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A CASE STUDY EXAMINING TEACHER RESPONSES
TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK OF
CLASS OBSERVATIONS

by

Sean Kelly

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

In

Leadership for Learning

Educational Leadership

In the

Bagwell College of Education

Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, GA

2014

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2014

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The dissertation titled:

A CASE STUDY EXAMINING TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK OF CLASS OBSERVATIONS

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my son. It has been his presence in my life that has truly changed my perspective of what it means to lead by example and be the type of father he deserves. I have truly committed myself to providing for him the best possible example of what it means to be a man and more importantly a father. As an educator I cannot profess to him the importance and value of education without first demonstrating to him that I value my personal education almost as much as I value his. For those reasons, his presence has inspired me to lead by example and continue my education to the most logical conclusion of completing this dissertation and being awarded the degree of Doctor of Education.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge a very loving wife whom without her encouragement and expertise in dealing with a very stubborn husband this dissertation would not have been possible. I also would like to acknowledge my mother whom always made sure my sister and I knew the value of education and how education could provide for us later in life. I remember my senior year in high school the tireless efforts of my mother to orchestrate a plan to ensure that I would have somewhere to go to college despite the obstacles that my family faced when I was young. If not for her, this dissertation would have never even been a dream.

I would also like to profess a most sincere and grateful acknowledgment to Kennesaw State University and the Educational Leadership Department. I am so grateful for their delivery of a program that has challenged me to do my best work while also providing support during the entire program. Kennesaw State University has delivered on a promise they made during the first night of orientation. I would certainly be remiss if I did not acknowledge Dr. T.C. Chan and Dr. Binbin Jiang. Your tireless efforts assisting me along the way have truly made a difference in this process. You have been supportive and extremely patient with me as we have journeyed together. I will always be fond of both of you as I look back on this process and know that I was well taken care of.

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY EXAMINING TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK OF CLASS OBSERVATIONS

by

Sean Kelly

In a time where teacher accountability for student achievement is being discussed from the most rural areas of the country to the halls of virtually every State government, educators are continuously seeking strategies to increase their ability to educate their students. So often, school systems allocate exorbitant amounts of funds and resources searching for methods to assist teachers in improving their teaching skills. School leaders may be overlooking improvement strategies that currently exist in their schools but may not be fully utilized. In this study, a qualitative approach was used to examine teacher responses to principal feedback of class room observations. Class room observations conducted by school leaders have been shown to benefit both teachers and students (McGill, 2011). To optimize the class room visit, leaders are encouraged to observe and offer effective feedback to teachers (Tuytens & Devos, 2011).

Four teachers from each of the four major academic disciplines: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English Language from a suburban high school in the Southeastern United States participated in the study. Each of the 16 teachers was observed on three separate occasions and provided feedback by the principal. Teachers were also interviewed and asked to keep a journal detailing their observation and feedback experiences. Teacher responses to principal feedback were examined to determine how teachers responded to principal feedback and why they responded to principal feedback in the manner they did.

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Findings of this study demonstrated that teachers who participated in this research most often preferred responding to principal feedback after class room observations by changing behaviors, considering changes to behaviors, through written communication, by providing explanations for the situations that generated principal feedback, and by reflecting on their teaching. Findings also demonstrated that teachers preferred to respond to principal feedback of class room observations with a focus on promoting the safety and security of their students and themselves.

Keywords: Class room observation, teacher observation, feedback, response, supervisor, reflection, explanation, focus response, principal, qualitative method.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The largest determining factor in student success is having an effective teacher in the classroom (Liu, 2010; Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009; Routman, 2012; & Southworth, 2010). An effective method of identifying good teachers is for educational leaders to visit classrooms and observe what happens as teachers teach and students learn (McGill, 2011). However, visiting classrooms to simply watch what teachers do is not completely effective (Marshall, 2005). To optimize the classroom visit, leaders are encouraged to observe and offer effective feedback to teachers (Tuytens & Devos, 2011).

In the fall of 2007 I was approached by county office administrators and offered an opportunity to pilot a classroom observation program in my high school. The program involved regular classroom visits whereby I would observe classroom teachers and record data. In those early visits I would use a Palm device (what is now considered a very primitive form of data recording equipment) to fill out a pre-determined observation template that consisted of desirable teacher behaviors. I would enter a classroom, sit down in a desk located somewhere near the back of the class, and check boxes on my template if I observed a teacher perform a behavior. Once I completed checking my boxes I would quietly leave the room. My visits usually lasted approximately three to five minutes. After the visit, I would return to my office, review the completed template, and email it back to the teacher. As I look back on those early days I realize my visits, the template, the check boxes, and the information provided to teachers could not have been a greater waste of time. The process was flawed and no valuable information ever came from those visits.

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Fast-forward a year and I have changed schools and school districts. I am at a new school with new teachers and new students. I enjoyed my time at my previous school and feel as if I had done some good work. Now that I am at a new school I wanted to do more. I wanted to be involved and have an understanding of what took place in classrooms. I wanted to watch teachers work with students. I thought that if I could visit classrooms and watch teachers and students in their rooms I could learn what it would take for us to improve. I became very excited about building a program that was based on classroom observations.

The program needed a name. I needed a name that was short and easy to remember. The name had to jump out at people so it would grab their attention. I also wanted the name of the program to be a description of what I was doing. I tried several different things that came to mind but I could not settle on something I liked. I finally decided to use the name that was associated with the web-based platform I was using to gather data. I called the program walk-throughs. Revolutionary, isn't it? Well, I guess not. I had seen this word for a while and decided that I did not need to reinvent the wheel. Sometimes the most appropriate things are staring you right in the face.

I remember creating the first template at the new school. I sat down with the other four administrators and we had a discussion about what we thought was important to see in a classroom. I considered myself to be knowledgeable regarding what good teaching should look like. I had a former Science teacher and Social Studies teacher in the group combined with three former Physical Education teachers so I thought we had a good knowledge base from which to form our opinions. We built our template and set off conducting classroom visits.

My first year at my new school went by so fast it seemed as if it was over before it even got started. During the first year the five of us conducted over 2,000 walk-throughs. I was so

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excited and proud. I thought that I had accomplished something few educators would ever experience. The five administrators had completed so many walk-throughs checking boxes and sending completed walk-throughs back to teachers that we thought we were the best anyone had ever seen. We felt confident we knew what was occurring in our school and in our classrooms.

The next year we continued with our walk-through program. We modified our template to accommodate new school initiatives and to address any instructional deficiencies we identified from the previous year. Classroom visits continued to be three to five minutes in length consisting primarily of checked boxes acknowledging observed behavior of teachers. I thought I was revolutionizing the observation process. I was in classes every day observing teachers and offering them feedback in the form of a checked box. I was using a web based platform that compiled my check boxes into charts and graphs that informed me of the amount of times I checked a box and a percentage of incidences of observed behavior. I was making a difference, or so I thought.

The following school year I applied and was accepted into a doctoral program. Semester one of my doctoral program introduced me to Advanced Qualitative Research. I was exposed to the many wonderful intricacies of qualitative research. I was intrigued by the concept of exploring why study participants felt a certain way about things and how they responded when specific circumstances were applied to situations. I enjoyed the freedom that qualitative research provided me as the researcher. A qualitative design allows the researcher opportunities to examine the meaning of conversations with study participants and question the reasons why participants choose a specific response.

A requirement of the class was to conduct a small pilot study. I chose the walk-through program as the topic of my study. I wanted to examine what opinions teachers had of the

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program. I wanted to know what they wanted from the program and how the walk-through program could be beneficial to them. The purpose of the study was to examine the perception and impact of walk-through data on teacher performance. Specifically, what aspects of the informal walk-through teacher assessment process did teacher's value? When teachers received the template after a walk-through, what information was important to them? What things were valuable to them and what things did they discard? How did data impact their current practice and what suggestions did they have to make the process more effective? I had many questions all resulting from information learned in the Advanced Qualitative class.

What I learned from this small pilot study was very encouraging. My goal during the pilot study was to determine if the informal walk-through teacher program had value for teachers. I also wanted to examine what could be done to improve the walk-through process and make it more beneficial to teachers. Findings from the study demonstrated the process had value and was influential with regard to the instructional practice of teachers. Teachers modified their instructional strategies and became more aware of students' needs as a result of the observation process. The process, as a whole, provided participants with the opportunity to reflect on their teaching, have open dialogue about the strengths and challenges experienced by educators, experience support from colleagues and administration, and formulate responses to areas that were of interest to them. Participants clearly indicated that feedback on teaching and classroom practice was valued when it was delivered in a manner that was thoughtful and sincere. Participants reported they understood there is always room for improvement and that it is acceptable to have those areas identified.

Findings also demonstrated several areas where the walk-through process could be improved. The walk-through process was too rigid and impersonal in past years. A series of

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checklists was just not appropriate for communicating progress on instructional initiatives. Teachers wanted more information about what they were doing in the classroom. Teachers wanted opportunities to read and understand what was observed during the visit and the walk-through process was just not providing that for teachers. Participants also wanted to see improvements regarding the timing and duration of classroom visits. They desired for observations to be more evenly spread-out during the week and not all crammed in on Friday afternoons. Teachers reported this would allow observers to see more of the big picture and not just what takes place at the end of the day or the end of the week. Participants also expressed that they would like for the observations to be longer. They did not think a three to five minute visit was long enough to really see what was going on in class.

As a result of these findings, several modifications were made to the walk-through process. The number of walk-throughs that administrators must complete during a week was decreased so that more time could be spent in the classroom during a visit. A conscious effort was made to conduct more walk-throughs at the beginning of the week so that walk-through visits could be more consistently conducted throughout the week. Most importantly, in my opinion, I learned less of a focus should be placed on the check boxes contained in the template and more emphasis should be focused on the comments made to teachers regarding what was observed. Since these modifications were made, an increased number of teachers have commented that the walk-through process has become more beneficial to them and their instructional practice.

What I believe to be the most enlightening result of the pilot study was my knowledge that the walk-through program needed to be modified. Prior to the pilot study, the program

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primarily served the interest of the administrators. As a result, changes were made and the benefits to teachers and ultimately students became the focus of the program.

As the focus of the program changed so did the level of involvement among teachers. Teachers became more vocal. Teachers began to respond to classroom visits. Teachers would send email responses to observers explaining their behaviors during the visit. Teachers would stop observers in the hall or visit with them in the office to provide an explanation. Teachers began to critique the information listed on the walk-through and became increasingly more involved in the process.

The increased interest among teachers and their desire to become more involved in the walk-through process was very exciting. I appreciated teachers informing me of their thoughts and feelings regarding the walk-through program. I appreciated the fact that teachers wanted to discuss with me the information that was contained on the walk-through template after a visit to their classroom. The vigor demonstrated by teachers intrigued me. I began to ask myself questions. I asked myself many questions but had very few answers. I wanted to know more about teachers and their responses to the information contained in the template. I was curious as to how teachers perceived the information and what would motivate them to respond in the manner they did. I wanted to know what teachers thought of my comments and how my comments influenced them to respond.

My curiosity and my desire to improve the effectiveness of teachers is the driving force for this work. I enjoy visiting teachers in their classrooms and observing the incredible work they do with students. However, there has to be more that I can do than just observe. Can I offer teachers insight into their practice that assists them in becoming more effective educators? Does

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the information and feedback I offer to teachers after a classroom observation influence them to respond in a specific manner? I hope to gain insight into these questions as a result of this work.

The conceptual framework associated with this study is Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997). Higgins described that people will respond to situations or stimuli with either a prevention response or a promotion response. A prevention response is focused on ensuring the absence of negatives. A promotion response is focused on ensuring safety or promotion. The prevention or promotion response of participants after feedback from the principal will be an interesting examination.

Manders (2008) noted when examining desirable qualities of principals that “Effective leadership is a passion, a dedication to hard work along with insurmountable patience and an unconditional desire to make a difference” (p. 94). That unconditional desire to make a difference through classroom visits and providing feedback to teachers is what is intriguing. Providing feedback to teachers is essential for them to reflect on their professional practice and ultimately seek new and innovative methods for teaching (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). Soliciting this reflection or any response from teachers when they receive feedback is the interesting aspect of the process of observing teachers.

Many classroom visits over the course of a school year as compared to the traditional one or two visits a year yield more relevant data and are more beneficial to teachers (Marshall, 2005). However, just visiting the classroom is not enough. Feedback is a critical component in student achievement and the professional growth of teachers (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). But what teachers do with this feedback is equally as critical. Reviewing the related literature left me perplexed regarding how teachers respond to feedback from class observations. There is little inquiry into how teachers respond to feedback provided to them after a classroom visit. When

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McGill (2007) asked principals what they valued from conducting classroom observations; overwhelmingly stated were the benefits to students and improved teacher growth. To understand how or why teachers are influenced after a classroom visit is an important endeavor for researchers. Demonstrating improvement, regardless of the measure, should not be the end result. Asking why improvement was demonstrated and how teacher growth was experienced is important in improving and sustaining positive change (Feeney, 2007). The problem addressed in this research is the how and why of teachers' responses to feedback.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher responses to principal feedback of class observations. The observation process involving visits to classrooms followed by a submission of feedback to teachers has been prevalent in my school for many years. I visit at the minimum of 10 classrooms a week and collect data on an electronic template. The template allows me to collect data on teacher behaviors within the classroom while also allowing me to provide feedback to the teacher when the visit is concluded. Throughout my tenure as principal, I have had many opportunities to discuss the observation process with teachers. However, I continue to have questions regarding how teachers feel about the visits and what influences them to respond the way they do as a result of the feedback.

My goal for conducting this research is to answer the questions that I continue to ask myself and that I feel are yet to be sufficiently answered by other researchers. The review of literature regarding feedback provided to teachers by principals is lacking. The majority of research addressing feedback to teachers focuses on feedback from individuals other than the principal. When feedback from principals is provided to teachers it is often evaluative in nature. Feedback offered through the walk-through program is not intended to be evaluative in nature.

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Feedback offered through the walk-through program is intended to solicit reflection from teachers and open lines of communication among the teacher and the principal. To better understand how teachers respond to principal feedback of classroom observations, 16 teachers from a suburban high school located in the Southeastern United States will participate in the study.

Based upon the stated purpose and goals of this study, the following research questions will guide this work. The primary research questions for this study are:

1. How do teachers respond to principal's feedback after class observations?
2. Why do teachers respond to principal's observation feedback in specific ways?
3. How do teachers' verbal responses to principal feedback differ from their behavioral responses to principal feedback?
4. Do teachers' responses to principal's observation feedback differ by academic discipline?
5. Do teachers' responses to principal's observation feedback differ by their teaching experiences?
6. Do teachers respond to principal's feedback with prevention responses or promotion responses?

Significance of the Study

The goal of any educational initiative should be to improve student achievement (Feeney, 2007). Visits to classrooms by principals to observe teachers and students in the learning process are an acceptable method of evaluating teacher effectiveness (McGill, 2011). Improving teacher effectiveness involves first identifying areas where improvement may be needed and providing feedback to teachers regarding those areas. In addition, feedback may be provided to teachers for areas where improvement is not readily evident but will enhance teacher performance as a result.

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The goal of feedback is to increase teacher effectiveness and improve professional growth (Feeney, 2007). Hattie & Timperley (2007) propose that feedback is second only to quality instruction when improvement initiatives are considered for schools, can only build upon strong instructional practice, and is often under researched. Hattie & Timperley (2007) also state that feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning, too rarely occurs, and needs to be more fully researched investigating how feedback affects the learning process. Manders (2008) reports that teachers perceive principals to be effective when they provide feedback that fosters professional growth. The best teachers also have room for improvement (Skretta, 2008).

Investigating the positive attributes of feedback was not a difficult task. The majority of research I discovered regarding the effects of feedback examined feedback provided to students. As I narrowed my investigation to examine feedback provided to teachers I encountered far less amounts of research. The majority of research on the topic of feedback provided to teachers would focus on teacher reflection, professional growth, characteristics of teaching, teacher self-efficacy, learning goals, or something that I feel was previously researched “to death” for lack of a better phrase. Several researchers have reported that feedback provided to teachers is of value (Bloom, 2007; Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009; Lee, 2011; Skretta, 2008; Tuytens & Devos, 2011; & Van Eekelen, Vermunt, & Boshiun, 2006). However, there is little information regarding what teachers do with feedback after classroom observations. Even more evident is the lack of research regarding principal feedback from observations of classrooms.

The goals of this research are to examine teachers’ responses to feedback from the principal and four administrators of BOB high school after class observations. The teachers’ response is operationally defined for this study by behavioral responses, verbal responses, and written responses. I will specifically examine the responses of 16 teachers to principal feedback

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of class observations. Four teachers from each of the major disciplines; Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English will participate in the study. In each major discipline, the two most experienced and two most inexperienced teachers will be selected for study.

An examination of both the verbal and behavioral responses of teachers to principal feedback will be of interest in this study. Investigating verbal responses of teachers as compared to behavioral responses of teachers will provide information regarding teachers' intentions and if stated intentions of teachers are related to the behavioral response. The opportunity to examine responses from experienced and inexperienced teachers will provide information regarding any similarities or differences among varying experience levels of teachers. Gaining insight into how teachers respond to principal feedback after classroom observations will assist principals in understanding how to provide feedback to teachers so that positive outcomes are more likely to result.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher responses to principal feedback of class observations. Subsequently, how teacher responses differ by academic discipline, teaching experience, and prior feedback incidences will also be examined. How teacher responses differ in these ways is an underlying question that I have pondered for a considerable amount of time and one that has motivated me to examine why teachers respond in the manner they do.

Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) posits two separate motivations for how someone will respond: prevention and promotion. A prevention focus for response emphasizes a consideration for safety and security. One responds in a manner with the focus of ensuring that something unpleasant or unsafe will not occur. There is a strategic focus for avoiding a loss.

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A promotion focus for response emphasizes a consideration for accomplishment and/or an advancement of needs. There is a strategic concern regarding the promotion focus of achieving gains and avoiding responses that do not achieve gains. Higgins (1997) also stated that regulatory focus is situational and operates in a state of flux. Regulatory focus can differ among individuals themselves and among situations involving individuals.

Regulatory focus can be both passive and aggressive in both prevention and promotion. Higgins (1997) used the terms vigilant and eager. A vigilant strategy ensures the absence of negatives. Someone who is vigilant in their regulatory focus generally focuses on the absence of negatives ensuring that situations or circumstances that could result in negatives are diminished.

An eager strategy focuses on the promotion of positives. Someone who is eager in their regulatory focus attempts to ensure the presence of positive circumstances and the absence of non-positives. Eager regulatory focused individuals generally focus on the promotion of positive situations and circumstances ensuring that the positive is achieved. Therefore, someone who is consistently prevention focused generally prefers a vigilant strategy and someone who is promotion focused generally prefers an eager strategy.

Although Higgins (1997) explained that regulatory focus theory explains to a degree how responses may emerge, he cautions that regulatory focus is sometimes dependent on situational and individual specific variables (Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998). A strong person-situation effect can have a significant influence on regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997). The individual responses of a person can sometimes be significantly influenced by the situational perception of the individual. How teacher responses vary by their years of experience, their specialized area of academia, and their specific situations encountered during this study will be interesting.

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Social Cognitive Theory, formerly known as Social Learning Theory, proposes that behavior change is affected by environmental influences, personal factors, and attributes of the behavior itself (Robbins, 2003). Social Cognitive theory is an extension of operant conditioning which states that behavior is a result of consequences. Individuals react to how they perceive consequences of their behavior. The individual's positive expectations from behaviors must outweigh the negative expectations from behaviors. Self-efficacy is believed to be the most important characteristic that determines a person's behavioral change because the expected outcomes are filtered through a person's expectations of being able to perform the behavior (Robbins, 2003).

Definition of Relevant Terms

When examining teachers' response to feedback after class observations, the various levels of perception among teachers must be considered by researchers (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). Clarifications of terms, as they relate to this study, are intended to address the various perceptions of the reader. For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined in relevant context of the goals and objectives of this work.

Behavioral Response. Any actions that teachers take to improve their teaching practices in terms of instructional strategies, classroom procedures, and/or monitoring of student progress in response to principals' feedback.

Categories. The grouping of similar or like codes to develop broader, more interrelated themes; also termed code families.

Class Observation. Classroom visits lasting a varied amount of time where an observer records data regarding the behavior of teachers using a pre-determined organizational framework.

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Class Room Instruction. The delivery of content from the teacher to the student. The direct practice of providing content related instruction to students.

Code. Assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that specific pieces of data are retrievable (Merriam, 2009).

Code Family. The grouping of similar or like codes to develop broader, more interrelated themes.

Co-Teacher. A Certified Special Education teacher assigned to an academic class to assist students who are served through an individualized education plan.

Electronic Template. Electronic form created on a web-based platform that allows an observer to record written and tally-mark data observed during a class observation.

Feedback. Written, verbal, or behavioral information provided to another referencing a specific act or acts.

Frequency of Assignment. The number of times a code is assigned to one or more participant quotations identifying relevance of the data.

Instructional Practice. Actions or behaviors demonstrated by teachers that involve communicating instructional content directly to students.

Interview. A meeting or conversation in which the researcher asks questions and records answers of study participants regarding responses to principal feedback of class observations.

Journal Writing. A record produced by study participants of occurrences, experiences, and/or related information regarding responses to principal feedback of class observations.

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LFS. Learning Focused Schools. The instructional framework used by BOB high school to deliver academic curriculum.

Meaningful Feedback. Information provided to another referencing a specific act or acts that is clear, concise, purposeful, and compatible with the recipients' level of knowledge (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Non-Negotiables. Five items that are required to be posted on the wall of every classroom at BOB high school. These items are the warm-up to be used to initiate the learning for students, the standard(s) that are associated with the lesson, the essential question(s) derived from the standard, the class procedures that students are to perform for that day, and the student agenda message that is used to summarize the learning or prepare students for the next day.

Prevention Response. A prevention response is focused on ensuring the absence of negatives.

Primary Document. Any text document loaded into Atlas ti associated with study related sources of data collection. These may be in the form of a word document, PDF, memo, or other text document.

Principal. Chief or head administrator of a school.

Professional Practice. Actions or behaviors demonstrated by teachers that supports the communication of instructional content to students. This may involve planning, web page information, professional collaboration, professional learning, resource development, etc.

Promotion Response. A promotion response is focused on ensuring safety or promotion

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Quotation. Segments of data derived from participant responses. This may be in the form of a response, thought, statement, idea, and/or related data excerpt from a primary document.

Response. Any behavior that results from an external or internal stimulus.

Self-Reflection. Careful consideration of one's past experiences in an effort to improve upon his/her present level of competence.

Teaching Experience. Number of years' experience as a teacher.

Verbal Response. Any verbal actions that teachers make to the researcher in reference to feedback provided after a class observation.

Overview of Study

In my former life I was a student athlete who eventually followed the path of so many who came before me. My playing days ended shortly after college but my desire to compete still burned as bright as it ever did. I felt I still had something to give and I wanted to continue what I enjoyed so much. I wanted to work with young people and pass along the knowledge I had gained from a lifetime of athletic participation. As I was maturing into a young adult I realized the many lessons I had learned from my athletic experiences were not necessarily physical in nature. I learned the value of hard work and dedication to the things I was passionate about. I also learned what it meant to be a member of a team and how team mates take care of one another. I wanted to offer young people experiences that would benefit them off the playing field when an athletic career ended. So, I became an educator and a coach. I enjoyed coaching and working with young people. I enjoyed guiding young athletes to levels of success both on and off the field. I spent several years teaching and coaching. Throughout those years I realized that I might have more to offer.

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After what I considered to be a fairly successful teaching and coaching career I was ready for something more. I wanted an opportunity to make an impact on a larger scale. I wanted to work with those who would have a greater impact on students. I wanted to work with teachers. I became an administrator. As an administrator I have had an opportunity to work with the adults who work with students. I have had the opportunity to influence more students through my work with teachers. But, I still had that competitive edge. I wanted to be the best and I wanted my teachers to be the best so that my students can be the best. This drive to be the best is the foundation for this study. I wanted to know what teachers think, feel, and perceive when we are trying to be the best. When I entered a classroom and watched teachers perform I offered feedback regarding what I observed. In some instances the feedback was positive. In other instances the feedback was not positive. To be the best we must continuously improve. For me to improve my ability to observe teachers and offer feedback I should have increased awareness of how teachers responded to feedback. I wanted to examine how teachers responded when feedback was provided. The stated purpose of this study is to examine teacher responses to principal feedback after classroom observations.

The largest determining factor in student success is having an effective teacher in the classroom (Liu, 2010; Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009; Routman, 2012; & Southworth, 2010). An effective method of identifying good teachers is for educational leaders to visit classrooms and watch what happens as teachers teach and students learn (McGill, 2011). However, visiting classrooms to simply watch what teachers do is not completely effective (Marshall, 2005). To optimize the classroom visit, leaders are encouraged to observe and offer feedback to teachers (Tuytens & Devos, 2011).

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A function of feedback is to increase the effectiveness of teachers (Getzlaf, B., Perry, B., Toffner, G., Lamarche, K., & Edwards, M. 2009). Feedback is offered to teachers to inform them of classroom practice that they may or may not realize for themselves. Colvin, Flannery, Sugai, and Monegan (2009) suggested that an effective method of improving instructional practice is to conduct classroom observations and provide performance feedback to teachers.

So many times teachers are evaluated only once or twice a year. These infrequent visits to classrooms to observe teachers are ineffective (Marshall, 2005). Observations should be conducted frequently to examine teachers' levels of performance. Frequent observations of teachers also provide insight into the real work teachers are performing and not the "dog and pony" show that some teachers perform when they know they are going to be observed (Oliva, Mathers, & Laine. 2009).

In addition to conducting frequent observations, leaders should provide teachers with feedback that communicates specific information about the classroom observation. Feedback offered to teachers should be personal and be accurate as it relates to instructional expectations (Getzlaf. Et al., 2009). Feedback provided to teachers should be descriptive and based upon what is observed (Feeney, 2007). However, feedback needs to solicit a response from teachers (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Teachers' responses to feedback may determine the level of improvement to be experienced. Teachers may not perceive feedback in the manner it was intended by the observer (Lee, 2011). This miscommunication of the feedback may hinder the improvement process. Understanding how teachers respond to feedback and the resulting action or in some cases inaction has intrigued me for years.

In my effort to be the best I also wanted for my teachers and my students to be the best. This competitive nature drives my perspective as an educational leader. To be the best we must

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continuously improve. For me to facilitate continuous improvement among my students I must encourage my teachers to continuously improve. Classroom observations and feedback provided to teachers encourage the process of continuous improvement (Colvin, et al., 2009).

The focus of this study is teachers' response to principal feedback of class observations. I will examine the feedback patterns of 16 teachers that teach in the same high school. Each teacher will be observed three times and provided feedback regarding the observation. Observations with feedback will also be conducted by four other administrators resulting in each teacher being observed several times. Collected data will be examined to address the stated research questions for this study. A conclusive report of the findings along with a summary of implications regarding the collected data will be provided.

Participants for this study will be four teachers from each of the four core academic areas; Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English. Participants were selected based upon relative teaching experience. The two teachers with the highest number of years teaching experience and the two teachers with the fewest number of years teaching experience from each of the four core academic areas were invited to participate in the study.

As researcher, I will observe each of the 16 study participants three times. Each observation will be approximately 30 minutes in length. Data collected during the observation will be recorded on an electronic template (Appendix A). The electronic template allows the researcher to collect data in the form of checked items and entered text. Feedback provided to study participants will be derived from the checked items and the entered text recorded on the template. Feedback from observations of four additional administrators will also be examined for use in the study. Data regarding teachers' responses to feedback will also be collected through participant interviews and journal writing.

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Much of the research I encountered regarding feedback in the field of education involved feedback provided by teachers to students. I have discovered very little research in the form of feedback provided to teachers and even less regarding feedback provided to teachers from administrators or other supervisors after class observations. This study addresses the gap in current research regarding principal feedback provided to teachers after class observations. Through this study I seek to examine how teachers respond to principal feedback from class observations. It is my desire to gain an understanding of how teachers respond to principal feedback through their behavior as well as through verbal communication. It is my desire that through this examination I will gain insight into how teachers respond to feedback so that I may improve my ability to provide feedback to teachers that encourages growth and improved teacher practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two is a review of the literature on the relevant findings of others as reported in journal articles, empirical studies, dissertations, and other forms of manuscript. Research regarding the response of teachers to principal feedback after class room observations is lacking. The majority of research discovered was feedback provided by teachers to students (Chen, Whittinghill, & Kadlowec, 2010; Ferguson, 2011; Souter, 2009; Southworth, 2010). Not to the extent to which feedback was provided to students, there were also studies that examined feedback provided to teachers from other sources (Bloom, 2007; Casey, 2008; Feeney, 2007; Hattie and Timperley, 2007; Tuytens and Devos, 2011).

In addition to reviewing literature regarding feedback, It is prudent to also include in this review research regarding class observations (Lee, 2011; Marshall, 2005; McGill, 2011) as class observations were the method by which feedback presented to teachers originated. Feedback provided to teachers can be in many forms and delivered in many ways. However, characteristics of effective feedback from observations of teaching and the response it generates from teachers needs to be explored.

Teacher Factor and Student Learning

Although research regarding feedback and the many attributes feedback may have on learning is abundant, there is a considerable gap in the research regarding feedback provided to teachers and even more of a gap regarding feedback provided to teachers after class observations. Inevitably, one must look at the aforementioned “attributes” feedback may have on learning to attempt to understand how feedback has been provided to learners in general and the impact feedback has on learning. However, I feel by reviewing specific cases in the literature,

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regardless of direction or purpose, there is a need for greater understanding of how feedback impacts learning.

Research studies have identified that the single most influential factor in student success is having an effective teacher in the classroom (Liu, 2010; Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009; Routman, 2012; Southworth, 2010). Liu (2010) focused his study on the differences between Chinese and American students' performance on cross-national performance assessments. Liu reviewed several empirical studies that focused on varying differences in the Chinese and American educational systems and stated that without considering the different types of professional knowledge the teachers in these two countries possess, simple comparison of students' performance on assessments makes little sense. Liu (2010) also stated that without considering how teachers develop professional knowledge one cannot determine the primary reason in the discrepancy of scores among the students of these two nations. In short, teacher knowledge and ability to integrate that knowledge into instructional strategies is a considerable factor in students' performance.

Southworth (2010) conducted hierarchical linear regression analyses on North Carolina students' reading and Mathematics end-of-grade achievement scores in fourth, sixth, and eighth grades to investigate the effect school-level inputs may have had on the achievement gap of students. Listed among several variables investigated by Southworth was teacher quality. Southworth (2010) reported that teacher quality as measured by years of experience and advanced degrees had a significantly positive effect on student achievement among all students. Southworth's conclusion that teacher quality affected students in a positive manner was refreshing.

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Effective feedback has been shown as an important means of communication between the teacher and the evaluator (Getzlaf et al, 2009). Getzlaf et al. studied online graduate students to determine students' perceptions of the content of effective instructor feedback. Data collected were via a survey that included open ended questions inviting participants to share their perspectives regarding on-line instructor feedback. Getzlaf et al. reported five major themes were revealed from the study: student involvement, gentle guidance, being positively constructive, timeliness, and future orientation. However, feedback offered to teachers from observers must be of quality (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Hattie and Timperley (2007) conducted a meta-analysis where they examined the impact feedback had on learning. The authors determined that although feedback had a major influence on learning, the type of feedback and the way it was given determined levels of effectiveness. Hattie and Timperley suggested a feedback model consisting of four levels; task, process, regulatory, and self-levels. Effective feedback at the task, process, and regulatory levels were interrelated. Feedback was most effective when it assisted in identifying faulty and erroneous cues and aids in building more effective and efficient strategies for understanding material. Hattie and Timperley (2007) suggested that feedback addressing the fourth level of self is rarely effective. The learner usually avoided the risk of engaging the material and minimized personal effort to avoid the fear of failure.

William (2012) wrote an article where he compared feedback to a thermostat that controls the temperature in a room. William stated that just as a thermostat adjusts room temperature, effective feedback helps maintain a supportive environment for learning. William discussed in his article examples of positive and negative feedback loops. An example of a positive feedback loop is the feedback you hear when a microphone becomes too close to the loudspeaker that is

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connected to the microphone. The microphone picks up the amplified sound coming from the speaker resulting in the disturbing howl you hear as feedback. A negative feedback loop is demonstrated by the function of a thermostat. A thermostat contains a mechanism that compares the desired temperature in the room to the actual temperature of the room. When those two temperatures are not equal, the thermostat sends a signal for the heat or air conditioning to turn on. The important thing about the concept of feedback in engineering is that the feedback is designed as part of the system and the role of the feedback is to keep the system under control.

William (2012) explained that when feedback is provided to students' eight things may happen and six of those things are bad. Students respond to feedback in four different ways; they may change the behavior, modify the goal, abandon the goal, or reject the feedback. Each of these four responses is associated with a corresponding behavior. When students are confronted with whether or not to change a behavior they will either increase or decrease effort. Students who considered modifying the goal chose to either increase or decrease aspirations. Students who contemplated abandoning the goal made that decision based upon the difficulty of the goal. Those students who rejected the feedback simply ignored it. Of these responses, the two worth preserving are increasing effort and increasing aspirations (William, 2012). We cannot understand feedback without thinking about how recipients respond to feedback. Feedback only works within a system. Teachers cannot give good feedback without understanding students, their experiences with current and previous teachers, their attitudes about subjects they are studying, and how they perceive you. This complexity means that the key to effective feedback is judgment and creativity of teachers (William, 2012).

Hellrung and Hartig (2013) conducted a review of empirical studies where they attempted to address how teachers use and understand feedback. The researchers examined how teachers

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understand the feedback they receive from external sources, how teachers use the feedback, and how teachers' understanding and use of such feedback affected the achievement of their students. After application of study criteria, researchers utilized 52 empirical studies to accomplish reported goals of their study. Researchers grouped the studies into three separate categories; understanding, use, and student achievement. A table was created to summarize details about the methods and findings of each study. Hellrung and Hartig (2013) reported that their analysis revealed that teachers generally have problems in understanding feedback from external sources requiring teachers and/or their schools to implement support and training for teachers in the interpretation of specific feedback data. With regard to the use of external feedback data, the authors suggested that there not be an extended amount of time between the event and the feedback that resulted from the event. Increased mounts of time between the event and the feedback that resulted hinders teachers from understanding and utilizing the feedback to change practice. The effects of external feedback sources on student achievement were reported by the researchers to be somewhat inconclusive. In some cases reviewed by Hellrung and Hartig (2013) student achievement increased as a result of external feedback sources provided to teachers. However, the authors caution that based upon the amount of time between the event and the provision of feedback the increase in student achievement should not be considered significant.

Chen, Whittinghill, & Kadlowec (2010) wished to improve student learning in foundation engineering courses. The researchers hypothesized that learning is improved by providing rapid feedback to students on their understanding of key concepts and skills as well as provides students with insight into their strategies for learning. Chen et al. (2010) alluded to rapid feedback as informing students of their progress immediately after a stimulus. For example, if a question were to be asked by the professor in class the correct response to that question would

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immediately follow the question or a discussion about the question. Chen et al. (2010) conducted their study in two sections of a lower-level engineering mechanics course for two consecutive years. One of the researchers taught sections and a crossover design of experiment was used. In a crossover design, one section was randomly chosen to receive feedback with handheld computers (treatment group) while the other received the “control”, which was either a feedback system using flashcards (in year one) or no feedback (year two). Findings from year one showed no significant difference using either rapid-feedback method. However, year two findings showed a significantly positive difference when students received feedback. Significant in these findings is the determination that feedback should be provided to teachers within a short amount of time after the observation. The findings by Chen et al. (2010) supported findings from Getzlaf et al. (2009) that feedback should be presented in a timely manner.

Ferguson (2011) examined 465 graduate students and 101 undergraduate students studying teacher education at a major Australian university to determine what students perceived to be effective, quality feedback based upon their extensive higher education experiences. Students completed a questionnaire with a mix of open and closed questions administered approximately three quarters of the way through their course after they had experience with assessment and feedback in the respective courses. Questions requiring a rating within the questionnaire focused on the range of assessment designs, quantity, and targeting of the feedback and the tone of the feedback provided. Students were also asked what they felt was the best balance between competing feedback issues for them personally as well as general suggestions to improve feedback quality. Ferguson (2011) concluded that greater experience in university programs did not assist students in dealing with feedback problems. Students reported that written feedback that was timely and personalized regarding their specific piece of work was the

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most useful feedback option for them. Students also commented that feedback needed to be positive, clear, and constructive acknowledging student successes and guiding them towards future improvement. Finally, Ferguson reported that the vast majority of students identified feedback as a valued part of their educational experience when done effectively and that they would become frustrated when feedback was unclear, too brief, or not relevant to their purpose. Ferguson's (2011) conclusions supported findings reported by researchers listed in this review (Feeney, 2009; Getzlaf et al., 2007; Oliva et al., 2009).

Harms and Roebuck (2010) addressed the concept of learning how to give and receive feedback in their business courses at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Harms) and Kennesaw State University (Roebuck). The authors proposed two feedback models in their article to assist students in providing and receiving feedback. Harms and Roebuck (2010) researched feedback models in hopes of finding models that their students could use in class and hopefully later in their professional careers. They sought out feedback models that were constructive, cooperative, and reciprocal while also being clearly designed and could be efficient regarding the amount of time it would take to complete the model. The researchers agreed upon the BET and BEAR feedback models to teach their students.

The BET feedback model focuses on positive feedback and included three steps: behavior, effect, and thank you. Harms and Roebuck (2010) encouraged their students to make approximately 75 to 80 percent of their feedback positive. In the "behavior" step, individuals gave feedback that described specific, detailed observations of positive behaviors. Positive feedback should be clear, detailed, and accurate. The "effect" step explained how the individual's behavior/actions is/are useful to the team. Thanking the individual is sometimes difficult for the student but is necessary to remain positive when feedback was provided.

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The BEAR feedback model is comprised of four steps: behavior, effect, alternative, and result. Harms and Roebuck (2010) encouraged their students to use the BEAR feedback model approximately 20 to 25 percent of the time when providing feedback. In the “behavior” step, feedback providers gave specific, detailed feedback of negative or nonproductive behaviors. In the “effect” segment, those providing feedback described how these behaviors affected the team. In the “alternative” step, individuals that provided feedback recommended and described the behaviors he or she would like to have observed in place of the nonproductive behaviors. In the “result” section, Harms and Roebuck (2010) encouraged students to think of other creative ways to have exhibited behaviors so that outcomes would have been more positive.

Harms and Roebuck (2010) reported that business communication teachers are well positioned to implement feedback instruction into their courses. Students in their classes reported that the BET and BEAR feedback models were helpful to them when delivering feedback. Students also reported that assignments designed to practice the feedback models provided them with beneficial experiences for both identifying acceptable and unacceptable behaviors among employees and peers and formulate both written and verbal responses regarding the behaviors.

Feedback After Observations and Teaching Improvement

Oliva, Mathers, and Laine (2009) reviewed several empirical studies regarding teacher evaluation practices in support of implementing new and improved methods of providing support to teachers. The principal of a Chicago high school along with local school district and teachers’ union leaders developed a standardized classroom observation rubric. Their hopes were that through frequent observation visits followed by feedback from the observer, teachers would have a clearer picture of classroom practice. Oliva et al. (2009) concluded that principals play a vital

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role in the creation of useful teacher evaluation methods. Education systems should provide methods of providing teachers with feedback that encourage continuous professional growth.

Structured observations are a means by which administrators, teacher leaders, or colleagues can explore the effectiveness of teachers (Colvin, Flannery, Sugai, & Monegan, 2009). Colvin et al. (2009) developed an observation tool to specifically collect information that would give teachers a clear picture of the interconnected patterns of instructional practices, student behavior, and teaching contexts over time. This structured observation protocol defined the parameters of the observation providing both the observer and the teacher with a clearly defined observational process. Colvin et al. (2009) conducted a qualitative case study on a male high school science teacher examining the effects of classroom observations accompanied by performance feedback focused on three key areas; classroom instructional settings, instructional practice, and student behavior. Researchers conducted three observation cycles of the science teacher. Immediately following each cycle researchers would submit feedback to the teacher regarding classroom practice. As a result of the observations accompanied with specific feedback regarding teaching practice and classroom management strategies the science teacher changed or modified practice based upon key concepts contained in the feedback. Colvin et al. (2009) reported that the results of their case study suggested that change in high school teachers' academic instructional practices can increase student engagement in the class. The authors also suggested that an observation system that gives high school teachers information about instructional practices and the effects they have on whole-class behaviors are feasible, relevant, and effective. Frequent formative observations of teachers allow better understanding of classroom dynamics and the teaching strategies that teachers use (Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009).

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Marshall and Young (2009) supported the concept of frequent classroom observations when they stated that classroom observations can provide a richer depiction of student learning and instructional strategies. Marshall and Young provided information regarding the benefits of observing teachers and providing them with meaningful feedback in the context of teaching adult language learners. Their brief addressed three types of observations followed by feedback sessions; formal, walk-through, and alternative. Annual reviews of teacher performance, walk-throughs, and alternative forms of observation are all useful tools in evaluating and supporting teachers despite the age of their students (Marshall & Young, 2009). Structured observations of teachers created opportunities for school leaders to provide meaningful feedback regarding the classroom experience (Routman, 2012).

Feedback offered to teachers should be of the highest quality and foster reflection from teachers regarding their professional practice (Feeney, 2007; Gray & Streshly, 2008; McGill, 2011). Feeney (2007) wrote an article wherein he examined the quality of feedback and how administrators use and provide this feedback to teachers through the evaluation process. Gray and Streshly (2008) examined what made good schools great. Gray and Streshly patterned their research after the good to great project authored by Jim Collins where he examined businesses that transitioned from a good company to a great company and applied it to educational leadership. McGill (2011) conducted a quantitative study that examined the level of importance that principals placed on the practice of classroom walkthroughs and on the specific elements of classroom walkthroughs. McGill surveyed elementary school principals from three metro-area school districts and determined that principals valued the practices associated with classroom walk-throughs. McGill (2011) also reported that participants perceived classroom walk-throughs to be effective in improving teacher-administrator relationships, informing principals of

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curriculum practices among teachers in the classroom, promoting professional development efforts, and improving student achievement.

Feedback offered to teachers becomes more effective and valuable when teachers perceive the feedback to be of high quality. Oliva et al. (2009) discussed effective teacher evaluation and stated that evaluation with little or no real information as to performance or how to improve instruction is of little value. Teachers want to know if what they are doing in the classroom is acceptable and how they can improve. Quality feedback can provide teachers with that information.

Quality feedback should be a process where all parties feels comfortable both giving and receiving feedback (Getzlaf et al., 2009; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Bloom (2007) offered suggestions as to how structured observations could be done well and noted that it is important for everyone to be involved in all aspects of the process.

Bloom (2007) wrote in his article that the process of walk-throughs, class room visits, instructional walks, and the like needs clarity. Bloom suggested that clarity regarding these visits should be in the areas of purpose, participants, and process. Bloom made it very clear that through his many years of researching achievement initiatives he has concluded that visiting class rooms can be a transformative endeavor but done poorly can be detrimental to the levels of trust among the faculty. Bloom (2007) stated that before class visits are to begin everyone involved must be clear on the expectations and goals of the process. Bloom suggested that despite the specific visitation model they should all have the same basic core attributes. Visits should have at their core the development of professional learning communities focused on improving teaching and learning, teaching practice is informed by standards well communicated, grounded in the commitment to support the learning of every student and teacher, and that they

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are organized around clear protocols that are open to all, are evidence based, and are linked to the continuous cycles of inquiry.

Effective feedback has been shown as an important means of communication between the teacher and the evaluator (Getzlaf et al, 2009). Feedback should flow both ways meaning that the observer is willing to accept feedback from the teacher as well (Van Eekelen et al., 2006).

Routman (2012) reported that teachers were much more welcoming of people in their rooms after a level of trust had been established. Tuytens & Devos (2011) suggested that if the leader conducting the observations embodied characteristics that were important to the teacher the feedback was considered to be of a higher quality. Feeney (2007) reported that in order for feedback to be considered accurate it should focus on what the teachers and students were actually doing. The quality of feedback is often dependent upon the manner in which the feedback is generated and the relationship between the observer and the teacher. When teachers perceive the feedback provided to them is of high quality, the more likely teachers are to use the feedback to improve their professional practice (Tuytens & Devos, 2011).

Bloom (2007) suggested that information garnered from structured observations can result in thoughtful discussions about teaching practice. Bloom also stated that observations of teachers provide for stimulating conversation among professionals that enhance school culture.

Anast-May, Penick, Schroyer, & Howell (2011) investigated teachers' perceptions of conferencing with feedback. The authors suggested that to provide quality and focused feedback a structure needs to occur to promote reflective inquiry and conversations for facilitating the learning of teachers. Conferencing facilitates a collaborative and reflective dialogue after a lesson has been observed. The researchers conducted an action research project using qualitative data to investigate the experiences of teachers who volunteered to participate in classroom

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observations with face-to-face conferencing feedback. Of the 135 teachers available for the study, 37 agreed to participate in the study agreeing to all procedures. Participants ranged from one year teaching experience to 28 years of teaching experience with the average years of teaching experience among participants being 15 years. Anast-May et al. (2011) reported that frequent and extended observations are needed before summative evaluations are conducted, formative feedback needs to occur throughout the year, and that structure, such as conferencing, needs to be in place after each observation rather than one time at the end of the year. The researchers also reported that the process of evaluation should involve conferencing and feedback that will lead teachers to construct their own understanding and set professional goals that are measured in terms of student learning.

Casey (2008) wrote a doctoral dissertation where she investigated the receipt of feedback and its relationship to use of recommended practices among early childhood teachers. In her study, Casey stated that feedback could be provided by anyone; a supervisor, co-worker, consultant, or administrator. Casey also stated that the rationale for investigating teachers' perceptions of the feedback is simple, "as a field, we cannot expect to influence teachers' behavior if teachers perceive feedback as useless, too infrequent to be helpful, or nonexistent (p. 7)." The purpose of the study was to determine if preschool teachers received feedback and if self-reported receipt of feedback predicted teachers' self-reported use of recommended practices.

Casey (2008) developed a questionnaire and mailed the questionnaire to 1,824 Head Start centers in hopes of one teacher at each of the centers completing the questionnaire and returning it back to the researcher. After reviewing all questionnaires, 238 questionnaires were used for the study. The 238 respondents represented lead teachers in preschool classrooms, employed for at least one year by mutually exclusive Head Start centers.

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Teachers reported that they received very little feedback but when they did receive feedback it was useful (Casey, 2008). Teachers also reported that receipt of feedback did not predict teachers' use of self-reported use of recommended practices. However, when students with disabilities were in the class room the use of recommended practices increased significantly. Casey suggested that feedback regarding teachers' practices should be accompanied with professional development to achieve improved teacher effectiveness.

In some instances studies that are not empirical in nature are useful in providing information into a specific area of inquiry. These studies are often conducted by reputable researchers and involve a review of current literature in the field of interest. One such study that I reviewed and determined to be informative was conducted by Thurlings, Vermeulen, Bastiaens, and Stijnen (2013). The authors aimed to review literature that focused on feedback to teachers. The authors also supported my statement that there is little research focused on feedback to teachers. Thurlings et al. (2013) stated that to their knowledge, only one review prior to their study, Scheeler, Ruhl, and McAfee (2004), focused on performance feedback given to teachers. Scheeler et al. determined that performance feedback given to teachers was effective. Thurlings et al. (2013) updated the findings of Scheeler et al. (2004).

Thurlings et al. proposed that characteristics of effective feedback and feedback processes were related to a specific learning theory from which learners are facilitated. Thurlings et al. (2013) discovered through their review of literature that from a meta-cognitivist perspective it is important to leave the control with the learner. From the perspective of a social constructivist it would be prudent to provide constructive feedback. However, despite the learning theory effective feedback is task or goal oriented, specific, and neutral. In addition it was reported that characteristics of learners be considered when feedback is provided. Thurlings

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et al. (2013) proposed four rules-of-thumb when feedback is provided. First, feedback should involve both the observer and the teacher. Second, feedback should elaborate on errors made and not just acknowledge the error. Third, feedback should contribute to further improvement in teaching practice either through professional learning or some other form of growth opportunity. Finally, timing of the feedback should be immediate so that there is no loss of relevancy resulting from increased amounts of time between feedback opportunities.

Principal Feedback and Teaching Improvement

Roberson and Roberson (2009) stated that the principal is the critical factor in the success of novice teachers. I am currently reviewing candidates for a mid-year teaching vacancy and as most administrators will attest many mid-year teacher candidates have just graduated from their institutions in December. Whether it be in the middle of the school year or the beginning of the school year ensuring the success of novice teachers is critical to ensure students have effective teachers from which to learn. Roberson and Roberson (2009) wrote an article where they suggested that principals support novice teachers to promote high levels of classroom practice, ensure the academic success of all students, and encourage new ways of being in schools for both novice and veteran teachers alike. To achieve this, the authors suggested that principals need to understand the issues novice teachers experience, the expectations novice teachers have of principals and colleagues, and to develop effective methods to meet the needs of novice teachers. To meet the needs of novice teachers, the authors suggested that principals first establish regular professional development meetings with new teachers and that second principals provide novice teachers with meaningful instructive feedback that is both personal and professional (Roberson and Roberson, 2009).

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Why does the principal have to be the critical factor for ensuring the success of novice teachers? Roberson and Roberson (2009) answered this question when they reported that the principal is the focal point of the school to which all people involved first look to for direction. The principal is also the instructional leader of the school. As instructional leader of the school, the principal is accountable for the success or failure of both students and teachers. The principal has the power and authority to establish procedures that support novice teachers. Finally, the principal has the responsibility to students to ensure that the classroom environment is one in which they can be successful and meet performance goals and to teachers to ensure they are prepared to lead students to success.

Routman (2012) conducted weeklong residencies in schools across the United States and Canada promoting sustainable, whole-school change. During her residencies, Routman spent a considerable amount of time with the principal conducting “instructional walks”. Routman suggested that for sustainable change to occur trusting relationships among all school staff must occur. Trust is built through several whole-school and small-school conversations in vertical and grade-level teams. These conversations were built largely upon the observations of the principal. Knowledge gleaned by the principal from classroom observations was used to guide the staff towards whole-school patterns of strengths and needs focusing on promoting continued growth towards improvement.

Gray and Streshly (2008) examined why some schools transformed to great schools. They applied the research of Jim Collins, who initially asked this question of the corporate world, to educational leadership. Gray and Streshly wanted to know if there were identifiable characteristics of successful school principals that could be correlated with long-term educational success. Gray and Streshly (2008) found that principals of successful schools were very similar

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in leadership ability to the executives that led great companies in the corporate world but with one significant addition. Successful principals of great schools not only possessed duality of personal will and personal humility, confronted the brutal facts of the organization, knew what their organization was good at, and created a culture of discipline; similar to characteristics of corporate leaders. School principals also possessed the ability to create and sustain positive relationships with their faculty.

McGill (2011) conducted a doctoral study examining the level of importance that principals placed on the practice of classroom walkthroughs and on the specific elements of classroom walkthroughs. Participants were identified through a convenience sample of elementary school principals from three metro-area school districts in a Southeastern state that included both metropolitan and suburban communities which resulted in 195 elementary school principals participating in the study. McGill (2011) concluded that participants perceived classroom walkthroughs to be effective in improving teacher-administrator relationships, familiarizing the principals with curricular decisions being made in the classroom, promoting professional development, and improving student achievement.

Skretta (2008) examined data collected from Nebraska High School principals regarding their use of structured observations and noted that respondents reported that structured observations were better to use than the traditional evaluation. Respondents also noted that they had better knowledge of what was going on in their school from conducting structured observations which resulted in feedback that was more accurate and useful to the teacher. The purpose of Skretta's (2008) study was to examine principals' perceptions of the use and feedback processes of walkthrough teacher observations in their schools. Survey data was collected from walkthroughs of public high school principals representing all sizes of high schools in Nebraska.

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An on-line survey was completed by 91 of the 200 principals contacted for a 45.5% response rate. From this survey data, Skretta concluded that relationships among building leaders and teachers benefitted from doing walk-throughs. Skretta (2008) also concluded that feedback provided to teachers from conducting walk-throughs was of greater quality as a result of leaders spending more time in the classroom.

Teacher Reflection of Principal Feedback

Teachers valued effective feedback when they felt it was presented in the appropriate manner, they felt the feedback was genuine in nature, and when the feedback originated from a person who had a sincere interest in including them in the process (Getzlaf, et.al, 2009). Positive relationships among observers and teachers that foster a sense of collaboration to improve practice are perceived as increasing the quality of feedback (Skretta, 2008; Van Eekelen et al. 2006). Routman (2012) reported that teachers were much more welcoming of people in their rooms after a level of trust had been established. Routman reported findings that she has discovered from many years of conducting week-long, intensive workshops with school systems. Routman (2012) stated that early during the workshops she would spend the majority of her time visiting with teachers. She learned that she had to begin the week visiting with the building leader teaching them how to get out in their building and experience what occurs in their school. As the week concluded, Routman guided the building leader and staff to her “Optimal Learning” model. The model illustrated that the responsibility of learning has to be transferred from staff to students and that structured observations are a collaborative effort to improve.

Teachers perceived feedback to be of high quality when the observer was perceived to be competent in the role of providing feedback. This competency may result from training (Van Eekelen et al., 2009). McGill (2011) stated that leaders should be trained to recognize

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appropriate components of an effective classroom. Competency in providing quality feedback may also result from increased experience in completing structured observations to generate effective feedback (McGill, 2011; Routeman, 2012). Competency may come from the materials leaders use to conduct and evaluate teacher effectiveness. Feeney (2007) suggested that this could be in the form of a rubric that assists in providing effective feedback to teachers. Tuytens & Devos (2011) suggested that if the leader conducting the observations embodied characteristics that were important to the teacher the feedback was considered to be of a higher quality.

Tuytens and Devos (2011) examined the characteristics of school leaders and how those perceived characteristics affected the perception of feedback among teachers. This study took place in the Dutch speaking region of Belgium with teachers from 32 secondary schools. In each school 20 teachers were given a questionnaire. Researchers specifically chose to only involve teachers who had previous experience of at least one evaluation conference with their supervisor. A total of 640 teachers were given a questionnaire. Questionnaires from 414 teachers were returned for a return rate of 65%. The questionnaire was designed to collect data on the perception teachers had of their school leader and how those perceptions affected the perceived quality teachers placed on the feedback from the leader.

For feedback to be considered of high quality, it must be accurate. Getzlaf et al. (2009) stated that feedback should be precise as it relates to established expectations. Getzlaf et al. also noted that feedback should be authentic. Feedback needs to be clear, concise, and compatible with teachers' beliefs to be considered of quality (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). If teachers do not understand how feedback generated from structured observations relates to their philosophy of teaching they are less likely to consider the feedback as accurate (Lee, 2011).

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Runhaar, et al. (2010) studied factors affecting teachers' reflection and feedback asking patterns and discovered that when teachers saw their leader as someone who was more transformational in their leadership style the more likely they were to reflect and ask for additional feedback. The researchers surveyed 456 members of a Dutch Vocational Educational and Training College to investigate reflection and how participants asked for feedback from leaders. Teachers comprised 90% of respondents with the other 10% of respondents being teaching assistants and instructors. The researchers noted that when providing feedback to teachers, school leaders are encouraged to take into account the ability of the teacher to improve and the perspective from which the teacher will examine the feedback. Leaders have a responsibility to learn alongside their teachers, particularly in the manner in which they provide feedback to teachers. Leaders are encouraged to have an understanding of how they are perceived by their teachers and how that perception affects the influence feedback has on teachers (Runhaar et al., 2010).

James and McCormick (2009) investigated methods associated with teachers learning how to learn and stated that building leaders should facilitate opportunities for teachers to share and reflect on their practice. Teachers benefited from opportunities to investigate their own professional practice regardless of the setting. Leaders would be wise to facilitate those opportunities.

Teacher Reflection and Teaching Improvement

Feedback generated through structured observations provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice. Observers should offer feedback to teachers that result in opportunities for them to reflect (Routman, 2012). Opportunities regarding reflection and

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feedback fall upon all those involved in the process (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). Teachers also understand the importance of reflecting on their teaching practices (Marshall, 2005).

Marshall (2005) was a teacher, a principal and central office administrator for many years. He now works as a leadership coach for new principals in New York and New Jersey. His article focused on the inadequacies of teacher supervision and evaluation. Marshall (2005) stated that the process by which most teachers are supervised and evaluated is inefficient, ineffective, and a poor use of principals' time. Marshall reported in his article that there are 10 reasons why the current supervision and evaluation models are ineffective. He listed the first five reasons as principals evaluate only a small amount of the teaching, evaluations of one or two lessons a year is not enough, observations are usually announced forgoing real lessons for staged teaching, evaluation almost never focuses on student learning, and high stakes evaluation tends to shut down adult learning. Marshall (2005) stated he would rather supervision and evaluation encompass an analysis of learning and not so much teaching, focus on the work of teams and not individuals, frequent unannounced visits as compared to the usual one or two meaningless visits per year, real conversations with teachers that focus on improvement, and a focus on improving teaching throughout the school. Marshall concluded that effective supervision and evaluation through class observations and feedback should focus on developing an understanding of what is really happening in classrooms, giving teachers constant feedback, making fair judgment about teacher performance, and getting teacher teams invested in improving student learning and focused on results.

Feeney (2007) conducted a case study analysis of the recommendations provided in narrative feedback given to teachers in their annual evaluations as well as how teachers used this feedback to promote self-reflective inquiry. Feeney (2007) stated that in order for feedback to be

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considered accurate it should focus on what the teachers and students were actually doing. Feeney examined the quality of feedback and how administrators used and provided this feedback to teachers through the evaluation process. Feeney conducted a case study that involved the analysis of the recommendations provided in narrative feedback given to teachers in their annual evaluations. The study also involved the examination of how teachers used this feedback to promote self-reflective inquiry. The sampling for this study consisted of the evaluations of 15 teachers in a large western school district that were written by several different administrators from 1982 to 2006. Feeney concluded that evaluations of teacher effectiveness should emerge from a relationship between the evaluator and the teacher. Professional growth should occur through an exchange of information gathered from reflective inquiry as both the teacher and the observer progress through the observation process. Feeney (2007) concluded through his examination that quality feedback encourages teachers to reflect on their own behaviors. Feeney also suggested that quality feedback should be focused on specific behaviors, promote reflection of one's own behaviors, and support the professional growth and goals of teachers.

What constitutes quality when providing feedback to teachers? Oliva et al. (2009) suggested that the quality of feedback was enhanced when teachers had opportunities to have input into the process that generates the feedback. Marshall and Young (2009) supported the concept of including teachers in feedback processes when they suggested that the observer should consult the teacher prior to the classroom visit. Both Oliva et al. (2009) and Marshall and Young (2009) reinforced the findings of Van Eekelen, Vermunt, & Boshuin (2006).

Feedback should flow both ways meaning that the observer is willing to accept feedback from the teacher as well. Van Eekelen et al. (2006) conducted a small-scale qualitative study examining the will of participants to learn. They discovered that some have no will at all to learn,

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some have the will but lack the ability, while others have the will and the ability to learn. The study was conducted in one Dutch high school located in a middle class community where most of the students who attended the high school lived in the town. The school contained 1500 students and 100 teachers from which a pool of potential participants would be sampled. The researchers identified 28 teachers as potential participants which resulted in 15 teachers actually taking part in the study. Participants were subjected to a semi-structured interview, an observation, and then a retrospective interview to determine learning opportunities during the study. Participants participated in the implementation of a new instructional initiative which provided opportunities for the researchers to examine their learning and improvement patterns.

The quality of feedback is increased when there is a level of trust between teachers and the observer (Tripp & Rich, 2012). Tripp and Rich examined the effect video recording had on teachers' desire to change their practice. Tripp and Rich (2012) used video recordings of seven teachers between the ages of 23 and 35 with teaching experience ranging from one year of teaching to nine years of teaching in all levels of schooling to conduct their study. The researchers would set-up the recording gear in the room and allow the teachers to record a lesson of their choosing. Once recording was completed, the teachers were instructed to view the recorded lesson and reflect on their teaching practice. Each teacher completed the video recording and reflection process four times. Tripp and Rich (2012) also conducted semi-structured interviews with the teachers to investigate further their opinions of their teaching. Tripp and Rich (2012) concluded through their study that four major themes emerged from the data. Teachers reported that as a result of the video analysis of their teaching they were able to recognize the need for changing their teaching practice, develop ideas that would allow for the change of teaching practice, implement the change, and evaluate the effectiveness of the change.

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Lee (2011) utilized data gathered from Hong Kong secondary teachers that attended a secondary education seminar on feedback in writing and examined teachers' readiness to implement change in the feedback as well as their perceptions of the factors that may inhibit change. The seminar was attended by 54 participants and started with a 45-minute presentation that summarized relevant research findings regarding the inadequacies of conventional feedback patterns. Participants completed a questionnaire to determine their reaction to feedback and their readiness to implement innovative feedback practices. Lee (2011) discovered that there is a need to understand teachers' readiness to change and implement new practices. Lee also discovered that feedback strategies are likely not to work unless teachers believe in the strategies and believe they are ready to attempt the strategies. Teacher education may enhance readiness to change and may be more successful when combined with a change strategy that supports teachers in their own teaching environment.

James and McCormick (2009) investigated methods associated with teachers learning how to learn and stated that building leaders should facilitate opportunities for teachers to share and reflect upon their practice. The researchers conducted their study initially focusing on students' ability to learn but thought it would be prudent to also include a study of how teachers in those same schools approached their learning opportunities. The researchers were part of a project in the United Kingdom that worked with 40 schools. The project investigated the "how" and "why" of learning among students and teachers. For the purpose of the current study, only data regarding the learning of teachers was examined. James & McCormick (2009) reported that teachers placed more emphasis on having opportunities to reflect and improve practice as being determining factors in improved performance in the classroom.

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Getzlaf et al. (2009) studied effective instructor feedback and noted that feedback should flow both ways and that leaders should consult with teachers to determine what types of feedback is useful. Reflection among teachers is not the sole responsibility of the leader. Teachers are equally responsible for reflection (Lee, 2011).

When opportunities to reflect and grow in their professional practice are presented teachers need to be ready to act (James & McCormick, 2009). Lee (2011) investigated factors that impeded the effective communication of feedback and concluded that all stakeholders must be open to change and the change process. When teachers truly wish to improve they are more likely to reflect and ask for feedback (Runhaar et al., 2010). Tripp & Rich (2012) introduced teachers to video analysis of their own teaching and reported that teachers were more motivated to reflect and improve their teaching when they could see themselves improving.

Bloom (2007) suggested that information garnered from structured observations can result in thoughtful discussions about teaching practice. Bloom investigated the characteristics of five different classroom observation models used by schools in different regions of the United States to determine similarities and differences among the models. As a result of his investigation of these similarities and differences, Bloom (2007) provided suggestions as to how classroom observations can be done well. Although Bloom's focus was primarily on the observation model, he continuously proposed that the discussions among professionals and the inquiry resulting from reflective practice among educators could change school culture and improve achievement. Feeney (2007) supported Bloom when he stated that effective feedback is needed to promote self-reflection.

In a study of the relationship between feedback and teacher reflection, Runhaar et al., (2010), reported that reflection and asking for feedback were related to each other. Those same

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authors also noted that gender, increased confidence in ability, and a true desire to improve practice were all factors for teachers wanting to reflect and ask for more feedback. When teachers are afforded opportunities to reflect on personal performance they are more likely to be encouraged to seek professional learning and improve their performance (Tuytens & Devos, 2011).

Summary

An extensive review of the literature from class observations of principals demonstrated that an obvious gap in the literature exists regarding principal feedback to teachers after class observations. However, there are several researchers that have suggested that it is beneficial to visit teachers in the classroom and offer feedback (Colvin et al. 2009; Marshal and Young, 2009; Oliva et al., 2009; Routman, 2012). A review of the literature also revealed that when feedback is provided to teachers it should be of quality (Feeney, 2007; Gray & Streshly, 2008; McGill, 2011) and solicit true reflection from the educator (Marshall, 2005; Routman, 2012; Runhaar et al., 2010; Tuytens & Devos, 2011).

The review of literature has demonstrated that effective feedback is timely as increased amounts of time from observation to the provision of the feedback decrease both the validity and the reliability of the feedback in addition to how the teacher will view the feedback as being useful. Effective feedback is also personal to the teacher and supports continued professional learning and growth. Feedback should also solicit true reflection from the teacher as a close examination of personal practice is needed for teachers to improve in their professional practice.

My goal for conducting this research was to answer the questions that I continue to ask myself and that I feel are yet to be sufficiently answered by other researchers. The review of literature regarding feedback provided to teachers by principals is lacking. The majority of

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research addressing feedback to teachers focuses on feedback from individuals other than the principal. The principal is the head administrator of a school and is ultimately responsible for ensuring teachers are effective in the classroom. I feel observing teachers and providing feedback regarding professional practice is an effective method for ensuring teachers are effective in the class room.

Roberson and Roberson (2009) stated that their study revealed the importance of the principal in ensuring the success of novice teachers. I feel as principal it is my responsibility to lead by example and ensure the success of everyone that enters my building each day; especially students. I cannot ensure that the students in my building will be successful unless I know the teachers in my building are effective. As principal I am the head of the school and everyone looks to me to ensure that we have effective practices in place to accomplish our mission of providing a quality education for all students. Contributing to the literature by examining the response of teachers to principal feedback after class observations will have an impact on administrators and other supervisors interested in providing both students and teachers with increased opportunities for educational successes.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

My rationale for selecting a qualitative design focused on a desire to understand how teachers respond to feedback provided after a class observation. I continue to have great interest in what makes a teacher act the way he/she does. I believed it was in qualitative design that I would find answers to my questions and satisfaction for my yearning to know how teachers would act upon feedback I would provide them after an observation. As Merriam (2009) stated:

Having an interest in knowing more about one's practice, and indeed in improving one's practice, leads to asking researchable questions, some of which are best approached through a qualitative research design. In fact I believe that research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making a difference in people's lives (p. 1).

Creswell (2007) stated that qualitative research involves "inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 37). Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul (1997) write in their book, *On Writing Qualitative Research*, that qualitative research is about telling a story from the perspective of not only the subjects but also the researcher. The story of how teachers respond to feedback and my journey with them through the process fascinates me.

Qualitative research comes in many forms; narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies (Creswell, 2007). Each of these designs has characteristics in common and characteristics that are different. The selection of which design to use will be based upon the emphasis of the researcher and the specific qualitative project. For the purposes of this work a case study design was used.

A case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). A case comprises just one individual, classroom, school, or program (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Creswell (2007) stated that case study research is the study of an issue explored through

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one or more cases within a bounded system. Creswell (2007) also described case study research as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system over time, through detailed and in-depth data collection involving several sources of information. I wish to examine the response of teachers to principal feedback of class observations in one high school.

Research Questions

Based upon the stated purpose and goals of this study, the following research questions provided guidance for this work. The primary research questions for this study are:

1. How do teachers respond to principal's feedback after class observations?
2. Why do teachers respond to principals' observation feedback in specific ways?
3. How do teachers' verbal responses to principal feedback differ from their behavioral responses to principal feedback?
4. Do teachers' responses to principal's observation feedback differ by academic discipline?
5. Do teachers' responses to principal's observation feedback differ by their teaching experiences?
6. Do teachers respond to principal's feedback with prevention responses or promotion responses?

Setting

This study was conducted at BOB high school. BOB high school (The name BOB high school is a pseudonym) serves a suburban community located in the Southeastern United States. BOB high school is one of five high schools in a school district that serves approximately 25,000 students. BOB high school was built approximately 13 years ago to alleviate student overcrowding among three other high schools. Since BOB high school was built, a fifth high school has been constructed to again alleviate issues of student overcrowding.

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BOB high school serves a community that experienced significant growth during the first decade of the 21st century. Prior to the fifth high school being constructed, BOB high school was serving approximately 1750 students. Attendance peaked at BOB high school during the 2005 and 2006 school years serving approximately 1860 students. During the years of significant attendance at BOB high school, 28 portable classrooms were needed to provide classroom space for all students. Upon completion of the fifth high school, student enrollment at BOB high school decreased to approximately 1150 students. BOB high school was built to serve approximately 1200 students, the addition of the fifth high school has allowed BOB high school to operate at approximately 50 students below listed state capacity for the past three years. Students attending BOB high school are no longer required to travel outside to portable classrooms. All classes are now conducted in the main building of BOB high school.

BOB high school currently serves approximately 1150 students. Of those 1150 students approximately 53% are African American, 35% are Caucasian, six percent are Hispanic, five percent are Multi-Ethnic, and one percent are Asian, Island, or American Indian. The student body at BOB high school is designated as 42.5% receiving free or reduced lunch. BOB high school serves 10% of the student population through the individualized education program.

BOB high school has a rich tradition of success. Prior to the adoption of the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI), BOB high school made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in all academic areas. However, due to performance by one sub-group BOB high school did not meet AYP requirements the final two years AYP was the performance measure. The new CCRPI performance measures embrace a holistic approach to measuring the effectiveness of schools. The CCRPI considers several performance indicators to determine an effectiveness measure as compared to the two or three performance indicators previously considered for AYP.

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BOB high school achieved a 71.9 score in the first year of CCRPI implementation as compared to the BOB school district average score of 80.8, the BOB school district high school average score of 67, and a state average score of 83.4.

Observations conducted for this study occurred in academic classrooms. Specifically, observations were conducted in the areas of Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English. Each classroom is what you would consider a traditional educational setting. Each class consisted of one content teacher and approximately 30 to 35 students. Each classroom contained approximately the same number of student desks and one or two teacher desks. The classrooms varied only slightly with additional items focusing on teacher needs and/or preferences as they related to the specific subject area. Each classroom contained a promethean board, document camera, projector, active response system, and white board. The only considerable differences would be the lab classrooms used by science. In lab classrooms students were seated at tables and not desks. Lab classrooms contained counters with a sink and gas hook-ups for lab experiments. Despite a few minor differences regarding lab equipment, all classrooms were very similar.

In some instances, classrooms contained a content teacher and a co-teacher. A co-teacher is a certified Special Education teacher that is assigned to a classroom when eight to ten students assigned to that class have an individualized education plan. Co-teachers are assigned to those classes to assist special education students who have learning deficiencies. Co-teachers also assist regular education students in those classes. However, classrooms containing a co-teacher had little if any influence on this study as it was the content teacher who participated in the study.

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BOB school district is comprised of five high schools. BOB high school is one of five high schools in the BOB school district. BOB High school was selected for study as a result of the teacher observation program that exists in BOB high school. The class room observation program that exists at BOB high school has been in place for six years. Class room observations exist as part of the instructional culture at BOB high school. Teachers are very comfortable with observers entering the class room. Students who attend BOB high school are accustomed to having observers in the classroom. Observers entering and leaving class rooms at BOB high school is so common place that there is minimal risk of distraction to teachers and students.

Feedback regarding professional practice of teachers in class rooms as a result of the class room observation program is also embedded into the instructional culture of BOB high school. Feedback resulting from class room observations has been an improvement initiative at BOB high school for six years. Observations of teachers followed by the submission of feedback to teachers are common place at BOB high school. The study of teacher responses to principal feedback after class observations is easily accessible at BOB high school as the process is already an established component of the instructional culture. To conduct the study at BOB high school is practical as minimal modification to the existing class room observation program will be required to accomplish the stated purpose and goals of this study.

Study Participants and Sampling

This study involved 16 teachers from one high school. Four teachers from each of the four major academic disciplines: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and English Language were invited to participate in the study. For the purposes of the study and to protect the confidentiality of those who participated in the study, pseudonyms were used to identify the participants. Each participant in each of the four major disciplines was assigned an identifier

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consisting of the name of the discipline and the letter A, B, C, or D. The participants in the study from the English department were assigned the pseudonym Eng. A, Eng. B, Eng. C, or Eng. D. The same process was conducted for the Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies departments as well. Eight teachers have at least eight years of teaching experience and eight teachers have less than eight years of teaching experience. Participants for this study are comprised of nine females and seven males. All participants in this study possess certification in their subject area. All participants are familiar with the teacher observation process and have experienced observations in their classroom.

Once a researcher has determined what is to be studied, the question of who to study must be addressed (Merriam, 2009). For this study, 16 teachers from one high school were selected for study. In most qualitative research studies, non-probability sampling is the method of choice (Merriam, 2009). Non-probability sampling does not involve a statistical approach to answering the research question(s) thus making it an appropriate method for qualitative research design. The most common form of non-probabilistic sampling is purposive or purposeful sampling.

Purposeful sampling involves selecting participants that will best allow the researcher to appropriately address the research questions (Creswell, 2009). The research questions that will drive the inquiry of this study search for understanding and meaning to the responses of teachers to principal feedback after classroom observations. Teachers participating in this study were purposefully selected using maximum variation sampling.

Maximum variation sampling, a type of purposeful sampling, was used to select participants for this study. I wanted to select teachers in the high school that would likely represent teachers in other schools. Maximum variation sampling involves identifying and

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seeking out those who represent the widest possible range of the characteristics of interest for the study (Merriam, 2009). Selecting 16 teachers from the four major academic areas resulted in approximately 50% of teachers available for participation in the study being selected. Selecting the two most experienced and two least experienced teachers from each major academic area: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English Language strengthened the possibility of a good representation of teachers.

The four assistant principals of BOB high school were also participants in this study. Data collected from teacher responses of observations conducted by the four assistant principals during the time period of the study were also used to examine teacher responses to principal feedback. The very nature of the teacher observation program at BOB high school made including the teacher responses to the observations of the assistant principals a logical decision. The method by which the teacher observations were conducted and the analysis of data collected as a result of the teacher observations among the four assistant principals and the principal were consistent. The administrative team of BOB high school met each week during the time period of the study to discuss the teacher observation program and the data that resulted. Teacher observation protocols among the administrators remained consistent throughout the study as a result of these weekly meetings. Including teacher responses to the observations of the four assistant principals greatly increased data collected for the study.

Instrument and Data Sources

Instrumentation used in this study was in the form of an electronic observation template (Appendix A). The template was created using a web-based observation platform that enables the user to build an electronic template and download it to a device; in this case an iPad. Information and data were collected using the template and uploaded back to the web-based platform. The

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web-based platform allowed for the template to be used multiple times while maintaining an organized format for data. The web-based platform also allowed for multiple data entries with an organized reporting format. Each time the template was used during an observation it was uploaded to the web-based platform and time stamped with the date and times of the observation. Each observation was stored separately in the web-based platform so that data from multiple observations was not combined and subsequently corrupted. Access to the web-based platform was password protected so that unauthorized viewing of observation data is prohibited.

The template was created by the leadership team of Bob high school. The administration and teacher leaders met to discuss the important initiatives of the school and developed a template that collected data on those specific items. The template was created to collect observational data in 14 areas: standards posted and aligned, learning focused schools, progress monitoring, instructor's delivery mode, instructor's role, student engagement, percent student engagement, student work, learning environment, posting of non-negotiables, use of instructional technology, differentiation, classroom management, and location of the teacher. Each of these 14 areas was depicted on the template and was termed an element. The template design was much like a traditional outline. Each element was much like the Roman Numeral in a traditional outline.

The template allows for the observer to collect data in the form of checked boxes on 13 of the elements and in the form of a drop down menu on one element of the template. The template also allows the observer to record entered text on each of the 14 elements. Upgrades to the web-based platform allow observers to take pictures during the observation and attach them directly to the template.

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For the purposes of identifying each specific observation, the template allows for the recording of logistical data. Each observation was recorded using the name of the teacher being observed, the observer, the subject area of the teacher, the start and end time of the observation, and the date of the observation. Logistical data allowed the observer or others with appropriate access the ability to review observations at a later date. Logistical data also assisted in the process of disaggregation of data for multiple observations.

Validity of the instrument was established by review of experts in the field of education. The data collection instrument, also referred to as the template, was distributed to 34 principals in the BOB school district. Each principal was asked to review the template and submit a response as to whether or not they believed the template would be a valid method of soliciting teacher responses. Requests for review of the template were returned by 19 of the 34 principals. Each of the 19 principals that responded to the request reported the template as a valid method of soliciting teacher responses. No respondents reported that revisions of the template were necessary to increase validity of the instrument.

Interviews of study participants were conducted regarding principal feedback after class observations. A semi-structured questioning format was utilized to allow for probing questions when needed. Merriam (2009) described the semi-structured interview format as flexibly worded questions containing both exact response and open-ended formats. The majority of a semi-structured interview is guided by a list of questions (Appendix B) or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time (Merriam, 2009). Participants were asked questions regarding their responses to principal feedback after class observations. The intent of the interviews was to gain insight and collect data regarding how participants responded to the principal feedback and for what reasons participants responded

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in the manner they did. Participants also engaged the observer in less formal verbal discussions regarding feedback from an observation. These instances of informal verbal discussions were also considered as interviews for the purposes of this study.

Participants also responded to principal feedback after class observations in the form of written response. Participants responded to the emails that contained the completed electronic template that was provided to them after the observation. Data collected in this manner was very useful in determining participant perspective of the provided feedback. In some instances, written responses from participants would be embedded in the electronic template received from the observer. Participants would provide a written response strategically placed on the template to emphasize a specific element in the template that was of interest to them or that contained feedback from the observer.

Participants were asked to write in a journal during the study so that their opinions, beliefs, understanding, and responses to principal feedback could be recorded. Participants were asked to journal after each observation regarding their responses to principal feedback. Participants were asked to journal about their feelings, their opinions, what frustrated them, what made them feel good, and the feedback received on the electronic template. Participants were asked to provide personal feedback on why they responded in a specific manner to principal feedback.

Data Collection

Data were collected in several forms. Data collected regarding teacher responses to principal feedback of class observations were in the form of class observations, interviews, and written teacher responses. Written teacher responses were in the form of responses to emails, responses to specific items in the electronic template, and journaling. Journaling involved

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participants keeping a journal of their responses to principal feedback. Study protocols were explained to participants in a one-on-one meeting. Participants were assured that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could decline participation at any time during the study without adverse action. Identity of study participants will be secured by using only demographic data to describe participants as a group. At no time during the study will the identity of participants be discussed. Permission for the study was granted by both the Institutional Review Board and the BOB school district.

Each of the 16 participants was observed by the principal on three separate occasions. Observations were unannounced. Participants did not know when the observations would be conducted other than a basic understanding that observations would occur approximately every two weeks until three observations had been conducted. After the initial observation, the second and third observations were conducted approximately two-weeks apart. Each observation was approximately 30 minutes in length. During the observation, data was collected using the electronic template. Data was collected in the form of checked boxes and entered text. Checked boxes demonstrated an observed action or behavior by the teacher. Entered text reflected conditions in the classroom that warranted a comment from the principal.

During the four-week data collection period, observations were also conducted by four additional administrators. The administrative team of BOB high school consisted of one principal and four assistant principals. The class room observation program at BOB high school was conducted by the administrative team. The administrative team of BOB high school was comprised of two administrators certified in physical education instruction, one administrator certified in science instruction, one administrator certified in Spanish instruction, and one administrator certified in social studies instruction. It was the opinion of the administrative team

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at BOB high school that the observation program allowed them to gain valuable insight into the instructional competency of teachers and that the observation process combined with feedback protocols increased their effectiveness to monitor and influence the instructional programs of BOB high school. As a result of their experience with class observations and providing feedback to teachers, I believed it only prudent to include the administrators of BOB high school in the current study.

Observations conducted by the additional four administrators were random in nature with each of the administrators deciding who would be observed. At the conclusion of the data collection period, I gathered all observations of study participants conducted by the four additional administrators. Data collected from those observations were also considered for this study.

Credibility and Transferability

I particularly appreciate the manner in which Bradford (2012) approached credibility and transferability in his study. J. W. Bradford (2012) is a graduate of Kennesaw State University who received his Educational Doctorate in Adolescent Education-English/Language Arts. Reviewing his work inspired me to approach the areas of credibility and transferability of my study in a similar fashion.

Observations, interviews, journal entries, and written responses from study participants were used to collect data for this study. Data collection using multiple procedures increases internal validity of the study (Merriam, 2009). Usually associated with navigation or land surveying (Merriam, 2009), triangulation uses several points of measurement to enable convergence on a site. Used in research, triangulation allows for multiple data collection procedures to confirm emerging data patterns. What someone tells you in an interview can be

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compared to what is observed during a classroom visit or written in a response. Participant responses to principal feedback after class observations were collected using multiple formats. Participants were interviewed regarding their responses to principal feedback and why they responded in a specific manner. Participants were informed that I and other administrators would be visiting their room periodically to conduct observations and record data on an electronic template. The written responses provided an honest response from participants of the perceived context and content of the feedback data. Data collected for this study was provided by participants in many forms. Utilizing multiple forms of data collection allowed the researcher to analyze data and establish patterns or themes from a variety of sources. As themes emerged in multiple areas the credibility of the data was increased.

Another method of increasing internal credibility is peer review (Creswell, 2007). The observations of participants by four other administrators were utilized in this study. These four administrators have been conducting teacher observations and discussing teacher feedback from those observations for several years. Creswell (2007) alluded to the responsibilities of a peer reviewer as one similar to that of the devil's advocate. The peer reviewer asks hard questions of the researcher ensuring the methods and meanings associated with the data are true and accurate. The peer reviewer keeps the researcher and the research process honest. The four assistant principals have done just that. They ensured that the observations and feedback process remained true to the intended purpose of providing accurate information regarding what occurs in classrooms and provided teachers with opportunities to have input into the program.

The administrative team of BOB high school met each week during the time period of the study to discuss the teacher observation program and the data that were collected. During these discussions, the protocols of the teacher observation program were discussed to ensure each

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member of the administrative team was conducting teacher observations in the agreed upon manner. The administrative team discussed the various times during a class period that observations were conducted to ensure that teachers were being observed throughout the class period and not primarily at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the class period. Discussions were conducted regarding the 14 different elements of the observation instrument to ensure administrators focused on the proper element criteria during the observation. Discussions were conducted regarding the length of time of each observation to ensure that an appropriate amount of time was spent to observe all 14 elements of the observation instrument. Discussions were also conducted regarding the comments provided by administrators on the various elements of the observation instrument to ensure that teachers were provided appropriate feedback regarding their performance and/or conditions of the class room during the observation. Discussions were also conducted regarding the submission of a completed observation instrument with appropriate feedback to the teacher within 48-hours of the observation. These discussions were conducted each week during the time period of the study to ensure that the researcher data that resulted were consistent with the goals and objectives of this study.

Transferability is the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to similar studies (Bradford, 2012). Transferability is difficult in qualitative research since it is often one case or situation that is the focus of the study with a small, non-random sampling of participants thus making generalizability difficult. To address these circumstances, Meriam (2009) suggests the use of a rich, thick description that provides a highly descriptive and detailed description of the setting, the participants, and the findings providing evidence in several forms.

Therefore, credibility and transferability are best provided in this study through multiple data collection methods, triangulation, peer review, and rich description of the case study. This

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research project attempted to satisfy the rigorous review of the requirements of a well-planned and well-conducted qualitative study.

Assumptions and Researcher Bias

Researcher bias was an important factor during this study. The observation and feedback process has been very important to me for many years. I brought this process to the BOB school system and think it is a very valuable tool that everyone should use. So, as primary researcher I recognize my bias with regard to the value that I believe this process has for teachers, administrators, and schools. To deal with my bias, I utilized a purposeful sample selecting participants in my school. Participants were selected utilizing years of experience and academic assignment to address potential researcher bias. I felt confident that my role as principal of the school would have no effect on participants in this study or their responses to principal feedback. The culture of Bob high school is one of open and sincere communication and one where shared leadership is valued. I also used data collected from four assistant principals to further ensure that responses to principal feedback were sincere and honest.

An additional source of overcoming researcher bias was my own personal reflection of the data as it was collected. I kept a data collection and analysis log where I continuously reflected on the data collection process. I attempted to reflect on my role as researcher as it was associated with the data collection and analysis process to ensure that I was honest with myself and my procedures. I reflected on memos I wrote and collected throughout the process attempting to create a different perspective of the data. I attempted to create an “alter ego” if you will that allowed me to view the data from the perspective of an outsider hoping this would provide me with an avenue to separate myself as researcher and assume the role of a peer reviewer.

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I am confident that the data gathered during this study are true and accurate and have not been impacted by my position as building leader of BOB high school. Initial conversations with participants included my explanation that I desired for them to be honest regarding their responses to principal feedback and that their participation in the study, regardless of response, would not be held against them.

Limitations

Several limitations have been reviewed as this study has progressed. The fact that I am the principal of the building is a limiting factor for this study. It was my desire to examine teacher responses to principal feedback in my own building. Some participants may have been reluctant to express authentic responses in fear of reprisal from me. To address the limitation of my being the principal of the building and the primary researcher, I utilized purposeful sampling to identify participants. As a result, I felt confident that the selection process yielded study participants that would provide data that was representative of their sincere responses. My relationship with the eight experienced participants over several years provided me with confidence that their responses to principal feedback would be genuine. The eight experienced participants have been at BOB high school many years and have experience with the observation and feedback protocols. They have confidence in me that their responses will be used only for the improvement of our practice. I was also confident that the eight least experienced participants knew that their responses would be used only for the purposes of this study and would not in any way influence our working relationship. I believe they understand this through their close working relationships with their colleagues who have participated in this process for several years.

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I also addressed the limiting factor of me being the building principal by utilizing the observations of assistant principals as sources of data. For the purposes of this study, the observations conducted by assistant principals of study participants were also used as a source of data. Data collected from observations conducted by assistant principals were analyzed by me and were never reviewed by the assistant principals for the purposes of this study. I do think the findings of this study are representative of what would be determined for a similar case.

Research Approach and Data Collection Alignment

The following was an attempt to align data collection sources and methods of analysis for each research question that guided this work. It was my goal to provide this information to the reader to demonstrate that clarity and a level of precision were applied to the process of data collection and analysis to bring about a better understanding of the strategies used to extract and then organize data used to address the stated problem of this work.

Creswell (2007) suggested that qualitative study include detailed methods of data collection and analysis so that rigorous procedures result. Creswell also stated that, “Rigor is seen when extensive data collection in the field occurs, or when the researcher conducts multiple levels of data analysis, from the narrow codes or themes to broader interrelated themes to more abstract dimensions” (p. 46). Merriam (2009) stated that data analysis is the most difficult aspect of qualitative research. Merriam also stated that “data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data” (p. 175). To assist the reader in making the connection between sources of data, data analysis procedures, and the research questions that guided this work an organized method of review was created. Table 1 lists each study related research question, sources of data used to address each research question and the method of analysis used to address each research question.

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Table 1

Research Approach and Data Collection Alignment

| Research Question | Source of Data | Method of Analysis |
|--|--|--|
| 1. How do teachers respond to principals' feedback after class observations? | Observations, email, interview questions 2-7, and journals | Transcribing, coding in Atlas ti, memo writing, identifying themes, analysis foci |
| 2. Why do teachers respond to principals' observation feedback in specific ways? | Interview questions 3-7, journals, emails | Listening, reflection, coding, observation, transcribing, reading, dialogue, Atlas ti, reviewing |
| 3. How do teachers' verbal responses to principal feedback differ from their behavioral responses to principal feedback? | Observations, email, interview questions, and journals | Identifying patterns for each type of responses and compare |
| 4. Do teachers' responses to principals' observation feedback differ by academic discipline? | Observations, email, interviews, demographics, and journals | Identifying patterns in the data by discipline |
| 5. Do teachers' responses to principals' observation feedback differ by their teaching experiences? | Observations, email, interviews, demographics, and journals | Identifying patterns in the data by teaching experiences |
| 6. Do teachers respond to principals' feedback with prevention responses or promotion responses? | Observations, email, interview questions 6 and 7, and journals | Identifying patterns from the relevant data analysis |

Research questions 1-6 were designed to provide an understanding of teacher responses to principal feedback after class observations. As researcher, it was my responsibility to conduct a study where data was collected, analyzed, interpreted, and reported so that the reader and the educational community as a whole would have an opportunity to explore teacher responses to principal feedback. It was also my responsibility to design and conduct a study that met the rigorous qualifications of a sound qualitative study.

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Observations of teachers, email correspondence, interview questions 2-7, and teachers' journals were used to answer research question number one: How do teachers respond to principals' feedback after class observations? Data collected from the observations of teachers were recorded on the observation instrument and uploaded into Atlas ti and analyzed to determine the manner in which teachers responded to principals' feedback. Data from teachers' email correspondence was reviewed and uploaded into Atlas ti to determine how teachers were corresponding about their responses to principals' feedback. Data from interview questions 2-7 were recorded, transcribed, and uploaded into Atlas ti to discern how teachers responded to principals' feedback. Teachers' entries into their journals were uploaded into Atlas ti to determine how teachers responded to principals' feedback.

Interview questions 3-7, teachers' journal writings, and teachers' email correspondence were used to answer research question number two: Why do teachers respond to principals' observation feedback in specific ways? Data from teachers' email correspondence was reviewed and uploaded into Atlas ti. Interviews with teachers were recorded, transcribed, and uploaded into Atlas ti. Teachers' entries into their journals were uploaded into Atlas ti. Data were analyzed and interpreted to determine why teachers responded to principals' feedback in a specific manner.

Data from observations of teachers, email correspondence, interviews, and teachers' journals were used to answer research question number three: How do teachers' verbal responses to principal feedback differ from their behavioral responses to principal feedback? Data from teachers' email correspondence, teacher interviews, and the writings contained in teachers' journals were compared with data collected from observations of teachers to answer research

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question number three. All data pertaining to this research question were uploaded into Atlas ti and analyzed.

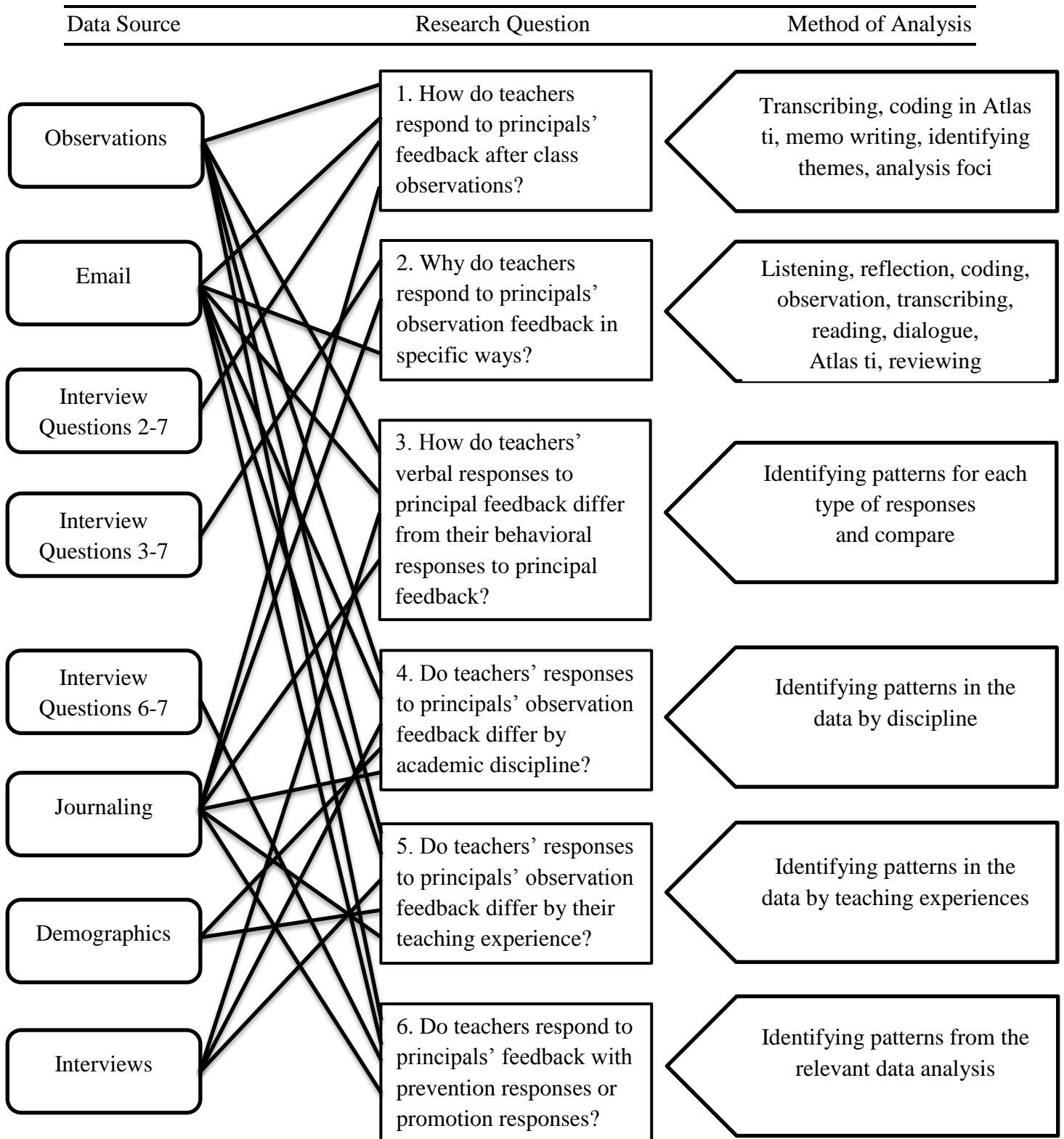
Data from observations of teachers, email correspondence, interviews, demographics, and teachers' journal writings were used to answer research question number four (Do teachers' responses to principals' observation feedback differ by academic discipline?) and research question number five (Do teachers' responses to principals' observation feedback differ by their teaching experiences?). Data from observations of teachers, teachers' email correspondence, transcriptions from teachers' interviews, demographics, and teachers' journal writings were uploaded into Atlas ti and analyzed to discern if teachers' academic discipline or years of teaching experience influenced their responses to principals' feedback. Figure 1 provides the reader with a different perspective of the data source and method of analysis used to address each research question.

Data from observations of teachers, teachers' email correspondence, interview questions 6-7, and writings from teachers' journals were used to answer research question number six: Do teachers respond to principals' feedback with prevention responses or promotion responses? Data from observations of teachers were recorded on the observation instrument and uploaded into Atlas ti to be analyzed. Teachers' email correspondence was uploaded into Atlas ti and analyzed to discern if teachers were corresponding about their reasoning for responding to principals' feedback using either prevention or promotion responses. Data collected from interview questions 6-7 were transcribed, uploaded into Atlas ti, and analyzed to discern if teachers utilized a prevention or promotion rationale when responding to principals' feedback. Data from writings in teachers' journals were uploaded into Atlas ti and analyzed to discern if teachers were writing about the influence principals' feedback had on their responses.

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Figure 1

Graphic Representation of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Method of Analysis



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Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted utilizing the ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis software to manage and analyze data. ATLAS.ti is a tightly integrated suite of tools that support analysis of written texts, audio, video, and graphic data. The integration of these tools is designed to perfectly support the work flow of the qualitative researcher. ATLAS.ti provides tools to manage, extract, compare, explore, and reassemble meaningful segments of large amounts of data in flexible and creative, yet systematic ways. ATLAS.ti allows the researcher to organize and review large amounts of data in a relatively short amount of time. I used the constant comparative method comparing and analyzing data as it was collected (Merriam, 2009). I was constantly reviewing data as new data were collected. Ultimately, as the study concluded, I examined all of the related data-rich documents and uploaded them into the ATLAS.ti software program. Each document was then analyzed and coded. Coding of documents (Merriam, 2009) is nothing more than assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that specific pieces of data are retrievable. Coding of data was achieved by using several types of coding procedures. Open coding was utilized to identify expansive segments of data that were of interest. Axial coding, also known as analytical coding, was then used to combine open codes that appeared to be similar or share some type of meaning. An examination of axial coding allowed me to begin the process of selective coding. Selective coding is the development of core categories, or themes, demonstrating recurring regularities or patterns in the data (Merriam, 2009). Themes can be interpreted as those overpowering concepts that emerge from the data.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

As stated in the introduction of this study, the largest determining factor in student success is having an effective teacher in the classroom (Liu, 2010; Oliva et al., 2009; Routman, 2012; & Southworth, 2010). An effective method of identifying good teachers is for educational leaders to visit classrooms and observe what happens as teachers teach and students learn (McGill, 2011). However, visiting classrooms to simply watch what teachers do is not completely effective (Marshall, 2005). To optimize the classroom visit, leaders are encouraged to observe and offer effective feedback to teachers (Tuytens & Devos, 2011).

The purpose of the study was to examine teacher responses to principal feedback of classroom observations. Feedback provided to teachers regarding their performance has been shown as an effective means of communication between the teacher and the observer (Getzlaf et al, 2009). Feedback can also be the means by which meaningful discussions are generated regarding effective teaching (Bloom, 2007). Casey (2008) stated, “As a field, we cannot expect to influence teachers’ behavior if teachers perceive feedback as useless, too infrequent to be helpful, or nonexistent” (p. 7). An examination of teacher responses to principal feedback may also be meaningful when one is considering how best to provide feedback to teachers.

The research questions that guided the study were: 1) How do teachers respond to principals’ feedback after class observations? 2) Why do teachers respond to principals’ observation feedback in specific ways? 3) How do teachers’ verbal responses to principal feedback differ from their behavioral responses to principal feedback? 4) Do teachers’ responses to principals’ observation feedback differ by academic discipline? 5) Do teachers’ responses to principals’ observation feedback differ by their teaching experience? 6) Do teachers respond to

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principals' feedback with prevention responses or promotion responses?

The theoretical framework that guided the study was Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997). Regulatory focus theory posits two motivations for how someone will respond: prevention or promotion. A prevention focus for response emphasizes a consideration for safety and security. One responds in a manner with the focus of ensuring that something unpleasant or unsafe will not occur. There is a strategic focus for avoiding a loss. A promotion focus for response emphasizes a consideration for accomplishment and/or advancement of needs. There is a strategic concern regarding the promotion focus of achieving gains and avoiding responses that do not achieve gains. Higgins (1997) also suggested that regulatory focus theory can be both passive and aggressive in both prevention and promotion focus.

Participants

The study involved 16 teachers from one high school. Four teachers from each of the four major academic disciplines: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and English Language were invited to participate in the study. For the purposes of the study and to protect the confidentiality of those who participated in the study, pseudonyms were used to identify the participants. Each participant in each of the four major disciplines was assigned an identifier consisting of the name of the discipline and the letter A, B, C, or D. The participants in the study from the English department were assigned the pseudonym Eng.-A, Eng.-B, Eng.-C, or Eng.-D. The same process was conducted for the Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies departments as well. Eight teachers have at least eight years of teaching experience and eight teachers have less than eight years of teaching experience. Participants for this study are comprised of nine females and seven males. All participants in this study possess certification in their subject area and are 100% highly qualified as required by the professional commission. All participants are familiar with

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the teacher observation process and have experienced observations in their classroom. All teachers have at least a portion of one year of experience at BOB high school and have participated in the observation process prior to this study. Table 2 lists each participant describing their subject area, gender, and approximate years of teaching experience.

Table 2

Participant by Subject, Gender, and Years of Teaching Experience

| Participant | Relevant Information |
|-------------------------|--|
| Math-A | Male, 25-30 years of teaching experience |
| Math-B | Male, 15-20 years of teaching experience |
| Math-C | Female, five to eight years of teaching experience |
| Math-D | Female, year of teaching experience |
| Science-A (Sci-A) | Female, ten to 15 years of teaching experience |
| Science-B (Sci-B) | Female, eight to ten years of teaching experience |
| Science-C (Sci-C) | Female, three to five years of teaching experience |
| Science-D (Sci-D) | Male, two years of teaching experience |
| Social Studies-A (SS-A) | Male, 20-25 years of teaching experience |
| Social Studies-B (SS-B) | Female, 15-20 years of teaching experience |
| Social Studies-C (SS-C) | Male, three to five years of teaching experience |
| Social Studies-D (SS-D) | Male, three years of teaching experience |
| English-A (Eng.-A) | Female, 30-33 years of teaching experience |
| English-B (Eng.-B) | Male, eight to 12 years of teaching experience |
| English-C (Eng.-C) | Female, three to five years of teaching experience |
| English-D (Eng.-D) | Female, first year of teaching experience |

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Data Collection and Analysis

Creswell (2007) stated that qualitative research involves “inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 37). A qualitative research model was used to examine the problem of teacher responses to principal feedback of class observations. A case study design was selected for this work. A case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). Participants for this study all teach in one high school so a case study design was appropriate. Creswell (2007) described case study research as a qualitative approach where the researcher explores a bounded system over time, through detailed and in-depth data collection and analysis involving several sources of information. Collection of data as it related to the research questions associated with the study were in the form of observations of teachers, email correspondence, interviews, and participant journals.

Coding.

Coding of documents (Merriam, 2009) is nothing more than assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that specific pieces of data are retrievable. Coding of data was achieved by using several types of coding procedures. Open coding was utilized to identify expansive segments of data that were of interest. Axial coding, also known as analytical coding, was then used to combine open codes that appeared to be similar or share some type of meaning. An examination of axial coding allowed me to begin the process of selective coding. Selective coding is the development of core categories, or themes, demonstrating recurring regularities or patterns in the data (Merriam, 2009). Themes can be interpreted as those overpowering concepts that emerge from the data.

All study related documents were loaded into Atlas ti and reviewed by the researcher.

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Segments of study related documents were then selected and coded to demonstrate relevance within the stated purpose of the study. Each study related document contained various segments of relevant text for this study. Coding of data contained within each document varied as some portions of a document consisted of text that was not relevant to this study. Open coding was used to assign quotations by participants a shorthand designation (Merriam, 2009) to identify specific study related interest and allow for quotations to be analyzed. Participant quotations were coded using 36 open code designations for a total of 856 code opportunities. Table 3 lists definitions of codes used to identify participant quotations associated with participant responses to principal feedback of class room observations. Code definitions are provided to the reader to provide clarity regarding why specific codes were assigned to participants' quotations.

Table 3

Definition of Codes

| Code Title | Definition of Code |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Explanation for situation | Participant responded with an explanation for the situation that generated principal feedback |
| Referenced specific feedback | Participant referenced during the response specific feedback provided by the principal |
| Feedback encouraged reflection | Participant indicated that feedback caused them to reflect on their practice |
| Behavior change | Participant responded to principal feedback with a change in behavior |
| Behavior change considered | Participant responded to principal feedback with a consideration to change a behavior |
| Written response in journal | Participant responded to principal feedback via a journal entry |
| Positive feedback acknowledged | Participant acknowledged principal feedback was perceived to be positive in nature |
| Appreciated feedback | Participant indicated an appreciation for principal feedback |

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| | |
|---|--|
| Promotion response | Participant responded in a manner that exhibited a focus on ensuring safety and promotion |
| Feedback acknowledged | Participant responded by acknowledging principal feedback |
| Written feedback preferred | Participant acknowledged the preference of receiving written feedback or responding through the use of written communication |
| Constructive feedback acknowledged | Participant acknowledged principal feedback was perceived to be constructive in nature |
| Helpful feedback | Participant indicated that principal feedback was in some way helpful |
| Influenced by principal feedback | Participant responded that they were influenced in some manner by principal feedback |
| Outside perspective | Participant acknowledged that feedback was generated from an observer and not themselves |
| Written response to observation | Participant responded to principal feedback via a written communication resulting from a class room observation |
| Good feelings | Participant acknowledged that principal feedback made them feel good |
| Validation | Participant indicated that principal feedback was accurate |
| Observation opportunities | Participant noted that they enjoyed having opportunities for the principal to observe their class |
| Feedback preference stated by teacher | Participant identified their preference for receiving principal feedback or for responding to principal feedback |
| Admin behavior change | Participant responded suggesting a change in administrative practice |
| Positive or constructive feedback-no preference | Participant indicated that either positive or constructive feedback was welcomed |
| Easy and convenient | Participant indicated that their preference regarding feedback was easier and more convenient-Primarily associated with written feedback |
| Written response | Participant responded to principal feedback through written communication |
| Verbal response | Participant response was verbal in nature |

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| | |
|--|---|
| Verbal feedback preferred | Participant acknowledged the preference of receiving verbal feedback or responding through the use of verbal communication |
| Assistance requested | Participant responded by indicating that assistance was needed |
| Agree feedback | Participant responded by agreeing with principal feedback |
| Input and explanation | Participant responded with an appreciation for having an opportunity to provide input or explain the circumstance associated with principal feedback |
| Prevention response | Participant responded in a manner that exhibited a focus on ensuring the absence of negatives |
| Anxious feeling being observed | Participant indicated that observations made them somewhat nervous |
| Dismissed behavior changes | Participant indicated that principal feedback did not influence them to consider a behavior change or initiate a behavior change because they already practice what is suggested or will practice what is suggested |
| Feedback anticipated | Participant indicated that they were anticipating principal feedback |
| Timely feedback | Participant indicated a preference and/or a need for principal feedback to be provided immediately after the class room observation |
| Supported explanation response with expert | Participant cited expert opinion when responding with an explanation for the situation that generated principal feedback |
| Apprehension | Participant indicated that there may be unfair or unjust practices associated with class room observations that resulted in suspicious motives for observations |

An analysis of open codes revealed similarities in the data. Open codes of similar nature were combined to develop families or categories depending on your preferred terminology. Atlas ti identifies codes of similar nature as families. Creswell (2009) utilized the term categories. The 36 open codes used to identify quotations relevant to the stated purpose of the study were assigned into eight families. Table 4 lists definitions of code families used to identify coded quotations associated with participant responses to principal feedback of class room

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observations.

Table 4

Definitions of Code Families

| Code Family | Definition |
|----------------------------|--|
| Behavior Changes | Participants' responses indicating that a change in behavior is appropriate, will occur, and/or has occurred |
| Explanations | Participants' responses containing an explanation for behavior, learning environment, or conditions associated with observation |
| Feedback Acknowledged | Participants' acknowledged the presence and/or preference of feedback, feedback components, and/or feedback qualities |
| Feedback Feelings | Participants indicated principal feedback was helpful, appreciated, provided joyful feelings, or was easy and convenient in response |
| Feedback Type | Types of principal feedback preferred by participants or types of feedback responses from participants |
| Feedback Requests | Participants requested feedback be provided in a timely manner or that assistance be provided |
| Observation Considerations | Participants' feelings associated with being observed |
| Response Focus | Participants' indicated their Focus for a prevention response or promotion response to principal feedback |

Table 5 lists each code family and the codes that were assigned to that family. Assigning codes into a family allows more in-depth analysis of the data. Table 6 lists code families, number of codes assigned to each family, and the number of quotations assigned to each family in descending order by number of coded quotations assigned to families. Table 6 provides information to the reader regarding more in-depth levels of data analysis and the emerging of themes.

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Table 5

Code Families Listing Assigned Open Codes

| Code Family | Open Codes Assigned |
|----------------------------|--|
| Feedback Type | Feedback preference stated by teacher Verbal feedback preferred Verbal response Written feedback preferred Written response Written response preferred Written response in journal Written response to observation |
| Observation Considerations | Anxious feeling being observed Apprehension Observation opportunities Feedback anticipated |
| Response Focus | Prevention response Promotion response |
| Feedback Acknowledged | Agree feedback Positive Feedback Acknowledged Constructive feedback acknowledged Feedback acknowledged Feedback encouraged reflection Outside perspective Positive or Constructive feedback-No preference Reference specific feedback Validation |
| Behavior Changes | Admin behavior change Dismissed behavior changes Behavior change considered Behavior change Influenced by principal feedback |
| Explanations | Support explanation response with expert Explanation for situation Input and explanation |

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Table 6

Code Families, Number of Codes Assigned to Family, and Number of Quotations

| Code Family | Number of Codes in Family | Frequency of Coded Quotations |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Feedback Acknowledged | 9 | 250 |
| Behavior Changes | 5 | 150 |
| Feedback Type | 8 | 129 |
| Explanations | 3 | 110 |
| Feedback Feelings | 4 | 82 |
| Response Focus | 2 | 37 |
| Observation Considerations | 4 | 22 |
| Feedback Requests | 2 | 11 |

Data sources.

Data were collected in several forms. Data collected regarding teacher responses to principal feedback of class observations were in the form of class observations, interviews, and written teacher responses. Written teacher responses were in the form of responses to observations, emails, responses to specific items in the electronic template, and journaling. Journaling involved participants keeping a journal of their responses to principal feedback.

Observations.

An analysis of observation data revealed that 13 of the 16 participants (81.2%) changed behaviors when principal feedback was provided after class room observations. Participants changed a behavior when they perceived that principal feedback had either encouraged a change in behavior or had suggested a change in behavior. Participants in this study often changed

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behaviors that were specific to principal feedback. For example, if principal feedback noted something was not posted as it should be the teacher would change the behavior and have the item posted during the next observation. If principal feedback noted the teacher was spending too much time behind the desk the teacher would change the behavior and spend more time out from behind the desk monitoring students during the next observation. This pattern of changing behaviors as a result of principal feedback from observations was consistent among all participants.

Table 7 describes the areas of the observation instrument and participants that demonstrated changes in behavior during observation numbers two and three that were a result of principal feedback from the previous observation.

Table 7

Participants' Behavior Changes Resulting from Principal Feedback After Observations

| Changed Behaviors on Observation Instrument | Teachers Demonstrating Changed Behavior |
|---|--|
| Providing Conducive Learning Condition | Math-B, Math-C, Sci-B, Sci-D, SS-A, SS-B, SS-C, SS-D, Eng.-C |
| Active Instruction | Math-A, Sci-B, Sci-C, Sci-D, SS-B, Eng.-B, Eng.-C, Eng.-D |
| Assessment | Math-A, Sci-C, Sci-D, Eng.-C |

Nine teachers responded to principal feedback of class room observations with changes in behavior in the area of providing a conducive learning condition. Participant SS-A responded with a change in behavior during observation number two in the area of providing conducive learning condition as a result of principal feedback after observation number one. After observation number one, SS-A was provided principal feedback regarding the posting of current standards on the board for students to review. It was noted in principal feedback after the first

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observation that performance standards listed on the board were not current and did not align to the activity students were performing. Principal feedback provided to SS-A after observation number two noted that the posted performance standards were current and did align with the activity students were performing in class. SS-A also made the comment to students during observation number two that he/she needed to ensure posted standards were current for students to review. SS-A demonstrated this change in behavior again during observation number three. Noted in principal feedback provided to SS-A after observation number three was the posting of appropriate performance standards for students indicating that the change in behavior had been sustained over the course of two observations.

Participant Sci-B responded with a behavior change in the area of providing conducive learning condition during observation number two as a result of being provided principal feedback after observation number one. Principal feedback provided after observation number one inquired as to the level of off task behavior among students during class. During observation number two it was evident that Sci-B had taken steps (changed behavior) to address the levels of off task behavior among students. This change in behavior was noted in principal feedback provided to Sci-B after observation number two.

Eight teachers responded to principal feedback of class room observations with changes in behavior in the area of active instruction. Sci-D was provided principal feedback after observation number one regarding the lack of differentiated instruction during the observation. It was noted after observation number two in principal feedback that Sci-B had differentiated the lesson for students allowing for a greater opportunity to experience various levels of learning. Sci-B created a lesson that contained several transitional periods to varied activities. Sci-B also differentiated the lesson by fostering a collaborative learning activity by placing students in

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small groups for the instructional period.

Eng.-C also demonstrated changes in behavior in the area of active instruction by using small group activities to differentiate the delivery model for students. Eng.-C created an activity where small groups of students were encouraged to collaborate on a lesson and rationalize the content. This rationalization was then presented to the class and defended if questions arose from their peers.

Four teachers responded to principal feedback of class room observations with changes in behavior in the area of assessment. Math-A responded with a change in behavior during observation number two in the area of assessment. During observation number one, Math-A displayed behavior that resulted in principal feedback inquiring about students not being acknowledged when they had their hand raised for an extended period of time. Math-A responded to principal feedback regarding students not being acknowledged during observation number one with a change in behavior during observation number two where he/she immediately acknowledged a student with their hand raised informing them that he/she was aware of their request for assistance and that he/she would be able to assist in just a few minutes. Math-A also displayed a change in behavior during observation number two in the area of active instruction where a lesson was differentiated through the use of peer collaboration as compared to no differentiation of a lesson being observed during observation number one.

It was noted in principal feedback provided to Eng.-C after observation number two that progress monitoring was primarily conducted through the use of guided questions aimed at students and that it was conducted while Eng.-C was sitting at his/her desk. It was noted in principal feedback after observation number three that Eng.-C responded with a change in behavior and was moving about the room monitoring the progress of students and was using

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more engaging methods to ensure students were challenged academically.

The observations of study participants by the four other administrators were also utilized for data collection and analysis. Responses to principal feedback provided to participants during observations by the other four administrators were recorded on the observation instrument and in participant journals. For the purposes of this research, participant responses to principal feedback from observations of the four additional administrators were reported more effectively in participants' journals yielding more beneficial data for this research. Knowing that the principal of BOB high school was the researcher for this study, participants responded to feedback provided by the four additional administrators through journal entries that were submitted to the principal. Findings from participant responses to principal feedback from the observations of the four additional administrators will be reported in conjunction with other relevant data collected through participant journals later in this chapter.

Participant Written Responses to Observations.

Participants demonstrated a preference to respond in writing to principal feedback after class room observations to explain the situation that generated the principal feedback. All participants (100%) responded to principal feedback by submitting written explanations to the circumstances associated with principal feedback from class room observations. Participants would read principal feedback and explain in writing why the learning environment or actions were occurring as they related to the feedback. Participants demonstrated that they would often explain in detail the reasons for their actions. The written explanations from participants in most instances provided some clarity to the situation that was observed.

SS-C was provided principal feedback in the form of a question. Principal feedback inquired as to the appropriateness of questioning strategies associated with students reviewing a

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completed assessment. SS-C responded by writing that just handing back questions does not work. SS-C prefers to have discussions to ensure students understand the concepts associated with the assessment before ever reviewing for answers. In cases such as this one involving SS-C, an explanation provides the principal with information he/she may not have understood at the time of the observation.

Sci-B was provided principal feedback regarding class room management techniques in class as a result of students being somewhat “chatty”. Sci-B responded by explaining that it has been his/her experience that most classes at the end of the day are this way. Sci-B also explained that this was an honors level course and that honors students are a little more intellectual so he/she is a little more flexible regarding the noise level because these students like to discuss things associated with the class.

Math-C received feedback inquiring about differentiation of a lesson. Math-C responded by writing that he/she knows these kids and that at some point they all receive some type of one-to-one instruction. Many of these students lack the basic skills to pass so more work is not the answer. On the contrary the opposite seems to work well. Math-C stated that he/she provides less work but provides more of his/her time. Knowing this information provides the observer with insight as to why the teacher is conducting class in a specific way.

Eng.-D was provided principal feedback asking his/her thoughts regarding the validity of students simply looking up definitions. Eng.-D responded in writing that the class that was observed was a co-taught class and that the co-teacher was working with the more accomplished students while he/she was working with the lesser accomplished students. Eng.-D explained that it quickly became apparent that this group of students would not be able to complete the planned activity and felt just defining the words would be appropriate. Eng.-D also commented that

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he/she meant to make no excuses and that he/she agreed that this lesson became less than ideal. Eng.-D also mentioned that his/her weakness for this specific group of students was not planning more effectively for the cognitive abilities of this group of students and differentiating the lesson appropriately.

Written responses from participants as a result of principal feedback after class room observations revealed that participants wish to explain their actions. In some instances these explanations proved to be insightful and provided the observer with information that would not have been revealed otherwise. Teachers in some instances attempted to “explain away” principal feedback that may have been constructive in nature. However, in some instances the explanations by participants were attempts to simply provide additional information to the researcher. Explanations by participants provided information regarding the actions of participants and often provided details to observed actions. Regardless of the intent, written explanations from participants after principal feedback has been demonstrated as a response to principal feedback.

An analysis of written responses from participants and class room observations of participants revealed that approximately eight participants (50%) who responded to principal feedback with an explanation for a situation that resulted from principal feedback also responded with behavior changes as a result of principal feedback after class room observations. Table 8 lists participants who demonstrated responses in similar areas of the observation instrument for both changed behaviors and explanations for the situation as a result of receiving principal feedback after class room observations.

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Table 8

Explanation for Situations and Changed Behaviors Demonstrated by Participants

| Participant | Areas of Observation Instrument with Shared Responses |
|-------------|--|
| Math-A | Active Instruction |
| Sci-C | Assessment, Student Engagement, Active Instruction |
| Sci-B | Active Instruction, Providing Conducive Learning Environment |
| SS-A | Providing Conducive Learning Environment |
| SS-C | Providing Conducive Learning Environment |
| SS-B | Providing Conducive Learning Environment |
| Math-C | Providing Conducive Learning Environment |
| Eng.-D | Providing Conducive Learning Environment |

Participant Math-A responded with a change in behavior as a result of principal feedback after a class room observation and also responded with an explanation for a situation. Both of these responses were in the area of active instruction. Sci-C demonstrated similarities among his/her responses to principal feedback after class room observations and his/her explanations for situations generating principal feedback in the areas of active instruction and assessment. Sci-B also demonstrated similarities in responding to principal feedback regarding changes in behavior and explanations for situations. Sci-B demonstrated similarities in the areas of active instruction and providing conducive learning condition. Participant SS-A demonstrated similarities among behavior changes and explanations in response to principal feedback but only in the area of providing conducive learning condition. SS-C demonstrated similarities in the same area as SS-A, providing conducive learning condition, despite being rather active in the areas of assessment and providing conducive learning condition when offering explanations in response to principal

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feedback. SS-B offered explanations in response to principal feedback in the area of providing conducive learning environment which was consistent with his/her areas where behavior changes were demonstrated as a result of principal feedback. Math-C demonstrated observed changes in behaviors from one observation to another in the area of providing conducive learning condition and offered explanations in the form of written responses for the same area after principal feedback was provided. Eng.-D also provided explanations in the form of written responses and changed behaviors from one observation to another in the area of active instruction.

Analysis of participants' responses after class room observations in the form of changed behaviors and explanations for the situations that generated the principal feedback suggests that participants will change a behavior when principal feedback is provided. However, participants will also respond with an explanation regarding the situation that initiated the principal feedback.

Interviews.

Each of the 16 participants was interviewed regarding the stated purpose and goals of the study. The interview questionnaire consisted of eight questions: 1) How do you prefer to receive principal feedback after class room observations? 2) How do you prefer to respond back to the principal as a result of feedback after class room observations? 3) Are you influenced by principal feedback after class room observations? In what manner? 4) How do you respond in terms of class room instruction as a result of principal feedback after class room observations? 5) How do you respond in terms of professional practice as a result of principal feedback after class room observations? 6) Are you more influenced by principal feedback after class room observations when the feedback is framed in a positive manner or when feedback is framed in a constructive manner? 7) Are you some one that responds with a focus to decrease the chances of a bad result or do you respond with a focus to increase the chance of a good result? 8) Is there

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anything else you would like to talk about/share with me regarding principal feedback after classroom observations?

Interview question one.

Interview question one inquired as to how participants preferred to receive principal feedback after class room observations? Participants' responses revealed that written feedback is preferred over other forms of feedback. All but one of the 16 participants (93.7%) indicated that written feedback from the principal was preferred over all other forms of communication. Participant Math-D indicated that written feedback was preferable when he/she stated "As far as the walk-throughs I really do like the walk-throughs cause I can read through it and I can make a change if I need to". Eng.-C also confirmed that written feedback was desirable when he/she indicated that some kind of written summary is the way he/she liked to receive feedback.

Interview question two.

Interview question two asked participants how they preferred to respond back to the principal as a result of principal feedback after classroom observations.

A majority of participants reported that they preferred to respond back to the principal in writing (75%) much like participants preferred to receive feedback in writing. The preference by participants to respond back to the principal in writing as a result of principal feedback after class room observations was evidenced by SS-A stating "If I am provided feedback in writing I prefer to respond in writing". Participant Math-A stated "It saves a lot of time. If you are busy and I am busy I can usually just reflect back with a response to the feedback you give me instead of us having to schedule a face to face meeting". Participant Eng.-B also confirmed a preference to respond back to the principal in writing when he/she stated they prefer to "send an email back and there is no having to schedule another meeting". Sci-A also indicated a preference to respond

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to principal feedback after class room observations via a written format when he/she stated “It is easier to do it through email”.

It should be noted that several participants (11 of 16 or 68.7%) indicated that responding in writing to principal feedback after class room observations was easier and more convenient. Participant quotations indicated that responding back to the principal in writing was easier, more convenient, more efficient, and required less time out of their schedule as compared to meeting face-to-face. Sci-C indicated that written responses to principal feedback were preferred by stating in the interview that “it is easier to respond through email”. Participant SS-B demonstrated a preference to respond back to the principal in writing by stating “I was able to type and think of other things to say or ask; I like that”. Participant Math-C preferred responding back to the principal “Through email because it is convenient”. Participant Eng.-C stated that “If I need to explain something I usually do it through email. I feel like that (written response) is effective”.

It should also be noted that four of the 16 participants (25%) preferred to respond back to the principal as a result of feedback after class room observations using verbal methods even though verbal responses were less frequent. Participant Sci-D stated that he/she would prefer that “If at all possible I like to come sit down face to face with you”. Participant Math-D indicated that he/she sometimes preferred an opportunity to respond through verbal communication by stating “Sometimes I like to personally converse with whoever does the walk-through”. Some participants stated that they would prefer a verbal response or face-to-face communication when they perceived the feedback or the situation that generated the feedback to be of a more serious nature. Participant SS-C communicated this point well when he/she stated “If there is a major problem with something that I see or something that was missed or commented on then I do like

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a face-to-face as well”. Participant Sci-C stated that he/she would welcome a conversation when there is “something that really needs to be changed right then it is good to have some feedback and talk, not just written, because you don’t know how to interpret things in writing sometimes”.

Interview question three.

Interview question three asked participants if they were influenced by principal feedback after class room observations? All participants (100%) indicated that they were influenced by principal feedback after class room observations. This was evident in quotations generated by participants during their interviews. When asked if he/she is influenced by principal feedback, Sci-B stated “Yes, I think so”. Sci-B expounded upon this belief by also stating “It’s always good to know what we are doing right and what you’re doing wrong so that I can make improvements”. Participant SS-B was also influenced by principal feedback after class room observations when he/she referenced a vocabulary lesson that was implemented based upon principal feedback from a class room observation. Participant Eng.-D was very adamant about being influenced by principal feedback when he/she stated that “I think I am definitely influenced by principal feedback”. Participant Math-C was also adamant about being influenced by principal feedback after class room observations when he/she stated during his/her interview “Of course you would be influenced by your information you give us”.

Behavior changes considered.

Data derived from interview question number three indicated that participants also considered changes in behavior as a result of the influence of principal feedback. Participant Sci-D mentioned that if the principal observed something in class and/or suggested a different practice then he/she would consider making that change in behavior to become a better teacher. Math-C also noted that a consideration to change a behavior as a result of the influence of

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principal feedback would be appropriate by stating “If I thought maybe it didn’t but you thought it did I can go back and see how we differ”. Eng.-C stated that “If principal feedback indicated that I am doing something well I will keep doing that”.

Outside observer.

Data also indicated that participants responded to interview question number three regarding the influence of principal feedback with an acknowledgement of their appreciation of having an observer from “outside the class room” offer feedback. The code “Outside perspective” was utilized to code participant quotations. Math-D affirmed this outside perspective when he/she acknowledged that principal feedback suggested moving the essential question from the back of the room to the front of the room to make it easier for students to see and the significant impact a simple move from the back of the room to the front of the room had on students.

Interview question four and five.

Questions four and five were discovered to be confusing to participants. Question four asked how do you respond in terms of class room instruction as a result of principal feedback after class room observations. In what manner? Question four was intended to inquire about the instructional practice teachers incorporated in the lesson. Question five asked how do you respond in terms of professional practice as a result of principal feedback after class room observations. Question five was intended to inquire about the professional practice that teachers incorporated both in the lesson and in the areas that support the lesson. It became evident after the second interview that participants did not distinguish between instructional practice and professional practice. To address this, I explained the context of the questions to the remaining

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participants prior to allowing them to answer effectively alleviating any confusion for the other 14 participants.

Interview question four inquired how participants may respond in terms of class room instruction as a result of principal feedback after class room observations. Interview question five asked much the same question but with a different focus on professional practice. Many participants (13 of 16 or 81.2%) responded to these questions in much the same manner as they did regarding whether or not they were influenced by principal feedback after class room observations.

Change in behavior.

All participants responded to question four and question five as either considering a change in behavior or actually stating they would change a behavior. SS-D simply responded with the quotation “I am going to change that.” When he/she considered their response in terms of professional practice (interview question five), Sci-A mentioned that they would consider the feedback provided by the principal and make sure those things associated with professional practice were appropriate. Eng.-B alluded to building upon his/her leadership capacity in the class room as a result of the principal providing feedback after class room observations. Eng.-B also stated that the principal feedback from class room observations resulted in him/her reflecting on class room instruction and considering ways in which to improve. Math-C was much more direct in his/her response to the question how did they respond in terms of class room instruction as a result of principal feedback after class room observations by stating “You definitely correct that if it was in your observation”. Eng.-D was provided principal feedback regarding a specific reading strategy after a class room observation and responded with the

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quotation “I’ve started looking more ahead now at the chapters and now I am going to try to have things ready to display more quickly” indicating a response that resulted in a behavior change.

Encouraged reflection.

It should also be noted that most participants (14 of 16 or 87.5%) responded to interview question numbers four and five regarding their response to principal feedback in terms of their class room instruction and professional practice with quotations that indicated that principal feedback encouraged personal reflection. This is notable as participants indicated that principal feedback resulted in their looking back at their practice and evaluating their performance. This practice of reflection was noted by SS-C when he/she stated “It gives me an opportunity to sit down and think why I did it this way”. Math-D stated that principal feedback “Really makes me think”. Eng.-C commented that principal feedback “Provides me with people who have been there and done that” referencing his/her reflecting back on the comments of someone who has spent time in the class room. Sci-A stated “I reflect back on the feedback to see if my planning and instruction could be differed or improved”.

Interview question six.

Interview question six asked participants if they were more influenced by principal feedback after class room observations when the feedback was framed in a positive manner or when feedback was framed in a constructive manner. Participants indicated that both were desirable. The general consensus among participants regarding interview question six was that feedback framed in a constructive manner was desirable for improvement but that feedback framed in a positive manner was always welcomed because teachers like to feel appreciated and that the principal acknowledged that they were doing a good job in the class room.

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Participant SS-C mentioned in his/her interview that if the principal observed something exemplary it was nice to hear that in the feedback. Participant SS-C also stated that if feedback from the principal was constructive in nature that was fine as well because it was those constructive pieces of feedback that provided growth. SS-B noted in his/her interview that “I think it is always good to have positive feedback”. Also, in the next statement SS-B acknowledged that “Constructive feedback can be positive too” demonstrating that both positive and constructive feedback was desirable. Sci-C stated in his/her interview that positive feedback is like a pat on the back and lets him/her know that “Hey, I’ve got something down”. Sci-C also stated that if the principal provided feedback that was constructive in nature he/she would attempt to “Address it so it does not become an issue later”. Math-D confirmed the response by Sci-C when he/she stated that positive feedback from the principal was like a “pat on the back”. Math-D also stated that he/she was probably more influenced by feedback from the principal when it was framed in a constructive manner because constructive feedback “kind of gives you your highs and your lows and lets you know there is always something to work on”. Eng.-A also noted in his/her interview that both positive and constructive framed feedback from the principal is beneficial. Eng.-A mentioned that he/she was likely to be influenced more when feedback was framed in a positive manner because everyone likes to be patted on the back. However, Eng.-A also stated that constructive feedback is beneficial as well because everyone has something they can change.

Interview question seven.

Interview question seven focused on the theoretical aspects of this research (Higgins, 1997). Interview question seven asked participants if they were someone that responds with a focus to decrease the chances of a bad result or do you respond with a focus to increase the

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chance of a good result? Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997) posits two motivations for how someone will respond: prevention (Decrease the chance of a bad result) or promotion (Increase the chance of a good result). A prevention focus for response emphasizes a consideration for safety and security. A promotion focus for response emphasizes a consideration for accomplishment and/or advancement of needs. Interview data revealed that 14 of the 16 participants (87.5%) stated that they would most often respond with a promotion focus. Participants indicated that responding to principal feedback after class room observations was primarily conducted with a focus to promote accomplishment and/or advancement of needs.

Participants responded most often with a promotion focus (14 of 16 or 87.5%) when asked how they respond to principal feedback after class observations. SS-A stated that he/she wanted to “promote good behavior” when responding to principal feedback. This response was confusing to the researcher as it was interpreted as a response that was aimed at student behavior. Participant Math-B simply stated “I would like to focus on the chance of producing a good result”. Math-B communicated through this response that interview question number seven was clearly understood. Participant SS-C provided what I would consider the most rational response regarding a choice of responding with a prevention focus or promotion focus when he/she stated that “I am going for the win”. Meaning he/she chose the promotion focus when responding to principal feedback after class room observations. SS-C also stated “I am a coach and I play to win. I don’t play trying not to lose”. Participants Sci-D, Math-D, Eng.-A, Eng.-C, Eng.-D, Sci-A, Math-C, Eng.-B, Math-A, and SS-D all stated that they would respond with a focus to increase the chances of a positive result (Promotion focus).

Two of the 16 participants (12.5%) did respond with a prevention focus demonstrating their wish to decrease the chances of a bad result when responding to principal feedback after

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class room observations. This was demonstrated by participant SS-A when he/she commented that both a prevention focus and promotion focus were beneficial. SS-B asked the researcher if he/she could respond with a little bit of both. SS-B also stated that a prevention focus for response was sometimes a selfish response due to his/her attempting to decrease the incidents of having to “bail” students out of trouble. The only participants to focus primarily on the prevention of a bad result (prevention response) were Sci-B and Math-C. Sci-B was quick to respond with a prevention focus when asked interview question number seven. Math-C also stated that he/she would be the one to try and decrease the chance of a bad result. One participant specifically mentioned that he/she had changed their focus. Sci-D stated that he/she was prevention focused early in his/her career but as he/she has gained experience they have made a shift to a promotion focus.

Interview question eight.

Interview question number eight asked participants if there was anything else they wanted to talk about/share regarding principal feedback after class room observations. Responses from participants ranged from a simple “No” to very informative diatribes regarding their opinions of principal feedback and walk-throughs (Class Room Observations). SS-A informed me that he/she wanted to emphasize that the more direct the feedback was the better. Math-B provided a rather lengthy response to interview question number eight. Math-B stated that he/she was appreciative of having opportunities to explain situations and feel as if the administration had a purpose for the feedback and was not just completing a form. SS-C also provided a great deal of information regarding his/her additional opinions of principal feedback after class room observations. SS-C referred to a specific incident where feedback was provided by the principal regarding a lesson he/she was conducting. The lesson was about the Pope and how the Pope

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came to be and the specific powers the Pope has in the church. The principal asked SS-C about the present day Pope and whether or not SS-C knew that the present day Pope was once a bouncer for a night club. Not knowing this information, SS-C later responded to the principal feedback stating “You asked me a question I was not ready for. It made me go back and check my information”. Eng.-A responded to interview question number eight by informing the principal that some teachers in the building have expressed that the feedback among administrators is not equitable. The feeling is administrators are not consistent with regard to some pieces of the observation instrument. One specific example provided by Eng.-A was that some administrators are very picky where things are posted in the room where other administrators never make a comment about where things are posted in the room. Eng.-A stated that this sometimes causes a little bit of a problem. Sci-D stated that “You are there to help me improve and at the end of the day it is all about what the kids receive”. Those participants that did have opinions to express regarding principal feedback primarily did so in a positive manner.

Constructive Feedback to Researcher.

Two participants expressed somewhat constructive responses when asked if they had anything else they wanted to talk about/share regarding principal feedback after class room observations by stating that feedback needs to be provided in a timely manner and that there are concerns among teachers that feedback is not equitable among administrators. One response was a result of a quotation from Eng.-A regarding the equitable application of feedback after class room observations from the different administrators. This feedback from Eng.-A was so powerful that it was discussed at the next administration meeting. Sci-C provided a response regarding timely feedback when he/she stated that “feedback needs to be provided back to us in a

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timely manner”. Sci-C also mentioned that it is hard to remember the situation that resulted in the feedback when we do not get it back for a week or so.

Several participants did not have any additional information to communicate when asked if they wanted to talk about/share anything else regarding principal feedback after class room observations. Eng.-D simply stated “No, I don’t think so”. Sci-B stated “No”. Sci-A stated that “If I think of anything I will email you”. SS-D first stated “No” but then felt compelled to explain the “No”.

Participant interviews were a rich source of data regarding teacher responses to principal feedback after class room observations. It was revealed through observation data that participants are willing to make behavioral changes as a result of principal feedback. Similar considerations to make behavioral changes were demonstrated by participants during interviews. This information suggests that whether or not principal feedback results in a change in behavior, as suggested during observations of participants, at the very least participants are reviewing principal feedback after class room observations and considering if a change in behavior is warranted.

It should also be noted that participants indicated during interviews that they are willing to make changes in their behavior as a result of principal feedback. This data aligns with observation data suggesting that principal feedback after class room observations influences some participants to actually make a behavioral change. This is of interest as data from both observations of participants and interviews with participants suggesting that principal feedback after class room observations influences changes in behavior among participants addresses the validity of principal feedback after class room observations.

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Participants have demonstrated in both their written responses to class room observations and interviews that written forms of feedback and response are preferred. Participants indicated during interviews that the preference for written feedback was desirable. This preference supported data from written responses of participants to principal feedback after class room observations. Data from both written responses from participants and participant interviews suggest that participants prefer written communication in regards to receiving principal feedback and for responding back to the principal after feedback is received.

Journals.

Earlier in this paper and in the observations section of this chapter the reader was informed that participants knew that the principal of BOB high school was the researcher for this study. The reader was also informed that observations of four additional administrators would be reviewed to collect data. Participants responded to feedback provided by the four additional administrators after class room observations through journal entries that were submitted to the principal. Findings from participant responses to principal feedback from the observations of the four additional administrators will be reported in conjunction with other relevant data collected through participant journals. This data was reviewed by the researcher and no additional relevant data was revealed that is not similar to the findings already reported in the observations section of this chapter. Participant responses to feedback from the other four administrators after class room observations were consistent with participant responses to principal feedback after class room observations. Participants consistently responded to feedback from the other four administrators with changes in behavior. However, participants did provide journal entries that were associated with class room observations. As researcher, I believe the stated purpose and goals of this research will be better served by reporting findings from participants' journals

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holistically. Therefore, the following report of findings for participants' journal entries will include journal entries from all participants for responses to all study related observations.

Journal entry data revealed that participants responded to principal feedback of class room observations through written communication. Teachers also responded by providing explanations for their actions and by referencing specific observer feedback. Teachers also expressed their desire to reflect on their own professional practice as a result of principal feedback after class room observations.

Journal entry data revealed that participants (12 of 16 or 75%) preferred feedback be provided through written communication and that participants preferred to respond back to the principal in writing. Participants also responded back to the principal via written communication to provide an explanation regarding what was observed during the classroom visit. The abundance of quotations from participants' journals coded as "Explanation for situation" validates findings from written responses to observations by participants. This finding suggests that participants wish to respond to principal feedback after class room observations with an explanation of the situation that generated the principal feedback. Participants also chose to respond through journal entries with a reference to the specific feedback that was provided after a class room observation. This data indicates that participants are reading and becoming more aware of the principal feedback that is provided after class room observations. This data also suggests that participants are formulating responses in the journal to address principal feedback after class room observations. Participants also responded to principal feedback after class room observations through journaling about their opportunities to reflect on their teaching practice as a result of principal feedback. Participants noted in their journals that principal feedback after class

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room observations provided them with opportunities to review the feedback and formulate a response.

Explanations via journaling.

All participants (100%) responded to principal feedback after class room observations in their journals with explanations of the situation and/or the learning environment that existed during the observation. Teachers desired to provide the researcher with an explanation that described their response to the feedback that was provided after the class room visit.

Explanations provided by teachers after class room observations were very insightful and informative.

SS-B was provided principal feedback after a class room observation regarding a word association activity performed by students. Principal feedback inquired as to the goal of the lesson as it was associated with students blurting out answers and raising their voice to the teacher. SS-B explained in his/her journal response that this type of learning environment encourages competition among students and that this particular group likes competition. SS-B also explained that this type of student engagement technique was discussed at a professional learning opportunity he/she attended and was aimed at decreasing the pressure among students to be “right” all the time and encourage participation, even if the answer may be incorrect.

Eng.-D was provided principal feedback regarding a reading strategy he/she termed as “Popcorn reading”. Popcorn reading is where one student reads while all other students follow along in the text. At any given point the teacher will direct the student to stop reading and call on another student who is to “pop-up” and begin reading where the other student stopped reading. The term “popcorn” is associated with the “popping-up” popcorn does when it is cooking. Principal feedback from the class room observation where students were “Popcorn” reading

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inquired about the intended goals and desired outcomes of this teaching strategy. Eng.-D responded in a journal entry that the intention of the reading strategy was to keep kids awake, focused on the content, and interested. Eng.-B was of the opinion that this reading technique accomplished what he/she intended for it to accomplish. Eng.-B continued in his/her journal explaining that he/she would eventually like to streamline this activity into an activity to discuss the more difficult vocabulary. Eng.-B also stated that he/she intends to become more aware of his/her goals for students in the area of reading and that this “awareness” will be a positive influence in his/her teaching techniques in the area of reading.

Math-B was provided principal feedback after a class room observation about the levels of differentiation provided for the entire class. Math-B indicated that he/she differentiated a lesson for a visually impaired student who sits in the front of the class. Principal feedback regarding this class room observation inquired as to what extent was differentiation being considered for all students in the class. Math-B responded with a journal entry outlining his/her efforts to differentiate the lesson for all students. Math-B provided a detailed explanation of the differentiation strategies for this class by describing the learning focused schools teaching strategies that were combined with various graphic organizers, remediation, and connections with real-world examples to facilitate learning by all students. It was a rather impressive explanation.

Sci-D was provided with principal feedback that asked a question of his/her desired outcomes for a lesson. Specifically, the question was asked “How have you differentiated this lesson?” Asking this question of Sci-D resulted in a change in behavior that was observed in a subsequent class room visit. This was evident in a journal entry submitted by Sci-D after the subsequent class room visit where he/she acknowledged that principal feedback was received

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praising the creativity of the activity and the engagement level of the students. Sci-D explained in his/her journal that the new activity was a result of their desire to incorporate more interactive teaching strategies. Sci-D communicated in his/her journal that he/she differentiated the lesson and was praised for the change in behavior. Sci-D also stated that the principal feedback received after the subsequent observation made him/her feel quite proud of the lesson.

Reference specific principal feedback.

Participants also chose to respond through journal entries with a reference to the specific feedback (13 of 16 or 81.25%) that was provided after a class room observation. This data indicates that participants are reading and becoming more aware of the principal feedback that is provided after class room observations. This data also suggests that participants are formulating responses in the journal to address principal feedback after class room observations.

Math-C referenced specific feedback through his/her journal by writing the exact feedback provided by the principal. Principal feedback regarding differentiation was provided to Math-C as “Maybe differentiated by your approach? Not sure. What do you think?” Math-C responded by writing that exact phrase in his/her journal with the answer “Wow, good question.” Math-C continued with an explanation of how the lesson was to be differentiated for the various students.

SS-D referenced a situation in his/her journal regarding principal participation in a class during an observation. During class, SS-D was discussing a scenario with students regarding the federal government when the principal asked a question to gain a better understanding of the concept and to participate in the class with students. Feedback was provided during class in the form of a question that was posed to the teacher as if the principal was one of the students. SS-D referenced this feedback in class in his/her journal by stating that he/she thought it was very

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smooth how the principal focused a question as if the principal was seeking personal clarification on the concept knowing all the while that the principal actually asked the question to assist another student in clarifying the instructional context of the lesson.

Eng.-B referenced specific feedback from a class room observation by acknowledging the specific comment made by the principal. The principal often will thank the teacher for allowing the visit to the class. This is done to acknowledge the fact that the principal understands that despite him being the leader of the school the class room is the domain of the teacher. Eng.-B referenced that statement in his/her journal and stated that by the principal starting with the phrase “Thank you for allowing me to visit your class” a sense of community and common ground was instantly fostered. Eng.-B continued with the statements that by including those types of comments and that type of feedback teachers are shown that they are an integral part of the school.

In many instances principal feedback after class room observations was in the form of a question. This was acknowledged by Sci-C when he/she stated in a journal entry “I have finally figured out what I want to say to the principal in response to his visit last week and the questions he asked”. This data communicates that participants are reviewing specific principal feedback and formulating concise responses.

Teacher reflection.

Participants also responded to principal feedback (15 of 16 or 93.7%) after class room observations through journaling about their opportunities to reflect on their teaching practice as a result of principal feedback. Participants noted in their journals that principal feedback after class room observations provided them with opportunities to review the feedback and formulate a response.

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Sci-B simply stated that he/she thought the lesson went very well after reflecting on principal feedback. Principal feedback was provided regarding the level of noise in the class room while Sci-B was providing instruction. Sci-B was quick to state that after considering the comments provided by the principal he/she felt confident that this group of students was capable of this level of engagement while also accomplishing the goals and objectives of the class.

Math-D was provided principal feedback regarding his/her methods for grouping students during a lesson. Math-D responded in his/her journal that after reflecting on this activity he/she might have taken more time to consider the grouping of students to maximize time and learning for student groups.

SS-C responded in his/her journal to principal feedback after class room observations by reflecting on the benefits of having observers watch him/her teach. SS-C stated that it was beneficial for administrators to see what actually occurred in the class room. SS-C also stated that it is very helpful when students are aware that at any time an administrator could walk into the room to observe.

Eng.-D simply referenced principal feedback from an observation and stated “However, after further reflection on this question”. This statement by Eng.-D demonstrates that participants of this study responded to principal feedback by reflecting on their teaching practices. Teacher reflection plays a vital role in the professional growth of teachers (Feeney, 2007).

Participant journaling was another valuable source of data. Participants responded in their journals to principal feedback after class room observations in a manner that demonstrated some consistency with other forms of data collection. Participants’ journal responses demonstrated some similarities with participants’ responses to observations, written responses to observations, and interviews.

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Participants' journal responses demonstrated some level of consistency with participants' behavioral changes identified for various areas of the observation instrument. Some participants provided explanations for principal feedback and demonstrated changes in behavior in the areas of active instruction, providing conducive learning conditions and assessment. It is also interesting to note that three participants (18%) demonstrated responses to principal feedback that were consistent across observations of their class rooms, their written responses to observations, and their journal entries with regard to areas of the observation instrument.

An interesting finding from participants' journals was that participants again demonstrated that responses to principal feedback after class room observations were often in the form of explanations for the behavior or the learning environment at the time of the observation. This finding is consistent among other forms of participants' responses.

Participants' interviews and journal entries also demonstrated similar findings. Journal data and interview data revealed that participants consider changes in behavior after principal feedback is received. Findings revealed among varied sources of data that participants are considering changes in behavior as a result of principal feedback after class room observations provides validity to the findings of this study.

Research Questions and Findings

Based upon the stated purpose and goals of this study, the following research questions guided this work. The primary research questions for this study are:

1. How do teachers respond to principal's feedback after class observations?
2. Why do teachers respond to principals' observation feedback in specific ways?
3. How do teachers' verbal responses to principal feedback differ from their behavioral responses to principal feedback?

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4. Do teachers' responses to principal's observation feedback differ by academic discipline?
5. Do teachers' responses to principal's observation feedback differ by their teaching experiences?
6. Do teachers respond to principal's feedback with prevention responses or promotion responses?

Research Question One.

Research question number one asks how teachers respond to principal feedback after class observations. An analysis of response data collected from participant observations, written responses to observations, interviews, and journals suggests that teachers respond to principal feedback in a variety of ways. Data suggests that participants of this study most often respond to principal feedback after class room observations by changing behaviors, considering a change in behaviors, through written communication, and/or by reflecting on their teaching.

Participants of this study primarily prefer to respond to principal feedback after class room observations through written communication (75%). However, data collected from observations of participants indicated that when principal feedback was provided to teachers on the observation instrument a change in behavior was observed (100%) during the next class room observation. When analysis of participants' observation data was conducted for observations number two and number three, participants consistently demonstrated a change in behavior from the previous class room observation in the areas that generated the initial principal feedback.

Participants' changing behavior as a result of principal feedback after class room observations was supported by written responses of participants to class room observations. Participants responded in writing after class room observations indicating that changes in behavior were appropriate particularly if the teacher perceived that principal feedback in some

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way suggested a change in behavior was appropriate. Participant SS-A wrote a response to principal feedback after a class observation that as a result of the feedback he/she now meets expectations of all teachers by continuously having important information posted for students. Sci-C responded with a change in behavior regarding showing clips of videos instead of the entire movie. Eng.-D modified a teaching strategy as a result of principal feedback demonstrating that a behavior change was an appropriate response to principal feedback. Instances such as the ones listed demonstrate that participants involved in this study changed behaviors as a result of principal feedback after class room observations.

Interview data collected from participants also supported the finding of teachers changing behaviors as a result of principal feedback. All participants (100%) indicated in their responses to interview questions that if principal feedback was perceived by them that a change in behavior was appropriate then they would make a change in behavior. SS-D simply stated in his/her interview that if principal feedback suggested that a change was appropriate then “I am going to change that.” Math-C responded during the interview that if principal feedback from a class room observation in some way suggested a change in behavior then “You definitely correct that if it was in your observation.”

Data collected from participants’ journal entries supported the finding that teachers responded to principal feedback after class room observations with a change in behavior. Math-A stated in a journal entry that principal feedback after class room observations resulted in him/her having changed the way lessons were planned and implemented in the class. Sci-B stated that after principal feedback from a class room observation he/she had attempted several different class room management strategies in class.

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Participants also communicated in their journal responses (12 of 16 or 75%) to principal feedback after class room observations that in some cases a consideration to change behaviors was appropriate even if they were not yet fully persuaded to make a change. In some instances, principal feedback resulted in teachers responding with comments or behaviors that indicated they were still considering the context of the feedback and whether or not a change in behavior was appropriate. Sci-B demonstrated this consideration to change a behavior when he/she commented in the journal that “Maybe a bell” would be an effective classroom management technique. Math-D stated in a journal entry that he/she had thought about several grouping strategies for students. Eng.-B stated that he/she “Needs to work on referencing the standard more in class” which indicated a consideration for a change in behavior. Math-D considered a change in behavior as a result of principal feedback when he/she stated that “I believe that in the future I would only show the first portion (video) to my lab students”.

Data collected from participants’ journals affirmed findings that teachers respond to principal feedback after class room observations with a consideration to change behaviors. These findings were evidenced by Sci-B acknowledging in his/her journal that there is a need to consider developing a more effective method for redirecting off-task students when principal feedback referenced students being a little off task during the class room visit. Math-D commented in his/her journal after principal feedback referenced the length of a movie that was shown to students that in the future a smaller video clip may be appropriate for students to maximize instructional time. SS-C affirmed that teachers respond to principal feedback by considering changes in behavior. Principal feedback referenced a power point being shown to students that contained only text information. SS-C was discussing careers associated with the content of the lesson and showing a power point that only contained text. Principal feedback

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suggested other types of media be incorporated into the presentation to make it more interesting for students. SS-C commented in his/her journal that incorporating pictures and other forms of media was a good idea and a great visual teaching strategy that he/she needed to consider.

Data collected from participants indicates that teachers prefer to respond to principal feedback after class room observations through written communication (15 of 16 or 93.7%). Teachers prefer to respond to principal feedback by writing a response. Participants indicated that most often they prefer to respond to principal feedback after class room observations by writing an explanation for the situation that generated the principal feedback. Quotations from participants contained in data collection sources were coded to identify relevance regarding the stated purpose and goals of this research.

The code “Explanation for situation” is defined for the purposes of this study as “Participant responded with an explanation for the situation that generated principal feedback.” This code was used for participant responses that offered an explanation as to why they were performing a behavior or why a specific condition was occurring in their class that resulted in principal feedback being provided. The code “Explanation for situation” was the most frequently assigned code for all data collection sources by a considerable margin. The code “Explanation for situation” was assigned to approximately 102 participant quotations. The second most frequently assigned code was “Reference specific feedback” which was assigned 67 times to participant quotations. Codes “Feedback encouraged reflection” (64 times) and “Responded with behavior change” (62 times) were the third and fourth most frequently assigned codes to participant quotations. The amount of quotations assigned the code “Explanation for situation” as compared to the second most frequently assigned code of “Feedback encouraged reflection”

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demonstrated the overwhelming desire of teachers to explain what was occurring in class that resulted in principal feedback.

Collected data also suggests that teachers respond to principal feedback after class room observations by reflecting on their teaching (87.5%). Teachers reported that they will respond to principal feedback by reflecting on the practice that generated the principal feedback. The code “Feedback encouraged reflection” was the third most frequently assigned code for all data sources. The code “Feedback encouraged reflection” is defined for the purposes of this study as “Participant indicated that feedback caused them to reflect on their practice”. Participants reflecting on their practice as a result of principal feedback after class room observations were demonstrated by relevant quotations collected through the various sources of data. Eng.-A stated in his/her interview that if principal feedback referenced the material I was teaching was not clear or the teaching method may not be as effective as it should be the students may share the same opinion. Eng.-A stated that if that is true, something needs to be done regarding his/her techniques to make the content more accessible for students. Math-C affirmed teachers responding to principal feedback after class room observations by reflecting on his/her teaching when he/she stated in the interview that if principal feedback indicated that something wasn’t working he/she would have to go back and look at that to determine where things went wrong and how best to modify the strategy. Sci-B responded with a journal entry to principal feedback provided after a class room observation regarding how he/she thought the lesson went by simply writing “I thought the lesson went very well”. This communicates that Sci-B reflected on the lesson and considered the response he/she provided.

Participants responded to principal feedback after class room observations in several ways. Most often, participants preferred to respond with written communication explaining the

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situation that generated the initial principal feedback. Participants also responded to principal feedback after class room observations by changing the behaviors that were referenced in the feedback. Teachers also noted that behavior changes were more than an appropriate response when there was a perception by the participant that principal feedback in some way suggested that a behavior change was needed or suggested.

Research Question Two.

Research question two asks why teachers respond to principals' observation feedback in specific ways. As described in research question one regarding how teachers respond to principal feedback after class room observations, participants in this study most often responded to principals' observation feedback by either changing behaviors or considering a change in behavior, through written communication, and by reflecting on their teaching practice. Reasons why participants responded in the manner they did vary.

In incidences where teachers responded with a change in behavior as a result of principal feedback it was most often noted that participants interpreted that the principal feedback in some way encouraged or suggested a change in behavior was appropriate. Several participants reported that if principal feedback suggested something needed to be changed then a behavior would be changed. When asked in the interview if principal feedback influenced his/her behavior, SS-A responded by stating "Absolutely. If my boss tells me there needs to be a change then there will be a change". Sci-B responded in his/her journal that a change in behavior was conducted as a result of principal feedback from a prior class room observation being perceived as suggesting a change. Eng.-A commented in his/her interview that feedback comments after observations are sometimes things you already know that are being done wrong but that a comment from an observer is what ultimately influences you to make that change in behavior.

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Teachers in this study most often responded to principal feedback after class room observations through written communication. The primary reason reported by teachers for this manner of response was that it was easier, more convenient and less time consuming to just reply or respond in writing (68.7%). SS-A demonstrated his/her preference to respond to principal feedback using written communication by stating that if he/she is provided feedback in writing then he/she will respond back in writing. Sci-A also demonstrated his/her preference to respond to principal feedback through written communication because of convenience by stating in the interview that it is so much easier to hit reply and just respond through email. Several other participants (Math-C, Eng.-B, SS-D, and Sci-A) also stated that the ease and convenience of responding back to principal feedback through written communication was desirable.

Participants' reflections of teaching practice as a result of principal feedback was also reported as a finding for why teachers respond to principal feedback in the manner they do. Math-B stated that he/she responded by reflecting on principal feedback because it is good practice to look back at what you do and think why it was I am doing this. SS-C also responded with reflection of principal feedback provided after a class room observation because it provided time for him/her to sit down and think about the feedback. Eng.-A stated that reflection is an appropriate response to principal feedback after class room observations because it makes you think if what they are seeing is really what you want the students to see. If not, there needs to be some modification.

Participants indicated through their responses via the various forms of data collection that their desire to respond to principal feedback after class room observations in the manner they did was for a few different reasons. Participants made a behavior change when they felt principal feedback encouraged them to change. Participants considered behavior changes when they

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believed principal feedback offered them the opportunity to have an opinion as to whether or not a behavior change was appropriate. Participants reflected about their teaching practices when principal feedback encouraged them to think back or formulate opinions regarding what was occurring in class. In most instances teachers responded in writing to principal feedback after class room observations primarily because it was easier and less time consuming.

Research Question Three.

Research question three asks how teachers' verbal responses to principal feedback differ from their behavioral responses. Participants in this study demonstrated a difference between verbal responses and behavioral responses only in the manner in which they perceived principal feedback. In some instances verbal responses and behavioral responses were intertwined. Participants changed behaviors when they were of the opinion that principal feedback either encouraged or suggested a change be considered. This was evidenced by participants reporting either through verbal responses or written responses that when they believed that there was some form of autonomy provided to them as a result of principal feedback they would reflect and decide the appropriate response. On the contrary, participants demonstrated through observation data they would most often simply change a behavior in a subsequent observation when principal feedback in a previous observation was provided and was perceived as suggesting a change needed to occur.

Analysis of observation data revealed that participants would make a behavior change in a second or third observation when principal feedback in the prior observation was perceived as suggesting a change in behavior was needed. Observation data suggested there was not much dialogue regarding behavior changes that were observable. In most instances, observable

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changes in behaviors were preceded by principal feedback that in some way communicated to the participant that a change in behavior was expected.

Participant SS-A was very adamant about making changes in behavior when the principal provided feedback that he/she interpreted as suggesting a change in behavior was appropriate. SS-A basically stated in his/her interview that if the boss says I need to change then I will change. Math-B supported this adamant viewpoint expressed by SS-A when he/she stated that if I am told to do something different then I will make those adjustments accordingly. Eng.-D stated in his/her journal that he/she knew that principal feedback was meant to push him/her toward continuing to strive to improve teaching practice. This comment by Eng.-D indicated that at least this participant feels that they know and can interpret the meaning of principal feedback. SS-C made the comment during his/her interview that he/she would be crazy not to tweak or fix professional practice if principal feedback suggested such an action.

Participants were more flexible in their responses when they perceived principal feedback after class room observations provided them with some level of autonomy. When interview data and journal data were analyzed participants were not as rigid with regard to behavioral changes as compared to observation data. Many participants demonstrated that reflection of practice as a result of principal feedback was an appropriate course of action when principal feedback after class room observations was provided. In many instances, if teachers did not perceive that principal feedback encouraged a change they would take time to analyze the feedback and then make decisions regarding the appropriate response.

Eng.-D is a new teacher and one I have referenced several times as findings have been reported. I have done this because his/her insight into his/her own teaching in my opinion is far beyond the years he/she has actually been in a class room. I keep referencing one particular

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incident when I was in Eng.-D's class room. The class was reading aloud. One student was reading while the other students were following along in the text. As the student was reading Eng.-D would call upon another student and that student would continue reading where the previous student left off. The strategy appeared to me to be an effective reading strategy but I wanted to know Eng.-D's opinion of the lesson. Principal feedback was provided after the class room observation asking Eng.-D "What are your goals for students when they are reading aloud?" Eng.-D responded with a journal entry explaining that principal feedback really made him/her think about the lesson. His/her goal was to reflect and really consider how this lesson could be used to better educate students. How could he/she teach students and not just convey information. The goal moving forward is to have students follow the reading more carefully and think more deeply about the context of the words they are reading. Reading fluency and confidence are also goals Eng.-D has for these students. Eng.-D concludes that changing and being more aware of his/her goals for students in the area of reading will be a positive change to his/her teaching techniques.

The reflection by Eng.-D for this one observation and the feedback provided by the principal illustrates how participants' verbal responses to principal feedback after class room observations and behavioral responses to principal feedback after class room observations may differ but may also be intertwined. The inclination of Eng.-D to analyze a simple question posed by the principal and incorporate that reflection into his/her own personal needs and the needs of the students demonstrates that for participants in this study data suggests that any differences between verbal and behavioral responses was conditional upon the situation that generated the principal feedback.

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Research Question Four.

Research question four asks if teachers' responses to principals' observation feedback differ by academic discipline. Participants in this study are from the four major subject areas of BOB high school: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English Language. Each academic discipline is represented by four participants. Data collected for this study does not reveal that there is any discernible difference in teacher responses based upon their academic discipline when examining the total number of responses provided by participants. Data collected for this study does suggest a difference in teacher responses when examining individual assignments of codes for the various disciplines.

Primary documents loaded into Atlas ti for each academic discipline were fairly consistent. Comparing the number of primary documents loaded into Atlas ti by each academic discipline allows me to analyze the amount of responses by participants and discern if the frequency of responses is dependent on the academic discipline of participants. Table 9 lists the frequency of primary documents per academic discipline. As noted in Table 9, readers may discern that based upon the frequency of primary documents loaded into Atlas ti responses by academic discipline are consistent.

Table 9

Frequency of Primary Documents by Academic Discipline

| Academic Discipline | Frequency of Primary Documents |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Social Studies | 30 |
| Mathematics | 28 |
| English | 28 |
| Science | 26 |

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Primary documents loaded into Atlas ti are representative of participants' responses to principal feedback after class room observations. However, a primary document may contain many relevant quotations from participants that are worthy of being assigned a code. Therefore, it is prudent to also analyze the number of participant quotations for all primary documents loaded into Atlas ti for each academic discipline. Be reminded that codes are assigned to participants' quotations that are identified as relevant to the stated purpose and goals of this study. Therefore, one primary document may contain a minimal number of relevant quotations or may contain a large number of relevant quotations. Table 10 lists the frequency of relevant quotations for primary documents loaded into Atlas ti by academic discipline. As noted in Table 10, data suggests minimal difference in the number of relevant quotations by academic discipline.

Table 10

Frequency of Relevant Quotations by Academic Discipline

| Academic Discipline | Frequency of relevant Quotations for Primary Documents |
|---------------------|--|
| Social Studies | 193 |
| Mathematics | 183 |
| English | 180 |
| Science | 166 |

As frequency of individual codes assigned to relevant participant quotations was examined, it became apparent that data suggests teachers' responses to principal's observation feedback may differ by academic discipline. Table 11 lists the frequency individual codes that were assigned to relevant participant quotations by academic discipline.

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Table 11

Frequency of Individual Codes Assigned by Academic Discipline

| Code Title | Frequency of Code Assignment by Academic Discipline | | | |
|---|---|-------------|---------|----|
| | English | Mathematics | Science | SS |
| Outside perspective | 13 | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| Admin behavior change | 5 | 0 | 11 | 3 |
| Agree feedback | 3 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Anxious feeling being observed | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Input and explanation | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Appreciated feedback | 13 | 3 | 1 | 18 |
| Apprehension | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Assistance requested | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Behavior change considered | 14 | 16 | 16 | 13 |
| Dismissed behavior changes | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Constructive feedback acknowledged | 8 | 5 | 10 | 3 |
| Observation opportunities | 6 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Explanation for situation | 13 | 34 | 28 | 29 |
| Feedback acknowledged | 10 | 11 | 3 | 7 |
| Feedback anticipated | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Feedback encouraged reflection | 28 | 19 | 7 | 10 |
| Timely feedback | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Good feelings | 6 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Feedback preference stated by teacher | 4 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| Helpful feedback | 10 | 8 | 3 | 5 |
| Influenced by principal feedback | 9 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| Easy and convenient | 1 | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| Positive feedback acknowledged | 15 | 5 | 9 | 18 |
| Positive or constructive feedback-no preference | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| Prevention response | 0 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| Promotion response | 7 | 7 | 6 | 13 |
| Referenced specific feedback | 10 | 24 | 15 | 18 |
| Behavior change | 12 | 14 | 21 | 15 |
| Supported explanation response with expert | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Validation | 9 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Verbal feedback preferred | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Verbal response | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Written feedback preferred | 11 | 6 | 7 | 4 |
| Written response | 3 | 0 | 5 | 3 |
| Written response in journal | 15 | 15 | 8 | 9 |
| Written response to observation | 1 | 2 | 8 | 6 |

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Data suggests that participants of this study most often respond to principal feedback after class room observations by changing behaviors, considering a change in behaviors, through written communication, and/or by reflecting on their teaching. An examination of codes suggests that teachers participating in this study may differ in their responses to principal feedback after class room observations for assignment of codes “Outside perspective”, “Appreciated feedback”, “Explanation for situation”, “Feedback encouraged reflection”, “Positive feedback acknowledged”, and “Referenced specific feedback”. Table 12 lists the frequency “Outside perspective”, “Appreciated feedback”, “Explanation for situation”, “Feedback encouraged reflection”, “Positive feedback acknowledged”, and “Referenced specific feedback” codes were assigned to relevant participant quotations by academic discipline.

Table 12

Frequency of Codes Assigned to Select Quotations from Participants

| Code Title | Frequency of Code Assignment by Academic Discipline | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------|---------|----|
| | English | Mathematics | Science | SS |
| Outside perspective | 13 | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| Appreciated feedback | 13 | 3 | 1 | 18 |
| Explanation for situation | 13 | 34 | 28 | 29 |
| Feedback Encouraged reflection | 28 | 19 | 7 | 10 |
| Positive feedback acknowledged | 15 | 5 | 9 | 18 |
| Referenced specific feedback | 10 | 24 | 15 | 18 |

Table 12 demonstrates six code assignments for participant quotations that appear to have the most inconsistent frequency of codes across the four major academic disciplines. An

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examination of teachers' responses to principals' observation feedback to determine if they differ by academic discipline may be interpreted in Table 12 as indicative of the number of code assignments each academic discipline experienced.

The code "Outside perspective" received codes for participant quotations 13 times for responses by English teachers, three times for responses by Mathematics teachers, one time for Science teachers, and seven times for responses by Social Studies teachers. This data indicates that English teachers responded to principal feedback after class room observations by acknowledging the perspective of the observer considerably more than Mathematics teachers and Science teachers and just a little more than Social Studies Teachers. The same analysis can be conducted for all codes listed in Table 12 and the frequency they were assigned to relevant quotations from participants. This data suggests that teachers' responses to principals' observation feedback differed by academic discipline.

Research Question Five.

Research question five asks if teachers' responses to principals' observation feedback differ by their teaching experience. Participants for this study were selected based upon their academic discipline and years of experience. Four participants from each of the four major academic disciplines were selected to participate in the study. In each of the four academic disciplines, the two most experienced and two least experienced members were asked to participate in the study. The 16 participants from the four major academic disciplines were divided into two groups. The groups were designated as "experienced teachers" and "young teachers". Teachers who comprised the "Experienced" group have at least eight years of teaching experience. Teachers who comprise the "young" group have less than eight years of teaching experience.

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Primary documents loaded into Atlas ti for each of the two groups were consistent. Comparing the number of primary documents loaded into Atlas ti for both the young teacher group and the experienced teacher group allows me to analyze the amount of responses by participants and discern if the frequency of responses is dependent on the teaching experience of participants. Table 13 lists the frequency of primary documents by teaching experience group. As noted in Table 13, readers may discern that based upon the frequency of primary documents loaded into Atlas ti responses by teaching experience are consistent.

Table 13

Frequency of Primary Documents by Teaching Experience

| Teaching Experience Group | Frequency of Primary Documents |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Young Teachers | 58 |
| Experienced Teachers | 54 |

The experienced group of teachers responded to principal feedback after class room observations as indicated by 54 primary documents being loaded into Atlas ti by the researcher. The young group of teachers responded to principal feedback after class room observations as indicated by 58 primary documents being loaded into Atlas ti by the researcher. A difference of only four additional primary documents being loaded into Atlas ti by the young group demonstrates a slight increase in the amount of responses by the younger group of teachers as compared to the experienced group of teachers.

Analysis of participant quotations for the experienced group of teachers and the young group of teachers coded to identify relevance for this study also demonstrates consistency. The

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young teachers group amassed 362 quotations that received codes for participant quotations. The experienced teachers group amassed 360 quotations that received codes for participant quotations. This data suggests that based on coding of participant quotations teachers' responses to principals' feedback did not differ for participants in this study. Table 14 lists frequency of participant quotations by teaching experience.

Table 14

Frequency of Quotations by Teaching Experience

| Teaching Experience Group | Frequency of Quotations |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Young Teachers | 362 |
| Experienced Teachers | 360 |

As frequency of individual codes assigned to relevant participant quotations was examined, it became apparent that data suggests teachers' responses to principal's observation feedback may differ only slightly by teacher experience. Table 15 lists the frequency individual codes were assigned to relevant participant quotations by teacher experience. Data suggests that participants of this study most often respond to principal feedback after class room observations by changing behaviors, considering a change in behaviors, through written communication, and/or by reflecting on their teaching. An examination of codes suggests that teachers participating in this study may differ only slightly by teacher experience in their responses to principal feedback after class room observations. Table 15 demonstrates that teachers' responses to principals' observation feedback may differ slightly by teaching experience. Analysis of relevant codes by teaching experience provides insight into patterns established by the teaching groups.

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Table 15

Frequency of Individual Codes Assigned by Teacher Experience

| Code Title | Frequency of Code Assignment by Teaching Experience | |
|---|---|----------------------|
| | Young Teachers | Experienced Teachers |
| Outside perspective | 12 | 12 |
| Admin behavior change | 1 | 10 |
| Agree feedback | 5 | 2 |
| Anxious feeling being observed | 5 | 0 |
| Input and explanation | 3 | 4 |
| Appreciated feedback | 17 | 18 |
| Apprehension | 1 | 0 |
| Assistance requested | 5 | 3 |
| Behavior change considered | 33 | 23 |
| Dismissed behavior changes | 1 | 2 |
| Constructive feedback acknowledged | 15 | 11 |
| Observation opportunities | 7 | 6 |
| Explanation for situation | 49 | 54 |
| Feedback acknowledged | 9 | 22 |
| Feedback anticipated | 0 | 3 |
| Feedback encouraged reflection | 33 | 31 |
| Timely feedback | 2 | 1 |
| Good feelings | 10 | 6 |
| Feedback preference stated by teacher | 4 | 9 |
| Helpful feedback | 13 | 13 |
| Influenced by principal feedback | 15 | 11 |
| Easy and convenient | 4 | 7 |
| Positive feedback acknowledged | 22 | 21 |
| Positive or constructive feedback-no preference | 8 | 4 |
| Prevention response | 3 | 5 |
| Promotion response | 17 | 17 |
| Referenced specific feedback | 28 | 39 |
| Behavior change | 34 | 28 |
| Supported explanation response with expert | 0 | 2 |
| Validation | 9 | 6 |
| Verbal feedback preferred | 6 | 3 |
| Verbal response | 9 | 1 |
| Written feedback preferred | 12 | 16 |
| Written response | 5 | 7 |
| Written response in journal | 23 | 24 |
| Written response to observation | 11 | 7 |

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As previously listed, participants of this study responded to principal feedback after class room observations by changing behaviors, considering a change in behaviors, through written communication, and/or by reflecting on their teaching. The codes associated with these types of responses demonstrated by study participants are “Behavior change”, “Behavior change considered”, “Written feedback preferred”, “Written response”, and “Feedback encouraged reflection”. An examination of the frequency these codes were assigned to quotations of participants in the “experienced” teachers group and the “young” teachers group demonstrates that teachers’ responses to principals’ observation feedback may differ slightly by teaching experience. Table 16 lists the frequency select codes were assigned to participant quotations for both the experienced teachers group and the young teachers group.

Table 16

Frequency of Select Codes Assigned to Experienced Teachers and Young Teachers

| Code Title | Frequency of Code Assignment by Teaching Experience | |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| | Young Teachers | Experienced Teachers |
| Behavior change considered | 33 | 23 |
| Feedback encouraged reflection | 33 | 31 |
| Behavior change | 34 | 28 |
| Written feedback preferred | 12 | 16 |
| Written response | 5 | 7 |

Table 16 demonstrates the five code assignments for participant quotations that are associated with reported teachers’ responses to principal feedback after class room observations.

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An examination of teachers' response data has revealed that teachers' responses to principals' observation feedback differs only slightly by teaching experience.

The code "Behavior change considered" received codes for participant quotations 33 times for responses by young teachers as compared to 23 times for experienced teachers. The code "Feedback encouraged reflection" received codes for participant quotations 33 times for responses by young teachers as compared to 31 times for experienced teachers. The code "Behavior change" received codes for participant quotations 34 times for responses by young teachers as compared to 28 times for experienced teachers. Data indicates that young teachers and experienced teachers are fairly consistent in their responses to principal feedback after classroom observations.

Research Question Six.

Research question six asks if teachers respond to principal's feedback with prevention responses or promotion responses. Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) posits that people will respond to situations or stimuli with either a prevention response or a promotion response. A prevention response is focused on ensuring the absence of negatives. A promotion response is focused on ensuring safety or promotion.

The majority of teachers (14 of 16 or 87.5%) involved in the study responded to principal feedback with a promotion response. An analysis of relevant quotations from participants revealed that the code "Promotion response" was assigned to 32 relevant quotations by participants as compared to seven relevant quotations by participants being assigned the code "Prevention response". This data indicates that the majority of teachers who participated in this study respond to principal feedback in a manner to increase the chances of a good result. Table

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17 demonstrates the frequency of relevant quotations by participants being coded as either “Promotion response” or “Prevention response”.

Table 17

Frequency of Promotion and Prevention Code Assignments

| Code Title | Frequency of Assignment |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Promotion response | 32 |
| Prevention response | 7 |

Several data collection sources provided data regarding teachers’ responding to principal observation feedback with a prevention response or a promotion response. However, interview data provided the most revealing findings regarding the prevention or promotion response by participants. Interview question seven asked participants if they were someone who would respond to principal feedback after class room observations with a focus to decrease the chances of a bad result (Prevention focus) or someone who would respond with a focus to increase the chance of a good result (Promotion focus)? Participants overwhelmingly responded with a focus to increase the chances of a good result (Promotion focus). Of the 16 participants who participated in the study, all but one (93.7%) responded at some point with a promotion focus. However, four participants (25%) responded that both a promotion focus and a prevention focus may be appropriate in some instances. Also revealed from the data were 11 participants (68.7%) who responded with only a promotion focus. Table 18 lists each participant and their interview response regarding whether they would respond to principal feedback after class room observations with a prevention focus or a promotion focus.

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Table 18

Participants' Interview Response as Prevention Focus or Promotion Focus

| Participant | Prevention Focused | Promotion Focused | Both |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|------|
| Math-A | | X | |
| Math-B | | X | |
| Math-C | | | X |
| Math-D | | X | |
| Sci-A | | X | |
| Sci-B | X | | |
| Sci-C | | X | |
| Sci-D | | | X |
| SS-A | | | X |
| SS-B | | | X |
| SS-C | | X | |
| SS-D | | X | |
| Eng.-A | | X | |
| Eng.-B | | X | |
| Eng.-C | | X | |
| Eng.-D | | X | |

Sci-B was the only participant to respond primarily with a prevention focus. Sci-B stated in his/her interview that “I think I try to decrease the chance of a bad result most of the time”.

Four participants responded with both a prevention and promotion focus. SS-A responded that

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he/she thought both prevention and promotion focus were good depending on the circumstances. SS-B responded by asking me the question “Can I say a little of both?” SS-B also stated that responding with a prevention focus in some cases prevents negative things from occurring to the students and at the same time is more convenient for him/her. Sci-D stated that at the beginning of his/her teaching career he/she was more prevention focused. However, as Sci-D has gained experience he/she has primarily responded with a promotion focus. Math-C stated in his/her interview, “I am probably the person that wants to focus on decreasing the chances of a bad result”. However, in the very next sentence Math-C stated that he/she always plays the game to win.

Playing the game to win became a common theme among participants as interviews were conducted. SS-C was the first to reference competition and the philosophy of trying to win as compared to trying not to lose when responding to the prevention or promotion focus concept. Participants Eng.-C, Sci-A, Math-C, Math-B, Math-A, and SS-D all made similar references regarding wanting to play to win the game as compared to playing the game trying not to lose.

Journal data collected from participants were consistent with interview data supporting participants’ preferences to respond to principal feedback after class room observations with a promotion focus. Participant SS-A stated in his/her journal that he/she has a four-step process for ensuring students experience a positive result. SS-A credits this process with increasing the chances of a good result for students over his/her several years of teaching. Sci-D made similar comments in his/her journal stating that class room lessons are designed to increase opportunities for students to experience positive results. Sci-D was conducting a lesson that he/she planned as a result of principal feedback from a previous observation. Sci-D noted in his/her journal that planning was designed to increase positive opportunities for students. Eng.-B, a rather insightful

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participant, responded in his/her journal that if an observer can enter the room for a “snapshot” and glean the focus of the lesson and what the students are to do to accomplish the desired learning goals then he/she has created a lesson that will positively impact the students.

Participants of this study primarily responded to principal feedback with a promotion focus. Data collected from participants’ interviews, journals, and written responses to observations indicate that a response to principal feedback after class room observations with a promotion focus was most desirable by participants. Participants cited that the reasons for a promotion response were to increase opportunities for students to experience positive outcomes. Most participants made references that a promotion response to principal feedback after class room observations was appropriate because they did not want to prevent negatives when promoting opportunities for positive results was more effective and more efficient. However, some participants (2 of 16 or 12.5%) did respond on occasion with a prevention focus. In most instances when participants referenced responses with a prevention focus it was a result of participants being selfish and not wanting more work for them. SS-B made a point to express his/her opinions regarding a prevention focus when he/she stated in the interview that it makes it much easier on the teachers when they take steps to prevent bad things from happening. This comment submitted by SS-B is consistent with other participants that at some point communicated a prevention focus when responding to principal feedback.

Summary

In conclusion, an examination of participants’ responses to principals’ feedback after class room observations has revealed a considerable amount of data. An examination of participants’ responses to principals’ observational feedback, participants’ written responses to principals’ observational feedback, interviews, and journal entries regarding principals’ feedback

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indicates that participants who participated in this study prefer to respond to principal feedback in various ways. Teachers who participated in this research most often preferred responding to principal feedback after class room observations by changing behaviors, considering changes to behaviors, through written communication, by providing explanations for the situations that generated principal feedback, and by reflecting on their teaching.

An analysis of open codes used to identify participant quotations for all data sources revealed that teachers prefer to receive principals' feedback and respond to principals' feedback through written communication. Teachers reported that written communication provides them opportunities to review information contained in principals' feedback and reflect on the circumstances associated with the feedback. Teachers also reported that responding back to the principal using written communication is easier for them as it allows time for them to formulate appropriate responses and is easier than scheduling face-to-face meetings. However, some participants did report that if principals' feedback was perceived to be serious in nature then a face-to-face conversation may be a more appropriate response.

An analysis of observation responses by participants indicated that most often principal feedback would result in a change in behavior. An examination of observations two and three of participants indicated an observable change in behavior as a result of principal feedback from a previous observation. An example of this observable change in behavior response would be principal feedback indicating that during an observation a teacher spent a considerable amount of time behind the desk resulting in an insufficient method of appropriate progress monitoring. The change in behavior would result when the teacher was observed during the next observation moving around the room and monitoring the progress of students appropriately. The majority of observational data of participants involved a change in behavior response.

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Written responses to participant observations revealed similar data. Participants would respond in writing to principals' feedback after a class room observation by either explaining the situation that generated the principals' feedback or by describing why a change in behavior was being considered. When teachers perceived that principal feedback provided them with an opportunity to have ownership of the response they were more likely to offer some insight into the response. Teachers would often explain their rationale of the situation that generated principals' feedback. Teachers demonstrated a desire to explain to the principal through written communication why they were demonstrating a specific behavior or why the class room environment was in the state it was during the observation. Teachers also expressed a desire to reflect on principals' feedback and decide if a change in behavior was appropriate. Teachers would analyze principals' feedback based on their opinion of the situation and the learning environment and if they believed a change in behavior was appropriate a change in behavior would be performed.

Participants also revealed during interviews their desire to receive principal feedback in writing and to respond back to the principal in writing. Interview data also revealed that teachers wish to explain the situations that generate principal feedback and why they demonstrated specific behaviors that generated principal feedback. One notable finding regarding teachers' responses to principal feedback is that 15 of the 16 teachers (93.7%) who participated in this study prefer to respond with a promotion focus. Teachers wish to respond in a manner that increases the chance of a good result.

Participants' journal entries demonstrated similar findings. Participants reported that written communication was preferred for both receiving and responding to principals' feedback. Teachers also reported through journal entries their desire to provide explanations for the

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situations that generated principals' feedback. Teachers communicated through their journal entries that principals' feedback would influence changes in behavior when teachers believed a change was appropriate and that they appreciated opportunities to reflect back on the feedback and formulate responses.

Teachers' responses to principals' feedback after class room observations has revealed some interesting findings. Participants revealed that they are willing to make a change in behavior when they perceive a change in behavior is encouraged by the principal or when they have had the opportunity to reflect on the feedback and determine that a change in behavior is appropriate. Teachers also desire to respond with an explanation outlining why they were performing in such a manner that warranted principal feedback after a class room observation. Findings also reveal that participants of this study often reflect on principal feedback provided after class room observations to determine their opinion of the feedback and if action regarding principal feedback is appropriate. Teachers also have demonstrated in this study that a promotion response to principal feedback is most appropriate. In the next chapter, data associated with the examination of teacher responses to principal feedback of class room observations will be discussed and interpreted in terms of limitations of findings and implications for educational practice.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the investigation of teacher responses to principal feedback of class room observations. Teachers who participated in this study most often preferred responding to principal feedback after class room observations by changing behaviors, considering changes to behaviors, through written communication, by providing explanations for the situations that generated principal feedback, and by reflecting on their teaching. Data also revealed that teachers most often respond to principal feedback after class room observations with a promotion response. Teachers would respond to principal feedback after class room observations in a manner to increase the chances of a good result promoting an advancement of personal needs and safety (Higgins, 1997). Results are discussed relevant to existing literature on the topic of teacher responses to feedback, the implications that results may potentially have for educational leaders, and future research opportunities born from this study.

Summary of the study

This qualitative study was conducted in one high school located in the Southeastern portion of the United States. A case study approach was utilized to examine responses of teachers to principal feedback provided after class room observations. Teachers were also interviewed and asked to keep a journal regarding the observation and feedback process. Data regarding teachers' responses to principal feedback after class room observations were analyzed to interpret major themes and patterns of information in the data. Analysis of data was conducted to discern how teachers responded to principal feedback after class room observations, why

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teachers responded in specific ways to principal feedback, and the potential effects findings may have on the observation/feedback process.

Overview of the problem

The largest determining factor in student success is having an effective teacher in the classroom (Liu, 2010; Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009; Routman, 2012; & Southworth, 2010). An effective method of identifying good teachers is for educational leaders to visit classrooms and observe what happens as teachers teach and students learn (McGill, 2011). However, visiting classrooms to simply watch what teachers do is not completely effective (Marshall, 2005). To optimize the classroom visit, leaders are encouraged to observe and offer effective feedback to teachers (Tuytens & Devos, 2011).

The goal of any educational initiative should be to improve student achievement (Feeney, 2007). Visits to classrooms by principals to observe teachers and students in the learning process are an acceptable method of evaluating teacher effectiveness (McGill, 2011). Improving teacher effectiveness involves first identifying areas where improvement may be needed and providing feedback to teachers regarding those areas. In addition, feedback may be provided to teachers for areas where improvement is not readily evident but will enhance teacher performance as a result.

The goal of feedback is to increase teacher effectiveness and improve professional growth (Feeney, 2007). Hattie & Timperley (2007) propose that feedback is second only to quality instruction when improvement initiatives are considered for schools, can only build upon strong instructional practice, and is often under researched. Hattie & Timperley (2007) also state that feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning, too rarely occurs, and needs to be more fully researched investigating how feedback affects the learning process. Manders

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(2008) reports that teachers perceive principals to be effective when they provide feedback that fosters professional growth. The best teachers also have room for improvement (Skretta, 2008).

Investigating the positive attributes of feedback was not a difficult task. The majority of research I discovered regarding the effects of feedback examined feedback provided to students. As I narrowed my investigation to examine feedback provided to teachers I encountered far less amounts of research. The majority of research on the topic of feedback provided to teachers would focus on teacher reflection, professional growth, characteristics of teaching, teacher self-efficacy, learning goals, or something that I feel was previously researched “to death” for lack of a better phrase. Several researchers have reported that feedback provided to teachers is of value (Bloom, 2007; Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009; Lee, 2011; Skretta, 2008; Tuytens & Devos, 2011; & Van Eekelen, Vermunt, & Boshiun, 2006). However, there is little information regarding what teachers do with feedback after classroom observations. Even more apparent is the lack of research regarding principal feedback from observations of classrooms.

Research questions

Research questions for this investigation of teacher responses to principal feedback of class room observations were developed to examine how teachers respond to principal feedback and why teachers respond to principal feedback in the manner they do. The research questions which guided this study were:

1. How do teachers respond to principal’s feedback after class observations?
2. Why do teachers respond to principal’s observation feedback in specific ways?
3. How do teachers’ verbal responses to principal feedback differ from their behavioral responses to principal feedback?
4. Do teachers’ responses to principal’s observation feedback differ by academic discipline?

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5. Do teachers' responses to principal's observation feedback differ by their teaching experiences?
6. Do teachers respond to principal's feedback with prevention responses or promotion responses?

Review of methodology

My rationale for selecting a qualitative design focused on the desire to understand how teachers respond to feedback provided after a class observation. A case study approach was used to examine teacher responses to principal feedback of class room observations. A case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). A case comprises just one individual, classroom, school, or program (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Four participants from each of the four major disciplines were selected for study: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English Language. The two most experienced and the two least experienced teachers from each of the four major academic disciplines participated in the study.

Data collection consisted of class room observations, teacher journaling, written communication, and interviews. Each teacher was observed on three separate occasions. Principal feedback was provided after each observation. Observation numbers two and three were analyzed for each participant to discern responses to principal feedback provided after previous observations. Teachers were asked to maintain a journal recording their thoughts and opinions of the observation and feedback process. Teachers submitted journal entries after each observation regarding their thoughts and opinions of the class room observation and the principal feedback that was provided. Written communication from teachers outside their journaling responsibilities were also analyzed. Each teacher was interviewed and responses recorded.

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Recordings of interviews were transcribed by the researcher. All study related data were loaded into the Atlas ti qualitative data analysis software for analysis.

Major findings

Each of the data sources revealed interesting findings regarding teacher responses to principal feedback of class observations. Observations of participants, written communication, interviews, and journals all revealed that teachers who participated in this study would respond to feedback provided by the principal after class room observations. Findings suggest teachers would respond to principal feedback by changing behaviors or in some instances would consider a change in behavior. Teachers preferred to receive principal feedback in writing and would respond back to the principal through written communication after feedback was provided. Findings from this study indicated that teachers desired to provide written explanations back to the principal regarding their actions that were observed or the state of the learning environment during the class room observation. Findings also indicated that teachers would analyze and reflect upon principal feedback to discern the appropriate response. Findings of this study revealed that teachers would respond to principal feedback after class room observations with a promotion focus.

Findings from observation data revealed that teachers would change a behavior or at the very least would consider changing a behavior when principal feedback was perceived to suggest or encourage a change in behavior was appropriate. It was observed that most often teachers changed a behavior during the next observation as a result of principal feedback provided after the previous observation. For example, SS-A received principal feedback referencing standards not being posted for students to guide the learning. During the next class room visit, it was observed by the principal that standards were posted for students in the appropriate area and in

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the appropriate manner. This change in behavior was a result of principal feedback from the previous observation.

Findings from this study also revealed that participants prefer feedback be provided to them in writing and that they prefer to respond back to the principal in writing when appropriate. Teachers overwhelmingly reported that they prefer to receive principal feedback in writing. Teachers reported that receiving principal feedback in writing allowed them time to read the feedback and internalize the information. Written feedback allowed participants opportunities to review the feedback and interpret their feelings and opinions of the principal feedback and formulate appropriate responses. Teachers also reported they preferred to respond to principal feedback in writing. Responding back to the principal in writing allowed teachers opportunities to formulate their thoughts regarding their response to the principal. Teachers also reported that responding back to the principal in writing provided them with time to analyze their thoughts and ensure their response accurately reflected their thoughts and opinions.

Teachers overwhelmingly demonstrated that they would often respond to principal feedback after class room observations with a written explanation of why they were observed conducting specific behaviors or why the learning environment was the way it was during the observation. In some instances teachers were in some ways making excuses for behaviors that were referenced in principal feedback. I found the written explanations to be quite informative. Teachers wanted me to know what they were doing and the reasons they had for doing it. As I analyzed the data from the written explanations I learned more about the rationale teachers had for their actions. In many cases I believed that the teachers were sincere in their explanations. This epiphany leads me to a greater understanding of teachers' methodology and provided information I did not previously realize. Written explanations from teachers regarding the

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content of principal feedback provided to them after class room observations has resulted in me having a greater understanding of teachers and why teachers choose specific forms of methodology over others.

Findings that indicated teachers desired to provide explanations to principal feedback after class room observations opens the door for increased dialogue among the principal and the teacher. This dialogue has the potential to break down barriers between teachers and principals and foster sincere communication among educators (Getzlaf et al., 2009). Post observation discussions between the principal and the teacher as a result of written explanations from teachers after class room observations promote a common understanding of the various aspects of the observation/feedback process. Principals may not always understand the circumstances of the observation that occurred before or just after the observation. Post-observation communication can be beneficial and increase understanding among all observation participants. Post-observation communication between teachers and the principal have the potential to build stronger relationships among educators and foster greater understanding of the instructional strategies that occurred during the observation (McGill, 2011). Explanations from teachers in response to principal feedback of class room observations have the potential to result in a mutually beneficial learning experience for students, teachers, and Principals. Principals who embrace the explanations of teachers that resulted from principal feedback of class room observations promote a collegial relationship that has the potential to be very informative and provide unique professional growth for both teachers and the principal.

Teachers who participated in this study responded to principal feedback of class room observations by reflecting on their professional practice and how they go about the business of educating students. As discussed earlier in this chapter, teachers preferred to receive principal

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feedback in writing. One reason expressed by teachers for receiving principal feedback in writing was so that they could read the feedback several times and reflect on the information provided by the principal. Teachers would then formulate responses regarding the feedback. Teachers also reported that principal feedback resulted in reflection of their professional practice to the degree that they would critically analyze their current methodology to determine if there were improvements that could be made to their teaching.

An examination of the theoretical basis of this study was conducted to determine if teachers responded to principal feedback of classroom observations with a promotion response or a prevention response (Higgins, 1997). Teachers who responded with a promotion focus were those who promoted the positive. These teachers responded with the intent to increase the chances of a positive result. Teachers who responded with a prevention focus were those teachers who attempted to prevent the negative. These teachers responded with the intent to prevent a negative result. Teachers who participated in this study demonstrated primarily promotion responses.

A goal of this study was to examine responses of teachers based upon academic discipline or experience. Data collected for this study did not reveal that there was any discernible difference in teacher responses based upon their academic discipline when the total number of responses provided by participants was examined. Teachers who participated in this study were consistent in that principal feedback would most often solicit a response by teachers regardless of academic discipline. However, data collected for this study does suggest a difference in teacher responses when examining individual assignments of codes for the various disciplines. Teachers who participated in this study differed when examining the specific code assignments for quotations. The code "Outside perspective" received codes for participant

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quotations 13 times for responses by English teachers, three times for responses by Mathematics teachers, one time for Science teachers, and seven times for responses by Social Studies teachers. This data indicates that English teachers responded to principal feedback after class room observations by acknowledging the perspective of the observer considerably more than Mathematics teachers and Science teachers and just a little more than Social Studies Teachers. Teachers in the various departments may consistently respond to principal feedback of class room observations but the type of feedback they choose to respond to and the context of the response differ among academic disciplines.

Findings that indicated teacher responses to principal feedback differed by academic discipline when individual assignment of codes was considered may have been a result of the collective preference of the members of each academic discipline. At BOB high school each academic discipline possessed a unique personality and perspective as to how they may approach principal feedback. I attribute these differences to the unique perspectives of each discipline and their value of one type of feedback as compared to another. Participant interviews revealed that teachers have a variety of perspectives when it comes to principal feedback. Some teachers prefer very precise and “to the point” feedback with little or no ambiguity while other teachers prefer just the opposite. It would be my summation that this same variety of perspectives would account for the different types of principal feedback teachers value and why findings from this study indicated that when individual assignment of codes were examined teacher responses to principal feedback differed by academic discipline.

When experience of teachers was examined, results from this study revealed that teachers consistently respond to principal feedback regardless of their teaching experience. When examining the types of responses demonstrated by teachers to principal feedback of class room

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observation data from this study revealed that there was only a slight difference in the manner teachers responded to principal feedback when experience of teachers was considered.

Findings related to literature

Research studies have identified that the single most influential factor in student success is having an effective teacher in the classroom (Liu, 2010; Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009; Routman, 2012; Southworth, 2010). An effective method of identifying good teachers is for educational leaders to visit classrooms and observe what happens as teachers teach and students learn (McGill, 2011). However, visiting classrooms to simply watch what teachers do is not completely effective (Marshall, 2005). To optimize the classroom visit, leaders are encouraged to observe and offer effective feedback to teachers (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). Although research regarding feedback and the many attributes feedback may have on learning is abundant, there is a considerable gap in the research regarding feedback provided to teachers and even more of a gap regarding principal feedback provided to teachers after class room observations.

The focus of this study was to examine teacher responses to principal feedback of class observations. Very little research was discovered regarding teacher responses to principal feedback. The majority of research regarding the topic of feedback provided to teachers is associated with the types of feedback provided and the parameters by which feedback is to be presented to teachers. However, findings from this study can be associated with literature reviewed in chapter two of this work.

Colvin et al. (2010) suggested that feedback has an effect on teachers changing or considering change to their academic practice. Findings from this study support Colvin et al. as teachers who participated in this study demonstrated that they are willing to change their teaching practices as a result of principal feedback after a class room observation. Teachers

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changing behaviors as a result of principal feedback after class room observations also supports the conclusions from Oliva et al. (2009) that teachers want to know if what they are doing in the class room is acceptable and how they can improve. Teachers of this study demonstrated that principal feedback after class room observations resulted in changes in their teaching.

Teachers who participated in this study reported that they prefer principal feedback be provided to them in writing. Teachers also reported that they also desire to respond back to the principal in writing when appropriate. Teachers stated that written feedback was desirable as a result of their being able to continuously review the feedback and revisit the feedback several times to ensure an accurate interpretation of what the principal was communicating. Teachers also desire to respond back to the principal in writing so that they may be meticulous in their communication back to the principal. This communication between principal and teacher is beneficial for both parties and supports Getzlaf et al (2009) who concluded that effective feedback encourages communication between teacher and evaluator. Findings from this study regarding teachers wishing to receive principal feedback in writing and responding back to the principal using written communication bolsters Bloom's (2007) conclusions that information garnered from observations of teachers results in meaningful discussions among educators about teaching practice.

Reflection of one's own professional practice can be a powerful influence on teachers and leaders should provide teachers opportunities to reflect on their teaching (Feeney, 2007). Principal feedback of class room observations resulted in teachers who participated in this study reflecting on their professional practice. Teachers reported that principal feedback influenced them to reflect on the professional practice that was associated with the class room environment and their teaching methodology. Teachers also reported that principal feedback was helpful in

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their analysis of their teaching effectiveness. These findings support researchers who concluded that feedback should foster reflection among teachers regarding their professional practice (Feeney, 2007; Gray & Streshley, 2008; McGill, 2011). Tuytens & Devos (2011) also concluded that teachers who are afforded opportunities to reflect on their professional practice are more likely to seek out professional learning opportunities and improve their teaching performance.

Several researchers concluded that observations of teachers were beneficial (Marshall & Young, 2009; McGill, 2011; Routman, 2012; Skretta, 2008). Participants of this study also reported that observations of teachers by the principal were beneficial. Math-D referenced during the interview that a simple suggestion from the principal to post the essential question in the front of the room as compared to the current location of the back of the room had a tremendous impact on the learning environment for students. SS-C stated that praise from the principal after class room observations was beneficial in that it was nice to know that the principal both recognized and remarked that the he/she was doing a good job in the class room.

Conclusions

The results of this study support findings from other researchers that class room observations of teachers can yield beneficial information regarding teacher practices and that feedback from those class room observations provided to teachers can be a powerful influence on teacher improvement (Bloom, 2007; Casey, 2008; Feeney, 2007; Hattie and Timperley, 2007; Tuytens and Devos, 2011). However, the response of teachers to principal feedback of class room observations is lacking in the literature and needs to be explored further. Results of this study have broad reaching implications for school leaders, teachers, and policy makers. Results of this study have demonstrated that teachers will respond to principal feedback of class room observations and will respond in a manner that is to be considered when school leaders are

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exploring school improvement initiatives (Colvin, Flannery, Sugai, & Monegan, 2009; Marshal & Young, 2009; Oliva et al, 2009; Routman, 2012).

Teacher responses to principal feedback of class room observations regarding the areas of changed behaviors, written communication, teacher reflection, explanation of action, and promotion of positive outcomes indicates that teachers who participated in this study desire to improve in their ability to educate young people. Teachers have demonstrated that principal feedback is welcome and valued when it is presented appropriately and when teachers are allowed opportunities to participate in the process. Teachers value the opinions of their principal and will change behaviors accordingly when encouraged to do so. But even more effective than suggesting change in teacher behavior is principal feedback that builds relationships with teachers and provides opportunities for teachers to assume ownership of their professional learning and improvement endeavors.

I have learned that teachers of BOB high school have a genuine desire to improve. I have learned this through an examination of their responses to principal feedback of class room observations. I have learned that teachers of BOB high school want their principal to observe them in class and provide feedback that is sincere and honest. Teachers desire to be praised by those who supervise them and also wish to be offered constructive feedback when appropriate to improve their teaching. Teachers will reflect upon principal feedback and make informed and thoughtful decisions as to how best to respond. Teachers will do this as a result of their genuine desire to improve and be the very best teacher they can be.

Implications for school leaders

School leaders would be better served to understand that it is a worthwhile endeavor to create time in their schedule to conduct class room observations and offer teachers meaningful

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feedback (Bloom, 2007; Casey, 2008; Feeney, 2007; Hattie and Timperley, 2007; Lee, 2011; Marshal, 2005; McGill, 2011; Tuytens and Devos, 2011). School leaders that have a working knowledge of what occurs in the class room are better equipped to provide support for teachers and ultimately provide support for students.

School leaders who maximize opportunities to conduct class room observations and provide meaningful feedback to teachers regarding what they observe have opportunities to improve the culture of their schools. Findings from this study demonstrate that teachers wish for their principal to visit their class room and provide feedback regarding what they observe. Findings from this study indicate that teachers desire praise from their principal when they are observed doing a good job but teachers equally desire feedback regarding their teaching performance that may be constructive in nature and assist them in improving their teaching.

School leaders who conduct class room observations and provide meaningful feedback have opportunities to provide critical information to their teachers regarding teaching practices, the learning environment, school initiatives, professional learning, and a host of other effective professional practices that determine the effectiveness of the teacher and the school. School leaders have opportunities to spotlight expert teachers and provide them with the praise and recognition they deserve (Getzlaf et al, 2009). School leaders have opportunities to identify expert teachers in their building who could possibly be utilized as professional learning opportunities for other teachers. School leaders have opportunities to discover teachers early who may be experiencing challenges in their teaching and offer support before the challenges become overwhelming. School leaders who observe class rooms and offer feedback to teachers have opportunities to learn what is taking place in their buildings and take appropriate action to improve upon the existing culture of the school.

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

Teachers who participated in this study demonstrated that they prefer to receive principal feedback after class room observations in a written format and that they desire to respond back to the principal also using a written format. These findings suggest that principals should continuously analyze and improve their ability to provide teachers with written feedback that accurately and effectively communicates the desired information to teachers. Teachers have demonstrated that they will internalize written feedback from the principal and formulate what they feel is the appropriate response. School leaders will be more effective in their communication with teachers if they realize the brevity of ensuring that written feedback provided to teachers is accurate. Findings of this study indicate that principal feedback is a powerful tool for influencing teachers and their responses. If school leaders will consider these findings when constructing feedback they provide to teachers their influence as school leader will grow and become more effective.

Several researchers support findings from this study that class room observations and principal feedback are an effective means of improving communication among educators (Bloom, 2007; Casey, 2008; Gray & Streshly, 2008; Routman, 2012; Tuytens & Devos, 2011). Findings from this study indicated that teachers have a strong desire to respond to principal feedback of class room observations with written explanations of the learning environment and the actions the teachers were conducting during the observation. These explanations proved to be quite informative which could provide school leaders with useful information. The creation of dialogue among teachers and the principal provide both parties with information regarding the learning environment in the class room. This information could be utilized by both parties to improve opportunities for students, teachers, and for the school.

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

Implications for school leaders regarding the examination of teacher responses to principal feedback of class room observations are broad and expansive. The implications of better understanding how teachers will respond to principal feedback can lead to a better understanding by principals of how to formulate feedback to accomplish school improvement initiatives. Understanding better how to formulate feedback provided to teachers can also provide teachers with more effective opportunities to improve their teaching practice. In the end, any initiative that improves teacher performance has the likelihood to improve student achievement which when all things are considered is the most important result we all desire.

Implications for Teachers

School leaders who understand how to increase the levels of effective communication among the administration and teachers will be better equipped to support teachers (Getzlaf et al., 2009). Findings from this study indicate that teachers value their principal observing their teaching and providing feedback. Liu (2010) suggested that teacher knowledge and ability to integrate that knowledge into instructional strategies is a considerable factor in students' performance.

Teachers who experience greater levels of support from their administration often experience greater levels of success in the class room (Colvin et al., 2009). The observation and feedback process builds trust among educational professionals. Teachers benefit from knowing that their supervisors are aware of their expertise in the class room. Receiving feedback from observers provides teachers with a perspective of the class room that they may not experience otherwise and offers teachers opportunities to reflect and think about their teaching practice. These opportunities allow teachers to identify personal strengths to build upon while also identifying challenges they may need to address.

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

Teachers also benefit from a more educated administrative staff (Marshall & Young, 2009) as a result of increased observations and feedback protocols. School leaders who visit class rooms, provide teachers with feedback, and improve their communication skills are more effective resources for teachers. School leaders gain knowledge of how best to communicate with teachers and how to effectively convey points of interest when they have a better understanding of how teachers respond to their feedback after class room observations. This greater awareness among administrators of teachers' opinions and feedback preferences open the lines of communication among educators even greater and allow for a more collaborative effort regarding improvement.

Implications for policy Makers

It has been noted several times in this work and reported by several researchers that the most influential factor in student success is an effective teacher (Liu, 2010; Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009; Routman, 2012; & Southworth, 2010). Knowing this, policy makers would be well served to understand that class room observations combined with effective feedback from school leaders are beneficial for teachers and their students. Findings of this study have indicated that teachers value the opinions of their supervisors and will in most instances internalize the information provided to them after class room observations and respond in appropriate ways.

Policy makers can support teachers and administrators in their efforts by understanding that class room observations accompanied by effective feedback can be transformative for schools. Those who create policy also create mission and vision statements that almost always encompass ideals that are in some way associated with improving academics, safety, and the betterment of society. Improved academic achievement among students in addition to the increased capacity of high school graduates accomplishes most if not all of the mission and

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

vision statements that policy makers profess are their ultimate goals. Findings from this study that teachers and students benefit from class room observations and the opportunities feedback afford all of those involved are in direct correlation with the ideals that policy makers claim they hold so sacred.

Policy makers can support teachers and building leaders in accomplishing the mission and vision of schools by creating policies and allocating resources that benefit the class room observation and feedback program. Policy makers have the authority to make class room observations a priority. Policy makers have the authority to allocate resources to purchase equipment in support of the observation program. Policy makers have the authority to allocate resources that afford school leaders the time necessary to conduct class room observations and provide meaningful feedback to teachers. Policy makers have the authority to allocate funds and resources to professional learning initiatives that are born out of the observation process. Policy makers have the authority to support building leaders in their efforts to support those teachers who may be experiencing challenges in the class room. Policy makers have the authority to make class room observations and the feedback offered to teachers a priority in schools.

Implications for Professional and Personal Growth

Findings indicated in this study have provided me opportunities to grow both professionally and personally as an educational leader. The experience of conducting this research has enlightened my perspective of how and why teachers choose to respond to the feedback provided to them after a class room observation. Teachers are not that dissimilar from students. Each teacher has their own personality and their own value system. Individual teachers respond to outside stimuli in various ways. The more information I have as to how teachers will respond to feedback after a class room observation the more effective I can be in communicating

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

with teachers. Findings from this research that indicated teachers respond to principal feedback after class room observations by changing behaviors, considering changing behaviors, through written communication, through reflection, and through promotion responses has provided me with information regarding how I might improve the manner in which I provide feedback to teachers.

A better understanding of how individual teachers responded to feedback allows me to improve my ability to formulate feedback for individual teachers and for specific circumstances. Feedback formulated for one teacher may be ineffective for another. Feedback received by one teacher as constructive and beneficial may be received by a different teacher as offensive and degrading. Findings from this study have expanded my knowledge of the need to personally formulate feedback provided to individual teachers in a manner that it is meaningful and beneficial for that specific teacher. I have gleaned from this research that feedback is not universal. Feedback is most effective when it is personal for the teacher and designed to accommodate the unique personality of the teacher.

Findings from this study indicated that teachers will respond to principal feedback after class room observations with written explanations regarding the principal feedback that was provided. Teachers provided explanations regarding their actions that generated specific principal feedback or the state of affairs regarding the learning environment during the observation. These explanations proved to be very informative for the researcher. Teachers provided information to the researcher that may not have been readily apparent during the observation. This information provided insight into the reason teachers were performing in the manner they were and resulted in a more knowledgeable observer.

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

As building leader it is my responsibility to ensure that there are processes and procedures in place to foster continuous improvement among the faculty and staff of my school. Findings from this examination of teacher responses to principal feedback of class observations have revealed that teachers will respond to principal feedback in a variety of ways. It is my responsibility to develop and implement observation and feedback protocols that are efficient and effective in soliciting the appropriate responses from teachers and communicate those protocols to those who will be observing teachers. I must also monitor those observation and feedback incidences performed by others to ensure that teachers are provided the most beneficial observation/feedback experience possible.

Recommendations for future research

The results of this study have added much needed insight regarding teacher responses to principal feedback of class room observations. The examination conducted during this study has revealed some interesting inquiries into this area and continued exploration of this topic may be beneficial.

A more focused investigation into feedback provided to teachers could possibly expand on the topic of teacher response. This examination focused primarily on teachers' responses to principal feedback. Results of this study have suggested that principal feedback is considerably influential for teachers and their practice. An investigation into specific types of feedback provided to teachers and the varying responses that may result may be of benefit.

Also worthy of consideration is the level of teaching environment that is examined. This study was conducted in a high school. Might responses of middle school or elementary school teachers to principal feedback of class room observations be different?

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This examination of teacher responses revealed that teachers will change behaviors as a result of principal feedback. However, the types of behavioral changes exhibited by teachers was not thoroughly explored and future research could provide useful information into the rationale teachers had for changing behaviors.

Although the observations of assistant principals were utilized in this examination they were not the primary researcher and bias does exist when the supervising principal is conducting the research. An interesting examination would be to combine the responses of teachers with a comparison of the relationship teachers have with their principals. It may also be beneficial to explore teacher responses to feedback provided by observers other than the principal (Casey, 2008). This may account for any bias teachers may have with the principal serving as the primary researcher. Perhaps a study excluding the administration of the school as a whole would reveal intriguing results when participants were not observed by any direct supervisors. Observations conducted by other teachers and/or parents may also reveal a different perspective on the topic of teacher responses to feedback of class room observations.

It may also be of benefit to incorporate aspects of quantitative research into the examination of teacher responses to principal feedback. A mixed method approach to examining teacher responses to principal feedback of class room observations may reveal important information not exposed through the qualitative model. An examination of teacher responses using differential statistics may provide a different perspective of this problem.

Groups of teachers differentiated by academic discipline and teaching experience were examined in this study. Incorporating gender or other demographic groupings of teachers into this examination may provide greater insight into how and why teachers respond in the manner they do to principal feedback.

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

Regardless of the suggestions listed for future research considerations regarding teacher responses to principal feedback, additional investigations into how teachers respond to feedback, be it from the principal or otherwise, would be beneficial and could possibly provide additional information. As mentioned several times in this work, research investigating teachers' responses to principal feedback is lacking in the literature and needs to be explored in more detail. The implications of such research have the potential to be very powerful and could alter the landscape of school culture.

Conclusions

In the beginning of this work it was proclaimed that the largest determining factor in student success is having an effective teacher in the classroom (Liu, 2010; Oliva, Mathers, & Laine, 2009; Routman, 2012; & Southworth, 2010). An effective method of identifying good teachers is for educational leaders to visit classrooms and observe what happens as teachers teach and students learn (McGill, 2011). However, visiting classrooms to simply watch what teachers do is not completely effective (Marshall, 2005). To optimize the classroom visit, leaders are encouraged to observe and offer effective feedback to teachers (Tuytens & Devos, 2011).

These statements are extremely powerful and have been supported by the findings of this study. Also stated in the initial section of this work was the goal of any educational initiative should be to improve student achievement (Feeney, 2007): Also very powerful and also supported by findings of this research. Observations of teachers have been demonstrated to be beneficial to both teachers and students (McGill, 2007). However, there is so much more school leaders can do when they observe class rooms and so much more influence school leaders can have on the success of teachers and students in their school.

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

Personally, this journey has benefited me more than I had ever imagined. The doctoral dissertation has been a tremendously awakening experience. I have learned a great deal from my immersion into the class room observation and feedback process. I am truly amazed at the ability of teachers to reach students and affect positive change. Each class room I enter I learn something new. This new awareness that I have developed has afforded me opportunities to become more of a servant leader to my school. I have enjoyed the opportunity to learn alongside my students and my teachers. I will take from this experience a new found respect for teachers and what they do each day to serve students. I am confident that this experience will allow me to continue to grow in my ability to serve those that work and learn in my school.

A greater understanding of how teachers perceive my feedback after class room observations and the responses they demonstrate as a result of my feedback will allow me to more effectively communicate with those that I serve. As I continue to grow as an educational leader I gain a greater understanding of how the quality of principal feedback impacts teachers and my role as building leader (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). I understand that leadership is all about relationships. Participating in this research has afforded me opportunities to learn and grow within those relationships and I think my school is a better place for students as a result.

The investigation of teacher responses to principal feedback has been a tremendously rewarding experience that has revealed much information regarding how teachers positively impact their students and their school. Principals now have a basis by which to explore even greater impacts principal feedback may have on teachers to benefit the school and all those who participate in school business each day.

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TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

Appendix A

Walk-through Electronic Template

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Walk-through Name | Template |
| | |
| Board Name | School Name |
| | |
| Observer | Subject |
| SEAN KELLY | Sean Kelly |
| Start Date | End Date |
| | |
| Administrator | Subject |
| Choose One | Choose One |
| Page 1 | |
| 1. Standard Posted and Aligned 2 | |
| • Standard(s) posted | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Words vs. Descriptors | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Standard Referenced during WT | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| 2. LFS | |
| • EQ Posted | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • EQ is Learning Focused | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Vocabulary Used Appropriately | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Extended Thinking Lesson | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Acquisition Lesson | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Non-Verbal Representations | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Summarizing | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| 3. Progress Monitoring 2 | |
| • Questions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Monitoring Student Work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Written Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Clarifying/Explaining | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Students Self-Monitor/Evaluate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Informal Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Formal Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| 4. Instructor's Delivery Mode | |
| • Whole Group | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Small Group | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Paired | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| 5. Instructor's Role | |
| • Facilitator | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Lecturer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Monitoring Student Progress | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Modeling or Demonstrating | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Using LFS Strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Praise/Positive Reinforcement | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Page 2 | |
| 1. Student Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Recall Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Textbook Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Worksheet Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • LFS Strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Performance Tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Discussions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Listening to Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Use of Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Off Task-Disrupting | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| Page 2 | |
| 2. % Student Engagement | - |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| 3. Student Work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Posted | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Rubric Provided | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Teacher Commentary Specific | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Opportunity for Revision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Associated Standard Posted | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| 4. Learning Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Focused | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Engaging | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Challenging | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Organized | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Student Centered | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Teacher Centered | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Growth Suggested | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| 5. Five Non-Negotiables Posted | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Warm-Up | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • GPS | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • EQ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Class Procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Student Agenda Message | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Posted | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Posted in Appropriate Location | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| Page 3 | |
| 1. Use of Instructional Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Promethean Board | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Active Response | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Active Slate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Used by Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Used by Student | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • None Used | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| 2. Differentiation 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Teaching Strategy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Student Learning Style | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Effective Transition | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Peer Collaboration | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Group Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| 3. Classroom Management 2• | <input type="checkbox"/> |

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Student Expectations Evident | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Student Expectations NOT Evident | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Dress Code Violation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Head Down | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Electronics | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Disruptive | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Teacher in Control | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |
| 4. Location of Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Front of Room | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Circulating | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Assisting Students | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Back of Room | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Sitting at desk | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • On Computer at desk | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Out of Classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Note: Comments go here. | |

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. How do you prefer to receive principal feedback after class room observations? Please explain.
2. How do you prefer to respond back to the principal as a result of feedback after class room observations? Please explain.
3. Are you influenced by principal feedback after class room observations? In what manner?
4. How do you respond in terms of class room instruction as a result of principal feedback after class room observations? Please explain.
5. How do you respond in terms of professional practice as a result of principal feedback after class room observations? Please explain.
6. Are you more influenced by principal feedback after class room observations when the feedback is framed in a positive manner or when the feedback is framed in a constructive manner? Why?
7. Are you someone that responds with a focus to decrease the chances of a bad result or do you respond with a focus to increase the chance of a good result? Please explain.
8. Is there anything else you would like to talk about/share with me regarding principal feedback after classroom observations?

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

Appendix C

Institutional Review Board Approval

January 25, 2014

Sean Kelly, Student
Department of Educational Leadership
Kennesaw State University

RE: Request for Revision to Exempted Study, Study #12-070: Influence of Walk-Through Data On Teacher Perspective and Practice

Dear Mr. Kelly:

I have reviewed your request for revisions to the exempted study listed above, which involves the following change to the protocol: Title of study changed to A Case Study Examining Teacher Responses to Principal Feedback of Class Observations. 13 new participants added. Examination of teachers' responses to feedback provided by the principal after class observations rather than the opinions of teachers regarding the observation program specifically. This study continues to qualify as exempt from review under DHHS (OHRP) Title 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) - educational tests, surveys, interviews, public observations. You are free to conduct your study as approved.

Please note that any further proposed changes to the study must be promptly reported and approved prior to implementation. Contact the IRB at (678) 797-2268 or irb@kennesaw.edu if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Christine Ziegler, Ph.D.
KSU Institutional Review Board Chair

cc: aterry@kennesaw.edu

TEACHER RESPONSES TO PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

Appendix D

District Approval

February 4, 2014

Sean Kelly

Dear Mr. Kelly:

Permission is granted for you to conduct your research study. The title of your study is “A Case Study Examining Teacher Responses to Principal Feedback of Class Observations.” All information to be gathered will be done in a confidential and appropriate manner. The [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is to receive a copy of all completed research findings.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Associate Superintendent

Student Achievement & Leadership