers reported that they are more comfortable with people coming into their room now. According to Rebecca, "I think it made people not feel so frightened of being observed. You know that we are here to help one another and to improve each other, and it is not we're out there to get one another." Teachers stated that observing in other teachers' room gave them ideas to enhance student learning. There was more teamwork and more dialogue. Sandra stated,

> It's [teacher walkthroughs] made us more aware, self awareness of what we are doing and what we are supposed to do. Reflections- I'm reflecting a lot more and I know my colleagues are because I hear them talk about it. I mean, I just think that's the biggest thing. You're the only one in there doing your thing. You don't know if you're really doing what you need with your kids, but it just helps when other people give you feedback.

The act of including teachers in the walkthrough process resulted in a school culture that was caring and supportive of others, collaborative, respectful, trusting, and focused on student and adult learning. The essential characteristics of professional learning communities were evident at Star Elementary, Students First Elementary, and Accomplish Elementary.

In contrast, the analysis of the teachers' responses from the other two schools, Excellence Elementary and Soar Elementary, where teachers were not involved in conducting walkthroughs reflects that the theme of a professional learning community

was not evident. The teachers viewed the principal as a police or inspector. Therefore, the principals' and teachers' responses regarding walkthroughs were quite different.

According to Mary, there were negative attitudes regarding principal walkthroughs. Many teachers reported that they did not want principals coming into their classroom all of the time watching over them. Holly felt like she was being put under a microscope or taking a test when the principal conducted a walkthrough in her room. Shelia stated, "It feels like we are called to the carpet every time something is not right whether it's school wide, grade wide or individual, whatever, but there is never that I noticed that you were doing this in your classroom, and that was a really good idea; you implemented this really well." Lauren's comment summarized the feelings of most teachers in the schools where principals were the only ones conducting walkthroughs.

> To be quite honest, when you have a principal that's constantly in your presence, as a teacher, you tend to feel like you're doing something wrong and you need more guidance. So, usually the less an administrator is seen in a classroom the better you feel that you are doing what you need to be doing.

Overall, the teachers' view of walkthroughs was unfavorable. Many teachers indicated that principals were looking to see what they were doing wrong and not anything of what they were are doing right. Holly added that walkthroughs bring down morale.

Principal White said, "Well, I think that if you don't do the walkthroughs it gives teachers a little more latitude to become lax. We want to make sure that they are teaching the curriculum and not wasting time." Principal White's and the teachers' responses indicates that the focus during the walkthrough was on teachers.

Opportunity to Promote Individual Teacher Growth

As reported above, data analysis revealed that teachers appreciated the walkthrough tool because it provided clear expectations. However, further analysis of data revealed that there were mixed feelings about the feedback provided using the walkthrough form. Principals indicated they used similar methods for providing feedback from walkthroughs to teachers, such as a completed copy of the walkthrough form via email or hard copy, personal conversations, or group discussions.

As teachers discussed the feedback they received from walkthroughs, it was apparent that they wanted more feedback. They wanted feedback that would promote individual teacher growth. The teachers' responses revealed this theme.

Many teachers stated that they wanted more that a check indicating observed or not observed. They wanted detailed feedback. They wanted to know how they could improve. Tonya reported, "The checklist can be good but there needs to be more elaboration. If they would explain just a little bit and give an explanation or ways we can improve ..."

Beth stated that there is a space for written comments on the walkthrough form. She suggested that principals provide positive comments and constructive criticism in that space. Beth was not the only teacher who welcomed constructive criticism. Holly said, ". . . I am fine with constructive criticism. Bring it on and let me improve . . ." This was the response from many of the teachers.

Teachers indicated that principals could not observe everything on the walkthrough form during every visit, because the walkthrough is short. However, some teachers indicated that getting a not observed checked bothered them. A not observed

was viewed negatively. Shelia states a not observed doesn't need to be a negative thing, because it is so small. In the quote below, Marie suggested that the walkthrough form be revised.

> Well, I know that you have to have one tool that works for everyone and it's never going to be perfect, but certain aspects of it I think you could adapt. Like is the technology being utilized, not every lesson lends itself to that, I think there should be a not applicable section on there.

Data analysis of completed walkthrough forms provided by the elementary principals revealed that principals were not providing detailed feedback that promoted individual teacher growth. The researcher analyzed 34 completed walkthrough forms, and the majority of the walkthrough forms lacked detailed comments. Most forms only had observed or not observed checked for each item. When comments were provided, the comments were direct and did not give opportunity for reflective thought. Some of the written comments that were provided to the teachers are below.

- Great commentary!
- Needs to be larger [classroom schedule] so students can see from their desk.
- Great activity!
- Work on adding commentary to student work.
- You did an excellent job using the language of the standards.
- Wow! Great learning activity for inquiry. Students were very involved and truly understood their learning.

- Positive learning environment. Good use of ‘exit ticket’ strategy. Classroom procedures seem to be well in place.
- Great variety of words on wall. Adding math terms may be helpful.

Opportunity to Acknowledge Teachers

Walkthroughs enabled principals to observe first hand the teaching and learning that occurred in each classroom. Data revealed that teachers desired to be acknowledged and appreciated for a job well done. Acknowledging teachers is one way for principals to practice Hallinger’s instructional leadership function of providing incentives for teachers. The theme, opportunity to acknowledge teachers, emerged from the principals’ and teachers’ responses below. However, the data did not reveal how often principals acknowledged teachers.

According to Principal Smith, as a result of conducting walkthroughs, he has a better knowledge and appreciation of the hard work that teachers do, and that keeps him from taking them for granted. All principals in the study recognized the importance of acknowledging teachers. Principal Smith believes you have to let teachers know you appreciate the efforts they are making. Principal White stated, “You want people to feel like they are doing their best, giving the best quality teaching and instruction to the students.” Principal Park provided the quote below.

> I think every teacher wants to know that they’re doing a good job and they want to know that they are doing what you have asked. I think we all want that. I want feedback. I want to know that I am doing a good job. I want to know that what I

> am doing is working. I think we're all in this for that reason. … Because of the walkthroughs, teachers are getting more feedback now than before. They can say I know that I am on the right track.

Teachers revealed that they appreciated being acknowledged for doing a good job. Sue stated, "It gives me an affirmation that I am doing a good job. The pats on the back or piece of paper saying hey I appreciate what you did." Beth also indicated that the walkthroughs provided teachers an affirmation that they were on the right track.

Teachers and principal shared ways that principals used what they saw doing walkthroughs to acknowledge them. Sara discussed how her principal verbally shared with other teachers the good things that she saw when she visited in the classroom. According to Louise, he principal will make a note in the newsletters to highlight what is going on in classes. Principal Jackson stated, "I can send other teachers to observe what's really great." Other principals and teachers indicated the principals acknowledged teachers by having other teachers observe them.

Summary

Through data analysis, the researcher identified the benefits of walkthroughs from the principals' and teachers' viewpoints. Walkthroughs were beneficial in these ways. First, walkthroughs allowed principals to maintain high visibility in the school. Secondly, walkthroughs promoted data driven professional learning. Third, principals used walkthroughs to foster professional learning communities that encouraged teacher collaboration, reflection, sharing, dialogue and teamwork. Next, walkthroughs were

beneficial to promote individual teacher growth. Last, walkthroughs provided the opportunity to promote a positive learning climate through the acknowledgment of teachers.

Sub-question 3: How do principals and teachers describe the principal's role as an instructional leader?

The third question sought to understand how principals and teachers described the principal's role as an instructional leader. This research question was answered by participants' responses to seven interview questions (See Table 3 & Table 4).

Although principals have many roles to fill, an analysis of data from the principal interviews revealed that principals viewed their major role in their school as an instructional leader. Responses from teacher interviews indicated that teachers saw their principal in the instructional leadership role on a daily basis. Through the analysis of the participants' responses and Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Model, the theme, one strategy does not fulfill all roles, emerged.

One Strategy Does not Fulfill All Roles

Four of the five principals identified walkthroughs/ classroom visits as an important instructional leadership activity. Principal Park stated that he used walkthroughs to monitor teachers to make sure that they were teaching the standards and elements and monitor student academic achievement to make sure students were progressing.

Teachers' responses confirmed that principals conducted walkthroughs in the instructional leadership role. In the responses below, teachers described other activities

such as participating in instructional meetings, modeling lessons, planning professional learning and analyzing data, performed by principals in the instructional leadership role.

Many teachers reported that the principal participated in meeting with them in his/her instructional leadership role. Lauren stated that her principal meets with them on a regular basis to discuss instructional ideas, to review test scores, and to set goals for their students. Other teachers indicated that their principals met with them to discuss instructional strategies that will enhance student learning and to provide instructional suggestions. According to Beth, her principal meets with grade level to analyze student data and to prioritize curriculum maps based on the data.

Teachers indicated that the principal should provide support in the instructional leadership role. Teachers indicated that principals taught model lessons or demonstrated a desired expectation to provide support to them. Louise described how her principal provides support.

> If she sees a need and she has some advice, she is very quick to jump in and say let me show you this. And that I appreciated in the first year that she was here because there was such a need for development in different areas. She brought professional learning to us. I remember coming out of my third grade classroom and trying something and saying that's really cool and I showed it to her. She goes, oh, that is great; what else could you do there? And of course I was like I don't know and she was quick to give me support and give me some ideas about where else to go.

Summary

The data revealed the walkthrough was one instructional strategy that allowed elementary principals to step into the instructional leader role. However, elementary principals performed other activities, such as participating in instructional meetings, mapping curriculum, and analyzing data, in the instructional leadership role.

Overarching question: How do elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their roles as instructional leaders?

To respond to the overarching question, all data was blended from the three sub-questions to report the findings. The following research findings are reported to answer the overarching question.

- Principals utilized walkthroughs in their roles as instructional leaders to monitor the instructional program and to monitor student progress.
- Walkthroughs allowed principals to maintain high visibility in the school which communicated the principals' focus on learning.
- Principals used data gathered from walkthroughs to plan data driven professional learning.
- In schools where principals used teachers as walkthrough partners, professional learning communities that encouraged teacher collaboration, reflection, sharing, dialogue and teamwork were evident.
- The data also revealed that walkthroughs provided an opportunity to promote individual teacher growth. However, teachers rarely received feedback that furthered individual teacher growth.

- The data revealed that walkthroughs provided opportunities for principals to acknowledge teachers.
- Data revealed the walkthrough to be one strategy that allowed elementary principals to serve as instructional leaders. However, the walkthrough was not the only activity associated with instructional leadership. The data revealed that elementary principals participated in other activities in the instructional leader role.

Summary

Chapter 4 focused on the findings of the study. The findings were organized and discussed by the three sub-questions that guided the study. Within the data analysis of the principal interviews, teacher interviews and documents, several themes emerged. Elementary principals and teachers shared their perceptions regarding the elementary principals' utilization of walkthroughs in their instructional leader roles. The data also reflected that walkthroughs can be beneficial. Elementary principals and teachers unanimously agreed that walkthroughs are an instructional strategy that they would recommend to other administrators. However, walkthroughs are just one instructional leadership strategy; therefore, instructional leaders are not able to use this one strategy to perform all of the instructional leadership functions identified by Hallinger.

Chapter 5 will focus on a discussion of the findings relevant to related professional literature, implications for educational leaders, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides a brief summary of the entire study. It includes the analysis and discussion of the finding relevant to related professional literature, implications based on the findings, recommendations for further study based on the analysis of the data gathered during the study, and concluding thoughts.

Summary

Increased accountability for student achievement has changed the work of school principals. Principals must know what is happening in the classroom in order to determine if quality teaching and learning are occurring. Research indicates that walkthroughs are an instructional leadership strategy that allows firsthand observations of teaching and learning that is occurring in the classroom (Johnston, 2003). The researcher's purpose of this study was to understand how elementary principals utilized walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders. The researcher designed the qualitative study to answer the following overarching question: How do elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders?

The study was guided by the following sub-questions:

Sub-question 1: Why do principals conduct walkthroughs?

Sub-question 2: How do principals and teachers describe the benefits of principal walkthroughs?

Sub-question 3: How do principals and teachers describe the principal's role as an instructional leader?

Participants for this study were employed in elementary schools in a Georgia school district that invested resources to develop principals as instructional leaders by providing specific training in conducting walkthroughs. The school district, Achievement School District (pseudonym), is located east of Atlanta. Purposive sampling was used to select five elementary principals and fifteen elementary teachers from five schools within Achievement School District.

This qualitative study was completed through individual interviews with five elementary principals and five group interviews with three elementary teachers at each of the five elementary schools in Achievement School District. Document analysis was also used to collect data.

The interviews were completed using a semi-structured approach. The researcher developed a general set of questions and format to follow and use on all participants. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed by the researcher. In order to protect the identity of the school district, elementary schools, and participants, pseudonyms were used.

The researcher analyzed walkthrough forms, and school improvement plans. The researcher used a data analysis sheet to record analysis of the documents. The transcriptions and documents were analyzed using thematic analysis in relation to the three research sub-questions. This study revealed how elementary principals utilized walkthroughs in their role of instructional leaders.

Analysis and Discussion of Research Findings

The findings of the study were presented in Chapter 4. The purpose of this section is to present a thorough discussion of the major findings from this study in relation to the professional literature. Many of the findings of this study were similar and resembled much of the information cited in the review of literature. The researcher analyzed the themes that emerged from the coded data in relationship to Hallinger's (2003) ten instructional leadership functions to examine the utilization of principals' walkthroughs in the role as instructional leaders: (1) framing the school's goals (2) communicating the school's goals (3) supervising and evaluating instruction (4) coordinating curriculum (5) monitoring student progress (6) protecting instructional time (7) promoting professional development (8) maintaining high visibility (9) providing incentives for teachers (10) providing incentives for learning. The findings are discussed as a series of responses to the research sub- questions.

Sub-question 1: Why do principals conduct walkthroughs?

Principals have started conducting walkthroughs, frequent, brief and focused visits to classrooms, for the purpose of observing, first hand, the instruction that is provided and the needs of staff and students in the school (Hopkins, 2007). The principals in this study were required to conduct walkthroughs. Hallinger's (2003) functions of managing the instructional program seemed to be the motivating factors for principals to conduct walkthroughs in the instructional leadership role. Walkthroughs allowed principals to supervise and evaluate instruction by examining the use of best practices and monitoring student progress.

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007) acknowledged that walkthroughs work best when the observer and observed know and understand its purpose and focus. It was also suggested that teachers be involved in determining the "look fors" and "listen fors" that principals use during observations to ensure that there is a common understanding (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007). Data revealed that Achievement School District used a walkthrough form that listed the "look-fors". These "look-fors" informed teachers and principals of the best practices that should be occurring in a standards-based classroom. Principals used the walkthrough form as a tool to monitor the instructional program and student learning.

"As an instructional leader, the principal focuses less on doing things right and more on 'doing the right things', the things we know can help improve student achievement" (Andrew et al., 1991, p. 97). Israel (2006) notes that the most effective teacher observation is student-focused. An analysis of data from the principal interviews and teacher interviews revealed that principals not only looked for best practices during walkthroughs, but they also monitored student progress. Principals engaged in conversations with students in order to informally assess their understanding and progress towards standards. This allowed principals to shift their focus from the teachers to the students.

Teachers also revealed that the walkthroughs "look-fors" have impacted their instructional practices. Instruction is focused on student learning, and teachers are ensuring that students understand what they are learning and the importance of learning. The purpose of the supervisory walkthrough is to examine the learning or instructional

process as it relates to the content in which students are engaged, and student work serves as evidence of learning and instruction (The Institute for Learning, 1999).

Marzano (2003) ranks a guaranteed and viable curriculum as the first school-level factor that has the most impact on student achievement (Marzano, 2003). Through walkthroughs principals were able to monitor instruction and student learning. Thompson and Thompson suggest (2003) that walkthroughs are tools for providing high accountability and support.

Sub-question 2: How do principals and teachers describe the benefits of principal walkthroughs?

Data analysis revealed walkthroughs were beneficial in assisting elementary principals to promote a positive school learning climate. Hallinger's (2003) instructional leadership functions of maintaining visibility, promoting professional development, and providing incentives for learning were evident in data analysis. Principal visibility, data driven professional development, professional learning communities, opportunity for individual teacher growth, and opportunity to acknowledge teachers emerged as benefits of principal walkthroughs.

According to Marzano et al. (2005), visibility is commonly associated with instructional leadership, and principals demonstrate this responsibility when they make daily visits to classrooms simply to ask teachers and students how things are going. The data revealed the principals and teachers identified the principal visibility to be a benefit of principal walkthroughs. Principals and teachers believed high visibility of principals in the school communicated the principals' focus on learning. This belief is supported in

the literature. "These visits drive home the message that learning is the purpose of school- for teachers and students" (Schmoker, 2001, p. 117).

Data driven professional learning was identified as the second benefit. According to Black (2007), walkthroughs provide data on classroom instruction and student learning. Walkthroughs are a way to determine what additional support teachers need in order to achieve the school's goals (Archer, 2005; Richardson, 2001). Data was used to determine that teachers needed support differentiating instruction in two of the schools in this study; therefore, differentiated instruction was addressed in the school improvement plan as a strategy to achieve the school's goals and it became the professional learning focus. In another school in this study, data revealed that teachers needed training in providing teacher commentary. So, teacher commentary became the professional learning focus for that school. The interview responses revealed that the data collected during walkthroughs was not used to evaluate individual teachers. Principals and teachers indicated that data from the walkthroughs were primarily used collectively to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses within the school in order to determine the next steps for instructional practices and professional learning. This finding supports the literature.

The third benefit revealed was the opportunity to foster professional learning communities. According to Damon and Ginsberg (2002), principals who are instructional leaders work with teachers to create an environment that promotes dialogue centered around teaching and learning. Bushman (2006) suggests using teachers as walkthrough partners to improve instructional practices and create a collaborative professional culture. Teachers observing each other could be used to foster collaboration

and improve student achievement (Israel, 2006). The responses from three of the schools revealed that principals empowered teachers by allowing them to conduct walkthroughs in the schools. The principals provided incentives for learning by using teachers as walkthrough partners. Principals and teachers indicated that the strategy of shared instructional leadership fostered professional learning communities that increased teacher dialogue, collaboration, reflection, sharing, and teamwork. According to Ziegler (2006), professional learning communities (PLC) are developed in a culture of collaboration and support which allow for ongoing dialogue and reflections. These finding were congruent with the literature. However, the researcher found that two of the principals did not seize the opportunity to foster professional learning communities through allowing teachers to be walkthrough partners, and teachers in these schools viewed walkthroughs negatively.

Opportunity to promote individual teacher growth was the fourth benefit of principal walkthroughs revealed through the data. According to Craig (2005), school improvement is lost without feedback, and feedback is most powerful when it is expressed in terms of the expectations. However, teachers must understand the expectations prior to receiving feedback. Data analysis showed that the walkthrough form provided teachers with clear expectations. However, the teachers expressed concerns regarding the feedback they received. According to the responses from teachers and analysis of completed walkthrough forms, the feedback provided by the observer consisted of check marks indicating what was observed or not observed. Teachers expressed that they wanted more detailed feedback. There is disconnection in the type of feedback teachers received and what they wanted to receive. The data also revealed that teachers yearned for feedback that would promote individual teacher growth, and the

literature supports this type of feedback. The literature suggests that instruction should be the focus of the walkthrough and some dialogue should occur as a result of walkthroughs (Downey et al., 2004; The Institute for Learning, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 2003). However, principals did not use feedback as an incentive for learning.

Opportunity to acknowledge teachers was the final benefit of principal walkthroughs revealed through the data. Frase and Hetzel (1990) stated, "It doesn't take extensive observations nor elaborate data gathering to identify critical strengths and weaknesses; it does take a well-focused visit." The data revealed that walkthroughs could be used to promote a positive learning climate through the acknowledgment of teachers. Principals and teachers stated that teachers wanted to know that they were appreciated for a job well done. The acknowledgement of teachers is a way for principals to practice Hallinger's (2003) instructional leadership function of providing incentives for teachers. However, the data did not specify how often principals acknowledged the good things that they observed during walkthroughs. The literature suggests that principals could acknowledge teacher's strengths by having them share with other teachers (Skretta, 2007), and some of the principals in this study did this.

Sub-question 3: How do principals and teachers describe the principal's role as an instructional leader?

Downey et. al., (2004) note that ". . . principals and other administrators must come to view their primary roles as one of an instructional leader promoting improved student achievement" (p. 7). Page (2004) and Hulme (2006) agree that principals must be instructional leaders. The principals in this study viewed focus on instruction as their major role. According to Fullan (2008), principals must spend the majority of their time

dealing with instructional issues. Hallinger (2003) identified ten instructional leadership functions: (1) framing the school's goals (2) communicating the school's goals (3) supervising and evaluating instruction (4) coordinating curriculum (5) monitoring student progress (6) protecting instructional time (7) promoting professional development (8) maintaining high visibility (9) providing incentives for teachers (10) providing incentives for learning. The researcher analyzed the themes that emerged from the coded data in relationship to Hallinger's (2003) ten instructional leadership functions to examine the utilization of principals' walkthroughs in the role as instructional leaders.

The walkthrough is one of the most promising strategies for providing instructional leadership (Johnston, 2003). Although the participants did not directly answer this question, the data revealed the walkthrough was one instructional strategy that allowed instructional leaders to carry out the following instructional leadership functions identified by Hallinger's: supervising and evaluating instruction, monitoring student progress, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, and providing incentives for learning. School's goals were communicated in the school improvement plans, and the analysis of the school improvement plans revealed that principals used walkthroughs to monitor the school goals. However, data analysis revealed that principals conducted other activities such as instructional meetings, curriculum mapping, and data analysis to achieve the other functions, framing the school's goals, communicating the school's goals, coordinating curriculum, protecting instructional time, and providing incentives for teachers, identified by Hallinger.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the era of accountability mandates that principals across the nation are being called upon to exercise strong instructional leadership in their schools (Johnston, 2003). The findings in the study correlated with the research sub-questions and were used to answer the overarching question, "How do elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders?" Findings revealed that walkthroughs allowed principals to perform six of the ten instructional leadership functions identified by Hallinger.

The findings for the first research sub-question, Why do principals conduct walkthroughs?, revealed that principals' reasons for conducting walkthroughs aligned with the purposes of walkthroughs in the literature. Although principals were required to conduct walkthroughs, the researcher found that was not the only reason principals conducted walkthroughs. Data revealed that principals conducted walkthroughs to monitor instructional practices and student learning (Georgia Department of Education, 2007), and these practices aligned with two of Hallinger's (2003) instructional functions for managing the instructional program, supervises and evaluates instruction and monitors student progress. However, the district's purpose of walkthroughs was to monitor the implementation of instructional best practices (i.e. standards-based classroom and learning focused schools strategies) that teachers learned through district wide professional learning and determine future professional learning for teachers. Though this was the district's original purpose, surprisingly, professional learning was not revealed as a reason why principals conducted walkthroughs.

The findings for research sub-question two, How do principals and teachers describe the benefits of principal walkthroughs?, revealed the benefits of principal walkthrough aligned with Hallinger's (2003) functions of promoting a positive school learning climate. First, walkthroughs allowed principals to maintain high visibility in the school which communicated the principals' focus on learning. Second, data gathered from walkthroughs were used to promote data driven professional learning. Principals and teachers in the study discussed how they used walkthrough data to identify common trends to determine the professional learning that teachers needed to move the schools toward their desired goals. Data generated from walkthroughs helped principals frame school goals. Third, the opportunity to foster professional learning communities was cited as a benefit. In three schools, principals provided incentives for learning by using teachers as walkthrough partners. This strategy of shared instructional leadership fostered professional learning communities that encouraged teacher collaboration, reflection, sharing, dialogue and teamwork. However, negative attitudes regarding walkthroughs were evident in the schools where teachers were not included in conducting walkthroughs. Fourth, the opportunity to promote individual teacher growth was also cited as a benefit of principal walkthroughs. Finally, walkthroughs allowed principals to identify teachers' strengths thus providing the opportunity for principals to acknowledge teachers. Although the data revealed teachers wanted to be acknowledged for doing a good job, it was unclear how often principals grasped the opportunity to acknowledge the good things that they observed the teachers doing during the walkthroughs. Overall, teachers and principals viewed walkthroughs to be beneficial, and the principals and teachers unanimously agreed that walkthroughs are an instructional strategy that they

would recommend to other administrators. However, these finding also suggest walkthroughs are more beneficial when teachers are involved in the process and when teachers receive meaningful feedback that will enhance instructional practices.

Findings from this study addressed research sub-question three, How do principals and teachers describe the principal's role as an instructional leader?. Participates did not directly answer this question. Principals and teachers identified various activities that they associated with instructional leadership. The focus activity for this study, walkthroughs, was identified as an essential instructional leadership strategy. However, the walkthrough is one strategy that allows principals to perform some of the functions identified by Hallinger. Principals have to participate in other activities in order the fulfill all of Hallinger's ten instructional leadership functions. One strategy does not allow principals to carry out all instructional leadership roles.

In closing, walkthroughs allowed principals to step into the instructional leadership role. The data revealed that by conducting walkthroughs principals were able to perform six of ten instructional leadership functions identified by Hallinger: supervising and evaluating instruction, monitoring student progress, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning. Framing the school's goals, communicating the school's goals, coordinating curriculum, and protecting instructional time were not identified through the data as instructional leadership functions principals used walkthroughs to accomplish. Through the analysis and synthesis of the findings, the researcher drew the following conclusions.

1. The way walkthroughs are implemented in schools matters. Including teachers as walkthrough partners can have a positive impact on the school's learning climate. When teachers participate in walkthroughs, teacher collaboration, reflection and dialogue about instruction increase. On the other hand, isolating teachers from the process of conducting walkthroughs can have an adverse effect. When teachers are not involved in conducting walkthroughs, they tend to favor principal walkthroughs less and they develop negative attitudes.
2. Teachers did not fully grasp the purpose of walkthroughs. Although, walkthroughs were not intended to evaluate individual teachers, teachers often viewed walkthroughs as a form of evaluation. Teachers wanted to know how they could get better. Instead, principals used walkthroughs to generate school level data in order to determine the next steps.
3. Professional learning regarding walkthroughs is essential. All participants must have an understanding of the purpose and process of the walkthrough and the relevance of the data collected. When implementing walkthroughs, the actions must align with the purpose.
4. When the focus of walkthroughs is on students learning, it causes teachers to shift their focus from teaching to learning.

Implications

Walkthroughs provide a vehicle for principals to step into the role of instructional leaders. There are several walkthrough models that principals can use. However, this study suggests that principals examine the walkthrough process in their school.

The implications of this study directly relates to principals who utilize walkthroughs in their role of instructional leaders. Although teachers and principals found walkthroughs to be beneficial overall, there were areas of concern and areas that could be improved. The implementation of walkthroughs that included teachers as walkthrough partners fostered a culture that promoted professional learning communities in which teacher growth occurred through collaboration, dialogue, reflection, sharing, and teamwork. This suggests that when teachers are included in the process of conducting walkthroughs, the walkthroughs are more meaningful.

The findings of this study contribute to the body of existing literature on walkthroughs. There was little reported on how principals used walkthroughs. This study revealed that principals could use walkthroughs in the instructional leadership role to monitor the instructional program, to monitor student progress, to maintain visibility, to promote data driven professional learning, to foster professional learning communities, to promote individual teacher growth, and to acknowledge teachers. These findings provide strategies for principals to use walkthroughs in the instructional leadership role to promote continuous school improvement.

The study is also beneficial to Achievement School Districts because it provides insight from the teachers' perspective regarding the walkthrough form. Teachers appreciate that the walkthrough form makes expectations clear. However, they were not satisfied with the quality of the feedback that is provided. Teachers want more than a check mark indicating what was observed; they would like detailed feedback which includes positive comments and constructive criticism. Teachers also stated that the "not observed" option on the walkthrough form was viewed in a negative way. Since

walkthroughs are brief observations, not all items listed on the form would be observed during a walkthrough. Achievement School district could use this finding to reevaluate the walkthrough form. Focus or reflective questions could be added to prompt and provoke dialogue and/or reflection about instruction that will improve instructional practices and enhance student achievement. Combining elements from several walkthrough models may be beneficial. If teachers do not get the quality feedback that they deserve, walkthroughs may have little impact on their instructional practices and student learning. Based on the literature and the findings, it would be advantageous for elementary principals to provide feedback that will promote dialogue and encourage teachers to reflect on their classroom practices.

Recommendations for Further Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how elementary principals utilized walkthroughs in their role of instructional leaders. The following recommendations for further study emerged from the study by the researcher.

1. Conduct a comparative study of schools where walkthroughs are conducted by administrators only and schools where teachers and administrators conduct walkthroughs to examine the culture of the school. Consider view point of principals, teachers, and students regarding the walkthroughs.
2. Conduct a study to examine the type of feedback that teachers receive from walkthroughs and its impact of the feedback on instructional practices.

Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, principals now find themselves in the age of accountability and improvements with the expectation that they will function as instructional leaders. It is imperative that principals know that teaching and learning is occurring in the classrooms. Walkthroughs are an instructional strategy that provides firsthand knowledge of what is happening in the school. Walkthroughs are most beneficial when expectations are clear, feedback is meaningful, and teachers are involved in conducting walkthroughs. Walkthroughs should be student focused, and the data should be used for continuous school improvement.

As an administrator, this study presented invaluable findings on how walkthroughs can be used in the instructional leader role. This study provides greater understanding of the importance of empowering teachers and including them in this experience. If the purpose of walkthroughs is truly to be non-evaluative and focused on student learning, then it is essential to include teachers in the process. Including teachers in the process and providing meaningful feedback that promotes teacher growth will help schools and teachers reach the goal to which they all aspire- better student achievement.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ELEMENTARY WALKTHROUGH FORM

School:
Grade Level _____ Date _____ Subject _____ Teacher _____

Standards and Elements:

It is clear and evident TO STUDENTS what they are learning. (1a, 1b, 1c, 1f, 1l)

Check all that apply: Check one:

- ☐ Teacher posting ☐ Evident (2 out of 3)
- ☐ Student saying ☐ Not Evident
- ☐ Student doing ☐ Transition

Relevant student work is posted. (1a, 1b, 1c, 1j)

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

Evidence exists that shows that the GPS are being taught. (1a, 1b, 1c, 1f)

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

Instruction:

Graphic organizers are being utilized. (1r, 3l)

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

Evidence exists that a functional word wall is being utilized. (1j, 3l)

☐ Observed☐ Not Observed

Teacher and students are actively participating in the lesson together.

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

Students are:

- ☐ Engaged
- ☐ Compliant
- ☐ Off-task

The Delivery mode for instruction is: (1m)

- ☐ Whole Group
- ☐ Small Group
- ☐ One-on-one
- ☐ Independent work by students

Evidence exists that technology is being utilized to enhance instruction. (1d, 1e, 1g, 4b)

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

Essential questions are posted and are relevant to current instruction. (1l, 1r, 3l)

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

Classroom Environment:

A daily classroom schedule is posted.

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

Materials for lesson are prepared and readily accessible.

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

The classroom is organized, clean and safe. (4, 4c)

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

Strategies are being utilized to reinforce appropriate behavior. (4)

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

The classroom is arranged to accommodate whole group instruction, teacher-led small group instruction, and independent student work. (1m)

☐ Observed ☐ Not Observed

☐ Not Possible Due to Space

Notes and *Celebrations!*

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APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FOR SCHOOL SYSTEM

COLLEGE OF Graduate Studies

DEPARTMENT OF Leadership, Technology, and Human Development

INFORMED CONSENT for School System

December 4, 2008

Dear Assoc. Supt. for Curriculum:

I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University. I am requesting permission to conduct a dissertation study in the XXXXX County School System for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. The purpose of the study will be to understand how elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders.

This will be a qualitative study in which principal interviews, teacher interviews, and document analysis will be used as the means to collect data. Purposive sampling will be used to select elementary principals and elementary teachers from five schools within the XXXXX County School System. Participation in all aspects of the study will be voluntary. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the school district, selected elementary schools, and participants. All information collected will be kept secure and confidential.

I would like to begin this process in January 2009. If you have questions regarding this research project, please contact me at 678-794-4663 or mcclain.lasharon@newton.k12.ga.us. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Linda Arthur, at 912-478-0697 or larthur@georgiasouthern.edu.

If you are willing to permit elementary principals and elementary teachers employed by XXXXX County School District to participate in the study, please provide the researcher an approval letter. The results of this study should be helpful in revealing how elementary principals use walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders to promote continuous school improvement. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

LaSharon S. McClain, Ed.D Candidate
Georgia Southern University

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-478-0843
Fax: 912-478-0719 IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu
Veazey Hall 2021
P.O. Box 8005
Statesboro, GA 30460

To: LaSharon McClain
5002 Samantha Court
McDonough, GA 30252

CC: Charles E. Patterson
Associate Vice President for Research

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: December 23, 2008

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered:**H09133** and titled **"Elementary Principals' Utilization of Walkthroughs in the Role of Instructional Leaders"**, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FOR ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

COLLEGE OF Graduate Studies

DEPARTMENT OF Leadership, Technology, and Human Development

INFORMED CONSENT for Principals

Dear Elementary School Principal:

I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University. I will be conducting a dissertation study in the XXXXX County School System for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. The purpose of the study will be to understand how elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders.

The purpose of this letter is to request your help in gathering data for this study. This will be a qualitative study in which principal interviews, teacher interviews, and document analysis will be used as the means to collect data. There is no penalty should you decide not to participate in the study. However, your participation in this study would provide valuable information about how elementary principals use walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

If you agree to participate, you will assist the researcher by agreeing to be interviewed, providing the researcher with a list of teachers in the school with a minimum of three years teaching experience at the school, and providing the researcher with school documents relating to walkthroughs. Participation in all aspects of the study will be voluntary. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and the identity of the school district and school. All information collected will be kept secure and confidential.

I would like to begin this process in January 2009. If you have questions regarding this research project, please contact me or my faculty advisor, Dr. Linda Arthur. The contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-681-0843.

If you are willing to participant, please sign and return this consent form to me. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

LaSharon McClain, Ed.D Candidate
Georgia Southern University
You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Title of Project: Elementary Principals' Utilization of Walkthroughs in the Role as Instructional Leaders

Principal Investigator: LaSharon McClain, 678-794-4663, mcclain.lasharon@newton.k12.ga.us

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Linda Arthur, 912-478-0697, larthur@georgiasouthern.edu

_____ _____

Participant Signature **Date**

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

_____ _____

Investigator Signature **Date**

APPENDIX E

EMAIL TO REQUEST TEACHER PARTICIPATION

Dear XXXXX Elementary School Teacher:

I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University. I will be conducting a dissertation study in the XXXXX County School System for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. The purpose of the study will be to understand how elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders.

Your principal has agreed to participate in the study. The purpose of this email is to request your help in gathering data for this study. You can assist me by volunteering to participate in a teacher group interview. The group will consist of three teachers. The interview will be held after school and should last approximately 45-60 minutes. There is no penalty should you decide not to participate in the study. However, your participation in this study would provide valuable information about how elementary principals use walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders.

I would like to conduct the interview on _____ at _____ p.m. The interview will be held at _____. If you agree to participate, please let me know by responding to this email.

Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,

LaSharon McClain

APPENDIX F

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Time of Interview: Date: Place:
Interviewer: LaSharon McClain Interviewee:

[Discuss the purpose of the study, individuals and sources of data being collected, what will be done with the data to protect confidentially of the interviewee, and how long the interview will take.] Turn on the tape recorder

Principal Interview Questions:

1. Principals have so much to do. What do you see as your major role in this school?
2. How much time do you spend in the instructional leadership role?
3. What activities do you consider most important in the instructional leadership role?
4. How do you think teachers would describe your role as an instructional leader?
5. As part of that role, how often do you conduct walkthroughs? When? Using what forms?
6. What are your purposes for completing walkthroughs? Does the same purpose work for every walkthrough? How do teachers know and understand what the purpose is?
7. Describe the focus of a typical walkthrough. What would be considered a typical walkthrough?
8. What happens after conducting walkthroughs?
9. Is all of the information you've gathered from walkthroughs used individually or collectively?
10. What process do you use in the follow-up? Forms, plans?
11. What methods do you use to share the feedback?
12. What value do you gain professionally from walkthroughs?
13. What added value do you think teachers would describe from walkthroughs?
14. Tell me some things that happened at this school that you think are a direct result of walkthroughs.
15. Describe succinctly-- uses of walkthrough data?
16. What impact has the walkthroughs had on teachers and students?
17. What impact does the evidence gathered during walkthroughs have on school improvement?
18. If I asked your teachers to discuss the benefits of principal walkthroughs, what would they tell me?
19. What do you view to be the benefits of walkthroughs?
20. What advice would you give an administrator who chooses not to conduct walkthroughs in his/her school?

[Thank the individual for their cooperation and participation in this interview. Assure them of the confidentiality of the responses and the potential for follow up conversations.]

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

COLLEGE OF Graduate Studies

DEPARTMENT OF Leadership, Technology, and Human Development

INFORMED CONSENT for Teachers

Dear Elementary School Teacher:

I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University. I will be conducting a dissertation study in the XXXXX County School System for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. The purpose of the study will be to understand how elementary principals utilize walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders.

The purpose of this letter is to request your help in gathering data for this study. This will be a qualitative study in which principal interviews, teacher interviews, and document analysis will be used as the means to collect data. There is no penalty should you decide not to participate in the study. However, your participation in this study would provide valuable information about how elementary principals use walkthroughs in their role as instructional leaders. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

If you agree to participate, you will assist the researcher by agreeing to be interviewed. The interview should last approximately 45-60 minutes. Participation in all aspects of the study will be voluntary. Participants may withdraw their participation at any time or decline to answer specific questions. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and the identity of the school district and school. All information collected will be kept secure and confidential.

I would like to begin this process in January 2009. If you have questions regarding this research project, please contact me or my faculty advisor, Dr. Linda Arthur. The contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-681-0843.

If you are willing to participant, please sign and return this consent form to me. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

LaSharon McClain, Ed.D Candidate
Georgia Southern University
You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Title of Project: Elementary Principals' Utilization of Walkthroughs in the Role as Instructional Leaders

Principal Investigator: LaSharon McClain, 678-794-4663, mcclain.lasharon@newton.k12.ga.us

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Linda Arthur, 912-478-0697, larthur@georgiasouthern.edu

_____ _____

Participant Signature **Date**

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

_____ _____

Investigator Signature **Date**

APPENDIX H

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Time of Interview: Date: Place:
Interviewer: LaSharon McClain Interviewees:

[Discuss the purpose of the study, individuals and sources of data being collected, what will be done with the data to protect confidentially of the interviewee, and how long the interview will take.] Turn on the tape recorder

Teacher Interview Questions:

1. Describe the activities that you have observed of your principal in his/her role as instructional leader.
2. How often do you actually see the principal in his/her role? Under what conditions would you want to see more of the principal in the instructional leader role?
3. As a teacher, what's your view of the principal walkthroughs? Helpful, or not? Why or why not?
4. How are you prepared for administrator observations, walkthroughs, evaluations, etc.?
5. Is there a difference in administrator observation and walkthrough? If so, what is it?
6. What feedback do you get from your principal after a walkthrough?
7. What kind of information would you want to receive?
8. How does the school culture differ because of walkthroughs?
9. How do you use the feedback provide from walkthroughs?
10. How does the school use the data from walkthroughs?
11. Tell me something that happened at this school that you consider to be a direct result of walkthroughs.
12. How do students respond to walkthroughs? Are they ever disruptive? Why, or why not?
13. How has walkthroughs impacted teachers?
14. So, share with me the real deal—what is major value to you professionally?
15. Has any of your instructional practice changed as a result of walkthroughs? If so, please describe.
16. In your opinion, what are the pitfalls of walkthroughs?
17. What advice would you give an administrator who chooses not to conduct walkthroughs in his/her school?
18. And finally, what is said in the public about principal walkthroughs?

[Thank the individual for their cooperation and participation in this interview. Assure them of the confidentiality of the responses and the potential for follow up conversations.]

APPENDIX I

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

School:

Document Provided by:

Document Reviewed by: LaSharon McClain

Date Document Received:

Date Document Reviewed:

1. Type of Document

___School Improvement Plan
___Walkthrough Notes
___Walkthrough Forms
___Other:
___Leadership Team Minutes
___Walkthrough Analysis Chart/Summary
___Faculty Handbook

2. **Author (or Creator) of Document**:

Position (Title)

3. **For what audience was the document written**:

4. Goal of Document Information:

___Focus on student achievement
___Promote Professional Development
___Promote School Improvement
___Professional and Collaborative Learning Communities
___Other:
___Promote Reflect Dialogue
___Identification of Best Practices

5. What evidence in the document reveals how the data from walkthroughs is used?

6. What is left unanswered in this document? What questions need to be asked?