Open Access Theses & Dissertations

2012-01-01

Teacher Evaluations: Empty Ceremony or Vital Activity

Catherine Kennedy
University of Texas at El Paso, ckennedy@yisd.net

TEACHER EVALUATIONS:
EMPTY CEREMONY OR VITAL ACTIVITY?

CATHERINE KENNEDY

Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations

APPROVED:

_____

John Daresh, Ed.D. Chair

_____

Zulma Mendez, Ph.D.

_____

Don P. Schulte, Ed.D.

_____

Hector Montenegro, Ph.D.

_____

Benjamin C. Flores, Ph.D.
Interim Dean of the Graduate School

Dedication

It is without a doubt that I share this degree with so many people that have inspired, motivated, encouraged and loved me unconditionally. I dedicate this research to my family because they have traveled along side this journey with me for the last five years.

To my incredible husband Mike, and two children, Anthony and Triana. Thank you so much for sacrificing all you have for the last five years. Thank you for understanding how important this dream was for me. Thank you for understanding the number of practices, meetings and games I missed because I was in class, reading books, researching or writing. I love you more than life itself. If anything, I hope I have modeled to you the importance of learning and the importance of achieving your goals. There is nothing you cannot accomplish without the love and support of family.

With that in mind, I share this degree with my mother, Santiaga, my sisters Terri and Christy and brother Eddie. Thank you for the numerous times you helped me out by taking care of my children when I couldn't because I was in class. Your support is so much appreciated and I could not have done this without you. I love you and I know many times the words 'I appreciate everything you do" seldom were expressed. To my father, Antonio, my first teacher, how I miss your words and your presence on a daily basis! Not a day goes by without me wishing to hear your voice and words of encouragement. I know you are looking down saying, "Mija, I'm very proud of you!"

TEACHER EVALUATIONS:

EMPTY CEREMONY OR VITAL ACTIVITY?

by

CATHERINE KENNEDY, B.S., M.S.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

May 2012

Acknowledgements

There are so many people that I would like to thank for making this happen. Besides my family, I have been so fortunate to be surrounded by so many talented and hard working people.

Thank you so much for the support and dedication to the participants that worked with me in this study. I am in awe of your work, your beliefs and your love to our profession.

Thank you to Triana Olivas, my first principal and mentor. Thank you for always being that lighthouse that continues to inspire and guide me when at times I feel lost and isolated.

Thank you to the committee that ensured that I finished this study. Thank you Dr. Daresh for believing in my work and for encouraging me to continue in this profession. Thank you to Dr. Mendez and Dr. Schulte for your expertise and experience that you unselfishly shared with me. Thank you to Dr. Montenegro for modeling to me what leadership is all about. I learned so much from you and will never take for granted the importance of quality feedback.

Thank you to teachers that I have had the opportunity to observe and learn from. You are an absolute gift and blessing to me. How fortunate our students are to have teachers that care so much about them.

Thank you to the numerous friends that were my cheerleaders to get this done! I share this degree with all of you and hope you know how much you are loved!

Abstract

One of the most critical duties of a school principal is to evaluate and lead teachers. A school district in Texas has mandated that all administrators conduct one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs per school year. Given that time is a priceless commodity in a typical school day, how effective is the above mandate to teacher and principal performance? The purpose of this research study was to examine how principals provide effective feedback to teachers on walkthroughs and evaluations. In addition this study looked at what teachers do with the feedback that is given to them on a walkthrough and evaluation.

Through a series of qualitative interview questions, teachers reflected on the purpose of walkthroughs and the feedback that was provided to them by principals. Principals reflected on their practice of walkthroughs and evaluations to determine if the feedback that was provided to teachers effective and useful. Teachers and principals were asked to define the type of feedback that they give and receive according to the feedback model as defined by Hattie and Timperley (2007). In addition, teachers and principals were asked to identify the type of learner they perceive themselves to be according to Kolb's learning style model. Answers from the interview questions were grouped into three categories: consensus theme, supported theme, and individual theme. Consensus themes are when the majority of the participants stated the same answer or theme, supported themes are when the approximately half of the participants stated the same answers and individual themes are when one or two participants stated the same theme or answers. Each question from the interviews were analyzed and a descriptive summary was provided.

Findings from this research indicated that walkthrough visits must be focused in order for feedback to be effective. Teachers do use the feedback to help them improve instruction, but it is important for principals to conduct follow up visits to ensure that the feedback they have delivered to teachers is being utilized. Principals must allow teachers to be self-reflective learners in order to understand the feedback that is given to them by administration.

Walkthroughs and evaluations should be seen as a means to improve the learning on the campus as opposed to a completion of a mandate.

Finally recommendations and self- reflections were made regarding the practice of walkthroughs, evaluations and the importance of feedback.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

Management and leadership guru Peter Drucker once said, "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things" (2005, p. 3). As a school leader, doing the right thing means doing what is best for students. "Most people will agree that principals are the most important leaders in our school system. Most will also agree that effective leadership in schools is still dismayingly, exceedingly rare" (Schmoker, 2006, p.3). One of the most important responsibilities I have as a leader is to facilitate the learning and teaching of teachers, staff and students on campus. In order to ensure that quality teaching and learning is happening in the classroom, I am expected to carry out both, informal or formal observations of teachers in my school. An informal observation is often called a walkthrough. This is a short unannounced visit that provides me with a snapshot of the nature of instruction and the likelihood that learning is taking place in the classroom. The principal usually spends anywhere between three to ten minutes in the classroom trying to capture what is currently being taught. As soon as possible after the observation, the principal is expected to provide the teacher with feedback that will help improve instruction and learning. Informal walkthroughs have become a standard practice in education in schools across the United States (Rissman, 2009). Although walkthroughs are not typically classified as formal, summative teacher evaluation sessions, the data that is collected from these walkthroughs can be used as part of the formal teacher evaluation at the end of the school year.

In August 2009, school administrators from one local school district, were given the mandate to conduct one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs in teacher classes per each school year. That would mean, depending on the size of the school campus, teachers could expect to

receive two or more visits from the principal or assistant principal. As the instructional leader on campus, it is extremely important to be visible at all times. Walking into the classrooms is expected to provide principals the opportunity to see what is or is not happening in the room. Frequent visits can give principals information as to what is and is not working in their school (Protheroe, 2009). Walkthroughs give principals the opportunity to visit with students and build relationships with them through conversations within the visit. Walkthroughs give teachers and students the message that the principal believes that what the teacher is doing daily with the students is important (Saphier, 2008). Classroom visits can be effective if principals truly understand the role it plays with the improvement of teacher quality, instructional programs and student achievement. "The classroom walkthrough is a process of visiting classrooms for short periods of five to fifteen minutes, where the instructional program is observed, feedback is provided to teachers, students talk about what they are doing, and data is gathered to inform curricular decisions" (Walker, 2005, p.1)

While it may appear as if the use of walkthrough observations in schools is little more than a demand that principals must spend more of their time in classrooms and not in their offices or in meetings at the central office, there are certain critical guidelines that need to be addressed by administrators as they walkthrough teachers' classrooms (Downey, 2004). First among these expectations is the fact that these visits must be focused; they are not simply "management by wandering around." Walkthroughs should not be classroom visits that are completed because a quota is needed to be met by principals each school year. Administrators should not simply walk in and out of classrooms to accommodate a mandated ceremony each day. Instead, they should be walking through classes to determine if behavior and activities of teachers are promoting student learning on a regular basis. And above all, walkthroughs should

not simply be efforts to "catch teachers" doing "bad things."   Accordingly, Pitler and Goodwin (2008), "principals should ask six questions when observing classrooms:

1.   Are teachers using research based teaching strategies?

2.   Do student grouping patterns support learning?

3.   Are teachers and students using technology to support student learning?

4.   Do students understand their goals for learning?

5.   Are students learning both basic and higher order levels of knowledge?

6.   Do student achievement data correlate with walkthrough data?" (p. 9)

These expectations should also be conveyed to teachers prior to the beginning of the school year. Teachers and students need to know the purpose and expectations of classroom visits. Having a clear focus of what is expected from these walkthroughs will help administrators provide effective feedback to the teacher. This feedback is to be used by teachers to reflect and improve their craft, engage in professional dialogue with their colleagues and administrator and identify personal areas of needs and strengths (Kachur, 2010). If walkthroughs are not focused however, and if feedback is not given to teachers, the potential value of this informal observation is lost. Teachers and administrators will no longer see the purpose or rationale behind a classroom visit. These practices simply become a ritual that is conducted for the sake of compliance as opposed to an opportunity to enhance learning for both teachers and students.

Providing feedback to teachers should be an easy task to accomplish by the administrator. The walkthrough is to be used to "coach teachers to a higher level of performance" (Pitler and Goodwin, 2008, p. 11). As the instructional leader on campus, the principal must be able to communicate effectively expectations to teachers. Principals are to provide support and professional development to help the teacher succeed in the classroom. Because of the demand

to complete or conduct a prescribed number of walkthroughs and evaluations, principals do not feel that they are doing an adequate job in providing feedback to their teachers. "Administrators in American schools supervise and evaluate too many people annually to be able to do a credible job" (Platt, 2004, p. 24). Over the past twenty-seven years, Jon Saphier, has looked at how administrators have evaluated teachers. He found that "the incoming skills of administrators tend to be quite low. Administrators have little or no preparation for analyzing instruction when they are hired, and almost never had to show they could do so to get their job" (2008, p.2). How much time and resources are underutilized if administrators are not equipped with skills and are asked to conduct one hundred and forty four unfocused walkthroughs?

According to a study from Hattie and Timperley, (2007), there is a "framework that identifies four types of feedback can be explored to see how feedback can actually motivate learning: task level, process level, self-regulation and self-level" (p.90). Task level feedback is based on work about a task or product. An example of this type of feedback is correcting work that is unacceptable or incorrect. A principal might use this type of feedback if she/he observes a teacher saying something that is inappropriate or incorrect to a student. Process level feedback is directed at the process of learning. An example of this type of feedback could be giving teachers feedback about the lesson plan cycle. During a walkthrough a teacher may consistently omit a part of the lesson cycle. The principal may offer feedback on how to improve the lesson cycle implementation for the next visit. As the principal enters the classroom of the teacher he/she may be focused solely on the lesson plan cycle. The principal wants to check for understanding of the feedback that was given to the teacher. Self -regulation feedback is the ability of the learner to self- check his/her learning given prompts. This type of feedback allows the teacher to assess his/her own learning. The last type of feedback is self-level. This is probably the most

common but yet ineffective feedback that can be given to the learner. Comments such as, 'you are a wonderful teacher' or 'this is a wonderful lesson' are examples of this type of feedback. The learner doesn't really understand why they are a wonderful teacher or why this lesson was a great lesson. There is no learning from this type of feedback. Providing feedback to teachers is indeed a skill and will take practice and time to master this process effectively. An effective teacher knows that in order to reach students, you must teach according to the way the student learns. Principals need to understand that teachers are learners and seek effective feedback in order to enhance their teaching and learning. Principals may take for granted that teachers understand what they mean through their feedback because they are teachers and they understand the education jargon and expectations. If teachers continue to perform the same way even after receiving feedback form principals, there could be a disconnect with the way the teacher learns. That is why it is important that adults understand how adults learn and process information.

Learning is defined as "the act, process, or experience of gaining knowledge or skill" (Connor, 2010, p.1). Learning is improved "by matching the mode of instruction to the preferred learning style of the student" (Riener, 2010, p. 34). Adults and children learn differently (Knowles, 1998). Children learn by building cell assemblies and sequences. Adults make new arrangements and rely on experiences and background knowledge to learn new concepts. Learning must be a life long process. Adults, just like children, must understand why something is important for them to learn. That is why teachers should understand the expectations and goals of a walkthrough. A walkthrough is not about catching a teacher doing something wrong. Rather it is an opportunity to see how instruction and learning can improve. It is a way for principals to acknowledge the work of the teacher and students. Adult learners want to use what they know and want to be acknowledged for what they know. Knowing this

information will help the evaluator to provide effective feedback. As principals provide feedback to teachers regarding their instruction, it is imperative that principals understand how much training and how much knowledge the teacher brings with him/her in the classroom. "Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it" (Kolb, 1984, p.41). The adult learner must be given the opportunity to reflect upon the process and the opportunity to achieve what is expected. When providing feedback to the teacher, the principal should allow the teacher to help collaborate goals that will help improve instruction. How often do principals and teachers take the time to discuss their own learning or learning style?

Theoretical Framework

David Kolb created an experiential learning model that is associated with the way adults learn. "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). According to Kolb, experiences are grasped through apprehension or comprehension. Apprehension is viewed as participation in the actual experience, whereas comprehension occurs outside the actual experience through abstract conceptualization. In this study, the walkthrough may be viewed as the apprehension, while the feedback from the walkthrough is the comprehension of the walkthrough. In other words, what are principals and teachers actually learning from walkthroughs and teacher evaluations?

The learning model is a four stage learning cycle that shows how experience in translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences (Healey & Jenkins, 2000, p. 186). This learning theory will serve as the theoretical framework for this study. The first stage is concrete experience, which is where the learner actually does something. The second stage is reflective observation where the learner has the opportunity to reflect on the experience. The third stage is abstract

6

conceptualization where the learner conceptualizes and draws conclusions about their experience. The fourth stage is active experimentation where the learner is trying to plan for a new experience. (Kolb, 1984). Kolb also identified four learning styles that correspond to the four learning stages. These four learning styles are: "Converging, Diverging Accommodating and Assimilating" (1996, p. 65). The Converger is the abstract learner. The learner is unemotional and has strong practical application of ideas. The learner has the ability to solve problems and make decisions based on finding solutions to questions or problems. The Diverger is the concrete learner. The learner has a strong imaginative ability and is good at generating ideas and seeing things from a different perspective. These learners prefer to work in groups and listen with an open mind when receiving feedback. The Assimilator is the abstract learner with reflective observations. This learner is concerned with abstract concepts rather than people. People with this learning style prefer readings and lectures and have time to think things through. The Accommodator learns concretely through active experimentation. This learner is more of a risk taker. This type of learner solves problems intuitively. People with this type of learning style have the ability to learn from hands-on experiences (Sternberg & Zhang, 2000).

Analyses of data gathered for this study will be facilitated by the learning cycle and learning styles as defined by David Kolb. As principals seek to understand how teachers learn, principals need to understand the type of learner they are as well. Teachers tend to teach students according to the way the teacher learns. Adults need to recognize their own individual learning style as a basis for the development of effective teaching and learning strategies. Perhaps, principals need to reflect how they tend to teach teachers. Do principals give feedback to their teachers in a form or method that will allow their teachers to understand and learn? In the everyday practice of our demanding field it sometimes becomes impossible to even have time

7

to assess what type of learner I may have on my campus. How can I meet the needs of my teachers, if I do not understand who they are?

Observing teachers is not the only task a principal is responsible for. The principal is in charge of the overall operation of the school. As the principal of the school, it is my responsibility to ensure that the building is conducive for learning. Many questions are asked on a daily basis as I begin my work at school: Are the heaters or coolers working properly? Is the school a safe environment for students? Are systems in place to address discipline issues?   Are there enough monies in the school budget to purchase materials and resources that are needed for teachers? How many meetings are scheduled this week with my supervisor, teachers, students, parents and or community? Do I have agendas ready and prepared for these meetings? Do I have enough personnel to cover duty stations? How many teachers were out today and do I have enough substitutes to cover each class? and finally, How many walkthroughs must I do today? Time is an absolute commodity in the business of education. That is why it is critical to look at the time that is spent on daily activities, such as walkthroughs and assess the effectiveness of it.

Statement of the Problem

This study examines how principals and teachers view the practice of walkthroughs on their campus. Given that the leaders of a school have so much to do on a daily basis, are walkthroughs conducted in a manner that they feel helps to improve instruction and learning? Teachers are implicitly expected to use the feedback from the walkthroughs to enhance his/her learning. But the fact is that research indicates that teachers and principals see little value in evaluation models because teachers do not receive accurate feedback (Frase, 1992). "Feedback can be said to describe any communication or procedure given to inform a learner of the accuracy of a response, usually to an instructional question" (Carter, 1984, p. 745). Feedback

can also be viewed as "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding" (Hattie, 2007, p.102). Without feedback, growth or success would not prosper. "All life thrives on feedback and dies without it" (Wheatley, 2005, p. 156). Knowing the importance of feedback, it is surprising to find that very few studies have "systematically investigated the meaning of feedback in the classrooms" (Hattie, 2007, p.81). Studies that have been conducted have looked at the importance of feedback between teachers and students and not at the relationship of feedback between teachers and principals. Teachers recognize the importance of feedback and welcome it, but unfortunately feel that they rarely receive feedback from their principal (Aiex, 1993). "Teachers are the principal's most valuable assets. They require and deserve more than management; they need strong relationships, individual attention, consistent support, fair treatment, and accurate feedback" (Hall, 2005, p.12). Providing effective feedback takes skill and practice. If principals do not see themselves as effective communicators, student achievement and teacher quality will not improve. Therefore because there is a limited amount of research in the area of walkthrough feedback, there is a need to examine how principals analyze data in order to provide effective feedback to the teacher and there is a need to look at what teachers do with the feedback that is given to teachers from walkthroughs and evaluations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a deep understanding of how principals conduct walkthroughs on their campus. This study will look at how principals view walkthroughs on their campus through a series of qualitative interview questions. This interview gives principals an opportunity to look at how they derive at developing the feedback that they give to their teachers. This study will allow principals to think about the feedback they give to their teachers

and receive from their supervisor. Principals will look at the four types of feedback as identified from the research of Hattie and Timperley (2007) and identify which type of feedback is delivered to teachers on their campus. Principals will be able to reflect if their feedback has been effective to their teachers. Principals will also identify the type of learner they perceive themselves to be according to David Kolb's learning style theory.

Since walkthroughs are conducted by principals to teachers, this study will also look at how teachers perceive walkthroughs on their campus. Through a series of qualitative interview questions, teachers will reflect on the purpose of walkthroughs and the feedback that is given to them by principals. Teachers will explore the four types of feedback that they receive from their principals and give to their students. Teachers will also identify the type of learner they perceive themselves to be according to Kolb's learning style model.

Significance of the Study

This study will provide information about walkthroughs through the lenses of three principals and three teachers. These educators will share their perspectives as to the importance of walkthroughs and the feedback they receive from them. This study will likely afford other researchers an understanding of the effectiveness of school leadership in regards to walkthroughs and evaluations. Conducting walkthroughs, much less one hundred and forty four walkthroughs, takes a lot of time and preparation if given a clear focus and goal. If walkthroughs are just rituals and if feedback is inadequate, then teaching and learning does not exist. The time that is spent on walkthroughs should be redirected to other activities or responsibilities that will help improve learning. If walkthroughs are shown not to improve the quality of instruction, then perhaps a change in the way teachers are evaluated needs to be reviewed.

Findings from this investigation may also be useful in guiding the development of further policies and practices at the school district level by going on simple mandates to carry out activities without necessarily providing guidelines and clear statements of rationale.

Chapter Summary

In the demanding field of education, principals are asked to be the gatekeepers of their schools. They are asked to be managers and instructional leaders on their campus. They are asked to handle a daily schedule that entails meeting with parents, students and community members. One of the biggest responsibilities that an administrator has is to ensure that quality instruction is delivered in the classroom on a daily basis. Walkthroughs are informal classroom visits that allow the principal to see a snapshot of teacher and student learning. In order for walkthroughs to be effective, principals must provide teachers with feedback that will help improve the instruction and learning in the classroom. This process should be a natural ritual that is expected from principals. However, do walkthroughs and feedback from the walkthroughs lose value or meaning when they become a mandate by the superintendent? Do these walkthroughs become a ritual of compliance with no meaning or do they afford principals the opportunity to help teachers improve instruction and increase student achievement?

In the chapters that follow, a review of research and literature and research related to teacher evaluation and its impact on teacher thinking and behavior will be presented in Chapter 2, followed in Chapter 3 by a description of the research methodology used in this study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research activity, and the final chapter considers the implications derived from this research in terms of practice and future research activity.

Chapter Two

Review of Research and Related Literature

The purpose of this study was to investigate principals' perceptions of the value and implementation of walkthrough teacher evaluations in a public school district. Specifically, the study sought to determine the nature of teacher and administrator insights into the extent to which the walkthrough evaluations promoted effective feedback to teachers who served as the objects of short-term walkthrough observations and evaluations by principals in one school year.

Several different sources were used in this study to create an analytical framework for understanding the data collected through this study. These sources included research and literature in the area of teacher evaluation, literature related to the use of what is commonly known as walkthrough teacher observations and evaluation, otherwise described as unannounced short term observations of teacher performance, research and literature related to feedback as part of communication in organizations, and finally, adult learning and development theory and research.

Teacher Evaluation

A primary duty of any school principal is the conduct of periodic evaluation of all teachers working in a school. This responsibility has long been recognized as a central duty of all principals in school across the United States because "research shows a critical link between effective teaching and students' academic achievement" (Mathers, 2008, p. 1). Teacher evaluations are traditionally designed to enable school leaders to identify areas of teacher performance in need of staff development and professional growth, with the expectation that such activity will enhance the quality of teaching and lead to more effective student learning.

Although there are other potential uses of the teacher evaluation process (e.g., personnel decisions), the teacher evaluation process is most often cited as a way to enable schools to assist teachers in the improvement of their skills by assessing teachers' strengths and limitations in order to provide adequate support through professional development opportunities. "Evaluations should provide all teachers with regular feedback that helps them grow as professionals, no matter how long they have been in the classroom" (The New Teacher Project, 2010, p. 3).

There are two basic forms of teacher evaluation that permeate the teacher evaluation process on a regular basis. The first is formative evaluation and it is typically described as a practice designed to provide teachers with data that can be used to improve the quality of instructional practices. By contrast, summative evaluation is meant to serve as a data gathering process that can be used to make an assessment of overall teacher performance for an entire school year. Regardless of the type of evaluation that is in place, research suggest "most evaluations are not used to target the needs of individual teachers and help them select professional development to address those areas in which they need additional knowledge or skills" (National Board Resource Center, 2010, p.v). Teacher evaluations simply become an action or routine that principals complete at the end of the school year (Frase, 1992). In a report conducted by the Center for American Progress, thirty principals were interviewed regarding hiring, assigning and evaluation practices used in the United States. Principals agreed that the evaluation process is used to improve teacher's practice, but in reality, they do not believe that this purpose is actually carried out (Donaldson, 2011). Principals do agree that evaluations are important but as one principal noted, "It's the last thing to get done when it should be the first thing" (Donaldson, 2011, p.18). One reason why principals find it difficult to devote adequate time on evaluations is because of competing demands made on them to accomplish many

specific activities during each school day. "Most principals spend from forty-eighty percent of their time in or around the office area. An additional twenty-three to forty percent is spent in hallways and on the playground. About eleven percent is spent off campus, and only about two to ten percent is spent in classrooms" (Downey, 2004, p. 99). What is even more alarming is that only twelve states require teacher evaluations on an annual basis, twenty-six states require evaluators to receive formal training and twelve states link teacher evaluations to student performance (Varlas, 2009). This means that teachers might go years between receiving any type of feedback regarding their teaching. Even so, the evaluation itself may carry little value or merit due to the lack of training for evaluators. The evaluation process thus becomes more of a compliance activity as opposed to a ritual that should be focused and meaningful for the educator.

Three descriptive studies have examined teacher evaluations (Brandt et al., 2007; Ellett & Garland, 1987; Loup, Garland, Ellet, & Rugutt, 1996). These studies indicated that teacher evaluations were focused more often on summative goals; they were used more for dismissal and remediation purposes rather than as part of an ongoing effort to engage in school improvement activity. Most policies did not include requirements for establishing performance standards and evaluator training (Mathers, 2008).

In the state of Texas, teachers are evaluated using the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). This state approved instrument has been in place since 1997 and is intended to help teachers grow professionally. This instrument looks at eight domains with fifty-one indicators. The "eight domains are:

1. Active, successful student participation in the learning process
2. Learner centered instruction
3. Evaluation and feedback on student progress
4. Management of student discipline, instructional strategies, time and materials

5. Professional communication
6. Professional development
7. Compliance with policies, operating procedures and requirements
8. Improvement of all students academic performance" (Region XIII website, 2012).

It is a Texas state requirement that teachers are given an orientation on a yearly basis to review these domains and expectations. This orientation is provided for teachers and administration to have a clear focus on what is expected during the school year. The problem that often arises on many school campuses with teachers and administrators is that the wording of the evaluation may be too ambiguous or vague. Interpretation of a domain or indicator is left open for the administrator or teacher to determine whether or not the goal was met. Expectations "should also be precisely worded and leave little room for inference to ensure that all teachers and instructional managers interpret them in the same way" (New Teacher Project, 2010, p. 4). That is why it is imperative that the individual school principal understands and articulates to the staff what each domain looks like and feels like on the campus. The principal has a shared responsibility for improving teaching and student learning. The feedback that principals generate and deliver to teachers must be purposeful and deliberate towards the domains in which teachers will be evaluated on. The teacher and administrator may have a preconference to discuss the lesson that will be observed. The formal observation will be a forty-five minute lesson in which the principal uses a checklist to monitor the eight domain and indicators. At the end of the school year, the principal will have a summative conference to discuss the observation and any other informal data the principal may have regarding the instruction in the classroom. Feedback between the teacher and administrator should be ongoing in order to improve teacher and student performance.

Administrators however, may not feel equipped to give such purposeful feedback on evaluations. "Evaluators often lack specific knowledge about the content areas in which they

evaluate teachers, especially at the secondary level" (Donaldson, 2010, p. 54). Evaluations

therefore tend to be highly inflated and "used as an opportunity for cheerleading and motivating,

rather than providing critical feedback" (Varlas, 2009, p. 6). Principals may provide feedback

that is not helpful for the teacher to grow professionally or the principal may choose not to give

any feedback at all, thus making the evaluation process a useless tool to improve learning. The

Joyce Foundation (2010) studied over 100,000 teachers from Illinois and found "evaluations

typically contain little detail to show who are outstanding teachers and who are poor performers.

They do not relate teacher performance to school goals or identify strengths and weaknesses that

could be used to start turning things around" (p. 3). Details on evaluations are simply called

feedback. According to the Center for American Progress, "current teacher evaluation systems

do not give proper feedback, so effective teachers are not identified and rewarded, and

ineffective teachers are not given the tools to improve. Students and teachers lose out as a

result" (2010, p. 1). In many districts studied by the New Teacher Project, teachers reported that

they felt the feedback on their performance instrument was not useful (2009). Feedback for

teachers should be ongoing through short visits or walkthroughs conducted by the school

principal.

<div align="center">**Walkthrough Evaluations**</div>

The birth of the walkthrough in the field of education began in 1960's with administrator

Carolyn Downey. She was asked by a colleague to be more visible in the classrooms. The staff

responded very well to her visits. She also realized that these visits helped her to "get a big

picture of the learning environment and saw how much one could learn from walkthroughs"

(Downey, Steffy, English, Frase & Poston, 2004, p. 10). She began to work with other gurus in

the field of education such as Madeline Hunter and Sue Welsh. She integrated Hunter's model

for teacher evaluation and Welsh's self- analysis portion from Hunter's model to create the Downey Walkthrough Model.

Teacher walkthrough evaluations are short and focused observations. "The idea behind walkthroughs is that firsthand classroom observations can paint a picture to inform improvement efforts" (David, 2008, p. 81.). These short visits can range from three to ten minutes at length. The short visits give the principal a snapshot of the teaching and learning that is occurring on a regular basis in the classroom, as contrasted with traditional classroom observations which are often exercises in watching teachers engaged in staged, carefully planned special events that occur on a predictable schedule in late winter or early winter of each school year. Through the frequent and unpredicted visits to classrooms, it is more likely to enable principals to be able to provide teachers feedback concerning more typical events and situations that are likely to arise during a normal school year at any time. In turn, it is expected that such contact between principals and teachers based on wholly unrehearsed activity will lead to teachers gaining insight into how to improve instruction. Feedback can also be used to validate the work of the teacher as well. Research on walkthroughs is limited, but available studies reveal "wide variation in their usefulness and effects. According to an in-depth study of three urban districts conducted by the Rand Cooperation, administrators find walkthroughs more useful than do teachers mainly because teachers rarely receive feedback" (David, 2008, p. 82).

Walkthroughs in education also stem from the work of Peters and Waterman (1982). In their book, In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best Run Companies, it was noted that excellent companies had a strong rapport or communication with their employees. Managers were seen to leave their offices to "walk around and engage with employees through informal exchanges" (Kachur, 2010, p.3). Hewlett-Packard termed this practice 'Management

by Wandering Around (MBWA)'. The overall purpose of this practice was to allow management to "keep a finger on the pulse of the company" (Kachur, 2010, p.3). Managers of successful companies stayed close to the customers and people doing the work. In the realm of education, walkthroughs allow principals to stay close to the teachers and students in the classroom. In cases where managers left their offices to see what was going on as normal activity in their companies, there were no formal rubrics to be followed to determine either behavior observed as being "good" or "bad." Instead, the mere presence of management personnel in a company was seen as a signal by the workers that "the boss was around" and that was enough to motivate employees to be more alert to what they were actually doing. "MBWA" became a term used to connote actions of leaders who were actually seen in the midst of the production enterprise, and it became a regular expectation for bosses to get out of their offices and interact with employees.

Studies by Elmore & Burney (1997), documented how Superintendent Anthony Alvarado in New York City used walkthroughs to support teacher learning. He, along with his principals, visited classroom on a random, but frequent basis to observe instruction.   In a case study from Austin, Texas, Talbert and David (2007) looked at "how principals spent time in the classroom observing teachers and discussing instruction" (David, 2009, p. 88). "According to Kate Maloy who described the work of Alvarado and Fink in a U.S. Department of Education research report, *Building a Learning Community: The Story of New York City Community School District #2* (1998, p. 17):

> Over the years, the walkthrough strategy has proven to be an effective
> professional development tool in itself. It focuses principals on their
> primary task- the improvement of instruction- and encourages them
> always to be seeking new means of motivating the teachers in their
> schools, devising opportunities for teachers to develop substantive collegial
> ties, and deeply informing them about theory, content areas, and best practices"

(Kachur, 2004, p. 4).

Frase and Hetzel (19xx) published <u>School Management by Wandering Around</u>. This book followed the business models and focused on the value of having the principal wandering throughout the school. The principal was no longer behind the desk but rather in classrooms observing with a purpose (2003). In the 1960's, elementary administrator, Carolyn Downey wanted to let her staff know how much she cared about them and their work. Classroom visits gave her the opportunity to share with her staff strategies she never used as a classroom teacher. She "came to realize that walkthroughs, along with meaningful dialogue was an effective approach to help the teacher grow professionally" (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004, p. 10). She wanted her visits however to be more than a symbolic message. She wanted teachers to become self- reflective. After attending training with Madeline Hunter and Sue Wells, Downey walkthrough model moved "toward a more collaborative and interdependent practice in which reflection was the focus" (Downey, et al., 2004, p.10).

Walkthroughs should be focused on instruction. They are "designed to be dynamic and meaningful to a school site or staff, and help drive instructional improvement, not an item to be checked off on a supervisor's 'to do' list" (Cudeiro, 2009, p. 19). Oddly enough, the tool that is used to conduct walkthroughs in a school district in Texas is nothing but a checklist that is aligned to the summative evaluation system. It is up to the administrator to provide additional feedback to make the walkthrough meaningful. The effectiveness of a walkthrough depends on what the focus or target is. Pitler and Goodwin (2008) outline six questions that principals should ask when conducting walkthroughs:

"1. Are teachers using research based teaching strategies?
2. Do student grouping patterns support learning?
3. Are teachers and students using technology to support student learning?
4. Do students understand their goals for learning?

5. Are students learning both basic and higher order levels of knowledge?
6. Do student achievement data correlate with walkthrough data?" (p. 9)

The main role of the principal has shifted to the improvement of teacher quality. Principals need to be deeply knowledgeable about good instruction and skillful at communicating. These six questions allow principals to be reflective practioners in the field of instruction. Feedback from walkthroughs should give teachers suggestions to improve instruction.

Cervone and Martinez Miller (2007) describe walkthroughs "as a tool to drive a cycle of continuous improvement by focusing on the effects of instruction" (p.30). Ginsberg and Murphy (2002) highlight five benefits from walkthroughs:

"1. Administrators become more familiar with the school curriculum
2. Administrators can gauge the climate of the school
3. A team atmosphere develops as teachers and administrators examine instruction
4. Administrators establish themselves as instructional leaders
5. Students see that both administrators and teachers value instruction"
(p.2).

Walkthroughs must be seen as a coaching opportunity and not as data that shows teachers what they are doing that is wrong. Skretta (2007) defines an effective walkthrough as feedback that gives teachers "relevant, real time data on their instruction" (p. 18). Unfortunately principals have a difficult time providing effective feedback to teachers. Walkthrough data may be seen as a "superficial act" if feedback is nonexistent or inadequate.

One reason why principals may feel that they are not providing effective feedback may be because the focus of a walkthrough has not been defined. As is the case so often, schools borrow brilliant practices (MBWA) from private industry and decide we should do it too. Schools are very different organizations. Teachers tend not to work harder or even better because the principal walks in the classroom with an iPad and a list of "look fors." Research suggests that walkthroughs can play a constructive role "only when districts make their purpose

20

clear and carry them out in a climate of trust" (David, 2008, p. 89). It is unclear as to how many districts provide administrators with a clear focus and creating a climate of trust can take years to build. There is no doubt that walkthroughs can be beneficial given the right tools and direction, but using walkthroughs to enforce compliance may backfire and cause distrust and tension. That is why administrators must learn the skill of providing effective feedback.

Feedback

"Feedback can be said to describe any communication or procedure given to inform a learner of the accuracy of a response, usually to an instructional question" (Carter, 1984, p. 53). Knowing the importance of feedback, it is surprising to find that very few studies have "systematically investigated the meaning of feedback in classrooms" (Hattie, 2007, p. 81). Studies that have been conducted have looked at the importance of feedback between teachers and students and not at the relationship of feedback between teachers and principals. Teachers recognize the importance of feedback and welcome it, but unfortunately feel that they rarely receive feedback from their principal (Aiex, 1993).

Teachers, like students, need to seek and learn from feedback. Principals must use feedback as a valuable tool that allows teachers to determine areas of need and professional growth. Feedback needs to be specific and focused on a need or goal. An evaluation would allow principals the opportunity to provide feedback to help teachers improve on his/her craft. Dunkleberger (1982) states that teachers see feedback as one dimensional rating scales used for hiring or firing. Teachers do not view evaluations as a tool to help their craft. They tend to see the evaluation process as punitive. According to a study from Frase, "feedback has too often been inaccurate, shallow, and at times mean spirited, rather than helpful and uplifting" (1992, p. 179). Researcher Morgan Donaldson disagrees with this perception and seems to believe that

21

evaluations are being used as motivators instead of providing critical feedback (2009).

According to the Center for American Progress, ninety nine percent of public school teachers

receive satisfactory evaluations, but ninety-nine percent of the students are not learning to high

standards (Donaldson, 2011). In essence, teachers are receiving satisfactory evaluations with

ineffective feedback to improve learning.

Perhaps evaluations can be seen as mere motivators as opposed to effective tools because

principals may feel that they are not qualified to provide effective feedback (Donaldson, 2011).

In addition, principals may prefer to give over inflated evaluations to teachers to solely avoid any

confrontation. The effect of this practice however, leads to mediocre teaching. An administrator

may choose not to address concerns or chooses not to provide strategies that would help the

teacher grow professionally because documenting these areas take time. Unfortunately, this

choice ultimately hinders student learning. Effective feedback is critical to student achievement.

When teachers receive effective feedback that allows them to change or alter instruction to the

meet the needs of students, student achievement improves. "If feedback is directed at the right

level, it can assist students to comprehend, engage, or develop effective strategies to process the

information intended to be learned" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 104).

Providing effective feedback takes skill and practice. If principals do not see themselves

as effective communicators, student achievement will not improve. "In 2004, the Missouri

Professors of Educational Administration identified principals who had guided their schools to

improved student achievement and/or maintained high levels of achievement" (Arnold, 2009,

p.1). The principals from this study all had effective communication skills. It was important for

principals to "ask questions, tell the truth and encourage feedback from members of the

community" (Bolman & Deal, 2002, p.2). Effective principals must understand what good

teaching looks like and provide support to teachers when they need assistance. Principals know

that they have the responsibility to improve the effectiveness of their teachers (Whitaker, 2003).

Principals must be knowledgeable in their field to provide that feedback to teachers. This

knowledge then needs to be transferred to such documents like a teacher evaluation or

walkthrough.

Feeny (2007) stresses that the goal of feedback is to improve the effectiveness of teaching

and professional growth. It must therefore be meaningful and purposeful. Feedback provides

information that addresses a specific goal or target for the teacher. Feedback "gives everyone the

chance to slow down, to breathe, to make sense of where they've been, how they got there,

where they should go next, and the best ways to get there" (Guskey, 2009, p. 207). Feedback

promotes learning therefore, it must be descriptive and given to teachers in a timely manner in

order to be effective. Feedback from a walkthrough should be seen as a formative process.

"Walkthroughs are not teacher evaluations; they are a method for identifying opportunities for

improvement" (Pitler & Goodwin, 2008, p. 11). The data from the feedback should help

teachers improve teaching while the school year is still in session. At the end of the school year,

the summative evaluation is used to make decisions about professional growth.

Feedback can be delivered in several ways: it can be written, immediate verbal feedback

or delayed verbal feedback. "Teachers express a strong desire for more concrete, detailed

feedback from administrators" (Donaldson, 2010, p. 55). In a classroom setting studies showed

that the most effective feedback given to students came in a form of video, audio or computer

assisted method (Hattie, 2004). Feedback from a classroom observation visit typically consists

of an administrator taking notes from the visit, writing some comments about what was or was

not observed and then sending that feedback to the teacher electronically through an email or

through a face- to- face conference. Rarely will you find a teacher questioning or analyzing what was written about the observation. In a study from the Wallace Foundation, principals were asked to reflect upon the amount of time they spend in classrooms. It was found that principals spent "far less time in providing feedback to teachers but spent more time working with managerial tasks" (2010. P.1). Given that principals do not spend enough time giving feedback, it is critical for principals to increase their time and skills on instruction. "In order to provide effective feedback to teachers, supervisors and other involved in teacher preparation must first know the attributes of effective feedback" (Scheeler, 2004, p.60).

Van Houten (1980) studied feedback by analyzing three different categories: 1) the nature of feedback, 2) the temporal dimension of feedback and 3) who delivers feedback. The nature of feedback is the information that is being delivered. The feedback may be corrective, general, specific or positive. Feedback can be delivered verbally, audio, video, through checklists or through a conference. Frequency and timing is the second attribute of feedback. If a behavior is to change or if a goal needs to be reached, frequent feedback will help achieve this task. Feedback timing can either be delayed or immediate. Immediate feedback seems to be more effective than delayed feedback. "If reinforcement is not immediate, it is possible that an intervening behavior will be reinforced instead" (Scheeler, Ruhl & McAfee, 2004, p. 60). Feedback in a school setting may be delivered by a teacher, a student, an administrator, university supervisor and/or parent. The person providing the feedback must have a purpose and rationale as to why the feedback is being provided. Given these three categories, ten empirical studies (Cossairt, Hall & Hopkins, 1973; Englert & Sugai, 1983; Hindman & Polsgrove, 1988; Hao, 1991; O'Reilly, Renzaglia, Hutchins, Koterba-Buss, Clayton, Halle, & Izen, 1992; Giebelhaus, 1994; O'Reilly, Renzaglia, & Lee, 1994; Pierce & Miller, 1994; Coutler & Grosse,

1997; Sharpe, Lounsbery, & Bahls 1997) from teacher preparation programs, show that the two most effective attributes to promote teacher change are the nature of feedback and the timing of feedback. Feedback should be immediate, specific, positive and corrective (Scheeler, et al., 2004).

Hattie and Timperley (2007) identify a framework that defines four types of feedback that motivates learning; "task level, process level, self regulation and self level" (p. 86). Task level feedback is based on work about a task or product. An example of this type of feedback is correcting work that is incorrect or unacceptable. Process level feedback is directed at the process of learning. An example of this type of learning is looking at whether or not the teacher understands the process of teaching and learning. Self-regulation is the ability of the learner to self -check his/her learning given prompts. The principal may provide feedback to the teacher to help him/her remember something that was missing or not seen during the classroom observation. The last level of feedback is self-level. This is probably the most common yet most ineffective type of learning. Feedback such as, 'you are great teacher or this is a great lesson' are examples of this type of feedback. These are positive comments but there is no learning or thinking involved. Although this study or framework is used with students and teachers, this framework can be used between teachers and principals.

The Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership (2006) described four types of feedback that resemble the work from Hattie and Timperley (2007). Effective feedback is used when the goal is to get the learner to redo an assignment or lesson using learned strategies. Descriptive feedback is used to help the learner move forward in the learning process. Evaluative feedback is used during summative assessments. The goal is to give the learner a grade or score. Finally motivational feedback is used to praise or encourage the learner (2006).

In a school setting, feedback "should be based on descriptive observable data, provide characteristics of effective teaching and promote reflective inquiry and self directedness to foster improvements in teaching supported by evidence of student learning" (Feeney, 2007, p. 191). As principals conduct walkthroughs, data is collected that is based on instruction and student learning. Feedback can be used to strengthen learning goals, to minimize difficulty level, to increase self-efficacy and to gain control over his/her learning (Mory, 2004). After giving feedback to the teachers, the principal should check for understanding. Checking for understanding is a strategy used to determine if learning took place. This step however, seems to be overlooked as principals may not have the time to provide feedback immediately. Checking for understanding usually occurs at the end of the school year and by then it gives teachers little time for improvement. "An evaluation has no meaning if it is not interpreted, questioned, discussed and reflected on" (Feeney, 2007, p. 195). The principal and teacher must take the time to have crucial and honest conversations on a consistent basis.

Having follow up visits or conversations with teachers will allow principals to see whether or not teachers have utilized the feedback effectively. Checking for understanding gives principals the opportunity to see if the teacher is learning from the walkthroughs or evaluations. Teachers, just like students, learn differently. Although more studies are warranted, especially in the field of education, it has been noted that daily and weekly feedback as opposed to weekly and monthly feedback is more effective in an organization (Pampino, 2003). Studies show that learning takes place when feedback is given more frequently (Scheeler, 2004). In addition, to frequency, timing is another area that needs to be looked at when studying the effectiveness of feedback. Feedback is either immediate or delayed. When feedback is immediate, teachers are

able to correct or practice what is needed from the feedback. Principals are able to see this process through consistent classroom visits.

In order for feedback to be effective a certain goal or focus must be addressed. A principal must be ready to walk into the classroom looking for a specific purpose that will help the teacher improve or enhance classroom instruction. The teacher must understand what the principal is looking for in order to be receptive of the feedback. If the teacher has no idea what or why the principal is in the classroom, then feedback will carry little or no value. "If the material studied is unfamiliar or abstruse, providing feedback should have little effect on performance, since there is no way to relate the new information to what is already known" (Kulhavy, 1977, p. 220). Learning goals should be established through a collaborative effort between the teacher and feedback. Creating goals will foster a sense of understanding and ownership. Feedback needs to provide information to the learner that will help the learner improve the task that is being observed. Whether or not principals truly understand and use the levels of feedback is questionable based on the lack of research and studies that have been implemented.

When effective feedback is given to teachers, change in instruction is likely to occur. Principals need to understand that teachers are learners and seek effective feedback to enhance instruction and student achievement. Are walkthroughs the tool or vehicle that allows principals to give effective feedback to teachers?   Teachers receive feedback in order to understand and learn. Principals must however be cognizant of how the adult actually learns.

Adult Learning

The process of engaging adult learning into strategies is called andragogy. Social Scientist, Eugen Rosenstock claimed that "adult education requires special teachers, special methods, and a special philosophy" (Knowles, 1998, p. 59). The word andragogy is Greek meaning: man leading" as opposed to pedagogy that s directed more to child learning. German educator, Alexander Kapp, outlines issues in regards to adult learning. These include: 1) letting the learner know why it is important to learn, 2) showing learners how to direct themselves through information and 3) relating the lesson to the learners experience (Connor, 2007). In addition, "Malcolm Knowles, a pioneer in the study of adult learning observed that adults learn best when they understand why it is important, when they have the freedom to learn their way, when learning is experiential, when timing is right for them to learn and when the process is positive and encouraging" (Peterson, 2010, p.1).

Unlike children, adults bring with them many experiences ad different motivators that help them learn or acquire new knowledge. The adult educator must find out how much experience or knowledge the adult learner has. In the field of education, the principal must understand how much experience and knowledge the classroom teacher has in order to be receptive the new learning. Adult learners want to use what they know and want to be acknowledged for what they know. Knowing this information will help the evaluator to provide effective feedback. Learning is not a one-way process. The learner must see the value or goal of the lesson, if not, the learner may resist the learning (Fidishun, 2010, n.d.).

Seeing the value of learning increases the motivation to learn. Motivation is one of four critical elements that help adults learn. The adult educator can motivate the adult learner by setting a friendly, open atmosphere that will help them learn. Reinforcement is another critical

element for adult learning. "Reinforcement should be part of the teaching-learning process to ensure correct behavior" ((Lieb, 1991, p.4). Feedback must be specific, not general, in order to learners to understand what the learning that must occur. The third element that helps adult learn is retention. In order to participants to retain information that is being taught, they must be able to see a meaning or purpose for that information. Transference is the last critical element that helps adult learn. Transference "is the ability to use the information taught in a new setting" (Lieb, 1991, p. 6). When adults are given a purpose to learn and can apply this knowledge to their setting, it is very likely that learning will take place.

David Kolb created a learning theory and model that is associated with the way adults learn. This model consists of four learning stages and four learning styles. The four stages are: concrete experience, reflective observations, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. The learner must experience some type of activity, reflect and observe what happened, think about what happened and then plan for the next or new learning experiences. For learning to occur, experiences must be transformed. Thus learning is transformed through the learning styles or modes. The four learning styles that correspond to the four stages are: diverging, converging, accommodators and assimilators. Divergers are learners that have a strong imagination and are good at generating ideas. These learners are 'feelers or watchers'. Convergers tend to be unemotional and can focus on specific problems. These learners are 'thinkers and doers'. The accommodators are risk takers. These learners solve problems intuitively. These learners are described as the 'feelers and doers'. The assimilator learner excels in inductive reasoning and s concerned with abstract concepts rather than people. These learners are 'thinkers and watchers' (Kolb, 1984). These learning styles fit into a learning circle that involves experiences that revolve around concrete, reflective observation, abstract

29

conceptualization and active experimentation (Lunenburg, 2010). "The learning process begins with a person carrying out a particular action and then seeing its effect of the action in this situation" (Lunenberg, 2010, p.3). Learning is seen as a continuous cycle. One may begin at any stage, but must follow each other in sequence. As the principal of the school it is essential to understand the type of learners teachers are. Knowing this information will help the principal communicate or instruct in a manner in which the teacher will learn. Teachers must see themselves as learners and understand how they learn. How often are teachers and principals given the opportunity to reflect upon their own learning style?

Evaluating teachers is a complex process. Teachers are evaluated formally or informally through the use of some type of evaluation tool: a teacher evaluation or walkthrough. Research states that although these measures are in place, the effectiveness of these tools may be very minimum due to the lack of effective feedback provided by the administrator. This lack of effective feedback may be due to the lack of understanding as to how adults learn and process information. If principals lack formal training to provide effective feedback, teacher evaluations lose meaning or value in efforts to improve teacher quality. This study looks at how principals conduct walkthroughs and provide feedback to teachers as well as how teachers use this feedback to improve instruction.

The next chapter provides information concerning the rational for the data collection process utilized in this study, followed by a description of the techniques used to collect data and analyze the data.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Principals and teachers are typically evaluated on an annual basis. Principals evaluate teachers using a specific set of criteria as provided by the state. Principals are evaluated by the superintendent or designee at the end of each year using a format that is acceptable or approved by the school board. Regardless of the tool or vessel that is used, both parties: principal and teacher, are evaluated and provided feedback to improve or validate one's performance. In this study, I looked at the feedback that was provided by the principal to the teacher on walkthroughs, and evaluations formal, scheduled observations. This study looked at the effectiveness of the feedback and how it was used in the classroom. To explore the questions that I was posing in this research, I will be using a qualitative approach. The choice of qualitative methodology was selected because it appeared to be the most appropriate method to pursue the questions identified as relevant to this study. Given that I explore meaning, my approach is qualitative. As Erickson (1986) states, qualitative approaches are useful when attempting to understand how actors in a particular context imbue meaning to their behavior. Thus, because I am interested in learning what walkthroughs mean to principals and teachers, and how those meanings are manifested and guide their practice, my study is qualitative. Generally, key questions in qualitative research include, "what has happened here, specifically? And "What did these happenings mean to people engaged in them?" (Erickson, 1986, p. 124).

Qualitative research is "all about exploring issues, understanding phenomena, and answering questions" (QSR website, 2011). Qualitative research is a type of scientific research that "seeks to answer a question, systematically uses a predetermined set of procedures to answer the question, collects evidence, produces findings that were not determined in advance and

produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study" (Family Health International, 2012, p. 1). Qualitative research "provides 'depth' and 'detail' because it is concerned with detailed descriptions of conditions, events, people, and interactions from the pragmatic world" (Rossi, 2007, p. 54). Ethnography is a methodology that "is concerned with producing descriptions and explanations of particular phenomena, or with developing theories rather than with testing existing hypothesis" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 21). Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore and analyze individual and collective beliefs, values, and perceptions (McMillan, & Schumacher, 2006). Feedback from teacher walkthroughs and evaluations was the phenomenon that was explored through the lenses of principals and teachers. Conducting one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs a school year is a daunting task. The amount of time invested in this task can be burdensome considering the other responsibilities and duties performed by the principal. This study looked at the effectiveness of this practice and determined if this mandate is effective or valued.

"Years of research has proven that nothing schools can do for their students matters more than giving them effective teachers" (New Teacher project, 2007, n.d.). Principals have the responsibility to provide the feedback necessary to help teachers become effective. Devoting the time to get this task completed may sometimes be impossible due to the demands that are pressed upon an administrator. Therefore understanding the process or phenomena of feedback through walkthroughs and evaluations will help principals fulfill their responsibility to help teachers become effective leaders in the classroom.

The assessment of teachers in the field is a critical yet complex process to be studied. The methodology selected to understand what goes on in the interaction between the evaluator and those being evaluated must be sensitive to nuances that occur in the evaluation interaction.

32

As a result, ethnography was selected by the researcher who wanted to trace the subtle interactions that occur in the evaluation activity mandated of teachers by school building administrators. Ethnography "is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render" (Geertz, 1973, p. 10). Evaluating teachers is something that is common for principals. After all this process is done every year. Sometimes however, completing a ritual year after year may lose meaning or value because there is a lack of focus or urgency. Sometimes we just do things because we are told as opposed to questioning the meaning or purpose. It just simply becomes part of the culture. Ethnography is a methodology that allows for the study of culture and meaning.

Geertz (1973) defines culture as "context, something within which they can be intelligibly described"(p. 14). "Culture refers to the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behavior" (Spradley, 1979, p. 5). The essential core of ethnography "is to understand another way of life from a native point of view" (Spradley, 1979, p. 3). Walkthroughs are conducted at all levels in the field of education. Principals in a district in Texas were given the task to conduct one hundred forty-four walkthroughs on their campus annually. Regardless of the size of the campus, every administrator was to complete this directive. In this study, I interviewed three principals and three teachers to determine how feedback is generated and used to improve instruction. I looked to see if principals had an understanding of effective feedback and if they utilized this knowledge in the feedback that they delivered to teachers. In addition, I asked principals and teachers to look at how adults learn and identify their own personal learning style. Teachers are typically asked to deliver instruction in the way a student learns best. Hence, it is important that principals deliver feedback in the

manner in which a teacher learns best. Conducting walkthroughs is a phenomena that educators are familiar with. Taking the time to observe and ask questions about the effectiveness of this practice from the perspective of a principal and from a teacher is something that was explored from this study.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research:

1. How does the principal analyze data in order to provide effective feedback to the teacher?

2. What does the teacher do with the feedback that is provided on the walkthrough forms and evaluation?

3. How has feedback from walkthroughs or evaluations improved teachers and principals as instructional leaders?

4. What is the congruence between teachers and principals learning styles as defined by David Kolb?

5. What is the congruence between principal's perspectives and teacher's perspectives on the purpose of feedback from walkthroughs and evaluations?

6. What is the congruence between principals and teachers feedback delivery as defined by Hattie and Timperley?

Research Design

This study was conducted within a school year and followed a qualitative design in that it consisted of interviews from three principals and three teachers who were employed in a school district that mandated administrators to conduct one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs within a school year. "Most ethnographic research has been concerned with producing descriptions and explanations of particular phenomena, or with developing theories, rather than with testing existing hypothesis" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 21). I looked at how principals generated feedback from walkthroughs and evaluations. I also explored how teachers utilized the feedback from principals. I had teachers and principals look at the various types of feedback and identify what they use and receive from their evaluator. In addition, principals and teachers examined Kolb's learning theories and identified the style that best described how they learn. In order to collect this information in depth interviews were conducted at a location that was convenient for the participants.

Sample & Setting

The participants from the study are employed at a public school district in Texas. These participants were looked at because their campus administrator is required to conduct one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs throughout a school year. The district currently serves forty-four thousand students and employs over six thousand teachers. I called principals from various campuses using the district website for school numbers. Once the principal agreed to participate in the study, I selected at random teachers that were employed at the school where the principal was employed. I was able to interview a principal and teacher from the same school for the elementary and middle school. The teacher interviewed from the high school does not work at the same campus from high school principal that was interviewed. Sampling is described as

"a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. By observing the characteristics of the sample, one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn" (Best & Kahn, 2003, p. 12). In qualitative research, the sample is small and purposeful (Patton, 1996).

Principal A and Teacher A are from the elementary campus that serves five hundred eighty-four students. Teacher A has been teaching for eight years. Principal A has been an administrator for fourteen years. This campus employs sixty-six employees. There is one additional administrator on this campus.

Principal B and Teacher B are from a middle school that serves over nine hundred students. Principal B has been an administrator for seven years. Teacher B has been in the classroom for three years. This campus has a total of one hundred and nine employees. This campus also has two additional administrators. This campus is a recognized campus based on student academic state assessment scores.

Principal C and Teacher C are from the high school setting. Principal C has been an administrator for thirty-five years. This campus serves one thousand five hundred students and employs one hundred-eighty three employees. This campus has two additional administrators on campus. Teacher C has been teaching for ten years and is employed at a campus that serves one thousand eight hundred students and employs over two hundred people.

Participants were invited to participate in a study that looked at feedback from walkthroughs and evaluations. There were no particular criteria for the selection of these teachers and principals other than they worked at the district that has asked for administrators to conduct the mandated quota of walkthroughs.

Data Collection Strategies

"An ethnographic interview is a particular kind of speech event" (Spradley, 1979, p. 55). The interview can also be seen as a friendly conversation. "The purpose of gathering responses to open ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view through prior selection of questionnaire categories" (Patton, 1980, p. 28). To gather data, I interviewed three principals and three teachers from a district in Texas. This district had given the principals a directive to conduct one hundred forty-four walkthroughs in one academic school year. Regardless of the size of the campus, every administrator was required to fulfill this task. I interviewed three principals from each school level: elementary, middle and high school. In addition, I interviewed a teacher from the campus that principal led from the elementary and middle schools. The high school teacher that was interviewed did not work on the same campus of the high school principal that was interviewed. I collected walkthrough documents that principals used to conduct classroom visits. I scheduled a time and location for the interviews based upon the request of the principal and teacher. Five of the six interviews were conducted at the place of employment of the principal and teacher. One teacher requested that I conduct the interview at my location of work. Four of the six interviews took place in a conference or meeting room of the school. Two of the interviews were conducted in the office that belonged to the principal. Interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed verbatim onto the computer. Interviews lasted anywhere between one to two hours per participant.

Descriptive data gathered from the participants "own words assist the researcher in developing insights on how the subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 94). Data that was collected allowed the researcher to understand what principals look

for when they conduct walkthroughs and evaluations. I looked at the types of feedback principals felt comfortable delivering to teachers. I looked at how teachers used feedback in their instruction and what they did with feedback that they did not agree with. I looked at how principals and teachers perceived themselves as learners and checked to see if there was a commonality between principals and teachers learning style. The responses from both the principals and teachers were coded.

Interview Questions- Principal

The following questions served as the foundation of interviews of the principals who engaged in the walkthrough process with the teachers in their schools. In addition to these basic questions, further information and insights were sought through probing questions asked during each interview.

1. What do you look for when you enter a classroom?

2. What thoughts are going through your mind as you generate feedback for your teachers?

3. How often are you in the classroom on a weekly basis?

4. How do you deliver feedback regarding walkthroughs and evaluations? Is it through emails, letters, notes or face to face?

5. Which method do you use more of and why do you think this is so?

6. How do you process what you are going to communicate to teachers as you are in the classroom?

7. How do you know that teachers are utilizing the feedback you have shared with them from walkthroughs or evaluations?

8.	What type of feedback are you most comfortable with: task level, process level, self-regulation or self- level? (definitions provided to participant)

9.	What types of training have you had in providing feedback to teachers?

10.	Do you think your feedback is effective? Why or why not?

11.	What is the purpose of evaluating teachers with Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS)?

12.	Do you feel this tool is effective in fulfilling the purpose? Why or why not?

13.	Describe what it is like for you to receive feedback from your evaluation?

14.	What thoughts are going through your mind as you receive feedback?

15.	What do you do with the feedback you receive from your evaluator?

16.	How does that feedback improve your performance?

17.	What type of learner do you think you are according to Kolb's learning styles? (definitions provided to participant)

18.	Do you find walkthroughs s a valuable tool to help teachers improve instruction?

19.	Do you think that because of the mandate of completing one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs, you have become a stronger instructional leader? Why or why not?

20.	When do you foresee yourself completing the walkthroughs?

21.	How often would you be in the classroom if you were not given the one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs?

22.	Where do you spend most of your day during the week? (give or take)

Interview Questions- Teacher

The following questions served as the foundation of interviews of the teachers who engaged in the walkthrough process with their principals in their schools. In addition to these basic questions, further information and insights were sought through probing questions asked during each interview.

1.   How often do you receive walkthroughs on a weekly basis?

2.   What thoughts or feelings are going through your head when you see the administrator enter the room?

3.   What do you do with the feedback that is provided for you on the walkthrough?

4.   How have walkthroughs enhanced your professional growth or knowledge?

5.   What is the purpose of the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS)?

6.   When your administrator enters your classroom, do you know what he/she is looking for?

7.   What type of feedback do you receive more often from your administrator: task level, process level, self-regulation or self -level? (definitions provided to participant)

8.   What type of feedback would you prefer to receive from your administrator? (written, immediate verbal or delayed verbal feedback)

9.   How do you feel when you receive feedback from the administrator and you do not agree with what he/she said? What do you do with that data?

10.   What type of feedback do you provide to your students? (refer to question #6)

11.   How has the PDAS evaluation system helped you to improve instruction?

12.   What type of learner do you think you are according to Kolb's learning styles? (definitions provided to participant)

13.   If your principal did not have to complete one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs a

year, do you think you would see your administrator in your classroom as often as

you do now? Why or why not?

Data Analysis

Data analysis in a qualitative study is "sorting out the structures of signification"

(Geertz, 1973, p. 9). After transcribing the answers from the interviews, the researcher looked at

commonalities from their responses and grouped them accordingly. "Analysis of any kind

involves a way of thinking. It refers to the systematic examination of something to determine its

parts, the relationship among parts, and their relationship to the whole" (Spradley, 1979, p. 92).

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) defines analysis as "working with the data, organizing them,

breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering

what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell others" (p. 157). The data

collected for this study is from interviews from six participants. The data was collected and then

dividing the data into parts, identifying the relationships among the parts and then looking at the

relationship to the whole (Spradley, 1979). In this study, the data was organized according to the

responses from the interviews. Responses were grouped into cultural symbols. "A symbol is

any object or event that refers to something. All symbols involve three elements: the symbol

itself, one or more referents, and a relationship between the symbol and referent. This triad is the

basis for all symbolic meaning" (Spradley, 1979, p. 95). The responses from the open -ended

questions were categorized into themes based on patterns or concepts from the data. The three

categories used for this study were: consensus themes, supported themes, and individual themes.

Consensus themes are when the majority of the participants state the same theme, supported

themes are when approximately half of the participants state the same theme, and individual

themes are when one or two participants state the same theme (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Each

question was analyzed and a descriptive summary was written. An overview of Kolb's learning

cycle was discussed based on the findings of the research questions.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative study looked into the feedback that principals deliver to teachers and how

teachers use the feedback to improve their craft. This study looked into the effectiveness of

conducting one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs within an academic school year. The

research occurred in a school district that mandated administrators to conduct such

walkthroughs. Open-ended interview questions were conducted, audiotaped and transcribed.

The data from the interviews were coded and themes were identified. The next chapter focuses

on the analysis of the data from the interviews of this study.

Chapter Four

Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine how principals and teachers viewed the effectiveness of feedback from walkthroughs and evaluations on their campus. Principals give teachers feedback on walkthroughs and evaluations. This study examined the effectiveness and types of feedback principals give to teachers. In addition, this study examined how teachers utilized the feedback that principals gave to them from the walkthroughs and evaluations. This study was conceived from a mandate that was given to administrators by the superintendent from a school district in Texas. A review of literature revealed that teachers and principals see little value in evaluation models because teachers do not receive accurate feedback. In addition, principals have so much to do on a daily basis, placing such a high mandate of conducting one hundred forty-four walkthroughs may not be seen as a valued activity, but rather an activity that needs to be completed at the end of the school year without utilizing the data that is collected. The method of research was personal interviews of three principals and three teachers from an elementary, middle and high school. Each interview was audio taped and transcribed verbatim.

This chapter begins with a profile of the participants and the schools they are employed at, a discussion of each research question, results of the data analysis, a summary of the themes that were identified and a conclusion of the results.

Profile of Participants from the Study

Six participants from an urban school district in Texas participated in this study. This district serves approximately forty- four thousand students. There are sixty-two campuses: eight high schools, eleven middle schools, thirty -six elementary campuses, two K-8th grade schools, three special campuses (such as alternative campuses) and two Pre-K Centers. Ten of these

schools have been named a National Blue Ribbon School. Twelve of these schools have been

rated "Exemplary" as measured by the state of Texas according to results from the state

assessment scores from 2010-2011. Demographics reveal that 81.3% of the students are

economically disadvantaged. The average attendance rate for the 2010-2011 school year was at

95.6%. The demographic breakdown of students shows that 92.9% of the students are

Hispanic/Latino. For purposes of this study, principals and teachers were selected from an

elementary campus, middle school and high school. Each school replicates the same

demographics as represented by the district. Two of the three campuses: elementary and middle

school are rated "Recognized" as measured by the state of Texas according to results from the

state assessment scores from 2010-2011. The high school is rated "Academically Acceptable".

Teachers are evaluated or appraised every three years by the campus administrator. The

administrator uses the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS). This is a Texas

approved instrument that evaluates teachers on eight domains. It has been in existence since

1997. In addition to the evaluation, administrators are expected to conduct one hundred and

forty-four walkthroughs by the end of the school year. Administrators may use the walkthrough

checklist that is provided for them through a software system called Eduphoria. This

walkthrough checklist is aligned to the eight domains from PDAS.

Principals

Three principals participated in this study. After approval from the district to conduct

this study, the researcher contacted at random three schools: one elementary school, one middle

school and one high school. Each principal has been employed with the district as an

administrator for over six years. The mandate to conduct one hundred and forty-four

walkthroughs was in place in 2007. Each principal has experience of conducting walkthroughs

with and without a mandate. Disaggregated demographic data for the principals represented in

the study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.1 Demographic Data of the Principals Represented in the Study.

Principal	Total Administrative Experience	Number of years as Building principal
A- Elementary (female)	14 years	12 years
B- Middle (female)	7 years	7 years
C- High School (male)	35 years	3 years

Teachers

Three teachers participated in this study. The researcher contacted teachers from the

campus of the principal that was interviewed to participate in the study. Two of the three

campuses: elementary campus and middle school campus participated. The researcher did not

obtain participation from the high school campus of the principal that was interviewed for the

study. Therefore the researcher contacted a high school teacher from another campus who

agreed to participate in the study. The principal of this teacher is also expected to conduct the

mandated one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs. Disaggregated demographic data for the

teachers represented in the study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.1 Demographic Data of the Teachers Represented in the Study.

Teacher	Total Teaching Experience	Grade or Content
A- Elementary (female)	8 years	2nd grade
B- Middle (female)	3 years	Math
C- High School (male)	10 years	History

This section focuses on the six research questions that addressed the focus of this study: the impact of the feedback from teacher walkthroughs and evaluations. Each response is documented to show the congruencies and differences of their perceptions regarding the research questions. Responses will be divided into three categories: consensus theme, supported theme and individual theme. Direct quotations and excerpts from the interviews are explored.

Research Question 1: How does the principal analyze data in order to provide effective feedback to the teacher?

The following questions were asked of the principals to answer this question:

1. What do you look for when you enter a classroom?

2. What thoughts are going through your mind as you generate feedback for your teachers?

3. How often are you in the classroom on a weekly basis?

4. How do you deliver feedback regarding walkthroughs and evaluations? Is it through emails, letters, notes or face to face?

5. Which method do you use more of and why do you think this is so?

6. How do you process what you are going to communicate to teachers as you are in the classroom?

Data collected for question one shows that the three principals interviewed had several consensus indicators. Principals believed that the most important thing that they look for when they enter the classroom is student engagement. All responded that is was important to look at what the students were doing. They also indicated that they read the walls from the classroom. This meant that they looked to see what was posted on the walls such as student expectations, word

46

walls, and student work. They looked at the environment of the classroom to check for learning. The principals felt that they are not in the classrooms as often as they would like. Even though there is a mandate of one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs, they felt that they were not in the classroom enough. All three principals utilized the system that is place to document the walkthrough and evaluation. They also preferred to have face-to-face conversations with the teachers on issues that needed addressing. Feedback needs to be honest and straightforward.

Data showed two supported themes for question one. Two of the three principals used sticky notes as a mode of communication to delivery feedback. These notes are used as a catalyst to start conversations with teachers. In addition, when generating feedback to teachers, two of the three principals felt that teachers need to be self reflective by answering the question: 'How do you think your lesson went?' These principals preferred to have the teachers lead the conference as opposed to having the principal provide the majority of the feedback.

Individual themes emerged with the question regarding the way the principal processes how he/she is going to communicate with the teacher in the classroom. Each principal took a different approach as to how he/she prepares to communicate with the teacher. One principal analyzed feedback and delivers feedback in a manner in which he wishes to receive feedback. The golden rule, 'treat people the way you want to be treated' is something he believes and practices with his staff. Principal A believes the wording from the feedback must be done cautiously. Principal B divides her feedback into two groups: glows and grows. She believes it is important to provide a balance of negative and positive feedback. This feedback should also be shared with departments, not solely with individuals. After all, the overall goal is to improve instruction.

The next section highlights direct quotes from the participants that support the three themes for each question. Figure 1 identifies the consensus, supported and individual theme for question one.

What do you look for when you enter a classroom?

When entering a classroom Principal A looks at several things. Principal A reads the walls in the classroom, looks to see what is posted and then asks the children what they are learning. Principal A wants to see the students doing most of the work. This principal was the only principal that defined what student engagement is. Principal A stated:

> I'm looking for the students to be doing most of the work, most of the thinking. I'm looking for engagement. What does that mean? I'm looking for children conversing and dialoguing, talking about the learning. I'm looking for students not just completing worksheets, but talking about the answers, how did they arrive at the answers? They are working in groups learning from one another.

The first thing Principal B looks for is student engagement. As with the other two principals, Principal B also looks at the classroom environment. Principal B stated,

> I think the first thing I look for is student engagement. Like what is taking place in the room to just try to get a feel for is this teacher generated or is this student generated or is it cooperative generated. I look for things that are on the wall, things that are on the white boards. I look for student work. I look for what students are expected to learn for the day so that I have an idea what they are doing for the day.

Looking at what students are doing is what Principal C focuses on. Principal C explained,

> As I enter the classroom the very first thing I look at is what are the students doing. Are they engaged? Are they looking at the teacher? Are they working in group work? Are they working on a seat assignment? So, the first thing isn't looking for the teacher. I see what is happening in the classroom. I start looking around the room to see what is posted around the walls.

What thoughts are going through your mind as you generate feedback for your teachers?

This question was a supported theme as two of the three principals felt that it was important to allow the teachers to provide some type of feedback regarding the visit from the walkthrough or evaluation.

Principal A felt that when getting ready to deliver feedback, it is important to look at the entire lesson and ask if the learning objective was met. The feedback that goes to the teacher should be coming more from the teacher not from the principal.

> When I converse with the teacher, I ask her, what was your expectation and how did you get to that expectation? If the children were not successful, then I usually ask the teacher, 'what might you do differently? What might that look like? What else can I do to support you to ensure that the students are learning?' The conversations need to revolve about teachers reflecting what they need. I can tell them; do this and do that, but those are my ideas and suggestions. So if it doesn't work, they are going to say, 'See! It didn't work'. So I usually ask, 'what can you do differently?' so they can think and reflect, because they know what to do. You just have to push their thinking.

Principal B felt that the principal should have a plan ready for the teacher, but the teacher should also have an opportunity to share feedback as well.

> I think one thought about generating feedback is that it is always about being honest and authentic with what you tell them. If it is feedback that they need help with you should have already generated in your mind a plan that you know you are going to extend to the teacher. Sometimes I want to ask them how they felt the lesson went when I was in their room. I want to get their feedback.

Principal C took the classroom visit personal. As the visit takes place, Principal C asks self-reflecting questions that help to generate the feedback that will be delivered to the teachers.

> I really think when I start talking to teachers about what I think they can do for kids, one of the first things I do and I do this with every classroom, I put myself or I put one of my boys in that classroom. I think, if I was in this classroom would this be good enough for me or good and would I understand it? (the feedback) I think about ways in helping the teacher. You can offer differ types of feedback. Mine is constructive. I don't have to be nasty about it. I will watch a teacher and if there is something that needs to be brought to their attention, it's a very open conversation.

How often are you in classrooms on a weekly basis?

Although administrators are mandated to conduct one hundred and forty-four

walkthroughs, principals interviewed still felt that they were not in classrooms enough.

Principal A tries to schedule five walkthroughs a day but knows at times this is not achievable.

> I schedule like around five walkthroughs per day. Sometimes like today, I won't
> accomplish my goal, so I have to get more done during the week. Sometimes I
> accomplish more; sometimes I accomplish less depending on the week. I do set a goal of
> twenty-five walkthroughs per week.

Principal B laughed at the questioned at stated point blank,

> Not as much as I would like to be. Oh gosh! No, I'm not in the classrooms as much as I
> would like to be but I think what I am able to see, I see a lot of learning.

Principal C has actually scheduled walkthroughs to ensure that observations are conducted.

> I am not in classrooms as often as I would like. I think you will probably hear that from
> everyone. I actually schedule time throughout the week where I am not in my office. I
> put it (walkthrough) down as an appointment in the calendar. The only one that can add
> any meeting to that or change that agenda is me, not my secretary, nobody.

**How do you deliver feedback regarding walkthroughs and evaluations: email, letter/note or
face to face? Which method do you use more of and why do you think this is so?**

All three principals felt that it was important to have face -to -face conversations with

teachers when delivering feedback. Two of the three principals actually go a step further by

leaving notes or questions to the teacher so that they may respond regarding the visit. All three

principals utilize the system that is place to write or script the feedback.

Principal A stated,

> As soon as I complete the walkthrough, I always leave them with a question. Once they
> receive the walkthrough they seethe question. They are asked to reflect upon the
> question and they may email the response to me. I then ask them to stop by to see me
> and we talk about it and that is when I allow them to continue to reflect but at a different
> level. I like leaving them the question and then we meet face to face. I think it validates
> their ideas.

Principal B added,

> I will leave a sticky note to come see me if it's something that I really need to talk to them about. I don't want any misinterpretations and emails or things like that. I do more face to face only because that's a lot of my own learning style. If somebody is going to give me feedback, do not put it in a letter or email, because I will have questions for you. I think face –to- face is authentic. You can see the body language and body language tells you a lot about whether someone is telling the truth or not.

Principal C acknowledged the importance of a face-face conference.

> I don't send out an email. I don't send out an email with bad news. I usually say come by and see me. I have already set aside time for you. When the walkthrough is good and it gets to that point that that is all they need from me, I do not have a conference. If I have a concern, I really like though, the eye-to-eye contact with the staff member.

How do you process what you are going to communicate to teachers as you are in the classroom?

Processing what principals are going to communicate to teachers was an individual theme

that occurred with question one.

Principal A felt that communicating with teachers needs to be well thought out and handled with

care.

> I process what I am going to communicate to teachers very carefully and cautiously. The key is the wording. They know my expectations of instructions but I am also very cautious and very careful because it's about helping them become better teachers. They know that I expect them to be exemplary teachers, but they also know they have my support.

Principal B shares the process of communicating with teachers. Principal B shares,

> Usually I take the iPad or a tablet to the classroom and make a T-chart about the positive things where I saw the Glows and Grows or that there is a balance and that is not all about the accolades or it's not always negative. When great things are happening, I want people to know when great things are happening, but when we need to grow, we need to grow. Then what I do is sometimes test. I will be let's say in Math for example, and they are pretty much on the same page. So I can be in one room and see a method being used. I can go into another math room right in the same time period and I see a different method being used. So sometimes, I need to generate feedback for an entire department, maybe it is not individual teacher feedback, at that degree, but now I will talk to the entire department.

Principal C takes a personal approach on how to communicate with teachers on campus.

Principal C stated,

> I think about if I was that teacher and if I was teaching that, how would I want somebody to get back with me? So I just put myself in their spot on how I am going to tell them and what I am going to tell them. And I do think about how I am going to phrase it. Sometimes it's not what you say, but how you say it.

Conclusion

Based on the research from chapter two, it is important that walkthroughs are focused. The researcher noticed that the principals looked more at the external features of the room as opposed to the instruction from the teacher. In reviewing Pitler and Goodwin's (2008) questions from a walkthrough, the principals from this study looked at two of the six areas: student engagement and student expectations. It was interesting how all three principals placed an emphasis on what was displayed on the walls or looked at what the students were doing as opposed to what the teacher was actually delivering to the students. These external factors are part of the checklist that principals fill out to deliver feedback. These external factors are part of the expectations that teachers are familiar with based upon the appraisal system.

Identified Themes for Research Question 1

Consensus Theme	Supported Theme	Individual Theme
· Student engagement. · Reading the walls. · Checking out the environment. · Not in the classrooms enough. · Uses the system in place to record the observations. · Face-to-face conversations.	· Sticky notes or questions left after the walkthrough. · Teachers need to be part of the feedback process.	· Watch the wording to what is said. · Look for grows and glows. · Check to see if feedback can be given to departments. · Deliver feedback the way you would like to receive it.

Figure 1.1 Research Question 1: How does the principal analyze data in order to provide effective feedback?

Research Question 2: What does the teacher/principal do with the feedback that is provided on the walkthrough forms and evaluation?

The following questions were asked of the teachers and principals to answer this question:

Teachers

1. What do you do with the feedback that is provided for you on walkthroughs?

2. How do you feel when you receive feedback from the administrator and you do not agree with what he/she said? What do you with that data?

Principals

1. How do you know that teachers are utilizing the feedback you have shared with them from the walkthrough or evaluation?

2. Describe what it is like for you to receive feedback from your evaluation?

3. What thoughts are going through your mind as you receive feedback?

4.   What do you do with the feedback you receive from your evaluator?

The purpose of a walkthrough is to be used to "coach teachers to a higher level or performance" (Pitler & Goodwin, 2008, p. 11). In order to accomplish this task, administrators should provide feedback that allows teachers to improve instruction in the classroom. In the field of education, the administrator and teacher are evaluated and provided feedback. The researcher wanted to explore what teachers and principals did with the feedback they received from a walkthrough or evaluation. Two questions were asked to teachers and four questions were asked to principals. The desire to correct what was wrong in the classroom was the only consensus theme found with teachers. Three supported themes were shared with teachers. Two of the three teachers applied the feedback from the principal in the classroom immediately. Two of the three teachers felt it was important to ask questions to their principal when they did not understand the expectations from the feedback. It was also important to look at the feedback objectively. There were a couple of individual themes within these two questions. One teacher did not take the feedback personally; in fact, feedback was taken 'with a grain of salt'. One teacher stated that the thoughts and opinions of the principals were highly respected and was willing to make any changes to help her become a better teacher.

Questions for the principals revealed one consensus theme. All three principals felt that follow up visits to the teachers classrooms was the best way to see if teachers were utilizing the feedback that was given to them from previous observations. One supported theme emerged from the three questions that were studied. Two of the three principals felt that another way to check for feedback utilization was to simply ask the teacher if they used the feedback. Asking students questions about the instruction and leaving notes of acknowledgement were individual themes that were found regarding utilization of feedback from teachers. Principals were asked

what they did with the feedback from their supervisor or evaluator. Principals were not as eager,

like the teachers to utilize the feedback. There were no consensus themes found with this

question. A supported theme revealed that the feedback from the evaluation helps principals

improve their set goals. Two of the three principals felt it was important to look at the feedback

to help grow as a professional and that the feedback should not be taken personally. Three

individual themes revealed that the evaluation is simply a formality that shouldn't be taken

personally. One principal felt that feedback should include resources or ways to help close the

learning gap. Feedback is not believed to be valid or authentic. One principal felt that attitude

would help determine how someone takes in the feedback from the supervisor.

The following section reveals responses and direct quotations regarding the research for

question two. Figure 2 identifies the consensus, supported and individual theme for teachers and

principals.

Teachers

What do you do with the feedback that is provided for you on walkthroughs?

Teacher A feels that she is very self critical and any feedback she receives from the

administrator is important.

Teacher A stated,

> Everything that my principal says is positive and I take it and run with it. Any type of
> constructive criticism I really take to heart and I make sure that whatever she wants me to
> do more of, the next time it is done. I respect her thoughts, I respect her opinions and
> anything I can do to improve, to become a better teacher for those students, and I take to
> heart.

> Teacher B is a bit reflective with the feedback from the administrator.

Teacher B explained,

> For me, I actually do go back and I run through that period in my head and I look at the comments and say 'Okay, this is what they saw, did I do that? Did I not have that? Can I go back and correct this?' I actually take their comments and try to reapply it to the classroom like immediately.

Teacher C responded point blank,

> I look at it (feedback) and see if I feel it is accurate. If not, 'Oh well'. I just take it with a grain of salt and go on. Lately, I feel they (administration) have been fairly accurate. They have been point on.

How do you feel when you receive feedback from the administrator and you do not agree with what he/she said? What do you with that data?

Teacher A gave an example of using higher level thinking question during an observation. Teacher A felt that she was using a higher level thinking question but the principal did not observe this during a walkthrough. Teacher A felt that it is important to ask for clarification.

> I've always gone back to her and ask her what do you expect? Most of the times she will show me Blooms taxonomy and she will give me a list of questions so I will strive to ask those questions. I understand that from he perspective, it is hard for her to be in the classroom and pick up everything, so I don't take it personally. I do strive to do what she has asked.

Teacher B also believed it is best to ask questions. Teacher B stated,

> I try to look at it (feedback) very objectively. If it is something that I feel that I did do but didn't see it that way, I will go back and ask.

Teacher C shared what he does with the feedback that he doesn't agree with,

> Like I said before, you just take it and try to learn from it and correct it.

Principals

How do you know that teachers are utilizing the feedback you have shared with them from the walkthrough or evaluation?

Principals spend numerous hours conducting walkthroughs and evaluations. Providing

feedback is part of the evaluation/observation process. This question explored how principals

determined whether or not their feedback was valued or utilized. All three principals felt that

follow up classroom visits helped to monitor whether or not the feedback was utilized. Principal

A had an individual theme of questioning the student.

Principal A stated,

> It's the evidence I guess continuing to go back into the classrooms and whatever
> feedback was given to the teacher go and check. If it's changing the questioning or
> certain strategies or having students engage more in conversations that were in
> walkthroughs, go ask the children. Ask the children, 'what are you doing?' They might
> say, 'well the teacher is asking us questions or we are engaging more in group work' or
> so on.

Principal B believed that to monitor feedback, not only should you visit the

classroom, but go and ask the teacher if changes have been made.

Principal B stated,

> I go back and check. I give them about a week of so, seven to ten days maybe and I
> follow up. I will follow up and say, 'hey how was blah, blah, blah, you know, how is
> whatever going?' Give them an informal check.

Principal C firmly believed that because the feedback has suggested some changes in instruction,

it is simply going to get done. When changes are done, an added note of acknowledgement is

made.

> You know, I get along with just about everybody. If I say we need to do something, it's
> done. When I mention things that they need to do, they (teachers) really listen. When I
> do the feedback, it is constructive. It is factual. No personalities involved. In the
> meeting that I am having with them is not about justifying anything. This is what I saw.
> How are we going to fix it? Anytime I offer a suggestion that I want to see happen in the
> classroom, or something that they need to do, I always follow up on that. I make a note
> on it and I go back. It might be that day or it might be in two days. They know I came
> back and if I go back after hours, I will leave a note and say ' Hey, I came back and I saw
> that thing. Thanks! That's all we needed.' But I let them know once a suggested has
> been made, it is really only a suggestion to be put into place. If they can't put it in place,
> then all they have to do is tell me why and then we get around it.

Receiving feedback is a phenomenon that is shared by both teachers and principals. I wanted to explore how principals felt when they received feedback from their evaluation by their supervisor. The following three questions look at principals feel about the feedback they receive from their supervisor.

Describe what it is like for you to receive feedback from your evaluation?

Principal A reflects about the feedback. Principal A stated,

> It's an opportunity to go back and reflect. What is it that I'm doing that is working and what is it that I'm doing that is not working? If it is not working, then focus on what I need to do differently. If it is working, then how do I take it to another level? It's looking at all the components from the evaluation and the feedback. Really take it not personally, but to heart as an educator and continue improving.

Principal B questions the validity of the feedback or the process that is involved with the evaluation. Principal B stated,

> If the feedback is authentic, I'm good with it. (laughter) If it's because I've been told that no one can get above this (a certain score or rank), I have a problem with this because I think as principals I think we build on… like we build our schools. We start with something when we first enter and we evaluate what that looks like, then we start building a foundation and we start building walls. We start building the empire that we represent and I don't know ho from June to October people could have failed. I mean really? If you were outstanding in June, what happened from June to October that you are not outstanding anymore? I have a hard time with that.

Principal C felt that the manner in which you are given feedback makes a difference as to how you receive it. Principal C stated,

> I know what it's like when I don't get all the points. I know what it's like when my evaluator writes down something that I think I was better at. I know how it feels when one of my strong points doesn't seem like a strong point to my area superintendent. But I also look at it as 'Well, in his mind, that is his perception'. What I have to do is change that perception because a perception to somebody is real. I would also like him to treat me like I treat my teachers. You know, you don't have to be mean to me. If I didn't do it, just tell me. Let me fix it. If I don't fix it then you do something to me at that point. Maybe I might not have known it was broken. But I treat people how I want to be treated. And I really, I really think about that. That one little sign (points to a sign on the wall in the office), "Attitude is everything."

What thoughts are going through your mind as you receive feedback?

Principal A stated,

> Well, at first, I'm human, and I will say "hmmm", but later on I will sit down and truly listen to the feedback. To me, it is an opportunity to improve and to change because it is about the children. Whatever feedback I receive, I truly take it and go with it and apply whatever I know that will be a better campus, a better culture for kids.

Principal B has an individual theme with this response. Principal B stated,

> It's a formality. I don't think that it really means anything. It's a tool. It's a checklist, it's a deadline. I mean something you have to endure. If you are told you are going to have all 5's in May or June, it doesn't make sense.

Principal C stated,

> Well, first of all I think about why he felt that way. Or what he was looking at to give him that idea.

What do you do with the feedback you receive from your evaluator?

Principal A shared,

> At first I go home and really think about it and then take it one at a time. I try to set a couple of goals, not five or six, a few goals.

Principal B stated,

> I listen to the feedback, but I think unless you can really help me get from where we are to let's say recognize to breaking the glass ceiling and being an exemplary school, you haven't helped me much. We are missing something, not sure what it is... not sure I can ever be there. We have kids for two years. There are a lot of things that I don't even know. As the supervisor, you can see the bigger picture from top down, then your feedback to me should be about people and resources and strategies and initiatives that we should be focusing on that will indeed close that gap from Recognize to Exemplary or from this percentage to that percentage or whatever the marking system might be. So outside of that means that this is a piece of paper.

Principal C stated,

> I really don't just put it in a file and wait until next time. I know a lot of people do that. Hell, we are glad we got through it ad signed off on it ad wait another year. I really actually look at it. I pay attention to it and if I don't understand I will ask for clarification. I think all they want is for me to do better and improve for this campus.

And again, I don't take it personal. It's kind of like an improvement plan for a teacher. They can take it personally which I think is going to be a disaster. You can write an improvement plan to hurt somebody or fire somebody. You can write an improvement plan to help somebody. On my evaluations, when I look at that feedback, I look at what he (supervisor) is doing. You know, he is responsible for this school and for this area. I'm sure he would want us to step up. I don' think he would do anything to destroy it. I think what he wants is for me to bring it up another level.

Conclusion

On a weekly basis principals spend an additional sixty-nine minutes on observations and walkthroughs (Wallace Foundation, 2009). Imagine how much more time is spent if given a mandated amount to walkthroughs to conduct? The amount of time that is spent on documenting and providing feedback can be daunting. The researcher wanted to examine if the feedback that is given to teachers is actually utilized. The researcher wanted principals to reflect as well as to what they do with the feedback they received from their supervisor.

Chapter two revealed that teachers do not feel confident with the feedback that they receive from their administrator. In fact, "teachers express a strong desire for more concrete, detailed feedback from administrators" (Donaldson, 2010, p. 55). In this study, for the most part, teachers and principals felt that they utilize the feedback to help them improve their teaching and leadership skills.

Identified Themes for Research Question 2

Consensus Theme	Supported Theme	Individual Theme
TEACHER		
· Correct what is wrong as identified by the principal.	· Apply feedback comments in the classroom. · Ask questions for clarification. · Look objectively at the feedback	· Take feedback with a grain of salt. · Respect thoughts and opinions of administrator. · Do not take feedback personally.
PRINCIPAL		
· Follow up with teachers on feedback given to them.	· Ask teachers questions about the feedback given. · Do not take feedback personally. · Be reflective about the feedback. · Set goals from feedback	· Ask students' questions to check if feedback has been utilized. · Leave notes of acknowledgment · Feedback is not authentic or helpful · Receive feedback with a good attitude · Give feedback that will close learning gap

Figure 2.1 Research Question 2: What does the teacher and principal do with feedback that is provided on a walkthrough or evaluation?

Research Question 3: How has feedback from walkthroughs and/or evaluations improve teachers and principals as instructional leaders?

The following questions were asked of the teachers and principals to answer this question:

Teachers

1. How have walkthroughs enhanced your professional growth and knowledge?

2. When your administrator is in your classroom, do you know what

    he/she is looking for?

61

3. Do you see your administrator as an instructional leader? Why or why

   not?

Principals

1. How does feedback improve your performance?

2. Do you find walkthroughs as a valuable tool to help teachers

   improve instruction?

3. Do you think that because of the mandate of completing one hundred and

   forty-four walkthroughs, you have become a stronger instructional

   leader? Why or why not?

The purpose of this study was to look at the feedback that is being delivered to teachers by principals. Receiving feedback is a phenomenon that is shared by teachers and principals. Feedback is provided on walkthroughs and evaluations. The six questions that were asked to the participants explores if feedback provided to them improves or enhances their instruction in the classroom or on the campus. Data analysis for teachers reveals three consensus, two supported and two individual themes. Consensus themes included the following: teachers felt that walkthroughs have helped them become better teachers. Administration has articulated expectations of 'look- fors' as they enter the classroom. All three teachers felt that their principal was an instructional leader. Supported themes include; teachers felt that feedback from principals actually motivate or push them to become a better teacher. Administrators model what is expected from them in the classroom. Individual themes included that the feedback that is received by the administrator allows Teacher B to research strategies to learn more. Teacher A wishes that the administrator would visit the classroom a bit more.

The following excerpts highlight direct quotes from the participants that support the three

themes for question three. Figure 3 identifies the consensus, supported and individual theme for

question three.

How have walkthroughs enhanced your professional knowledge?

Teacher A stated,

> I'm very self-reflective and I think when I have somebody else who is observing me, it
> pushes me to be the best that I can be. Is she doesn't come in for a while, like a for a
> week or two, I'm waiting for her to come in. I even tell her, I think it's time for you to
> come see me. When she says something good about something I didn't even notice I was
> doing that was good, it makes me want to do better. If there is ever something I am not
> doing, it makes me want to do it. It really helps me grow as a teacher.

Teacher B stated,

> When they go through the walkthrough and give me their feedback, like if there was
> something that was not checked off like motivation, I will go back and research and
> check how I can motivate my kids more. I use a lot of their feedback for my own
> research so that I incorporate that in the classroom.

Teacher C stated,

> I think it (walkthroughs) makes you stay on task more and you are always conscious
> about teaching from bell to bell.

When your administrator is in your classroom, do you know what he/she is looking for?

Teacher A stated,

> Definitely! She tells us what she expects and she repeats herself several times. I want to
> make sure that those students are engaged. How are you taking them to the next level?
> What are their expectations at that moment? She is very vocal with what she expects
> from us.

Teacher B stated,

> Yes and no! I know there are basics. Are the Student Expectations on the wall? Are the
> classroom procedures and rules on the wall? Are the kids following directions? Are they
> engaged? But then there are things that I may not know what they are looking for.

Teacher C stated,

> Yes, they have told us at the beginning that this is what they are going to be looking for.
> This would be like the expectations, to see if we are incorporating all of the students in
> our lesson and stuff like that.

Do you see your administrator as an instructional leader? Why or why not?

Teacher A eagerly responded,

> Oh definitely! She is a great example. She is somebody who doesn't just tell us what to
> do but she exemplifies everything she is striving to get us to do by the way she conducts
> her self. She wants us to read for example. She will give us a book study, but at the
> same time she is not just giving US something to read. You see her book and it is
> highlighted and it is marked with post it notes and you know she strives to be the best
> leader she can be and that is so inspiring. She is a good role model.

Teacher B responded without hesitation,

> Definitely! And just with the amount of work we have done here, especially with data
> teams and how we work in our classroom. We are always improving our instruction.
> She pushes me more. Every time she introduces something more, I'm like "ok, this is
> something I need to do more research." I really enjoy this and I think she understands
> that for the students to be successful.

Teacher C stated quickly,

> I see her as an instructional leader. I know she used to be a teacher and she used to be a
> teacher in my subject, so we interact a lot, that's why I see her as an instructional leader.
> She tells me what she used to do and she helps me in my subject.

Principals had the opportunity to explore how feedback improves their performance on the

campus. Data collected shows four consensus themes, no supported themes and two individual

themes. Principals felt that feedback has helped them improve their craft, walkthroughs allow

them to help improve teacher performance, and having to conduct a mandated amount of

walkthroughs allows principals to be visible and provides consistent and quality feedback to

teachers. This visibility allows principals to know what is going on in the classroom on a

consistent basis as well. Individual themes revealed that principals felt it was important to

surround yourself with the right people because they bring strengths to the workplace that might

be missing with the principal. One principal felt that the principal evaluation is not aligned with

the current standards and expectations that we hold teachers and students to.

How does feedback improve your performance?

Principal A stated,

> I take it (feedback) to heart and I truly, truly reflect. It's going to give me the opportunity
> to become a better instructional leader.

Principal B stated,

> If it is negative feedback, it will motivate me. If it's positive feedback, it affirms that we
> are doing what we need to be doing. I think at a campus level the work that we do with
> our teachers everyday, like the Professional Learning Communities model and what we
> have build over the years, I don't think it's congruent with what the principal evaluation
> looks like.

Principal C stated,

> You know, I'm just the type of individual that if it not done good, if it is not done the
> right way, if it's not done where it needs to be, I don't accept it. If he (supervisor) saw
> something wrong, I want to prove we can fix it. You surround yourself with the right
> people. When you surround yourself with the right people, life is easy and the job is
> easy.

Do you find walkthroughs as a valuable tool to help teachers improve instruction? Why or

why not?

Principal A stated,

> Absolutely! Feedback is provided to teachers regarding instructional strategies and
> practices.

Principal B stated,

> Walkthroughs help improve instruction only if the feedback is quality and specific and
> timely. The teacher needs to be willing to participate in the process.

Principal C stated,

> Yes. Often I can see something that the teacher did not notice or was unaware of it
> happening. I am that extra set of eyes in the room with the primary goal of helping my
> colleagues.

Do you think that because of the mandate of completing one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs, you have become a stronger instructional leader? Why or why not?

Principal A stated,

> Yes! I have the opportunity to put in place best practices and engage in dialogues about instruction with our teachers.

Principal B stated,

> Not a stronger leader per say, but it has allowed me to really know what is going on in the classrooms with relationship teaching and learning.

Principal C stated,

> Yes. I am able to give immediate and consistent feedback to teachers and then able to get back into the classroom to see if the teacher has made the suggested adjustments.

Conclusion

The whole purpose of evaluations is to "provide all teachers with regular feedback that helps them grow as professionals, no matter how long they have been in the classroom" (The New Teacher Project, 2010, p. 1). Research question three focused on how feedback has actually helped teacher and principals grow professionally. Data revealed that feedback does help improve teachers and principals as instructional leaders. Both teachers and principals are receptive to the feedback and want to improve their performance in the classroom and on campus. Further study is needed in the area of principal evaluations.

Identified Themes for Research Question 3

Consensus Theme	Supported Theme	Individual Theme
TEACHER		
· Helps me become a better teacher. · Expectations for walkthroughs are defined for teachers. · Principal is an instructional leader.	· Walkthrough visits help push me as a teacher. · Principal walks the talk and models what is expected.	· Feedback helps me research to learn more. · I want my administrator to be in my classroom more.
PRINCIPAL		
· Feedback helps principals become a better leader. · Walkthroughs allow principals to help teachers become better teachers. · Walkthroughs allow principals to provide consistent & quality feedback. · Visibility; know what's going on		· Principal evaluations are not aligned with classroom practices. · Surround yourself with the right people.

Figure 3.1 Research Question 3: How has feedback from walkthroughs or evaluations improved teachers and principals as instructional leaders?

Research Question 4: What is the congruence between teachers and principals learning styles as defined by David Kolb?

To acquire the data to answer Research Question four, the researcher asked the participants the following question: What type of learner do you think you are according to Kolb's learning styles?

During the interview, the researcher gave each participant a list of David Kolb's learning styles along with the definition. Divergers are learners that have a strong imagination and are good at generating ideas. These learners are 'feelers or watchers.' These learners learn better when allowed to observe and collect a wide range of information. Convergers tend to be unemotional and can focus on specific problems. These learners are 'thinkers and doers'. These learners learn better when provided with practical applications of concepts and theories. The Accommodators are risk takers. These learners solve problems intuitively. These learners are described as the 'feelers and doers.' These learners learn better when provided with "hands-on" experiences. The Assimilator learner excels in inductive reasoning and is concerned with abstract concepts rather than people. These learners learn better when presented with sound logical theories to consider (Kolb, 1984).

Principals and teachers read the definitions and identified themselves as learners. Upon analysis of the collected data, there were no consensus, three supported and two individual themes. Supported themes included, four of the six participants considered to be Divergers. Three of the four Divergers were principals. The elementary principal and teacher had the same learning style. The two individual themes that emerged was that each teacher identified themselves as a different learner and two of the three principals felt that they had two learning styles.

The following excerpts reveal the reasons why the participant identified himself/herself as a

particular learner. Figure 4 shows the related themes.

What type of learner do you think you are according to Kolb's learning styles?

Teacher A stated,

> I think I am a Diverger. I'm pretty good at generating good ideas and I definitely am able to see things from different perspectives.

Teacher B stated,

> Actually, I think I am more of a Converger. Because for me, if I have a problem or if there is a problem, I don't immediately go out and say, 'oh let's get together and discuss this.' I'm more of a 'Ok, let me go out and do the research' and just let me in my own world.

Teacher C stated,

> I'm more of an Assimilator. I like concepts. I really like concepts that actually deal with specific people.

Principal A stated,

> I think I'm the Diverger. I always look at things. I always look at the whole picture. I always visualize and by visualizing I do get to general ideas.

Principal B stated,

> I think I'm a Diverger for one. That is about reflecting. Like I'm always reflecting about work. Sometimes I'm a Converger, but it all depends. I think when you have to make change, you have to think of every possibility before the change can be implemented and effective.

Principal C stated,

> I think I have to be the first one (Diverger) and the third one (Accommodator). I can stay focused but I'm emotional. Emotional to the point about caring. You gotta be caring about other people. I think I'm a risk taker. When we look at things on this campus, I know that anything that has happened can be fixed. I will fix it, or find someone that help get it fixed.

Conclusion

Upon reflection of research question four, there was not a relationship between the learning styles of the teacher or principal. What was interesting to observe however, was the reaction from the principals and teachers when asked to identify their particular learning style. Principal C even joked and said that these words were not in his vocabulary. As adults, we do not give ourselves time to reflect upon learning styles and the importance of knowing the learning styles of others. What is clear however, is that adults do have a learning style and will tend to learn more effectively if the learning is directed according to their preference.

Identified Themes for Research Question 4

Consensus Theme	Supported Theme	Individual Theme
	· All three principals were Divergers. · Four of the six participants were Divergers. · The elementary principal and teacher had the same learning style.	· Each teacher had a different learning style. · Two of the six participants had two different learning styles.

Figure 4.1 Research Question 4: What is the congruence between teachers and principals learning styles as defined by Kolb?

Research Question 5: What is the congruence between teachers and principals perspectives on the purpose of feedback from walkthroughs and evaluations?

The following questions were asked of teachers and principals to acquire data to answer research question 5:

Teachers

1.   What thoughts or feelings are going through your head when you see the

administrator enter your room?

2.   What is the purpose of the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS)?

3.   How has the PDAS evaluation system helped you improve instruction?

Principals

1.   What is the purpose of evaluating teachers with PDAS instrument?

2.   Do you feel this tool is effective in fulfilling the purpose? Why or why not?

A primary responsibility of a principal is to evaluate teachers. In Texas teachers are evaluated with the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS). Chapter two revealed that teacher evaluations are simply becoming an action or routine that principals complete at the end of the year (Frase, 1992). The researcher wanted to explore if this perception was congruent with the six participants from this study. Time is such a precious commodity and if principals are completing evaluations just because they are mandated, the value and purpose of an evaluation becomes lessened.

Upon analysis of the data, teacher questions revealed no consensus theme, but three supported and five individual themes were found. Teachers did feel nervous when principals entered the classroom. Two of the three teachers felt that PDAS did help improve their instruction. PDAS also gives teachers an opportunity to grow professionally. Individual themes regarding teacher evaluations included: minimal improvement with instruction, monitor system, feedback for teachers, planning tool for the summer, and the opportunity to show the administrator quality instruction in the classroom. Principal questions found one consensus, one supported and three individual themes. All principals acknowledged that PDAS is a tool used to evaluate teachers. Two of the three principals felt that PDAS is used to comply with a state mandate. Individual responses included that PDAS helps improve instruction, documents teachers, and needs to change to reflect current standards.

71

The following excerpts reveal teacher and principal perceptions on teacher evaluations. Figure 5 will also reveal the consensus, supported and individual themes.

Teacher

What thoughts or feelings are going through your head when you see the administrator enter your room?

Teacher A stated,

> My heart races, I panic. When she comes in, I want to make sure that it's my best. I want to make sure that I am asking the right questions. I want to make sure that my kids are engaged and thinking at a higher level and making connections to the real world. The second she walks in there are all these things that race through your head and you tend to tense up a little but at the same time it kind of excites you and puts you in check.

Teacher B stated,

> At first, it's nervousness, but now I'm like, 'Ok, they are in here for a walkthrough, keep going with your kids and get done what you need to get done.' Just act natural.

Teacher C stated,

> Now, I don't think of anything because it happens so often, so now I just continue with my business and do my thing.

What is the purpose of the PDAS?

Teacher A stated,

> It's to create the best working environment for those students. It is to make sure that you know those students are reaching that higher level of thinking. It is to make sure that teachers are creating an environment to do their best every day.

Teacher B stated,

> It's for the effectiveness for the teacher and o see where they are proficient at, where they are exceeding at and where they might be lacking. What can they do to improve, what is going on in the classroom and what are they doing with professional development.

Teacher C stated,

> I would feel it is to keep an eye on teachers to see if they are doing their job the way they are supposed to. I'm not too sure.

How has the PDAS evaluation system helped you improve instruction?

Teacher A stated,

> In the end, it's all about student. It's helped me in the sense that it has helped me grow.
> I'm always learning. You need to change what you are doing so that students can benefit
> from that.

Teacher B stated,

> It has helped me tremendously! I go back and I look at my PDAS and I see it as research
> for me. I look at what satisfactory versus proficient versus exceeds expectations. I want
> everything to be exceeds expectations. I go back and I look to see what I need to work
> on. I literally plan it out in the summer.

Teacher C stated,

> Honestly, very minimal, but I guess like I said before, you kind of make sure it keeps you
> on task because people are looking at you and documenting what you are doing.

Principal

What is the purpose of evaluating teachers with the PDAS instrument?

Principal A stated,

> First of all, to comply with state and district requirements. It also gives us an opportunity
> to go in and evaluate and see what's happening in regards to student learning. It's a
> conversation we engage with teachers in regards to performance.

Principal B stated,

> I think there are two different purposes. It satisfies the evaluation tool required by the
> state and it's the culminating total of the evaluation of walkthroughs, feedback and
> results. It's a tool to really document teachers on how they are doing. I think more
> importantly than the x's and check marks in the column, is the written piece or feedback
> that we provide.

Principal C stated,

> It's all about improving instruction. The expectation is that no matter what time I enter
> the room, I am going to see quality instruction. I don't want to see the dog and pony
> show. You know, it's not about hurting a teacher, it's all about helping. PDAS can do
> that if you use it the right way.

Do you feel this tool is effective in fulfilling the purpose? Why or why not?

Principal A stated,

> I guess it's a tool that helps us to comply. If the purpose is just to go in and evaluate and comply, then yes, it's effective.

Principal B stated,

> No, I think there could be a better instrument. One, I think today with the changes in our standards and what we are expecting with students and where our state has gone with what that need to look like for children, I think the tool and the instrument needs to be changed as well. I would love to see more of a teacher feedback piece. Maybe it has outlived its purpose.

Principal C stated,

> You have to have something! We have had a number of instruments. This is a state evaluation. You have to have something.

Conclusion

"Most evaluations are not used to target the needs of individual teachers and help them select professional development to address those areas in which they need additional knowledge or skills" (National Board Resource Center, 2012, p. v). The teacher evaluation process has been labeled inadequate, of little value in helping teachers improve instruction and deficiencies (Frase, 1994). The answers to this research question supported the literature that was presented in chapter two.

Upon reflection of the research question five, the researcher felt that teachers and principals do not feel that the teacher evaluation system is effective. Principals clearly felt that the teacher evaluations are conducted and completed simply because it is a state requirement. Evaluating teachers is a responsibility that is part of the role or job description of a principal. Principals feel that the tool or the container that holds the feedback is not effective. In reviewing research question three, teachers and principals felt that feedback from the evaluations and

walkthroughs have helped them become a better teacher or leader. The researcher questions why

principals and teachers think that feedback and the evaluation tool are separate entities.

Identified Themes for Research Question 5

Consensus Theme	Supported Theme	Individual Theme
TEACHER		
	· Nervousness and panic.	· Minimal help
	· Helps improve instruction.	· Keeps an eye on teachers.
	· Helps teachers grow professionally.	· PDAS is feedback for teachers.
		· I always want to do my best.
		· Plan instruction over the summer.
PRINCIPAL		
· Tool to evaluate teachers.	· Compliance for the state.	· Improves instruction.
		· Documents teachers.
		· Ineffective tool.

Figure 5.1 Research Question 5: What is the congruence between principals' perspectives and teachers' perspectives on the purpose of feedback from walkthroughs and evaluations?

Research Question 6: What is the congruence between principals and teachers feedback

delivery as defined by Hattie and Timperley?

To acquire the data to answer research, the researcher asked the following questions:

Teachers

1. What type of feedback do you receive more often from your administrator: task level,

   process level, self-regulation or self-level?

2. What type of feedback do you provide to your students; task level, process level,

self-regulation, or self-level?

Principals

1. What type of feedback are you most comfortable with: task level, process level, self-regulation or self-level?

2. What type of training have you had in providing feedback to teachers?

According to a study from Hattie and Timperley (2007), there is a 'framework that identifies four types of feedback that motivates learning: task learning, process level, self-regulation and self-level" (p. 90). Task level is based on work about a task or product. Process level feedback is directed at the process of learning. Self- regulation feedback is the ability of the learner to self-check his/her learning given prompts. Self-level is the most common yet ineffective feedback that can be given to the learner. This type of feedback is comments or praises that are not specific to the learner, such as, 'you are a wonderful teacher' or 'you did a great job'.

The researcher interviewed the participants, and provided them with definitions from Hattie and Timperley. "Feedback provided to teachers should be descriptive and based on what the teacher and students actually do" (Feeney, 2007, p.195). While conducting walkthrough visits or evaluations, principals should be providing meaning feedback to teachers. Teachers should be able to incorporate the feedback given to them in their instruction. As teachers are in the classroom, they too should be providing meaningful feedback to their students. This feedback is the comprehension or understanding of the learning cycle. This is the reflection piece that helps put together the learning framework. How often do principals and teachers reflect on the actual feedback that they deliver to teachers or students? These questions gave teachers and principals an opportunity to explore the type of feedback that they feel they

administer on campus or in the classroom. Upon analysis of the collected data from teachers, there was one consensus theme, and two individual themes. Upon analysis of the collected data from the principals, there was one consensus theme, two supported themes, and one individual theme.

When asked about the type of feedback teachers receive from their administrator, one consensus theme arose: teachers were able to identify the type of feedback from Hattie and Timperley, but all three responses were different. When asked about the type of feedback they deliver to students, each teacher responded with a different type of feedback. There was no consensus or supported theme regarding the type of feedback a teacher delivers to students.

When asked about the training principals receive regarding feedback, all three principals acknowledged that they had some type of training. The training has been minimal, but there has been some type of support given to principals. A supported theme regarding feedback emerged when principals reflected on the type of feedback they deliver to their teachers. Two of the three principals identified that they deliver self- regulation feedback. Two of the three principals felt comfortable delivering two types of feedback to their teachers. It was important to have teachers reflect upon the instruction in the classroom and how he/she can improve that process. The two individual themes that were found with this question was that one principal felt that training on feedback was not really necessary. In addition, each principal interviewed identified a different type of feedback that he/she feels comfortable delivering to teachers.

Excerpts reveal the teachers and principals responses to feedback. Figure 6 identifies the three related themes.

Teacher

What type of feedback do you receive from your administrator: task level, process level,

self-regulation or self-level?

Teacher A stated,

> I think definitely task level. When she goes in, it's not as much as when she goes in, she is just looking for, you know, this is the lesson, it's more about, what is the end result? If she does find work that is unacceptable she will pull us in and say 'you need to fix this'. She doesn't just say, 'you are a wonderful teacher or this is a wonderful lesson'. She will tell us why. She is very specific with her feedback, which is good because it is not general or broad.

Teacher B stated,

> Self -regulation. The principal may provide feedback to the teacher hat will allow him/her to incorporate the components for the next visit. For me, that is how it is. They (administration) give me feedback and then I immediately go and try to apply it the next day.

Teacher C stated,

> Process level. They (administration) are trying to see if all the students are learning and the process that we are trying to get them to learn.

What type of feedback do you provide to your students: task level, process level, self -

regulation or self level?

Teacher A stated,

> I guess a little bit of all of them. There are sometimes where I walk around an say, 'you are doing a great job' just to get their spirits up. Maybe I should be a bit more specific with why they are doing a great job. I guess it all depends at the task at hand. I strive definitely to be very specific and get them to complete the task or project that we are working on. I strive to do more task level

Teacher B stated,

> Wow! Mine is more process level. I am very directed on the process of learning. Are they (students) getting the steps, or the procedures? Are they (students) understanding the parts of the problem? Are they (students) understanding the concept and how it relates to the problem?

Teacher C stated,

> Mainly task level because everything is basically a 'yes or no', percentage grade, TAKS score or that type of stuff. Every now and then we will do some process level, but pretty much it is task level.

Principal

What type of feedback are you most comfortable with: task level, process level, self-

regulation or self-level?

Teacher A stated,

> I'm comfortable, very comfortable with self- regulation. It gives me the ability to go back and reflect, so I try to instill that with teachers. I'm also good with task level. Based on the expectations, I let them know this is what I'm expecting. I can go in and do the task, but if they are not reflecting, learning or applying, then it (feedback) is not going to work. So self-regulation is what I feel more comfortable with.

Teacher B stated,

> I think sometimes, yes I do task level, sometimes I have to do process level and then I think about self -regulation. I think definitely the two, process and task level. I am not comfortable with self-level. I think that is real fake. I mean there has to be substance to it. There has to be a balance to it. I don't think you can always build people up because then you get a false sense. I just want people to be real in the room.

Teacher C stated,

> I really look at self-regulation. You know sometimes they know what to do. They might not just do it. Sometimes we take the easy way. Sometimes we don't follow through on something. I like the idea to talk to teachers about what needs to get done.

What type of training have you had in providing feedback to teachers?

Principal A stated,

> Cognitive coaching was like seven years ago through the university. I took that course. The district actually sent us to Cognitive Coaching.

Principal B stated,

> I think probably the only real training about feedback would be when we had small training on like the 3-minute walkthrough. I think we only had like maybe one or two meetings on that and then it disappeared. I always come back to believe it or not a

comment from a former superintendent about leading with courage. To me courage is about doing the right thing, just be real, be authentic. Just deal with what needs to be dealt with.

Principal C stated,

> The district offered training through Region 19 on the evaluation systems we have had over the years. I don't need training in knowing if a classroom is organized or unorganized. I don't need training to go into a room and see if it is clean and orderly. I don't need training to see if the kids are on task or not. The weak area I might have might be curriculum, but that is why I have other administrators on the team.

Conclusion

"Two of the essential ingredients of learning are feedback and challenge. The greater the challenge, the higher the probability that one seeks and needs feedback, and the more important it is a teacher to ensure that the learner is on the right path to successfully meet the challenge" (Hattie, 2009, p. 177). Hattie and Timperley have been researching the effects of feedback between teachers and students by analyzing over eight thousand studies. Because of their research with feedback, the researcher selected the four types of feedback that they have identified that motivate learning: task level, process level, self-regulation and self-level (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). The most improvement in student learning takes place when students got "information feedback about a task and how to do it more effectively". Learning achievement is low when feedback focused on 'praise, rewards and punishment' (p. 84).

Upon reflection of research question six, the researcher felt that given the amount of research that is available in regards to effective feedback, more training should be given to principals and teachers. When reviewing the definitions of feedback with the participants, all of them were unfamiliar with the studies and research from Hattie and Timperley. Teacher and principal feedback were not congruent with one another. If given the proper training, the researcher believes that teachers and principals would see an alignment with the types of feedback that is given and received by both parties.

Identified Themes for Research Question 6

Consensus Theme	Supported Theme	Individual Theme
TEACHER		
· Feedback from administrator was identified.		· Each teacher received a different type of feedback from their administrator. · Each teacher delivers a different type of feedback to their students.
PRINCIPAL		
· Feedback training has been provided to principals.	· Two types of feedback identified. · Self-regulation feedback.	· Training is not really needed.

Figure 6.1 Research Question 6: What is the congruence between principals' and teachers' feedback delivery as defined by Hattie and Timperley?

Theoretical Framework Analysis

Kolb's learning theory is a cyclical model that is based on the transformation of experience. Experience is translated into observation and reflection then into concepts and planning. The learner must experience something first, reflect upon that experience, think about what is happening and finally develop plan or test for the new experience. A teacher and a principal (learners) both experience walkthroughs or observations. During these experiences, the learner reflects upon the actual evaluation or observation. The learner then begins to form abstract concepts from the experience and creates a plan or in this case feedback regarding the whole process. The research questions that were asked to the participants took them through the process of learning. The principals shared the experience of conducting walkthroughs, observing and reflecting what they saw in the classroom and then thought about what they were observing in order to generate feedback to communicate with teachers so that teachers could improve their instruction and enhance their learning. Teachers were receiving feedback from walkthroughs,

reflecting on the feedback, making generalizations about the feedback in order to develop a plan that would help improve their instruction in the classroom. The learning process is continuous with an outcome for quality teaching and student learning.

The next chapter provides recommendations and implications from this study.

Chapter Five

Summary, Recommendations and Personal Reflections

Overview

The use of "walkthrough" teacher evaluations has become an increasingly popular approach used by school administrators to engage in more frequent observations of actual practices by teachers as they work in classrooms each day. The promise of this approach was that, by increasing the frequency of principal observations, coupled with the randomness of observations as unannounced events would ensure that teachers were not able to "stage" instruction in ways that might mask the actual practices used in schools each day. In 2009, one public school district in Texas mandated a new policy wherein administrators would be required to conduct at least one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs during the school year. This utilization of the walkthrough observation of teachers as an expectation for principals is not unique to one district. The assumed value of requiring unannounced and random evaluation of teachers has made this practice appealing to school districts across the nation. Among the merits of frequent classroom visits are:

1. It will be possible to observe normal practice by teachers on a regular basis, rather than sessions which may be rehearsed to impress principals who visit classrooms on an infrequent, but typically planned, basis.

2. Since the instructional practices of teachers on a regular basis is what may serve as the most concrete example of what is going on in the teaching and learning practices of a school, the principal gains insights on teaching behavior on a regular basis throughout the school year.

3. Walkthrough evaluations are frequent and become part of the operational culture of a school; "teacher observation day" is no longer the traumatic special event that it once was.

4. Frequency of contact between teachers and trained observers leads to a cycle of ongoing and regular feedback.

5. Feedback provided to teachers enables them to engage in continuous self-directed professional development.

6. The result of this process is the foundation of focused improvement of teaching leading to better learning by students.

7. The principal serves as a true instructional leader.

The goal of teacher evaluation in any form is the improvement of student learning through the improvement of teaching practice. The use of frequent unannounced walkthrough observations by principals has been cited often as a further step toward increasing the efficacy of instruction (Protheroe, 2009). The addition of walkthrough observations as regular responsibility for principals means a major increase in the responsibilities and workloads of campus administrators. The purpose of the study reported here was an effort to ascertain if the addition of an activity that, with approximately ten minutes per observation one hundred and forty-four times each school year (approximately two full weeks of a principal's work year), would be indeed a way to improve instructional practices of teachers in a school.

To address this goal, this study made use of qualitative research methodology (McMillan & Schumachker, 2006) which used collected data through structured and focused interviews of teachers and principals working in one school year to obtain perceptions of whether feedback from walkthrough teacher observations met the promise of better teaching and focus on student

learning across a school district. Teachers and principals were interviewed to determine the

value of walkthroughs and responses to the following research questions that guided this study:

1. How does the principal analyze data in order to provide effective feedback to the

teacher?

2. What does the teacher do with the feedback that is provided on the walkthrough forms

and evaluations?

3. How has feedback from walkthroughs or evaluations improved teachers and principals

as instructional leaders?

4. What is the congruence between teachers and principals learning styles as defined by

David Kolb?

5. What is the congruence between principal's perspectives `and teachers perspectives on

the purpose of feedback from walkthroughs and evaluations?

6. What is the congruence between principals an teachers feedback delivery as defined by

Hattie and Timperley?

Answers related to the extent to which the walkthrough evaluation of teachers was

effective according to insights shared by teachers and principals, as noted in the previous

chapter. Here implications for practice in schools as well as future research activities are noted

as they related to the findings and conclusions of this study.

Lessons Learned from the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide information about walkthroughs through the lenses of principals and teachers. More specifically, the researcher wanted to examine the importance of feedback from the walkthroughs and evaluations. In summary, below are the valuable lessons learned from conducting this study:

Walkthroughs must be focused visits so that the feedback is focused. Walkthroughs cannot be an activity that is simply checked off from the administrators' schedule. They must have a focus or a purpose that will be used to help improve teaching and learning. Walkthroughs are more than looking at a checklist and filling out a form. Walkthroughs must be time that is invested that is truly looking at how to improve or validate learning.

Once a walkthrough has been conducted, a follow up visits must be made to ensure that the feedback is being utilized. The administrator must take the time to visit face-to-face with the teacher to discuss the data that was observed from the walkthrough. Even though the teacher has the opportunity to view the data, conducting a face-to-face conference will help bring clarity to the expectations and feedback that is provided to them. This means that additional time in the school day must be devoted to face-to-face conferences with teachers.

As these conferences are scheduled, it is important to have the teacher participate in the conference. The administrator should ask the teacher how he/she felt about the observation. Allow the teacher to become self-reflective before the administrator starts to provide the feedback. In addition, clarify the expectations to the teachers so that they are aware of what the administrator will be looking for during the next follow up walkthrough. If the feedback that was given from a previous walkthrough s not being utilized, it is important for the administrator to find out from the teacher why the feedback is not be utilized.

Walkthroughs are a snapshot of what is and not happening in the classroom. It is important for administrators to validate the work of teachers. Administrators should take the time to acknowledge the work of teachers when earned. Administrators need to be cognizant of the manner in which feedback is given to teachers. Is this delivery of feedback given to teachers the same delivery principals would want to receive feedback and acknowledgement from their supervisor? Feedback from walkthroughs can be very powerful if it is purposeful and focused. Principals must use walkthroughs as a means to improve the learning on campus.

Connections from Literature Review

This study concurred with most of the literature review that was presented in chapter two.

Teacher Evaluations

Principals felt that teacher evaluation process needed improvement. It is vital to evaluate teachers but perhaps the model or instrument that is currently used in the state of Texas is outdated or as Principal B stated, 'run its' course.' Teachers did however feel that evaluations helped improve their professional growth. Evaluations and walkthroughs are merely a paper trail. Teacher C stated, 'it keeps you on task because people are looking and documenting what you are doing.'

Walkthrough Evaluations

Conducting one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs a year is quite a task. Even with that high of a number of walkthrough visits, principals still felt that they needed to be in classrooms much more. The demands of their job and responsibilities sometimes limit the amount of time they can devote to classroom observations. Walkthoughs are effective if they have a clear focus and if effective feedback is given to teachers. Participants felt that feedback

was important and that conducting follow up visits was vital to ensure if learning was taking place.

Feedback

Teachers concurred with research as they stated that they preferred immediate feedback. Teachers wanted feedback to help improve their practice in the classroom. Principals would follow up with teachers to check for understanding. Both teachers and principals felt that they knew what they were looking for as they conducted walkthroughs. These 'look fors' made it easier to provide feedback to teachers. Further training on effective strategies of feedback is needed.

Adult Learning

Learning takes place with the learner sees value and understanding to the experience. Once the learner understands the rational or purpose behind the experience only then will learning take place. Each participant understood that learning styles exist and that it was important to identify styles in order to deliver instruction effectively.

Implications for Practice

Principal and school leadership can be improved as a result from this study. The most obvious improvement is providing principals and teachers with a solid rationale as to why it is important to conduct walkthroughs on campus. This rationale should also include commonalities in terms of the "look fors" every administrator is looking for. These "look fors" should be consistent and aligned district wide to promote continuity. Walkthroughs should not be conducted to fulfill a directive. Walkthroughs are to be conducted because there is a need to improve and enhance classroom instruction.

Districts should provide more training in the areas of feedback for teachers and principals. Utilizing the research from Hattie and Timperley in regards to effective feedback will be an excellent starting point to engage administrators, teachers and students in conversations that will help promote teaching and learning.

The teacher evaluation system in Texas has been in place since 1997. Based on the research from this study, teachers and principals agree that the tool needs to be updated to reflect the current standards and expectations from the state. Students' across the state of Texas have been given a new assessment during the 2011-2012 school year. Perhaps a new evaluation tool can be developed to reflect the changes and expectations.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on an analysis of the data collected in this study, and after a review of the conclusions, the following recommendations are offered to improve practice in the field of education. Hattie and Timperley (2008) have conducted many studies regarding feedback between teachers and students. Based on this research there seems to be a need to initiate a study that examines feedback from principals to teachers. Perhaps studies from Hattie and Timperley can be replicated using the feedback model between teachers and principals in order to motivate learning.

Administrators were given a mandate to complete one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs during a school year. To answer the question as to 'why should I complete this?' (other than because I was told to do so) a quantitative study should be conducted to examine the outcome of student achievement based on the one hundred and forty-four walkthroughs that were conducted in the school district.

Since walkthroughs are used to help improve teacher instruction, it would be suggested to conduct a quantitative study that examines the effectiveness of walkthroughs in regards to teacher improvement. Have teachers improved their instruction because of walkthroughs or have more teachers been terminated due to the amount of data that has been accumulated from the walkthroughs and evaluations? Have more teachers been terminated since 2009 and was it attributed to the data collected from the walkthroughs?

Personal Reflections

The researcher started this research by wanting to look at something that would benefit school principals. The researcher wanted to look at a practice that principals do on a weekly if not daily basis: observe teachers. The researcher wanted to look at this practice in a manner that would take the familiar experience and change it into something unfamiliar. So as principals looked at walkthroughs or evaluations, the researcher realized that principals have been filling out forms and checking off checklists because that was expected from them. The researcher realized that administrators did not really pay close attention to the thought process of generating feedback and realizing the impact that is made from thoughts to paper to teachers.

The interviews that were conducted for this research allowed the researcher to visualize the process that teachers go through as they open the email to read the feedback or as they sit in a chair to confer with the administrator. It was so important for the researcher to hear how passionate the participants were about wanting to be a better teacher and how the feedback they received helps them do that. However short or long the feedback was, as long as they received some type of feedback that kept them wanting more. It made the researcher realize how important it is to deliver quality feedback.

The principals that participated in this study made the researcher realize just how much work they devote to this profession. For the most part, they do not see giving teachers feedback a compliance issue. They know their thoughts, their beliefs about teaching are important to share with teachers. They believe in their teachers and know that if want to see changes in the classroom, walkthroughs or observations are clearly needed. Their feedback from the walkthroughs or evaluations will be the catalyst to get that done. If anything, these principals expect more and demand more from the education system to support what they need to get their job done. They have no problem reflecting on their learning and they have no problem fixing things when they are told, just give them feedback, resources and tools they need to get it done. The researcher walked away from these interviews feeling validated, motivated and inspired to continue learning in the field of education. The researcher walked away knowing that the practice of walkthroughs and evaluation is a vital activity for teachers and principals if proper attention is given to the ritual. Teachers and principals must be given time to analyze the data from the walkthroughs and evaluations to make crucial and important decisions about teaching and learning. If walkthroughs are completed, just to say you have been in a classroom, then the meaning and purpose of walkthroughs is lost. It quite simply becomes an empty ceremony that causes more harm than good.

References

Aiex, N. (1993). A Communicative Approach to Observation and Feedback. ERIC
   Clearinghouse on Reading, English and Communication Digest, 87.

Arnold, M. (2004). The Practitioner: How Successful Principals Lead and
   Influence. Retrieved September 23, 2010, from
   http://cnx.org/content/ml14255

Best, J., & Kahn, J. (2003). *Research in Education*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (1998). *Qualitative research for Education*. Boston: Allyn &
   Bacon

Bolman, L.G., & Deal, T. (2002). *Reframing the Path to School Leadership: A Guide for
   Teachers and Principals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Carter, J. (1984). Instructional Learner feedback: A literature review with
   Implications for software development. *The Computing Teacher,
   12 (2), 53-55*

Center for American Progress (2010). *Changing Teacher Evaluations to Create
   Effective teachers*. Retrieved March 12, 2010, from
   www.americanprogress.org

Coigligh, C. (2008). Communication and the Principal. *Journal of the Irish Primary
   Principals' Network, April 2008*.

Conner, M. (2007). How Adults Learn. Retrieved September 20, 2010, from
   www.agelesslearner.com/intros/adultlearning.html

Cudeiro, A. (2009, January/February). The Next Generation of Walkthroughs,
   Leadership, 18-21.

Creswell, J. (2008). *Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

David, J. (2008). Classroom Walkthroughs, *Educational Leadership, 65 (4),* 81-82.

Dimbleby, R. & Burton, G., (1998). *More than Words. An introduction to
   Communication* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.

Donaldson, M. (2010, May). No More Valentine's. *Educational Leadership, 67(8),
   54-58*.

Donaldson, M. (2011). Principals' Approaches to Developing Teacher Quality.
   Center for American Progress.

Downey, C., Steffy, B., English, F., Frase, L., Poston, W. (2004). *The three minute Classroom Walkthrough,* Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California.

Dunkleberger, G. (1982). "Classroom observations- What should principals look for?" *NASSP Bulletin, 66(458),* 9-15. EJ 274-276.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. Whittrock (ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 119-161). New York: Macmillan.

Feeney, E. (2007). Quality Feedback: The Essential Ingredient for Teacher Success. *The Clearing House*, March/April 2007, 191-197.

Ferguson, R. (1998). Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations and the Black-White Test Score Gap. *Urban Education July 2003, 38, 460-507.*

Fidishun, D. (n.d.). *Andragogy and Technology: Integrating Adult Learning Theory As We Teach with Technology*. Retrieved April 20, 2010, from http://frank.mtsu.du/~itconf/proceed00/fidishun.htm

Frase, L.E. (1992). Constructive Feedback in teaching is missing. *Education*. 113 (2), 176-81.

Frase, L. & Hartzel, R. (2003). *School Management by Wandering Around*. R & L Education.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*: *selected essays*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Ginsberg, M.G., & Murphy, D. (2002). *How walkthroughs open doors*. Boulder, CO. Retrieved February 2012, from: http://teacherweb.com/MA/teachers

Glickman, C. (2002), *Leadership for Learning: How to help teachers succeed*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Goldhaber, G. (1983). *Organizational Communication*. Madison, Wisconsin: Brown & Benchmark Publication.

Guskey, T. (2009). *The Teacher as Assessment Leader*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Hall, P. (2005). Voices from the Field: The Principal's Presence and Supervision to Improve Teaching. *SEDL, Leadership for Learning, 17 (2), 12-16.*

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: principles in practice*. Madison
Avenue, New York: Routledge.

Hattie, J. & Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational
Research*, 77 (1), 81-112.

Healey, M. & Jenkins, A. (2000). Kolb's Experinetial Learning Theory an Its Application in
Geography in Higher Education. *Journal of Geography, 99,* 185-195.

Joyce Foundation, (2009). *Improving Teacher Quality*. Retrieved November 2011,
from: www.joycefdn.org/teacherquality

Kachur, D. (2010). *Classroom Walkthroughs to Improve Teaching and Learning*.
Larchmont, N.Y: Eye on Education.

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential Learning,* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Knowles, M. (1998). *The Adult Learner*. Houston: Gulf Publishing.

Kulhavy, R. (1977). Feedback in written instruction. *Review of Educational
Research, 47 (1), 211-222*.

Lester, S. (1999). *An Introduction to phenomenological research*. Retrieved
September 2010, from: http://www.sid.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf

Lewis, A. (2001). *Add it Up: Using research to improve education for low-income
and minority students*. Washington, DC: Poverty & Race Research Action
Council, p.x.

Lincoln, Y., & Gruba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage
Publications.

Mathers, C., & Oliva, M. (2008). Improving Instruction through Effective Teacher
Evaluation; Options for States and Districts. *National Comprehensive
Center for Teacher Quality,* from: www.ncctq.org

McMillan, J., & S. Schumacher. (2006). *Research in Education*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership (2006). Types of Feedback. *Milwaukee
Mathematics Partnership Year 3 Annual Report 2005-2006*.

Mory, E. (2004). Feedback Research Revisited. The University of North Carolina at
Wilmington.

National Board Resource Center (2010). A Quality Teacher in Every Classroom: Creating a Teacher Evaluation System that Works in California. *National Board Resource Center, Stanford University*.

New Teacher Project, (2009). *Teacher Evaluation*, Retrieved March 2011, from www.tntp.org/widget

Orleans, M. (2009), Phenomenology. *Encyclopedia of Sociology,* Retrieved October 2011, from http://www.flinet.com/~carp/

Pampino, R. (2003). Weekly Feedback vs. Daily Feedback: An Application in Retail. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management, 23 (2/3)*.

Patton, J. (1996). *Analysis of Thinking and Research about Qualitative Methods*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Patton, M. (1980). *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverley Hills: Sage Publications.

Peterson, D. (2010). *5 Principles for the Teacher of Adults*. Retrieved 9/20/2010, from http://adilted.about.com/od/teachers/a/teachingadults.htm

Pitler, H. & Goodwin, B., (2008, Summer). Classroom walkthroughs: Learning to see the trees and the forest. *Changing Schools*. 9-11.

Platt, A. (2000). *The Skillful Leader Confronting Mediocre Teaching*. Acton, MA. Ready About Press.

Protheroe, N. (2009, March/April) Using Classroom Walk-throughs to Improve Instruction. *Principal*, 30-34.

Public Education Network and *Education Week*. (2002). Accountability for all: *What voters want from education candidates*. Retrieved September 20, 2010, from http://www.publiceducation.org

Region XIII Education Service Center, (2011). *Professional Development and Appraisal System*. Retrieved March 2012 from http://www5.esc13.net/pdas

Riener, C. (2010). The Myth of Learning Styles. *Change, September/October*. P. 32-35

Reyes, P. (1992). Teachers' Satisfaction with Principals' Communication. The *Journal of Educational Research, 85 (3)*.

Rissman, L.M., Miller, D. H. & Torgesen, J. K. (2009). *Adolescent literacy walk-through For principals: A guide for instructional leaders*. Portsmouth, N.H. RMC Research Corporation, center on Instruction.

Rossi, G. (2007). *The Classroom Walkthrough: The Perceptions of Elementary School Principals on its Impact on Student Achievement*. University of Pittsburgh

Sanders, W. & Rivers, J., (1996). Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement, *Journal of Personnel Evaluation In Education 12 (3)*.

Saphier, J. (2008). *The Skillful Teacher: Building your Teaching Strengths*. Acton, MA. Research for Better Teaching.

Scheeler, M. (2004). Providing Performance Feedback to Teachers: A Review *Teacher Education and Special Education, 27(3), 59-70.*

Schmoker, M. (2006). The New Fundamnetals of Leadership. *SEDL Letter, 17(2), 3-7.*

Sheppard, Ken., (1992). Two Feedback Types: Do they make a Difference? *A Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 23 (1), 103-110.*

Skretta, J. (2007, May). Using Walk-Throughs to Gather. *Principal Leadership, 16-23.*

Sloan, W. (2011, March). What Did You Say? *Education*, *53(3), 1-5.*

Spradley, J. (1979). *The Ethnographic Interview*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.

Sternberg, R.J., & Zhang, L. (2000). Perspectives on cognitive, learning and Thinking styles. NJ: Lawrence Erilbaum.

Van Houten, (1980). Feedback interventions and driving speed. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, *14*, 261-271.

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived Experiences: Human Science for Action Sensitive Pedagogy, Albany NY:* State University of New York Press.

Varlas, L. (2009). Making Teacher Evaluations Meaningful. *ASCD 51 (11)* p. 1-6.

Wallace Foundation, (2010, April). Re-Imaging the Job of Leading Schools. *NSDC, 31(2).*

Wheatley, M. (2005). *Finding our way: Leadership for an uncertain time*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Whitaker, T. (2003). *What Great Principals Do Differently: Fifteen things that matter Most*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Wlodkowski, R. (1993). *Enhancing Adult Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Curriculum Vitae

Catherine Kennedy was born in El Paso in 1967. She is the third child born to Antonio and Santiaga Villanueva. She attended Eastwood High school and graduated in 1986. She attendedthe University of Texas at El Paso where she earned her bachelors degree in 1990 and her Master's Degree in 1995.

Catherine began her teaching career as a fifth grade teacher at Cadwallader Elementary. After three years of teaching she wanted to pursue a career in Educational Law. In the process of getting accepted into law school she enrolled in graduate school at UTEP and simply fell in love with administration. She became an assistant principal at Sageland MicroSociety in 1995. After three years as an elementary assistant principal she ventured into Early Childhood as an assistant principal at the Ysleta Pre-K Center. In 2002, Catherine became principal at Robert F. Kennedy Pre K Center. She served two years working with pre-k students before returning back to the elementary setting. In 2004, Catherine became the principal at East Point Elementary and worked with elementary students and teachers for six years. After twenty years in elementary education, Catherine decided to enter the secondary world where she is currently the principal at Valley View Middle School.

Catherine decided to return to school and joined the Doctoral Program at the University of Texas at El Paso in 2007. In May of 2012 she defended her dissertation. She currently lives in El Paso, Texas.

Catherine is married to Michael Kennedy and has two children, Anthony and Triana. Anthony is a freshman at Eastwood High School and Triana is a seventh grader at Eastwood Middle School.

Permanent address: 1381 Emerald Gate Lane

El Paso, Texas 79936

This dissertation was typed by Catherine Kennedy.