

Assessing Teachers: A Mixed-Method Case Study of Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation

by

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ABSTRACT

A review of studies selected from the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) covering the years 1985 through 2011 revealed three key evaluation components to analyze within a comprehensive teacher evaluation program: (a) designing, planning, and implementing instruction; (b) learning environments; and (c) parent and peer surveys. In this dissertation, these three components are investigated in the context of two research questions:

1. What is the relationship, if any, between comprehensive teacher evaluation scores and student standardized test scores?
2. How do teachers and administrators experience the comprehensive evaluation process and how do they use their experiences to inform instruction?

The methodology for the study included a mixed-method case study at a charter school located in a middle-class neighborhood within a large metropolitan area of the southwestern United States, which included a comparison of teachers' average evaluation scores in the areas of instruction and environment, peer survey scores, parent survey scores, and students' standardized test (SST) benchmark scores over a two-year period as the quantitative data for the study. I also completed in-depth interviews with classroom teachers, mentor teachers, the master teacher, and the school principal; I used these interviews for the qualitative portion of my study. All three teachers had similar evaluation scores; however, when comparing student scores among the teachers, differences were evident. While no direct correlations between student achievement data and teacher evaluation scores are possible, the qualitative data suggest that there were variations among the teachers and administrators in how they experienced or "bought

into” the comprehensive teacher evaluation, but they all used evaluation information to inform their instruction. This dissertation contributes to current research by suggesting that comprehensive teacher evaluation has the potential to change teachers’ and principals’ perceptions of teacher evaluation as inefficient and unproductive to a system that can enhance instruction and ultimately improve student achievement.

DEDICATION

To my Mother, Dolores Scaff, and my Father, Bill Scaff, for always believing in me and supporting my educational goals. To my husband, Steve Bullock, and my children Amy Jordan, Adam Bullock, Troy Bullock, and Tara Bullock for supporting me and believing in me throughout years of going to classes, studying, and completing hours of homework. Lastly, to my son-in-law Eric Jordan and my future daughter-in-laws Megan Nickum and most recently Jeannie Jordan for supporting me and believing in me as well.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Overview

This dissertation examined specific elements that research indicated are critical to comprehensive teacher evaluation: (a) instruction, (b) classroom environment, (c) peer surveys, and (d) parent surveys. The focus of my research was in-depth interviews with teachers as well as in-depth interviews with evaluators (a mentor teacher, a master teacher, and the principal). This dissertation also draws from a descriptive analysis of teacher evaluation scores in the areas of instruction and classroom environment, scores on peer and parent surveys, and students' standardized test (SST) benchmark scores.

Comprehensive teacher evaluation is a school reform being implemented in numerous districts throughout the southwestern United States (US). This chapter addresses the practical problem of comprehensive teacher evaluation that drives the research. I have two main research questions:

1. What is the relationship, if any, between comprehensive teacher evaluation scores and student standardized test scores?
2. How do teachers and administrators experience the comprehensive evaluation process and how do they use their experiences to inform instruction?

This chapter is broken down into subsections based on the main research questions and provides an overview of the scholarly literature that highlights the relevance of each topic.

In the current era of high-stakes testing and education budget cuts, comprehensive teacher evaluations have been proposed as a cornerstone of successful school reform. The

US needs qualified teachers and administrators to address achievement gaps and meet the needs of diverse students. My dissertation sought to assess the relationship among teacher evaluation scores (see Appendix A, which includes the teacher evaluation rubric tool as well as the indicators and scoring scale that the teachers are scored on over three evaluations each year), peer survey scores (see Appendix B and Appendix C, which provide peer surveys, which are the indicators that the teachers score one another on, and the scoring scale), parent survey scores (see Appendix D), and SST benchmark scores. I further conducted in-depth interviews with teachers and administrators (see Appendix E for the interview protocol). I used high-stakes test scores as one element of my research because schools are evaluated based on these scores. Because SST benchmark scores are consequential for schools and teachers, my goal was to assess if a relationship existed between the SST benchmark scores and comprehensive teacher evaluations. While the data did not permit making any direct inferences about teacher performance, it did provide important insights into the evaluation process. My focus was on teachers and how the comprehensive evaluation process related to instruction.

I conducted my research at a charter school that has been in operation and successful for 15 years. The mission of the chosen school was to provide a safe learning environment rich in technology where students achieve academic and social excellence while solving real-life problems in a cooperative manner. The charter school was located in a middle-class neighborhood within a large metropolitan area of the southwestern US. The school had implemented a comprehensive teacher evaluation program for the 13 years preceding this study.

The teacher evaluation instrument is used to evaluate teachers on designing, planning, and implementing instruction by using 15 rubric indicators. The instrument also evaluates the learning environment using four rubric indicators. In each area teachers are assigned scale scores of 1 to 5, with 1 being *needs improvement* and 5 being *exemplary*. The scores of 1 to 5 that the teacher received over the school year were averaged. I assessed the teachers' evaluation scores alongside their classes' benchmark SST scores for 2010-11 and 2011-12. For each year there is a percentage (and raw number) of students who received *exceeds standard*, *meets standard*, *approaches standard*, and *falls far below standard*. These data allowed me to summarize the data and then follow up with some possible interpretations of the data.

The scores from peer and parent surveys, which also use a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being *needs improvement* and 5 being *exemplary* also permitted me to summarize that data and then follow up with some possible interpretation.

Statement of the Problem

I studied comprehensive teacher evaluation as it related to SST benchmark scores using mixed methods. I explored the relationship between comprehensive teacher evaluation and SST benchmark scores and also the perspectives of educators about the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation process. Through these two types of data, I was able to better understand how to assess teacher quality and how the assessment process shapes instructional practice.

Contributions to the Scholarly Literature

Orr, Berg, Shore, and Meier (2008) found that state and national policy makers expect all schools to serve all children so that they meet or exceed state standards as defined by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (p. 670). Those standards are presumed to be measurable by high-stakes tests. However, there are many possible elements that may affect SST benchmark scores including teacher experience and the quality of teachers, administrators, and programs as well as poverty levels and related inequalities within our educational system. This research looks specifically at teacher quality as reflected in three critical components of a comprehensive teacher evaluation system. In the remainder of this section, I highlight key scholarly literature informing the study, and then I suggest the ways in which this study expands on and extends that scholarly literature.

Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) determined that in this “era of accountability, a principal’s responsibility for the quality of teachers’ work is simply a fact of life. How to achieve influence over work settings (classrooms) in which they rarely participate is a key dilemma” (p. 459). Researchers find a positive relationship between principals who are present in classrooms and who build instructional capacity through detailed feedback (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). But this direct method requires the principal to be in many classrooms most days, which quickly becomes an unmanageable task in any but small schools. However, my study looks at comprehensive teacher evaluation to determine if it addresses this challenge by having the principal, mentor and master teachers giving teachers feedback and being in the classrooms daily for evaluations, modeling, and support.

Ovando and Ramirez (2007) stated, “As principals create favorable conditions that promote teacher learning and create structures to enhance teaching and learning, they must also respond to calls for implementing new comprehensive teacher evaluation systems that aim at improving both teacher performance and academic performance” (p. 91). Teacher evaluation programs are important in order to help schools meet desired student outcomes; however, the process by which most teachers are evaluated is inefficient and ineffective (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007). Ovando and Ramirez (2007) indicated that little is known about the direct effect principals have on the academic achievement of students and the quality of instructional programs, and so they suggest additional studies are needed to highlight actual leadership actions that lead to improved student performance (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007). My study addresses this need by looking at leadership actions of the principal, mentor and master teacher within a comprehensive teacher evaluation program and how these may be related to student performance.

Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, and Harms (2008) suggested “a strong and positive leadership is associated with a high level of self-confidence in the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with leading others” (p. 669). Research also indicated that effective school leadership included actions such as hiring and socializing new teachers, buffering teachers from intrusions on teaching, providing substantive feedback to teachers through comprehensive teacher evaluations, and helping to create norms of continuous improvement in the school (Riehl, 2000, p. 63). Marks and Printy (2003) integrated into the research a view of leadership that highlighted the synergistic power of leadership shared by individuals throughout the school organization. Marks and Printy (2003)

further suggested that when the principal elicits high levels of commitment and professionalism from teachers and works interactively with teachers in a shared instructional leadership capacity, then schools have the benefit of learning and performing at high levels (p. 393). Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) found that when teachers were involved in making decisions that affected them, they tended to strengthen or deepen their instructional practice with the influence, and the combined efforts on the quality of pedagogy were significant (p. 483).

Designing, Planning, and Implementing Instruction

The comprehensive teacher evaluation program in this study focuses strongly on helping teachers improve their practice in the areas of designing, planning, and implementing instruction and incorporates other elements such as modeling and professional development. Many researchers note the importance of sound instructional planning and design. For example, in order to see strong scores on high-stakes assessments for all students, Orr et al. (2008) cited the importance of the following instructional elements: a) a rigorous, standards-based curriculum; b) safety nets for all students; c) instructional blocks for literacy, math, and science; a common curriculum core; d) ongoing student assessments; e) distributed leadership; and f) school-embedded teacher professional development. Thus, teachers and school leaders—those charged with executing these instructional elements—are critical to effecting positive student outcomes. Riehl (2000) suggested:

new (or renewed) instructional methods, such as project-based learning or constructivist learning, new organizational configurations, such as smaller schools, small class sizes, or block scheduling, new forms of assessment and

accountability, such as portfolios and high-stakes gateway testing, and new norms of teacher practice that emphasize collaboration and professional growth are examples of reform initiatives that address fundamental structures and processes within schools (p. 60).

In order to address these issues in my research, the evaluation process I am studying is aimed at fostering teachers' professional growth, instructional strategies, and unique organizational configurations.

Blasé and Blasé (1999) pointed out that the impact of principals on school outcomes (i.e., students' scores on high-stakes assessments) is derived, in part, from the principals' interaction with and influence on teachers (p. 368). Marks and Printy (2003) found that shared leadership and transformational leadership together, which they describe as integrated leadership, resulted in teachers providing evidence of high-quality pedagogy and their students scoring high on authentic assessments. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) found that in schools with higher levels of collective decision-making, there is a greater likelihood that reform initiatives are widespread and demonstrate improvements in student learning (p. 462). However, in research by Orr et al. (2008), the researchers found:

there were no mechanisms through which school leaders and groups of teachers worked together to review student data and make inferences about how to improve instruction and student learning, to reflect on current practice, or to try out new approaches. Little or no capacity for collective problem solving, growth, and development existed in the schools generally, even in non-instructional areas. (p. 684)

Orr et al. (2008) discovered that schools made limited use of assessment data despite frequent student testing and assessment reports they received. Part of the comprehensive teacher evaluation program that is examined in this study included weekly team meetings, which they called *cluster meetings*, where teachers brought student data to discuss and drive future instruction.

Principals are an integral part of implementing instruction. Feedback from the principal and proactively giving advice for the improvement of instruction was one central and powerful element of principals' verbal interactions with teachers in Blasé and Blasé's (1999) study. Teachers also disclosed that principals made purposeful, appropriate, nonthreatening suggestions characterized by listening, sharing, using examples, giving choices, contradicting outdated or destructive policies, encouraging risk taking, offering professional literature, recognizing teachers' strengths, and maintaining a focus on improving instruction. Likewise, Marks and Printy (2003) suggested that principals build leadership capacity to improve student academic performance by involving teachers in continuous reflections, dialogue, and decision-making about educational matter using their professionalism and capitalizing on their knowledge and skills. Orr et al. (2008) found that a consistent theme throughout the school improvement literature was the centrality of leadership, particularly instructionally focused leadership, which included fostering organizational stability, developing organizational capacity for change, and engaging staff as professional learning communities.

The Learning Environment

In creating a positive and inviting learning environment, principals can make all teachers feel welcome by conveying the message that they are valued members of the

school community. It also sends the message that, as instructional leaders, principals will take the time to support all teachers. Similarly, teachers should convey the message that the students are valued members of the school community (Tillman, 2005). Riehl (2000) stated that the schools that serve all students well have continuous open communication with parents, teachers, and students in order to promote trust within the community, which increases the capacity for larger problems to be addressed.

Blasé and Blasé (1999) found that principals who encouraged teachers to be creative, take a risk, and step outside the box also encouraged diverse approaches to teaching and learning that enhanced teachers' development and reflective teaching (pp. 366-367). In turn, when teachers were encouraged to be creative and take a risk, they modeled these behaviors for their students and created a safe, risk-taking environment for the students. The study conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1999) "assumed that the impact achieved by principals on school outcomes (i.e., student's scores on high-stake assessments) derives, in part, from the principals' interaction with and influence on teachers" (p. 368) and the interaction and influence of the teachers with the students. Blasé and Blasé (1999) further found that in effective principal-teacher interactions, teachers built repertoires of flexible alternatives for instruction rather than collecting rigid teaching procedures and methods (p. 359). Moreover, "when principals who are transformation leaders accept their instructional role and exercise it in collaboration with teachers, they practice an integrated form of leadership" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 376). A positive school community with open communication and collaboration among the teachers and administration creates a model for teachers in creating a similar environment within the classroom, which encourages flexible alternatives for learning.

Peer and Parent Surveys

Another way to create an environment of collaboration and support for one another is to accept feedback from parents and peers. Through sharing other perspectives and having teachers reflect on that feedback and make determination on that feedback, the feedback could change teaching, relationships, and ultimately student's scores on high-stakes assessments. For example, Marks and Printy (2003) observed that, "as teachers inquire together, they encourage each other toward answers for instructional problems. Leadership for instruction emerges from both the principal and the teachers" (p. 374). When the teachers inquired together on a regular basis, they created strong relationships among themselves and created a safe and supportive environment among themselves as educators. Marks and Printy (2003) continued by suggesting that principals contributed importantly to these communities when they promoted teacher reflection and professional growth. Principals and teachers both play a part in forging an effective leadership relationship (p. 374). Research further indicated that to include parent perspectives on teachers and teaching is somewhat controversial, but something we may need to consider. I included this element in my research to determine the relationship among the parent and teacher connections, collaboration, and student's benchmark scores on high-stakes assessments.

Summary and Synthesis

There are many factors in school improvement that are outside of principals' and teachers' control, such as budget cuts and mandatory state and federal school reform programs. However, there are many things that educators can do to make a positive difference within schools. As highlighted here and discussed more fully in Chapter 2, a

plethora of research indicates that collaboration between administrators and teachers, teacher and students, and teacher and parents can create a school that includes the following elements: time for reflection, time for data analysis, time for professional development, and structures that allow the principal to work intimately with the teachers. These elements are areas that should be included in a comprehensive teacher evaluation system. In particular, research clearly indicates the need for further research in the areas of instruction, school and classroom environments, and assessment. My research seeks to identify whether combining these elements, which are proven through research to be successful, can create a strong school reform that helps schools meet state and federal requirements such as those mandated by NCLB. The upcoming chapter will provide a literature review that examines the research on the effectiveness of each element.

Significance of the study. My research includes both qualitative and quantitative elements using a mixed-methods approach in the areas of (a) designing, planning, and implementing instruction, (b) learning environment, (c) peer surveys, (d) parent surveys, and (e) students' scores on high-stakes assessments. Quantitative data includes SST benchmark scores from the students of each of the teachers involved in the study along with the teacher evaluation scores. The scores for the two years that the students and teachers worked together were examined. The scores were broken down into the five areas mentioned above so I was able to conduct a descriptive analysis of the data. Originally, the qualitative data were to include in-depth interviews with four fifth and sixth grade teachers, which would have included two language arts and two math teachers—at least one of whom would be in the role of mentor teacher to gain the perceptions of the teachers' experiences with comprehensive teacher evaluation.

However, due to change within the fifth and sixth grade team, I was only able to interview one language arts teacher instead of two. I also conducted in-depth interviews with this group of teachers' principal and the master teacher. From the interview data I crafted narrative profiles (Seidman, 2006), which provided insights into how teachers and school leaders use the evaluation process to improve instruction and how this may or may not affect SST benchmark scores.

Delimitations. This research project focuses on the relationship between SST benchmark scores and teacher effectiveness as measured by the scores teachers receive on a comprehensive teacher evaluation program over two years and data gathered through in-depth interviews with teachers and administrators. However, it is important to note that this research was not able to determine the validity or effectiveness of the annual statewide assessment. The study assumes that the assessment system is a reasonable measure of what students have learned. This research was not able to determine interrater reliability among evaluators or possible inflation or deflation of scores for teachers within the rubric. Lastly, in this school, the students have the same teachers for two years, which makes for an uncommon situation in comparison to other schools. By analyzing the interviews, I address some of these delimitations based on the thoughts, opinions, and feedback of the teachers and administrators.

When choosing the research site, I was directed by my personal knowledge of this comprehensive teacher evaluation tool and the school that uses it, which is a charter school in a middle-class neighborhood. This school was chosen because, at the time of this study, there were very few schools in the state within which the study took place that had fully implemented comprehensive teacher evaluation programs over a number of

years. Logistically, I did not have the ability to conduct this research in an inner city school where there are more challenges than in a school located in a middle class suburb.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation includes six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. In this introduction, I have shared some research on teacher evaluations within the areas I am looking at including instruction, environment, peer surveys, parent surveys, and standardized test scores. Chapter 2 gives a more detailed and in-depth examination of the current research, shares my conceptual framework and introduces how I conducted my research. In Chapter 3, I go into further detail about how I collected data and the strategies I used to analyze the data. Chapter 4 includes average evaluation scores, peer and parent survey scores, and percentages and raw data of SST benchmark scores for each of the teachers as well as a descriptive analysis of the quantitative data that allows implications for my first research question: What is the relationship, if any, between teachers evaluation scores and student standardized test scores? Chapter 5 includes detailed and thorough examination of the five in-depth interviews I conducted with the three teachers, one master teacher, and principal. I broke each interview down into categories, found themes within each category, used those themes to analyze data and answer my second research question: How do teachers and administrators experience the comprehensive evaluation process and how do they use their experiences to inform instruction? The last chapter of my dissertation, Chapter 6, addresses my two research questions and a summary of how I came to those conclusions based on the data I collected. I also included what this research suggests for comprehensive teacher

evaluation and what further studies need to be done in order to continue to determine how to create the strongest educational system for teachers, students, and families.

Chapter 2

Conceptual and Empirical Background for the Study

This literature review establishes a foundation for my multilayered research project. The study focuses on elements of comprehensive teacher evaluation that the literatures indicates are essential to teacher quality: (a) designing, planning, and implementing instruction, (b) learning environments, (c) peer surveys, (d) parent surveys, and ultimately (e) SST benchmark scores. In the sections that follow, I share my conceptual framework, define teacher evaluation, and discuss formative versus summative evaluation. I also provide an overview of the key elements that research suggests should be included in a comprehensive teacher evaluation system. These elements are instruction, learning environment, peer surveys, and parent surveys.

Conceptual Framework

My conceptual framework consists of specific elements within teacher evaluation that I discussed in the previous paragraph: (a) designing, planning, and implementing instruction, (b) learning environments, (c) peer surveys, (d) parent surveys, and (e) standardized test scores. My analysis draws from a variety of data sources including student and teacher scores, surveys, and in-depth interviews.

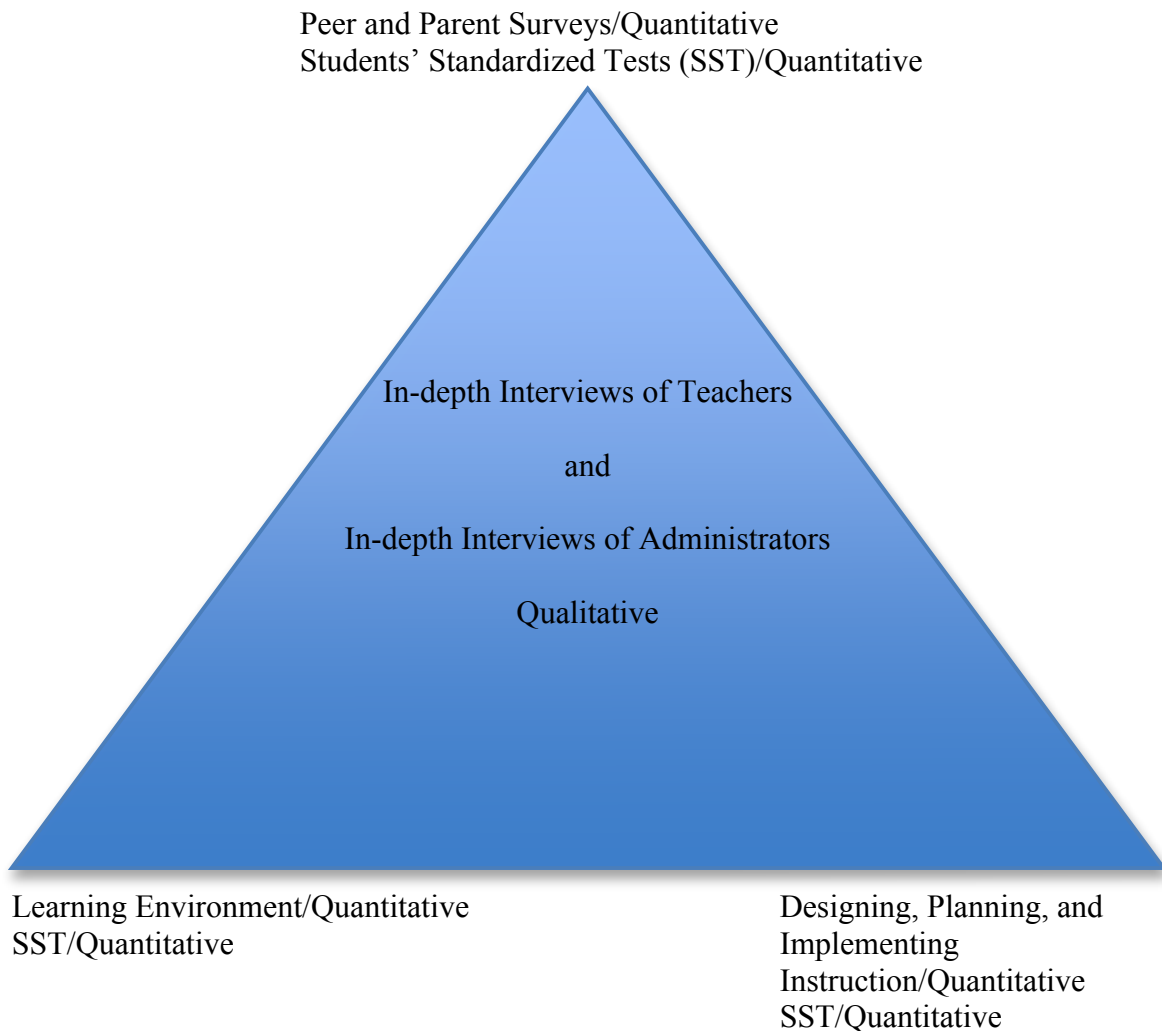


Figure 2.1. A visual representation of the conceptual framework for the study.

Designing, Planning, and Implementing Instruction

In general, teacher evaluation is the act of performing an assessment based on established criteria of how well a teacher instructs. Traditional teacher evaluations often consist of one to two visits by the principal to the classroom within an academic year. The teacher typically has an announced observation and an unannounced observation. During an announced observation, teachers are able to determine when and what the principal will be observing. The teacher prepares for the observation, which may or may

not reflect the teaching that goes on daily within the classroom. These evaluations generally focus on a teacher's instructional strategies without much focus on other elements that may contribute to an efficient and effective teacher evaluation. Gallagher (2004) suggested that traditional principal evaluations of proficient teachers are inadequate for determining strong and effective teachers and for providing guidance for them to improve their teaching skills. Gallagher (2004) also found that studies of teacher evaluation showed that both teachers and principals saw typical evaluations as having little value and that principals' ratings of teachers generally were uncorrelated with students' scores on high-stakes assessments.

Within schools, principals and other school leaders help determine the value and role of teacher evaluations (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007). That is, whether or not teacher evaluations are perfunctory, summative evaluations or a meaningful assessment of the teaching and learning process depends on school leaders. School administrators can extend evaluation beyond the ritualistic tradition of rating teachers on the basis of style and trait by moving towards a newer conceptualization of leadership defined as leadership density (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007, p. 87). In schools that embrace leadership density, administration and staff promote: (a) the use of collaborative group engagement among the teachers, (b) seek high-quality opportunities to improve student's scores on high-stakes assessments, (c) have a definition and process for student achievement in place, (d) support positive organizational change, (e) create greater program coherence, (f) build strong professional relationships among teachers and teachers and administrators that strengthen leadership density, and finally (f) strengthen teacher's individual and collective efficacy beliefs (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007, p. 87).

Summative and formative assessments are used within the classroom by the teacher and in some cases for the teacher in teacher evaluation systems. Crumrine and Demers (2007) emphasized the importance of conducting frequent formative assessments with students to help them gauge their learning. Formative assessments like observations are ongoing, and they assess assignments and projects or quizzes that help the teacher drive instruction. Likewise, ongoing formative assessments with teachers can be important for their professional growth, because ideally they should use the results to shape their teaching. Formative assessments with the teachers might include daily walkthroughs with the principal with feedback to the teacher for continuous growth and improvement. Crumrine and Demers (2007) noted that, "when summative and formative assessment is regular and ongoing, teaching can adapt to help learners develop deeper understanding and actively participate in their own learning" (p. 32). The same premise holds true when the teacher is the learner. Summative assessment is the process of evaluating and grading the learning that has taken place at a particular point, usually at the end of a unit of learning. Many associate summative assessments with standardized tests, but they are also used as an accountability measure that is generally used as part of the grading process or to set goals for teachers, students, classes, and schools.

Epstein (1985) found that there was general dissatisfaction with the way teacher evaluations were conducted, what they measured, how they aligned with professional development, improved teacher status, and how they contributed to the effective education of students (p. 3). Research clearly stated that teacher performance must be evaluated based on fair and comprehensive standards. Moreover, procedures must assist all teachers to advance professionally rather than identify a few meritorious teachers

(Epstein, 1985, p. 3). Research indicated a strong comprehensive teacher evaluation system needed to include assessments by a variety of professionals using several instruments instead of assessments conducted by one individual on a few occasions. Multiple judges who rate teachers on many teaching practices important to student learning and development contribute to effective school reform (Epstein, 1985, p. 4). Goldstein's (2005) literature review included the finding that the supervisory relationship focused on formative assessment was fundamentally grounded on trust between the teacher and the supervisor, and without trust the supervisor would not effectively support teachers in improving their instructional practice (p. 236). However, some educators and scholars argued that formative and summative assessment could and should be combined (Goldstein, 2005, p. 237). Formative and summative assessments can be fair and accurate if they include: (a) multiple data points; (b) an understanding of the teaching context, the focus of improvement efforts, and the challenges faced by the teacher; (c) an assessment of how hard the teacher is trying to improve and with what degree of self-reflection and self-assessment; and (d) the growth or lack thereof that the teacher has accomplished (Goldstein, 2005, p. 237).

According to Hazi and Rucinski (2009), teacher evaluation should include reflection on the teacher's part and a professional development component based on the outcomes of the evaluations (pp. 4-5). However, the social contexts in which teacher evaluations occur often limit the improvements evaluation systems are able to achieve (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007, p. 87). Ovando and Ramirez (2007) also suggested that the evaluation personnel should include mentors, peer coaches, department chairs, and central office administrators or supervisors as well as the principal (p. 89). However,

even with the research conducted to date, researchers in the field still know little regarding the direct effect that principals exert upon the academic achievement of the students and the overall quality of the instructional programs in the schools. The dearth of information suggests that more research needs to be completed in this area (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007, p. 90). Two main reasons for teacher evaluation are accountability and professional growth. As such, summative evaluation is essential for students to perform well on high-stakes assessments and for overall school improvement (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007, p. 89).

It is imperative that a number of internal structures are present for teachers to perform at a high level of efficiency. Ovando and Ramirez (2007) indicated instructional quality could be strengthened when principals created internal structures, including regular meeting times for teams of teachers to plan instruction and reflect on their practice, aligning school-wide professional development activities with school goals and teachers' professional needs, promoting social trust among staff members, and practicing distributed leadership (p. 91). Ovando and Ramirez (2007) further indicated that it is important for a principal to take on these additional roles, but a principal's most important responsibility is the evaluation of teacher performance (p. 91). However, "despite an abundance of research on principal leadership and the many roles, few studies have conceptualized or empirically examined connections among principal leadership, teacher evaluation, professional development, and school organizational conditions that may influence instructional quality" (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007, p. 90). Through an effective teacher evaluation system, principals are expected to improve the instructional program, teaching practices, student performance, staff development activities, and

opportunities for teachers (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007, p. 91). However, Ovando and Ramirez (2007) explained:

The challenging responsibility for administrators is to provide multiple opportunities for teachers to examine their practices, to reflect on those practices, to collaborate with others as they are assessing practices, and then to empower these professionals to act on the many lessons learned from these endeavors as they attempt to influence teaching and learning through specific instructional leadership actions. (p. 92)

Each of the opportunities Ovando and Ramirez presented could create an effective and on-going teacher evaluation system. They specified even further that:

Teacher appraisal systems are an important link in the chain leading to desired student outcomes. On the other hand, it is argued that the process by which most teachers are supervised and evaluated is inefficient, ineffective, and a poor use of principals' time. (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007, p. 106)

Ovando and Ramirez (2007) believed that liberating principals did the right kind of work, which included improving instructional quality through a comprehensive teacher evaluation system; they also supported the comprehensive teacher evaluation system as one of the most important practices a school district could implement if it wanted to close the achievement gap and get all students achieving at high levels (p. 106).

Learning Environment

Expectations. Anderson, Finnan, and Schnepel (2003) found that some schools were aligning their school cultures and their classroom cultures through the concept of powerful learning. In these schools, challenging and exciting curriculum and instruction

were present to create a powerful learning environment (p. 392). According to Anderson et al. (2003), “Learning is considered powerful if it is authentic, interactive, learner-centered, inclusive, and continuous” (p. 392). Furthermore, powerful learning creates a strong and positive learning environment. A challenging curriculum without adequate support for all students to meet those challenges could be a recipe for failure for children who begin school with more limited skill sets; thus, the answer is not simply to develop a more challenging curriculum, but provide classes that are advanced and supported (Crosnoe et al., 2010, p. 408). Crosnoe et al. (2010) found that support in the classroom may entail a supplementary focus on foundational skills not available to the children entering school with fewer skills, and support also came from positive emotional responses from teachers (p. 408). Without these supports, “exposing all children to similar levels of higher order instruction may close, rather than widen, achievement disparities” (Crosnoe et al., 2010, p. 409).

Students who have low skill levels in a subject like math at the start of school will likely make up ground over time if they enjoy the same instructional resources as their peers who enter school with more skills. If, on the other hand, students with low skills are relegated to less-demanding courses because of their perceived lack of aptitude, then they will likely fall farther behind (Crosnoe et al., 2010, p. 409). Although research indicated the need to expose all students to higher-level instruction, this cannot be done haphazardly by exposing relatively less-prepared or less-able children to the same kind of challenging, complex activities and instruction as their better-prepared peers because that could most likely be counterproductive (Crosnoe et al., 2010, p. 409). Crosnoe et al. (2010) made clear that if the manner in which we expose relatively less-prepared students

to higher-level instruction were not well thought out, then these students would be overwhelmed because they do not have the foundational, basic experiences and knowledge, a situation which would perpetuate the cumulative disadvantage process it is intended to correct (p. 409). Thus, teachers must take care to make the learning experience less jarring for students who lack foundational experiences and knowledge. One way to achieve a less-jarring curriculum would be to include basic skills supplements at the beginning of the school year and move towards higher-level instruction, which would eventually move the two groups toward uniformity (Crosnoe et al., 2010, p. 409). To successfully navigate a potentially at-risk child through such an experience, a teacher needs to attend to the student's psychological well being as well as academic needs (Crosnoe et al., 2010, p. 409). According to Crosnoe et al. (2010), a teacher who provides encouragement, emotional support, and comfort to a student is likely to be better able to make that higher order approach work. In contrast, a teacher-student relationship fraught with conflicts is not conducive to success, which strongly suggests the need to include an evaluation of the classroom environment in a comprehensive teacher evaluation program (Crosnoe et al., 2010, p. 409).

Part of the classroom environment, as defined by Dochy, Janssens, and Struyven (2008), includes *student-activating teaching methods*, which challenge students to construct knowledge by means of authentic assignments that literally require their *active* participation in the learning and teaching process to incorporate and apply the available information from external sources such as course books, Internet, scientific journals, etc. Within active participation, students are expected to select, interpret, and apply information and knowledge to practical cases and to solve real life problems (Dochy et

al., 2008, p. 297). However, research also indicated that minimally guided active instructional approaches ignored evidence from empirical studies over the past half century that consistently indicated that this type of instruction was less effective and efficient than instructional approaches that placed a strong emphasis on guidance of the student learning process within an active participation classroom (Dochy et al., 2008, p. 297). The findings of Dochy et al. (2008) suggested that active participation was an important element in a classroom environment with a balance of support and guidance from the teacher. A comprehensive teacher evaluation program may help teachers to achieve this balance.

Within the learning environment, teachers strive to create a positive relationship with their students and to balance expectations through pairing basic skills and higher-level assignments. Empirical evidence also indicated that teachers need to consider the learning styles of each student, because learning styles influence learning outcomes (Dochy et al., 2008, p. 297). Dochy et al. (2008) found that the most important behaviors of teachers were to present material clearly, answer students' questions, treat students in a courteous and professional manner, and be well prepared for each class by providing students with clear directions and specific feedback (Dochy et al., 2008, p. 297-298).

The classroom environment is an element of a comprehensive teacher evaluation program. One main characteristic of the ideal teacher deemed important by students and teachers within a classroom setting is the "willingness to help students" (Dochy et al., 2008, p. 298). Other qualities Dochy et al. (2008) found rated highly by both the students and the faculty were "knowledge of subject-matter," "availability to present information

in a logical sequence,” “attention given to essentials of information,” “ability for clear communication in simple language” and “respect for student opinion” (p. 298).

Research indicated the relationship among the students, teachers, and the likeability ratings of the class were also associated with students’ perception of the learning environment (Dochy et al., 2008, p. 298). One component of the learning environment is the available technology, and:

A large number of research studies related students’ perceptions and learning outcomes to innovative computer technologies and the use of multimedia; many of them comparing an innovative method to traditional classroom teaching.

Though achievement is usually found to be similar to the scores of the classroom teaching groups, students tend to like the computer or Internet-based setting better than the traditional setting. (Dochy et al., 2008, p. 298)

Dochy et al. (2008) also found a similar set of studies conducted for other teaching methods and constructivist environments, and the most popular teaching methods among those studies were collaborative teaching methods and problem-based learning (PBL) (p. 298). Research indicated that PBL revealed a picture of popular teaching methods. When compared with a traditional setting, students had favorable perceptions of, and experienced specific learning gains within, the PBL setting; however, differences between PBL formats were also found (Dochy et al., 2008, p. 298). In their research, Dochy et al. (2008) clearly indicated educational literature revealed different types of relationships—namely, the relationship between the learning environment and students’ preferences, the relationship between the learning environment and students’ learning

outcomes, and the relationship between students' perceptions of the learning environment and student learning (pg. 298).

Managing student behavior. According to Bradshaw, Koth, and Leaf (2008), “another potential classroom-level predictor of students' perceptions of school climate is the students' proximal exposure to deviant or aggressive behavior in the classroom” (p. 97). A growing number of studies have shown that groups of children with a high concentration of aggressive members within their classroom have an effect on both the behavior of the students and dynamics of the class itself (Bradshaw et al., 2008, p. 97). In addition, studies indicated “that aggressive or deviant children shift the social norms, such that deviant behavior becomes socially acceptable among the members” (Bradshaw et al., 2008, p. 97). These findings suggest that the concentration of children with behavior problems may be an important classroom-level factor to consider when examining variation in children's perception of the school environment (Bradshaw et al., 2008, p. 97).

Further research by Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, and Feinberg (2005) also found that antisocial behavior, academic underachievement, and poor development of prosocial skills among students attending our nation's public schools were concerns for educators, parents, and the lay public (p.183). Many public schools in the US experience problems such as violence, vandalism, bullying, and similar behaviors, which create an unsafe learning environment, undermine instruction, and pose a threat to the school population. Furthermore, early onset of discipline problems in school children predicts later maladjustment (Luiselli et al., 2005, p. 183). Such a situation is noteworthy because “the concern about student discipline has produced many intervention and prevention-focused

programs to improve character and moral development, promote exemplary social skills, reduce antisocial behaviors, and strengthen academic competencies” (Luiselli et al., 2005, p. 184). Luiselli et al. (2005) found that many prevention-focused programs had conceptual limitations, were publicized without supporting empirical data, and had minimal to no positive effects when evaluated objectively through randomized controlled trials (p. 184). They also found social skills training promoted social competence by teaching students how to interact more effectively with peers and adults through enhanced conflict resolution, problem solving, negotiation, and friendship-building abilities (Luiselli et al., 2005, p. 184). In addition, Luiselli et al. (2005) discovered that systems-based behavioral intervention in schools incorporated contemporary principles of positive behaviors support (PBS). Defined broadly, PBS is “the application of positive behavioral intervention and systems to achieve socially accepted behavior change” (Luiselli et al., 2005, p. 184).

Luiselli et al. (2005) ultimately found that the critical components of a strong and positive learning environment included one in which the educators set consensus-driven behavior expectations, taught critical interpersonal skills, provided systematic positive reinforcement for meeting and exceeding performance criteria, monitored intervention efficacy continuously through data collection and analysis, involved all stakeholders in the formulation of discipline practices including teachers, administrators, and parents, and, lastly, reduced and eliminated reactive, punitive, and exclusionary strategies in favor of a proactive, preventive, and skill-building orientation (pp. 184-185). As Luiselli et al. (2005) explained, “The area of academic curricular modification considers many influences but one of the most relevant is training educators to increase the academic

engagement of their students” (p. 185). A strong and positive learning environment involves more than just behavior management; it also involves relationship building, setting high expectations, and engaging all students in the learning process.

Respectful culture. An ideal learning environment is one that fosters a safe environment for students to learn and take risks, sustains positive student-teacher relationships, upholds school values and beliefs, and clearly articulates high expectations. The learning environment is important to consider in a comprehensive teacher evaluation system, although there are questions regarding how many evaluation categories should include the learning environment as part of the assessment of comprehensive school reform and teacher evaluation. A school’s learning environment consists of administrators working with teachers and outside influences. Meanwhile, the classroom learning environment consists of teachers working with students in a more closed environment, which can directly affect student learning and achievement (Anderson et al., 2003, p. 392). Anderson et al. (2003) suggested that the culture within the school, including school-wide beliefs, values, and expectations, might not be expressed or manifested in the same way within each classroom (p. 392).

Classroom dynamics are complex and similar to school climate in that they involve the relationships and interactions between teachers and students and among students, as well as the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of students and teachers within the classroom (Bradshaw et al., 2008). It is likely that the climate of each classroom within a single school varies; moreover, within each classroom, classroom management, class composition, and teacher characteristics are all factors that influence student learning and achievement (Bradshaw et al., 2008, p. 97). According to Bradshaw

et al. (2008), “Aggregated indicators of student characteristics and school type are linked with perceptions of school climate. However, relatively few studies have investigated factors at the classroom level in relation to perceptions of the overall school climate” (p. 97). Bradshaw et al. (2008) also argued that it is imperative to evaluate teachers with practices that include emphasis on prosocial values and cooperation. It is also argued to evaluate teachers who are supportive and experience improvement in positive student behavior and create students’ perception of connectedness to add to a strong and positive classroom climate where learning and achievement takes place (p. 97).

Peer and Parent Surveys

As discussed, there are several elements considered within a comprehensive teacher evaluation. One of these elements is peer and parent feedback, which is gained through surveys. Bruce and Ross (2007) found that high expectations of success motivated classroom experimentation because teachers anticipated they would be able to achieve the benefits of innovation and overcome obstacles. Teachers with high expectations about their abilities to teach produced higher student scores on high-stakes assessment (Bruce & Ross, 2007, pp. 147-148). Bruce and Ross (2007) also found that “teacher efficacy contributes to achievement because high efficacy teachers try harder, use management strategies that stimulate student autonomy, attend more closely to low ability student needs, and modify students’ ability perceptions” (p. 148). In their research, Bruce and Ross (2007) found that teachers with high teacher efficacy had fewer absences, were more willing to handle difficult-to-teach students themselves rather than refer them to special classes, and were less likely to leave the profession (p. 148). In other words, Bruce and Ross (2007) found that confident teachers persisted; they did not

allow failure to affect their progress, but instead responded to setbacks with renewed effort (p. 148). It is suggested that teachers who have these high expectations for themselves are more open and encourage feedback from their peers as well as the parents of the student's they serve.

Peer feedback. Bruce and Ross (2007) indicated peer feedback influenced teacher's judgments about their goal attainment (p. 148). They also found that peers influenced teacher satisfaction with the outcomes of their instruction if colleagues gave praise specifically linked to the quality of the teacher's performance; teacher performance would then, in turn, affect student's scores on high-stakes assessments (Bruce & Ross, 2007, p. 148). However, it is important to point out that peer input may complement or compete with self-evaluation depending upon the teacher's perceptions of the credibility of her or his colleagues, which indicates the importance of creating strong relationships in a school environment (Bruce & Ross, 2007, p. 148). When strong and positive relationships are created, peers can influence teacher practice by suggesting specific strategies and work together to implement them. Collaboration among teachers promotes teacher efficacy, especially when it leads to instructional coordination within a school (Bruce & Ross, 2007, p. 148). Based on their research, Bruce and Ross (2007) suggested a structured approach for peer coaching in which pairs of teachers with equal experience and competence observed each other teach, negotiated improvement goals, devised strategies to implement the goals, observed the improved teaching, and provided each other with effective feedback (Bruce & Ross, 2007, p. 149). This research supported the phenomenon that when teachers reinforce each other's beliefs about competence, the competencies are magnified (Bruce & Ross, 2007, p. 149).

Parent feedback. Using systematically gathered parent feedback for teacher evaluations is an uncommon practice; however, many writers have argued in favor of including them (Peterson, Wahlquist, Brown, & Mukhopadhyay, 2003, p. 318). Epstein (1985) contended that parent views could be an important source of information about teachers. She found that parent ratings were influenced by student reports of classroom life and by resources and ideas given to the parents by the teacher. Epstein (1985) highlighted theories and empirical studies that suggested teachers and parents share responsibility for the child's success in school and that parents could help teachers and students meet school goals (Epstein, 1985, p. 4). There are a number of ways that parents can be involved in their children's education. More common methods include parent-teacher conferences and ongoing informal communication throughout the school year. However, formal parent surveys are a tool that can give feedback to the teachers and also help them maintain or improve their relationships with parents.

Building on the work of Epstein (1985), Peterson et al. (2003) also advocated parent views as an important but distinct data source for comprehensive teacher evaluation (p. 319). However, research showed a statistically significant difference in return rates and ratings of parent surveys according to the age of the pupils. Research also demonstrated that parent ratings of teachers did not agree with teacher self-ratings or administrator ratings. Finally, research confirmed that parents view teachers in a positive light, but that parents rated teachers lower than did the administrators (Peterson et al., 2003, p. 319). Peterson et al. (2003) considered parents' surveys to be a state-of-the-art remedy for deficiencies in most current teacher evaluation practices (p. 319). It is important to consider and recognize the logistics of including parent views in teacher

evaluation are considerable: time and dollar costs for complex data collection require deliberation, which in turn requires time costs to teachers—and time is a teacher’s most valuable commodity (Peterson et al., 2003, p. 319). Research made clear that the use of parent views in teacher evaluation is both sociologically and politically controversial (Peterson et al., 2003, p. 320).

Summary and Synthesis

Overall, the literature review suggested that a comprehensive teacher evaluation program has the ability to make a difference when the evaluation includes a number of elements. The creation of a strong relationship between administration, teachers, parents and students makes for a team effort and a safe place for teachers and students to take risks. Such risks also allow for a deeper understanding of skills and learning. The literature also suggested that teacher evaluation must include focus on more than one component in evaluating teachers beyond teaching strategies. In addition, in order for students to achieve high scores on high-stakes assessments, teacher evaluations need to be comprehensive and assess school climate and culture, classroom environment, and teacher strategies and must consider the team effort among administration, teachers, students, and parents. This literature review suggested that parent feedback could function as an element of evaluations that would be able to add to teacher improvement if the data were used in a systematic manner and analyzed in the appropriate context. Furthermore, this literature review indicated that there were numerous studies and data available to indicate various effects that instruction, learning environments, and peer and parent feedback have on the educational system.

My study adds to this body of research in all these areas; specifically, my study assesses a descriptive analysis among instruction, the learning environment, peer surveys, parent feedback and student standardized test scores. My study also allows the teachers who are subjects of the study and who are presently in the field to share their perceptions of comprehensive teacher evaluation and the effect it has on student standardized test scores.

Chapter 3

Methodology

I believe that statistical data are powerful and meaningful. However, I also believe that in-depth interviews are valuable and useful because they provide insights that numbers cannot. The information gained from interviews has the potential to make a difference in education. Professionals who work in classrooms everyday have important insights into what is working effectively within the educational system and what we need to do to improve.

In this chapter I first share the research design of this mixed methods, case study approach to my research including the rationale for the study design. I describe the school and the reasoning behind choosing the school. I further describe the details of the quantitative and qualitative data collection and end this chapter with how the analysis was conducted.

One goal of this research is to examine the relationship between comprehensive teacher evaluation and student standardized test scores. My second goal is to understand teachers' and administrators' perspectives of the evaluation process and how they use the results of the evaluation to inform instruction. Comprehensive teacher evaluation is defined as an evaluation program for teachers consisting of multiple forms of evaluations completed by multiple people to determine the effectiveness of teachers and educational programs. A mixed-method case study design is well suited to examine comprehensive teacher evaluation as a key element of school improvement and reform (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 128). Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggested the rationale for using a case study approach includes the strength of the details and complexities that can be gathered

and the use of a range of sources to obtain multiple perspectives within the case study framework (p. 105). The quantitative data consist of teacher evaluation scores, peer and parent survey results, and SST benchmark scores. I have looked at the raw data to determine if it suggests there is a relationship between the different elements of the comprehensive teacher evaluation and student scores, and I have hypothesized what that relationship might be. From the qualitative data (the in-depth interviews), I explored teachers' and administrators' experiences with and perceptions of comprehensive teacher evaluation. I have learned in detail about their experiences and what they perceived as the strengths and weaknesses of a comprehensive teacher evaluation program. Most importantly, I have gathered data specifically on how the extent to which it helps them to become better teachers and in turn improve student's scores on standardized tests.

I have completed a descriptive analysis based on teacher evaluation scores in the areas of instruction, environment, peer and parent survey results, and data from statewide assessments in the areas of math and language arts. I have collected teacher's average annual evaluation scores in all of the evaluation categories, SST benchmark scores for each class in the areas of math for the math teachers and in the area of language arts for the language arts teacher for the 2010-11 and the 2011-12 school years. These data have been used to construct a descriptive analysis and derive possible interpretations and implications of the data. These data have been used to answer the first research question.

The qualitative portion of the study includes detailed analysis of in-depth interviews with three teachers who taught fifth and sixth grade multi-aged classrooms. The subject pool consisted of two math teachers and one language arts teacher, and there were two mentor teachers among the three interviewees. Originally, I had planned on

interviewing four teachers (two math teachers and two language art teachers); however, the second potential language arts teacher was new to the school and the position, so there was no historical data on that teacher. I also completed an in-depth interview with the master teacher for that cluster group and the principal of the charter school. The data were collected in order to answer the research questions, which are as follows:

1. What is the relationship, if any, between comprehensive teacher evaluation scores and students' standardized test scores?
2. How do teachers and administrators experience the comprehensive evaluation process and how do they use their experiences to inform instruction?

Research Design

I used a mixed-method, case study approach. The quantitative portion of the study included a descriptive analysis of teacher's average evaluation scores in the areas of instruction, environment, peer and parent survey scores, and SST benchmark scores over a two-year period. The qualitative portion of the study consisted of in-depth interviews with teachers and administrators. I characterize this work as a case study because it is an in-depth and detailed exploration of the teachers' and administrator's experiences within the comprehensive teacher evaluation program and their perspectives on how this relates to students achievement. I support the in-depth interviews with a descriptive analysis of quantitative data. The relationships that manifest within this school setting constitute the case, or the unit of analysis (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 104).

Creswell (2009) suggested there were four important aspects when planning a mixed-methods study. Those aspects include timing, weighting, mixing, and theorizing. I collected quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, which gave each set of data equal

weight using a method called a concurrent triangulation strategy. According to Creswell (2009):

The concurrent triangulation approach is probably the most familiar of the six major mixed methods models. In a concurrent triangulation approach, the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then compares the two databases to determine if there is convergence. (p. 213)

Creswell (2009) suggested that the concurrent triangulation method should be used to compensate for the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other. Creswell (2009) described that in this mixed-methods approach, the two sets of data are placed side-by-side and a detailed discussion is completed (p. 213). As Creswell (2009) explained, “This traditional mixed methods model is advantageous because it is familiar to most researchers and can result in well-validated and substantiated findings” (pp. 213-214).

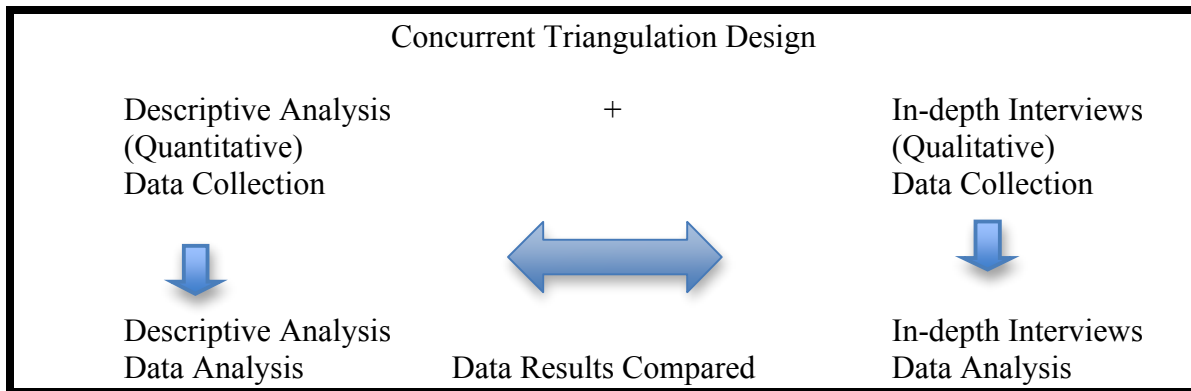


Figure 3.1. Creswell’s concurrent triangulation design for a mixed-methods study. Adapted from *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, by J. W. Creswell, 2009, p. 210. Copyright by Sage Publications.

Context and Access

As I was designing the study, it was very difficult to find a local school that had a comprehensive teacher evaluation program in place and fully implemented. There were at least 14 school districts in the state in which the study took place that were either considering the implementation of or in the first stages of implementation, but none were in full implementation in time for this study. The only school with this evaluation system fully implemented was South East Valley (SEV) Charter School (pseudonym) located in a predominantly White, middle-class neighborhood in a large metropolitan area in the Western US. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the mission of the charter school is to provide a safe learning environment rich in technology where students could achieve academic and social excellence while solving real-life problems in a cooperative manner. The mission statement was developed at a time when all schools throughout the US felt pressure regarding their students' scores on high-stakes testing.

At the time of the study, SEV Charter School had approximately 1,552 students who were enrolled in pre-kindergarten (pre-K) through twelfth grade. The pre-K through fourth grade enrollment was approximately 610 students; fifth and sixth grades had approximately 247 students; seventh and eighth grades had 282 students; ninth through twelfth grades had 413 students. Of these students, an insignificant percentage qualified for free and reduced lunch. The students in this school came from homes where many of the mothers were stay-at-home mothers or professionals. The parents were highly motivated and involved in the school and were expected to complete volunteer hours each year, but did not have a specified amount of volunteer hours required. Table 3.1 shows a breakdown of the enrollment for SEV.

Table 3.1

SEV Charter School Student Population

Grades	Number of Students
Pre-k-fourth	610
Fifth and sixth	247
Seventh and Eighth	282
Ninth through twelfth	413
Total	1,552

The school was rated *Excelling* by the State Department of Education. Opened in 1996, the majority of students who attended this charter school were White, English speaking, and not economically disadvantaged; there were very few students with disabilities. The demographics of the teachers were similar to those of the students they served. I contacted the chief executive officer of the charter school and received approval to conduct my study at this school.

I chose SEV Charter School because it had a comprehensive teacher evaluation program in place for many years. The comprehensive teacher evaluation program implemented at SEV Charter School includes a highly detailed rubric to help teachers to improve how they designed, planned, and implemented instruction as well as evaluate their classroom environments (Appendix A). The school also administered peer (Appendices B & C) and parent surveys (Appendix D) during the academic year and provided time each week for the teachers to reflect on their teaching both independently and within their grade level team.

The first through fourth grades had multi-aged classrooms with 60 students per classroom. In each classroom, there were two certified teachers and one instructional assistant in a space the size of two standard classrooms; the school referred to the spaces

as clusters. The intermediate elementary, middle school, and high school were departmentalized, and each student had teachers who were highly qualified in the content area they taught. The students were grouped based on their abilities in math and reading. Project-based learning (PBL) was used for science and social studies instruction with students of all levels working together. The students presented the completed projects to their parents each quarter. Each student also had an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and ILP conferences were conducted five times a year with the teacher, student, and parent(s).

There were three categories of teachers within the school: classroom teachers (career teachers), classroom teachers who served as mentors (mentors), and teachers who did not have a class and functioned as a support and a coach to the classroom teachers (master teacher). Career and mentor teachers had 90 minutes each day to collaborate with their co-teachers, attend meetings, and receive professional development. During the 90 minutes, the students received physical education, music, technology, and Spanish instruction from certified teachers in those content areas. The mentor teachers, master teachers, and principal completed three teacher evaluations of each teacher throughout the school year. Based on student assessments and teacher evaluations, the master teacher continuously researched and tested effective teaching and learning strategies. Based on the master teacher's findings, he or she then trained the career and mentor teachers to implement the strategies in his or her classrooms through modeling and professional development during their planning time.

Researcher Positioning and Stance

I chose this school because, to my knowledge, it was the only school that had a long-running comprehensive teacher evaluation program at the time of the study. I had

worked with the administration at this school, and so I had established rapport with the administration. As such, I have a clear understanding of the comprehensive teacher evaluation program. I chose to focus on the sixth grade because this enabled me to examine SST benchmark scores among students who had a history with statewide assessment. Although the teachers have multi-age classrooms with fifth and sixth grade, I specifically focused on the sixth grade. While some of these sixth graders were new to the school, most had been enrolled for a number of years.

Quantitative Data

For the quantitative portion of my research, I gathered data from teacher evaluations, peer and parent surveys, and SST benchmark scores, which were provided by the chief executive officer of the school and I created student numbers for each student to keep their identities anonymous. I collected standardized test data for the same group of students for the 2010-11 and the 2011-12 school years (they were in the fifth and sixth grades over the two years) taught by the teachers for whom I had collected data. At this school, students were in multi-aged classrooms, so many of the sixth grade students worked with the same teacher they had in fifth grade. I collected the average teacher evaluation scores for specific evaluation areas for the fifth and sixth grade language arts teacher and math teachers for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years. I analyzed the SST benchmark scores and teachers' average scores in each of the specified areas and completed a descriptive analysis based on all of the quantitative data.

Each teacher received three observations within one school year from administration, mentor teachers, and master teachers. They received scores between 1 and 5, with 1 being *unsatisfactory* and 5 being *exemplary*. Teachers received scores in 15

areas that included designing, planning, and implementing instruction. These 15 scores from the three observations per academic year were averaged to create one, overall score in the area of designing, planning, and implementing instruction. The teachers also received scores between 1 and 5 for evaluations in four areas relating to the learning environment. These scores were obtained over the course of three observations per academic year, and they were averaged to create one overall score in the area of the learning environment. I also collected the scores for each teacher in the areas of peer and parents surveys. These scores were also averaged. The teacher evaluation scores, peers survey scores, parents survey scores, and SST benchmark scores were the basis of constructing my descriptive analysis. While collecting this quantitative data, I also collected the qualitative data, discussed in the next section.

Qualitative Data

For the qualitative portion of my research, I recruited three fifth and sixth grade teachers to participate in in-depth interviews. Based on Seidman's (2006) three-part interview sequence, "The first interview inquires into the interviewee's history and life story" (Seidman, 2003, p. 98). The second interview orients both the researcher and the interviewee regarding the comprehensive teacher evaluation program in which the teacher has been involved (Seidman, 2003). The purpose of the third interview is to bring the first and second interviews "together in a reflective dialogue about the meaning of the interviewee's experience in light of his/her history" (Seidman, 2003, p. 98). My interview questions and conversations were directed at the comprehensive teacher evaluation program in which the interviewees participated. I also asked about the

experiences they had within the program and how they believed those experiences had an effect on instruction, student learning, and statewide-standardized test scores.

Each teacher involved in my research signed permission forms so I could have access to their evaluation data and I created pseudonyms to help keep their identities anonymous. I conducted in-depth interviews at the same time with the same three teachers (one language arts teacher and two math teachers) to get to know their personal and professional background, and the experience they had at the school with regard to the comprehensive teacher evaluation program. I also conducted interviews with the master teacher and the principal. These five interviews constitute the bulk of the data for my research. I broke down the questions from each of the five interviewees into the categories from my conceptual framework: instruction, environment, and peer and parent surveys. I also incorporated interview data from each of the interviewees in regard to how much they “buy-into” the program as well as the strengths and weaknesses they see within the program.

Data Analysis

After collecting all of the quantitative and qualitative data, it was then necessary to analyze the material. The quantitative data were historical data that was given to me by the CEO. This data included SST benchmark scores of the student’s of each teacher, teacher evaluation data, peer surveys results for each teacher, and parent survey results for each teacher. I completed a descriptive analysis on this data and suggested implications based on these analyses.

The interviews were newly collected material, so unlike the quantitative data from prior academic years, there was a great deal of interview data to process and analyze.

According to Rossman and Rallis (2003):

Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data is the process of deep immersion in the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials you have collected; systematically organizing these material into salient themes and patterns; bringing meaning so the themes tell a coherent story; and writing it all up so that others can read what you have learned. (p. 270)

The in-depth interviews helped reveal where each teacher came from, how their teaching has or has not changed since they became involved in the comprehensive teacher evaluation program, what they thought of the program, and what they perceived as the relationship, if any, between the comprehensive teacher evaluation program and students' standardized test scores. Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggested the use of preliminary categories to help focus the data gathering process. In accordance with this suggestion, the interview analysis began with preliminary categories that included the teacher's perception of each of the elements I am focusing on in my study: designing, planning, and implementing instruction, learning environment, and peer and parent surveys (p. 282). I also learned the extent of the benefits they receive from the program, not only in terms of the evaluations themselves, but also the training, professional development, or any other support they felt necessary. I learned their opinion on if they supported more schools adopting comprehensive teacher evaluation programs, and we discussed why or why not they supported adoption of the program. Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggested

that once interview information is gathered through the categories, a more subtle analysis may be revealed (p. 282).

As the analysis moved forward, I relied on the categories I developed through the literature review and my conceptual framework; however, as Rossman and Rallis (2003) described, during the focused analysis other categories were determined and I have included them in my analysis.

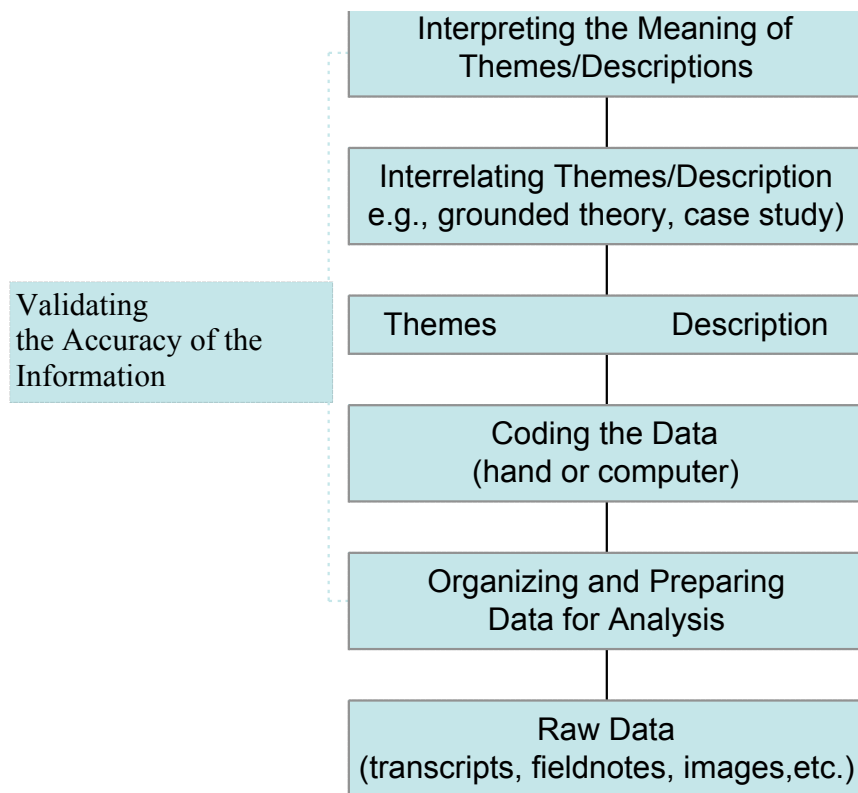


Figure 3.2. Diagram of the process of data analysis for qualitative data. Adapted from *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, by J. W. Creswell, 2009, p. 185. Copyright by Sage Publications.

According to Creswell (2009), “This side-by-side integration is often seen in published mixed methods studies in which a discussion section first provides quantitative statistical results followed by qualitative quotes that support or disconfirm the

quantitative results” (p. 212). This is the organization seen in the following chapters within my research project.

Summary and Synthesis

This chapter provided an overview of the process that I completed to collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data describing the research design. It further shares research to support the process chosen to complete this study. I describe the school that was selected and the reasons behind the school that was selected. There is a detailed section describing the data collection and analysis for both the quantitative and qualitative data and concludes with a detailed section on completing data analysis. Chapters 4 and 5 delve into the actual data and detailed analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter 4

Descriptive Analysis

Introduction

I completed a mixed-method case study that included a comparison of teachers' average evaluation scores in the areas of instruction and environment, peer survey scores, parent survey scores, and students' SST benchmark scores over a two-year period as the quantitative data for the study. I also completed in-depth interviews with classroom teachers, mentor teachers, the master teacher, and the school principal; I used these interviews for the qualitative portion of my study (discussed in Chapter 5). In this chapter, I will present the data I used to address my first research question: What is the relationship, if any, between comprehensive teacher evaluation scores and students' standardized test scores? This chapter provides an overview of teacher evaluation scores, survey scores and their SST benchmark scores.

Three classroom teachers from the fifth and sixth grade team at South East Valley (SEV, a pseudonym) were participants in this study, and two of them served in the mentor teacher role. Bill (all of the teachers were assigned pseudonyms) has taught math; Katherine has taught math; and Emma has taught language arts. Katherine and Emma have both served as mentor teachers as well as classroom teachers. Table 4.1 shows which data were available for each of the teachers involved in the study.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Data Overview

Teacher	2010-11					2011-12				
	Designing, Planning, and Implementing Instruction	Environment	Peer Surveys	Parent Surveys	AIMS Data	Designing, Planning, and Implementing Instruction	Environment	Peer Surveys	Parent Surveys	AIMS Data
Bill	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Katherine	X	X			X	X	X		X	X
Emma	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X

Table 4.2 provides a list of the instruments I used for the analysis. It also provides a brief description of what each instrument is designed to do, the scale scores for each instrument, and the response rate for each of the instruments.

Table 4.2

Description of Instruments

Instrument	What it is Designed to do	Scoring Scale	Response Rate
Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) Rubric (Appendix 1)	This instrument is a 19 point rubric that is used to evaluate career teachers and mentor teachers. This evaluation instrument is designed to indicate the strengths (Reinforcements) and weaknesses (Refinements) for the teachers in regards to the specific lesson that was being observed.	1-5 with 1 being Needs Improvement, 3 Proficient, and 5 Exemplary.	Teachers received three observations each year for the two years of this study.
Instruction	This section has 12 Rubric Indicators		
Planning and Designing Instruction	This section has 3 Rubric Indicators		
Environment	This section has 4 Rubric Indicators		
Peer Surveys			
Career Teacher (Appendix 2)	This instrument includes eight questions and is designed to give teachers an opportunity to give feedback to one another in the areas of growing and developing professionally and reflecting on teaching.	1-5 with 1 being Unsatisfactory, 3 Proficient, and 5 Exemplary.	One of the three teachers is a career teacher; Teacher #1 Bill and SEV had peer survey results for him one of the two years of the study.

Mentor Teacher (Appendix 3)	This instrument includes 11 questions and is designed to give teachers an opportunity to give feedback to the mentor teachers in the areas of staff development, instructional supervision, mentoring, and community involvement.	1-5 with 1 being Unsatisfactory, 3 Proficient, and 5 Exemplary.	Two of the three teachers are mentor teachers; Teacher #2 Katherine and Teacher #3 Emma. SEV had no peer survey results for Katherine for the two year period and peer survey results for one of the two years for Emma.
Parent Surveys (Appendix 4)	This instrument includes 13 questions and is designed to give parents an opportunity to give feedback to the teachers.	1-5 with NO being No Opinion, 1 being Disagree Very Much, 3 Occasionally, and 5 Agree Very Much.	SEV had parents survey results for all three teachers for one of the two year period.
AIMS Scores	This instrument is a State Standardized Test given to all students in grades 3-12. This instrument assesses student growth in the areas of Reading, Writing, Math, and Science. This study focuses on Math and Reading	Exceeds, Meets, Approaches, and Falls Far Below are the indicators on the AIMS.	SEV had AIMS scores for all students within the areas of Math and Reading for the two year study period.

The first section of this chapter includes the evaluation scores for each of the three teachers for the school years 2010-11 and 2011-12. The teachers’ scores are provided for each rubric indicator within these broad areas: Designing and Planning Instruction, Instruction, and Environment. There are 15 rubric indicators for Designing and Planning Instruction and Instruction. The Designing and Planning Instruction section of the rubric covers the areas of:

- instructional plans
- student work
- assessment

The Instruction section of the rubric covers the areas of:

- standards and objectives
- motivating students

- presenting instructional content
- lesson structure and pacing
- activities and materials
- questioning
- academic feedback
- grouping students
- teacher content knowledge
- teacher knowledge of students
- thinking
- problem solving

Each section provided a score; one score was from Instruction and the other was from Designing and Planning Instruction. I then averaged the two scores to determine each teacher's overall score for Designing, Planning, and Implementing Instruction.

The Environment section of the rubric has three rubric indicators:

- expectations
- managing student behavior
- environment

I calculated a score for environment by averaging across the indicators.

The teacher evaluation scores indicated that the teachers scored between 3 and 4 each school year. The teachers' scores did not change much from one school year to the next. The Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) rubric suggested that if the teacher scored a 3, then the students should be advancing one year's worth of growth, however my data do not allow me to directly assess student growth.

I have also included tables to show more detailed information regarding the responses from the parent and peer surveys, which will be covered more specifically near the end of the chapter. However, the surveys did not have a high response rate. At the end of the chapter, I provide an overview of the extent to which each teacher's students met SST benchmarks.

Teacher Evaluation Scores

Teacher evaluation scores for math teacher Bill. Bill has taught math for the fifth and sixth grade team at SEV. He scored an average of 3.53 in the area of Designing and Planning Instruction in the 2010-11 school year and 3.61 in the 2011-12 school year. He scored an average of 5 in the area of Environment for the 2010-11 school year, which is a perfect score; however, his average fell to a 3.97 average for the 2011-12 school year, which indicates a drop from the previous year. Lastly, Bill scored an overall average of 3.78 in the area of Instruction during the 2010-11 school year and a 3.75 in the 2011-12 school year, which was a minor increase. Overall, these scores suggest that Bill's instruction did not change substantially over the two-year period. Instead, the scores suggest that there was either a change in Bill's classroom environment or the evaluators changed from one year to the next and there was decreased consensus among the evaluators. In other words, Bill's classroom environment may not have changed, but the expectations of the evaluators changed. Overall, these scores suggests Bill is an above-average teacher. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show the breakdown of Bill's evaluation scores over the two-year period.

Teacher evaluation scores for math teacher Katherine. Katherine has taught math for the fifth and sixth grade team at SEV and has also served as a mentor teacher.

She scored an average of 3.68 in the area of Designing and Planning Instruction for the 2010-11 school year and 3.47 in the 2011-12 school year. This score indicates a small drop in this area. She scored an average of 4.28 in the area of Environment for the 2010-11 school year, and her score increased slightly to an average of 4.52 for the 2011-12 school year. Lastly, Katherine scored an overall average of 3.75 in the area of Instruction during the 2010-11 school year and a 3.79 in the 2011-12 school year, a slight increase in this area. Overall, these scores suggest that Katherine's overall instruction did not change significantly over the two-year period; it also suggests she is an above-average teacher. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show the breakdown of Katherine's evaluation scores over the two-year period.

Teacher evaluation scores for language arts teacher Emma. Emma has taught language arts for the fifth and sixth grade team at SEV and has also served as a mentor teacher. She scored an average of 3.84 in the area of Designing and Planning Instruction for the 2010-11 school year and 3.7 in the 2011-12 school year, which was a small decrease. She scored an average of 4.01 in the area of Environment for the 2010-11 school year, and her score in this area increased to 4.43 for the 2011-12 school year. Lastly, Emma scored an overall average of 3.94 in the area of Instruction during the 2010-11 school year and a 3.81 in the 2011-12 school year, which indicates a minor dip in her score. Overall, these scores suggest that Emma's general instruction practices did not change substantially over the two-year period, and also indicates she is an above-average teacher based on the expectations of the teacher evaluation program. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show the breakdown of Emma's evaluation scores over the two-year period.

Understanding teacher evaluation scores. While the average teacher evaluation scores were very similar, there were some differences in the teachers' scores in the different areas, which suggests the importance of carefully assessing each teacher using the detail within each broad area to understand teachers' strengths and weaknesses.

Table 4.3

Teacher Evaluation Scores for 2010-11

Teacher Averages by Rubric Domain 2010-11

Participant Pseudonym	# of Obs	Designing and Planning Instruction	Instructional Plans	Student Work	Assessment	The Learning Environment	Expectations	Managing Student Behavior	Environment	Respectful Culture	Instruction
Bill	3	3.53	3.67	3.77	3.17	5	5	5	5	5	3.78
Katherine	3	3.68	4.3	3.33	3.4	4.28	4.37	4.03	4.37	4.37	3.75
Emma	3	3.84	4.3	3.63	3.6	4.01	3.7	3.97	3.97	4.4	3.94

Teacher Averages by Rubric Domain 2010-11

Participant Pseudonym	Standards and Objectives	Motivating Students	Presenting Instructional Content	Lesson Structure and Pacing	Activities and Materials	Questioning	Academic Feedback	Grouping Students	Teacher Content Knowledge	Teacher Knowledge of Students	Thinking	Problem Solving
Bill	3.8	4.33	3.97	3.7	3.63	3.63	3.63	3.4	4.4	4.1	3.67	3.07
Katherine	4.3	3.97	3.37	3.7	3.67	3.27	4.03	3.37	4.97	3.77	3.3	3.3
Emma	3.67	3.97	4.33	3.7	3.93	3.63	3.93	3	4.67	3.97	4.23	4.2

Table 4.4

Teacher Evaluation Scores for 2011-12

Teacher Averages by Rubric Domain 2011-12

Participant Pseudonym	# of Obs	Designing and Planning Instruction	Instructional Plans	Student Work	Assessment	The Learning Environment	Expectations	Managing Student Behavior	Environment	Respectful Culture	Instruction	Standards and Objectives
Bill	3	3.61	4.03	3.4	3.4	3.97	3.73	4.03	4.07	4.03	3.75	4.33
Katherine	3	3.47	3.7	3.33	3.37	4.52	4.6	4.57	4.6	4.3	3.79	4
Emma	3	3.7	3.7	4.03	3.37	4.43	4.33	4.33	4.33	4.7	3.81	4.03

Teacher Averages by Rubric Domain 2011-12

Participant Pseudonym	Motivating Students	Presenting Instructional Content	Lesson Structure and Pacing	Activities and Materials	Questioning	Academic Feedback	Grouping Students	Teacher Content Knowledge	Teacher Knowledge of Students	Thinking	Problem Solving
Bill	4.03	3.43	3.37	4.03	3.1	3.4	4.03	4.37	3.4	3.73	3.73
Katherine	3.9	3.97	3.33	3.6	3.37	3.67	3.37	4.7	4.03	3.63	3.93
Emma	3.67	3.73	3.73	3.63	3.63	3.97	3.63	4.33	4.03	3.97	3.3

Peer Survey Results

Historically, SEV has conducted peer surveys annually in the spring. To do this, the leadership team creates their own surveys with feedback from the teachers based on the information they want to collect (Appendices B and C). The questions in the peer surveys (career teacher and mentor teacher surveys) focus on how the teachers work within teams, how they collaborate, and the level of content knowledge from the perspective of their team members. SEV teachers work together on a daily basis and look at student work, create goals for themselves as well as the students, and work on their teaching strategies; the peer surveys give the teachers feedback on these expectations.

Teachers complete peer surveys for teachers that are on their team or cluster and teachers they work closely with on a regular basis; therefore, the overall number of surveys is small. SEV located peer survey results for two out of three of the teachers for the 2010-11 school year. There were no peer survey results for Katherine, and it is unclear why they were not completed. SEV was unable to provide peer survey results for any of the three teachers for the 2011-12 school year.

Peer survey results for math teacher Bill. For the 2010-11 school year, SEV had peer survey results for Bill as a career teacher and seven out of seven of Bill’s peers filled out the survey, which is a response rate of 100%. The teacher survey results

indicated that Bill's peers had a very positive overall attitude toward Bill. Table 4.5 shows the detailed responses Bill received from his peers. Bill's strongest area from the perspective of his peers is in the area of knowledge or how to get unknown knowledge in content area. All of Bill's peers gave him a perfect score for that indicator. All of his peers also gave him a 4 or a 5 for all of the indicators, except for one peer who gave him a 3 on six of the indicators. The 3s that Bill received are the lowest scores he received from his peers. The overall score of 4.66 indicates that Bill is well respected by his peers.

Table 4.5

Bill's Career Teacher Peer Survey Results for 2010-11

Participant Pseudonym	Bill					Rating Average
	1	2	3	4	5	
The teacher is open minded.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	28.6%(2)	71.4%(5)	4.71
enthusiastic about teaching.	0.00%	0.00%	14.3%(1)	14.3%(1)	71.4%(5)	4.57
The teacher models the school values.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	28.6%(2)	71.4%(5)	4.71
The teacher "goes to the source."	0.00%	0.00%	14.3%(1)	28.6%(2)	57.1%(4)	4.43
The teacher is approachable.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	42.9%(3)	57.1%(4)	4.57
The teacher is knowledgeable or knows how to obtain knowledge for unknown content or questions.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%(7)	5.00
The teacher is willing to share resources/ideas with others.	0.00%	0.00%	14.3%(1)	0.00%	85.7%(6)	4.71
The teacher follows through on assigned or volunteered tasks.	0.00%	0.00%	14.3%(1)	28.6%(2)	57.1%(4)	4.43
The teacher is a learner as well as a teacher.	0.00%	0.00%	14.3%(1)	0.00%	85.7%(6)	4.71
The teacher is flexible to meet the team's needs.	0.00%	0.00%	14.3%(1)	0.00%	85.7%(6)	4.71
						4.66

Career Teacher Peer Comments

Bill	Because Bill and I have worked together for the last 9 years, we have developed almost a family like relationship. Sometimes we don't agree, and although we've had difficulty communication that from time to time, I think we've come a long way. Our communication has gotten much better and there is a mutual respect that has been built. I am happy to know and work with Bill.
	I am very lucky to have Bill as a teaching partner. We work well together (at least I think we do)...never drama!! I value him and his experience, he teaches me a lot.
	Bill is a solid, stabilizing member of the team and is always willing to share ideas and help.
	Bill's demeanor around parents and kids is something I respect and hope to learn one day for myself.

Peer survey results for language arts teacher Emma. For the 2010-11 school year, SEV had peer survey results for Emma as a mentor teacher and eight out of eight of Emma's peers filled out the survey, which is a response rate of 100%. Emma's peers had

a very positive overall attitude toward Emma as a mentor teacher as indicated by the survey results. Table 4.6 shows the detailed responses Emma received from her peers. Emma's strongest score was with the indicator that states she is willing to share resources and ideas with others. As a mentor teacher, this is a very important element. It is also important to point out that Emma received a 5 on the majority of the indicators by a majority of her peers. However, her low score was a 2 on the indicator that the teacher follows up on professional growth topics, something Emma would want to address if she had not already done so by the time she received the results of the survey. The overall scores for the 2010-11 school year mentor teacher peer survey indicated that Emma was well respected by her peers. As the mentor teacher, Emma received an overall average score of 4.69 from her peers with 5 being a perfect score.

Table 4.6

Emma's Mentor Teacher Peer Survey Results for 2010-11

Participant Pseudonym	Emma					Rating Average
	1	2	3	4	5	
The mentor teacher is open minded.	0.00%	0.00%	25%(2)	25%(2)	50%(4)	4.25
The mentor teacher is enthusiastic about professional growth.	0.00%	0.00%	12.5%(1)	25%(2)	62.5%(5)	4.50
The mentor teacher models the school values.	0.00%	0.00%	12.5%(1)	12.5%(1)	75%(6)	4.63
The mentor teacher "goes to the source."	0.00%	0.00%	12.5%(1)	0.00%	87.5%(7)	4.75
The mentor teacher is approachable.	0.00%	0.00%	12.5%(1)	25%(2)	62.5%(5)	4.50
The mentor teacher is knowledgeable or knows how to obtain knowledge for unknown content or questions.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.5%(1)	87.5%(7)	4.88
The mentor teacher is willing to share resources/ideas with others.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%(8)	5.00
The mentor teacher follows up with me on professional growth topics.	0.00%	12.5%(1)	0.00%	12.5%(1)	50%(4)	4.33
The mentor teacher is a learner as well as a teacher.	0.00%	0.00%	12.5%(1)	12.5%(1)	75%(6)	4.63
The mentor teacher is flexible to meet my needs.	0.00%	0.00%	12.5%(1)	12.5%(1)	75%(6)	4.63
The mentor teacher helps me problem solve with students.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.5%(1)	62.5%(5)	4.83
The mentor teacher helps me problem solve with parents	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.5%(1)	62.5%(5)	4.83
I look to the mentor teacher for direction in curriculum planning	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.5%(1)	75%(6)	4.86
I grow from the formal and informal observations conducted by the mentor teacher	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	62.5%(5)	5.00
						4.69
Mentor Teacher Peer Comments						
Emma	<p>In my interactions, I feel Emma worked hard and grown this year.</p> <p>Emma implements effective strategies that help her students progress and be successful. She is very personable and helpful to all staff members.</p> <p>Emma and I have come a long way over the years. We have come to understand each other on a different level, and have learned to respect one another for our strengths. There will always be bumps in the road here and there, but the path we've been on for a while has been smooth sailing. I appreciate Emma for who she is, and what she does for our school and our team. I am happy to see how far we have come as both colleagues and friends.</p> <p>I have seen such growth in Emma this year. Her leadership and big picture thinking for the Language team is growing by the day and the way she and Katherine team project group shows the team good teamwork.</p>					

Peer Survey Results Summary

For the 2010-11 school year, there were peer responses for two out of the three teachers. The data that were available suggest that these teachers have respect for one another, support one another in their jobs, and believe that they are each doing an above-average job of teaching and supporting one another. It is important to point out that the two surveys are different. Bill's peers completed the career teacher survey and Emma's

peers completed the mentor teacher survey. These surveys have different questions and are not comparable. As a practitioner, I would go over peer survey results with all of my teachers. I would ask questions to encourage the teachers to recognize his or her area of strength and specific things he or she does to support his or her team in the specific area. I would further encourage the teacher to look at his or her lowest scores and have a conversation to determine what he or she thinks may have contributed to that score and how that information might inform future objectives and goals.

Parent Survey Results

SEV located parent survey results for all three teachers for the 2011-12 school year, but parent survey results were not available for the teachers for the 2010-11 school year. SEV was either unable to locate the data or the surveys were not completed for 2010-11 school year. Appendices G, H, and I, give detailed responses to each of the indicators for the teachers as well as the number of parents who responded for each teacher. However, due to the considerably low return rate, it is not reasonable to complete an in-depth analysis of this data.

Overall, the number of parent surveys that were returned was limited. Bill received responses from 14 parents; Katherine received responses from 14 parents; Emma received responses from 10 parents. Each teacher received scores ranging from 1 to 5, although the majority of responses were found in the 4 and 5 range for all three teachers. Bill received an overall average score of 4.41 on the parent surveys, Katherine received an overall average score of 4.67 on the parent surveys, and Emma received an overall average score of 4.59 on parent survey scores. These scores suggest that the parents who did respond to the 2011-12 parent survey felt that the teachers were above

average in the areas that were addressed in the survey. However, these were only a minority of each teachers' parents. A short summary can be found in Appendix J.

Score Summary

Tables 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9, include Bill's, Katherine's, and Emma's average evaluation scores in the areas of instruction and environment, peer and parent survey scores (where available), and a percentage and raw score for SST benchmark data for each teacher for 2010-11 and 2011-12. I broke down the SST benchmark data into the performance categories used by the state. For each year, there is a percentage (and raw number) of students who received *exceeds standard*, *meets standard*, *approaches standard*, and *falls far below standard*. These tables allowed me to summarize the data and then follow up with some possible interpretations of the data. It is important to recognize that, because the samples of students in each classroom was small, I can only conduct a basic descriptive analysis.

As a practitioner, these data alone do not allow me to make firm conclusions such as effectiveness and efficiency in regard to instruction or learning. Although within the context of the comprehensive teacher evaluation program, these data are the basis for conversations and future plans for teacher and student goals. These data are analyzed with the teacher and goals are created for the teacher to improve upon scores within their evaluations. This process is also tied to goals that are created for moving students from one level to the other within the SST categories. Instructional strategies to move students from one level to another are set within leadership and cluster meetings.

Score summary for math teacher Bill. Table 4.7 includes Bill's average score in the areas of instruction and environment, peer and parent survey results, and student

SST benchmark scores for 2010-11 and 2011-12. The scores Bill received in the area of instruction and environment were very similar over the two-year period. The scores suggest that Bill is a slightly above-average teacher. The comprehensive teacher evaluation program suggests that when a teacher receives a 3, then the teacher is proficient (an average teacher) and Bill's scores were slightly above a 3. Both the peer and parent survey scores suggest that Bill's peers and parents believe Bill is an above-average teacher. Those scores were slightly higher than what Bill received on his evaluation scores. However, the number of surveys completed was smaller, thus making it difficult to put too much weight on these scores.

Bill's SST benchmark scores were also very similar over the two-year period. The scores suggest that Bill's students, overall, met or exceeded state standards. Over the two-year period, Bill had mixed results. It is important to note that it is imperative to look at the students individually: where they fall within the raw scores of each category, academic capability, special needs, and family support to name just a few considerations. It is also imperative to look at the prior achievement of students in a teachers' class and movement in and out of the classroom or school.

Table 4.7

Bill's Evaluation Scores, Peer Survey Scores, Parent Survey Scores, and SST Benchmark Scores for 2010-11 and 2011-12

Year	Average Instruction Score	Average Environment Score	Peer Survey Scores	Parent Survey Scores	Students' Standardized Test Scores			
					Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Falls Far Below
2010-11	3.655	5	4.655	NA	44%(18)	49%(20)	7%(3)	0%(0)
2011-12	3.68	3.97	NA	4.41	51%(18)	37%(13)	6%(2)	6%(2)

Score summary for math teacher Katherine. Table 4.8 includes Katherine's average score in the areas of instruction and environment, peer and parent survey results, and SST benchmark scores for 2010-11 and 2011-12. The scores Katherine received in the area of instruction and environment were very similar over the two-year period. The scores suggest that Katherine is a slightly above-average teacher. There were no peer survey results for Katherine for either of the two years. Parent survey scores suggest the parents that responded believed Katherine was an above-average teacher. The parent survey scores for 2011-12 were slightly higher than what Katherine received on her evaluation scores. However, as mentioned before, the number of surveys completed was small, thus making it difficult to put too much weight on these scores.

Katherine's SST benchmark scores were also very similar over the two-year period. The scores suggest that Katherine's students, overall, met or exceeded state standards. Over the two-year period, Katherine had a small shift for all categories; however, further investigation is needed to determine what happened within each category. The categories shifted from two to five students over the two-year period. It is imperative to look at the students individually—that is, to consider the students' scale scores, prior achievement, special needs, and family support to name just a few considerations. Likewise, it is also important to understand class composition and movement in and out of the classroom or school. Katherine had the largest number of student who scored at *approaches* and *falls far below* standards. However, it is important to consider the composition of the classroom when Katherine started working with the student. It is likely that the prior achievement of Katherine's students was very different than Bill's when they began working with their classes in the 5th grade and that the

placement of students within classrooms was not random. Likewise, there was also some movement between the two classrooms over the two years of the study that was deliberate and a principal would have to take these issues into account when they look at the array of data associated with the teacher evaluation process.

Table 4.8

Katherine's Evaluation Scores, Peer Survey Scores, Parent Survey Scores, and SST Benchmark Scores for 2010-11 and 2011-12

Year	Average Instruction Score	Average Environment Score	Peer Survey Scores	Parent Survey Scores	Students' Standardized Test Scores			
					Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Falls Far Below
2010-11	3.715	4.28	NA	NA	28%(22)	41%(32)	22%(17)	10%(8)
2011-12	3.63	4.52	NA	4.67	23%(19)	43%(35)	27%(22)	7%(6)

Score summary for language arts teacher Emma. Table 4.9 includes Emma's average score in the areas of instruction and environment, peer and parent survey results, and SST benchmark scores for 2010-11 and 2011-12. The scores Emma received in the area of instruction and environment were very similar over the two-year period. The scores suggest that Emma is a slightly above-average teacher. Peer and parent survey scores suggest that Emma's peers and parents believe Emma is an above-average teacher. The peer and parent survey scores were slightly higher than what Emma received on her evaluation scores. However, the number of surveys completed was small, thus making it difficult to put too much weight on these scores.

Like with the other two teachers, Emma's SST benchmark scores were also very similar over the two-year period. The scores suggest that Emma's students, overall, met or exceeded state standards. Over the two-year period, Emma had a small shift for all

categories; however, further investigation is needed to determine what happened within each category. The distribution of students in each category shifted anywhere from one to six students over the two year period. It is important to note that it is imperative to look at the students individually. This includes assessing their scale scores rather than the benchmark, academic capabilities, special needs, and family support to name just a few considerations. It is also imperative to look at the class makeup and movement in and out of the classroom or school.

Table 4.9

Emma’s Evaluation Scores, Peer Survey Scores, Parent Survey Scores, and SST Benchmark Scores for 2010-11 and 2011-12

Year	Average Instruction Score	Average Environment Score	Peer Survey Scores	Parent Survey Scores	Students' Standardized Test Scores			
					Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Falls Far Below
2010-11	3.89	4.01	4.68	NA	10%(3)	71%(22)	16%(5)	3%(1)
2011-12	3.755	4.43	NA	4.59	26%(9)	71%(24)	3%(1)	0%(0)

Summary and Interpretation

In Chapter 2, the literature review covered research in the areas of instruction, environment, peer and parent surveys, and how these elements affect student achievement. The literature review suggested that in the area of instruction, “Teacher appraisal systems are an important link in the chain leading to desired student outcomes” (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007, p. 106). In the area of Environment, Crosnoe et al. (2010) suggested that a teacher who provides encouragement, emotional support, and comfort to a student is likely to be better able to make that higher order approach work. The literature review further suggested that peer and parent surveys could have an effect on

student achievement. Bruce and Ross (2007) found that peers influenced teacher satisfaction with the outcomes of their instruction if they gave praise specifically linked to the quality of the teacher's performance positively affecting student's scores on high-stakes assessments (Bruce & Ross, 2007, p. 148). Lastly, Peterson, Wahlquist, Brown, and Mukhopadhyay (2003) considered parent surveys to be a state-of-the-art remedy for deficiencies in most current teacher evaluation practices (p. 319).

The data in this chapter provide limited insight into the relationship between teacher evaluation scores and student achievement. Each teacher in this research study had scores between 3 and 4 in instruction, environment, peer surveys, and parent surveys. These scores indicate that the teachers were considered above average from the evaluators, their peers, and the parents. Keeping in mind that the peer surveys included other teachers on their teams, however, the teams were quite small and there were few surveys completed or collected. I only had parent surveys for one of the two years and the numbers of parents responding were small as well. Even though the teachers' scores were relatively similar, the SST benchmark scores were not as similar. In 2010-11, 44% of Bills students scored *exceeds standards* and 51% in 2011-12. Katherine had 28% of her students in 2010-11 score *exceeds standards* and 23% in 2011-12. However, Emma had 10% of her students *exceeding standards* in 2010-11 and 26% in 2011-12. Katherine also had the largest number of students who scored at the *approaching standard* in comparison to Bill and Emma. Interestingly, Katherine also had twice as many students as Bill or Emma. These data suggest that there is more going on here than a simple correlation between strong instruction, environment, or responses from peers or parents and strong SST benchmark scores.

As a practitioner, this data by itself does not tell me much. Once this data is collected, it needs to be analyzed closely, but the knowledge of the students, teachers, and circumstances are imperative. Research supports the idea that there are a number of elements that a comprehensive teacher evaluation program needs to embrace. Ovando and Ramirez (2007) indicated:

In schools that embrace leadership density, administration and staff promote: (a) the use of collaborative group engagement among the teachers, (b) seek high-quality opportunities to improve student's scores on high-stakes assessments, (c) have a definition and process for student achievement in place, (d) support positive organizational change, (e) create greater program coherence, (f) build strong professional relationships among teachers and teachers and administrators that strengthen leadership density, and finally (f) strengthen teacher's individual and collective efficacy beliefs (p. 87).

The data collected indicate that, according to these measures, the three teachers were above-average teachers. The data further indicate that most of the three teachers' students had strong scores on the SST, however this data does not allow me to address student growth. The similarities in the teachers' scores and the differences in student achievement across the classrooms suggests that it is necessary to consider beyond the indicators discussed here if we want to understand the relationship between teacher performance and student achievement. The focus of my study was on teachers and how the comprehensive evaluation process related to instruction and ultimately student achievement. Evaluations, survey results, and SST benchmark scores are elements of the process. However, my literature review and the data within this chapter suggest that

other elements are needed to determine the effectiveness of teachers. Additional insights on these factors can be gained from an examination of the qualitative data, which I turn to next.

Chapter 5

Qualitative Data Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to share detailed profiles from each of the five interviewees and to analyze that data to address my second research question: How do teachers and administrators experience the comprehensive evaluation process and how do they use their experiences to inform instruction? The chapter starts with profiles of each of the three teachers I introduced in previous chapters: Bill, a math teacher; Katherine, a math teacher; and Emma, a language arts teacher. Additionally, there are profiles for the master teacher, Colette, and the principal, Linda.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the qualitative data were primarily derived from in-depth interviews. Following the recommendations of Rossman and Rallis (2003) and Seidman (2006), I first reviewed and scanned the interview transcripts for recurring key words or codes. As Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated, qualitative analysis strategies “require *decision rules* to help guide the assignment” to particular codes and categories (p. 273). In the case of this study, I made the decision to use holistic strategies to “describe connections among the data in the actual context” of participants’ experiences (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 274). Rossman and Rallis (2003) described categories as a word or phrase describing some segment of data that is explicit (p. 282). The main categories that emerged from the sorting, scanning, and coding process in this study include:

- background experiences
- instruction,
- environment (classroom and school),

- assessment,
- evaluation process,
- peer and parent feedback,
- family.

I then crafted narrative profiles for each participant and the narratives were organized around these categories. Instruction, assessment, environment, evaluation process, and peer and parent feedback align with my conceptual framework. However, the category of family, which aligns with environment was unexpected, and relates to the unique makeup of this particular school. It is important to point out as well that not all of these categories were relevant for all of the interviewees. In Bill's interview, for example, the categories of peer and parent feedback and family did not come up.

As Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated, from this kind of holistic, contextualized analysis, "details coalesce; connections are made; you build a narrative" (p. 274). I modeled my narratives after those discussed by Seidman (2006), and I selected passages from the interviews "marked as important and put[ting] them together as a single transcript" while being "faithful to the words of the participants" (p. 121). As Seidman recommended, I have crafted the narratives in first person to reflect the participants' own voice. Seidman (2006) stated, "A profile in the words of the participant . . . allows us to present the participant in context, to clarify his or her intentions, and to convey a sense of process and time, all central components of qualitative analysis" (p. 119).

The next step in the analysis was to further code the individual narrative profiles to derive recurring themes across the profiles of all participants. Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated that, "As the researcher interprets her analyses, she is putting together a

story” (p. 287). I laid each narrative out side-by-side, and aligned each one of the categories. For example, for each of the narratives, I set out the excerpts for background experiences and after further analysis came up with themes within each category that recurred across the narratives. Rossman and Rallis (2003) described a theme as a phrase or sentence describing more subtle and tacit processes (p. 282). They further suggested this strategy of identifying recurring ideas or language, patterns of beliefs, and actions as a deeper way to understand and interpret the data (p. 284). The themes that presented themselves within each category included:

- background experiences
 - instilled values for the importance of education
 - teaching as a second career
- instruction
 - buy-in
- environment (classroom or school),
 - relationships
- assessment
 - standardized assessments
 - formative assessments
- evaluation process
 - roles
 - processes
- peer and parent feedback,
 - communication

- perspective
- family
 - school family
 - immediate family

From the themes, I began to analyze the data. For each interviewee, I went through each category and theme. In the following sections, I first share where the category was derived from within my three-part interview. From there, I pulled research data from my literature review that addressed the category and theme and aligned it with my conceptual framework. I also identified quotations from the teachers themselves that addressed the theme. From the focused themes, past research, and direct quotations from the teachers, I came up with my interpretation of the data. As mentioned above, each of the following narratives are crafted in first person to reflect the participants' own voice.

Narrative for Math Teacher Bill

Bill's background experience. I was born in Elgin, Illinois, just outside of Chicago. I'm 55 years old and come from a family of four. Neither my mom nor my dad graduated from high school. They got married when they were 17 or 18. Dad got drafted into the Korean War and my sister was born during that time. I came along about three and one-half years later and I grew up in a lower, middle-income neighborhood. My dad passed on when I was a teenager.

We didn't have a lot of money, so I paid my own way through college. I went to a community college and got my associate's [degree] and it took me six years to do that because I was working full-time and went to school at night. After I was done with that, I

met my wife Dawn [pseudonym] and got married. She had just finished college and suggested I complete my BA. I got my undergraduate degree in religion and philosophy.

Dawn wanted to travel, so when I finished college, we moved to Japan. We went there for three years and taught English, allowing us to save a lot of money. We left Japan in the late 80s and backpacked around the world for about half the year.

We came home and tried to figure out what we wanted to do. I got into business for about 10 years as an electrical representative. However, I worked with kids a lot in my church and other types of community organizations. I also worked with kids coaching baseball, so when I was about 40, I got my teaching degree.

My first teaching job was in a suburban school outside New York City. I did all my student teaching in inner city schools, which was interesting. I actually wanted to teach in the city, but a suburban school offered me a job first and I took it.

My wife and I adopted two boys who were eight and nine the same year I started teaching, so we had a huge learning curve. We were living in New York and we had adopted these boys and we had them about three years when 9/11 happened. By that time, all of Dawn's immediate family and my immediate family had migrated here and we were coming down here for a visit. We wanted the boys to have a family nearby, so I told Dawn I think we need to move here. We came down here and I was hoping to interview. Dawn had popped into the YMCA, and while she was there, she asked if they knew any schools in the area that were hiring. They said there's this charter school down the street that is hiring. So I went to South East Valley (SEV) and went through three interviews, and about a week later, I was called and offered a job. I never looked for a job beyond that. So, it was a good fit.

My first three years of teaching had been in a typical school with a great group of people around me and I learned a lot. But, you know you are in your room by yourself, and it's not like team teaching, so I learned a lot the first three years at SEV. I picked up a lot of stuff just because of the amount of communication and the amount of teaming that goes on. There is a high level of accountability, which gets to be a real pain in the rear at times but on the other hand tends to move you towards being a better teacher.

My first three years in New York I taught fourth grade. When I came down here I taught third and fourth grade for five years and the last six years I have been in the fifth and sixth grades teaching math. Teaching fourth, fifth, and sixth grades have been great. They [students] haven't gotten into the middle school attitude. They don't think about being cool and they are very capable. You can do a lot with them, and you don't have to be planned out every 15 minutes of the day, so it's a fun group.

Bill's instruction. For so long, I have been involved with a lot of teachers who learned like me: putting new tools in your toolbox and thinking that is the job. That is not the job. Can you open the toolbox and solve this problem and know which tool to pick? So knowing all these different math skills, those are just tools that you have. I have been doing more instructing like that: putting things out there for the kids to look at, problems to solve. A lot of time they say, "I don't get it, I don't get it." I tell them yes, but you haven't even opened your toolbox yet. "Show me what tools you have taken out." We go through this. "Well, do you know how to divide? Is division something we can do here?" It is like pulling teeth. What they really want to do is practice something over and over. I think that foremost in my mind, driven by SST benchmark scores and

state standards, we are definitely trying to change our approach to teaching to be more problem-solving oriented—the ability to transfer knowledge. I would love to see more integration of thinking.

Bill’s classroom environment. Sometimes as teachers, we tell students they are not good at something and we make them practice it. However, no one likes to repeatedly do something they are not good at. So, I think there are some psychological things here—even some basic human psychology—that education ignores because it is not convenient; it doesn’t fit into the system. I do feel that these little things, these intangibles where we develop a relationship—one thing I have said for a long time since I started teaching is that everything happens inside a relationship. You ask yourself what is your relationship with that student? If a student is not doing well in your classroom, the first thing you should ask is: what is my relationship with that student? If it is just that I come in and tell the student what to do, that may not be enough. I think it all happens, especially with kids; they are highly motivated by their relationship.

Here’s the thing: you can have a lousy relationship with your boss for six months and have a 15-minute meeting with your boss and that could totally change—it’s possible. That can happen in an adult relationship carrying around some really lousy feelings and attitudes, realistic or not. But they can be cleared up, and when they are cleared up, a person can suddenly feel very differently about their job. The same thing can happen with kids. I think that part of education is more important than what we maybe spend time on.

Bill’s student assessment practices. One of the goals I developed over the years is to really try to deal with students on a more individual basis if I could. A whole bank

of grades doesn't tell people much. Teachers think that grades give a lot of information because teachers know a lot. The problem is the grades you put in the grade book don't really inform other people of much. It's a little bit of my problem with data-driven education, because I think the most important data is the stuff that people need to talk about. Individual learning plans [ILPs] are wonderful, we should have them, we have a lot of students, and we only do them as much as we can, but I think it is that kind of interaction that is way more important than a lot of things on paper.

So, in terms of assessment, I take notes. I have a spiral notebook that I use. I take notes about different things I notice about students. If I start to see a trend in regards to a particular student I jot a note down: "Talk to Ethan about the quality of his work." That's the whole note that I will say, and then at some point fairly soon I will make a little bit of time to talk to Ethan. It usually isn't a long conversation. "Look at this; I think you can do a better job. What is going on?" Most of the time, I get a good response from that. Most of the time, for some reason kids value that I say you can do a better job. I think that's the best, the most important assessment that really goes on that the teacher is in tune with the individuals that are in the classroom.

It all starts with observation. I think the biggest assessment that really goes on is the teacher that is truly watching students. We have a tracking system right now that is very paper-orientated. There is nothing wrong with that, but we have to be careful because teachers have to have enough time on their hands and be free enough to have those relationships with their students and be able to observe. What I think the biggest thing is, not does she or does she not know how to do long division—that's important but that is not the issue. What is the underlining issue? Why is she in fifth grade and she still

can't do long division? I would like to see more consulting with other teachers who had her last year. I would like to sit down in a more organized way with the teacher that had her last year. "What did you see?" Sometimes we almost always see some kind of progress taking place, but what's bringing about that progress? I think teaching and learning is living life. I think that is the number one assessment.

The next most valuable assessment is probably watching how kids learn. If you can figure out what works and what doesn't work. The important thing is who needs five minutes with you to understand something better and feel more confident about something. It's not the numbers; it's more the timing. So, if you can see how someone is learning and what they are doing in class, if you look at their avoidance behaviors, when are they avoiding and when do they embrace, when are they jumping in and when are they not jumping in, that should tell you something about where they are at. We like to do what we know and we feel uncomfortable and stupid when we don't know something and we can start getting them over that hump.

I think that is the next assessment, and maybe that is a lot like the first one, but it is to really understand that child's learning style if you can, and that's ongoing. None of us are even close to being experts at that. We are all trying to get better at that. Then, I think probably the lowest kind of assessment is a straight grade. I would love us to get away from that, I really would. I keep on thinking we are afraid of getting rid of grades. I think when we start getting rid of grades, we are going to start concentrating on things that are more meaningful and we will find better motivation than just these symbols.

I do a lot of assessing when I walk around the room and observe how kids are doing things. We are getting into the Common Core now [standards that clearly

communicate what is expected of students at each grade level; the Common Core State Standards focus on core conceptual understandings and procedures], and that is really opening the door to a lot of things I am talking about, because Common Core is built on more dialogue in the classroom, which I love because it demands more interaction and thinking. I can see we are going to have a big problem trying to go down that Common Core path at the same time we are stuck in this old assessment style. Assessments tend to drive teachers: how we assess and whatever anybody says is important ends up being what teachers focus on because they are told to, in a way.

Over the last three years, we have been tracking students that were at *meets* [i.e., meets expectations] and were ready to go over that line into *exceeds* [expectations] or kids that were close to the line. I think we are in our second or third year where we are actually tracking those students, focus on them a little bit, and say, what's the difference? What would get them to the next level? We've spent a lot more time looking at the SST assessment. This is a good change, no doubt about it, and I am still struggling to change my math instruction to line up with more Common Core and even before that the new SST that was really demanding much deeper understanding. The big thing here is the ability to transfer your understanding and apply in a completely different situation. You know this, but can you take this and apply it over there? We have got to get away from just the skills thing and change our whole concept. I think there needs to be an environment developed, I think we have one here for the most part that is positive and supportive. Assessment is not something to be afraid of if you want to be a better teacher. I think they do a good job here of developing that environment.

Bill's experience with the comprehensive teacher evaluation process. I

honestly think there are good ideas in our comprehensive teacher evaluation program [TAP]. I think that the majority of the things, not just an individual concept, but if you practice a number of these things consistently, it will have an effect over time. Being clear on your objective regularly because it's not just about doing something, it's about thought. And so, I feel I have improved as a teacher with the program.

I am not a big comprehensive teacher evaluation program rubric fan, but I would say absolutely a teacher can go to the rubric, think about some of the things that are in there, and internaliz[e] it a little bit. It is not so much about what that person [the evaluator] wants you to do, it's about: would that work in your classroom and if you did that consistently would it help you think more clearly, communicate more clearly, would the kids understand more clearly, and would it pull them into the process better? I think there is a lot of stuff there that would do that.

One of the things I think about within the rubric is that all the different elements are not of equal value. There are things in there that are very hard to do and one of the criticisms I have and I have felt here in my experience is we have tended to look at things that were easier to assess when I am being assessed as a teacher. Does it relate when you put a lesson together, does it relate to their prior knowledge? Is it something that as kids they can relate to? Is there any kind of integration of thinking whatsoever? There are some deep concepts. There are things that people in education have been striving for quite some time. At least we have said these things are the right things to do.

However, there are other things that contribute to the lesson plan, prior knowledge, integration of thinking, etc., that I would like to see more of within the

classroom. Instead of it [teacher evaluation] being this huge amount of information, I would love to see the many rubric indicators tied together better in terms of how one indicator relates to other indicators. As a teacher, you have to have a larger goal that you are shooting for and then you have to realize that the smaller things you are doing contribute to that larger goal, allowing you to buy into the smaller things.

If someone is telling you, “you have to work on this,” you might walk away going, “Okay, I will do that if that is what you want me to do.” But, if suddenly you can realize that what they are asking you to do actually contributes to something that you value, I believe teachers would have more buy-in, but I don’t feel it is presented that way necessarily. I feel that a lot of times teachers get a run through: we are going to focus on this part of the comprehensive teacher evaluation rubric now. I think there are a lot of good things on the comprehensive teacher evaluation rubric that has helped me to be a good teacher, specifically the assessment part, but I think that when I am being observed and someone comes in with a computer open and they are clicking, I have a little problem with that. I like to be observed and I don’t mind people saying you need to think about this or that. I had good feedback from my last observation, it was substantial, but there was other times I got something bad and I thought it wasn’t that valuable to me, but I can see what they were talking about. I feel good about assessments; I think teachers need that; we all need to be assessed. That is something we should embrace.

Here we have master teachers and a big part of the comprehensive teacher evaluation program are master teachers, but are there really master teachers? The people we have right now, I love them as people, and I think they are great as individuals; they love kids, and they love this school. However, they are not master teachers; they are not

people who own this information and who can therefore do what I want to do for a kid and somehow translate and get you [the master teacher] to come into my world and love this as well. Therefore, most of their instruction about comprehensive teacher evaluation ends up being very paper oriented—“Let’s look at this thing, let’s underline words, let’s do this, and let’s do that.” Not the kind of master teacher activity that I was told I was going to get, but never got.

When you have an idea, you tell the master teacher and they gather information from you and they will come in and model for you. There is a little bit of this and a little bit of that, but there’s kind of a top-down implementation of the comprehensive teacher evaluation program. I think it has to come from the bottom up. But, if you are in a school that has pretty good teachers, I don’t know, a comprehensive teacher evaluation program could start to constrict. Because I think what this school needs is for the comprehensive teacher evaluation program to have more life in it. I think that comes from master teachers. I guess my vision of master teacher is prejudicial, but someone who has been teaching for 30 years and really has been around the block and believes in the comprehensive teacher evaluation program and knows what it really is.

The best example I can give to try to express what I am talking about is we have a character education here and we teach perseverance. You can stand in front of a class and teach perseverance, you can talk about perseverance, you can define perseverance, you can make sure students can spell perseverance, you can make them use it in a sentence, but none of that means anything compared to the moment that they experience perseverance. When kids have struggled for three days on a concept and then gets it, and when they get it you say, “By the way, that’s perseverance,” and now they know it.

That's the way you teach character. It's good to talk about a concept, but you have to be teaching it all the time. Right where you are at—on the playground and everywhere you go. That's how they really learn. That's what I think a true master teacher can do more of—something like that.

I think the biggest impacts in teacher evaluation are the ongoing conversation about better teaching. It keeps the conversation going. Nobody gets to sit around. I think that's a good thing about it. You can disagree or agree but the conversation going is everybody is involved with a comprehensive teacher evaluation program and it becomes a culture after awhile. It's not a culture a lot of teachers like off the bat; you have to get use to that. I think that is the number one thing. I would never say get rid of a comprehensive teacher evaluation program. I would say keep thinking how it should evolve, how could it be shared, what's the best process?

I think every school should have a comprehensive teacher evaluation program. Even schools that are structured different need it more so. The question is: what are you ready for? What do you need? How do you refine your craft? But the effect on a school is that it keeps teachers involved with the learning environment and what's more, you can't do anything better than having teachers being learners. They are going to be better teachers if they are learning themselves.

Postconference [a meeting between the teacher and evaluator after an observation to discuss the results of the evaluation] is one thing, but I think the worst thing that can happen to someone is that the things that make a difference are the small things you do every day differently than what you did before. Now they start to gain some steam. I think good master teachers and teachers who are willing to improve, they will identify

things they can work on over time. We have a goal system here, but at the same time, I think there has to be more individual conversations with master teachers. I think there needs to be that kind of heart-to-heart [pause] talking heart-to-heart, more of the heart-to-heart, not the piece of paper and your goal here. You have to really be careful for it not to be a paper trail of a goal. Write down three things you did in the last week to meet your goal. But I think when it gets internalized, it's something that master teachers and that teachers are working on, and there is an understanding and a thing they are working on: it's very powerful. For teachers, it has to get off the paper. Anything that does get off the paper and in their mind and heart: that's real. We could do a better job there.

The nature of education is you are always fighting the battle between all the busy work that is involved and always carving out time. What do teachers have a battle with, carving out time to create better lessons, that's the key? There are a thousand other things to do. So, master teachers I imagine, are up against that, too. I think a short meeting that is consistent—meetings over time that stay focused on a certain thing and a little bit of collaborative teaching and stuff like that—can really set it for people.

Narrative for Math Teacher Katherine

Katherine's background experience. I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and I am the second of five kids; I have one older sister and three younger brothers. My father was in the hotel industry, and he was often transferred, so we moved around many times. It really wasn't until junior high that we settled down, but I had a great family. My mom and dad are still married today and the five of us [siblings] remain really close.

My mom was a stay-at-home mom when I was growing up, raising the five kids. She was the soccer coach and our ski coach. I ended up going to college in New

Hampshire. I majored in business and I graduated in 1995 with a business major, and due to the influence of my father, I got into the hotel industry. I was very successful, moving up very quickly, and I worked at some of the top hotels in the country. It was fantastic, but I was in my 20s and single and I was working 50, 70, 80 hours a week, working weekends and holidays. It was very rewarding and challenging to me.

I met my husband in the hotel business. We got married and had our first child. While on maternity leave, I was watching TV and my thought was, “How am I supposed to go back to work—she [my daughter] is so cute—and work 60, 70, 80 hours a week and holidays?” An advertisement came on the TV for an online college program. My thought was, well gosh, I already have my degree in business, what if I went back to school to become a teacher? That is what I did. I thought getting my master’s online would be beneficial to me, even though it was a little bit more expensive. However, if I went to a college, then I would have to pay for the daycare. So I ended up being a stay-at-home mom for two years while I was getting my master’s online.

When I saw this ad on TV, we were living in Washington State. We lived in a great area in Washington, but frankly it was small. I was doing my research for my homework, and I knew there wouldn’t be a lot of job opportunities for me once I got through the year-and-a-half program. We had lived here a few years earlier because I was transferred to a hotel down here. I knew the job market here was better, more opportunities, and at that time we had some family down here so we did move, crossing our fingers that I would get a job.

We moved and my husband got a great job, and I stayed home for those two years, and it was great because my daughter was just born and my other one was just two.

It was nice to stay home with them. It was very easy for me to manage the work that I had in regards to getting my master's. I knew when I first wanted to go back and get my teaching degree I would teach math. In high school, in college, math always clicked for me. I always was very strong in it, and it was something I liked to do.

I did my student teaching, and it was a great experience. You can read a book about teaching, but it's not until you are actually doing it [that you really understand it]. I finished up in the spring of 2005. Of course, you always want to work at the school that you did your student teaching at, but they didn't have anything available. So, I started applying. It was the springtime when I finished my student teaching, so that is when schools are getting ready to hire for the next school year. I was looking, and one day I was looking at the paper and there was a job opening here at SEV. I came down here; the position that was available was a seventh and eighth grade math position. She [the principal at that time] called me back, but she did say that they had filled the seventh and eighth grade math position internally, and asked if I would be interested to come in for the fifth and sixth grade math position that was open. I said absolutely.

She asked me if I could come the next day. I said I can, but I need to confirm that I can have a friend watch my two daughters. She said, "Bring your girls in during the interview." Right away, you knew that the school could support you as a mom and as a family. There I was, interviewing with the principal and my girls were on the floor playing. We got through that interview and she [the principal] walked me around, and she called me up that evening and offered me the position, and it was one of those things that I got a job offer: "Sure, I am going to take it." This school was even much more

appealing because they had the staff daycare so I could bring the girls, who were two and three at the time, to work with me every day. And since then, I have had my third child.

I really do appreciate my experience in the hotel industry, because I know the importance of professionalism and customer service, budgets, management, and managing people. I am surprised of the benefits it has for me as a teacher and as a mentor teacher. How useful it is, because when you go into the process of becoming a teacher, it's all about the content and how to teach, but there are a lot of professional aspects that require you to be a good professional that isn't taught, and I see that—whether I am sitting around and reading or trying to communicate to someone else, so I certainly appreciate and value that business background.

Katherine's instruction. I am very driven by our comprehensive teacher evaluation program, the evaluation, and the rubric that we use. I was a new teacher, I didn't have any experience except for my student teaching, and I always like to do my best. I like someone to tell me what that looks like. Here is a rubric. You can't be robotic, but have to clearly define expectations, especially for a new teacher. It's little things like waiting five seconds after a question. I didn't know any of that; it didn't define the art of what I was teaching, but it defined the other aspects of it. I needed that, and I knew some people that would walk into the classroom and do anything and everything their own way, but I wanted and needed that help. I appreciate it, and I am also realistic about it, too. I know I can't do everything every single day all day long; there is give and take.

There are some things I do better than others. There are things that I forget. On my overhead, I have a little sticky note. It says "think time" to remind me to give the

kids time to think about a question before jumping into it. The sticky note also talks about reflection time. It reminds me to model my expectations and not just telling them [students] what I want. There is a lot to do. Some things you do instinctually, but there definitely are things that we need to be reminded. I think the evaluation provides you with good direction in your classroom. Sometimes, it is just one or two items.

If someone is evaluating you, and they give you 10 or 11 things to work on, it's not fair, it's not going to work, it's not manageable. But, if you can identify two quality items to really focus on, you are really going to get the biggest bang for your buck. Whether it's classroom management for one teacher, time management for another teacher, and just kind of staying on that path and then learning more about it.

Katherine's classroom environment. I do believe that the environment of any classroom or school can have an impact on student achievement. A positive, friendly, safe, supportive classroom, [how I strive for mine] encourages students to take risks, ask questions, and explore their thoughts deeper. A good classroom should be encouraging and let kids know that it is okay to make mistakes as long as they learn from them. Classrooms should be welcoming to all and be friendly and respectful. If a classroom and school are able to maintain a good environment, it will only support and promote the learning of the kids.

Katherine's student assessment practices. I have learned so much about assessment. I keep learning how to do assessments better and more effectively all the time. Even though it might be very expanded, keep the main focus simple; I think that is going to be most beneficial. It's very funny, because I would love it if someone sat in my room every day and gave me feedback, but for some people it is frightening.

Assessments certainly have changed a lot since I started seven or eight years ago. I used to do the chapter test that the book gave me, then I learned that assessments didn't always mean using a pencil to answer some questions on the test. I also find it's different from my fifth grade class compared to my algebra class. My algebra class is a high school class, so I teach it like a high school class. A lot of times, it is the test with the paper and the pencil. With the fifth graders, I am looking at what they are saying, their explanations, and listening to the questions that they ask. For example, for my fifth grade class, when you were comparing decimals, eight years ago I probably gave them a test to compare three-tenths and seven-tenths and they would put the greater than or less than symbol. This year, I have them compare three-tenths and seven-tenths and put greater than or less than symbol in there, but I made them prove it in three different ways. They needed to show me their thinking and show it on a number line. They needed to explain it using a place value chart and explain it using a 100-grid chart. It was obviously giving me more information about if they really understood what these numbers represented and their value. That is what I am trying to do more of. I am doing a lot more; I ask them to explain their answer, or I give them a problem that is wrong and they need to tell me why it's wrong.

I don't think the evaluation portion of the program is what ultimately helped me to change what I was doing. I think it is the professional growth, because quite frankly, the teacher evaluation really hasn't changed much, but I think it is the professional growth that has changed, and so it's the emphasis on what assessments look like and the student's justifying their answers. It even says in our evaluations [in the rubric] the students need to justify their work. We didn't understand it eight years ago; we didn't

talk about it enough. I didn't appreciate it, whatever it was. In our weekly meetings we share what worked and what didn't work.

We do not complete specific assessments at this age in regards to their grade level for math. It is usually just given; these kids completed and passed fourth grade math, so you are going to have them in fifth grade math. There is still some juggling. I ended up with two fifth grade math classes and after some time, I noticed, even though they were both fifth grade math classes, some of the students were working at a more efficient, effective, and faster pace, and they were getting it. The other groups were definitely working a lot slower. I am supposed to start division, but the kids don't know their multiplication, and so I did move some classes around—some students around—so I could work at a quicker pace, and this class really needed to buckle down and do hardcore multiplication boot camp. It should have been mastered last year, but kids struggle. There is movement based on that. Sometimes, too, we do have some aggressive families, and maybe their kids went to a math camp over the summer, so we do placement testing to be sure if we need to move someone up. There have been times when we had to move someone down.

Katherine's experience with the comprehensive teacher evaluation process.

It took me a long time to really learn our comprehensive teacher evaluation program and all of its elements. I don't know if it was how it was taught to me or just how comprehensive it is. In my place, I am still learning it, so I don't know if that means there is too much in it or I don't know if that means we just need to do a better job diving into it. I think really educating the new teachers is hard. My first year, I was learning so much, and now you are going to give me a whole other thing to learn? That's a lot, it

really is. I say I had it easy. If I worked at another school or district for a few years before it, I always say coming to SEV to work must be hard. This is all I have ever known. We do have high expectations and rigor, and I appreciate that, but I can't imagine how hard it is for some who have worked in another school or district. If you think about it, a lot of it is common sense.

I think one thing that is really hard to understand is that they [teachers] think they should be getting a 5 on everything. The understanding that 3 is proficient, and it's difficult for them to appreciate and understand that they got a 3 and it is good. However, the teachers need to know what the numbers mean and what the numbers look like. If you give me a rubric where 5 is the best score possible, then that is what I want to achieve. It took me time to learn and see what that looks like. I was fortunate that, being a mentor teacher, I'm in extra training. I am fortunate that I have been to conferences for added training. I can get additional training in education for myself, so I can really see the big picture.

When I first started here, people were always given that heads-up when someone was going to come into the classroom, and so you knew the day before your observation—you were getting all the material, all the cool things, to make sure when they came in there was a fancy lesson with manipulatives, the colors, the bells and whistles. Then I realized that I am who I am in the classroom. Over the last few years, we have changed that, and now they are unannounced, and it definitely gives a more accurate picture of where the teacher is.

I think I am fortunate that I have been here for several years. I do feel very well respected by other teachers, and not just my teammates, because I evaluate other math

teachers throughout K-6 [kindergarten through sixth grade]. I think they respect me for who I am as a math teacher. I think I am lucky. They welcome my feedback; I am a relatively nice person, so even if something wasn't so great, I am not intimidating. I have been doing evaluations for 20 years.

Katherine's experience with peer and parent feedback. I truly value the peer surveys, because they see me every day. I believe that they are honest. I would hope that if they had negative feedback, I would have heard that before they are filling in a survey. I am very fortunate that my time here I have gotten along well with everyone. My team respects me and visa versa. I do respect and appreciate the feedback from those surveys.

The school does a great job sending out the parent surveys. I am a parent here, too, so I see what the parents get. But from my experiences, we get very little feedback. I have four classes, so I have 120 some odd students, and I receive proportionality very little responses. For those that I do get back, I listen to them, but I don't know if I want to say that I take it with a grain of salt, but I don't think they know me well enough. They are not in my classroom, and being a mom, I know what my kids say sometimes at the kitchen table.

My thought is if a group of parents have a major concern, our principal would pull me into her office and have a conversation with me. Are you going to have a few parents every year out of 120 students that don't like your teaching style or things like you are unfair? For example, I ask my daughter, "tell me what you think about your math class," and she responds, "I don't like her because she calls on me when I am not raising my hand." As a teacher, I know that is what a teacher is supposed to do! They need to make

sure you are paying attention. I know that, but what if there is some mom doesn't know that? She may wonder, is she picking on my kid?

Katherine's family experience. Since I started here at SEV, I have had our third child. He was born three years ago. The way it works out is that one of my daughters is actually in my math class. She is the oldest one; she is in sixth grade and at the seventh grade level. I am the only one that teaches that level. Really, they don't want parents to teach their own children, but there was no other class for her to go, but it is going great. She calls me Mrs. so and so; I check her homework just like I check my fourth graders' homework every night.

Narrative for Language Arts Teacher Emma

Emma's background experience. I was born and grew up in Michigan. I think that when we were younger, my dad had gone to college, but my mom did not. My mom graduated from high school, got married, and she was home with us for most of the time. I think my mom went to work when I was 14. She was there for all of our formative years.

I'm not sure if my dad and mom ever said it, but I felt it was just assumed we were going to college. It wasn't about, "Are you going to college?" but "Where do you want to go?" I don't know if they ever said that or if it was just understood that education was important. It's just the way it was. My sister went to college, but stayed at home. When it was time for me to go, my dad said, "You don't have to go to Williams State." So, I went to Michigan State, and so my sister joined me there, too. We were lucky that we were able to do that, and we understand that.

When I was in high school, I thought I wanted to be an accountant. I quickly decided that wasn't really the thing. Of course, like college girls, I was interested in fashion and management, and they had a merchandise management program, so I thought that's a great fit. I did that, graduated, and went on to a long career. I worked at the Gap for 14 years, and then I worked at Pottery Barn for Kids for five years. I was in retail for a long time. I did it well, and I got paid well.

I moved here when I was 31. My sister and her family had moved out here. Both of my parents had passed as well as my younger brother, and I needed to be where my sister was. I came out here, and at that point my sister was a stay-at-home mom. A couple of years later, her children began to attend SEV and my sister started a position at the school as a teacher's assistant [TA]. She always wanted to be a teacher, and when she was in college, she was convinced there wasn't going to be any teacher jobs. Once she was working here, there was a cohort group that some of the TAs were involved in—a post-bac [post-baccalaureate] teaching program. The reason I say that is because that is what eventually led me to that, too.

I was working in retail and had worked in retail since I graduated from college in different positions. I worked as the store manager and traveled a lot and trained store managers in other states. I enjoyed that part of my job. Over time, I felt as though that job was very stressful for me. There was a lot of stress, and I couldn't really decide how the job was important enough to cause that much stress. I left and went to a different company thinking some of my issues were going to be better at the new company. The problem, of course, was I did that job pretty well; it's difficult to say, well let me go do something else, when I am already in my 30s. I eventually moved to California with the

company that I was working for, but I didn't particularly care for my job and I didn't live where my family was.

I was in sunny California, but it was not the right thing. I called my sister and said, "I need to leave this job. Can I come stay with you until I decide?" She said yes and I said, "Okay, I'm going to give notice tomorrow." She was coming to California about a week later to visit her in-laws, and I called the next day and said, "I gave my notice and when you come to visit your in-laws, let's get a U-Haul and I'm coming back with you." I came back here, and frankly I didn't know what I wanted to do, so that holiday season I didn't work. I took care of all her [sister's] business, did all her Christmas shopping, wrapped all her presents. I went to the grocery store, and I went to SEV and spent time in her class. I was at SEV and I thought, I think this is the thing I am supposed to be doing, and I knew that my sister was happy being a teacher.

My time in the classroom, I came to the conclusion it was what I was supposed to be doing and what I was supposed to have been doing the whole time. I did a little research and knew the program that my sister had gone through was not a program that was available. So, I did a little bit of research and found a program that allowed me to get a post-bac and with a little bit more a master's degree. My intent was that I needed to have the post-bac, because I'm supposed to be teaching.

My sister had student-taught with a fifth and sixth grade teacher at SEV, so when it came time to pick where was I going to student teach, I knew and loved the teacher, so I wanted to student teach with her also, and so I did. Before I started student teaching, I thought I wanted to teach the younger grades, but the teacher I was doing my student teaching with was a teacher in fifth and sixth grade, but I felt it was better to be with a

teacher that I think is a really good teacher. So, I started my student teaching, and I think we were maybe 11 or 12 weeks in, and the teacher I was working with had the opportunity to step out of the classroom and take on the counselor's role.

When all was said and done, I think I was done with 12 weeks of the 16 and I took over. The teacher would come in occasionally, but she didn't sit there. I fully appreciate that I was in the right place. I must have been doing it right. I credit the teacher, as she was a wonderful person to teach with. I totally appreciate how everything fell into place for me. But maybe it reinforces that it was the right thing—something I was suppose to be doing. So, I never taught anywhere other than SEV, so I don't have anything to compare it to. I don't see a time when I would leave, because I think this place and the way we teach is the fit for me.

Emma's instruction. Our comprehensive teacher evaluation program definitely affects me, because I want to do the best job that I can, so I do listen, and in fact the master teacher and I laugh about it, but I ask, "If I get a 3, what did I need to do to get a 4? What did you not see me do?" Because, of course, we all think we all do it well every day. I understand a 3 does mean that you are doing it well, but I want to know what things I should have done. What would have made it better? Our master teacher has always been really great at giving me that information—putting it in the evidence box—a 4 would have looked like this, a 5 would have looked like this. For instance, my last one I had at the end of the year from the principal. It was about writing objectives—writing an objective that really honed in on what you were really asking the kids to do. So, I'm still working on that; I am not afraid to admit it. You know, I start with the verbiage from the standard even if that is not exactly what I am asking them to do yet, and even if

this other thing leads up to that, so what part of it is more important? But it is something that I am cognizant of every day. What is the best way to write the objective that is going to be the most clear to anybody that walks in? What are they doing in this classroom now? That is probably true of most teachers here at SEV, because they really do feel like much is asked. I think that when you work at SEV, it is a choice to work at SEV, and I think that has been evident in people that have left. We all as a whole are trying to do the best that we can. Most are open—the evaluations that I have done, the feedback I have given, has been positive and well received.

For me, because of my personality, I like to understand exactly what is expected, and our comprehensive teacher evaluation program is very clear about what I am expected to do in the classroom. For me, the fact that the more and more connected I become, the interconnectedness of the different elements of the program, what does it feel like? I have to do 85 things during this lesson? What is that? I think it has made me better in my job. I have gotten consistent feedback about what things I can affect and how I can be a better teacher to help support the kids. That has been consistent since I started here, although the comprehensive teacher evaluation program has looked a little differently across the time, too. I believe that the comprehensive teacher evaluation program helps us to be better teachers, so it has to affect what students are doing in class. I think that when you look at how SEV has done historically in terms of how we have been graded by the state, I'm thinking it works.

Emma's classroom environment. I think there is a sense of community, and I mean the community within the fifth and sixth grade language arts team, and the fifth and sixth grade team, and the elementary team, the school community, but also the

community at large. We have a good community with parents and with families. There are a lot of families that the whole family is here or the kids went from kindergarten through 12th grade. There is a sense that we are all in this together.

I enjoy hands-on learning that we have for the kids. The kids aren't sitting in rows looking at the white board and I'm just up there talking at them. Again, we ask a lot of those students, but we get a lot back. When we go on field trips and we see kids from other schools, sometimes we want to get bogged down with somebody did this, or somebody did that, and they misbehaved, but when we compare what our misbehaviors are and other misbehaviors are, ours are pretty small. So, I think it's the community and the hands-on learning, and I appreciate the way we teach.

Emma's student assessment practices. An example of an assessment we are doing is literature circles, and we typically do those every quarter. The students have a literature role that they fill out when they are reading. We actually redid all the roles this quarter because we started the year with Common Core, and we needed something that was the same, so we weren't trying to manage new everything at one time. We decided for first quarter, literature was going to be the same. As the four of us [teachers] were all taking notes about where the holes were, [we were asking] what are we not hitting with this form that we are using according to Common Core? What changes need to happen in order to continue to use the role sheet as an accountability piece for the student and to help them with their discussions, but make it so it fits into Common Core the way we need it to. So, at the beginning of the quarter, we redid the sheets so they are more rigorous and better matched with the standards. For literature, there are two pieces that we use: the literature role and their discussions. The discussions are very student

directed, we [teachers] are walking around from group to group and sitting in and listening to what they are saying, so a secondary way is the listening. Are they able to manage those discussions on their own, and what kind of evidence are they using from the text? We are listening to the kids, also the prompting of what is your evidence?

We don't usually give the kids a test at the end of the book that looks like questions with multiple-choice answers. It would look more like a writing prompt where they are going to compare a character from this book from a character from another book. At the end of this past quarter, a couple of the kids said, "Why aren't we taking a test?" I told them, "You just did. What was I trying to assess when I asked you to compare those two characters?" It's kind of a mindset for the kids, too, and what they are used to as far as an assessment. It is a better way for assessment when they have to support it [their responses] with evidence from the text; they can't fake their understanding.

When the leadership team sat down at the beginning of the year, we pulled our SST [students' standardized test] apart and looked at it. What we tried to do is look at students we could best affect. We looked at students that either fell *far below* or *approached* [the standard]. We don't have very many in those categories. The next place we looked was at the growth percentile and the people who were right on the edge. So, if they just took on a couple more points, we would have bumped them. So we weren't just targeting students that didn't do so well, but students across a spectrum that we could affect. So, we pull evidence from the student's work each week and talk about it in leadership and have done that every week for this whole year.

Our cluster [team meeting] is a little bit behind, so other teachers are pulling evidence as well, but we had to decide what we wanted it to look like first within our

leadership meetings. We identified students that we all wanted to pull. Typically, what happens is I look at those students and that's what I bring to leadership, and when I go back and look at everybody else's that I am comparing, it's pretty similar in the results that I get, so it justifies to me we are doing all the right things, and we think if we can affect those kids, everyone else is affected too.

Emma's experience with the comprehensive teacher evaluation process. I learn from all the teachers that I evaluate all the time. I don't necessary evaluate the people on my team, so I evaluate across all grade levels. Last term, I went into a first and second grade classroom and they were doing centers. Before I went in, I thought, okay, these kids are six, how do they manage? I went in there, and the teacher gave pretty minimal instruction, so obviously it was routine. The students were all sitting at their center tables and were independently working on their activities that all had manipulatives. She was meeting with a literature group, and the kids with very few exceptions were on task and doing what they were supposed to be doing. But it is nice to see and helpful to see what things she had in place that worked for her.

I observed in band last year, and I thought, I have to observe in band? I don't know anything about that, but it came down to classroom management and how to best support that teacher and her struggles. When the kids have instruments, how does the teacher find the middle so kids aren't just going to sit there and be silent? But, they can't be blowing their horn while she is trying to teach them something either. It has been wonderful to—I think it helps both people.

When I first started, we had announced evaluations. I think announced evaluations were much more stressful. Now I feel like I do what I do, and if one of them

shows up with their computer in their hand to script me, alright, well, I am just doing what I am doing, so come on in. I think that having them be unannounced, it makes all of us be a better teacher every day. It's not just on Tuesday I know someone is going to come, so let me do these things. For new teachers, the first evaluation is announced, but for everybody else none of them are announced, but by and large—and the teachers that I have talked to all have the same opinion about the unannounced being more preferable.

Emma's experience with peer and parent feedback. I think sometimes the peer evaluations are trickier, because I think that sometimes people feel like they have to say something that is not positive about someone who they work with everyday, and maybe they like that person. But maybe this is about a specific question about approachability, and that doesn't feel so good. But I also think we are all adults, and we should be able to give feedback. But, again, if that's the first time you are hearing about it, then it didn't get handled the right way to begin with, because it's really not fair for the survey to be the first place for you to hear about it. That didn't give anybody an opportunity to change that situation or that perception.

I think that the parent surveys are wonderful. I think we have a lot of parent interaction, and, again, I don't have anything to compare it to, but it feels like there is a lot of parent communication and interaction here at SEV. So, really, you shouldn't see anything on that survey that you weren't already aware of. Whether that is something that was positive or negative, you should already know.

Emma's family experience. My sister and I both work here, and actually she teachers in the third and fourth grade. All three of her kids went here, and it's been a long time, a long history of SEV for us. She came to SEV because of her oldest child.

They were in another school district, the gifted program was not very developed, and he really struggled. He came to SEV because of what SEV could offer. He was much more successful in this school being able to be ability-grouped, working at his own pace. This was a much better place for him. Her two daughters went all the way through SEV as well.

Narrative for Master Teacher Colette

Colette's background experience. I am from Nebraska from a town of about 3,000 people. My mom and dad are still there. My parents don't have a formal education after high school. My mom worked at the hospital for a long time, then worked in an office, and she most recently has done daycare in her home. My dad was a plumber for many years. He had his own plumbing business, but it was hard in a small town. What I really remember him doing is managing golf courses, but now he is on the slower end of things, not the manager but just an employee.

I was the first one in my family to go to college and first one to graduate from college. I have a younger brother, and he got his associate degree, and now he is working on his bachelor's. He has a very good job and this has helped him to do that. We have the same mom and dad, but I have a brother and sister from my dad's first marriage. They are here, and I see them occasionally; however, my little brother is back home. We go home every summer and every other Christmas to see them.

It was a big deal that I was the first person in my family to graduate from college. There was just no question I was going to go to college, not knowing exactly what I really wanted to do. My mom did daycare forever, so it was just natural: I wanted to be with kids kind of thing. I went to the college that was closest to my hometown, and no

one else from my class went there. In order to go to school, we applied for everything, because my parents had no money. I got a couple of grants, took out student loans, and worked, saving as much money as I could. I went to school and I got my elementary education degree. I will pay school loans until I die, but that was the only way. I wouldn't be where I am if I hadn't done that.

I had a great student teaching opportunity in the town where I was going to school. She [Colette's mentor teacher] was wonderful, very SEV-like, and now this is where I am—which is crazy that happened, because obviously SEV is very different from where I grew up. I had a sister and a brother who were out here and they said, "We can find you a job, you are not going to find one there." It was really hard to leave my mom and dad and grandma and grandpa and everybody. But, I knew if I wanted to be a teacher it wasn't going to happen there. So, I came out here, and a lady in my sister's neighborhood told my sister, "You should have her go apply at SEV."

It was August 7th and SEV starts early, so they were already in school, but I went and applied, and they called me the next day and asked if I would come in for an interview, and I thought, sure. I went through the whole interview process. I think about it now, and all the people that were at the table, and I don't know how I made it through that. I started the next day as a long-term sub [substitute teacher], and I have been here ever since. Someone was watching out for me.

I have been the master teacher for approximately six years and have worked here for 15 to 16 years all together. I started off being a classroom teacher, then a mentor teacher, and now the master teacher. I just think it is a beautiful place to be—to do what you want to do where you are comfortable.

Colette's instruction. This week, I went into all the first and second grade math classes and did a lesson with a math toolkit. I have been in all of the classes at least three times so far this year. Last year, I don't think I ever went in. It just has evolved, I want to say—putting myself out there. I want them to give me feedback, too. I want to go in and try something, but I also want them to see here's how Common Core can work. Here's how you can help your kids be successful, help you be successful, bring out the teacher that you want to be. Struggling through writing that objective or whatever but knowing here is why we are here.

For math, I have been doing different math routines with math fluency pieces so they need to keep doing that. I might be in there and be the fun person to introduce it, but you have to keep continuing that, or your kids are going to think I was the fun person who came in. It's been really good in getting to know the kids better. When teachers say such and such is really struggling, when I was in there I really noticed they weren't able to do this. They do care what I am doing and they do know that it is hard. At the end of the day, when the kids are smiling, you know it is a good thing. It is a hard job and it takes a lot. It takes a lot to work anywhere, but I always say it takes a lot to work at SEV, because you have to be on your game all the time—you just do, you have to be on.

I rotate my cycle, through; I did all of third and fourth grade two weeks ago, then I did fifth and sixth grade, and this week was first and second grade and then kindergarten. I will also go in and talk with the mentor teachers. They are usually a step or two ahead of their team. So, I usually go to their room first, "Let me come try this and see how it goes," tweak it, and then take it to the other classrooms.

There are a lot of people who can say all the right things, but it is when they have to do them. There are times that I think they think they really are doing them. But when you say, “Can you show me that?” or “Let’s look at your script,” or “Let’s talk about your lesson, let’s look at your student work,” and it’s not there consistently, then something has got to change. It is work; you have to work hard to get something. You are going to feel that reward eventually, but you might not know it right in that moment. I think that is the biggest thing: being accountable. You had the support, the conversation, whatever the situation, and you have to do it or not. I can’t make that choice for them. It’s just like I tell the kids: I can’t make that choice for you, and you have to do what’s right for you. I think people have a hard time with accountability and facing situations that are hard. It’s not easy, and it’s not easy for me to come to you and say, “You aren’t doing this,” or, “Your students are struggling,” but I have to see something. I want to see something; the kids are the most important. That is the most important piece.

Colette’s classroom environment. All of our teachers are all about the many great things out there, but there are so many things you don’t want to get sucked into. This is really nothing, this is really a great book, but it doesn’t tell me anything. The principal has been really good about, “Let’s look at this resource before we buy anything. We have all this and we have freedom, so let’s put it to good use and create what is going to work for us and our kids. Don’t reinvent the wheel; spend your time on what you need to spend your time on, but when you find something good, then share it.” It’s hard, but you know, all of our teachers are so wonderful, and we work on those teams. It’s really about developing the trust within the team. It’s not, “I am going to go in my room and

shut my door.” It’s, “What are you doing? Come look at this? Can you help me with this?” It is really that team.

Teachers at SEV need to understand and accept that there are three people in the elementary classrooms, and they have to work together for those kids. That’s what I would say is the hardest: the accountability. If you are not teaching the way you need to be teaching, then I think of it as a mom and I don’t want my child in that classroom. I wouldn’t go that far, but then it is my job; I need to get that person going or maybe this isn’t the place for them, and they usually self-select. We might have those conversations and those plans, and you say I am doing this, this, and this, but you have to do this, this, and this.

I love being able to go into a classroom and seeing something that is so amazing or wonderful and being able to think of somebody who could value seeing that same thing. There are times I will say, “Go next door. I will stay here for five minutes, and you need to go see what is going on.” Or, when a career teacher is doing something, I might send their mentor or master teacher, “You need to go see such and such because what they have really been struggling with, they are getting it. It’s taking time and it takes time, but they are getting it, go watch them right now. “ I think that is the piece I like. I love that I can see something in kindergarten and then I can hear the third and fourth grade math teachers say, “My kids just don’t get this,” and I say, “It’s coming, they are doing it in kindergarten, I know it is coming your way.” There is hope out there. They may forget it, because they always pretend they didn’t learn it last year. That is such a great thing, and I think that is part of my experience, so SEV is just like that.

We have been trying to create a bridge with secondary. We have student interns who are over here, we have reading buddies, or students may go interview this social studies class from high school to work on these skills. So, just really making it that community feel, where there are great things going on here every day. We have to learn from them. We also learn from the not great things either. Okay, I can walk out of a room, and I can say I know exactly what will help that teacher get over whatever that situation was—being able to be in the classrooms, communicate all of those things, make any situation good.

Colette's student assessment practices. The first assessment that comes to mind is the SST. Every summer or right when we (the mentor and master teachers) come back to school in the summertime, our principal has already analyzed the data, but we start as a leadership team analyzing what we saw so we have that to drive our instruction. What the leadership team has been doing is taking it to cluster [team meetings], and the individual teacher uses her own assessments. Teachers use varying sorts looking at the standard, and how are you assessing it, and are you assessing what you are asking them to do? Really, being able to match those together.

We have Developmental Reading Assessments [DRA] levels we use, and we do the Response to Intervention [RTI] screenings for the beginning of the year that identifies students with specific needs. We use reading mastery for instruction. We did a math screener last year and this year. We now have a math intervention group along with our reading intervention group. Our reading intervention group is grades one through four; our math intervention group is grades three through six. We have an intervention specialist doing so many wonderful things with helping these students to get extra math

each day along with their regular math. It's tweaking their schedule here and there; they progress, they get three consistent weeks at a certain level, and they graduate out. We started that last year. We have been doing RTI for several years.

Now with Common Core, because it's so different, so we have to look at where we place our kids according to ability and how are we going to continue doing that in a real way. We will still get their reading levels, their writing records, but what are we going to use for the math pieces, the part that gets more challenging because it is like, where do we start? What are we going to ask the students to show us so we can help put them in an environment with peers and people to grow with? We haven't cracked that code yet, but we are working on it.

Colette's experiences with the comprehensive teacher evaluation process. I remember the first official comprehensive teacher evaluation training and really learning what this is and what we were going to do. I think I was a new mentor teacher at that time. Now I see the value of that and how we have been able to take it and make it ours. We followed their expectations, but then really made it ours. I can't imagine going or doing anything else. You have to see it to believe it, but you have to really believe it. You work hard at what you do, but it is worth it in the end. It's the successes, even me personally; I get evaluated in the classroom, so when someone comes and they give me the feedback, I can so appreciate it. I can see it, and it really is the language that I speak, and I use the rubric. Those are things that if I can look for them and be specific and give somebody that information, I can say, you know what, I am struggling with assessment and here is the piece I am really working on. When I am in your room, please tell me if I am doing this or not, because I want to know, too. We all have things we can do better.

Sometimes, if I go into a mentor teacher's classroom, they can go see someone else. They want to be there when I am in there so they know what I am doing, but if they need to go check on someone, like this person is really struggling with this, I know that they know enough that they will communicate with me. I want them to go support the other person that maybe is struggling with the same math thing that I know they are doing well. Sometimes it's that, but other times they're in there working with me and doing whatever it is. It is based on teacher need. "What do you need? Do you need me to come in and listen to your kids count to 100? Then I will come in and help you. But if you want me to come do a lesson about problem solving, or counting, or 10 frames, then let me come in and do that so we can work together." I feel so good about this year that I have been able to do that. It is part of my personal goal to be in the classroom. Not just to go in there and do some fun thing I want to do, but really coming in and diving into curriculum, and then expecting those teachers to continue.

Master teachers also get evaluated. The other master teacher evaluates me, a mentor teacher will evaluate me and the principal will evaluate me. It's different people and we have changed that process over the last couple of years. I use to work with third and fourth grade and fifth and sixth grade teachers, and I would evaluate the same teachers and the same content.

Now that we have moved into Common Core, I still try to focus on third and fourth grade and fifth and sixth as much as possible. I am doing math, and the other master teacher is doing language. I do K-6 math and do all their content and all their cluster meetings [weekly team meetings], and she does the same for first and second

grade because it was too hard to go between math and language. This is the first year we have done that.

We have decided to change who watches and evaluates who, because sometimes you get stuck on the same feedback watching the same person three times a year. So, we had our mentor teachers switch up. They don't evaluate everyone on their team. A first and second grade mentor teacher will go to fifth and sixth grade and do the same content but different grade level to give them feedback. We heard from both teachers and mentor teachers and they really like to do it this way. They want to coach their team, but they want to go in and evaluate another teacher because it gives them that perspective also. It's been really good. I have gotten to know more of the staff, as weird as that sounds. I never knew such and such. I knew her but now I understand her. This is the first time I have really been able to go in and do lessons.

Colette's experiences with peer and parent feedback. We complete peer and parent surveys, and I think it is important to ask for feedback. It is also important to take that feedback into consideration when making decisions and planning. By asking for feedback, you open yourself up to the idea that we all have things that we can improve on, that we all have areas of refinement. What the next step I see is taking that and using it to improve the situation. At times, the feedback received is not based in anything that is real or that you or me are capable of changing—sometimes things are just out of our control. On the other side, we need to know and be able to address the areas we need to improve on. I see feedback as a great resource in making what I do better. I can also reflect on how I can improve myself and then work with the situations around me. The instruction is all based on need and teachers, students, and parents all have a voice in

what is working and not working. The only way to have a well-rounded situation is to ask for feedback and then use it to the best of your ability.

Colette's family experiences. I have two girls. They are 10 and 5—almost 6. They go to school here, and actually, my husband works here, too. He is an elementary PE [physical education] teacher and a high school baseball coach. When I met him through people at school, he was a manager at Play It Again Sports. So, he was a manager in retail. After our first daughter was born, we never saw him because of his work hours. It was really hard and he realized it was not working for us. Our daughter was here with me because we have childcare here, so my girls have been with me; they think they own the school, which is sometimes a bad thing. My husband said, “You know, we need to do something else.” So, he went back to school to be a business teacher. He had been coaching at a couple different areas. He had a friend that worked at a nearby high school, so he coached with him for awhile, then he student-taught over there and said, “This is where I am going to go.” He graduated in October and needed a job, and SEV had a teaching assistant position open, and I'm like, how great if we could all have the same schedule. So, he started as a teaching assistant in one of the classes. I was a master teacher at that time.

At the end of the year, a PE position opened and that was the field of study from his original schooling. After going through all of his credits and all the things he had done, he had his teaching certificate and he was highly qualified because he had all the PE stuff you needed. So, he became the elementary PE teacher. He thought he would go to high school at one point because there was an opening, and then he decided he really

liked elementary, and he loves coaching the high school and loves baseball—that's his thing—so that is what he decided to keep doing.

I am not being biased, but he is a really good teacher. For six years now, we have all been here—like I said, this is my family. This is home to me other than my real home that I sleep at. Everything I know, do, and love is here. I think that's the piece of the community; there are a lot of families here. I mean, it's a cousin, a brother, a husband, a wife, or whatever. It's because I believe in this place, and I want everybody to come here. Definitely all of my family is here.

Narrative for Principal Linda

Linda's background experience. I grew up here in the southern part of the state. You could call my mother a hippie, and that's how my brother and I grew up. My father did not graduate from high school, but my mother did. Both of my parents were proponents of my brother and I. They are very serious about school and very serious about our education. Both of us went to private Catholic school. As much as my parents felt it was important, homework and schoolwork was not a center of what was happening at home. It was what happened at school, and at home; there was a lot of music, books, and reading. In my brain, I did not connect those two; school and what happened at home were not connected at all.

I initially went to college to either go into education or into library sciences; that is what they called it, a media specialist. Then I left college to go to a school to be a travel agent and I was a travel agent for a while and then worked in Florida for a tour company for a few years. But I kept feeling education was where I needed to be, so I

went back to school part time and then full time and got my bachelors in Florida at the University of South Florida.

I became a teacher in Florida and worked my first year there. I did my student teaching and my first year of teaching in Florida. What was interesting is I went through a really good teacher post-bac program. When I hear of other people's experiences and my experiences, I knew mine was very good. I did my student teaching in a fourth grade class. The teacher that was my supervising teacher was pregnant, and I took over for her once I completed my student teaching. She stayed gone, and I stayed the rest of the year, and for my first year of teaching I stayed there again. Then my husband and I moved here.

I met my husband when I was 20 and married him when I was 23. I met him in California on a trip and then did long-distance relationship for a little while. Then I moved to California for a while. Then we moved to Florida and we got married in Florida. We moved here for him to go to school. He was back in college, and he got a scholarship to a technology school here. We came in the summertime, and I was looking for a teaching job, but school was about to start, so there wasn't a lot out here. About the time school was starting, I got an interview at a charter school here. It was a really small charter school downtown. They opened the very first year that charter schools were allowed in this state.

I went to this interview; it was a group interview, and very interesting. It was in the building where they ended up having the school, but it had been an old office building and they remodeled it even as teachers were coming through to interview. There was a

start date of August 1st, but it was pushed back because the school wasn't ready. I got the job and taught fourth grade there for three years.

Starting up and creating a school was really a great experience. I actually ended up being asked to sit on the board of that school. The last year I was there, I sat on the board of that school. A husband and wife team applied for the charter and opened the school, but they divorced and there was this big fight about who owned the school. The board, including myself, said nobody owns the school, it's a charter, it belongs to the state, and they were debating who's property it was, and it got really ugly.

So, my husband drove by the campus of SEV, and he told me, "There is a charter school right by the house, you should send a résumé there," and so he did. The CEO [chief executive officer] called me, and I was in the middle of all that [the other charter school problems] when he called me. I remember coming in. I met the principal first; she was the one who did the screening. She took me right away to meet the CEO. I sat down to meet him and he said, "Well, how would you like to teach kindergarten and first grade?" I told him I have never taught kindergarten and first grade, but if he thought I could do it, so did I.

The first year, I taught kindergarten and first grade. The second year, I taught fourth and fifth grade. I taught fourth and fifth grade here for three years. The last year I taught, we started the comprehensive teacher evaluation program. The first year we did the comprehensive teacher evaluation program, I was one of the mentor teachers. The next year, we were going to have two master teachers, so they asked me to be the other master teacher. I was a master teacher for three or four years before the principal and CEO asked me to take on the principal position temporarily because the CEO was going

to go check out opening another charter school, and while he was gone, the principal was going to be the executive director. This is my fifth year as the principal.

I remember when the CEO would bring in people from the new charter school he was opening to interview us about our program. But, I kept saying time and time again, it's about program, but primarily, it's about people and relationships. First and foremost, it's about people and relationships more than about the program. It's the only way it works, because when you work so tightly in these kinds of situations where you share students, where you work together, when you team, it has to be about people and relationships. That's the foundation for everything. A lot of times I felt like they were looking at me, "What are you talking about?" But it is so true.

Linda's instructional leadership. We typically spend the first cluster [team meeting] or part of the first cluster doing professional growth based on the comprehensive teacher evaluation rubric and what it is. But because most of our teachers aren't new, we use data from past evaluations to determine the overall areas of strength and weakness, and that is what we focus mostly on during that first cluster. Even though we touch on everything in the program, we really spend a lot of time with that. We are always trying to bring that back in. The master teachers and mentor teachers and I in the leadership team also try to continually bring in our overall goal. That is not driving the instruction, but it's driving the teachers and their individual cause. Just like the students, we keep asking, "How can we individualize without having 50 different clusters going on but make it meaningful?" Meaning: this is what we all need. Here's what we all need, because it is our school's goal. Here's where we all need to focus on average, but you specifically.

I very rarely get to attend whole cluster. I am in and out of cluster every week when they have cluster. I am with the leadership team and with the master teachers as they are planning the clusters, and I am able to bring that [what I heard in cluster]. I would love to be at all of them all the time, but what I find to be most effective is when I'm in a classroom, or I am talking with a teacher, or they come to ask me a question, I can bring in what I know from cluster. But also, I can say this is what is happening in this teacher's class, and this is what I saw, so let's talk about how we can bring that into cluster.

It goes back to that teacher piece that people call buy-in, or whatever it is, that if teachers don't fully believe that it's put in place to help them get better, then it becomes a gotcha [i.e., a poor evaluation] and it's not going to improve teachers. It just becomes a hoop, or they don't love it, or buy into it, and it's not going to help. It is a lot of work. When you first start using it, even as an evaluator, I can remember the first years—every evaluation taking hours and hours to complete. It's still time consuming, as it should be, even knowing it and doing it all the time. If it's comprehensive, time should be put into it, and it is never going to be quick and easy. It's quicker than when I first started doing it, but it's very time consuming.

Linda's classroom environment. When I taught in Florida, I had 29 or 30 kids. When I taught downtown, I had 25 with a teacher's assistant and myself. Here, I have always had team teaching with anywhere between 28 to 62 students. Each classroom has one instructional assistant and fifth and sixth share two, so fifth and sixth looks a little more traditional. They have two they share between the eight teachers; everyone else has one between two people.

Each class has two specials a day, so they do daily PE and then they rotate through Spanish, technology, and music through the quarter. It is an expensive program to have those 90 minutes every day. It's great for the kids; it's great to have those teachers, but it's an expense. It's worth it and our school protects it. We believe it strongly, but I think that when most schools try to implement this, that's going to be the biggest stumbling block, because they can't manage that.

Linda's student assessment practices. We do the typical standardized tests and we do teacher-created assessments. We do the DRA and weekly running records, especially kindergarten through fourth grade, but most of the rest are teacher-created tests. We do more benchmark assessing on our students who are in our intervention programs. Reading intervention and math intervention, we do weekly progress monitoring in terms of standardized progress monitoring on tests for those students to determine their progress.

Our school goal every year is written off of our standardized testing. It is the main thing, which then drives our cluster and professional development, but then the student's Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are also driven by assessment results, because that's when they determine what the students' goals are for the next semester and quarter and whether it is continuing to progress on the pace they are, or do they need to move back, or do they need to move forward. However, the children's goals and how they move and fluctuate within levels and groupings are mostly from teacher-created assessments. The standardized tests are used to create our school goals, which then drives our professional development.

Linda's experiences with the comprehensive teacher evaluation process. I have been working with the comprehensive teacher evaluation program for a long time. We know the elements, but it does go back to the relationships and the time that master teachers, mentor teachers, and myself can spend with teachers in their classrooms, because that is driven by the evaluations, which is the most important part. When follow-up doesn't happen, not just postconference, but going into the classrooms and revisiting and bringing it back to cluster, it is still just a moment in time. It's good specific feedback for that time, but if you don't follow it up, if you don't continue it, even teachers who want to—we all get too busy and then it stops there—the growth doesn't continue to happen. Maybe one element of it goes in the form of a tweak, but if I talk to someone about solid lesson, objective lesson writing, and we have a great conversation, they go and they are jazzed about it; they start working on it. When I am in their classroom the next time, I don't comment on it. Then all of a sudden, they are asking me, what do you think of this? It has to be that ongoing piece, because it is not even the best-intentioned teacher. We all get too busy and it ends there. The true growth happens when it continues to be brought back either through individual conversations, the follow-up classroom visits, or cluster that it continues to come back. That is really when change in growth really can happen.

This ongoing communication opens it up to teachers; they feel they can come to you with a question or tackle something together. I don't have all the answers; the master teachers and mentor teachers don't have all the answers. It's not, "Come check with me and I will let you know how it goes," because I don't know either, but if I know this isn't

exactly right, and the teacher knows it's not exactly right, okay, well, let's figure it out together.

If I go into an evaluation and it comes out to be a gotcha, I feel that is my fault. I really do feel it is my fault, because if that is what is really going on, and I knew that was what really was going on, I should have been helping that teacher before I ever went in there. I prefer to know what is going on, work together, know it's up and running, know this teacher is doing well, and then go in there and support them. Everyone is going to have a bad day, that's going to happen, but if you know that teacher, and you have been in there, you know it's a bad day. This isn't characteristic of this person.

When a teacher does have a bad day, that's going to come out of that postconference conversation. If it's really terrible, there usually is more of a problem. I have had those really hard conversations. It may even be a mentor teacher who is a rock star teacher, but you went in there and something was not the way it should be. That's the thing I like about it; it's very clearly evidenced based. It's not my opinion of you; it's not what I think. Most teachers are going to come to figure it out.

I have had occasions that the teacher did not have a good evaluation. They were struggling as a teacher and they come to me and say, "My evaluation was terrible." I say, "Let's go through it," and they say, "Yes, that is what happened." I say, "You know we have three or four more evaluations. It's an average. Get it together. You can recover from that, so what do we need to do? How do we move forward and really get to do the hard work that needs to be done to figure out what needs to be done to move on?" When those things happen, the first thing is that they are hurt and disappointed, but we can get through it together. It's part of the profession, but a teacher's biggest nemesis is time: "I

need more time with the kids and to plan this.” I think that is a struggle, because like you said, we always want to do more. Those that follow up that relationship building, the dialogue, the peer-to-peer interaction, strengthens all of us as educators, and when we are all strengthened it has an impact on student achievement.

I know one weakness within the comprehensive teacher evaluation program is implementing the program. They give you this model and they tell you this is what you need to do, and I agree with the model, but sometimes you can get into going through the steps, because I am in the model. You can plan cluster, and lose sight of what you really need to do with the people—the teachers and the students at your school. Those two things can overlap; you can get too focused on the process. We would get our program review. The program review didn’t matter to me; maybe it should matter more than it did. But it never did, because I knew our weaknesses as far as the program went, and some of those weaknesses were by choice. That was not what we chose to focus on at that moment. I am not saying it’s more or less important, but for us, for this moment, for our people, for our students, this is where we are. We are not there yet. If you find yourself driven by the program review, or we have to do this to be the model comprehensive teacher evaluation program school, you can lose sight of what is really important, which is the teachers and students, the needs of what is here today. I can see how that can be a weakness, especially for a school new to it, but it’s hard, because all the elements are important. It’s important to follow the elements, too; it’s important to be all those pieces; but if you get too focused, you can lose sight.

When we first started, all of our teacher evaluations were announced, and moving from announced to unannounced was a sticky wicket. Now that all of ours are

unannounced, we only do one announced for new teachers to SEV. The very first one is announced so we can walk them through the process. Other than that, no teachers have announced evaluations. The feedback I have gotten from teachers is that they like it better. It is more of what they are doing every day. It is usually great. It is good, because it is what you are doing every day. It's not a dog and pony show, and that's not what I am trying to see. I want to see what's happening in the classroom every day. We went to all unannounced [evaluations] because we have teachers that have been here for several years and they know the program. The teachers were starting to show me the best they had. That's great to see the best, but I want to know what's happening on a day-to-day basis. If you are doing the solid lesson, you're hitting everything on the rubric; you don't need to have all the bells and whistles. Solid teaching is solid teaching.

Linda's experiences with peer and parent feedback. We use peer and parent survey results as feedback for teachers. They are so hard on themselves; they get 60 back and the one negative comment is the one they take home with them in the backseat. I think there are two sides to that, too. We want that, and we want to give people that opportunity, but I also know how hard teachers can be on themselves.

Linda's family experiences. I have one daughter. She is eight years old and she goes to school here. She has been here since she was nine weeks old. She went to preschool here. But, you know, I often said that she doesn't just go to school here. Being the principal makes it easy for me, but I always said I had to meet her and get to know her before I would know if this was the right place for her—because it is the right place for some people, but not for everybody; for her it is. It is exactly how she learns, and she fits right in. So, she goes to school here and she loves it. So far it is great, but I always

think, gosh, how is it going to be for her to have her mom as principal and for me to have my daughter as a student here? But I tell all of my staff, especially people who have family here, I think sometimes that can be a bad thing to be thinking of your child. But I always think, too, that if we make decisions with our loved ones in our heart, we are making best decisions for everyone. If we want it for our child, if I would want those two teachers for my child, if I can say I would put my child in any single class, then I am making the right decision for everyone's child.

Thematic Analysis and Interpretation

According to Seidman (2006), narrative profiles are “a way of knowing” (p. 123). Although there are various ways of analyzing and interpreting narrative profiles, Seidman stated that one conventional strategy is to search “for connecting threads and patterns among the excerpts within . . . categories and for connections between the various categories that might be called themes” (p. 125). In this section, I review each of the categories used to organize the narratives presented above: background experiences, instruction, classroom environment, assessment practices, experience with the comprehensive teacher evaluation process, experiences with peer and parent feedback, and family. I then draw out recurring themes based on those narratives. This is the interpretative part of the analysis, which Patton (2002) described as “attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, . . . making inferences, considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order” on the narrative data (as cited in Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 286). As Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated, a key question at this stage is: “What is the story these data tell?” (p. 287). They further suggested, “You aim to tell a richly detailed story that respects these contexts and connects participants,

events, experiences or discourses to larger issues, theories, or phenomena” (p. 289). That aim is what I have worked toward with the following analysis of the rich stories my participants shared.

Participants’ background experiences: “It was just understood that education was important.” The category of *background experiences* is derived from the initial part of Seidman’s (2006) three-part interview sequence, in which participants were asked questions designed to elicit a “focused life history” (p. 17). The focus in this part of the study was on participants’ early education experiences, what led them to become an educator, and what ultimately led them to join the SEV faculty. It was clear through the initial part of the interviews and the rich text created from them that even though many participants began their work lives in different (noneducation) careers, they did not just haphazardly come to be in the field of education. The following analysis shares their journey to education.

The five interviewees came from a variety of areas within the US and a range of socioeconomic and family situations. All of the interviewees came from families where they were expected to attend college after high school, whether those expectations were spoken or unspoken. I labeled this theme *instilled values of the importance of education*. As Emma shared in her interview, “I’m not sure if my dad and mom ever said it, but I felt it was just assumed we were going to college. It wasn’t about, ‘Are you going to college?’ but ‘Where do you want to go? . . . It’s just the way it was.” Collette also shared, “It was a big deal that I was the first person in my family to graduate from college. There was just no question I was going to go to college, not knowing exactly what I really wanted to do.” Linda stated, “Both of my parents were proponents of my

brother and I.” Throughout all of the interviews, I heard that regardless of their parents’ level of education, their socioeconomic level, or where they lived, the parents of all of the interviewees supported their education. This suggests that each of these educators experienced a lifetime of valuing the importance of education. It is likely that these teachers also impart this value to their students, although I did not observe this directly. This theme aligns indirectly with the element of environment within my study.

Another theme that stood out in examining participants’ background experiences was that all but one interviewee came to *teaching as a second career*. Each person shared experiences from his or her first career, but they also shared the desire to find a career in which they could feel personally and professionally fulfilled, and that career was in the field of education. Emma’s first career was in the area of retail; as she began to question her happiness within her job, she made a decision to move here where she volunteered in her sister’s classroom. It was at this time that she came to realize, “[This] was what I was supposed to be doing and what I was supposed to have been doing the whole time.” Katherine’s experience was a little different in that she had gotten married and had her first child. It was at this time that she began to question her long hours in the hotel industry. As she explained, “While on maternity leave, I was watching TV and my thought was, ‘How am I supposed to go back to work—she [my daughter] is so cute—and work 60, 70, 80 hours a week and holidays?’” When Katherine saw a television advertisement for an online degree program, she thought, “well gosh, I already have my degree in business, what if I went back to school to become a teacher?” That is what I did.” The theme of teaching as a second career suggests that each of these teachers and administrators came to teaching after much thought and developing much passion for the

field; it was something they believed strongly in, and, as evidenced by their testimony, a career they loved. These teacher and administrators bring background knowledge and skills from their first careers that are relevant for a number of the areas assessed by the comprehensive teacher evaluation program such as problem solving, thinking, and working within a collaborative team.

Participants' instruction experiences: "The comprehensive teacher evaluation program helps us to be better teachers so it has to affect what students are doing in class." The category of *instruction* is drawn from the second part of Seidman's (2006) three-part interview sequence, in which participants are asked questions designed to elicit "details of experiences" (p. 18). The focus in this portion of the study was on participants' experiences with various teaching strategies, evaluations of the teaching and learning, and how the teacher evaluation program informed instruction. This portion of the interview sequences is also an element of my conceptual framework: designing, planning, and implementing instruction.

My literature review suggests that, historically, teachers in US schools did not routinely buy into the teacher evaluation process. Epstein (1985) found that there was general dissatisfaction with the way teacher evaluations were conducted, what they measured, how they aligned with professional development, improved teacher status, and how they contributed to the effective education of students (p. 3). Gallagher (2004) also found that studies of teacher evaluations showed that both teachers and principals saw typical evaluations as having little value, and principals' ratings of teachers generally were uncorrelated with students' scores on high-stakes assessments.

However, in this study, each interviewee shared her or his experiences and feelings toward the instructional rubric, and it became clear that each of them felt that the rubric was comprehensive and helped them in becoming better teachers. The rubric became foundational to their instructional practice. That said, the level of buy-in differed among the interviewees. Bill shared his level of buy-in by stating, “I honestly think there are good ideas in our comprehensive teacher evaluation program.” However, he also shared, “I am not a big comprehensive teacher evaluation program rubric fan, but I would say absolutely a teacher can go to the rubric, think about some of the things that are in there, and internaliz[e] it a little bit.” The other interviewees’ comments suggested stronger buy-in, particularly in the area of instruction. Katherine’s voice made this clear when she stated, “I am very driven by our comprehensive teacher evaluation program, the evaluation, and the rubric that we use.” It is important to point out that Bill was the only teacher who had teaching experience outside of SEV beyond student teaching (Katherine completed her student teaching outside of SEV). This gave him knowledge and experiences of other types of evaluation processes.

Altogether, the data indicated that the teachers who were interviewed felt positive about the instructional rubric, which they described as directing their teaching and instruction practices. They also felt that using this comprehensive rubric has helped to make them better teachers.

Participants’ environment experiences: “There is a sense that we are all in this together.” The category of *environment* is derived from the second part of Seidman’s (2006) three-part interview sequence, in which participants are asked questions designed to elicit “details of experiences” (p. 18). The focus in this portion of

the study was on participants' experiences with other key elements of the program; the environment was one of those elements. This portion of the interview was drawn from my conceptual framework.

In the category of environment, the theme of *relationships* resonated very strongly within each of the interviews, although the specific types of relationships the participants described varied based on their positions. Bill and Katherine tended to focus on the relationship between the teacher and the students. Bill shared, "One thing I have said for a long time since I started teaching is that everything happens inside a relationship [students] are highly motivated by their relationship." This indicates the importance Bill places on the relationship between students and teachers and learning. Similarly, Katherine stated, "I do believe that the environment of any classroom or school can have an impact on student achievement." She further suggested that, "a positive, friendly, safe, supportive classroom encourages students to take risks, ask questions, and explore their thoughts deeper." Katherine's remarks support those expressed by Bill in response to the importance of environment.

Emma focused on the environment within the grade level teams to the community at large. She stated:

I think there is a sense of community . . . within the fifth and sixth grade language arts team, and the fifth and sixth grade team, and the elementary team, the school community, but also the community at large. We have a good community with parents and with families. . . . There is a sense that we are all in this together."

Although Linda and Colette focused more on the structure of the school, this still had to do with relationships because the school incorporated team teaching and sharing of

students, which requires the teachers to work together in order to create a positive environment within the classroom. Linda also shared the importance of the teachers having their time each day for planning, collaboration, and professional development. Each of these interview excerpts indicates that the interviewees found that the relationships among the teachers, the teachers and the students, and the community at large are highly important, and when those relationships are present, it creates a positive learning environment that facilitates student achievement.

The connection between relationships and a positive environment is consistent with the scholarly literature from Chapter 2 of this study, in particular Bradshaw, Koth, and Leaf's (2008) findings that "classroom dynamics are complex and similar to school climate in that they involve the relationships and interactions between teachers and students and among students, as well as the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of students and teachers within the classroom" (p. 97). They further determined it is likely that the climates of each classroom are all factors that influence student learning and achievement (Bradshaw et al., 2008). This is evident in this program because the evaluation instruments include four rubric indicators that address learning environment: expectations, managing student behavior, environment, and respectful culture.

Participants' assessment experiences: "Teaching and learning is living life."

The category of *assessment* is also derived from the second part of Seidman's (2006) three-part interview sequence, which he refers to as details of experiences. The focus in this portion of the study was on participants' experiences with assessments and how that drives instruction. Assessment was not a specific element within my conceptual

framework; however, assessment is a rubric indicator within the planning, designing, and implementing instruction element within my conceptual framework.

As I reviewed the interview data in regard to assessment, I found several themes that stood out and indicated the many different types of assessments that were used at SEV. I also found that each theme brought a different type of information to the table. What the data show is that the tests really are driving how instruction is planned and carried out. One of the themes related to assessment is *the role of standardized tests in driving instructional planning*. The interviewees each spoke of how the standardized tests were analyzed at the beginning of the year and then helped to create: (a) school goals, (b) driving instruction, (c) planning cluster meetings, and (d) determining professional development. For example, the principal shared:

Our school goal every year is written off of our standardized testing. It is the main thing, which then drives our cluster and professional development, but then the students' Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are also driven by assessment results, because that's when they determine what the students' goals are for the next semester and quarter and whether it is continuing to progress on the pace they are, or do they need to move back, or do they need to move forward.

Another theme that stood out in this category was *formative assessment*. Formative assessments are those ongoing assessments that teachers use to gauge students' learning and determine the modifications that need to take place within the classroom to help the students learn. Riehl (2000), for example, suggested "new (or renewed) instructional methods . . . new forms of assessment and accountability . . . are examples of reform initiatives that address fundamental structures and processes within

schools and are critical to effecting positive student outcomes” (p. 60). Throughout the interviews, the teachers and administrator spoke of various types of formative assessments, including observations, DRA, RTI, and teacher-created assessments. The interviewees shared that the formative assessments were important to the ongoing monitoring of student progress and the summative assessments were important elements of goal setting, both at the student and school levels. A point that clearly came through was that, although all of these assessments are used and respected, as educators transition to Common Core, assessments are changing and need to continue to change (the new assessment; Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers will include formative and summative elements). Bill suggested, “I can see we are going to have a big problem trying to go down that Common Core path at the same time we are stuck in this old assessment style.” Emma further questioned “what changes need to happen in order to continue to use the role sheet as an accountability piece [their current assessment piece] for the student and to help them with their discussions, but make it so it fits into Common Core the way we need it to.” The teachers realized that they needed to change their practice over time in response to formative assessments. This is also consistent with scholarly literature.

Participants’ comprehensive teacher evaluation process experiences:

“Teachers are better teachers if they are learning themselves.” The category of *teacher evaluation process* derived from the third part of Seidman’s (2006) three-part interview sequence, in which participants are asked questions designed to elicit “reflections on meaning” (p. 18). The focus in this portion of the study was on participants’ experiences with the process of the teacher evaluation program. This

portion of the study is not an element of my conceptual framework specifically; however, this portion of interviews was intended to focus in on the second research question: How do teachers and administrators experience the comprehensive evaluation process and how do they use their experiences to inform instruction?

Two themes that emerged within the category of evaluation process included *roles* and *processes*; however, the theme of buy-in from the category of instruction overlaps in this area as well. This overlap makes sense, because as mentioned above, these two categories are closely related where instructional strategies are a response to the process, and the process drives instructional strategies as long as there is buy-in. The roles within this teacher evaluation program include classroom teachers (career teachers), mentor teachers, master teachers, and the administration or principal. Katherine and Emma are mentor teachers, Colette is one of the master teachers, and Bill is a career teacher. Scholarly research reinforces this element as indicated in Chapter 2 of this study where Ovando and Ramirez (2007) supported the concept that the evaluation personnel should include mentors, peer coaches, department chairs, and central office administrators or supervisors as well as the principal (p. 89).

During the interview, Bill shared that he questioned the meaning of the role of master teacher. He suggested there might be a difference between what he defines as a master teacher and what the program defines as a master teacher. Bill stated, “Here we have master teachers . . . but are there really master teachers? The people we have right now, I love them as people However, they are not master teachers.” Mentor and master teachers conduct evaluations on the teachers, and Bill suggested these teachers may be knowledgeable within the comprehensive teacher evaluation program, but may

not have the years of experience necessary for him to deem them as master teachers. If Bill did not feel that the people who evaluated him had the experience and knowledge to effectively assess teachers on all elements of the evaluation rubric, he may be going through the process, but not totally buying into the roles associated with the program or the individuals who hold those roles.

There are a plethora of processes within this evaluation program. It was indicated that the school went from announced observations to all unannounced observations. Overall, it was indicated that this had been well received by teachers. The process of unannounced observations allows mentor and master teachers as well as the principal to see day-to-day teaching that goes on within each classroom. Katherine shared, “Over the last few years, we have changed that, and now they are unannounced, and it definitely gives a more accurate picture of where the teacher is.” Emma further stated, “For new teachers, the first evaluation is announced, but for everybody else none of them are announced, but by and large—and the teachers that I have talked to all have the same opinion about the unannounced being more preferable.”

Another area under the theme of processes involves the master teacher going into the classroom and supporting the teacher in any way the master teacher can. Colette commented, “I feel so good about this year that I have been able to do that . . . really coming in and diving into curriculum, and then expecting those teachers to continue.” Similarly, Linda stated, “We know the elements, but it does go back to the relationships and the time that master teachers, mentor teachers, and myself can spend with teachers in their classrooms.”

The literature is consistent with processes shared in regard to the comprehensive teacher evaluation program including cluster meetings, professional growth, development of school goals, and promoting trust. In Chapter 2, I reviewed that Ovando and Ramirez (2007) supported the idea that instructional quality could be strengthened when principals created internal structures, including regular meeting times for teams of teachers to plan instruction and reflect on their practice, aligning school-wide professional development activities with school goals and teachers' professional needs, promoting social trust among staff members, and practicing distributed leadership (p. 91).

Bill stated throughout his interviews that he believed that the comprehensive teacher evaluation program has helped him to become a better teacher. However, he also stated in regard to some of the processes, "But, if suddenly you can realize that what they are asking you to do actually contributes to something that you value, I believe teachers would have more buy-in, but I don't feel it is presented that way necessarily." He also shared that, "I feel good about assessments; I think teachers need that That is something we should embrace." He suggested that although he finds some parts of the process valuable, there is room for continued improvement within the program.

Participants' peer and parent feedback experiences: "We are all adults and we should be able to give [and get] feedback." The category of *peer and parent feedback* is derived from the second part of Seidman's (2006) three-part interview sequence termed details of experience. The focus in this portion of the study was on participants' experiences with key elements of the program. This portion of the study is also an element of my conceptual framework

The themes that emerged from the narrative data in the peer and parent feedback category include *communication* and *perspective*. The interviewees shared the importance of ongoing communication with the staff and with the parents. Bruce and Ross (2007) indicated peer feedback influenced teachers' judgments about their goal attainment (p. 148). They also found that peers influenced teachers' satisfaction with the outcomes of their instruction if colleagues gave praise specifically linked to the quality of the teacher's performance; teacher performance would then, in turn, affect student's scores on high-stakes assessments (Bruce & Ross, 2007, p. 148). As was also discussed in the literature review, Epstein (1985) suggested that parents could help teachers and students meet school goals. Epstein added that formal parent surveys are a tool that can give feedback to the teachers and also help them maintain or improve their relationships with parents.

When surveys are completed, it is important to consider the perspective of the audience that is completing the surveys. Teachers will have the perspective from within the classroom, and the parents will have the perspective of what they see through assignments and hear from their children. Katherine discussed the importance of perspective when she mentioned that parents are not in the classroom every day, so they get a lot of their information from their children, and their children also have a different perspective. Epstein (1985) supported that parent ratings were influenced by student reports of classroom life. This important dimension of instruction—communication outside the classroom (i.e., with parents)—is something that teachers need to take into account and determine what, if anything, they need to change. However, a low response rate from peers and parents is a weakness within the program or process. Low response

rates from any of the key stakeholders means that the evaluation is not as comprehensive as it should be.

Participants' Family Experiences: "Like I said, this is my family." The category of *family* was unanticipated, but was derived from the first part of Seidman's (2006) three-part interview sequence in which participants were asked questions designed to elicit "focused life history" (p. 17). The focus in this portion of the study was on participants' experiences with other important experiences as they related to their present position. This portion of the study is not an element of my conceptual framework specifically; however, I believe it fits well into the discussion of the learning environment. The comprehensive teacher evaluation program and scholarly literature I reviewed for this study suggest the learning environment is an important element in teacher evaluation and student achievement. The fact that the interviewees experienced a strong feeling of family within the school environment implies that the school had a strong positive learning environment.

The themes that emerged from the narrative data in the family category include *immediate family* and *school family*. Four out of five of the interviewees had family at the school during the time of this study. Some had their own children, one had a sister, and one had a husband at SEV. This clearly created even more of a connection to the school for these staff members and contributed to what participants described as a family atmosphere within the school. It also may have shaped their self-expectations of an educator, and in turn, their performance and practice. Linda stated, "If we want it for our child, if I would want those two teachers for my child, if I can say I would put my child in any single class, then I am making the right decision for everyone's child." The staff

members who had family at the school expressed a unique and strong passion for the school. This had a positive impact on their perceptions of and experiences with the school's comprehensive teacher evaluation program.

Colette best described the *school family* theme when she stated, "This is home to me other than my real home that I sleep at. Everything I know, do, and love is here." This sentiment resonated with each of the interviewees and aligns with the environment element of the evaluation rubric as well as scholarly literature that states the importance of a strong and positive learning environment in order to support teaching and learning.

Summary and Synthesis

This chapter has reviewed the process and the outcomes of my analysis and interpretation of the qualitative (interview) data. I explained how I coded the raw interview data and then combined relevant codes into overarching categories. Following Seidman's (2006) recommendations and examples, I used these main categories to craft narrative profiles. Comparisons within and across the narrative profiles became the foundation for further analysis of emerging themes. This allowed me to complete a deeper analysis and interpretation of the rich data garnered through the interview process. As I analyzed the data, I shared where each category was derived from and further reconnected my data with my conceptual framework, literature review, and focus of my study. Chapter 6 will build from the analyses from Chapters 4 and 5 by comparing the two sets of data to respond to my original research questions, and the chapter will also draw out implications for research, policy, and practice.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize and interpret all of the data from my mixed-method case study. The data include a descriptive analysis of teacher's average evaluation scores in the areas of instruction, environment, peer survey scores, parent survey scores, and students' standardized test (SST) benchmark scores as the quantitative portion of the study as well as in-depth interviews, which I used for the qualitative portion of my study. I also share the implications this research suggests as well as the study's limitations.

Research indicates that the following elements are critical to comprehensive teacher evaluation: (a) instruction, (b) classroom environment, (c) peer surveys, (d) and parent surveys. Therefore, I built my conceptual framework around these elements with the center element of my research design being the in-depth interviews. The quantitative portion of my research was directed to answer my first research question: What is the relationship, if any, between teachers' evaluation scores and student standardized test scores? My second research question was: How do teachers and administrators experience the comprehensive evaluation process and how do they use their experiences to inform instruction? The in-depth interviews I conducted address this question. In the remainder of this chapter, I will revisit both the quantitative and qualitative data as they help answer both of these research questions.

Overview of the Data and Findings

Quantitative data. The quantitative data were presented in Chapter 4. These data included average evaluation scores for the three teachers for two years, including peer and parent survey scores and standardized tests scores for the teacher's classes. These data were the basis for a descriptive analysis, and through the descriptive analysis I was able to gain some insights into comprehensive teacher evaluation and student achievement.

On the quantitative teacher evaluation metric, each of the teachers received similar scores in all areas. Their evaluation scores fell within a range of 3 and 4 (with 5 being the best score) for both instruction and environment. There was one exception to scores falling within that range, and this occurred with Bill, who received a score of 5 on Environment for the 2010-11 school year. There were limited survey results, but on the results that were available, the teachers received an average score of 4. These scores suggest that the teachers are performing at an average or above-average level. The scores from the surveys suggest that the peers and parents who responded to the surveys believed that these are all above-average teachers in their performance. In general, peers and parents scored the teachers higher than did the classroom observers using the evaluation instruments.

Overall, the quantitative data were limited, and the data I collected indicated that although the majority of students in all classes *met expectations* or *exceeded expectations*, there was a large range of SST benchmark scores in each of the classrooms. For example in 2010-11, 93% of Bill's students *met* or *exceeded expectations*. In Katherine's class, 69% scored at those levels, and 81% of Emma's students achieved those scores. The

teachers' evaluation scores were similar, and that similarity of evaluation scores along with the differences in their classes standardized test benchmark scores suggest that student achievement cannot be reduced to teacher evaluation scores alone: there is a more complicated relationship. I therefore am unable to make a direct connection between strong instruction, classroom environment, or responses from peers or parents and strong SST benchmark scores; as discussed later in this chapter, this is an area for further research.

Qualitative data. The qualitative data were collected during in-depth interviews using Seidman's (2006) three-part interview sequence. I interviewed three teachers; all three were classroom teachers, and two of the three had also served as mentor teachers. I also conducted interviews with a master teacher and the school principal. I coded the data from these interviews, and from this coding derived I seven categories:

- background experiences instruction,
- environment (classroom and school),
- assessment,
- evaluation process,
- peer and parent feedback,
- family.

I then used these categories to craft narrative profiles, again following Seidman's (2006) recommendations for generating profiles. The narrative profiles provided the foundation for a thematic analysis, discussed in Chapter 5. The themes included:

- background experiences
 - instilled values for the importance of education

- teaching as a second career
- instruction
 - buy-in
- environment (classroom and school)
 - relationships
- assessment
 - standardized assessments
 - formative assessments
- evaluation process
 - roles
 - processes
- peer and parent feedback
 - communication
 - perspective
- family
 - school family
 - immediate family

The qualitative data suggest that everyone who was interviewed (all three teachers, the master teacher, and the principal) had differences in how they experienced or *bought into* the comprehensive teacher evaluation. For example, although Bill shared that he felt the comprehensive teacher evaluation program helped him to become a stronger educator, he also felt that the master teachers in the program had not earned the title master teacher. He commented that he did not like it when an evaluator came into

his classroom and started typing (scripting the lesson for an evaluation). He further stated that, although sometimes he felt that the feedback he received from his evaluations was helpful, he did not always agree with the feedback. The other two teachers, both of whom served as mentor teachers, strongly embraced the teacher evaluation and the comprehensive teacher evaluation program. They both stated that they welcomed observers in their classrooms and desired continuous feedback from evaluators along with ways to improve their teaching craft. At the same time, however, all of the participants shared that they use the information from the comprehensive teacher evaluation to inform instruction. Each of the participants also expressed the strengths of this program to the school, to them as educators, and ultimately to the teaching of the students.

Bill was the only career teacher in the study. Although Bill had some concerns with the comprehensive teacher evaluation program itself, he indicated that the rubric had important elements that informed his instruction. Bill shared how he wanted to align his curriculum and instruction more closely with Common Core, which required him to use more problem-solving strategies in his instruction and assignments. The evaluation rubric includes problem-solving and thinking strategies throughout the rubric indicators.

Katherine was one of the mentor teachers, and she believed she had learned a great deal from the comprehensive teacher program. For example, one of the rubric indicators required teachers to give adequate wait time for students when they are responding to a question. Katherine shared that she placed notes around her classroom to remind her to give her students adequate wait time. Katherine described her practice as very driven by the program. She embraced ongoing evaluations and feedback she

received from the program and took the feedback she receives seriously.

Emma was also a mentor teacher. In her interview, she shared how the comprehensive teacher evaluation program had affected her as a teacher and an educator. Emma took the feedback she got very seriously. Recognizing that a 3 on the rubric indicates *proficient*, she wanted to know what she could do to earn a 4 and 5. Emma discussed that she was currently working on improving writing her objectives; she recognized she had more work to do in that area. Feedback from the program definitely allowed Emma to make changes regarding her instruction.

Colette was the master teacher in the study. She too expressed full buy-in for the evaluation program and the expectations the program brought to both her and the mentor and career teachers. Although Colette spoke mostly of her role of going into the classrooms, giving teachers support, and modeling teaching and learning strategies for the teachers, she also was evaluated using the comprehensive teacher evaluation system. In both situations, whether modeling for teachers or being evaluated, Colette shared her high expectations for both herself and the teachers in regard to the comprehensive teacher evaluation rubric. For example, Colette shared that sometimes teachers say the right things when talking about their evaluation, but when she looked at the script from their lesson, she could not find specific actions within the context of the lesson to demonstrate they implemented elements of the rubric. Colette believed the evaluation system was tough and she would sometimes have tough conversations with teachers because she felt that they received the support through this kind of dialogue that would push them to higher levels of performance.

Linda was the principal at SEV. Not surprisingly given her role as the instructional leader, she expressed full buy-in to the evaluation program and the expectations the program had brought to the school. Linda stated that if teachers do not buy into the program, it could become a gotcha experience (where the evaluation results came as a surprise) versus one that actually supported the teachers to become better at their craft. Linda was of the opinion that if teachers were not fully vested in what the program offered, then this would limit their growth as a teacher. She further mentioned the amount of time this program takes and suggested that might be part of why some teachers did not experience full buy-in when it came to the program. For Linda, using the SST scores to create school-wide goals was one important aspect of the comprehensive teacher evaluation program. The cluster meetings were another important aspect for Linda. During these meetings, the teachers brought student work, and with continuous work on the evaluation rubric indicators, teams were able to inform instructional practices to improve student achievement.

All of the interviewees agreed that the school and classroom environment is an important element in student learning. They all said they worked toward creating a positive and strong environment through relationships with students, teachers, parents, and administration. For these educators, ongoing communication was the primary element used in creating a strong and healthy environment.

The peer and parent surveys were accepted among the staff that I interviewed. They believed that if there was something that needed to be addressed, it should have been communicated prior to a survey; therefore, they said there usually were no surprises. However, Katherine noted that parents were not in the classroom every day, and much of

their perceptions of the classroom and instruction came from what they heard from their child's perspective. Thus, it is important to recognize the perspective of the respondent when interpreting survey results. Linda summarized this well when she stated that they use peer and parent surveys as feedback.

The one unexpected finding from the interview data concerned the role of family. With one exception, all of the participants had family members either attending or working at the school. I interpreted this theme in three ways: (a) the school administration created a family environment within the school setting by welcoming the children of staff members into the school within the daycare that was offered, (b) faculty had children who attended the school, and (c) family members were coworkers within the school. Linda made a comment about having family at the school and suggested that if she were making decisions and would be happy with those decisions for her child, then those decisions would be good for all students. In terms of the purpose of this dissertation, this theme illuminates the ways in which this unique school environment nurtured relationships that may have been beneficial to instruction and student achievement.

Overall, the interview data revealed that while all of these educators came from a variety of backgrounds, all but the master teacher entered the education profession as a second career. All had upbringings that emphasized strong educational values, and all believed in the importance of a variety of assessments and of a positive and supportive learning-teaching environment. These factors influenced these educators' practice in myriad ways. The interview data also revealed that all of these educators believed that the comprehensive teacher evaluation allowed them to improve their instruction and

ultimately improve student achievement.

Quantitative and qualitative data. When looked at side by side, the quantitative and qualitative data suggest an overriding theme. The quantitative data indicate that each of these teachers was viewed as average to above-average in terms of the evaluation rubrics. However, the scores that their students received on the SST were not as consistent. For example, in 2010-11, 44% of Bill's students had score that indicated they *exceeded expectations* on the SST; however, only 28% of Katherine's students and 10% of Emma's students received *exceeds expectations*. These data suggest there is no linear, straight-line relationship between teachers' performance on the comprehensive teacher evaluation and their students' scores on standardized tests. Test scores are one element of the program; however, as a practitioner, I believe it is important to look at the scores, but then have ongoing communication with the teacher to examine additional elements of her or his practice, such as knowledge of the students' performance prior to their placement in a teacher's classroom and the circumstances that may have influenced the process of matching students, teachers, and classrooms. This takes us back to how the comprehensive evaluation process is related to instruction, however, through additional in-depth analysis of evaluation scores, student growth and other elements as noted.

The qualitative data help round out this picture. These data suggest there are many elements that are very important within a comprehensive teacher evaluation program. As I was coding the data, the theme of *buy-in* was repeated throughout the instruction data, but was also found within the comprehensive teacher evaluation process. *Relationships* were a theme repeated throughout the interviews regarding the instructional environment, and *communication* was the theme repeated in these educators' experiences

with peer and parent surveys. Together with the quantitative data, these findings illuminate the multiple, complex, and often context-specific factors (e.g., the importance of family) that create a positive learning environment and influence student performance on standardized tests. The data collected through the interviews indicated that the comprehensive teacher evaluation process was seen by the teachers and administrators as related to instruction and student achievement. However, there is much more to consider in determining effects on student achievement than students' scores on standardized tests.

Limitations of the Study

As with any case study, this study is limited by the fact that it is a single case, and hence cannot be generalized. There are also certain limitations within the study design and execution itself. The data suggest there is more to comprehensive teacher evaluation than scores in the three elements of my conceptual framework, which consisted of the areas of instruction and environment as well as peer surveys, parent surveys, and SST. In this case, it is also necessary to consider additional limitations. The school was small, which limited the size of data available for analysis, and one of the teachers who taught fifth and sixth grade was new so there was no historical data for that teacher, which even further limited the size of the database. There was peer survey data for only two out of three teachers [one out of the two years] and parent surveys with data for three out of the three teachers [one out of the years], and in both cases this information was limited. These limitations made it difficult to directly respond to the first research question: What is the relationship, if any, between comprehensive teacher evaluation scores and student standardized test scores?

Out of the five people I interviewed, only one was a career teacher. He had a slightly different perspective on the comprehensive teacher evaluation program, and it would have been beneficial to interview more career teachers. This would have enabled me to better determine how career teachers at SEV experience and use the comprehensive teacher evaluation program as a whole. It is also important to point out that Bill was the only teacher that had teaching experience outside of SEV. Thus, the other teachers in my study did not have experiences at other schools that would allow them to compare this evaluation program to any other evaluation program or process. Katherine and Colette completed their student teaching outside of SEV, but had never taught anywhere else. Linda completed her student teaching elsewhere and taught in two other schools; however, her perspective within this study was that of an administrator versus a teacher within the classroom experiencing the comprehensive teacher evaluation program.

This study was also limited by the composition of the school where the study took place. Comprehensive teacher evaluation needs to be researched and studied within school settings where there is a more linguistically, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse student population than the one at SEV. This would help us better understand the benefits and challenges of a comprehensive teacher evaluation program and how it relates to school reform.

Despite these limitations, this case study does have implications (i.e., transferrable lessons) for research, policy and practice. I conclude with some of those implications and with recommendations for teacher evaluation as one important tool for enhancing student achievement.

Implications for Research

My conceptual framework consists of these elements within teacher evaluation: (a) designing, planning, and implementing instruction, (b) learning environments, (c) peer surveys, and (d) parent surveys. My goal was to determine the relationship, if any, between these elements and student achievement. My analysis draws from a variety of data sources including SST benchmark scores, teacher evaluation scores, surveys, and in-depth interviews.

Gallagher (2004) suggested that traditional principal evaluations of proficient teachers are inadequate for determining strong and effective teachers as well as a guide to improve teaching skills. Gallagher (2004) also found that studies of teacher evaluation show both teachers and principals see typical evaluations as having little value and that principals' ratings of teachers generally are uncorrelated with students' scores on high-stakes assessments. However, my research indicates that the comprehensive teacher evaluation program at SEV is not seen in this light. The teachers and principal view the evaluation process efficient and effective.

Within the learning environment, along with creating a positive relationship among students and teachers and balancing expectations through pairing basic skills and higher-level assignments, empirical evidence indicates that teachers also need to consider the learning styles of each student, because this variable also influences learning outcomes (Dochy, Janssens, & Struyven, 2008, p. 297). The school learning environment consists of administrators working with teachers along with outside influences, while the classroom learning environment consists of teachers working with students in a more closed environment, which can directly affect student learning and achievement

(Anderson, Finnan, & Schnepel, 2003, p. 392). The in-depth interviews conducted for this study indicate that the teachers at SEV work hard at creating balance between working on basic skills and implementing higher-level assignments. This is evident through the math and reading intervention classes students attend to address challenge areas as well as the many descriptions of the higher-level thinking the teachers encourage students to use. For example, teachers use assessments where students have to explain how they came up with mathematical responses or demonstrate reading comprehension through analysis of two different literature pieces comparing characters.

Bruce and Ross (2007) indicated peer feedback influences teachers' judgments about their goal attainment (p. 148). They also found that peers influence teachers' satisfaction with the outcomes of their instruction if colleagues give praise specifically linked to the quality of the teacher's performance, which in turn, they argue, will directly affect students' scores on high-stakes assessments (Bruce & Ross, 2007, p. 148). The data I collected suggest that the teachers I interviewed respect and encourage feedback from their peers.

Using systematically gathered parent views in teacher evaluation is an uncommon practice; however, many writers have argued for including them (Peterson, Wahlquist, Brown, & Mukhopadhyay, 2003, p. 318). Epstein (1985) contended that parent views can be an important source of information about teachers. She found that parent ratings were influenced by student reports of classroom life and by resources and ideas given to the parents by the teacher. My research indicates that teachers are open to and encourage feedback from parents. One of the teachers interviewed in this study, however, suggested

that the parent ratings are influenced by student reports of classroom life, and so this perspective is something that should be considered.

Overall, this research indicates that comprehensive teacher evaluation can be valuable in changing teachers' and administrators' perspectives from a view of teacher evaluation as inefficient and unproductive to a view of evaluation as a means of improving teacher performance and ultimately student achievement. In this study, a critical element regarding perspective was the level of teacher and administrator buy-in; all participants in this study evidenced a strong degree of buy-in, and this in turn affected their practice. Other critical elements of a comprehensive teacher evaluation program consist of time for teachers to collaborate and plan together, professional development for the teachers based on teacher need, and multiple evaluators. This study further suggests the importance of all of these elements to attain strong and effective teachers and high achievement on student standardized test scores.

This research further suggests that teacher evaluations that are multilayered, including formal evaluations, ongoing communication among staff, ongoing analysis of a variety of assessments, and weekly team meetings may have a positive relationship with the scores students receive on high-stakes assessments. Further research needs to be conducted in the area of comprehensive teacher evaluation on a much larger scale with larger databases to assess if comprehensive teacher evaluations will allow schools to improve student achievement. Further research is also needed within more diverse schools to assess how comprehensive teacher evaluation works in other settings.

Implications and Recommendations for Policy and Practice

At the time of the study, policies and practices regarding teacher evaluation were changing within numerous school districts within the state in which this research was conducted; comprehensive teacher evaluation was being implemented in numerous districts. In most schools, it is typical for a teacher to have one announced and one unannounced annual evaluation. Typically, either the principal or assistant principal conducted these evaluations, and the evaluations generally focused on instruction only. However, these evaluations were generally deemed to be ineffective by teachers and administrators.

This study suggests that more efficient and effective teacher evaluations are imperative, and teacher evaluation needs to incorporate more elements than simply evaluation on the delivery of instruction and the teacher's content knowledge. Research literature indicates the need for programs with numerous elements, such as collaboration and planning time for teachers, professional development for the teachers based on teacher need, multiple evaluators, formal evaluations, ongoing communication among staff, ongoing analysis of a variety of assessments, and weekly team meetings. The rich, in-depth analyses from the interviews within this study suggest that classroom teachers support the use of multilayered elements of a comprehensive teacher evaluation program. This study also suggests that teachers and administrators support comprehensive teacher evaluation programs to guide teachers to become stronger and more effective educators and ultimately enhance their students' achievement on standardized tests.

There are many changes under way in the field of education, most notably the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and a new standardized test that

will be implemented to align with Common Core. These changes are designed to better prepare students for continued education after high school and a more diverse and global workplace. To accompany these changes, implementing comprehensive teacher evaluation throughout districts should also be considered.

Implementation of comprehensive teacher evaluation would require a number of steps in order for the evaluation process to be embraced by educators and to ultimately be successful. Funding for implementing comprehensive teacher evaluation would be imperative. Creating or adopting a comprehensive teacher evaluation program along with the professional development of teachers and administration would be a cost to districts. However, this is a necessary element to implement evaluation effectively and efficiently.

This study reaffirms the critical importance of educator buy-in as comprehensive teacher evaluation is adopted and implemented. Thus, districts need to share current research with teachers and administrators and allow them to take an active part in the creation of this new system. Lastly, time must be allocated to create or adopt a program as well as train the teachers and administrators. The field of education is in a constant change, but comprehensive teacher evaluation is something districts need to seriously consider to make teacher evaluation more productive and meaningful.

Final Reflections

As a researcher-practitioner, I learned that research over several years has indicated the need for a more comprehensive teacher evaluation program. The research literature, as well as the present study, suggest that in order to be successful, schools need to allow teachers time for collaboration and planning. Professional development needs to be based on teachers' need, and this need can be determined through effective teacher

evaluations. The evaluations need to be conducted by more than one person, which allows teachers to be evaluated through the perspectives of different people, but all of whom follow specific evaluation criteria. Teachers need to engage in continuous analyses of student work to inform instructional and learning strategies.

I learned through the collection of my quantitative data and the descriptive analysis that even with a comprehensive teacher evaluation program in place, teacher evaluation scores do not necessarily determine the outcomes of the SST benchmark scores. This gave me more insight into the need for ongoing communication and discussions among teachers and administrators on how to meet the various needs of students. This further supports the need for teachers to discuss and implement a variety of learning strategies within the classroom to meet students' diverse needs. My research also suggests that schools should include feedback from peers and parents. However, what data is to be collected, how that data will be collected, and how the data will be used are crucial considerations. If a school takes the time to create instruments to collect data, they should analyze the data, share the data outcomes, and share how those outcomes will be used to improve the educational environment.

I learned about teachers' and administrators' perspectives through my qualitative data collection. The main thing that stands out from these data was the importance of the environment for the teachers and administrators, teachers and students, and teachers and parents. Relationships are the foundation for a positive and successful school. I also learned that buy-in from the staff is an important element in any teacher evaluation program, but gaining teacher buy-in can be difficult and complicated. I heard throughout my in-depth interviews that teachers needed to be open to the values and expectations of

the school. This helped me see the importance of teachers, administrators, and families being able to embrace and contribute to the school's values.

My goals for this research project were to determine if there was a relationship between comprehensive teacher evaluation scores and student achievement. My research study was unable to identify a single definitive answer to this research question. What the study did show was that the relationship between teacher evaluation scores and student achievement is much more complex and diffuse than a single, straight-line equation. Making a determination of the type suggested by my first research question would require a much larger database (both quantitative and qualitative). This is still a question that resonates with me, and as a practitioner, these data suggest the importance of looking at each teacher and class on an individual basis and making determinations from that further analysis.

My second research question asked: How do teachers and administrators experience the comprehensive evaluation process and how do they use their experiences to inform instruction? This study added to research regarding how teachers and administrators within this school and comprehensive teacher evaluation program were able to use their experiences to inform instruction. The narrative profiles I constructed from the in-depth interviews provided a wealth of information on educators' experiences and perceptions of comprehensive teacher evaluation. The participants shared their experiences not only on the evaluation process, but also on the collaboration and support that helps inform their instruction. It further revealed the differences in perceptions depending upon the background experiences and how those experiences shaped their opinions and outlook.

Comprehensive teacher evaluation is not only expensive, but also takes an abundant amount of time to implement. Time is a precious commodity, especially for educators. It is important to point out that school personnel need to be careful when implementing such a time-consuming program, not to allow themselves to get lost in the process, allowing them to lose sight of the purpose of the program, which is to support teachers, help them to become better teachers, and ultimately improve student achievement. Both Bill and Linda pointed out the importance of not allowing a program to take away from time with the students, creating and managing relationships or getting caught up in the process.

I hope the results of this research motivate others in the field of education to take a deeper look at comprehensive teacher evaluation. I also hope the results of this research study support SEV in continuing to analyze, change, and improve what they have begun and use this information as a model for other schools with similar goals and aspirations for their students and their communities.

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APPENDIX A
TEACHER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM (TAP) TEACHER OBSERVATION
RUBRIC

Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) Teacher Observation Rubric			
INSTRUCTION			
Indicators↓	Exemplary (5)	Proficient (3)	Needs Improvement (1)
Standards And Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All learning objectives and state content standards are explicitly communicated. Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's major objective. Learning objectives are (a) consistently connected to what students have previously learned, (b) know from life experiences, and (c) integrated with other disciplines. Expectations for student performance are clear, demanding, and high. State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson. There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most learning objectives and state content standards are communicated. Sub-objectives are mostly aligned to the lesson's major objective. Learning objectives are connected to what students have previously learned. Expectations for student performance are clear. State standards are displayed. There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few learning objectives and state content standards are communicated. Sub-objectives are inconsistently aligned to the lesson's major objective. Learning objectives are rarely connected to what students have previously learned. Expectations for student performance are vague. State standards are displayed. There is evidence that few students demonstrate mastery of the objective.
Motivating Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher consistently organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students. The teacher consistently develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity and exploration are valued. The teacher regularly reinforces and rewards effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher sometimes organizes the content so that is personally meaningful and relevant to students. The teacher sometimes develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity and exploration are valued. The teacher sometimes reinforces and rewards effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher rarely organizes the content so that it is meaningful and relevant to students. The teacher rarely develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. The teacher rarely reinforces and rewards effort.
Presenting Instructional Content	<p>Presentation of content always includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visuals that establish: the purpose of the lesson, previews the organization of the lesson, and includes internal summaries of the lesson. Examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas. Modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his/her performance expectations. Concise communication. Logical sequencing and segmenting. All essential information. No irrelevant, confusing, or non-essential information. 	<p>Presentation of content most of the time includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visuals that establish: the purpose of the lesson, previews the organization of the lesson, and includes internal summaries of the lesson. Examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas. Modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his/her performance expectations. Concise communication. Logical sequencing and segmenting. All essential information. No irrelevant, confusing, or non-essential information. 	<p>Presentation of content rarely includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visuals that establish: the purpose of the lesson, previews the organization of the lesson, and includes internal summaries of the lesson. Examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas. Modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his/her performance expectations. Concise communication. Logical sequencing and segmenting. All essential information. No irrelevant, confusing, or non-essential information.

Lesson Structure And Pacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All lessons start promptly. • The lesson's structure is coherent, with a beginning, middle, end, and time for reflection, • Pacing is brisk, and provides many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates. • Routines for distributing materials are seamless. • No instructional time is lost during transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most lesson start promptly. • The lesson's structure is coherent, with a beginning, middle and end. • Pacing is appropriate, and sometimes provides opportunities for students who progress at different rates. • Routines for distributing materials are efficient. • Little instructional time is lost during transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons are not started promptly. • The lesson has a structure, but may be missing closure or introductory elements. • Pacing is appropriate for less than half of the students, and rarely provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates. • Routines for distributing materials are inefficient. • Considerable time is lost during transitions.
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Activities And Materials	<p>Activities and materials include all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the lesson objectives. • Are challenging. • Sustain students' attention. • Elicit a variety of thinking. • Provide time for reflection. • Are relevant to students' lives. • Provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction. • Induce student curiosity and suspense. • Provide students with choices. • Incorporate media and technology. • Incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher made materials, manipulative(s), and resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.). • In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction and self-monitoring. 	<p>Activities and materials include most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the lesson objectives. • Are challenging. • Sustain students' attention. • Elicit a variety of thinking. • Provide time for reflection. • Are relevant to students' lives. • Provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction. • Induce student curiosity and suspense. • Provide students with choices. • Incorporate media and technology. • Incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher made materials, manipulative(s), and resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.). 	<p>Activities and materials include few of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the lesson objectives. • Are challenging. • Sustain students' attention. • Elicit a variety of thinking. • Provide time for reflection. • Are relevant to students' lives. • Provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction. • Induce student curiosity and suspense. • Provide students with choices. • Incorporate media and technology. • Incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher made materials, manipulative(s), and resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.). • In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction and self-monitoring.
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Questioning	<p>Teacher questions are varied and high quality proving a balanced mix of question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and comprehension. • Application and analysis. • Creation and evaluation. • Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent. • High frequencies of questions are asked. • Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Questions regularly require active responses (e.g., whole class signaling, choral responses, written and shared responses, or group and individual answers). • Wait time (3-5 seconds) is consistently provided. • The teacher calls on volunteers and non-volunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and sex. • Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning. 	<p>Teacher questions are varied and high quality providing for some, but not all, question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and comprehension. • Application and analysis. • Creation and evaluation. • Questions are usually purposeful and coherent. • A moderate frequency of questions asked. • Questions are sometimes sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Questions sometimes require active responses (e.g., whole class signaling, choral responses, or group and individual answers). • Wait time is sometimes provided. • The teacher calls on volunteers and non-volunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and sex. 	<p>Teacher questions are inconsistent in quality and include few question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and comprehension. • Application and analysis. • Creation and evaluation. • Questions are random and lack coherence. • A low frequency of questions is asked. • Questions are rarely sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Questions rarely require active responses (e.g., whole class signaling, choral responses, or group and individual answers). • Wait time is inconsistently provided. • The teacher mostly calls on volunteers and high ability students.
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Academic Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral and written feedback is consistently academically focused, • Feedback is frequently given during guided practice and homework review. • The teacher circulates to prompt student thinking, assess each student's progress, and provide individual feedback. • Feedback from students is regular used to monitor and adjust instruction. • Teacher engages students in giving specific and high quality feedback to one another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral and written feedback is mostly academically focused, frequently, and mostly high quality. • Feedback is sometimes given during guided practice and homework review. • The teacher circulates during instructional activities to support engagement, and monitor student work. • Feedback from students is sometimes used to monitor and adjust instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality and timeliness of feedback is inconsistent. • Feedback is rarely given during guided practice and homework review. • The teacher circulates during instructional activities, but monitors mostly behavior. • Feedback from students is rarely used to monitor or adjust instruction.
Grouping Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructional grouping arrangement (either whole class, small groups, pairs, individual; hetero-or-homogenous ability) consistently maximizes student understanding and learning efficiency. • All students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations. • All students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work. • Instructional group composition is varied (e.g., race, gender, ability, and age) to best accomplish the goals of the lesson. • Instructional groups facilitate opportunities for students to set goals, reflect on, and evaluate their learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructional grouping arrangement (either whole class, small groups, pairs, individual; hetero-or-homogenous ability) adequately enhances student understanding and learning efficiency. • Most students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations. • Most students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work. • Instructional group composition is varied (e.g., race, gender, ability, and age) to most of the time; accomplish the goals of the lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructional grouping arrangement (either whole class, small groups, pairs, individual; hetero-or-homogenous ability) inhibits student understanding and learning efficiency. • Few students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations. • Few students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work. • Instructional group composition remains unchanged irrespective of the learning, and instructional goals of a lesson.
Teacher Content Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher displays extensive content knowledge she or he teachers. • Teacher regularly implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. • The teacher regularly highlights key concepts and ideas, and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas. • Limited content is taught in sufficient depth to allow for the development to understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher displays accurate content knowledge she or he teachers. • Teacher sometimes implements subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. • The teacher sometimes highlights key concepts and ideas, and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher develops underdeveloped content knowledge in several subject areas. • Teacher rarely implements subject specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. • Teacher does not understand key concepts and ideas in the discipline, and therefore, presents content in an unconnected way.
Teacher Knowledge of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher practices display understanding of each student's anticipated learning difficulties. • Teacher practices regularly incorporate student interests and cultural heritage. • Teacher regularly provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure children have the opportunity to master what is being taught. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher practices display understanding of some students' anticipated learning difficulties. • Teacher practices sometimes incorporate student interests and cultural heritage. • Teacher sometimes provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure children have the opportunity to master what is being taught. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher practices display minimal knowledge of students' anticipated learning difficulties. • Teacher practices rarely incorporate student interests and cultural heritage. • Teacher practices demonstrate little differentiation of instructional methods or content.

Thinking	<p>Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher consistently and thoroughly teaches all four types of thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical thinking where students analyze, compares and contrasts, and evaluates and explains information. Practical thinking where students use, applies, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios. Creative thinking where students create, designs, imagines and suppose. Research-based thinking where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems. <p>The teacher regularly provides opportunities where students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate a variety of ideas and alternatives. Analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints. Monitor their thinking to insure that they understand what they are learning, are attending to critical information, and are aware of the learning strategies that they are using and why. 	<p>Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher consistently and thoroughly teaches two types of thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical thinking where students analyze, compares and contrasts, and evaluates and explains information. Practical thinking where students use, applies, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios. Creative thinking where students create, designs, imagines and suppose. Research-based thinking where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems. <p>The teacher sometimes provides opportunities where students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate a variety of ideas and alternatives. Analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints. 	<p>Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher implements few learning experiences that thoroughly teach any type of thinking. The teacher provides few opportunities where students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate a variety of ideas and alternatives. Analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints. <p>NOTE: If the teacher regularly and thoroughly teaches one type of thinking, he or she shall receive a score of 2.</p>
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Problem Solving	<p>Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher implements activities that teach and reinforce 6 or more of the following problem solving types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abstraction Categorization Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solutions Predicting Outcomes Observing and Experimenting Improving Solutions Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information Generating Ideas Creating and Designing 	<p>Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher implements activities that teach and reinforce 4 or more of the following problem solving types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abstraction Categorization Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solutions Predicting Outcomes Observing and Experimenting Improving Solutions Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information Generating Ideas Creating and Designing 	<p>Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher implements less than two activities that teach the following problem solving types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abstraction Categorization Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solutions Predicting Outcomes Observing and Experimenting Improving Solutions Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information Generating Ideas Creating and Designing
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DESIGNING AND PLANNING INSTRUCTION			
Indicators↓	Exemplary (5)	Proficient (3)	Needs Improvement (1)
Instructional Plans	<p>Instructional plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurable and explicit goals aligned to state content standards. <p>Activities, materials, and assessments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are aligned to state standards. Are sequenced from basic to complex. Build on prior student knowledge, are relevant to students' lives, and integrate other disciplines. Provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson and unit closure. Evidence that plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of all learners. Evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs. 	<p>Instructional plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurable and explicit goals aligned to state content standards. <p>Activities, materials, and assessments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are aligned to state standards. Are sequenced from basic to complex. Build on prior student knowledge. Provide appropriate time for student work, and lesson and unit closure. Evidence that plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of most learners. Evidence that the plan provides some opportunities to accommodate individual student needs. 	<p>Instructional plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few goals aligned to state content standards. <p>Activities, materials, and assessments that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are rarely aligned to state standards. Are rarely logically sequenced Rarely build on prior student knowledge. Inconsistently provide time for student work and lesson and unit closure. Little evidence that plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of the learners. Little evidence that the plan provides some opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.

Student Work	Assignments require students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize, interpret, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than reproduce it. Draw conclusions, make generalizations, and produce arguments that are supported through extended writing. Connect what they are learning to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their daily lives both inside and outside of school. 	Assignments require students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret information rather than reproduce it. Draw conclusions and support them through writing. Connect what they are learning to prior learning and some life experiences. 	Assignments require students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly reproduce information. Rarely draw conclusions and support them through writing. Rarely connect what they are learning to prior learning or life experiences.
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Assessment	Assessment Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are aligned with state content standards. Have clear measurable criteria. Measure student performance in more than three ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test). Require extended written tasks. Are portfolio-based with clear illustrations of student progress toward state content standards. Include descriptions of how assessment results will be used to inform future instruction. 	Assessment Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are aligned with state content standards. Have measurement criteria. Measure student performance in more than two ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test). Require written tasks. Include performance checks throughout the school year. 	Assessment Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are rarely aligned with state content standards. Have ambiguous measurement criteria. Measure student performance in less than two ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test). Include performance checks, although the purpose of these checks is not clear.
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THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT			
Indicators↓	Exemplary (5)	Proficient (3)	Needs Improvement (1)
Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student. Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes. Teacher creates learning opportunities where all students can experience success. Students take initiative and follow through with their own work. Teacher optimizes instructional time, teaches more material, and demands better performance from every student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student. Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes. Teacher creates learning opportunities where most students can experience success. Students complete their work according to teacher expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher expectations are not sufficiently high for every student. Teacher creates an environment where mistakes and failure are not viewed as learning experiences. Students demonstrate little or no pride in the quality of their work.

Managing Student Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are consistently well behaved and on task. Teacher and students establish clear rules for learning and behavior. The teacher uses several techniques such as social approval, contingent activities, and consequences to maintain appropriate student behavior. The teacher overlooks inconsequential behavior. The teacher deals with students who have caused disruptions, rather than the entire class. The teacher attends to disruptions quickly and firmly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are mostly well behaved, on task, some disruptions may occur. Teacher establishes rules for learning and behavior. The teacher uses some techniques such as social approval, contingent activities, and consequences to maintain appropriate student behavior. The teacher overlooks some inconsequential behavior, but other times addresses it stopping the lesson. The teacher deals with students who have caused disruptions, yet sometimes he or she addresses the entire class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are not well behaved and are often off-task. Teacher establishes few rules for learning and behavior. The teacher uses few techniques to maintain appropriate student behavior. The teacher cannot distinguish between inconsequential behavior, and inappropriate behaviors. Disruptions frequently interrupt instruction.
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Environment	<p>The classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomes all members and guests. • Is organized. • Understandable to all students. • Supplies, equipment, and resources are easily and readily accessible. • Displays student work that frequently changes. • Is arranged to promote individual and group learning. 	<p>The classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomes most members and guests. • Is organized and understandable to most students. • Supplies, equipment, and resources are accessible. • Displays student work. • Is arranged to promote individual and group learning. 	<p>The classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is somewhat cold and uninviting. • Are not well-organized and understandable to students. • Supplies, equipment, and resources are difficult to access. • Does not display student work. • Is not arranged to promote group learning.
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Respectful Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-student interactions demonstrate caring and respect for one another. • Students exhibit caring and respect for one another. • Teacher seeks out, and is receptive to the interests and opinions of all students. • Positive relationships and interdependence characterize the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-student interactions are generally friendly, but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, or disregard for students' cultures. • Students exhibit respect for the teacher, and are generally polite to each other. • Teacher is sometimes receptive to the interests and opinions of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-student interactions are sometimes authoritarian, negative, or inappropriate. • Students exhibit disrespect for the teacher. • Student interaction is characterized by conflict, sarcasm, or put-downs. • Teacher is not receptive to interests and opinions of students.
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APPENDIX B
CAREER TEACHER SURVEY

Responsibility Survey Career Teachers	
Teacher Surveyed:	Teacher Role: Career Teacher
Surveyed By:	Date:
School:	
Entered By:	

Exemplary	--	Proficient	--	Unsatisfactory
5	4	3	2	1

Growing and Developing Professionally	Score
1. The career teacher is prompt, prepared, and participates in cluster meetings, bringing student artifacts (student work) when requested.	
2. The career teacher appropriately attempts to implement new learning in the classroom following presentation in cluster.	
3. The career teacher develops and works on a yearly plan for new learning based on analyses of school improvement plans and new goals, self-assessment, and input from the master/mentor teacher and principal observations.	
4. The career teacher selects specific activities, content knowledge, or pedagogical skills to enhance and improve his/her proficiency.	

Reflecting on Teaching	Score
5. The career teacher makes thoughtful and accurate assessments of his/her lessons' effectiveness as evidenced by the self-reflection after each observation.	
6. The career teacher offers specific actions to improve his/her teaching.	
7. The career teacher accepts responsibilities contributing to school improvement.	
8. The teacher utilizes student achievement data to address strengths and weaknesses of students and guide instructional decisions.	

Comments (Optional and not part of the score)

APPENDIX C
MENTOR TEACHER SURVEY

Responsibility Survey Mentor Teachers	
Teacher Surveyed:	Teacher Role: Mentor Teacher
Surveyed By:	Date:
School:	
Entered By:	

Exemplary	--	Proficient	--	Unsatisfactory
5	4	3	2	1

Staff Development	Score
1. The mentor teacher assists the design and delivery of professional development activities for his/her cluster group as needed.	
2. The mentor teacher provides follow up (e.g. observations, team teaching, and/or demonstration lessons) that supports/models how to use the ideas and activities learned in cluster.	
3. The mentor teacher is a resource, providing access to materials and research based instructional methods to his/her cluster group and/or mentee.	
4. The mentor teacher works closely with cluster team members to plan instruction and assessments during cluster development time.	

Instructional Supervision	Score
5. The mentor teacher advances the career teacher's knowledge of state and district content standards and the TAP teaching rubrics.	
6. The mentor teacher's feedback during coaching specifically defines the areas of reinforcement and refinement.	

Mentoring	Score
7. The mentor teacher provides opportunities/support for the career teacher/mentee through team planning and team teaching.	
8. The mentor teacher serves as a resource for curriculum, assessment, instructional, and classroom management strategies and resources.	
9. The mentor teacher guides and coaches career teachers/mentees in the development of their growth plans.	
10. The mentor teacher observes and coaches mentees and/or career teachers to improve their instruction and align it with the TAP Rubrics.	

Community Involvement	Score
11. The mentor teacher actively supports school activities and events.	

APPENDIX D
PARENT SURVEY

Parent Survey Teachers	
Teacher Surveyed:	Teacher Role:
Surveyed By:	Date:
School:	
Entered By:	

Agree Very Much	Agree	Occasionally	Disagree	Disagree Very Much	N/O
5	4	3	2	1	No Opinion

	Score
1. My child is held to appropriate academic expectations.	
2. My child has opportunities for hands-on learning.	
3. My child's teacher is prepared for parent meetings.	
4. My child is listened to and treated with respect.	
5. The teacher sparks my child's interest and fosters leadership through increased responsibilities.	
6. The teacher communicates to my child and me my child's progress using PowerSchool and ILPs.	
7. My child's teacher assigns homework that is appropriate.	

8. My child's teacher is ready and willing to listen during the ILP conference.	
9. My child is disciplined consistently and fairly.	
10. My child's teacher has encouraged me to visit the classroom and volunteer.	
11. My child is exposed to field trips, guest speakers, and in school presentations.	
12. My child gets help with problem solving from his/her teachers.	
13. My child's teacher models the school values.	

Parent's Name (Optional):

Comments (Optional):

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Category	Part I: Focused Life History – Placing Participants’ Experience in Context	Part II: Details of Experience – Concrete Details of Participants’ Experience with comprehensive teacher evaluation(s)	Part III: Reflections on Meaning – Intellectual and Emotional Connections to comprehensive teacher evaluation(s)
Educators	<p>Please tell us about your background as an educator and how you came to SEV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where born and grew up? • Parents’ education and professional background? • Important people/teachings in your life? • Number of siblings and their educational background? • Number of children/grandchildren? • Where do they go to school? Why? • Personal schooling experiences? • How you came to be a teacher? • How many years teaching? • How you came to teach at SEV? • How many years teaching at SEV? • How many years teaching at a school with a comprehensive teacher evaluation program? • How many years of teaching in total? • Other experiences that were/are important to you in your present position? 	<p>Please tell us about how the comprehensive teacher evaluation program effects you in your classroom (and/or school).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade levels? • Number of students taught? • Student demographics? • Assessment of students’ academics throughout the school year? • How does student assessment data influence what you do in the classroom? • Does the teacher evaluation data influence how you teach? If so, how? Can you provide a specific example? • Describe the comprehensive teacher evaluation program’s key elements? • Describe a typical school day. • Describe the kinds of teaching strategies and materials used. • How do the key elements of the teacher evaluation program effect the classroom? • Describe the program’s unique features. • Other comments about how the comprehensive teacher evaluation program is/are implemented? 	<p>Given what you have said about the comprehensive teacher evaluation program, what does it mean to you as an educator?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your aspirations for SEV students? • Your aspirations as a teacher/administrator? • What is the relationship, if any, between the evaluation process and student learning? • What are the benefits of the program? What are the negatives of the program? • Has the evaluation process had an impact on you as a teacher? If so, what are they? • What factors have been most important in the program’s success? • What factors have been the most negative? • What have been the greatest challenges or barriers? • What would you want other educators to know about this program? • Where do you see your teaching going in the future?

Participant Category	Part I: Focused Life History – Placing Participants’ Experience in Context	Part II: Details of Experience – Concrete Details of Participants’ Experience with comprehensive teacher evaluation(s)	Part III: Reflections on Meaning – Intellectual and Emotional Connections to comprehensive teacher evaluation(s)
Principal	<p>Please tell us about your background as an educator and leader and how you came to SEV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where born and grew up? • Parents’ education and professional background? • Important people/teachings in your life? • Number of siblings and their educational background? • Number of children/grandchildren? • Where do they go to school? Why? • Personal schooling experiences? • How you came to be an educational leader? 	<p>Please tell us about how the comprehensive teacher evaluation program effects you in your position as the Principal of SEV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade levels at the school? • Number of students taught? • Student demographics? • Assessment of students’ academics throughout the school year? • How does the student assessment data influence what you do as the leadership of SEV? • How does the teacher evaluation data influence what you do as leadership of SEV? 	<p>Given what you have said about the comprehensive teacher evaluation program, what does it mean to you as an educational leader at SEV?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your aspirations for SEV students? • Your aspirations as the Principal of SEV? • How does the program support student learning? • What other benefits has the program had? • What are the weaknesses within the program in regards to student learning?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many years in education? • How you came to be the Principal of SEV? • How many years as the Principal of SEV? • How many years leading a school with a comprehensive teacher evaluation program? • How many years of educational leadership in total? • Other experiences that were/are important to you in your present position? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the comprehensive teacher evaluation program’s key elements? • How do the key elements of the teacher evaluation program effect the school? • Describe the program’s unique features? • Other comments about how the comprehensive teacher evaluation program is/are implemented? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other weaknesses does the program have overall? • What have been the greatest rewards to you as an educational leader? • What factors have been most important in the program’s success? • What have been the greatest challenges or barriers? • What would you want other educational leadership to know about this program? • Where do you see your leadership going in the future? • What is most “promising” to you about SEV’s comprehensive teacher evaluation program?
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might the program be improved? • Other comments/questions/ideas?

APPENDIX F
QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION SHEET

Year	Average Instruction Score	Average Environment Score	Peer Survey Scores	Parent Survey Scores	Students' Standardized Test Scores			
					Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Falls Far Below
2010-11								
2011-12								

APPENDIX G

BILL'S PARENT SURVEY TABLE, 2011-12

Participant Pseudonym	Bill						
	1	2	3	4	5	No Response	Rating Average
My child is held to appropriate academic expectations.	0.00%	7.1%(1)	0.00%	21.4%(3)	71.4%(10)	0.00%	4.57
My child has opportunities for hands-on learning.	14.3%(2)	0.00%	0.00%	21.4%(3)	64.3%(9)	0.00%	4.21
My child's teacher is prepared for parent meetings.	0.00%	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	78.6%(11)	0.00%	4.57
My child is listened to and treated with respect.	7.1%(1)	0.00%	0.00%	14.3%(2)	78.6%(11)	0.00%	4.57
The teacher sparks my child's interest and fosters leadership through increased responsibilities.	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.00%	21.4%(3)	64.3%(9)	0.00%	4.29
The teacher communicates to my child and me my child's progress using the School Management System and Individual Learning Plans (ILP).	0.00%	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	14.3%(2)	71.4%(10)	0.00%	4.50
My child's teacher assigns homework that is appropriate.	0.00%	14.3%(2)	0.00%	7.1%(1)	78.6%(11)	0.00%	4.50
My child's teacher is ready and willing to listen during the ILP conference.	7.1%(1)	0.00%	0.00%	14.3%(2)	71.4%(10)	7.1%(1)	4.54
My child is disciplined consistently and fairly.	7.7%(1)	0.00%	0.00%	15.4%(2)	53.8%(7)	23.1%(3)	4.40
My child's teacher has encouraged me to visit the classroom and volunteer.	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	14.3%(2)	7.1%(1)	42.9%(6)	21.4%(3)	3.91
My child is exposed to field trips, guest speakers, and in school presentations.	0.00%	7.1%(1)	0.00%	14.3%(2)	64.3%(9)	14.3%(2)	4.58
My child gets help with problem solving from his/her teacher.	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.00%	21.4%(3)	57.1%(8)	7.1%(1)	4.23
My child's teacher models the school values.	7.7%(1)	7.7%(1)	0.00%	0.00%	84.6%(11)	0.00%	4.46
Number of parent responses	14 Parents responded to the survey						4.41
Bill	He is a wonderful teacher. I am glad my daughter has him!						
	I have been not only disappointed but horrified by Bill's attitude and teaching methods/style. He has put minimal effort into teaching, is never available to help students, speaks to the students in a disrespectful, demeaning manner and is rude and dismissive to parents voicing concerns. He is in direct opposition to the SEV values. I sincerely hope that the students who had him this year for Pre-Algebra will have the chance to work with a different teacher next year. I hope that the Administration will take a close look at what is happening in his classroom and the effect his cruel sense of humor and minimal teaching efforts are having on his students.						
	Bill has been the math teacher for both of my older children and I feel he has prepared them well for middle school.						
	Teaches math to the text and through worksheets which does not live up to the portion of the mission "solving real-life problems in a cooperative manner."						

APPENDIX H

KATHERINE'S PARENT SURVEY TABLE, 2011-12

Participant Pseudonym	Katherine						No Response	Rating Average
	1	2	3	4	5			
My child is held to appropriate academic expectations.	0.00%	0.00%	7.1%(1)	21.4%(3)	71.4%(10)	0.00%	4.64	
My child has opportunities for hands-on learning.	0.00%	0.00%	7.1%(1)	21.4%(3)	71.4%(10)	0.00%	4.64	
My child's teacher is prepared for parent meetings.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.1%(1)	92.9%(13)	0.00%	4.93	
My child is listened to and treated with respect.	0.00%	7.1%(1)	0.00%	0.00%	92.9%(13)	0.00%	4.79	
The teacher sparks my child's interest and fosters leadership through increased responsibilities.	0.00%	7.1%(1)	0.00%	21.4%(3)	71.4%(10)	0.00%	4.57	
The teacher communicates to my child and me my child's progress using the School Management System and Individual Learning Plans (ILP).	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.3%(2)	85.7%(12)	0.00%	4.86	
My child's teacher assigns homework that is appropriate.	0.00%	7.1%(1)	0.00%	14.3%(2)	78.6%(11)	0.00%	4.64	
My child's teacher is ready and willing to listen during the ILP conference.	0.00%	0.00%	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	85.7%(12)	0.00%	4.79	
My child is disciplined consistently and fairly.	7.1%(1)	0.00%	0.00%	7.1%(1)	64.3%(9)	21.4%(3)	4.55	
My child's teacher has encouraged me to visit the classroom and volunteer.	7.1%(1)	0.00%	7.1%(1)	14.3%(2)	50%(7)	21.4%(3)	4.27	
My child is exposed to field trips, guest speakers, and in school presentations.	0.00%	0.00%	7.1%(1)	14.3%(2)	57.1%(8)	21.4%(3)	4.64	
My child gets help with problem solving from his/her teacher.	7.7%(1)	0.00%	0.00%	7.7%(1)	84.6%(11)	0.00%	4.62	
My child's teacher models the school values.	0.00%	7.1%(1)	0.00%	0.00%	92.9%(13)	0.00%	4.79	
Number of parent responses	14							4.67
Parent Comments								
Katherine	My son has had Katherine for 2 years now and she is one of his favorite teachers. Not only has he learned a lot in her classes, she is always very helpful during Ips to my questions as a parent as well.							
	Great teacher!							
	It has been a comfort having a teacher like Katherine this year.							
	Great teacher!							
	Not enough homework provided, this is not a reflection of the teacher more so the school policy. Math homework should be more than 2 times per week in 6th grade. Repetition of skills learned is helpful.							
	My student has gone from failing math at another school to doing great at SEV. Katherine is a wonderful teacher.							

APPENDIX I

EMMA'S PARENT SURVEY TABLE, 2011-12

Participant Pseudonym	Emma					No Response	Rating Average
	1	2	3	4	5		
My child is held to appropriate academic expectations.	0.00%	0.00%	10%(1)	20%(2)	70%(7)	0.00%	4.6
My child has opportunities for hands-on learning.	0.00%	0.00%	40%(4)	60%(6)	0.00%	0.00%	4.6
My child's teacher is prepared for parent meetings.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20%(2)	80%(8)	0.00%	4.8
My child is listened to and treated with respect.	0.00%	0.00%	10%(1)	10%(1)	80%(8)	0.00%	4.7
The teacher sparks my child's interest and fosters leadership through increased responsibilities.	0.00%	0.00%	20%(2)	20%(2)	60%(6)	0.00%	4.4
The teacher communicates to my child and me my child's progress using the School Management System and Individual Learning Plans (ILP).	0.00%	10%(1)	0.00%	20%(2)	70%(7)	0.00%	4.5
My child's teacher assigns homework that is appropriate.	0.00%	20%(2)	10%(1)	10%(1)	60%(6)	0.00%	4.1
My child's teacher is ready and willing to listen during the ILP conference.	0.00%	0.00%	10%(1)	20%(2)	70%(7)	0.00%	4.6
My child is disciplined consistently and fairly.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10%(1)	80%(8)	10%(1)	4.89
My child's teacher has encouraged me to visit the classroom and volunteer.	10%(1)	0.00%	10%(1)	0.00%	70%(7)	10%(1)	4.33
My child is exposed to field trips, guest speakers, and in school presentations.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20%(2)	50%(5)	30%(3)	4.71
My child gets help with problem solving from his/her teacher.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	30%(3)	70%(7)	0.00%	4.7
My child's teacher models the school values.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20%(2)	80%(8)	0.00%	4.8
Number of parent responses	10						4.59
Parent Comments							
Emma	Homework sometimes seems meaningless. My child will spend 10 minutes on a spelling word search or cross word puzzle.						
	I feel that there should be more of a challenge in honors as well as more homework. SEV needs to create more of a transition to middle school as far as homework and expectations. Emma is a great teacher.						
	Emma is a very engaging teacher who encourages my child to have a good work ethic and do her best.						

APPENDIX J

SUMMARY FOR PARENT SURVEY RESULTS, 2011-12

All teachers received a limited number of responses from parent surveys for 2011-12. SEV was unable to access any parent survey results for the 2010-11 school year and the reasons for that are unclear. There was such a low return rate for the parent surveys that it is not reasonable to make any definitive conclusions based on the responses received. The data that were available suggest that the parents believe the teachers to be above average. It is important to point out that parents who did fill out the surveys were either ecstatic with their experiences with the teachers or had a concern they wanted to share. As a practitioner I would go over parent survey results with all teachers. I would ask questions to encourage teachers to recognize his/her area of strength and specific things he/she does to support his/her student/family in this area. I would further encourage the teacher to look at his/her lowest scores and have a conversation to determine what he/she thinks may have contributed to that score and how that information might inform future objectives and goals. Based on the low turn out rate, I would further encourage teachers to realize that the responses were based on a small number of parents and therefore would need to limit the amount of weight they place on the responses.

APPENDIX K

INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL PAGE



To: Teresa Mccarty
ED 144E

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 10/03/2012

Committee Action: **Exemption Granted**

IRB Action Date: 10/03/2012

IRB Protocol #: 1209008281

Study Title: Assessing teachers: A mixed method case study of comprehensive teacher evaluation

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(1) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.