TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF EVALUATION FEEDBACK

By

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Dedication

To my amazing husband Vinnie and my wonderful sons Brandon and Zachary.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is my everything. I give You all the glory for blessing me with so much.

Next, my doctoral degree would not have been possible without my family's support. To my husband Vinnie, for encouraging me each and every day to see this journey through. You supported me when I was frustrated, stressed, and tired and reminded me take just one day at a time. I wouldn't have made it this far without you. To my sons Brandon and Zachary for being so smart, funny and absolutely precious to me. You have such bright futures ahead of you. Thank you for believing in me. Thank you to my parents, Kenneth and Eleanor Pelletier, who raised me in such a wonderful, nurturing home environment. You taught me how to love life and love people. You are truly the best parents a daughter could ask for, so this is all for you. To my brother and sisters who constantly make me laugh and encouraged me along this journey.

Finally, thank you Dr. Hackett and Dr. Lemoine for always answering my endless emails, phone calls and numerous questions throughout this process. Your dedication and commitment to the Warner Robins cohort was extremely appreciated. Thank you for helping me fulfill my dream.

KELLY PELLETIER RUSH

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Matt Arthur Elementary School   July 2015-Present
Kathleen, GA
2015-Present: Assistant Principal for Instruction
- Testing Coordinator
- Implement professional learning and development for teachers
- Evaluate teachers throughout the year using Georgia TKES evaluation instrument
- Assist teachers in Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies and interventions
- Provide instructional guidance and support

Matt Arthur Elementary School   July 2014-July 2015
Kathleen, GA
Miller Elementary School
Warner Robins, GA
2014-2015: Assistant Principal for Discipline between two schools
- Implemented school-wide discipline procedures
- Developed student behavior management plans for teachers
- Evaluated teachers throughout the year using Georgia TKES evaluation instrument
- Title IX Coordinator
- Textbook Coordinator

Eagle Springs Elementary School   January 2000-July 2014
Byron, GA

2000-2014: Interrelated Special Education Teacher
- Special Education Lead Teacher
- Wrote IEPs for students with disabilities
- Created behavior intervention plans for students
- Leadership team member
- Collaborated with teachers on instructional accommodations for students

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EDUCATION   August 2015-Present
   Ed.D. Curriculum and Leadership
- Columbus State University

   Ed.S. Educational Leadership   August 2008

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M.Ed. Special Education   July 1996
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Abstract

A vital part of the teacher evaluation process was the feedback teachers received following classroom observations. The provision of feedback by school administrators was intended to help teachers improve their instructional practice and raise student achievement. Teachers needed immediate feedback on their performance to make the necessary instructional adjustments in order to be more effective in the classroom. Evaluation feedback needed to be useful and intentional, with suggestions and strategies for improvement. The purpose of this this qualitative case study was to determine teachers' perceptions of teacher evaluation feedback. Eight interviews were conducted at an elementary school in Middle Georgia, using a semi-structured interview protocol.   The study was formed around two research questions. 1) To what extent do teachers perceive teacher evaluation feedback improves performance? 2) To what extent do teachers with varied years of teaching experience perceive teacher evaluation feedback improves performance? Eleven themes and four subthemes emerged through data analysis. Themes included feedback, influence of feedback, TKES evaluation, improvement, conversation, time, trust, emotion, depends on the evaluator, snapshot evaluation and obligation. Subthemes included effective feedback, written feedback, ineffective feedback and verbal feedback. Data results from the study indicated that teachers had negative perceptions of evaluation feedback and the improvement of performance. Participants expressed negativity about several aspects of feedback such as the lack of time principals give to evaluation and feedback, the inconsistency of feedback ratings and lack of influence feedback has on teaching performance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the 21st century, teacher status and evaluation practices were an increasing concern of leaders in the federal government (Hershberg & Robertson-Kraft, 2010). More federal involvement in the teacher evaluation process was a result of criticism towards evaluation practices and the lack of quality teaching (Barnett, 2013). Both federal and state mandates were put in place to reform education, and changes in teacher evaluation instruments and evaluation were set in motion in order to raise the level of teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Marzano, 2012). Although leaders in school districts spent time reforming evaluation processes, Myung and Martinez (2013) indicated that reform efforts were not paired with the need to provide feedback to support teacher improvement (Myung & Martinez, 2013).

Policymakers and educators were heavily focused on the improvement of teacher performance and student growth (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012). To assist in this effort, President George W. Bush signed into law the The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in January of 2002 (Dee & Jacob, 2011). NCLB reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and broadened federal involvement in K-12 public schools placing greater accountability measures on teachers, states, districts and schools to raise student performance (Dee & Jacob, 2011). According to Sartain and Steinberg, (2016), NCLB was also created to remove ineffective teachers and mandated that teachers across the nation become "highly qualified". In addition, Tavakolian and Howell (2012) shared that NCLB was initiated to increase rigor in instruction and bring awareness to the importance of raising student achievement. With NCLB, not only were more highly qualified teachers hired, but also more

stringent teacher evaluation systems were created to determine the effectiveness of teachers on academic achievement (Sartain & Steinberg, 2016).

As the first decade of the 21st century came to a close, legislators and educators continued to view teacher evaluations as ineffective (Marzano & Toth, 2013). Therefore, in 2009, President Barack Obama encouraged states to explore different and more improved methods of evaluating teachers with a $4.35 billion offered in a Race to the Top (RTTT) competition (Stern, 2013). Donaldson (2016) indicated that a goal of the RTTT competition was to generate huge improvements in the teacher evaluation process (Donaldson, 2016), and through the implementation of RTTT the need for improvement in teacher evaluations was implemented (Sartain & Steinberg, 2016). Though NCLB and RTTT were implemented with hopes of increasing teacher performance, Donaldson (2016) contended that although changes in teacher evaluation systems were made, administrators conducted the feedback process with a lack focus on teacher improvement.

Evaluation reform legislation required school districts to make changes to teacher evaluation procedures, including improvement in the feedback process (Myung & Martinez, 2013). According to Roussin and Zimmerman (2014), the focus of typical teacher evaluation procedures was to observe teacher instruction and student learning along with students' standardized test scores. Although these areas were an important part of the evaluation process, the provision of feedback following an observation were the "cornerstone" to teacher improvement (Roussin & Zimmerman, 2014). Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2013) indicated that evaluation systems needed evaluators who not only could identify great teaching and learning, but also could provide meaningful feedback to teachers concerning instruction.

To improve their instructional pedagogy and performance, teachers needed to use the evaluation feedback provided by their principal (Danielson, 2012; Ritter & Barnett, 2016). Many barriers, however, stood in the way of providing teachers necessary feedback for improvement. Lavigne and Chamberlain (2017) found the teacher evaluation process to be very time-consuming for principals, which inevitably reduced the amount of quality time for administrators to provide feedback to teachers. Derrington (2014) also found that new evaluation systems prompted by evaluation reform required extensive time to learn and implement. Similarly, Donaldson (2016) indicated that due to time constraints with evaluators, feedback was not considered effective by many teachers. In order to be effective, feedback needed to be consistent and ongoing in order to help teachers improve (Wiggins, 2012). Feedback also needed to be meaningful for teachers in terms of evaluation reform (Ritter & Barnett, 2016).

Another problem with the feedback process was that teacher feedback was usually a one-sided conversation with the principal talking during a post-evaluation conference (Roussin & Zimmerman, 2014). Teacher feedback, according to Ritter and Barnett (2016) was more beneficial if conversations were held between the principal and the teacher, rather than the principal doing the majority of the talking (Ritter & Barnett, 2016). According to Danielson and McGreal (2000), administrators who held professional conversations during the feedback process promoted the growth and development of teachers. In addition, feedback that encouraged conversations, assisted teachers in their professional growth and provided opportunities for administrators to motivate and encourage (Myung & Martinez, 2013). A vital part of feedback conversations was that teachers discussed their improvement as professionals and ways to improve student learning (Adams, Aguilar, Berg, Cismowski, Cody, Cohen & White, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

There were many concerns over the teacher evaluation process and overall effectiveness of teacher evaluations. Teacher evaluations lacked consistency, as many principals did not understand how to effectively evaluate teachers (Maslow & Kelley, 2012). Teacher evaluations were also highly scrutinized by educators for failing to provide adequate support in instructional improvement (Sartain & Steinberg, 2016). In addition, teacher evaluation practices were not considered effective if teachers found them irrelevant, and purposeful feedback was not provided to teachers (Maslow & Kelley, 2014).

Culbertson (2012) indicated that teacher evaluation systems needed to be linked to teacher development in order to support teachers and provide teachers with feedback towards improvement. Kraft and Gilmour (2016) conducted a case study on 24 principals in an urban district that experienced teacher evaluation reform. The purpose of the study was to determine principals' perceptions of the evaluation process, specifically the provision of feedback following an observation, since the authors felt feedback was a valuable method to help teachers improve. Kraft and Gilmour (2016) reported that if principals had the responsibility of evaluating numerous staff members, the feedback process was less meaningful and hindered the opportunity for teachers to improve (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). In a similar study of 606 school leaders from several K-12 schools in the United States, Lavigne and Chamberlain (2017) found that leaders perceived the evaluation process to be overly time-consuming. In addition, some leaders perceived the evaluation process as an important way to help teachers improve in their teaching, yet, most believed that too much time was dedicated to evaluation over other duties. Findings from the study also indicated that administrators benefited from training and additional resources to help meet the requirements of teacher evaluation, as well as methods to effectively evaluate teachers on student growth and achievement (Lavigne & Chamberlain, 2017).

Educators found the teacher evaluation process ineffective due to the lack of support provided to teachers on their overall instructional growth and improvement (Sartain & Steinberg, 2016).

According to researchers, teachers were not provided the feedback needed to improve in their instruction (Anast-May, Penick, Schroyer, & Howell, 2011). For teacher evaluations to be effective, professional conversations during the feedback process regarding recent observations were necessary to improve instruction and help to ensure teacher quality (Danielson, 2010). Anast-May et al. (2011) conducted a qualitative study to investigate teachers' perceptions of conferencing during the feedback process. Thirty-seven teachers from 3 different elementary schools participated in the study. Results from the study indicated that observations needed to occur more often so principals could obtain a clearer picture of teacher performance. In addition, feedback was vital to helping teachers improve when conversations between the teacher and evaluator were shared instead of the principal directing the conversation (Anast-May et al., 2011). Professional conversations were essential and created a chance for teachers to reflect on performance following an observation (Ritter & Barnett, 2016).

Purposeful teacher evaluations were the most beneficial to teachers when the entire evaluation, including rubrics, evaluation standards and feedback, were used together to aid in teacher improvement (Ritter & Barnett, 2016). Most principals used the collected data to make decisions on whether teachers were effective in their practice or whether improvements were needed (Maslow & Kelley, 2012). According to Maslow and Kelley (2012), however, minimal research has been conducted on the provision of teacher evaluation feedback and the provision of feedback to promote teacher improvement (Maslow & Kelley, 2012). The issue with teacher evaluations posed a significant problem; school districts needed to have a teacher evaluation system for leaders to be able to evaluate accordingly and effectively. In addition, in order for

teachers to demonstrate quality teaching, meaningful and useful feedback needed to be provided to teachers to help them improve.   Therefore, the researcher proposed to study teachers' perceptions of evaluation feedback to determine if teachers perceived evaluation feedback improved their performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of the evaluation process and determine the extent to which teachers perceived evaluator feedback improved performance. A second purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which teachers with varied years of teaching experience perceived teacher evaluation feedback improved performance. According to Anast-May et al. (2011), insight on teachers' perceptions of the feedback process provided school leaders with valuable information to determine if the evaluation process was effective or if the process needed to be reformed. Darling-Hammond (2013) indicated that teacher evaluation systems needed required evaluators who not only identified great teaching and learning, but provided meaningful feedback to teachers. According to Donaldson (2016), teachers perceived that teacher evaluations instruments should be designed to provide teachers with specific areas of improvement through feedback.

A major component of state teacher evaluation processes was in the feedback teachers received after an observation was conducted. However, teacher improvement was hindered by infrequent classroom observations and inconsistent feedback, therefore, teachers were not always provided with strategies to improve (Anast-May et al., 2011). Similarly, Dipaola and Hoy (2014) indicated that infrequent classroom observations were not an acceptable practice because conducting few observations did not give principals the opportunity to provide adequate feedback to teachers to meet their specific needs. According to Donaldson (2016), teachers

valued feedback and indicated that conversations between teacher and principal on performance were vital for improvement (Donaldson, 2016). Teacher evaluations created opportunities for discussion between the evaluator and teacher, and conversations during the feedback process allowed teachers more opportunities to reflect on their lesson, student interaction, and instructional practice (Ritter & Barnett, 2016).

According to Maslow and Kelley (2012), there were few studies concerning the provision of teacher evaluation feedback and the provision of feedback to promote teacher improvement for both novice teachers and experienced teachers. Huling, Resta and Yeargin (2012) indicated that novice teachers were teachers with three or less years of teaching experience, and experienced teachers had three or more years of teaching experience (Huling et al., 2012). Thus, the researcher proposed to conduct a study to investigate the following questions:

1. To what extent do teachers perceive teacher evaluation feedback improves performance?
2. To what extent do teachers with varied years of teaching experience perceive teacher evaluation feedback improves performance?

Conceptual Framework

The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) was the name of the instrument used for teacher evaluation in Georgia. The TKES evaluation process was broken into two distinct plans; the flexible evaluation plan and the full evaluation plan. School leaders conducted an orientation for teachers, which consisted of a thorough briefing of the evaluation process. After the orientation, teachers completed a self-assessment and rated themselves as ineffective, needs

Figure 1. TKES Teacher Evaluation Process
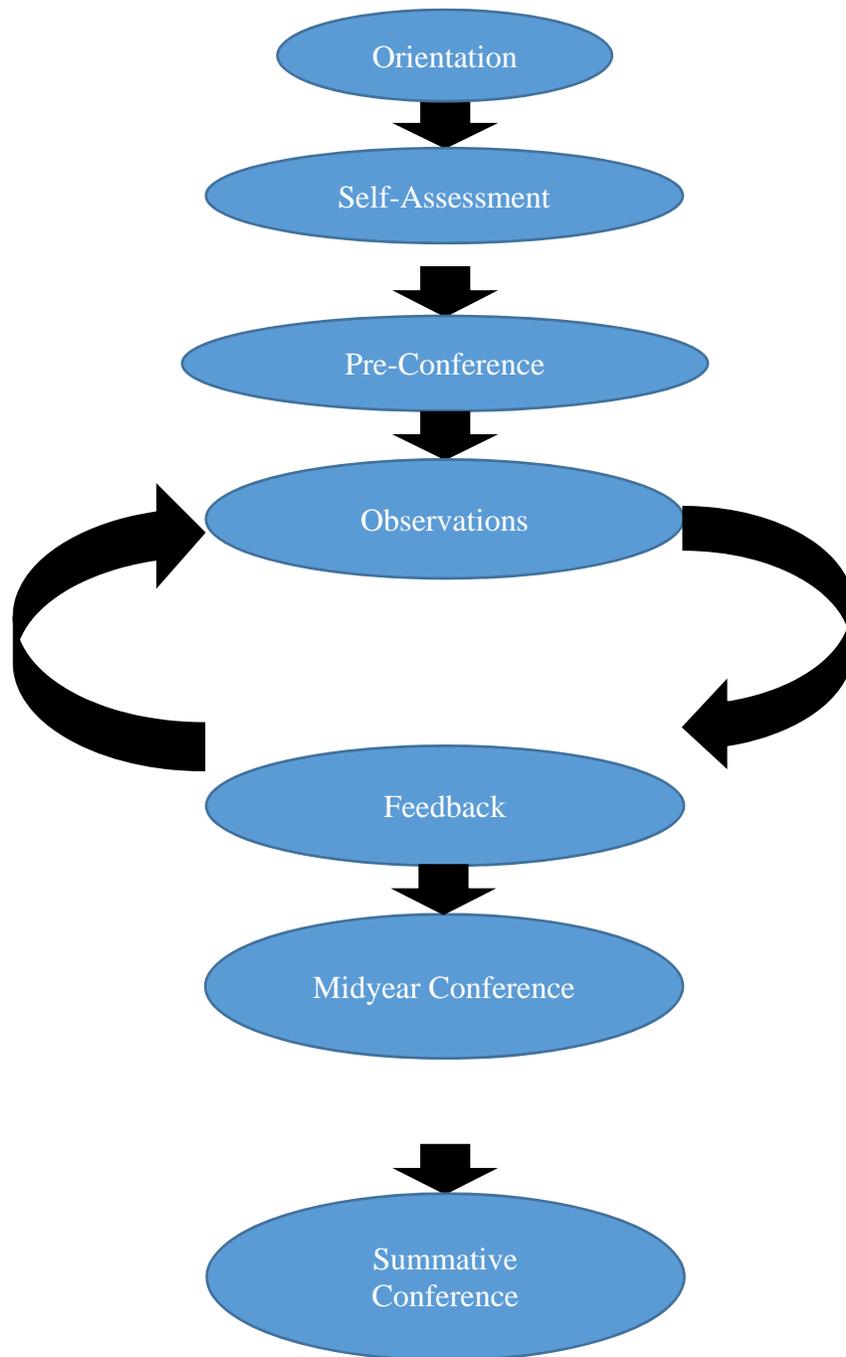
Figure 1 is a representation of the TKES evaluation process. The observation feedback process was cyclical. School leaders provided teachers with written feedback following walkthrough and formative observations, and if needed, teachers were expected to use the feedback to make changes or improvements for the next observation.

developing, proficient or exemplary on 10 professional standards. School leaders had the

opportunity to review teachers' self-assessments to learn more about teachers' perceptions of

their strengths and weaknesses on the standards. An observation pre-conference was conducted

first. The pre-conference was either conducted individually or in groups; this was dependent on

the school leader assigned to conduct the observations. The pre-conference provided time for the

school leader to review observation expectations and for the teachers to ask questions or express

concerns about the forthcoming observation.

Once the pre-conference was conducted, the observation process began. Observations

consisted of both walkthroughs and formative observations. Stout, Kachur & Edwards (2013)

defined a walkthrough as a quick and informal visit to a classroom by a school leader. During a

walkthrough, the school leader observed teaching and learning and provided feedback to teachers

for improvement (Stout et al., 2013). Benedict, Kimerling & Leko (2013) defined a formative

observation as a method of evaluating a teacher's performance. Some examples of formative

observations included direct observations of teaching standards, peer reviews and portfolios.

Teachers were either placed on a full observation plan or a flexible observation plan. The

full observation plan was designated for teachers who fell into the following criteria:

- Induction (3 or less years of teaching experience)

- Teaching out-of-field (non-renewable certificate)

- New position (change in field of certification)

- Out of the profession for longer than one year

- Moving into the state

- Evaluation performance of Needs Development or Ineffective (Georgia Department of Education, 2016).

Teachers on the full observation plan were required to have four walkthroughs and two formative observations for each year they were on the plan. The flexible observation plan was a plan for veteran teachers with either proficient or exemplary performance ratings on their summative evaluations (Georgia Department of Education, 2016). Teachers on the flexible observation plan were required to have one walkthrough and one formative observation each year. Feedback was provided in writing following each observation.

On the flexible observation plan, the midyear conference took place following the walkthrough and formative observations. On the full plan, the midyear conference took place following the first two walkthroughs and the formative observation. At the midyear conference, feedback was expected to be provided by the school leader. In addition, questions or concerns regarding previous observations were discussed. At the summative conference, the school leader and teacher met to discuss both performance strengths and areas of concern, as well as expectations for improvement for the following year.

Significance of the Study

According to researchers, teachers were considered the most important link to student learning (Adams et al., 2015). Because of this, teachers were expected to increase student achievement (Croft, 2016). Teachers were also required to elevate their teaching performance to meet proficiency levels required on teacher evaluation ratings, yet, teachers lacked professional guidance and support from school administrators to accomplish this task (Awkard, 2017). For teachers to demonstrate proficiency and promote student learning, consistent feedback from school administrators needed to be provided on instructional practices. Teacher improvement, however, was hindered by infrequent classroom observations and inconsistent feedback, therefore, teachers were not always provided with strategies to improve (Anast-May et al., 2011).

Meaningful and purposeful feedback allowed teachers to reflect on and change instruction in order to improve (Awkard, 2017); however, there were few studies conducted about whether teachers perceived that evaluation feedback improved their performance (Maslow & Kelley, 2014). Concerns with teacher evaluations rested in the evaluation process, (i.e. observations, ratings, student growth), and the feedback process was not considered as imperative (Myung & Martinez, 2013). In addition, Value Added Models (VAMs) were established as the basis for teacher employment renewal and teacher termination (Carlo, 2012; Pullin, 2013). VAMs were defined as the use of standardized tests to measure a teacher's effect on student learning and growth over a period of time, such as from the beginning of the school year until the end (Amrein-Beardsley et al., 2013). VAMs played a role in merit pay for teachers whose students performed higher on standardized assessments (Carlo, 2012; Pullin, 2013). In the state of Georgia, student growth counted as 30 percent of a teacher's evaluation, thus, it was important for teachers to be given consistent feedback on performance so improvements could occur (Georgia Department of Education, 2016).

Teachers, students, policymakers and educational leaders benefitted from the study since it was necessary to understand teachers' perceptions of evaluation feedback and to ascertain if teachers perceived that feedback improved their performance. Student growth was dependent on effective teacher instruction. Improvement on teacher instruction was dependent on purposeful and meaningful feedback from evaluators. Feedback needed to be ongoing throughout the school year to provide teachers with continuous support for improvement (Wiggins, 2012). However, feedback was often inconsistent and meaningless for teachers. Feedback was also infrequent and lacked timeliness (Park, Takahashi & White, 2014). Depending on the type of observation (walkthrough or formative), feedback was given in written or verbal form following

an observation, yet not often enough to make an impact on teachers' improvement of performance (Park et al., 2014). If teachers did not know how to improve in their instruction, they were not able to meet performance expectations and student learning was hindered. In addition, if teachers did not trust their principals, feedback was considered meaningless. Park et al. (2014) suggested that teachers and administrators should work on building trust throughout the school year in order for feedback to be believable.

Research Design

The researcher proposed to use a qualitative design. McCusker and Gunaydin, (2015) defined qualitative research as a way of understanding the experiences of others and analyzing these experiences using words. The researcher chose qualitative research over quantitative and mixed methods because the goal of the research was to discover the perceptions of teachers through their personal experiences with evaluation feedback. The researcher also proposed to conduct a descriptive case study, since this type of research focused on the lived experiences by individuals. According to Cronin (2014), a descriptive case study allowed the researcher to investigate various situations involving individuals, groups or phenomenon, as well as describe a case as accurately as possible. In addition, learning in a descriptive case study was viewed from the perspectives of the different people involved in the study (Cronin, 2014).

The researcher conducted qualitative research at one elementary school in a Middle Georgia school district, a site other than where the researcher was employed. The researcher proposed to conduct semi-structured interviews to collect data on teachers' perceptions. The researcher chose semi-structured interviews as the data collection method since these types of interviews allowed for in-depth questioning of real-life experiences and allowed participants to elaborate on the questions (Creswell, 2018). In addition, Galletta (2012) indicated that semi-

structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask follow up questions in order to gather

additional data. The researcher chose 8-14 teachers with varied years of teaching experience to

participate in the study. Teachers were selected through purposive sampling based on their

affirmative responses to participate in the study. Beins and McCarthy (2018) indicated that

purposive sampling was used when a researcher selected participants based on specific

characteristics and criteria they met to help with the research. To recruit participants, the

researcher sent a formal request for participation and an informed consent form to the assistant

principal of the designated school for the research study. The assistant principal was asked to

forward both the request for participation and the informed consent form to teachers in the

school building. The participants were asked to contact the researcher via email or telephone if

they were willing to participate in the research study. The researcher decided to accept the first

8-14 participants who responded in affirmation to participate in the research study. The

researcher selected 2-4 teachers in each of the following categories: 0-5 years of teaching

experience, 6-10 years of teaching experience, 11-15 years of teaching experience and 16 or

more years of teaching experience. Selecting teachers in this manner allowed the researcher to

gather data on perceptions of feedback from teachers with varied years of teaching experience.

  The researcher used a password protected digital recording device. The interview data

were transcribed. The researcher analyzed the transcriptions and coded patterns of words,

phrases and sentences presented in the data. Data from the semi-structured interviews were

analyzed and coded into themes and subthemes using NVivo. The researcher analyzed the data

by identifying the common themes and subthemes that emerged from the interviews and relative

data was reported in tables. For further explanation, a narrative of the data was reported

following each table presented in the research.

Research Questions

One component of state teacher evaluation processes consisted of the feedback that teachers received after an observation was conducted (Zatynski, 2012).   Often, teacher improvement was hindered by infrequent classroom observations and inconsistent feedback and teachers were not always provided with strategies to improve (Anast-May et al., 2011). In addition, Jacob, Vidyarth and Carroll (2012) indicated that an assumption existed that principals usually found novice teachers less effective in their teaching performance than experienced teachers, which caused principals to invest less time on supervision and feedback with experienced teachers. With this understanding, the researcher proposed to investigate teachers' perceptions of the feedback process.

The following research questions guided this qualitative study:

1. To what extent do teachers perceive teacher evaluation feedback improves performance?

2. To what extent do teachers of varied teaching experience perceive teacher evaluation feedback improves performance?

Methodology

The methodology used for this study was qualitative research. Qualitative research, according to McCusker and Gunaydin (2015), was a way of understanding the experiences and insight of others and analyzing these experiences using words. In addition, Cronin (2014) stated that qualitative research was a powerful way to collect explicit, descriptive data to understand specific phenomena. The researcher also followed the approach of Constructivism. According to Creswell (2014), constructivists sought to understand the world from the place where participants lived and worked, as well as through their experiences and interactions with others. Since the researcher focused on the lived experiences of individuals, a descriptive case study was

conducted. Cronin (2014) indicated that a case study allowed for the descriptive insight of individuals, groups or phenomena. In addition, Anast-May et al. (2011), indicated that insight on teachers' perceptions of the feedback process provided school leaders with valuable information to determine if the evaluation process was effective or if the process needed to be reformed.

Prior to the study, the researcher submitted a formal request to the school district's Board of Education's Office of Professional Learning to conduct the study in the school district. The researcher also submitted a formal request to the principal of the designated elementary school to conduct the research study in the school. After permission was granted by the Board of Education's Office of Professional Learning and the principal, the researcher requested permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study. Next, the researcher sent the assistant principal two documents to forward to the teachers in the school: 1) a written, formal request to ask teachers if they would be willing to participate in the study, and 2) an informed consent form indicating the purpose, procedures and ensured confidentiality of their participation in the study. A decision was made by the researcher to accept 8-14 teachers for the study. A decision was also made to accept the first teachers who responded affirmatively participate in the study, and who met the category requirements (see below). The population consisted of teachers who were recruited based on their varied years of teaching experience:

- 2-4 teachers with 0-5 years teaching experience
- 2-4 teachers with 6-10 years teaching experience
- 2-4 teachers with 11-15 years teaching experience
- 2-4 teachers with 16 or more years teaching experience

The site for the research study was an elementary school consisting of grades three through five teachers. The school was located in a school district in Middle Georgia.

The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview protocol for the research study. The researcher determined that conducting research through semi-structured interviews was the most appropriate method for collecting data in order to gain perspectives on the feedback process. In addition, Creswell (2014) showed that semi-structured interviews "involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants" (p. 190). Interviews were conducted by the researcher at the selected elementary school during after school hours in person or via telephone. After participants contacted the researcher indicating their willingness to participate in the research study, the researcher contacted the participants to set up a time for the interviews. The time was set at the convenience of the participants. Individual interviews took approximately 45 minutes to conduct. The purpose of conducting interviews was to determine if teachers perceived evaluator feedback improved their performance. Discussions and interactions with participants allowed teachers to share perceptions and experiences of teacher evaluation feedback (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016).

During the interview process, the researcher used a password-protected recording device to ensure that responses were kept confidential and anonymous. The recorded data were transcribed. The transcriptions were reviewed thoroughly. The researcher analyzed the data using NVivo. Using NVivo, the researcher identified the common themes and subthemes that were repeated and that showed a noticeable pattern in the data. Patterns shown from the themes and subthemes were coded and then put into tables. Tables were labeled based on the data presented. Specific and related quotes from the interview participants were included in the tables to provide additional information on the perceptions and experiences of the participants. Narrative, descriptive data about the patterns and themes were included in the study results.

Limitations

This qualitative study was conducted to determine if teachers perceived evaluation feedback improved their performance. One limitation was that the participants were teachers in the same school district as the researcher. The participants may not have wanted the researcher to know their true perceptions regarding teacher evaluation feedback.

Delimitations

The researcher chose qualitative research over quantitative and mixed methods because the goal of the research was to discover the perceptions of teachers through their personal experiences with evaluation feedback. The researcher chose to conduct interviews instead of other data collection methods, since interviews allowed for in-depth questioning about real-life teaching experiences and allowed participants to elaborate on the questions. Research was conducted using one elementary school in the school district.

Definitions

The following terms were used throughout the study to help guide and support the research:

Accountability: The way a teacher's performance in the classroom was measured, such as through evaluation ratings, summative observations and student growth data (Downing, 2016).

Evaluation Feedback: Anast-May et al. (2011) described evaluation feedback as "reflective inquiry and conversations for facilitating the learning of teachers" (p. 3).

Formative: Ongoing teacher observations throughout the school year that are focused on teacher and student learning (Benedict, Thomas, Kimerling & Leko, 2013).

Formative Observation: Method of evaluating a teacher's performance. Some examples included direct observations of teaching standards, peer reviews and portfolios (Benedict et al., 2013).

Multiple Measures of Evaluation: Evaluation based on a teacher's performance from several measures, i.e., multiple observations each year, student surveys, peer feedback, mastery of student learning objectives (SLOs), value-added models (VAMs), or student growth (Donaldson, 2016).

Peer Assistance and Review (PAR): A program that consisted of consulting teachers who provided assistance for a number of months to struggling teachers, then evaluated the teachers' performance to determine proficiency levels (Johnson & Fiarman, 2012).

Post-Observation Conference: A conference held between the evaluator and teacher following an observed lesson, to discuss both positive and negative aspects of the lesson (Mitchell & Bott, 2015).

Pre-Observation Conference: A conference held between the evaluator and teacher prior to an observation to discuss expectations for an upcoming lesson yet to be observed (Mitchell & Bott, 2015).

Standardized Tests: State tests that are commonly used to measure how well students have learned specific subject standards and how effectively teachers taught the standards (Rose, 2015).

Student Growth: A measurement of student learning from a starting point to an ending point (Amrein-Beardsley, Collins, Polasky & Sloat, 2013; Marzano & Toth, 2013).

Teacher Effectiveness: How well a teacher performed based on student learning, observations and evaluation of performance (Ritter & Shuls, 2012).

Value Added Models (VAMs): The use of standardized tests to measure a teacher's effect on student learning and growth over a period of time, such as from the beginning of the school year until the end (Amrein-Beardsley et al., 2013).

Walkthroughs: Quick and informal visit to the classroom by a school leader. During a walkthrough, the school leader observed teaching and learning and provided feedback to teachers for improvement (Stout, Kachur & Edwards, 2013).

Summary

Teacher evaluation feedback was an essential component of the teacher evaluation process. Feedback was generally provided to teachers following walkthrough observations and formative and summative evaluations. Teachers relied on meaningful, evaluation feedback from school administrators in order to improve their teaching performance. Depending on the results of the feedback, teachers made changes to their teaching style, adjusted lessons, and made any other necessary changes to improve their performance. In addition, the post-observation conference was an important time for teachers and school administrators to discuss performance following an evaluation, yet the post-observation conference did not always occur following an observation. Conferences following observations did not always occur, which made for inconsistent and unproductive feedback.

Past studies in the field of teacher evaluation indicated that teacher evaluation feedback was often neglected, which hindered teacher performance. Administrators did not always provide teachers with strategies for improvement. Evaluation conferences were often brief and predominantly conducted with the principal doing the majority of the talking. Additional studies showed that feedback conferences lacked conversations between the school administrator and teacher, which rarely gave teachers the opportunity to self-reflect on their performance. In

addition, principals did not take adequate time to give teachers the feedback they needed to improve performance. With this understanding, the researcher proposed to evaluate the feedback component of the teacher evaluation process to determine if teachers' perceived that evaluation feedback improved their performance.