

Running head: HOMEWORK PERCEPTIONS

THE PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS REGARDING HOMEWORK IN
THE INTERMEDIATE CLASSROOM

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

JAMISON D. WILKINS

DISSERTATION ADVISOR: DR. KENDRA LOWERY

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

MAY 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This doctoral dissertation would not have been possible without the tremendous assistance from Dr. Kendra Lowery, my graduate professor for several courses as well as my doctoral chair. Your willingness to be available for phone calls, emails, and virtual meetings was instrumental in helping me complete this process. You showed a true enthusiasm for my growth and your expertise in qualitative studies was extremely helpful. I would also like to thank Dr. Serena Salloum for assisting me in developing my research questions as well as the assistance she provided me in devising my research protocol. Thank you to the other members of the committee for the countless hours you have spent advising me and reading my work. Your assistance will never be forgotten.

Thank you to all my friends and colleagues that I have known along the way. I appreciate your help in reading my work, talking about the process, and your thoughts and prayers. I have been surrounded by some truly amazing people. Your loyalty to me as well as my journey will never be forgotten.

Thank you to my mom and dad, Pat and Tim Wilkins, for raising me and expressing the importance of a solid education. Your undying love for me was always felt. I appreciate the firm foundation you provided in establishing my beliefs, morals, and ethics. To Doug and Rose Jackson, my mother and father in law, thank you for always taking an interest and asking about the journey. The love you have shown me has always been felt.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Miranda, thank you for providing me the encouragement, love, understanding, and support throughout my educational journey. You truly make me a better person each day and through our journey together. I would not be half the man, that I am, without you by my side. Thank you to our four wonderful daughters. It has been a joy to see you grow as well as the interest you have shown in my journey. I could not be prouder of each one of you.

Thank you, God, for this amazing life. Words cannot describe the love that I have for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE.....

APPROVAL PAGE.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii

DEDICATION iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... iv

LIST OF TABLES vii

ABSTRACT..... viii

CHAPTER ONE 1

 Background..... 2

 Statement of the Problem..... 4

 Purpose of the Study 5

 Research Questions..... 6

 Theoretical Framework..... 6

 Significance of the Study 7

 Delimitations..... 8

 Definitions 10

 Summary..... 11

CHAPTER TWO 13

 Theoretical Framework..... 14

 Homework Design 17

 Home Environment..... 21

 Homework Capacity 26

Homework Effectiveness	30
Homework Perspectives and Purpose	35
Summary	43
CHAPTER THREE	45
Purpose of the Study	46
Research Questions	46
Research Design	47
Context of the Study	48
Participants and Participant Selection.....	48
Instrumentation	49
Data Collection	50
Data Analysis	51
Positionality	52
Limitations	53
Summary	54
CHAPTER FOUR.....	55
Purpose of the Study	55
Research Questions.....	56
Theme 1: Practice is the Primary Purpose	56
Theme 2: Homework is Important.....	61
Theme 3: Growth from Homework is Dependent on Support.....	63
Theme 4: Assessments Reflect Homework Effectiveness.....	67
Theme 5: Change in Teacher Practice	71

Theme 6: Feedback for Teachers 73

Summary 76

CHAPTER FIVE 77

Purpose of the Study 77

Research Questions 78

 Research Question #1 78

 Research Question #2 81

 Research Question #3 83

Social Cognitive Learning Theory Analysis 86

Limitations 89

Implications for Policy and Practice 89

Recommendations for Future Research 91

Conclusion 92

References 94

Appendix A 107

Appendix B 110

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table 1: Principals' Experience in the Study.....54

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: The Perceptions of Elementary Principals Regarding Homework in the Intermediate Classroom

STUDENT: Jamison Wilkins

DEGREE: Doctor of Education

COLLEGE: Teachers College

DATE: May 2021

PAGES: 110

This is a qualitative study that explores the perceptions of elementary principals with regards to homework practices in their schools. The purpose of the study was to investigate which strategies are believed by principals to be more valuable when assigning homework in grades three through five as well as their knowledge, and beliefs pertaining to homework as well as investigating from where this knowledge is derived. Eight elementary principals were interviewed from one school district. The district was chosen based on its above average performance on state standardized tests. An interview protocol was developed based on prior research as well as the research questions. Six themes were developed from the data: a) practice is the primary purpose for homework, b) homework is important, c) growth from homework is dependent on support, d) assessments reflect homework effectiveness, e) homework practices change with a teacher's experience, and f) the delivery of feedback to teachers regarding homework practices.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The importance of homework, the purpose of homework, and the effectiveness of homework are a few of the topics of discussion regarding homework practices as evidenced by the synthesis of research that was completed by Cooper et al. in 2006. The principal's viewpoint is important to the discussion of homework practices as the principal is the person who guides and sometimes implements or encourages the use of certain teaching strategies. Teacher and student viewpoints have been addresses in previous research (Rosario et al., 2015; Trautwein & Köller, 2003, Williams et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2016). Some teachers feel as though homework is important for all students; while some teachers feel homework is often misused and serves little purpose to the academic success of most students (Cooper et al., 2006). The emphasis of this study involved principals who are managing buildings attended by intermediate students. Intermediate students were defined in this study as those students in grades three through five.

As an instructional leader, principals should promote the most effective practices used to deliver the instruction (Marzano et al., 2005). Homework is an example of an instructional practice. Homework practices are varied from teacher to teacher in an intermediate classroom. Some teachers rely on the homework to reinforce skills learned in class, while others see it as practice for the concepts that have been learned during instruction (Scott & Glaze, 2016). Others use homework for application purposes to create a deeper learning approach that is more individualized (Rosario et al, 2015; Williams et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2016). The view of what is most effective may be different from person to person. This study examined principals' beliefs as to the best practices of assigning homework in intermediate classrooms. Other published studies have investigated homework practices, but the beliefs of principals at the intermediate

level have not been considered (Rosario et al, 2015; Williams et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2016). The beliefs of the principal may affect the beliefs of students and teachers (Waters et al., 2003). These beliefs were examined and compared to find similarities and differences in homework philosophies based on the perceptions of the principals and other research that has examined teacher and student perspectives.

Background

Assigning homework is a common practice in most classrooms in the United States. Sometimes students spend countless hours completing homework assignments. In Indiana at the third, fourth, and fifth grade levels, the demand for applying concepts grows and students are expected to work on a more independent level, than they did in their primary years as evidenced in the Indiana College and Career Readiness Standards (Indiana Department of Education, 2014). The same demand for application and independent work is apparent in the Common Core State Standards that have been adopted in other states (National Governors Association, 2021). One of the areas that may be related to student learning is the homework assigned and the students' ability to complete this work independently.

In grades three, four, and five, students across the state of Indiana begin to take part in high stakes testing known as the ILEARN test (Indiana Department of Education Office of Student Assessment, 2018). In Indiana, the location of this study, students previously took the ISTEP test which gives students an identification of passing or not passing the exam that is used to gauge the students' knowledge regarding the state standards (Indiana Department of Education Office of Student Assessment, 2018). Students in the third grade also took the IREAD test which was used as indicator of the child's reading level and the child's ability to proceed to the 4th grade (Indiana Department of Education Office of Student Assessment, 2018). Homework is

one of the procedures used to prepare students for the content and measure their ability to work independently on skills and concepts. Teachers may be aware of some of the most effective ways that homework can be used, and many times guidance from principals is given to the teachers based on the principal's beliefs of what homework practices are most effective. It is important to determine how homework is used in response to the testing requirements at this age level.

Several items have been found to assist in the effectiveness of homework for students. When assignments are applicable to a student's life outside of the school, students find the assignment more relevant (Amiryousefi, 2016; Williams et al., 2017). Homework is most effective when differentiated based on the student's academic level (Carr 2013; Fernandez-Alonzo et al., 2017). The more confident the student is in understanding the material, the more likely the homework will positively impact his or her learning (Brisson et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2016). Assignments that require critical thinking are also beneficial to the student's academic success (Rosario et al, 2015; Williams et al., 2017; Xu at al., 2016). Teachers should also explore methods that will motivate students to complete homework as it is not as effective if it is not completed (Kukliansky et al., 2016).

The principal's role in determining what is acceptable homework was the main focus of this study. The views of principals of intermediate aged children have not been included in the research regarding homework. The initiatives a principal may implement impacts student achievement as well as student learning (Cheng & Weng, 2017). The principal's perspective therefore is important to the homework discussion.

Homework is ingrained in the framework of society's beliefs of schools (Gill & Schlossman, 2004). Questioning the validity of the assignments with regards to its impact on

student learning is not always a common practice. I examined the views on the importance of homework practices with the consideration of the amount assigned, the time taken to complete the homework, as well as the type of homework (skill based, application based, advanced problem solving, or a combination of these principles) with regards to students in grades three through five. This was completed by examining the principal's perceptions, knowledge, and beliefs regarding the types of homework that are assigned. Principals were also asked which assignments are most beneficial to a student's education.

Statement of the Problem

Principals help guide the instructional practices in a building through teacher evaluations, teacher feedback, the planning of professional development, and other tasks designed to improve learning for students. As a principal, I am aware that principals are questioned by parents on the homework practices used in classrooms. Homework is one of the strategies that has been implemented to help students grasp content in the past. However, homework practices are often ineffective when a variety of student factors are not considered (Fernandez-Alonzo et al., 2017; Froiland et al., 2013). One problematic issue with homework is that it is dependent on the child completing the work at home and often independently. If the child does not understand the concept associated with the assignment, and works independently or without any assistance, one must wonder what completing the assignment will accomplish if the students completes it incorrectly. On the other hand, if the student receives assistance where a person is basically doing the assignment for him or her, this may be unhelpful as well. The teacher may not have an accurate depiction of the student's understanding. Homework completion and accuracy may be dependent on the help the student receives. Homework isn't as effective if it is not completed on a regular basis (Grodner & Rupp, 2013; Lee et al., 2017; Valle

et al., 2016). Another factor in the effectiveness of homework is the lack of differentiation that is involved for students who struggle academically (Bryan & Burstein, 1998; Fernandez-Alonzo et al., 2017). Some teachers do not consider student interests when assigning work, and this has been shown to be detrimental to the student's view of homework (Amiryousefi, 2016). Even though teachers are aware of the importance of problem solving and assigning work that requires students to think critically, some still only assign work that is based on students practicing simple skills learned in the classroom (Snead & Burris, 2016). The varying beliefs of teachers in the effectiveness of homework has many teachers wondering what is right and what is wrong (Trautwein & Köller, 2003). This lack of consistency and knowing what is appropriate for children has made homework an ongoing issue for years. Principals can provide guidance to teachers and help them understand what practices may be most beneficial.

The views of high school principals have been included in discussions of another study by Bartholomew and De Jong (2017) regarding the Response to Interventions (RTI) process and how an afterschool program was used as one of the items seen as an intervention to help students learn. This may have little relevance to the perspectives of intermediate principals as well as little relevance to the topic of homework. Studies examining the principal's perspective regarding homework for children in grades three, four, and five could not be found.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate which strategies are believed by principals to be more valuable when assigning homework in grades three through five. The homework perceptions were analyzed based on the effectiveness of homework, the amount of homework assigned, the purpose of homework, and the characteristics of the homework, such as skills based, application based, or a flipped classroom approach. I examined the principals'

perceptions, knowledge, and beliefs pertaining to homework as well as investigating the nature of these perceptions. Questions were posed to each of the principals to examine what and how homework is being assigned in their school and what homework practices are most effective in the intermediate classrooms. These questions were centered on the amount of homework assigned, the time taken to complete the homework, the category of homework activity (based on descriptors above), the effectiveness of homework, the purpose of the homework, student efficacy, the observations of principals, and the feedback received from students and parents.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided my work were:

1. How do elementary principals describe homework practices for grades 3-5?
2. How do elementary principals describe student growth as the result of homework practices?
3. How do principals approach providing guidance to their staffs regarding homework, what advice is given, and from where does this guidance originate?

Theoretical Framework

The theory that I used to guide my study is Social Cognitive Learning Theory, which provides a foundation about independent practice and principles centered on such practice (Bandura, 1996). It was developed by Albert Bandura and has been used to study human intellectual developments and the effect of the learning environment and internal factors on this development (Bandura, 1996). This theory indicates that learning processes can be explained by analyzing how a person learns information (Bandura, 1996). As applied to my study, this theory holds that the perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of principals will indicate the value of homework and the practices that they determine pertinent to the students' academic success

(Bandura, 1996). The practices were centered on the preferred homework practices, the type of homework that is assigned, and the purpose of homework.

Significance of the Study

The principal's perspective, regarding homework, is not one that has been examined at the intermediate level. The principals' perspective is important in that these individuals provide guidance to teachers on effective practices. Studies have been conducted to explore the importance of homework in classrooms around the world. Teacher perspectives have been examined as to the best practices for using homework (Holte, 2017; Kukliansky et al., 2016; Lander & Reinholz, 2015; Yildizli & Saban, 2016). Some studies have found teachers believe homework is important to the progress of children, while others have found that not all teachers have these beliefs (Lander & Reinholz, 2015; Tam & Chan, 2016). The student perspective has been examined as well (Amiryousefi, 2016; Brisson et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2017; Moroni et al., 2015; Nunez et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2016;). Bartholomew and De Jong (2017) examined the principal's perspective in an after-school study program in high school which was enlightening. However, it did not fully examine the perspective of principals and how this may influence these other groups. I examined the principal's belief and knowledge on effective homework uses in his or her building.

Studies have examined the relationship between the parents' views of homework and the students' views of homework (Booster et al., 2016; Froiland et al., 2013; Holte, 2017). I contend that the principals in a building may influence the homework that is assigned for classes. This may be especially true when we consider the types of assignments and the amount of homework assigned to the students. The relationship between the teachers and principals may influence the perception of the teachers with regards to this topic. Scott and Glaze (2017) determined that

teachers wish to be considered when making decisions as to what is acceptable work for teachers to assign students. The principals' understanding of the views of both students and teachers in the buildings are important in creating homework policy, procedures, or preferred practices for the entire building.

Another quality that makes this study important is the stance that districts have been taking on homework. Questioning the validity and importance of homework is rising to the point where school systems are changing policies, and stating that homework is no longer allowed (Sokol, n.d.). Homework has been a large piece of the American educational system for many years and principals indicated it is a foundation of the educational system. Some educators believe homework still has a place in the schools if it is assigned correctly (Rosario et al., 2019). Educators should not simply be assigning homework, because it is a common practice. The increase of alternative homework approaches such as flipping the classroom have shown to be effective (Alsancak et al., 2018; Gross et al., 2015; Gwo-Jen & Chiu-Lin, 2017). However, this change in policy could stop this practice that some teachers and students enjoy. Because principals make decisions on policy, practice, and procedures for their buildings, the perceptions of the principals are important to this discussion.

Delimitations

Several delimitations exist in this study. I only examined practices in grades 3, 4, and 5. Cooper et al. (2006) noted that homework is more important to the success of students as they are promoted to the next grade level. Only studying the perceptions of principals in these grades may be related to older students, but this is not certain. While this study contained value for the intermediate students it may not hold as much value for students older and younger. I contended that homework becomes more advanced at the third, fourth, and fifth grade levels than in the

primary grades, and it continues to advance in complexity as the child grows based on the findings from Cooper et al. (2006) where it was found that homework is more complex as students age. Because the complexity of homework may change, it is reasonable to assume that the perceptions of principals may change as well.

Another delimitation of this study is that homework was examined through only the principal's perspective. It is possible that the principals, who were the participants of this study, were not fully aware of the practices that are being used in their buildings. As instructional leaders, principals are expected to understand practices in their schools (Marzano et al., 2005). However, at times other items such as personnel issues, building concerns, parent issues, and student misconduct, among many other items, can divert their focus from the instructional piece. These other factors may have impacted the principal's perspective as well.

Perhaps the perceptions of the principals could change depending on the socio-economic background of the school. This study examined principals working in a suburban school system where approximately 20% of the students were receiving free and reduced lunches, which was lower than the Indiana state average of approximately 48% (IDOE Compass, 2018). The monetary support that many families could give their students in this school system may have been higher than other areas. One impact of the financial constraints on a family could have been the family's ability to hire help such as tutoring for students that may have caused less stress in the home. If this tutor was a trained teacher, it may have impacted the student's level of understanding as well. This may have distorted the data.

Some families have more time at night to help their children complete homework correctly. Other families have greater knowledge of the educational system and instructional practices that are beneficial to the progress of their students. Some families do not have the extra

time nor the knowledge and this can raise equity issues, especially when a teacher is relying on the parents to provide homework support.

While the school system studied did have a large number of students from various ethnic backgrounds, the makeup of the student body was approximately 85% Caucasian (IDOE Compass, 2018). Many of the views reflected in this study may be from the principals of students from this background. While students in this district were given support regardless of the students' minority status, the perceptions of students may have reflected their home environment. This perception of homework may have impacted the principal's perception as well. Any cultural differences may have not been as evident from this study.

I examined the perceptions of eight principals in one district that may or may not be similar to other districts. While I gained insight into the thoughts and perceptions of these principals, one cannot assume that this applies directly to principals in all districts. Because a variety of characteristics exist, such as the socioeconomic background, ethnic background, and regional background, from district to district, these differences may influence the thoughts of individuals that work in various districts. The study simply provides insight into the thoughts and perceptions in one district.

Definitions

The most important terms used in this dissertation are defined within the context of the study as follows:

Differentiation. “A wide variety of teaching techniques and lesson adaptations that educators use to instruct a diverse group of students with diverse learning needs in the same classroom.” (Great School Partnership, 2013)

Homework. “Work done at home or a lesson to be studied outside of the classroom.”

(Barnhart et al., 1992)

Homework design. The purpose behind the homework assignment such as skill based or application based. (Rosario et al., 2015)

Homework effectiveness. The benefits of homework for increased student understanding of concepts covered in the classroom. (Snead & Burris, 2016)

Intermediate students. Students in grades 3, 4, and 5.

Flipped classroom. “The opportunity to learn course concepts outside the classroom environment with online educational materials such as video, film and voice so that classroom time is used for active learning such as problem solving and practical applications.” (Alsancak et al., 2018)

One to one. “Providing computers, usually laptops or tablet computers, to learners, with one device made available to each student.” (Hockly, 2017)

Summary

I contended that the principal’s perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the types of homework, its uses, and the effectiveness is important as to how homework is used in the intermediate classrooms. Differences and similarities of perspectives may have led to discussions that may have taken place pertaining to the types of homework that is believed to be most effective. Principals may influence the perspectives of teachers and students in their perspectives of what is thought to be the most effective uses of homework. Principals are a very important part of the educational process, because many schools look to these individuals to be the instructional leaders in the district. The principals’ viewpoint is important to a school (Marzano et al., 2005). I considered the principals’ perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge, which

makes it different compared to other studies. In Chapter Two the results of other studies are mentioned as well as conclusions that have been made about a variety of characteristics of homework from the design of homework, the amount of homework assigned, the time students spend doing homework, homework effectiveness, the home environment and its impact on student homework, and the perspectives noted in other studies. In Chapter Three the methods behind the research conducted in this study are addressed. The results and findings of the study are discussed in Chapter Four. The summary of the study and any relevant conclusions are addressed in Chapter Five. The literature review serves as information that is important to the design of the study as well as what still can be learned from the perspectives of students, teachers, and principals when it comes to homework.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter Two is a literature review of the research on homework practices, perceptions, and its effect on student achievement. While the emphasis of this study involves principals overseeing students in grades three through five, homework practices at all levels as well as various curricular areas are a part of the review as they may hold some evidence to the effects on the intermediate student. This review contains information from the topics that have been mentioned in both the purpose of the review as well as the research questions. My review focuses on the various homework designs such as skill-based homework, application-based homework, the flipped classroom, required homework, and differentiating homework. The review also focuses on the home environment and items such as computer access, parental characteristics and the assistance parents can provide, as well as the physical environment provided in the home. Both the amount of homework assigned as well as the time spent completing the homework makes up the section on homework capacity. Next the research was examined pertaining to homework effectiveness based on the student's age, academic struggles, and homework completion. The last part of the review explores the perspectives of students, teachers, and principals.

To find the pertinent research for my study, first, I examined peer reviewed journals that were published in the last five years to gain a current understanding. Then, I gained a larger foundation of knowledge which included searches beyond the past 5 years. Some of the literature used was published later, but it is cited often in other works and provides the foundation or background for the review. The keywords that drove the research were: *mathematics homework, homework effectiveness, flipped classroom, homework self-efficacy,*

student perceptions, homework management, quality help, mathematical learning, parental involvement, teacher perceptions, inclusion, formative assessments, principals, administrators, homework completion, instructional leadership, and student achievement. When reviewing articles, I attempted to focus on areas that were included in the research questions and the purpose of the study. In some areas such as the homework design, I researched topics that were not originally intended to be a part of the study like the flipped classroom, because it was another approach to assigning homework effectively. It was difficult to find principal perspectives of homework. The studies that do relate are from the high school perspective. This showed the importance of researching the principal perspective in grades three through five.

Several search engines were used to find research on the various topics of homework and its effectiveness in grades three through five. Articles that were specific to the keywords listed were found via the databases of the Ball State University One Search, ERIC, and the Web of Science. The feature present in the Web of Science, which stated how many times an article was cited, was beneficial to the process of finding relevant articles. Items were also incorporated from professional development that I received in the last six years from my current professional position. The articles were compiled with the assistance of Zotero.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Learning Theory is used as a theoretical framing for my study. It assisted in examining the homework practices that principals believed are most effective in assisting students in learning. Social cognitive learning theory provides a foundation pertaining to how an individual learns and factors that impact learning (Bandura, 1996). It was developed by Albert Bandura and has been used to study conceptual developments and the effect of the learning environment and internal factors (Bandura, 1996). Social learning takes place in four

stages, which are attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Attention involves the act of watching and learning from others' behaviors (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). The stage of retention is centered on remembering what acts a person would like to reproduce that he or she has noticed (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Then the person needs to physically reproduce these behaviors that are seen to be preferred by the individual (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Last is finding what motivates the individual to create these intended outcomes (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). While this study focused on all of these aspects, much of it was devoted to the reproduction and motivational parts of the theory.

This theory indicates that learning processes can be explained by analyzing how a person learns information (Bandura, 1996). Schools should be most concerned with teaching students how to learn (Smith et al., 2016). Students are not the only individuals that are learning in schools. Teachers as well as administrators learn what methods are most effective and how to address student needs. Students using homework effectively is a strategy that may be useful in educating students. Principals gaining an understanding of what practices are beneficial for students were examined in this study. I explored how a group of principals learned what practices are most effective. It has been found by Horsburgh & Ippolito (2018) that students are more attentive to actions when these actions have an impact on the sought outcomes. The attention that principals place on homework use in their buildings and what they believe is effective was explored.

Social cognitive learning theory is applied in other research regarding educational practices and the use of homework (Bang, 2012; Cheema, 2018; Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Bang (2012) applied social learning with his study of the use of homework and students who are new to the United States of America. This was applied by understanding that students were

motivated by their teachers, and their teachers believe in the students' ability to learn the material. Social learning theory has also been applied in studies where students are learning in a clinical setting and observing their instructors (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Many times, students learn from teachers by watching and attending to what is being taught. Principals learn in a similar manner. They are exposed to a variety of methods with regards to assigning homework. They use these observations to form opinions pertaining to the positive or negatives uses and impact of homework. My study observed how the principal learns and the beliefs of a principal related to homework practices.

My study applied this theory in the belief that the principal's perceptions assist in determining the value of homework and how homework may assist students in achieving at a high level and, more important, learning the material (Bandura, 1996). The learner should be taught how to monitor his or her own learning and attaining self-created goals (Smith et al., 2016). The participants in this study reflected on past practices and how homework was used to meet the goals for student learning.

The homework traits were examined from a variety of characteristics, some of which were the amount of homework that is assigned, the type of homework that is assigned, the purpose of homework, as well as the perception of principals. Principals may influence a student's belief in his or her own abilities. The performance expectations of teachers have an influence on a student's work ethic and performance (Smith et al., 2016). The perceptions of teachers influence the student's overall performance (Smith et al., 2016). I analyzed the principal's perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge with the belief that it may have an effect on student learning.

Homework Design

The design of homework has changed greatly over the last 30 years and varies from classroom to classroom. Some of these changes have occurred as a result of the changing philosophy of what constitutes an appropriate education, which is consistently changing as well. Some of the changes are a result of the technology changes that have been prevalent over the past 30 years. In 1984 Paschal et al. found that “traditional homework was superior to nontraditional homework,” or the homework that is given to simply practice the skills learned in class is more beneficial than homework that goes beyond simple skills practice (p.103). Despite this belief new homework designs are being developed. In this section the differences in designs of homework were explored as the design of the assignment may have an impact on the principal’s perceptions of the homework. The quality of homework has been shown to be very important (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Strandberg, 2013).

Skill Based Assignments

A common practice in many schools across the country is to assign homework that is more skill based, where students practice a task that was learned in class. Much of the homework that teachers assign are simple recall questions instead of application of what was learned in class (Holte, 2017). Students may spend time completing some of the assignment in class, but the majority of it is completed at home or in a location where the teacher is not located. Some view this as a positive practice for learning the skills taught at school, and they believe it reinforces the teaching practices taught in class (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Farrow et al., 1999; Scott & Glaze, 2016). Some teachers have admitted to randomly assigning homework based on these skills that are taught in class (Snead & Burris, 2016). Educators have stated that homework is an effective method to reiterate what was studied in class, and complete

calculations that require little critical thinking (Snead & Burris, 2016). This is done despite the belief that critical thinking is important for students and the students being provided opportunities to show these critical thinking skills (Lodewyk, 2009). Critical thinking is important, because it can aid students, who may not have a great deal of interest in an academic area, succeed (Walter & Walter, 2018).

Application Based Assignments

Some teachers have begun to take a different approach with designing homework. Instead of completing simple calculation problems, the students' work is now more application based (Rosario et al, 2015; Williams et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2016). Time spent in class is used to teach the steps and the processes for the calculations, and time outside of the classroom (or homework) is for students to show how they can apply what was learned. The use of open-ended mathematics homework problems that are related to the students' home life has been found to be enjoyable for both parents and students (Williams et al., 2017). This practice has shown to influence the belief that the content is more relevant for the students as well as the parents (Williams et al., 2017). Families have indicated that assignments completed by their children that involve real world situations are more enjoyable for not only themselves, but more importantly the students (Williams et al., 2017). Some homework assignments are designed for students to bring in items from their homes and experiences from their homes and share them at school, as they believe it is just as effective as schoolwork that is sent home (Hill, 1994).

Teachers have been encouraged to assign homework that is used to solve a problem that is meaningful and with a larger application (Corno, 2000). Creating homework assignments that require students to apply mathematics concepts studied in class has been found to create higher achievement than those with the purpose of practice and preparation (Rosario et al., 2015).

Interesting homework assignments help students learn at a higher level (Xu et al., 2016). This has been discussed by Xu et al. (2016), who claimed that interest in mathematics homework is greater in China than in the United States resulting in more positive attitudes towards mathematics by Chinese students.

Homework and Differentiation

Research has indicated that homework should be differentiated, just as instruction needs to be differentiated (Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011). The child's ability to focus based on the age level should be considered when assigning homework for students to complete as well (Bryan & Burstein, 1998; Cooper, 2007). In the attempt to individualize homework, giving the students the option of completing assigned homework has been one of the designs chosen for classrooms (Scott & Glaze, 2017). When teachers have decided to give students the choice of doing homework, it was often reconsidered later in the year due to a lack of progress and the lack of rigor in the classroom, and the practice that was needed outside of the classroom (Scott & Glaze, 2016). The learning environment and individuality of instruction and student work that uses applications have been shown to increase student success in mathematics (Yildizli & Saban, 2016). Homework has also been indicated as an effective way for students to monitor their learning and set clear objectives (Bembenutty, 2011).

Flipping the Classroom

Another popular design for homework is flipping the classroom (Alsancak et al., 2018; Gross et al., 2015; Gwo-Jen & Chiu-Lin, 2017). In this approach the delivery of the content that is traditionally used in the classroom is completed through online lessons or discovery sessions at the students' homes. In other words, the more typical instruction is completed at home and what was traditionally completed at home is now completed in the classroom, where the teacher can

supervise the students' progress and assist in answering any questions that the students may have. I have seen this approach used in middle school and high school classrooms and have recently seen it used in elementary classrooms as well. The flipped classroom approach has appeared to have higher scores attained by students than the traditional approach (Alsancak et al., 2018). The students have also shown to be more motivated in the classroom where the content was flipped as opposed to the traditional classroom (Alsancak et al., 2018). Flipping the classroom even has a variety of approaches that have been studied, some of which are more successful than others (Gwo-Jen & Chiu-Lin, 2017). In one study, e-books were shown to be more effective than informational videos pertaining to the school content that students watched (Gwo-Jen & Chiu-Lin, 2017).

Despite the rise in classroom test scores for students in a flipped classroom, the advantages have not always been noticed by the students (Gross et al., 2015). In some situations, students have indicated the flipped classroom is not preferred despite an increase in test scores and overall student achievement (Gross et al., 2015). The flipped classroom has shown benefits for some students where benefits were not represented for other students (Gross et al., 2015). For example, in some situations the flipped classroom approach has been more helpful to the struggling students compared to the high achieving students (Gross et al., 2015).

Flipping the classroom is performed with the use of technology (Halili & Zainuddin, 2015). Many schools in the United States have started a one-to-one initiative where students receive an electronic device that, in many situations, they can take home with them. Schools have stated that the purpose of taking the devices home is for students to complete homework using these devices. This has not always been the case. For example, it has been shown that even though Maine has implemented a one-to-one program since 2002, teachers did not indicate

that the students normally complete homework using their school issued electronic devices (Feng et al., 2014).

Required Homework

Requiring students to complete homework has been shown to have an effect on student test performance (Grodner & Rupp, 2013). Grodner and Rupp (2013) found that students' test scores increased in a college class where homework was mandatory, but the improvement was marginal as it only improved test scores by two to four percent. In the same study the students who were required to complete all homework assignments completed 60 percent of all the assignments. Those who were not required to complete the assignments completed just 3 percent. While the study by Grodner and Rupp (2013) does involve homework completion, it is not focused on intermediate students. This study is more pertinent to the intermediate age group.

This section has shown that homework design is different from classroom to classroom. This design could be influential in the student's progress in an intermediate class. Although the various designs for homework have been studied, the principal's perspective of the design has not been considered in past research. It is very possible that the direction provided by the principal may influence the way teachers design the homework that is assigned.

Home Environment

A child's home environment may have an effect on the child's ability to not only complete the homework that he or she receives, but also complete it at a high level. Students across the country go home to environments that can be very different from one location to the next. The same can even be said for students who go to the same school. A student's achievement is positively correlated to the help the child receives on homework (Echaune et al., 2015). Some suggest the community shares in the task of helping students with homework

(Carr, 2013). In these next sections, the different components (computer access, parent characteristics, assistance provided, and the conditions of the home) were examined based on the home environment.

Computer Access

Computers and electronic devices are very prevalent in society today as indicated earlier in the review. With the adoption of one-to-one electronic device initiatives across the country, the computers the children use have an influence on the curriculum in many schools. Data were examined to see if the presence of a computer in the home increased achievement (Fairlie & Robinson, 2013). It was found that a computer in the home is not connected with higher student achievement when controlling for social variables (Fairlie & Robinson, 2013). Some students use the computer after school for a computer based tutoring system that is supposed to give students remediation for content that they did not grasp (Steenbergen-Hu & Cooper, 2013). Despite the intent to improve student achievement, one study found that computer-based tutoring has little influence on students learning the material in a mathematics classroom (Steenbergen-Hu & Cooper, 2013). A Janisse et al. study in 2018 contradicted this to a certain point, finding that the use of computers in the preschool classroom can help students' growth in mathematics but not as much in the areas of memory or speaking.

Parental Characteristics

Just as students are very different in classrooms across the United States, the parents of the children are also different. Parental characteristics affect a child's ability to perform (Booster et al., 2016; Froiland et al., 2013; Gonida & Cortina, 2014; Holte, 2017; Moroni et al., 2015; Nunez et al., 2015). Much of the positive assistance from students comes from the focus in which the assistance is given (Froiland et al., 2013; Gonida & Cortina, 2014). Parents who

believe their child can understand concepts are more likely to encourage the child to challenge himself or herself (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). This can be true for any person, in that if other people believe they can achieve at a higher level, then the person is more likely to believe this as well.

Parents believing in their children is not the only influence parents have on a child's academic success. Parents who focus on mastery while helping with homework are more likely to have students focus on mastery as well (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). The mastery learning approach is something that teachers use in conjunction with formative assessments to help students learn in the classroom (Guskey & Jung, 2013). Focusing on achievement does not have the same impact as focusing on mastery (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). The focus on students mastering the concepts instead of obtaining a certain grade builds students' confidence levels, helping the students believe that they can achieve at a higher level than their present level (Guskey & Jung, 2013).

The pressures that parents apply on their student also have an effect on the student's achievement level as well as the student's ability to complete homework productively (Moroni, et al., 2015; Nunez et al., 2015). A positive correlation exists from parents giving their students support, instead of pressure, and the student's achievement (Nunez et al., 2015). In one study it was found that when helping students, parents, who are seen as more supportive, have students who achieve at a higher level (Moroni, et al., 2015). The characteristics of the parental help is more important than the number of times parents help (Moroni, et al., 2015). The type of parental involvement is also more important than the degree of the involvement (Moroni, et al., 2015; Nunez et al., 2015).

A negative correlation exists between parents putting pressure on students finishing homework and academic achievement (Nunez et al., 2015). Students with parents who are heavily involved with homework do not achieve as high as those with lesser involvement (Moroni, et al., 2015). However, some of this may be attributed to these students receiving more help due to not achieving at a high level. One may argue that the data are tainted because lower achieving students may simply need more help from their parents or a source outside the school.

The intervention of the parents also has an effect not only on the child's ability to complete homework assignments in an acceptable manner, but also the child's ability to learn at a high level (Booster et al., 2016; Froiland et al., 2013; Holte, 2017; Muhlenbruck et al., 1999). Parents who are involved in homework and check their child's grades often do not necessarily help the student achieve at a high level (Froiland et al., 2013). Instead it has the opposite effect; the constant parental checking may hinder the child's achievement (Froiland et al., 2013). Perhaps this constant checking can create a student's poor self-image, that he or she is not responsible enough to achieve at a high level.

However, not all parental interventions are negative. Perhaps the constant checking of homework is why teachers have indicated homework is the cause of many disagreements in the home (Holte, 2017). Parents who intervene, when the student behavior is poor, have students who achieve at a higher level on homework (Booster et al., 2016). Muhlenbruck et al. (1999) stated, "the effectiveness for young children who are struggling in school might be improved by asking their parents to become more involved in the homework process in a direct instructional manner" (p. 315). The support of parents can be instrumental in a child's success, but parents must be certain it is the right type of assistance. Principals who possess this knowledge may take steps to help parents understand this.

The Parent's Ability to Provide Assistance

The confidence of the parent can impact the parent's ability to provide quality assistance during homework time (O'Sullivan et al., 2014; Yamamoto et al., 2016). With regards to mathematics homework, parents, who feel better about completing mathematics problems appropriately, are more willing to help their students (O'Sullivan et al., 2014). The confidence of the parents in assisting the children also changes with the age of the child and the complexities of the subjects taught as the students age. Some parents struggle to provide students the needed assistance when the student is older (Holte, 2017). Parents also spend the same amount of time helping students with homework in the primary grades through grade six even though students receive more homework as they get older (Worrell et al., 1999).

The differences in culture can also impact the ability of the parents to help their children (Yamamoto et al., 2016). The differences in parenting traits for mothers was studied in Japan and the United States (Yamamoto et al., 2016). It was noted that a mother who sees her responsibility as it is her duty to help her child learn, is more likely to find more thought-provoking activities for the students in those homes (Yamamoto et al., 2016). The study also found that mothers in the United States were more involved in the child's learning due to the teachers in the United States being more willing to welcome the help from mothers (Yamamoto et al., 2016). The mother's sense of responsibility to help and the mother's confidence in parenting was also greater in the United States and this affected the mother's involvement in the educational process as well (Yamamoto et al., 2016).

Quality Environment for Homework

Providing a quality place for students to complete homework is important to the success of a child (O'Sullivan et al., 2014; Rosario et al., 2015; Xu, 2013). O'Sullivan et al.'s (2014)

study indicated that parents providing a quality environment that can be used to complete the homework is the most common way parents say they should support the child. Parents and teachers should work together to help students create an environment conducive to completing homework (Xu, 2013). The importance of finding a quality working place at home for students is very important in mathematics (Rosario et al., 2015). An example of a quality working place is one that is quiet, well lit, and contains few distractions. Students completing homework in mathematics classes is greatly influenced by the home environment and the student's background (Rosario et al., 2015).

The design of the homework assignment could be instrumental to the success of the student (Gross et al., 2015; Holte, 2017). Teacher considerations when designing homework could impact the success of that assignment. The principal also has an influence on the design in that he or she can assist the teachers in drawing awareness to the most effective practices and considerations for the home environment. While the studies mentioned in this section discuss design, the home environment, and considerations for the students' needs, they do not investigate the role of the building level principal in encouraging teachers to use the best homework practices. The student, his or her environment, the teacher, and the principal may all play a role in the educational development of the child.

Homework Capacity

Studies have been completed that measure the amount of time taken to complete assignments as well as the amount of homework that is assigned (Cheema & Sheridan, 2015; Fernandez-Alonso et al., 2017; Núñez et al., 2015; Valle et al., 2016). For the purpose of this review both of these items are researched as a separate component of homework. The time spent on homework may vary from student to student. This time may be different for each student

based on the various designs that have been discussed. Both concepts, the amount of homework assigned and the time spent completing the homework, may play a role in the effectiveness of homework.

Time Spent Completing Homework

Students spending too much time on homework can have a negative effect on the students' achievement (Cooper et al., 2006). The dilemma with studying what constitutes too much time may be different for each student (Trautwein & Köller, 2003). It has been found in some cases that the time a student spends completing his or her homework is not a significant contributor to the student's success (Valle et al., 2016). Chen and Stevenson in 1989 found "Children within a culture who spend very large amounts of time on their homework are not necessarily the most effective students" (p. 560). Time management and homework skills on the other hand have been an indicator of student success (Valle et al., 2016). It has also been found that the homework amount is a more beneficial indicator of success than the time spent completing the homework assignment (Fernandez-Alonso et al., 2017).

The time spent completing homework may also differ from student to student based on the age level (Nunez et al., 2015). In one situation it was shown the time spent doing homework in the elementary classroom has a negative correlation with achievement (Nunez et al., 2015). Perhaps this was a result of students who struggle with the content taking longer to complete the homework. In this study the effect of homework on student achievement changed with older students (Nunez et al., 2015). In middle school classes there was no correlation, and in high schools the time spent completing homework had a positive correlation with student achievement (Nunez et al., 2015).

The time spent completing homework may have an effect on student learning. In one study a positive relationship occurred between the students' use of time, the time spent working, and the homework that the student was able to complete (Nunez et al., 2015). This was more significant for older students (Nunez et al., 2015). The gains seen from added assigned homework time has also been shown to be only beneficial with students who spent as much time or less than the class average (Fernandez-Alonso et al., 2017). Other studies have shown that spending too much time doing homework can have a negative effect on student achievement (Trautwein & Köller, 2003). The optimal time varies from student to student. One study in Spain found that for eighth grade Spanish students, 60 to 70 minutes of assigned homework per night for all subjects (cumulative) is the optimum amount (Fernandez-Alonso et al., 2017).

These findings by Fernandez Alonso et al. (2017) and Nunez et al. (2015), have not been supported in other studies. Cheema and Sheridan (2015) determined an increase in the amount of time spent on homework has a positive influence on mathematics achievement scores. These varying findings have made it more difficult for principals to guide teachers to determine the appropriate amount of time that should be spent, as no clear answer exists.

Another struggle that researchers have when calculating time spent is the reliability of the data. The time it takes to complete homework is often recorded differently for parents and students (Cooper et al., 2006). Parents do not see how much time was spent, because they are not aware of every moment the student is working (Cooper et al., 2006). This complicates the issue if the data are not reliable.

Amount of Homework Assigned

When studying the time spent doing the homework, it is also important to consider the amount that is assigned (or the amount of time intended), because the time it takes students to

complete the work may vary greatly. Simply giving students more homework is not necessarily advantageous to the educational process (Corno, 1996). The amount of homework that is best for students may depend on the type of homework being completed (Trautwein & Köller, 2003). It has been determined the amount of homework the students completed has a positive correlation with student success (Nunez et al., 2015). In one study in the elementary grades these findings were less pronounced, and such findings were actually more pronounced as students were older (Nunez et al., 2015).

The optimal amount of homework assigned may not just vary with a student's age. The amount often varies with the different curricular areas. In one study teachers stated they assign most of the homework in mathematics and English (Holte, 2017). In another study in Spain, with an additional amount of assigned homework in Spanish, science, and citizenship, the achievement was more noticeable than compared to mathematics (Fernandez-Alonso et al., 2017). However, all four areas showed achievement gains (Fernandez-Alonso et al., 2017).

In Indiana students start taking the state achievement test in third grade. The importance of homework being assigned in mathematics and English may be due to the importance that many schools place on achieving well on these tests. One may assume because of this emphasis students may experience more anxiety in these areas. However, Cheema and Sheridan (2015) found that no significant relationship existed between the mathematics anxiety that students possess and the amount of homework that was assigned for mathematics classes. This emphasis on state testing may have increased the pressure that district leaders and principals place on teachers, which may very well impact the amount of homework that the teachers feel they need to assign in these areas to better prepare their students. Therefore, the principal's view on homework can be important in this discussion of homework. The start of testing by the state of

Indiana in third, fourth, and fifth grade makes these grade levels very important to the discussion of homework. The principal is judged by the test scores of the students in his or her building. Perhaps this pressure will result in principals wanting more rigor. Some principals may see more time spent doing homework as more rigor.

Homework Effectiveness

The effectiveness of homework assignments may be influenced by a variety of factors other than the external factors that are influenced by the student's home environment. The concepts a child can learn may be influenced by the child's age. The age of the child and the impact on the effectiveness of homework has been researched in this section. Students also vary in the levels of academic performance, which can be impacted by being identified as special education students, high ability students, and English language learners as well as other areas. The effectiveness of homework based on the academic needs of the child will also be reviewed. The actual completion of the homework and the impact of the completion on a child's academic success is another topic in this section.

Grades Three Through Five

Age can have an influence on the effectiveness of the homework that is assigned (Froiland et al., 2013; Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011). Because younger students are often not as effective at working independently, the type of homework assigned may be influenced by their maturity level. More of an emphasis is placed on assigning homework to train students how to manage their time at the elementary level than at the high school level (Muhlenbruck et al., 1999). It is fair to say that one cannot expect younger children to achieve and understand the content to the same degree as older, more experienced learners. Teachers of children in earlier grades may not challenge the students to the same level as the students in older grades (Cooper et

al., 2006). This may explain the relationship between younger students and the effectiveness of their homework (Ramdass & Zimmerman 2011). The effectiveness of homework when examining a student's age is not only reliant on the intellectual ability, but also their experience. Knowing what is important and what is not, allows students to have a more focused approach when completing homework. Younger students want to simply look at the whole picture and all details instead of just focusing on what is important while completing homework (Cooper et al., 2006). Much of this ability to prioritize comes with being an experienced learner.

Different age groups of students are impacted differently by the environment that surrounds the student. Younger students have shown a struggle to focus on the homework if random noises exist in the house (Cooper et al., 2006). If the student is not focused on learning, then that student may struggle academically. The need for parental involvement with younger students is also very important. When studying the effectiveness of homework at various grade levels, parents who were involved in homework in kindergarten through eighth grade have a greater effect on student achievement in eighth grade than those parents who started helping when the students became older (Froiland et al., 2013).

While the review of literature shows research that pertains to various ages of students, none of research focuses on only the intermediate student. The Indiana College and Career Readiness Standards indicate that students must be able to not only calculate answers, but they must also be able to communicate the reasons behind responses and apply the knowledge they have learned (Indiana Department of Education, 2014). When examining the achievement level for students in grades three through five, much of the knowledge may have been gained from completing homework assignments. This is the reason this study focuses on the intermediate age group.

Students with Academic Struggles

The effectiveness of homework and help outside the normal school day has been shown to differ based on the achievement level of students in the classroom (Steenbergen-Hu & Cooper, 2013; Fernandez-Alonzo et al., 2017). For example, in one study it was found that mathematics tutoring completed on the computer was more effective for the average student than those below average (Steenbergen-Hu & Cooper, 2013). Perhaps this is due to the independence the student has while using the computer. Independent work is often a part of completing homework assignments. When assigning greater amounts of homework, a larger gap is created between the high achieving students and the low achieving students (Fernandez-Alonzo et al., 2017). Carr (2013) addressed the need to consider varying needs of students when she stated, “Educators can set students up for success by communicating with parents about homework expectations and student needs, taking into account varying exceptionalities in homework design, and teaching students self-regulation techniques through homework assignments” (p. 179). An example of addressing these needs is having special education students self-monitor their homework to help define areas, where students are deficient (Falkenberg & Barbetta, 2013). The idea of self-monitoring is a homework strategy that showed benefits in not only homework completion, but also accuracy and overall achievement (Falkenberg & Barbetta, 2013). While these same processes may benefit all students, it is clear to see some processes are necessary for special education students to achieve when completing homework effectively (Bryan & Burstein, 1998; Carr, 2013; Falkenberg & Barbetta, 2013). Even parents of high performing students describe their children as having some difficulties with some homework assignments (Worrell et al., 1999). Homework assignments should be assigned based on the needs of the students (Corno, 1996).

Homework Completion

In a variety of studies, it has been shown that homework completion has a positive effect on the child's academic success (Grodner & Rupp, 2013; Lee et al., 2017; Valle et al., 2016). This academic success as a result of homework completion has also been displayed in a variety of ways. Cooper et al. (2006) stated that in the areas of reading and mathematics, the students who complete the homework assignments tend to perform better on chapter and unit tests. Lee et al. (2017) found homework being completed by the students in the afterschool program has a positive relationship with the child's literacy level. The effectiveness of completing homework was also shown to be true in students in grades three, four, and five. It has been found that a close relationship exists between the homework that is completed by the students and the academic success of the students, in grades four through six (Valle et al., 2016). Completing homework assignments may also be impacted by the child's ability to understand the material in the homework that can be influenced by the instruction in the class. However, in a study by Rosario et al. (2015) it was determined that the type of instruction the child receives in class has no significant relationship to completing the homework. This study seems to go against the logic that a child's ability to complete a homework assignment is impacted by the child's understanding of the material.

The completion of homework has been shown to be impacted by other factors as well. The completion of homework and its effectiveness may be impacted by how meaningful the homework assignment is to the learning intended in the classroom (Bryan & Burstein, 1998). It was found that students show a greater willingness to complete the work when it shows a relevance to the child's life outside of the school environment (Brisson et al., 2017). Chen and Stevenson (1989) stated "If the assignments are interesting and children can see they are useful,

this form of practice can facilitate academic achievement” (p. 561). This directly coincides with the line of thinking that making the classroom environment engaging and relevant for students has an impact on the child’s willingness to learn the content (Marzano et al., 2011).

The willingness to complete homework is also influenced by the student’s self-concept (Xu et al., 2016). For example, a student who believes that he or she can achieve in mathematics is more likely to complete the homework assignments (Xu et al., 2016). The student’s confidence in completing the work may be influenced by the student’s grades. The grade reported by the students in the classroom is positively correlated with the student’s interest in completing the homework (Xu et al., 2016).

Of course, being able to complete the homework is also influenced by other factors. The amount of homework a child completes is also dependent on the child’s use of time as well as the time the child takes to complete the assignment (Nunez et al., 2015). The importance the classroom teacher places on homework is also important. Sometimes the homework is thought to be so important that negative consequences are used for those students who do not complete the work to reinforce this importance for the students (Kukliansky et al., 2016). Setting goals for when, where, and in what order the assignments are completed is helpful in creating a plan for homework completion and actually completing the assignment (Kahle & Kelley, 1994).

This section has shown the effectiveness of homework is dependent on the student’s age, academic level, and the ability to complete the homework (Bryan & Burstein, 1998; Fernandez-Alonzo et al., 2017; Froiland et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2016). Principals should consider these factors when encouraging teachers to design effective homework assignments for the students to complete. As an instructional leader, the building principal should be encouraged to make the teachers aware of the impact of these factors. While the classroom lessons are differentiated

much of the research suggests that perhaps homework should be differentiated as well (Brisson et al., 2017; Bryan & Burstein, 1998; Fernandez-Alonzo et al., 2017; Nunez et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2016). Principals may not be aware of this need, and therefore it is useful to understand what makes homework effective in the minds of the people who are responsible for overseeing the design of content and what ultimately students are responsible for completing individually.

Homework Perspectives and Purpose

Students, teachers, and principals all are impacted by the instructional practices that occur every day. The perceptions of these groups may be similar, but they also can be different. The students' perceptions are most relevant, because the homework will be completed by them. The teachers are assigning the homework. The principals may set guidelines for the homework such as the length and the projected time spent completing the assignments. The principal's view on homework practices may explain the homework practices in any particular school.

Students and Self-efficacy

It is well known that homework is something that many students complain about. Often teachers assign work for the students to do at home and the teacher is met with grumbles from the students. Despite these protests when assignments are given to the students, some students believe that homework is beneficial, while others do not (Burriss & Snead, 2017). Despite the students' feelings Paschal et al (1984) has shown that "assigned homework produced more learning than no homework" (p.103). Some of these mixed feelings may come from the type of homework the teacher assigns. Students have stated if the assignment is more interesting and relevant, then it is more useful (Amiryousefi, 2016; Bryan & Burstein, 1998). Attempting to make the assignment interesting may be difficult from time to time, but teachers should keep this

in mind when expecting students to complete an assignment. If principals are aware of this sentiment, it may be useful knowledge, which they can deliver to their staffs.

The students' feelings about the content can also assist student learning and the willingness to complete homework assignments (Brisson et al., 2017; Corno, 2000; Lee et al., 2017). An example of this is demonstrated in a study by Brisson et al. (2017) where students read positive quotes from other students on the relevance of mathematics, students showed a greater willingness to complete mathematics homework as well as classroom tasks. In a study, where students were involved in a reading program after school, the students indicated they felt better about their ability to read as a result of the program (Lee et al., 2017). They also felt better about their ability to complete reading tasks at home and at school (Lee et al., 2017). It has already been noted that students who believe they can achieve in mathematics are more likely to complete mathematics homework (Xu et al., 2016). Students have shown a positive attitude may change their perspective of the homework that is assigned.

Students also have indicated that the type of help they receive from their parents influences their feelings about homework and their self-image as well (Moroni et al., 2015; Nunez et al., 2015). Students have noted that the help that is given at home is more important than the number of times the help is given (Moroni et al., 2015). Students feel that a supportive parent is more helpful than the parent who creates the pressure to complete homework and do well academically (Nunez et al., 2015). Students have also indicated that parents do not know exactly how much time is spent doing homework, because students often record the time taken to complete homework as an amount that is different than their parents (Cooper et al., 2006).

Because students are unique individuals with different feelings, they have a variety of strategies that they prefer when doing homework (Xu, 2013). Some of these strategies may be

more beneficial for some students than others. The students also have a variety of times throughout the day that are preferred for completing assignments as well (Xu, 2013). Some prefer completing work immediately after school, while others would rather wait until right before bedtime.

The students' perspective on who is responsible for assigning homework and what is done with the homework when it is submitted is noteworthy. Some students believe that not only teachers have an influence on the homework that is assigned, but principals do as well (Burriss & Snead, 2017). Students also have the perception that the trade and grade method is the method that is most commonly used to assess learning from the homework assignment (Burriss & Snead, 2017). The trade and grade method refers to the practice of students trading homework assignments in class and grading the assignments, while the teacher reads the answers. In the United States homework feedback provided to the whole class is not seen as beneficial to the students in getting students to complete homework as providing individual feedback (Xu et al., 2016). Despite this, many teachers do not give individual feedback or provide conferencing about the completed homework. Instructing teachers about proper homework feedback has been shown to improve student achievement (Elawar & Corno, 1985). If principals are aware that teacher feedback to students is helpful when completing homework, it may be beneficial to require this of the teaching staff and train them on the proper approach as well.

Teachers

Teachers' views on homework are not consistent (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Kukliansky et al., 2016). It is important to understand these different views when operating as a building principal. Principals are responsible for helping teachers with instructional practices as

well as providing direction for the staff (Marzano et al., 2005). A large part of providing direction is gaining an understanding of staff beliefs, conveying principal beliefs, collaborating as to what is most important, and providing direction pertaining to effective practices (Marzano et al., 2005).

Some think homework is useful, while others do not (Kukliansky et al., 2016; Trautwein et al., 2009). Some teachers do not believe that homework is a large contributor to a child's academic success when compared to other educational strategies (Chen & Stevenson, 1989). While other teachers believe that homework should take precedence over all other matters when students go home (Holte, 2017). When researching various studies on homework and achievement, Cooper et al. (2006) found 50 studies indicating homework has a positive influence on achievement, and 19 stated there was a negative influence. In one study teachers indicated that homework is often assigned because that is what teachers are supposed to do (Snead & Burris, 2016). Some primary teachers place an importance on homework and its influence on student achievement (Matei & Ciasca, 2015). They often believe homework teaches students hard work as well as independence (Holte 2017; Matei & Ciasca, 2015). Other studies have indicated that teachers assign homework, so students practice time management skills (Muhlenbruck et al., 1999). Some teachers indicate one of the purposes of homework is to keep the class moving on as scheduled (Holte, 2017).

Teachers' views on the type of homework assigned is varied. Some teachers use homework to practice skills, so not as much reteaching is required (Holte, 2017). Reinforcing what was covered in class is another purpose that homework serves as well (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Kukliansky et al., 2016). Other teachers believe homework is a source that can be used to allow students to reflect on what was covered in the lesson (Lander & Reinholz,

2015). Despite seeing the importance of problem solving and critical thinking skills, teachers still think that drill based homework is important (Snead & Burris, 2016).

Teachers often strive to maintain a positive relationship with students and parents, where positive communication is occurring. Some teachers not only believe homework is a valuable instructional tool, but it also assists in communicating appropriately with the student's parents (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Tam & Chan, 2016). Homework as a communication device is also an effective purpose for assigning homework according to some teachers, because it is used in class to speak with the whole group about an issue (Bang, 2011; Kukliansky et al., 2016). This importance is displayed by the assignment being graded and students having consequences for not completing the homework (Kukliansky et al., 2016; Trautwein et al., 2009). Teachers also use homework to monitor a student's grasp of the content knowledge (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Tam & Chan, 2016).

The student work that requires the application of concepts increases student success in mathematics (Yildizli & Saban, 2016). Many teachers prefer assignments involving application and not simply doing a calculation in mathematics classes (Tam & Chan, 2016). Even though teachers see the value in application, they still see the value in doing calculations instead of applications from time to time as well (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Tam & Chan, 2016). According to some teachers, homework is an effective method that students can use to report on goals for themselves as well as for the teacher (Bang, 2011; Bryan & Burstein, 1998). According to Corno (1996), "Homework only supports school learning when it's explicitly used with that purpose in mind" (p. 28).

Principals

Another group whose perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge are important to the homework discussion, but has not been explored, is that of the principals. Principals often influence the building procedures and policies. Many of these procedures and policies will have an influence on student learning. It has been shown that the direction of the principal has an impact on student learning (Cheng & Weng, 2017; Marzano et al., 2005). Despite this common occurrence, the perspective of the principal with regards to homework is not a viewpoint that has been often examined. This is especially the case for principals who work in a building with third grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade students.

Principals are charged with encouraging teachers to use effective practices. A limited amount of research available indicates that homework is a useful tool for students. Some principals indicate that homework should be assigned nightly and it is a useful tool as indicated in a study pertaining to computer aided tutoring systems by Feng et al. (2014). Primary principals in South Africa have indicated that homework helps the students learn the material and reinforces what has been taught by the teacher (Ndebele, 2018). Some primary principals stated that the application of concepts is an important part of homework, while others believed it extended the classroom (Ndebele, 2018).

The characteristics of effective homework is an important part of understanding the principals' perceptions regarding homework. In one study, the characteristics of effective homework was different, in that some principals could not distinguish what makes homework effective and others related homework to the students' home lives (Ndebele, 2018). The principals in this study stated that the student' parents providing homework support can greatly enhance student learning (Ndebele, 2018). Some principals have stated the challenges presented

by homework are due to the lack of parental support (Ndebele, 2018). This results in students not doing their homework (Ndebele, 2018).

The studies that have been conducted in the United States are focused on the principals in secondary buildings. In these buildings, principals have described after school homework sessions that have been an intervention used during the Response to Intervention process are beneficial in helping those students who struggle (Bartholomew & De Jong, 2017). This helps with the independent work that the student is not prepared to examine on his or her own. Some of these study sessions are not implemented by the principal, rather they are implemented by the teacher.

Some research does exist pertaining to schools creating homework policies (Marzano & Pickering, 2007; Thomas, 1992). Policies have been written pertaining to homework, but surveys indicate that most districts do not have policies regarding homework (Cooper, 2007). Some principals agree with establishing homework policies while others do not follow the policy that has been adopted by the district (Ndebele, 2018). Cooper (2007) found that the policies written in 2007 were consistent with the research that has been conducted regarding effective homework practices. Marzano and Pickering (2007) warn schools against no longer using homework, indicating the research has shown that homework can still be useful. People who write homework policies should be informed of the research pertaining to homework before creating these policies (Corno, 1996). A district that no longer allows homework to be assigned should find an instructional tool that extends the learning outside of the time parameters of a normal school day, which homework can do effectively (Marzano & Pickering, 2007). It is noteworthy that the many of the created homework policies in the past are due to disagreements

in a school community on the length of assignments and the amount of time spent on homework (Cooper, 2007).

Suggestions have also been made as to what should be addressed in a school's homework policy (Thomas, 1992). Cooper (2007) indicates that a policy should address that homework is valuable, homework should be differentiated based on ability level, and the length of time as well as how often students have homework should be defined. While Cooper (2007) provides suggestions, he also indicates that the policy should be personalized to the school and community needs. If principals are expected to have a role in the homework process, then it is appropriate to study their perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge on the topic. Cooper (2007) also stated that the administrators should be involved by "communicating the district and school policy, monitoring the implementation of the policy, and coordinating the scheduling of homework among different classes, if needed" (p. 95). Thomas (1992) agreed with these sentiments and stated the principal should take an active role in helping teachers assign homework appropriately. The time constraints placed on teachers grading large amounts of homework is an item the principal may need to consider as well (Thomas, 1992).

When creating homework policies, principals should be encouraged to meet with their staffs to create a collaborative environment (Thomas, 1992). Teachers have indicated that they do not agree with not being consulted on changing homework policies (Scott & Glaze, 2017). Students also see the importance the principal plays in assigning homework, in that they have responded that principals impact the homework that teachers assign (Burriss & Snead, 2017).

The perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the building principal is important to the conversation of the importance of homework and the preferred practices. Studies have been completed that examine the perception of students and teachers. Some studies have even

examined the perceptions of these two groups simultaneously. I examined a different group in the equation, the principals. The principal should impact the instructional strategies that teachers are encouraged to use. The principal's viewpoint may actually affect the views of the staff after policies have been developed. Students then experience the repercussions of the policy.

Studying the perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of principals helped gain insight in the similarity and differences in opinions of the building leaders and these other groups within a school.

I examined the perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of principals working with students in grades three, four, and five. I have often heard teachers say that students should be expected to be more independent in grades three, four, and five. One of the ways students can show their independence is by completing homework. Because students are expected to be more independent at this level, and teachers are often encouraging this independence in the classroom, this age level was interesting to study.

Summary

While homework has been a constant in the education of students for many years, this chapter explored research that involved implementing appropriate homework strategies. One key element found from the review was that teachers often assign homework, because that is what they believe they are supposed to do (Snead & Burris, 2016). One wonders what purpose homework serves if it is simply assigned based on the need to uphold tradition. The element of homework design is very important to this discussion and is a key element of this study.

The differentiation of homework based on the age and skill level of a student was also explored. The home environment also may influence the effectiveness of homework based on the parental characteristics, technology in the home, and the physical surroundings (Booster et

al., 2016; Carr, 2013; Echaune et al., 2015; Froiland et al., 2013; Gonida & Cortina, 2014; Holte, 2017; Moroni et al., 2015; Nunez et al., 2015). More time spent on homework does not necessarily equate to higher achievement as well based on these differences in students (Chen & Stevenson, 1989; Nunez et al., 2015; Valle et al., 2016). The awareness of these differences by principals may also be a factor in encouraging teachers to design appropriate homework.

One of the ways to explore homework is from studying the principals' belief and knowledge. Students may believe that principals influence the homework assigned by teachers (Burriss & Snead, 2017). This perception may indicate that principals have a large voice in homework design and the actual effectiveness of various homework strategies. This review indicated that further exploration of the influence principals has on homework strategies needed to be examined. Chapter Three provides a description of the research methods that were used to address these homework perceptions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Currently homework is being given to students with little direction as to the purpose of homework (Froiland et al., 2013; Steenbergen-Hu & Cooper, 2013). I examined the effective practices according to principals and attempted to determine any similarities and differences this group may have when compared to other studies examining teachers and students. I concentrated on principals working with students in grades three, four, and five due to the introduction of high stakes testing at the state level in these grades (Indiana Department of Education Office of Student Assessment, 2018). According to the Indiana College and Career Readiness Standards (2014), upper elementary students are also at the age where they are asked to provide explanations when solving problems as well as applying concepts independently. There is no clear research that has examined the perceptions of building level principals. I gained insight into the principals' perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of homework as it relates to the purpose of homework, from where this knowledge is derived, the types of homework that is most beneficial, and how teachers create homework assignments.

In this chapter the research methods used to complete this study are defined. The areas that are described are the research design, a description of the sample, the instruments to be used, the data collection process, the analysis of the data, and limitations of this study. This is a qualitative study in which principals were asked a variety of questions in an interview format. The reasons for choosing the participants and the characteristics of the participants are described. The instrumentation that is used is described as well as the steps that were taken to ensure validity and reliability while conducting the research. A description of the data collection process is also provided. This section also describes the steps that were taken to ensure accuracy

while collecting the data. The data analysis portion contains the methods used for analysis as well as the reasons these methods were chosen. The last section is the limitations followed by a summary of the chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate which strategies are believed by principals to be more valuable when assigning homework in grades three through five. The homework perceptions were analyzed based on the effectiveness of homework, the amount of homework assigned, the purpose of homework, and the characteristics of the homework, such as skills based, application based, or a flipped classroom approach. The study examined the principals' perceptions, knowledge, and beliefs pertaining to homework as well as investigating the nature of these perceptions. Questions were posed to each of the principals to examine what and how homework is being assigned in their school and what homework practices are most effective in the intermediate classrooms. These questions were centered on the amount of homework assigned, the time taken to complete the homework, the category of homework activity, the effectiveness of homework, the purpose of the homework, student efficacy, the observations of principals, and the feedback received from students and parents.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided my work were:

1. How do elementary principals describe homework practices for grades 3-5?
2. How do elementary principals describe student growth as the result of homework practices?
3. How do principals approach providing guidance to their staffs regarding homework, what advice is given, and from where does this guidance originate?

Research Design

I used the qualitative approach for this study. The qualitative research used for this study is interpretive. My research “assumes that reality is socially constructed; that is, there is no single observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities of a single event” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 9). I constructed the knowledge based on my interpretations. A qualitative study examines data in the form of “text or image data” (Creswell, 2005, p. 183) and is used to understand experiences or a “phenomenon” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6).

I wished to gain insight on the principals’ experiences as it pertains to homework and investigated their perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge. The perceptions of principals were studied by conducting individual interviews. In my study I examined homework and practices that were being used in one school district according to the school principals. I attempted to find knowledge from the interviews that were conducted. In this study I am aware that the feelings shared by the principals, that I am interviewing, are their feelings and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of all principals. The views of the principals will not be used to predict situations involving other principals. They are simply used to “describe, understand, and interpret” this situation which is the purpose behind the interpretivist approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 12).

The perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the principals were explored through in-depth data collection using qualitative methods. The principals’ perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge were studied through the use of interviewing a small group of people individually. The purpose was to ask these individuals in depth questions to gain an understanding of the information that may be conveyed about homework. This qualitative approach gave me the ability to gather extensive information from the sample of principals (Creswell, 2003). According to Creswell

(2003) the researcher must be certain that the individual being interviewed has knowledge pertaining to the area in question. Because homework is such a popular technique used in schools (Snead & Burris, 2016), I am certain that the principals qualify as knowledgeable participants in the study.

Context of the Study

The participants of this study were elementary school principals in a high performing district in Northeast Indiana. The district was chosen based on state assessment results and the district performing at a level that is higher than the state average (IDOE Compass, 2018). Principals were involved with students in kindergarten through fifth grade. This school district was chosen to explore the effective homework practices that may lead to the district's performance above the state average on state standardized tests.

Participants and Participant Selection

After gaining IRB approval as well approval from the school district superintendent, an email was sent to each of the principals explaining my study and asking for their participation in the study. Every principal that was asked to contribute agreed to participate so the response rate was one hundred percent. A consent form was completed stating this. The participants were five female principals and three male principals. Each participant was given a pseudonym for privacy. The individuals range in experience from 1-13 years as a principal, and some have prior administrative experience as an assistant principal, dean of students, or curriculum coordinator (see Table 1). All have prior teaching experience at either the elementary or secondary levels as well. Each of the respondents are Caucasian. While the schools that are a part of the study were not viewed as being extremely diverse, the schools in which these principals worked, had students from a variety of racial, economic, and academic backgrounds. During the 2018-19

school year the district was comprised of 84% white students, 5% multiracial students, 5% Hispanic students, 4% Asian students, and 2% African American students (IDOE Compass, 2018). During the same school year 19% of the students receive a free or reduced lunch (IDOE Compass, 2018). Of the students in the corporation who took ISTEP (the statewide standardized test), 64% passed, as opposed to 51% passing across the state (IDOE Compass, 2018). Because the data tabulated for this group was qualitative in nature, each respondent must be considered knowledgeable in the area of research (Creswell, 2003). Because each of the respondents also has worked in education for over 10 years, they were viewed as experts in the area of homework and instructional practices.

Table 1: Principals' Experience in the Study

Principal	Years in Education	Years in Administration	Years as Principal
Ronda	32	13	13
Nick	18	11	8
Alex	21	14	11
Kelly	23	8	6
Missy	23	10	8
Tom	14	2	2
Nancy	15	4	1
Connie	19	10	2

Instrumentation

An interview protocol was developed for the interviews conducted with the participants (See Appendix A). The protocol was based on the research questions and is based on themes provided by the literature review. I interviewed each person individually while meeting face to face. The questions were centered on homework effectiveness, homework design, and the purpose of assignments as well. Because I wanted to have some structure to the interview, but

also wanted to have the freedom to explore, the interview was semi-structured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Individuals were asked clarifying questions to gain a better understanding of their answers. I asked probing questions that were appropriate based on the participants' responses. Because it is extremely difficult to determine the probing questions before the interview, adjustments were made during the interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Pilot interviews were conducted for this study. The interview protocol was conducted with two individuals who were not involved in this study before the interviews with the participants of the study. Appropriate changes were made to develop more coherent questions and properly address the research questions.

Data Collection

Consent forms were handed to all individuals who were interviewed before starting the process. The interviews were conducted by me, reading each question directly as it is worded to each principal. Clarification was needed when the answers were unclear. In the attempt to make sure the clarification is accurate; I rephrased the principal's viewpoint to reassure that their perception is fully understood.

All interviews were recorded on a recording device that is password protected and can only be accessed by me. The identification of all the participants is confidential. The length of each interview was approximately 60 minutes based on the clarity of responses and the need to probe. Interviews were transcribed word for word by an individual and kept in a secure location inside my office. The data was collected during the second semester of the school year. Once the transcription was complete, member checks were performed where each of the principals received the transcribed copy to confirm that all answers were accurate. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) verify that member checks is an effective practice to check for validity.

Data Analysis

Once the data were collected, I organized the data in a manner where I could gain a clearer understanding from the interviews and provide meaning from what was stated. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define data analysis in a qualitative study as understanding the data by “consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning” (p. 202). The interviews were examined, and common themes were discovered to answer the research questions. My expectation was to provide an unbiased approach that was structured in an appropriate manner.

The interviews of the principals were analyzed using qualitative analysis. The data gained from the interview was transcribed. The interviews were studied multiple times by me to determine which information is pertinent and important to the study and the research questions. The data was then organized in manner to determine what major outcomes can be ascertained from the study. Memos were created from the transcript. These were used to help with the coding. First cycle coding was used to organize the thoughts and responses of the participants (Saldaña, 2016). Second cycle coding was used to determine themes and categories that can be ascertained from the interviews (Saldaña, 2016). This was done by reorganizing the first cycle codes to find overlying categories (Saldaña, 2016).

While coding I revisited the research questions that were identified. I then looked through the transcripts of the interviews to develop codes that addressed what was stated by the participants that provided answers to my research questions. Some of these key concepts in my research questions and my literature review that provided a guide to my coding were homework design, homework effectiveness, guidance given, student growth, and developing practices. I also used my theoretical framework, social cognitive learning theory, to help with coding that

pertained to what was learned by the principals both while teaching and while performing their administrative duties such as teacher observation and teacher feedback. Some of the categories that were developed as a result were understanding tests, homework policy, practice, parent feedback, reading, mathematics, conversations with teachers, formative assessment, changed practice, communication tool, confidence, and independence. The six themes for this study were then developed by examining these categories. After determining categories and themes, member checks took place to verify that the data gained was accurate. This was done by revealing the data to the participants who were interviewed so they could verify what was stated during the interview process.

When finished, portions of the interviews were used to explain the analysis. The answers in the interview, memos, codes, categories, and themes were used to develop the topic and the ideas that are important to this study. When finished, I had documentation that presented an overarching view of the principals in this district.

Positionality

My positionality as a principal was important to consider while studying the perceptions of elementary principals regarding homework in the intermediate classrooms. While teaching mathematics to high school students, I often used homework in my class to check the understanding of my students. I viewed homework as valuable time to practice the skills that were learned in the classroom. As a principal, I still believe that homework serves a valuable purpose and should be used to practice skills independently and without the help of others in the household. Students are raised in a variety of environments, and every step should be taken to make sure that homework is assigned in an equitable fashion. It is my opinion because homework is used to practice skills, one should not receive a grade for the homework outside of

a simple completion grade. It has always been my point of view that athletes or performers are not judged by practice, rather they are judged by their competition and performances. I view homework as the practice for the performance, which is the summative assessment. I am aware that my position may distort the views of this study, even though I attempted to remain as objective as possible.

Limitations

One limitation of the study was the geographic location as well as the size of the study. Because this is a qualitative study that was interested in understanding the perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of principals in one district, it does not mean that these views represent the principals in every district. The participants worked in a suburban population in a Midwestern city in Northeast Indiana. The study was also performed in one school system. This system was chosen because of its successes on state standardized tests, and coincidentally it was also one with a small free and reduced lunch rate when compared to the state average (IDOE Compass, 2018). This socioeconomic structure may have impacted on the perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the participants as well.

Because I am an elementary principal, my point of view may have skewed the results. The other principals may have felt uncomfortable with me asking questions pertaining to their knowledge and could have been threatened by this. No indication was given that the participants felt uncomfortable or threatened. I attempted to craft questions that were well thought out and in a way that would not show judgement passed towards participants' answers. I did everything in my power to help the participants feel comfortable so I could receive trustworthy data.

Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology that was used to implement this study. The populations sample was discussed as well as how individuals who were chosen for the study. The characteristics of the sample were also mentioned. The study is a qualitative study where interviews were conducted to understand the perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of a group of elementary principals in a district. Data collection was also described and outlined as well. The data was analyzed to find similarities and differences. Limitations of the study were also discussed to set parameters on its implications for other geographical and socioeconomic areas. Chapter Four discusses the results of the study as well as the data that has been collected with the methods that have been outlined. In Chapter Five results will be summarized. Conclusions and implications will be discussed as well as possible areas of further research.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The directional support principals provide to teachers via conversation or feedback regarding the educational process has an impact on student learning (Marzano et al., 2005). Because the principal has a role in providing direction on the educational process of a building, this individual's beliefs and understanding of educational practices should be considered and explored. A common practice, that I have seen in the twenty-two years working in education as a teacher and administrator used by many teachers to assist in student learning, is assigning homework. I examined the principal's view of homework via eight interviews that were conducted with building level principals. Chapter 3 discusses the data collection process as well as the analysis of determining codes, categories, and themes (pp. 56-58).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate which strategies are believed by principals to be more valuable when assigning homework in grades three through five. The homework assigned was analyzed based on the effectiveness of homework, the amount of homework assigned, the purpose of homework, and the characteristics of the homework. The study examined the principals' perceptions, knowledge, and beliefs pertaining to homework as well as investigating the nature of these perceptions.

Questions, that were centered on the amount of homework assigned, the time taken to complete the homework, the category of homework activity, the effectiveness of homework, the purpose of the homework, student efficacy, the observations of principals, and the feedback received from students and parents, were posed to each of the principals. The key information gathered from these interviews is presented. Table 1 in Chapter 3 lists each of the participants'

pseudonym as well as their experience at the time of the interview. As a result of the interview data, six themes emerged regarding the principals' beliefs and homework practices: (1) practice is the primary purpose, (2) homework is important, (3) growth from homework is dependent on support, (4) assessments reflect homework effectiveness, (5) change in teacher practice, and (6) feedback for teachers.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided my work were:

1. How do elementary principals describe homework practices for grades 3-5?
2. How do elementary principals describe student growth as the result of homework practices?
3. How do principals approach providing guidance to their staffs regarding homework, what advice is given, and from where does this guidance originate?

Theme 1: Practice is the Primary Purpose

Many of the principals in the study described homework as great practice for the items and techniques that were learned in class. The individuals indicated that practice is the primary purpose for assigning homework. Providing practice is deemed by some to be an appropriate and even preferred method to assigning homework (Snead & Burris, 2016). Principals noted that students need time to work independently, and homework provides this opportunity. Of course, the participants could not be certain that the students work independently, because they do not see the students working while at home. Nancy and Ronda indicated that the practice helps develop certain skills that are important to understanding the curriculum. Nancy even spoke of the confidence that came with the practice when she stated, "I think the more practice they get the more confident they get with skills. If the work is practiced and it's practiced at a level they

can independently do on their own, then it's going to build confidence." Nancy stressed that confidence comes from practicing until students have mastered the concept. This assumes that students already understand the concepts before going home to practice. Efficacy impacts the goals a person creates and whether they can meet these goals and standards (Bandura, 2001). It appears practicing these skills is believed to be helpful to a student efficacy. One must wonder what happens to the confidence of the student when they do not understand the concept and are practicing.

Alex and Nick also specified the reinforcement of skills is important for students beyond what is completed in the classroom. Nick stated, "I think it's, again, some additional practice on something that child needs to practice to grow in and master." Connie also spoke about skill development from practice when she stated:

I think that with the skill, they've learned the skill. It's a matter of practicing the skill and they can go that route. Review, they've already learned it and it's a matter of going over it. They already know the steps to it.

She asserted that this practice can be crucial to student success. Practicing the concepts during the school day could not replace homework due to time constraints of the school day.

Homework was viewed as an extension of the school day that allowed individuals more learning time. This time spent is assigned by the teachers through homework.

It was stated that often this practice comes as a result of not finishing classwork as well. Alex also indicated this skill practice was a result of not finishing the practice in the classroom. It then becomes homework. He said "A lot of the teachers will say we don't really have homework but if you don't get something done, that we're working on during the school day, that will become your homework" Alex emphasized that some homework is simply classwork

that was not finished and sent home. Some of the individuals specified that they did not necessarily see finishing classwork as assigned homework. It was simply an extension of the school day that homework can give students. Nancy questioned what individuals consider as homework. She also agreed that sometimes homework can be excessive, however it is still useful. She stated:

I do agree that kids who should not spend all night doing homework. But I also think they are things that kids need to practice, and I think there's that piece where parents can see what the kids are doing and also the practice of seeing something through. But things like independent reading and studying math facts and spelling words, I don't know. Maybe those aren't considered homework.

Designating what is and what is not homework was noted by several in this discussion. Should an item be considered homework if it is simply not completed in class? Are we then considering that not finishing this item is a negative consequence to not completing the task during the school day? In this scenario this type homework appears to be more of a punishment. Several of the participants asserted that homework should not be used as a punishment. Tom reflected this type of behavior describing a situation by stating "He chose not to do that. He chose to do anything but that assignment. So, okay here you go, you are going to do it at home." This task appears to be a consequence and earlier he stated, "The things that didn't work, and you'll read the research on this, is counting homework for a grade and using that zero as a tool or weapon." In both scenarios it seems as though a negative consequence is applied to not completing the work. One is a grade and the other is a loss of time at home. These principals struggled with not using homework as a punishment when students do not complete it. On the other hand, how does one motivate students to do the work? Ronda said, "If there is not a consequence for not doing it,

then why would I?” Connie believed that a conversation with the student in this scenario is important. She used the task of helping the students understand why it is important and to understand that completing this during a recess or free time during the day is imperative to their academic growth. She referred to not finishing homework when she said, “If they didn’t finish it at home, they stayed inside from recess just to make sure they were reviewing.” The value teachers and principals place on homework leads to the use of consequences for not completing homework. It appears to be very difficult to establish the importance without establishing consequences, other than that the student is not achieving. This is not beneficial to the student nor the adult.

The principals noted that practicing mathematics skills and providing time for reading were two popular purposes for homework. When speaking about homework the principals often discussed problems and used terms centered around mathematics work such as mathematics facts, problem solving, application, and mathematics methods learned in class. The discussion of practice was related to mathematics work by Kelly. She stated, “I think math of all the areas was more cut and dried. It tended to be more practice, repeated practice, math facts, study math facts.” Connie’s conversation about the amount of homework was indicative of referencing mathematics work on a general topic when she said, “But I also feel like effective homework should not be fifty problems. It’s too many or an entire whole page if they can show you in seven. Why are we making them do fifty?” The amount of homework was a concern of hers.

The amount of homework that students receive was definitely a concern from other principals as well. The importance of the time parents spend with their children is valued by the principals that were interviewed. They focused on the family time and the schoolwork not becoming cumbersome in the students’ homes. Ronda stated that the family time is extremely

important and encouraged meetings between student, parents, and teacher when situations occur where students are spending an entire evening on schoolwork. The belief was that families should be encouraged to spend time together, and it should not be spent doing homework. Teachers must navigate that careful balance between assigning the appropriate work and intruding on the family dynamic. Sometimes principals need to be involved in this discussion as well.

Reading is an important part of the elementary curriculum. This importance was recognized by the participants, as they spoke of the need for students to practice reading skills. With regards to reading, several principals referred to a twenty-minute independent reading time in the evening to practice fluency, comprehension, and decoding. Tom indicated the merge between practice and reading when he stated:

...with reading, it's a lot of practice, so some teachers will say I'm going to assign twenty minutes of reading on these nights, and some teachers will say so many pages if they're doing something in the class or everybody is working on something together.

This reading was expressed as beneficial by Connie and Nancy in that students could find items that they enjoy reading. They also indicated the reading practice could help develop not only a love for reading, but also a love for learning. Principals stated that reading is not something that can only be practiced during the limited time of the school day. They also said students are not given large breaks to read for enjoyment, where they can develop a love for reading. Nancy spoke of this promotion of loving to read and reading for enjoyment when she said "I would always have them read, but they would just go to bed and do it. I didn't want them to have to write a summary or log pages, just go to bed and read." Principals indicated that one of the goals of this tactic is to help students develop a love for reading. They believe that giving

opportunities for students to improve valuable reading skills such as fluency, decoding, and comprehension can be provided through the 20-minute reading assignments.

Theme 2: Homework is Important

The principals noted that homework is a valuable part of the educational process, especially for students in grades three, four, and five. Past studies by (Grodner & Rupp, 2013; Valle et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2017) indicate that completing homework has a positive effect on a student's knowledge. Each of the participants were asked questions gauging the importance they as building leaders place on the use of homework in their buildings. Principals were asked to reflect on the practice of no longer being able to assign homework, which is believed to be a practice in some neighboring districts. While the principals understand this belief, all stated they would appreciate it being available in their schools. Ronda specified that homework is a teacher decision when she said, "I think it should be up to the teacher and the building. I mean it's a local decision. I would never say you couldn't give homework." The principals saw it as a valuable practice and one that could benefit when used appropriately. Kelly reflected this when stating "I think it could cause some teachers to feel limited in what they're able to do with their students. A little hesitation towards that." Tom and Alex also asserted that the practice of assigning homework has a place in education. Tom said,

I would hate to adopt something that restrictive, and I also don't think homework needs to be given every day, for every class for every subject. But I would hate to be in a position where the parents would say, oh, the Science Fair thing, should all be done at school, because you said you're not giving homework.

The extension of the school day at home to practice items is believed to be too difficult to duplicate during the confined hours of a school day.

The valuable practice that homework can provide should not be ignored when developing district policies (Cooper, 2007). The principals addressed the placing of homework guidelines in district policies. Alex spoke about a policy for all being negative when he said, “I don’t like a blanket policy in general for anything. I think there’s just way too many variables and nuances that blanket policies just can’t cover.” While Nick understood why districts make this decision, he did not support it. He said “Again, hearts in the right spot, I just disagree. I still think there’s a place for homework if done right.” Principals were quick to note that they do not think less of districts who have made the choice to stop homework. They just do not agree with banning the practice in their schools. The extra practice that homework provides for students cannot be duplicated in other ways. The principals believe that the only other way to accomplish this is to extend the school day. Homework is thought of as an extension of school in the home where students may practice skills independently.

Homework is important for students and families, because it is a great source of communication between teachers and the parents or guardians. Principals stated that many parents watch what their children bring home. Kelly said some parents may even request homework when she said:

I think parents would appreciate it and they would ask for homework. That gives them an idea of what’s going on and how their kids are doing, and if they’re struggling at home or if they’re excelling. The parents kind of get a feel for what they’re doing at school, what that looks like, and how are they doing with it.

Missy indicated “Part of the reason I would assign homework as a teacher was that I wanted to have that buy-in for parents on academics. It really was to show the value of being in that

classroom.” Some principals indicated that if homework was not used, many parents would not know what the students were learning. Ronda spoke of this when she said:

I think its insight for parents to see what’s going on during the school day. Until you have a parent sitting there sometimes, they don’t have a clue as to what you’re working on the next day until there’s a big project. The project they may see like Science Fair. But I think it’s important that they see daily what they’re doing.

Principals emphasized that homework is not only used to gain a better understanding of what was taught during the school day and what is important for students to understand, but also the extent in which students are grasping concepts. Parents can get a glimpse into how students are interacting with the content discussed in class. It can also give parents a better grasp on any study skills that need to be developed that impact learning both at home and at school.

Theme 3: Growth from Homework is Dependent on Support

Another overarching theme of the discussions with the principals is the support the student receives has a direct impact on the growth displayed from homework completion. A positive correlation exists between the level of support a student receives on homework and that student’s achievement (Echaune et al., 2015). The principals acknowledged this notion when discussing student growth as a result of not only completed homework, but also work completed correctly. When asked questions pertaining to growth, many of the responses given referred to the support a student receives. The principals believed that the support in the home can impact the growth a student can show from doing homework. While the value of the home environment is important to the discussion, the principals did not discuss what they do when the home environment is not as supportive. Tom and Alex were very direct on the negative impacts from not having that support at home. Tom, when speaking about the effectiveness of homework,

stated “I think if the kid doesn’t have the resources or the ability or the conditions at home, it’s going to tank.” Alex made a similar sentiment when referring to the lack of homework completion. He stated, “You know, if they don’t have that support at home, that’s definitely a factor in the completion.” The support was stressed as a key to student success. However, the individuals did not explain the response of the school when children do not receive the support. While parents certainly play a role in educating their students, the school must not use this as an excuse for a child failing. Assuming that a child will fail, because he or she does not have the necessary resources, does not assist in educating the child. This viewpoint represents a defeatist attitude.

When discussing the independent practice, they also discussed the support that students receive from home. In some cases, a lack of support was viewed as a negative. Nick referenced this in the following statement:

And some of our kids have a lot of support and some don’t. So how do we try and level that out. Well, if I send that home, my kids that have support, those parents will help.

The parents are going to be frustrated with you as a teacher for sending it home. The kids who have no support are now behind.

The reason for the lack of support was discussed by Missy when she indicated that families have a variety of nuances that may impede the ability to complete homework. She stated:

It would be awesome to think every kid has parents who could sit down at the dinner table and help them through it, but the reality is we have parents who don’t, either because they don’t want to; they want to but they’re not present; or they’re present and want to but they don’t have the ability.

While no blame was passed directly onto parents, an underlying accusation of a student failing due to the lack of help from home environment was detected. Passing the blame for failure onto another entity in the child's life does not address the primary function of a school to educate students. In other words, if a student fails one cannot simply say it was due to the lack of support from home. The school should take ownership in addressing the child's learning needs. Perhaps homework should be assigned at the student's independent level, where parents are not required to help the student. Parents could be made aware that they are not expected to help and are even discouraged from assisting the students on homework. This would be then used as a true formative assessment. This assessment would then be representative of the student's level of understanding and not those who are providing assistance.

While other times the support given was not clear, the principals indicated that the teachers struggle with understanding exactly what the student can do. Nancy spoke of the support from home and the grades assigned from homework. When speaking of grading all homework she specified, "I think that no, if it's something that they're taking home. It's a review page and they're taking it home. You don't really know how much of that is being done independently." Not knowing what is occurring at home is definitely a concern for these administrators and their teachers.

Connie stated that as a teacher, her expectations for homework changed based on the district in which she worked. She compared two districts that she believed had different support from parents. She felt like this support had an impact on what she would assign knowing that in one district it would be finished and in another district it was unlikely. She noted, "My homework expectations were significantly different in Northwest than they were in inner city Indianapolis. So, in inner city Indianapolis I would send things home for basic review with

knowing the majority of my work would not come back.” Connie explained that not having support in this district was discouraging. One wonders what steps were taken to involve the home environment in the learning. If the practice of assigning homework is truly a benefit to all students, a teacher should make every effort to help the child complete the work correctly. Simply stop assigning work because students are not completing it, must be replaced by an item that will assist the students and provide the needed independent practice. While different schools and communities face different challenges, if homework is thought to be crucial to the success of a child, perhaps it should not be abandoned.

The findings, relating to this theme, represent classic deficit thinking by the principals in this study. Deficit thinking is the belief that a student is not able to learn at the same level as other students because their background is less supportive (Weiner, 2006). Assumptions were made regarding the background of some students impacting their inability to complete homework or complete it correctly. The capability of students to learn and teachers to teach effectively are impacted when expectations are low, based on low expectations (Weiner, 2006). Some of these low expectations were prevalent in the comments from the principals.

The principals spoke about what certain students could not do based on the support the students receive from home. Some principals have a preconceived notion of students unable to perform certain tasks based on the students’ background and these notions also form an internal barrier for the principals that they are not able to overcome (Flessa, 2009). Principals sometimes blame the lack of student learning on a home environment that has not provided the appropriate support (Flessa, 2009). The scenario where students are not receiving support from their households is expected by some educators and is believed to be unavoidable (Skrla & Scherich, 2001). Principals should find ways to connect with the family to gain a better understanding and

find ways to assist all students (Flessa, 2009). Skrla and Scheurich (2001) described this phenomenon when discussing minority students and students from financially disadvantaged families when they stated,

...first, educators describe deficits, deficiencies, limitations, and shortcomings in children of color and children from low-income homes; next educators explain these deficits by locating them in such factors as limited intelligence or dysfunctional families; then, educators predict the perpetuation and accumulation of the deficits; and finally educators prescribe educational interventions designed to remediate the deficits. (p. 236)

The participants in this study represented the deficit thinking when discussing some of the families not being able to adequately assist their children in completing work. While they indicated the homework is important and helpful to student learning, individuals did not provide strategies to overcome these perceived deficits.

Theme 4: Assessments Reflect Homework Effectiveness

Assessments were stated by the individuals as playing a major role in determining if the homework practices are effective. Homework completion has been shown to have a positive effect of unit tests in reading and mathematics (Cooper et al. 2006). Principals discussed the effectiveness in terms of formative assessments as well as summative assessments. Principals indicated that teachers use formative assessment to monitor student growth. Often the formative assessments were the homework that was completed. Nancy spoke about determining what to do with the homework when completed in the following statement:

So, they would bring it back to school and turn it in, and then it depended on what it was. If it was the first time, we ever saw it, I wouldn't probably take a summative score in that way. I would just use it more as a formative type of thing.

Ronda supported this notion of not using the item as a grade for mastery, she used homework as an opportunity to provide feedback along with using it formatively. She stated “I would not use it in a grade. I would comment on it. I would comment on the responsibility piece, maybe a lifeline grade.” She went on to say “Bring it up, great job you got this. A quick note on anything. Even the straight A kids need it.” So, Ronda encouraged the practice of using homework as a completion grade, not a mastery grade, but also indicated students needed some feedback.

While other principals supported the notion of using homework as formative assessment, they also believed that homework should compose a portion of the student’s grade, not just a responsibility piece. Missy spoke about grading the homework also gives it value and students may be more likely to complete it. She asserted “It has value. It needs to be figured into a grade. It doesn’t have to have a huge impact in it, but why do it? It gives it value.” Nick even stated that using it as a grade can help the students who perform well on formative assessments, but poorly on summative assessments. He stated, “Using it on a small portion of the grade helps those who do poorly on summative assessments.” All principals indicated that a clear purpose should be determined before assigning any homework. However, differences occurred in what other purposes homework can serve.

Several principals indicated that students demonstrate an acquisition of knowledge by completing the work and show the teachers what they know about the content. Ronda said, “Yeah, they should be looking at it. They should be using it as almost an assessment, to me that’s almost a quick scan assessment.” Nick had a similar sentiment when he said, “I think the effectiveness comes down from the teacher gaining some type of knowledge on their kids’ skills.” Using the homework as a learning tool and to monitor student progress will assist in

gaining a better understanding of what students understand regarding the concepts taught (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Tam & Chan, 2016). Kelly spoke of the negative impacts of not assessing their work. She said, “Because if you’re getting feedback and they’re not being successful with it, I think that would be concerning to me.” Her concern reflected the lack of knowledge gained from not using the homework as a formative assessment.

Principals were asked a direct question concerning the impact homework has on state assessments. The state of Indiana has an accountability system in place that is driven by standardized testing. It is believed that positive instructional practices impact students in a positive manner, and this is reflected when students take the appropriate state assessment, ILEARN in Indiana (ISTEP in the past). Homework is an instructional practice that the participants believed is effective when applied correctly. I wanted to see if principals believed homework impacted student scores on the state assessment. Several individuals indicated while the homework should not be used to just “teach to the test”, it is a great method for students to demonstrate their skills before taking the state assessment. Kelly addressed this when she stated, “I think if it was appropriate homework, it gave them time to practice the material, and I would hope you’d see that translate into demonstrating their knowledge and understanding on the test.” Nick echoed this sentiment when stating:

I think the more quality the homework the more you’ve increased the opportunity for growth, whether that’s in math, reading, whatever, science. That said, as I’ve grown more skills and knowledge, I think I have the opportunity to do better on that assessment.

Tom even indicated that some of his teachers gain an understanding of the types of questions asked and assign homework based on this for extra practice. He said, “Some teachers dig in and they know the test, the kind of skills that the test is assessing. They know the manner in which

the questions were written. And so, they'll design homework that mirrors that." Principals indicated that the skills, learned from doing the homework, have an impact on students demonstrating knowledge on these standardized tests. Nancy stated, "So if the piece of homework is practiced towards that and helps them build skill in that then it may translate into a standardized test." She indicated that homework impacts the use of a skill that impacts the success on a test.

Two of the principals believed that successful homework completion was not positively correlated with standardized test scores like the state assessment. When referring to homework's impact on standardized test performance Ronda stated, "Other than practice and review, I don't think it does (have an impact)." Connie was a little more direct in her feelings regarding the correlation between homework and standardized test scores. She indicated that she thinks homework has no bearing on standardized tests scores when she commented:

I just don't think that the homework correlates to a score on one test on one particular day at that moment in time. I think giving them opportunities to practice problems that they might like or similar to what they might see or the process or understanding the process is much more powerful than sending home the homework. I just don't see it equating into a test score.

While she believed the practice is important, she did not see a correlation between homework and success on a statewide standardized assessment. However, she did believe that student growth is prevalent in other assessments such as summative and formative assessments designed by the teacher.

Theme 5: Change in Teacher Practice

Principals asserted that they have witnessed growth in teachers as it pertains to homework practices, and also asserted the same growth was in their own homework practices when they previously taught. Some referenced that homework was assigned when they first started teaching, because they believed it was a necessity. Alex stated, “I feel like young teachers feel compelled to give homework because they had homework.” Connie had an interesting take on homework as a teacher new to the profession and the importance it plays when compared to other items, such as instructional practices and classroom management. She stated:

I think when you're first starting to teach you are under water. There's so much on your plate. You're trying to understand the curriculum. You're trying to understand all of the standards. You're trying to understand all of the new books or resources that are available. You're wanting to make sure you're trying to look at classroom management. The homework, not that it's not important, but the hierarchy of trying to figure all the things out, that just becomes another thing you feel overwhelmed about.

Guskey and Jung (2013) discuss grading practices that are done simply because teachers experienced this when they were students. Assigning homework had the same sentiment for some of the principals. A principal's responsibility is to provide guidance to teachers pertaining to effective practices (Marzano et al., 2005).

Experiencing various professional development from fellow teachers was also important to some of the principal's growth as a teacher. While none spoke of partaking in professional development specifically geared for homework, they did seek the advice from more experienced teachers when changing their own homework strategies. Nick addressed this when he said:

...then over time just through conversations with colleagues and professional development just the ideas of how do we make this more meaningful and differentiate it. It's just some of it is just human nature and it takes time and work to fine tune. But, create dialogue, build some consistency with the teams on what homework should be and how to maintain quality.

Kelly also indicated that she garnered many ideas with regards to homework from her grade level team as well as her mentor teacher.

Some of the expressed attributes of better homework practices were simply due to having more experience. Nancy spoke about her own experiences and how that molded her into a different teacher. She stated, "Trial and error, I guess. Schooling, you learn things. You have your own personal experiences. I had my own children that were also experiences. So, I mean living and learning." Understanding that one can try new ways to assign homework was helpful as well. Individuals commented that when starting they believed others wanted to see the homework. Tom stated:

Well, it evolved because when I started my career I felt like parents wanted to see homework coming home so I felt sort of an obligation to parents that I'm doing my part, and I'm sending homework home and that sort of thing. But after talking with kids and after talking with parents, it seemed like their view of homework was different than what I remember when I was in high school.

Principals explained that they gained confidence by simply gaining experience from teaching and reassessing homework practices. Alex reflected this when he said "And you will see teachers, just like it did in my career, they will evolve over time as they learn new things and try new

things as to what their philosophy is on homework.” Several principals indicated the change in practice and philosophy after gaining experience.

Theme 6: Feedback for Teachers

Providing feedback is a useful and positive approach that is important to the growth of a teacher (Delvaux et al., 2013). While some of the principals stated that they have not often discussed homework issues with teachers, each stated it was something they have discussed before. When addressing this issue, the principals indicated that a mandate was not delivered to staff. Tom addressed this when he said, “You know, it’s just having conversations with teachers, asking questions. You know making no ultimatums just getting a better sense of what’s going on in their head and what their motivation was.” Many of the individuals indicated they seek to understand why decision are made and then have a conversation with the staff member based on the response. Kelly said:

So, starting by asking questions. What was that assignment? What was your hope for that? Did it go the way you thought it would go? Have you gotten any feedback from parents on it? So just starting with some guided questions to hopefully get them to reflect on.

Missy also spoke about the need to gain understanding and build the rapport in the beginning of a conversation with regards to homework. She said:

You validate that they’re professionals, and it’s a team and you want them to come alongside them. I think you start out with listening, and if you genuinely want to know and you want to come alongside them, they’re going to be pretty receptive to your feedback.

She was very concerned with teachers not only getting the feedback, but also delivering it in a manner that helped the teacher receive the knowledge.

When addressing changes needed, principals indicated this came in the form of suggestions. They explain a different method and the reasoning behind the method. Alex indicated:

You know, I would always present it in discussion format trying to get the teacher to reflect upon the effectiveness, what they feel the effectiveness is of that and you know while at the same time gearing the conversation to best practices and what are some options out there for trying to achieve the learning target that maybe they're not employing at the time. And again, I would just go talk to that teacher. Let them know a concern was raised and address it, get a game plan together for a response and discuss it.

They indicated that this creates a less stressful conversation with staff members. Nancy also stated the collaborative approach helps keep open lines of communication. She said:

Communication, talking to them, like maybe in a collaborative conversation, where this is an issue coming up, let's talk about what you're assigning, talk about what's important, what's not important, and try to get an idea, you know, just communicating.

While some principals indicated some of the conversation were started from observations made by the administrator, most were due to parent concerns that were raised. Some of the principals stated that homework is hard to gauge, and they do not generally see what is assigned.

Tom stated:

That's hard, because I'm not in there, every class, every day. I just take feedback from parents. You know like it is with a teacher. Sometimes parents will just offer up that information or I'll ask about how it's going at home.

Parents are a source used to monitor improprieties is assigned homework. Nancy indicated that she will speak to the teachers about the parent emails. She stated, “Communication, parent response, you know if somethings being done, we’re getting parent emails, you know.” It seems that many of these individuals rely on the parents to provide valuable feedback.

When discussing homework and items that parents complained about, two areas that were most addressed by parents were time spent doing homework and the purpose of the assignment. Principals indicated that parents will discuss the amount and time their children are spending doing homework. Missy said:

You know, like you’ll know if they’re not because parents will tell you. I mean, truthfully, if you have a teacher who is routinely assigning this obscene amount that isn’t okay. Parents are going to tell you fairly quickly into the school year that their child is doing two to three hours of homework a night.

Parents also indicated the importance of a purpose to the principals. The purpose is also a subject of the conversations that administrators have with teachers. Nancy spoke about homework having a purpose. She indicated students and parents get frustrated when they feel as though the work is simply busy work. Nancy reflected on other perspectives when she said, “I think teachers do need to think about other perspectives, the student’s perspective and the parent’s perspective to not build more frustration or have kids just doing busy work.”

Administrators explained if the homework is not purposeful and does not follow the learning goal from the instruction, then students and parents will not see the importance. Kelly spoke of the purpose when she said, “I think it’s all in how you use it and what your purpose is behind it. I think it can, it definitely has to be related to what you’re doing. It has to have purpose behind

it.” Kelly indicated that the relationship between the homework and content in the classroom is imperative.

Summary

This chapter revisited the purpose of the study as well as the participants involved. Data analysis was then presented from the interviews involving the eight principals. Six themes emerged from these discussions. Providing practice is the main purpose regarding assigning homework according to the principals. Principals also indicated that assigning homework is a valuable educational process. The growth from the assigned homework is dependent on the support the students receive according to some of the participants. They also indicated that this growth is evident on standardized tests. Administrators also asserted that homework practices change as teachers become more comfortable, a process that several said had occurred when they were new to the teaching profession. The principals stated that feedback, many times started from a parent complaint, to teachers regarding homework was delivered in a conversational manner about preferred homework practices. I discuss the response to the research questions in Chapter Five. Chapter Five also contains my discussion regarding implications as well as recommendations for research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This chapter provides an analysis of the data as it pertains to the research questions through the lens of the social cognitive learning theory and existing research. It also provides implications for policy, practice, as well as future research. Chapter Four presented six themes that emerged from the interviews of the eight elementary principals. In this chapter each of the research questions are addressed by themes developed from the interviews and are supported with existing research. Implications for policy and research, suggestions for future research, and concluding remarks will also be provided in the chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate which strategies are believed by principals to be more valuable when assigning homework in grades three through five. The homework perceptions were analyzed based on the effectiveness of homework, the amount of homework assigned, the purpose of homework, and the characteristics of the homework, such as skills based, application based, or a flipped classroom approach. I examined the principals' perceptions, knowledge, and beliefs pertaining to homework as well as investigating the nature of these perceptions. Questions were posed to each of the principals to examine what and how homework is being assigned in their school and what homework practices are most effective in the intermediate classrooms. These questions were centered on the amount of homework assigned, the time taken to complete the homework, the category of homework activity (based on descriptors above), the effectiveness of homework, the purpose of the homework, student efficacy, the observations of principals, and the feedback received from students and parents.

After questioning the participants, the data was analyzed for theme development and to help determine responses to the research questions.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided my work were:

1. How do elementary principals describe homework practices for grades 3-5?
2. How do elementary principals describe student growth as the result of homework practices?
3. How do principals approach providing guidance to their staffs regarding homework, what advice is given, and from where does this guidance originate?

The first portion that is discussed in this chapter is the elementary principals description of effective homework practices in grades 3-5. Next I discuss the principals' view of student growth as a result of said practices. The guidance provided to the staff from the principal as well as from where this advice originates is be discussed last.

Research Question #1: How do elementary principals describe homework practices for grades 3-5?

The principals indicated that homework is an important instructional practice. Each of the principals stated that they would oppose a policy in their district that did not allow teachers to assign homework. Paschal et al (1984) asserted that homework produces higher levels of learning than no homework. The principals believed that restricting the use of homework would also restrict an instructional practice that is useful in helping students grasp content that is important to their educational growth. This finding supports what was stated by Cooper (2007) when he said,

With only rare exceptions, the relationship between the amount of homework that students do, and their achievement outcomes was found to be positive and statistically different from zero. Therefore, I think it would not be imprudent, based on the evidence in hand, to conclude that doing homework can cause improved academic achievement.

(p. 37)

Alex supported the thought of homework being effective for students. He also stated that the homework should be relevant, well prepared, and contain a direct connection to what material was delivered in the classroom. Missy also supported the use of homework with an importance given to providing the connection to the class work.

Principals also agreed that assigning homework is a communication tool that can be used. Other studies have found that teachers see an importance of sending homework home with students to help the communication between school and home (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Tam & Chan, 2016). Nick conveyed the point that the communication provided from homework helps inform the parents and merge the home environment with the school. The principals suggested that parent communication is important when educating students in grades three through five. Principals indicated that one of the important purposes for assigning homework is the practice of sending things home for students to do so parents can see what is being accomplished in class. Some principals believe this communication may encourage involvement. Williams et al. (2017) discussed the benefits homework can provide in encouraging productive parental involvement when they stated,

In one respect, homework may be characterized as is simply another example of a school-initiated task that requires parental presence. An alternative view, though, is that it is an

example of engaging parents in an effective form of involvement which has a number of potential benefits and which has little cost. (p. 330)

The participants also agreed that homework needs to serve a purpose outside of simply communicating with parents.

Providing practice for students to perfect skills learned during the school day is the main purpose behind homework according to many of the participants. The belief, that assigning homework so students could work independently through the processes learned is beneficial to students, was prevalent among the administrators. Others view the practicing of skills at home that were taught during the school day as a positive approach as well (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Farrow et al., 1999; Scott & Glaze, 2016). When discussing these processes, much of the discussion centered around completing mathematics work and practicing these processes. Providing practice to complete calculations goes with what teachers have stated in past research by Snead and Burris (2016). The principals often described the homework completed as mathematics homework. An example of this is when Connie spoke of teachers not assigning fifty problems for students to complete.

The importance of providing practice is not just limited to mathematics homework. Principals indicated that providing reading practice is also an important component. The thought behind this is giving students an opportunity to read each night for enjoyment. The administrators indicated that many teachers assigned twenty minutes of reading each night to encourage their students to read. Some reading programs established by teachers in other districts are not only used as a communication tool, but parents are also expected to take an active role in the work sent home (Clarke & Comber, 2020). Clarke and comber stated

Take-home reading programs and the expectations that accompany them put parents in a position that requires them to take on the role of teacher. Parents must become familiar with school instructional strategies and pedagogical activities such as reader responses, character profiles, and writing newspaper articles (p. 570).

The principals did not describe a program such as this. They focused on not only perfecting reading skills, but also giving students the opportunity to develop a love for reading. It has been indicated that homework should be differentiated for students (Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011). Giving students an opportunity to individualize their reading assignments helps with this differentiation as well.

Research Question #2: How do elementary principals describe student growth as the result of homework practices?

The two themes that emerged that are associated with this question are “assessments reflect homework effectiveness” and “growth is dependent on support.” Principals identified the homework itself as a formative assessment used to determine the students’ grasp of the knowledge from completing the work. Students have indicated that individual feedback is encouraging and gives them an incentive to complete assignments (Xu et al., 2016). Principals expressed that they encourage teachers to use the homework as a device to better understand what students know and in what areas they need extra assistance. Ronda spoke of the need to give individual feedback not as a grade but providing valuable feedback that students can use. When grading assignments, “teachers can make a difference when they provide constructive comments to students” (Elawar & Corno, 1985, p. 172). This is supported by Cooper (2007) when he states,

All homework should be collected, and teachers should use it in the diagnosis of learning difficulties. If a teacher notices a student falling behind in class, homework assignments can be carefully scrutinized to determine where the difficulty lies. When errors or misunderstandings on homework are found, the teacher should more carefully go over the student's other assignments. Problems can be communicated directly to the student. In a sense, then, homework can help teachers individualize instruction. There is no more reason to treat each homework assignment as if it were a test than there is reason to grade students for their performance on each class lesson. (p. 79)

Principals also indicated that the homework should be purposeful and not assigned randomly so it can be used to determine growth. Nancy spoke of the term busy work and not just assigning work without a purpose.

Most of the participants also indicated that homework growth should also be evident in standardized tests. Cooper et al. (2006) indicated students who complete their homework assignments in reading and mathematics tend to score better on chapter and unit tests. While the principals did not see a direct correlation between homework completion and the standardized test score, they did see homework completion impacting student knowledge. Muhlebruck et al. (1999) asserted that homework can be beneficial even if it does not directly impact a student's grade or score on a standardized test. The principals indicated that homework should assist the students in gaining knowledge. That knowledge should then impact the student's ability to score on a test. This thought was highlighted by Nick when he stated,

I think the more quality the homework the more you've increased the opportunity for growth, whether that's in math, reading, whatever, science. That said, as I've more skills and knowledge, I think I have the opportunity to do better on that assessment.

This again supports what was stated in the response for question one. Homework is important to student growth. While it was explained that this district was explored due to their higher than average test scores, one must also take note that none of the principals stated that homework was directly responsible for the students in the district performing higher than average on state tests. Instead they believed homework enhanced the learning of students along with a variety of other instructional practices that can be effective when used properly.

When discussing growth, the individuals indicated this growth from homework is also dependent on the support students receive at home. When being supportive of the student, the parent can help the student achieve at a higher level (Moroni, et al., 2015). This support comes as a result of helping students with homework when needed as well as taking an interest in the student's schoolwork (Nunez et al., 2015). This is where the communication aspect of homework is beneficial. Parents being too involved with checking student work was addressed by Froiland et al. (2013) when they found, "This study provided further confirmation that early parental involvement and parental expectations are key longitudinal predictors of academic achievement. However, as children approach adolescence, parental expectations remain vital whereas parental involvement in homework and checking grades backfire slightly" (p. 46). The principals also stressed that support from homework can hinder the student in that the student is not showing what he or she knows, instead it is what the parent knows.

Research Question #3: How do principals approach providing guidance to their staffs regarding homework, what advice is given, and from where does this guidance originate?

The themes "change in teacher practice" and "feedback for teachers" provide insight to this last question. The principals' guidance for teachers originates from their own personal experience. All the individuals were former teachers and relied on this experience to guide their

judgements. The change in practices as teachers assist the principals in understanding what is appropriate and useful, and what is not when discussing positive practices. A person makes individual changes after creating acceptable ideals that are individualized (Bandura, 2001). The person then changes his or her actions to meet these individualized principles (Bandura, 2001). When the principals discussed the changes made when starting teaching to when they finished, they endorsed homework was something that they had to give and did not give it a great deal of attention. Connie stated,

I think I did what everybody else was doing because you just don't know any different.

So you ask your neighbors and they tell you what they're doing. That's one less thing that

I have to think about when you're still trying to figure out curriculum and everything else.

After the principals' initial year teaching, they then explored other avenues, not only asking other teachers for guidance and feedback, but also exploring other methods for assigning homework. They also indicated that providing a clear and accurate explanation of what was expected was helpful in that students had a better understanding of what they were to do. It was also stated that they received less parent complaints when a decent explanation was provided. These are just a few of the items the principals learned from teaching that they use to advise their teachers. They spoke of the need for teachers to provide clear directions when assigning homework. A clear purpose to the assignment was also important advice to teachers, as the clear purpose will help students understand that the assignment is useful and not simply busy work.

Principals also discussed the benefits of observation of homework procedures from a variety of teachers may help a new teacher as well. When discussing self-reflection and positive change Bandura (2001) states "They do things that give them self-satisfaction and a sense of

pride and self-worth, and refrain from behaving in ways that give rise to self-dissatisfaction, self-devaluation, and self-censure (p. 8).” Participants indicated help from colleagues was an important piece of the growth, that they have experienced when assigning homework.

Conveying this knowledge to their teachers is also helpful in developing the teachers’ practices.

The preferred method for delivering feedback was conversational in nature. “Trust” plays a large role in creating a happy and productive work environment (Ozyilmaz et al., 2017). Maintaining trust between the principals and their employees was important to those interviewed. The participants prefer asking questions regarding the reason behind an assignment, as well as what was beneficial. Thomas (1992) expressed that principals should collaborate with teachers when creating homework policies. This collaborative approach was evident amongst the principals. The discussion, provided in the development of these two themes, is helpful in debating the homework issue at hand. Several individuals asserted that they would only place direct demands on teachers with regards to homework if the situation was so dire that it necessitated this action.

The methods that teachers used when assigning homework was not always clear for the administrators managing the school. Several of the individuals indicated that they did not always know how each teacher is assigning work. They indicated they relied on parent observations to guide and assist them. Alex stated “At the elementary level most of the feedback I get about homework comes from parents. It’s usually if there’s a problem or if homework taking too long or not well communicated.” It was indicated that parent complaints about work helped the principals know if an issue exists. Many times, these complaints were about the size of an assignment or how much time their children were spending completing assignments. Cooper (2007) indicated that these are often the reasons that districts have developed a policy against the

use of homework. Parents also have spoken with principals about the purpose an assignment serves. These concerns are often addressed with the teachers in the building by simply asking the instructors about homework practices.

Social Cognitive Learning Theory Analysis

While my research explores the perceptions of the principals interviewed, it also explores from where this information is derived. The social cognitive learning theory provides the lens through which I explored the responses, because this theory examines how people learn information from both internal and external factors (Bandura, 1996). The principals in this study often referenced how they utilized homework as a teacher, and what they have witnessed as a principal. I believe this experience molded their views on the effective uses of homework in their buildings. They often referred to these experiences when discussing homework procedures.

Two avenues of gathering information or expertise were explored in this study. The first exploration of the principals' views was from the perspective when they were teachers. Each individual was asked how they used homework when teaching and how their practices changed over time. Principals spoke of the relationships formed with other teachers, when they worked as a classroom teacher and how this was helpful to their growth, like what has been found regarding strong relationships between coteachers and their perceived benefits increasing as well (Stefanidis et al., 2018). Principals spoke of other teachers' homework practices and seeing positive results from these practices. Remembering what acts the individuals wanted to reproduce is the stage of retention in the social cognitive learning theory (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). The observations formed by individuals are instrumental in professionals learning both positive traits and negative traits from another individuals (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2011). While this research focused on the positive uses of homework, negative traits were present, and

principals indicated that they learned from negative experiences when they were teachers utilizing homework practices. Bandura (2006) addressed how a person improves when he said, “People are contributors to their activities, not just onlooking hosts of sub personal networks autonomously creating and regulating their performance. People conceive of ends and work purposefully to achieve them. They are agents of experience, not just undergoers of experiences” (p. 168). The principals as teachers indicated they witnessed both positive and negative approaches and used these to create their own practices. Self-reflection helps individuals not only understand what has been attempted in the past, but also what can be accomplished in the future (Morris et al., 2016). These lessons learned from their teaching experience were instrumental in the advice given as administrators.

Another exploration of mine was from the administrator’s perspective as a building principal and the homework practices, that they have witnessed. People achieve more and at a higher level when working together (Bandura, 2006). While these individuals draw on their experience as teachers, they also expressed what they have witnessed as a building principal. Individuals can purposefully improve and have control over their own growth (Bandura, 2001). Principals indicated they wanted to grow and have a deeper understanding of useful homework practices and then deliver this knowledge to their teaching staffs. These individuals stated that they have a unique opportunity, in that they can witness various homework practices and understand various perspectives through conversation. While they admitted that the conversations were in response to parent complaints, it did help them understand the teacher’s perspective. These observations allowed for a much larger acquisition of knowledge based on what they have seen effective from one teacher to the next. The concept of agency that was discussed by Bandura (2001) addresses a person’s ability to control their own growth. Bandura

(2001) stated, “The core functions of agency enable people to play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal with changing time” (p. 2). Principals showed initiative in expanding their knowledge of effective practices by watching their teachers’ effective practices. After gaining this understanding they used this knowledge to help their staff utilize appropriate practices. They even indicated they encouraged staff members to share what was working with regards to homework, encouraging this share of knowledge amongst the various teachers in their buildings. An employee will tend to believe he or she can perform at a higher level, when this person feels encouraged and supported (Ozyilmaz et al., 2017). Goddard et al. (2004) stated, “teachers’ thoughts about their own capabilities will be influenced by beliefs about group capability that characterize the culture of the school” (p. 9). A leader of a group of individuals is best served by establishing a belief that employees can succeed and creating a relationship that is productive and encourages them to perform at a high level (Ozyilmaz et al., 2017). The goal in mind, that was conveyed by the participants, was cultivating an environment where all teachers assign homework in a manner that will encourage students to learn at their highest levels. The principals believed their teachers can achieve this as well. This was attributed to the experiences and the knowledge gained from watching others, learning from experiences, and establishing positive homework practices in their building.

The social cognitive learning theory provided guidance for me throughout the coding process as well as the data analysis. Because I wanted to gain a better understanding of not only what the principals believe, but also where these beliefs come from, this framework provided great assistance. I examined how the principals learned from internal and external sources which is what the social cognitive learning theory describes (Bandura, 1996). This often guided my coding because I knew this would be extremely beneficial in answering the third research

question. Several of my codes, like changed practice, parent feedback, and conversation with teachers, were directly representative of the learning that principals expressed when answering my questions. While analyzing the data I also became aware of the learning that the principals gained by not only taking part in the homework development process, but also watching colleagues and now teachers who report to them. They learn by observing others, making the appropriate changes, and also guiding others to making the appropriate changes.

Limitations

This study examined one group of administrators in a district that performs above average on state standardized tests. The district is also comprised of a population that is predominately Caucasian and with a low poverty level. A small group of people were interviewed and represented a portion of principals in the state and nation. Interviews were conducted to collect the data as well. While every attempt was made by me as the researcher to remain unbiased when reporting the information gained from the interviews, some bias may be present due to human error.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Several implications for policy and practice have risen as a result of this study. The principals in this study were not in favor of a district policy that does not allow homework to be assigned. The participants saw a value in assigning homework and believed it can be an important instructional strategy when applied correctly. One may wonder if the teachers and parents in the district are of the same opinion. When developing policy decisions based on a practice that may be valuable to some, districts should make certain they are not limiting the growth of the children. While the principals in the district that I examined support homework being used for students, perhaps other administrators as well as teachers in other districts do not

support this. Changing homework policies without teacher feedback is a source of frustration to some teachers (Scott & Glaze, 2017). The same frustrations may exist when other stakeholders' opinions are not considered as well. School districts have been encouraged to continue to utilize homework as it is seen as a positive educational practice (Marzano & Pickering, 2007). The feedback provided by this group of principals support this philosophy.

While district policies discouraging homework may not be appropriate, perhaps building guidelines for assigning homework may benefit the students as well as the teachers (Cooper, 2007). Principals in this study indicated when starting the teaching profession, homework is a device, that they thought they needed to assign but were unaware of how it should be given. The establishment of homework guidelines may help those new to the profession in understanding what the district and principals believe to be the best practices. These common homework procedures would also encourage uniformity in the building. If a principal is involved in establishing guidelines, he or she must be certain that the guidelines encourage practices that are assisting students in their academic growth.

Marzano et al. (2005) indicated that principals should monitor the effectiveness of the school's instructional practices to continue to move the school in a positive direction. The direction a principal provides can have a positive effect on student learning (Cheng & Weng, 2017). Monitoring homework practices has been found to be difficult with some instructional leaders. If homework is deemed to be an important strategy used in the instructional process, principals should look to find ways to evaluate the effectiveness of these practices regularly (Thomas, 1992). Cooper (2007) stated that districts should adopt a homework policy. He also encouraged individual schools and classrooms to have a policy as well. Devising a building

level procedure for homework may help the teachers understand the expectations. It may also help the building level leader understand how to evaluate these practices.

Recommendations for Future Research

Few studies have investigated the principal's perspective with regards to homework. While I investigated a group associated with one district, investigating the perspectives in other districts could certainly be beneficial. This study examined the beliefs and perceptions of eight individuals in one district. It is an explorative study. One cannot assume that the beliefs of these individuals is the predominant belief of all principals of intermediate classrooms. Conducting a quantitative study regarding the homework beliefs of principals in a variety of districts would allow one to gather information pertaining to a variety of principals outside of one district. While my study cannot be used to describe a larger population, a qualitative study that uses a survey "provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. From sample results, the researcher generalizes or draws inferences to the population" (Creswell, 2003, p. 155-156). Conducting a survey on a sample of principals can give one insight into the beliefs of the larger population of principals.

The participants were members of a district that still utilizes homework as an instructional tool. Gaining insight into the perspective of administrators in a district that has a no homework policy would be interesting to shed light on the homework dilemma that faces various districts. While Cooper (2007) argues that homework is valuable and should be stated in a policy, it would be interesting to gain an understanding of principals who may not have the same point of view based on the policy created in their district. It would also be interesting to

determine what instructional tools have been used to replace the individual practice students may gain from completing homework.

The insight principals provided regarding their schools was interesting. It may be interesting to study how these perspectives are similar to or different from their teaching staffs. Studying this may provide effective methods that can be used to monitor homework effectiveness. While principals indicated that they did not always know what teachers were assigning, it would be interesting to hear the teacher's perspective regarding their principal's knowledge on assigning homework and effective practices.

The principals in this study addressed some equity issues with regards to homework and the assistance students receive varies depending on income, time available, and knowledge of content to name a few. While the participants endorsed equity issues, they simply stated sometimes the homework just does not get finished due to the home environment. Further investigation is needed in this area of equity and homework. I would want to know what the principals believe causes these issues. Also, an investigation into how the issues are addressed with parents is warranted. Are parents made to feel like they are not doing their job as a parent or is a partnership formed to help the child? How do the principals address teachers when they blame the family for the lack of support on items like homework and a student struggling? What innovative techniques have they witnessed when students are struggling with completing homework? I believe these are just a few of the questions that would shed light on this issue of equity and homework.

Conclusion

The perspective of principals regarding the usefulness of homework and effective practices is one that has not been examined closely. This dissertation provides insight to the

thoughts and feelings of a group of elementary principals in a district. This study also explores from where the principals' knowledge about homework comes, which is not present in the other studies that were published. The principals were all in agreement that homework is a positive instructional tool when used appropriately. Feng et al. (2014) reported the same findings from secondary principals, and Ndebele (2018) reported the same findings from primary principals. However, no study had examined the perceptions of principals in the intermediate level. Some of the principals also went as far as saying homework provides an opportunity that is difficult to provide from using other instructional practices. The thought that homework is a valuable practice that is still useful is one that has been endorsed by Marzano and Pickering (2007).

The individuals in this study understood the difficulties associated with homework. They understood the challenges prevalent in households, the challenges for teachers to design appropriate homework practices, and the challenges in observing those practices. Primary principals have been shown to have noticed the same challenges for their students and families (Ndebele, 2018). These challenges appeared to be worth the effort in that the participants in this study saw the positive outcomes they associated with homework. Each of these individuals had a passion for assisting their teachers to become stronger instructionally with the belief that this strength will help their students become stronger academically.

References

- Alsancak Sirakaya, D., & Ozdemir, S. (2018). The effect of a flipped classroom model on academic achievement, self-directed learning readiness, motivation and retention. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 6(1), 76–91.
- Amiryousefi, M. (2016). Homework: Voices from efl teachers and learners. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 4(2), 35–54.
- Bandura, A. (1996). Multifaceted impact of self-efficacy beliefs on academic. *Child Development*, 67(3), 1206–1222.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1>
- Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a psychology of human agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1(2), 164–180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2006.00011.x>
- Bang, H. J. (2011). Promising homework practices: Teachers' perspectives on making homework work for newcomer immigrant students. *The High School Journal*, 95(2), 3–31.
- Bartholomew, M., & De Jong, D. (2017). Barriers to implementing the response to intervention framework in secondary schools: Interviews with secondary principals. *NASSP Bulletin*, 101(4), 261–277. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636517743788>
- Barnhart, C. L., Barnhart, R. K., & World Book, Inc (Eds.). (1992). *The world book dictionary*. World Book.
- Bembenutty, H. (2011). Meaningful and maladaptive homework practices: The role of self-efficacy and self-regulation. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 22(3), 448–473. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X1102200304>

- Booster, G. D., Mautone, J. A., Nissley-Tsiopinis, J., Van Dyke, D., & Power, T. J. (2016). Reductions in negative parenting practices mediate the effect of a family-school intervention for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *School Psychology Review, 45*(2), 192–208.
- Brisson, B. M., Dicke, A.-L., Gaspard, H., Häfner, I., Flunger, B., Nagengast, B., & Trautwein, U. (2017). Short intervention, sustained effects: Promoting students' math competence beliefs, effort, and achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 54*(6), 1048–1078. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217716084>
- Burriss, K. G., & Snead, D. (2017). Middle school students' perceptions regarding the motivation and effectiveness of homework. *School Community Journal, 27*(2), 193–210.
- Bryan, T., & Burstein, K. S. (1998). Teacher-selected strategies for improving homework completion. *Remedial and Special Education, 19*(5), 263–275. <https://doi.org/10.1177/074193259801900502>
- Carr, N. S. (2013). Increasing the effectiveness of homework for all learners in the inclusive classroom. *School Community Journal, 23*(1), 169–182.
- Cheema, J. R. (2018). Effect of math-specific self-efficacy on math literacy: Evidence from a Greek survey. *Research in Education, 102*(1), 13–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0034523717741914>
- Cheema, J. R., & Sheridan, K. (2015). Time spent on homework, mathematics anxiety and mathematics achievement: Evidence from a US sample. *Issues in Educational Research, 25*(3), 246-259.
- Chen, C., & Stevenson, H. W. (1989). Homework: A cross-cultural examination. *Child Development, 60*(3), 551. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1130721>

- Cheng, Y., Weng, C., (2017). Factors influence the digital media teaching of primary school teachers in a flipped class: A Taiwan case study. *South African Journal of Education*, 37(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v37n1a1293>
- Clarke, C., & Comber, B. (2020). How homework shapes family literacy practices. *The Reading Teacher*, 73(5), 563–573. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1879>
- Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C., & Patall, E. A. (2006). Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research, 1987-2003. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(1), 1–62.
- Cooper, H. M. (2007). *The battle over homework: common ground for administrators, teachers, and parents* (3rd ed). Corwin Press.
- Corno, L. (1996). Homework is a complicated thing. *Educational Researcher*, 25(8), 27–30. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X025008027>
- Corno, L. (2000). Looking at homework differently. *The Elementary School Journal*, 100(5), 529–548. <https://doi.org/10.1086/499654>
- Cunha, J., Rosario, P., Carlos Nunez, J., Nunes, A. R., Moreira, T., & Nunes, T. (2018). Homework feedback is...: Elementary and middle school teachers' conceptions of homework feedback. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9(32), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00032>
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 125-140.
- Delvaux, E., Vanhoof, J., Tuytens, M., Vekeman, E., Devos, G., & Van Petegem, P. (2013). How may teacher evaluation have an impact on professional development? A multilevel analysis. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 36, 1-11. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2013.06.011

- Echaune, M., Ndiku, J. M., & Sang, A. (2015). Parental involvement in homework and primary school academic performance in Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(9), 46–53.
- Elawar, M. C., & Corno, L. (1985). A factorial experiment in teachers' written feedback on student homework: Changing teacher behavior a little rather than a lot. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77(2), 162–173. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.77.2.162>
- Epstein, J. L., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2001). More than minutes: Teachers' roles in designing homework. *Educational Psychologist*, 36(3), 181–193.
https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326985EP3603_4
- Fairlie, R. W., Robinson, J. (2013). *Experimental evidence on the effects of home computers on academic achievement among schoolchildren*. (Paper Series #13-02). Retrieved from University of Michigan, National Poverty Center.
- Falkenberg, C. A., & Barbetta, P. M. (2013). The effects of a self-monitoring package on homework completion and accuracy of students with disabilities in an inclusive general education classroom. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 22(3), 190–210.
- Farrow, S., Tymms, P., & Henderson, B. (1999). Homework and attainment in primary schools. *British Educational Research Journal*, 25(3), 323–341.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0141192990250304>
- Feng, M., Roschelle, J., Heffernan, N., Fairman, J., & Murphy, R. (2014, June). *Implementation of an intelligent tutoring system for online homework support in an efficacy trial*. Paper Presented at the International Conference on Intelligent Tutoring Systems, Honolulu, HI.
- Fernández-Alonso, R., Álvarez-Díaz, M., Suárez-Álvarez, J., & Muñiz, J. (2017). Students'

- achievement and homework assignment strategies. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8(286), 1-11.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00286>
- Flessa, J. (2009). Urban school principals, deficit frameworks, and implications for leadership. *Journal of School Leadership*, 19(3), 334-373.
- Fowler, F.J. (2014). *Survey research methods* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Froiland, J. M., Peterson, A., & Davison, M. L. (2013). The long-term effects of early parent involvement and parent expectation in the USA. *School Psychology International*, 34(1), 33–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034312454361>
- Gill, B., & Schlossman, S. (2004). Villain or savior? The American discourse on homework, 1850-2003. *Theory into Practice*, 43(3), 174-181. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.bsu.edu/stable/3701518>
- Goddard, R. D., Hoy, W. K., & Hoy, A. W. (2004). Collective efficacy beliefs: Theoretical developments, empirical evidence, and future directions. *Educational Researcher*, 33(3), 3–13. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033003003>
- Gonida, E. N., & Cortina, K. S. (2014). Parental involvement in homework: Relations with parent and student achievement-related motivational beliefs and achievement. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84(3), 376–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12039>
- Gönülateş, E., & Kortemeyer, G. (2017). Modeling unproductive behavior in online homework in terms of latent student traits: An approach based on item response theory. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 26(2), 139–150.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10956-016-9659-8>
- Great School Partnership. (2013). Differentiation definition. Retrieved September 1, 2018, from <https://www.edglossary.org/differentiation/>

- Grodner, A., & Rupp, N. G. (2013). The role of homework in student learning outcomes: Evidence from a field experiment. *The Journal of Economic Education*, 44(2), 93–109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220485.2013.770334>
- Gross, D., Pietri, E., Anderson, G., Moyano-Camihort, K., & Graham, M. (2015). Increased preclass preparation underlies student outcome improvement in the flipped classroom. *CBE-LIFE SCIENCES EDUCATION*, 14(4), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.15-02-0040>
- Guskey, T. R., & Jung, L. A. (2013). *Answers to essential questions about standards, assessments, grading, and reporting*. Corwin Press.
- Gwo-Jen Hwang, & Chiu-Lin Lai. (2017). Facilitating and bridging out-of-class and in-class learning: an interactive e-book-based flipped learning approach for math courses. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 20(1), 184–197.
- Halili, S. H., & Zainuddin, Z. (2015). Flipping the classroom: What we know and what we don't. *The Online Journal of Distance Education and E-learning*, 3(1), 28-35.
- Hill, C. (1994). Testing and assessment: An applied linguistics perspective. *Educational Assessment*, 2(3), 179–212. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326977ea0203_1
- Hockly, N. (2017). One-to-one computer initiatives. *ELT Journal*, 71(1), 80–86. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccw077>
- Holte, K. L. (2016). Homework in primary school: Could it be made more child friendly? *Studia Paedagogica*; 21(4), 13-33. Retrieved from <http://www.phil.muni.cz/journals/index.php/studia-paedagogica/article/view/1568/1830>

- Horsburgh, J., & Ippolito, K. (2018). A skill to be worked at: using social learning theory to explore the process of learning from role models in clinical settings. *BMC Medical Education, 18*(1), 156. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-018-1251-x>
- IDOE Compass. (2018). Retrieved September 1, 2018, from <https://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx?type=corp&id=0225>
- Indiana Department of Education. (2014). Mathematics. Retrieved September 1, 2018, from <https://www.doe.in.gov/standards/mathematics#MathAcademic>
- Indiana Department of Education Office of Student Assessment. (2018). Indiana's required assessments. Retrieved September 1, 2018, from <https://www.doe.in.gov/assessment>
- Janisse, H. C., Li, X., Bhavnagri, N. P., Esposito, C., & Stanton, B. (2018). A longitudinal study of the effect of computers on the cognitive development of low-income African American preschool children. *Early Education and Development, 29*(2), 229–244.
- Kahle, A. L., & Kelley, M. L. (1994). Children's homework problems: A comparison of goal setting and parent training. *Behavior Therapy, 25*(2), 275–290. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894\(05\)80288-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894(05)80288-6)
- Kukliansky, I., Shosberger, I., & Eshach, H. (2016). Science teachers' voice on homework: Beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education, 14*(S1), 229–250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10763-014-9555-8>
- Landers, M., & Reinholz, D. (2015). Students' reflections on mathematics homework feedback. *Journal of Developmental Education, 38*(3), 22–24.
- Lee, D. S., Dang, T. G., Ulibas-Pascual, J., Gordon Biddle, K. A., Heller de Leon, B., Elliott, D., & Gorter, J. (2017). Exploring the influence of efficacy beliefs and homework help in

- predicting reading achievement among underserved children in an afterschool program. *The Urban Review*, 49(5), 707–728. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-017-0418-9>
- Lodewyk, K. R. (2009). Fostering critical thinking in physical education students. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 80(8), 12.
- Marzano, R. J., Frontier, T., & Livingston, D. (2011). *Effective supervision: Supporting the art and science of teaching*. ASCD.
- Marzano, R. J., & Pickering, D. J. (2007). The case for and against homework. *Educational Leadership*, 64(6), 74.
- Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: from research to results*. Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Matei, S., & Ciasca, L. (2015). Primary teachers opinion about homework. *Acta Didactica Napocensia*, 8(3), 29–36.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation* (Fourth edition). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Moroni, S., Dumont, H., Trautwein, U., Niggli, A., & Baeriswyl, F. (2015). The need to distinguish between quantity and quality in research on parental involvement: The example of parental help with homework. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 108(5), 417–431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2014.901283>
- Morris, D. B., Usher, E. L., & Chen, J. A. (2017). Reconceptualizing the sources of teaching self-efficacy: A critical review of emerging literature. *Educational Psychology Review*, 29(4), 795–833. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-016-9378-y>
- Muhlenbruck, L., Cooper, H., Nye, B., & Lindsay, J. J. (1999). Homework and achievement:

- Explaining the different strengths of relation at the elementary and secondary school levels. *Social Psychology of Education*, 3(4), 295–317.
<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009680513901>
- National Governors Association. (2021). Grade 3 Introduction. Retrieved March 4, 2021 from <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Content/3/introduction/>
- Ndebele, M. (2018). Homework in the foundation phase: perceptions of principals of eight public primary schools in Johannesburg. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(2).
<https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38n2a1461>
- Núñez, J. C., Suárez, N., Rosário, P., Vallejo, G., Valle, A., & Epstein, J. L. (2015). Relationships between perceived parental involvement in homework, student homework behaviors, and academic achievement: differences among elementary, junior high, and high school students. *Metacognition and Learning*, 10(3), 375–406.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11409-015-9135-5>
- O’Fallon, M. J., & Butterfield, K. D. (2012). The influence of unethical peer behavior on observers’ unethical behavior: a social cognitive perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 109(2), 117–131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1111-7>
- O’Sullivan, R. H., Chen, Y.-C., & Fish, M. C. (2014). Parental mathematics homework involvement of low-income families with middle school students. *School Community Journal*, 24(2), 165–188.
- Ozyilmaz, A., Erdogan, B., & Karaeminogullari, A. (2018). Trust in organization as a moderator of the relationship between self-efficacy and workplace outcomes: A social cognitive theory-based examination. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 91(1), 181–204. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12189>

- Paschal, R. A., Weinstein, T., & Walberg, H. J. (1984). The effects of homework on learning: a quantitative synthesis. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 78(2), 97–104.
- Ramdass, D., & Zimmerman, B. J. (2011). Developing self-regulation skills: The important role of homework. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 22(2), 194–218.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X1102200202>
- Rosario, P., Nunez, J., Vallejo, G., Cunha, J., Nunes, T., Mourao, R., & Pinto, R. (2015). Does homework design matter? The role of homework's purpose in student mathematics achievement. *CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY*, 43(2015), 10–24.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2015.08.001>
- Rosario, P., Cunha, J., Nunes, T., Nunes, A. R., Moreira, T., & Núñez, J. C. (2019). “Homework should be...but we do not live in an ideal world”: Mathematics teachers' perspectives on quality homework and on homework assigned in elementary and middle schools. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(224), 1-15.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00224>
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3E [Third edition]). SAGE.
- Scott, C. M., & Glaze, N. (2017). Homework policy and student choice: Findings from a montessori charter school. *Journal of Montessori Research*, 3(2), 1-18.
<https://doi.org/10.17161/jomr.v3i2.6585>
- Skrla, L., & Scheurich, J. J. (2001). Displacing deficit thinking in school district leadership. *Education and Urban Society*, 33(3), 235–259.
- Smith, K., Gamlem, S. M., Sandal, A. K., & Engelsen, K. S. (2016). Educating for the future: A conceptual framework of responsive pedagogy. *Cogent Education*, 3(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1227021>

- Snead, D., & Burris, K. G. (2016). Middle school teachers' perceptions regarding the motivation and effectiveness of homework. *Journal of Inquiry and Action in Education*, 7(2), 62–80.
- Sokol, R. (n.d.). Should schools eliminate homework? *Family Education*. Retrieved September 1, 2018, from <https://www.familyeducation.com/should-schools-eliminate-homework>
- Steenbergen-Hu, S., & Cooper, H. (2013). A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of intelligent tutoring systems on k-12 students' mathematical learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(4), 970–987.
- Stefanidis, A., King-Sears, M. E., & Brawand, A. (2019). Benefits for coteachers of students with disabilities: Do contextual factors matter? *Psychology in the Schools*, 56(4), 539–553. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22207>
- Strandberg, M. (2013). Homework – is there a connection with classroom assessment? A review from Sweden. *Educational Research*, 55(4), 325–346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2013.844936>
- Tam, V. C., & Chan, R. M. C. (2016). What is homework for? Hong Kong primary school teachers' homework conceptions. *School Community Journal*, 26(1), 25–44.
- Thomas, A. H. (1992). Homework: How effective? How much to assign? The need for clear policies. *OSSC Bulletin*, 36(1), 3-34.
- Trautwein, U., & Köller, O. (2003). The relationship between homework and achievement - still much of a mystery. *Educational Psychology Review*, 15(2), 115–145. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023460414243>
- Trautwein, U., Niggli, A., Schnyder, I., & Lüdtke, O. (2009). Between-teacher differences in homework assignments and the development of students' homework effort,

- homework emotions, and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *101*(1), 176–189. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.101.1.176>
- Valle, A., Regueiro, B., Nunez, J., Rodriguez, S., Pineiro, I., & Rosario, P. (2016). Academic goals, student homework engagement, and academic achievement in elementary school. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *7*(463), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00463>
- Walter, C., & Walter, P. (2018). Is critical thinking a mediator variable of student performance in school? *Educational Research Quarterly*, *41*(3), 3–24.
- Waters, T. Marzano, R., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced Leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*. McREL International.
- Weiner, L. (2006). Challenging deficit thinking. *Educational Leadership*, *64*(1), 42-45.
- Williams, K., Swift, J., Williams, H., & Van Daal, V. (2017). Raising children's self-efficacy through parental involvement in homework. *Educational Research*, *59*(3), 316–334. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2017.1344558>
- Worrell, F. C., Gabelko, N. H., Roth, D. A., & Samuels, L. K. (1999). Parents' reports on homework amount and problems in academically talented elementary students. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *43*(2), 86–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001698629904300205>
- Xu, J. (2013). Why do students have difficulties completing homework? The need for homework management. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, *1*(1), 98-105. <https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v1i1.78>
- Xu, J., Yuan, R., Xu, B., & Xu, M. (2016). Modeling students' interest in mathematics homework. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *109*(2), 148–158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2014.928252>

Yamamoto, Y., Holloway, S. D., & Suzuki, S. (2016). Parental engagement in children's education: Motivating factors in Japan and the U.S. *School Community Journal*, 26(1), 45–66.

Yıldızlı, H., & Saban, A. (2016). The effect of self-regulated learning on sixth-grade Turkish students' mathematics achievements and motivational beliefs. *Cogent Education*, 3(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1212456>

Appendix A

Principal Interview Protocol

The following protocol was created from the information gathered from the literature review. I will stress to each individual interviewed that the questions pertain to the third, fourth, and fifth grade classrooms.

The principal's viewpoint is important to the discussion of homework practices as the principal is the person who guides and sometimes recommends the use of certain teaching strategies. The emphasis of this study involves principals who are managing buildings attended by students in grades three through five. The view of what is most effective may be different from person to person. This study will examine principals' beliefs as to the best practices of assigning homework in third through fifth grade classrooms. The interview will last about one hour. The questions will be read from a script that was created to provide possible explanations for the research questions.

If you do not understand a question or would like clarification during the interview about a question, please ask. I am planning on recording this interview via an electronic audio recording device. It will be kept confidential. The results of this study and transcripts of the recording will be confidential as well. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

- 1) Tell me about your prior teaching experience.*
- 2) What were your homework practices with your students? What practices worked well and what practices did not? (probe)*
- 3) How did you utilize homework when you were teaching? (3)*
- 4) How did you learn what is effective and not effective with regards to assigning homework? (3)*

- 5) *Tell me about your past experience as a school administrator.*
- 6) *Why or why isn't homework an effective practice to enhance learning? (2)*
- 7) *What are the characteristics of a homework assignment that is effective? (1)*
- 8) *How does one determine if a homework assignment is/was effective? (1)*
- 9) *What types of assignments are the most effective (skills based, flipped, application, review, etc)? (1)*
- 10) *What are the strategies that teachers should use to make homework an effective practice for their students? (3)*
- 11) *How do you determine if the teachers are assigning homework effectively? (3)*
- 12) *How do you address teachers when homework is not used in an effective manner? (3)*
- 13) *What types of assignments do your teachers generally assign for each of the four core curricular areas (mathematics, language arts, social studies, and science)? (1)*
- 14) *What concerns are often raised by parents regarding homework? (3)*
- 15) *When parents have concerns regarding homework, how do you address these concerns with your staff? (3)*
- 16) *Why or why shouldn't homework be used when calculating grades for a certain content area? (3)*
- 17) *What other traits does homework have an effect on, outside of learning? (2)*
- 18) *What effect does homework have on a student's confidence in a curricular area? (2)*
- 19) *When giving a standardized test, what effect does homework have on the student's success? (2)*
- 20) *How should the assistance students receive when completing homework outside of the school day affect the teacher's homework that is assigned? (3)*

21) What is your opinion of schools that are requiring teachers to not give homework? (1)

Appendix B

Instrument Used to Answer Research Questions

How do elementary principals describe homework practices for grades 3-5?

Questions: 7, 8, 9, 13, 21

How do elementary principals describe student growth as the result of homework practices?

Questions: 6, 17, 18, 19

How do principals approach providing guidance to their staffs regarding homework, what advice is given, and from where does this guidance originate?

Questions: 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20