

Abstract

FULLER, CHARLES AVERY. Rural Principals and the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process: How has the Transition from the TPAI-R to the New Evaluation Process Changed Principals' Evaluative Practices? (Under the direction of Dr. Lance Fusarelli).

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) mandated the use of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process (Evaluation Process) for use in all public school systems in the state to conduct teacher observations and evaluations. The Evaluation Process replaced the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument – Revised (TPAI-R) as the instrument used to conduct observations and evaluations of the teachers in the state. The change from the use of the TPAI-R to the Evaluation Process represented a dramatic shift in not only the instrument used to evaluate teachers but also in the basic philosophy that guides the expectations for teacher performance. The purpose of this study was to ascertain how principals' observational and/or evaluative practices have changed, if at all, under the process as compared to how they performed this task under the TPAI-R. As an additional data point, teachers' thoughts, feelings and opinions on principals' evaluative practices as a result of this transition were included in the study.

In this study three school level administrators in a rural county in North Carolina were interviewed to determine how their observational practices have changed as a result of the transition to the Evaluation Process. In addition, data was obtained from the interview of a focus group of teachers. In an examination of the data three themes emerged from the principal data and one overriding theme from the teacher focus group in regards to observational practices. The three themes from the principal data were the amount of time needed to complete an observation or evaluation, the Evaluation Process effects how teachers

are expected to teach, and the use of the Evaluation Process and its effect of principals' evaluative practices.

The examination of the teacher focus group data supports the three themes identified from the principal data. The overriding theme from the teacher focus group data was the degree to which varying administrators differ in their interpretation of the teacher's performance when viewing the same or similar activities, also known as inter-rater agreement.

In the case of the three rural principals interviewed for this study, the study shows that their observational practices have changed. In comparison to the TPAI-R, all of the principals felt that the Evaluation Process helped them to be able to help teachers improve their instructional practices.

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Rural Principals and the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process: How has the Transition from the TPAI-R to the New Evaluation Process Changed Principals' Evaluative Practices?

by
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Dedication

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the educators at North Carolina State University who committed to bringing an educational doctorate program off-campus to make it accessible to students like myself who otherwise may not have ever had the opportunity to further their education to this level. Of particular note, I would like to thank Dr. Lance Fusarelli who was not only my committee chair but provided support and feedback throughout this process that kept me moving forward toward completion of this goal.

I would also like to thank my wonderful family. Each and every one of you has been invaluable to me in terms of keeping me focused and believing in my ability to reach this goal. Although all of you are special to me, I would like to name a few in particular. Thank you to my Mom and Dad, Gwen Fuller and Charles H. Fuller, for instilling in me the importance of getting a good education. Thank you to my children, daughter Eleanor Bradley and her husband Alex and my son Jared Fuller. I continue to draw inspiration from you in my life as you have continued to learn and grow into the caring and hard-working adults that I admire. Your love and support helped keep me going. You are amazing and I am so very proud of you.

Most importantly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and love to my wife, Veronica Fuller. You supported me unconditionally through all the long nights of studying, researching, and writing. Your belief in me never wavered and your willingness to support not just me but our family through the frustrations and triumphs can never be stressed enough. You are my heart and my inspiration.

Biography

I have been an educator for over 30 years, the first 16 of those as a science teacher at Louisburg High School and Franklinton High School. After transitioning into administration, I served as an assistant principal for over three years and then as the principal of Franklinton High School in Franklin County North Carolina for almost 10 years. After transitioning to the central office I held the position of Director of Secondary Education in Franklin County, working directly with all of the middle and high schools, primarily in the area of curriculum and instruction but in various other capacities as well. In 2015 I had the good fortune of becoming the principal of Envision Science Academy, a K-8 charter school located in Wake Forest North Carolina. It is a great school and a great place to be an educator. I am forever grateful to the Board of Directors for believing in me and giving me the opportunity to be a part of the Envision Family. I received my Bachelor of Science from Appalachian State University, majoring in health and physical education with a minor in physics. I then earned a Master of School Administration degree from UNC-Greensboro. This dissertation is the final requirement toward completion of the degree of Educational Doctorate in the area of Administration and Supervision from North Carolina State University. I am blessed to be married to Veronica Fuller, my wife of over 30 years, and we are both in turn blessed to have in our lives our daughter Eleanor Bradley and her husband Alex and our son Jared Fuller.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background of the Study	2
Problem Statement	3
Purpose of the Study	10
Overview of Methodological Approach	11
Conceptual Framework	11
Significance of the Study	14
Chapter Summary	15
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	17
The Purpose of Teacher Evaluation	21
Principal's Perspectives on Teacher Evaluation Systems	25
The Historical Context of Teacher Evaluation Instruments	29
Chapter 3: Methodology, Justification for Qualitative Methods	44
Case Study Approach	48
Research Questions	50
Recruitment of Participants and Sample Selection	51
Data Collection	53
Data Analysis	57
Ethical Issues	58
Limitations of the Study	59
Researcher Subjectivity Statement	60
Chapter Summary	63

Chapter 4: Findings.....	64
Research Process.....	64
An Examination of the Two Instruments.....	67
Participant Background Information.....	72
Emergent Themes	73
Time	75
The Effect on Teaching.....	79
The Effect on Principal’s Practices.....	83
Inter-rater Agreement.....	86
Researcher’s Experiences	89
Chapter Summary	91
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	93
Purpose of the Study.....	93
Summary of the Findings.....	94
Discussion of Study’s Findings	102
Implications of the Study for Policy and Practice	106
Recommendations for Further Research.....	110
Limitations of the Study.....	111
Conclusions.....	112
Summary	114
References.....	116
Appendices.....	122
Appendix A.....	123

Appendix B126
Appendix C129
Appendix D.....133

List of Figures

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.113

Literature Review

Figure 2.120

Chapter 1

Introduction

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) mandated the use of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process (Evaluation Process) for use in all public school systems in the state to conduct teacher observations and evaluations. This process was developed by McRel in collaboration with the N.C. State Board of Education and the N.C. Professional Teaching Standards Commission. In the McRel document, North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process, the SBE refers to this observational/evaluative tool as a process instead of an instrument because it contains various components that the principal will use and in which “the teacher will actively participate through the use of self-assessment, reflection, presentation of artifacts, and classroom demonstration(s)” (2009, p. 1). The primary observational/evaluative tool is the component of the process referred to as the rubric. For the purposes of this study the term instrument will be used to describe the observational/evaluative tool, whereas the term process will be used when referring to the entire document.

The action of mandating the use of the Evaluation Process eliminated the use of the previous evaluation tool called the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument – Revised (TPAI-R) which had been in use in its revised form since 1997. This action was the culmination of a process that had begun several years earlier. According to the evaluation manual developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) in cooperation with McRel, in 2006-2007 the State Board of Education adopted 21st Century Standards for the evaluation of teachers. In 2008, the SBE approved the policy adopting the Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers and the Teacher Evaluation Process which

provided the reasoning as well as the actual instrument that would be used to evaluate teachers (McRel, 2009).

The change from the use of the TPAI-R to the Evaluation Process represented a dramatic shift in not only the instrument used to evaluate teachers but also in the basic philosophy that guides the expectations for teacher performance. This change in philosophy by the SBE and the corresponding change in the instrument used to evaluate teachers was mandated in a top down form to the personnel actually tasked with observing and evaluating teachers – the principals and assistant principals that work in the schools. For the purpose of this research from this point forward the term principal(s) will be inclusive of assistant principals and/or any designee that utilizes the Evaluation Process at the school level.

Background of the Study

The evaluation of teachers and the instruments used by principals and others to conduct them is a topic of discussion that is a common topic in the educational literature. Teacher evaluation has been and continues to be used for a variety of purposes from improving teacher practices to determining if the teacher is doing an effective job of increasing student achievement (Halverson & Clifford, 2006). Part of the reason why teacher evaluation continues to be discussed is the fact that teaching can be a complicated process. As Davey (1991) stated, teaching “involves a complex set of knowledge, abilities, and personal attributes in dynamic interplay” (p. 121).

As a result of the complexity of the teaching profession, the evaluation of teachers can likewise be a complicated and sometimes frustrating process. Principals are the ones who often bear the responsibility of teacher evaluation. Classroom observations are one of the most commonly used methods to accomplish the task of evaluation. Markley (2004)

stated that, “Because there is no simple way to evaluate teachers, multiple methods have evolved. The most common method is classroom evaluation. One study found that 99.8% of public schools use principals’ classroom observations as the primary source of data for teacher evaluation” (p. 4). With this in mind, the change by North Carolina from the use of the TPAI-R to the dramatically different North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process is no small matter to the principals who are engaged in teacher evaluation.

Problem Statement

The problem this study addressed was to examine the change from the use of the TPAI-R by principals in a rural North Carolina county to the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process and determine how it affected their classroom observation/evaluation practices, if at all. This study examined, through principal and teacher interviews, how or if the use of the process, and specifically the observational/evaluative instrument contained in the process, affected the observational and evaluative practices of the principals who are tasked with implementing this change with the necessary degree of fidelity. The study explored principals’ and teachers’ thoughts, feelings, and insights about the Evaluation Process and how the use of the instrument associated with the process affected the evaluators’ observational practices as compared to how they performed this task under the previously used TPAI-R instrument.

The use of the TPAI-R in North Carolina has been well documented in the literature; however, the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process was fully implemented by the SBE in the 2010-2011 school year, thereby creating a gap in the literature involving the implementation of the instrument, especially as compared to the TPAI-R. Principals’

insights on this change are crucial to developing a body of research on this process and the observational/evaluative tool contained therein.

It is fitting that the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process is titled a process and not an instrument, especially when compared to the previous instrument, the TPAI-R. The TPAI-R was a four-page document that listed eight major functions on which teachers were to be evaluated. Each function was rated once using a scale that consisted of four possible ratings for the evaluator to choose from. They were above standard, at standard, below standard, and unsatisfactory (TPAI-R, 2001). The instrument is an eleven-page document and has five standards that a principal would look for during teacher observations in lieu of the eight major functions. In addition, as part of their summary evaluation teachers are provided a rating on a sixth standard through student growth data collected by NCDPI. While this standard is a significant component of a teacher's evaluation under this process, it is not part of the principal's responsibilities as an observer/evaluator. As a result, teachers may have very strong thoughts, feelings, and opinions on this standard, but since it does not directly affect the task of the principals their thoughts, feelings, and opinions on this standard may or may not be quite as strong.

Each of the five standards that principals are responsible for rating is sub-divided into specific items called elements. Each element contains specific skills under the five areas of what is referred to as the evaluation rubric. The instrument does not refer to these as ratings until the summary evaluation, but they can be used each time an observation is conducted with the process. When the Evaluation Process was initially unveiled these ratings were to be used in each observation. Subsequent procedural adjustments have given principals more flexibility to look for specific items during an observation instead of all of them. However, if

a principal examines each element once during an observation, he/she will have “rated” the teacher for a total of 25 items and 147 specific skills (McRel, 2009). This represents a staggering increase over the TPAI-R and a big increase in the complexity of the actual act of using the evaluation instrument.

To understand the task faced by the principals it is necessary to first understand just how drastic the difference is between the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process. The TPAI-R used a rating scale consisting of four categories: unsatisfactory, below standard, standard, and above standard (TPAI-R, 2001). This scale was used to rate or evaluate the teacher’s performance in eight areas called major functions. As found in the TPAI-R evaluation instrument, the eight major functions, in order are:

1. Management of Instructional Time
2. Management of Student Behavior
3. Instructional Presentation
4. Instructional Monitoring
5. Instructional Feedback
6. Facilitating Instruction
7. Communicating within the Educational Environment
8. Performing Non-Instructional Duties

Each of these major functions contained a list of specific items that the evaluator looked for during the observation to help guide them in their observation of the teacher, although only one rating was provided for the function as a whole (TPAI-R, 2001).

Holdzkom (1991, p. 783) stated in regards to the development of the TPAI, the precursor instrument to the TPAI-R:

The DPI asked researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to examine the research literature to see which teaching skills, if any, seemed to be especially important to consider in evaluations. The research team established several criteria that a skill would have to meet before it could be included on the final list of recommendations:

1. The skill should be observable.
2. The skill should be alterable.
3. The skill should have a demonstrated effect on student achievement, time on task, or both.
4. The skill should have been validated by empirical research studies conducted in various grades and subjects.

Using these criteria, the original version of the TPAI was adopted for use in North Carolina. According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction website (NCDPI, 2014, para 2),

Since 1985, North Carolina's public schools have utilized a statewide program for performance evaluation based on the principles of effective teaching. Pursuant to the passage of the Excellent Schools Act in 1997, the State Board of Education adopted standards for the evaluation of teachers, school administrators, central office staff, and superintendents. In 2000, revised or developed evaluation instruments were implemented to meet the legislative requirements emphasizing improving student achievement, employee skills, and employee knowledge. In 2006-07 the State Board of Education adopted 21st Century standards for the evaluation of teachers and school administrators.

The TPAI-R, the revised instrument adopted in 2000, remained the instrument used to observe and evaluate North Carolina's teachers until 2010. In that year the SBE, after two years of voluntary pilot participation by some school systems, fully mandated the implementation of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process. In McRel's evaluation manual (2009) it states:

The evaluation instruments are based on the Framework for 21st Century Learning and the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. The instruments are designed to promote effective leadership, quality teaching, and student learning while enhancing professional practice and leading to improved instruction. All of the instruments and processes are designed to encourage professional growth, to be flexible and fair to the persons being evaluated, and to serve as the foundation of the establishment of professional goals and identification of professional development needs.

The intended purpose of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process is to assess the teacher's performance in relation to the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and to design a plan for professional growth. The principal or a designee (hereinafter "principal") will conduct the evaluation process in which the teacher will actively participate through the use of self-assessment, reflection, presentation of artifacts, and classroom demonstration(s). (p. 1)

The North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process focuses more intently on what the teacher is actually doing in the classroom, school, and community. This instrument was developed based on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. These standards

are derived from “a new vision of teaching” emphasizing 21st Century Skills (2009, p. 5).

The evaluation manual (2009, p. 5) contains the following definition of this new vision:

The different demands on 21st century education dictate new roles for teachers in their classrooms and schools. The following defines what teachers need to know and do to teach students in the 21st century:

- Leadership among the staff and with the administration is shared in order to bring consensus and common, shared ownership of the vision and purpose of work of the school. Teachers are valued for the contributions they make to their classroom and the school.
- Teachers make the content they teach engaging, relevant, and meaningful to students’ lives.
- Teachers can no longer cover material; they, along with their students, uncover solutions. They teach existing core content that is revised to include skills like critical thinking, problem solving, and information and communications technology (ICT) literacy.
- In their classrooms, teachers facilitate instruction encouraging all students to use 21st century skills so they discover how to learn, innovate, collaborate, and communicate their ideas.
- The 21st century content (global awareness, civic literacy, financial literacy, and health awareness) is included in the core content areas.
- Subjects and related projects are integrated among disciplines and involve relationships with the home and community.

- Teachers are reflective about their practice and include assessments that are authentic and structured and demonstrate student understanding.
- Teachers demonstrate the value of lifelong learning and encourage their students to learn and grow.

This new vision of teaching and consequently new definition of what teachers are supposed to be doing in their classroom has to be interpreted by the principals when conducting their observations and evaluations of classroom teachers. Therefore, the perspectives of the principals are integral to the successful implementation of the process.

The rubric incorporated in the Evaluation Process is utilized in each observation; however, it is not termed as ratings until the summary. The five ratings contained in the rubric are developing, proficient, accomplished, distinguished, and not demonstrated (2009, p. 20). The basic premise of the observation rubric is that a teacher is not considered proficient unless he/she has mastered all of the skills for developing as well as all of the skills for proficient. Likewise, to be distinguished a teacher would have to show mastery of all of the skills under developing, proficient, accomplished, and distinguished.

When using this instrument, the principal examines the teacher in light of each skill for an element. Should a teacher demonstrate mastery of all skills save one, the rating of the teacher in that element would be the highest rating (developing, proficient, etc.) that the teacher had mastered all of the skills, beginning with developing and moving across the scale. For example, should a teacher show mastery in all skills for an element except for one skill under the proficient category, then the rating of the teacher would be developing, since it is the rating that mastery of all skills was demonstrated before getting to the rating in which

a deficiency was noted. Should the only deficiency occur under the distinguished category, then the teacher's rating would be accomplished.

Purpose of the Study

The adoption of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process by the SBE represents a drastic shift in how teachers' performance in the classroom is evaluated. The purpose of this study was to ascertain how principals' observational and/or evaluative practices have changed, if at all, under the process as compared to how they performed this task under the TPAI-R. As an additional data point, teachers' thoughts, feelings and opinions on principals' evaluative practices as a result of this transition were included in the study.

The intent of the research questions used in this study was to ascertain how principals in a rural county in North Carolina have altered their observational and evaluative practices through the use of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process. This was examined in reference to their observational and evaluative practices while using the TPAI-R. This study explored the following research questions:

1. What experiences did principals have when they implemented the new rubric?
2. How do principals perceive the value of the new process?
3. How has the new Evaluation Instrument affected principals' perceptions of what it means for a teacher to be effective?
4. How has the implementation of the Evaluation Process changed the principals' observational practices, i.e., what they look for during an observation as compared to what was looked for when using the TPAI-R?

Overview of Methodological Approach

This qualitative case study focused on the observational practices of principals as they completed the task of observing and evaluating teachers. Creswell (1994) defines a case study as one “in which the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon (the case) bounded by time and activity (a program, event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time” (p. 12). The case in this study was the Evaluation Process as it was used by the principals in a rural county. The qualitative nature of the study is found in the thoughts, feelings, and insights of the principals as the study explored their use of the instrument and how their observational practices have changed.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework selected for this study was a model developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This framework was selected as the model because it is a comprehensive framework of teacher evaluation that takes into account the purposes of teacher evaluation as well as the role of those who are responsible for conducting teacher evaluations. In a paper prepared by Santiago and Benavides and presented in an OECD workshop in December 2009 it was stated that:

Teacher evaluation issues cannot be studied in isolation. Societal, school system, and school-level factors all influence the design of teacher evaluation policies. These factors influence the design of approaches to teacher evaluation in terms of the needs for new policy initiatives, the factors that constrain policy opportunities, and the factors that influence policy implementation, impact and cost. Without an adequate understanding of the range of factors involved, and the ways they influence the

impact of teacher evaluation policies, there is a risk of developing ineffective approaches to teacher evaluation. (p. 4)

The framework (Figure 1) was adapted for the purposes of this study since the original framework as presented by Santiago and Benavides and the OECD is inclusive of teacher evaluation on a national scope, which is broader than the scope of this study. Slight changes were made in the model to reflect the difference in the intended scope of the model and the scope to which it is being applied. I did not choose the Framework for 21st Century Learning as presented in the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process manual because the framework is very teacher-centered. While this makes it very useful for the teacher and the principal in terms of knowing the expectations of the teacher as related to their performance, it does not present a comprehensive view of teacher evaluation as a whole and how the role of the principal relates back to the purposes of teacher evaluation.

The framework is a very comprehensive look at teacher evaluation and the instruments that are used for the purpose. The framework shows the relationship between the evaluators (in North Carolina, the principals), the criteria and standards used in evaluations, teaching performance to improve outcomes, the purposes of evaluation, and the role of the NCDPI and the SBE. The framework lists various components of evaluation instruments and the mechanisms to use feedback. The framework is very useful in that it provides a very thorough view of teacher evaluation. The framework is shown in Figure 1, Teacher Evaluation below.

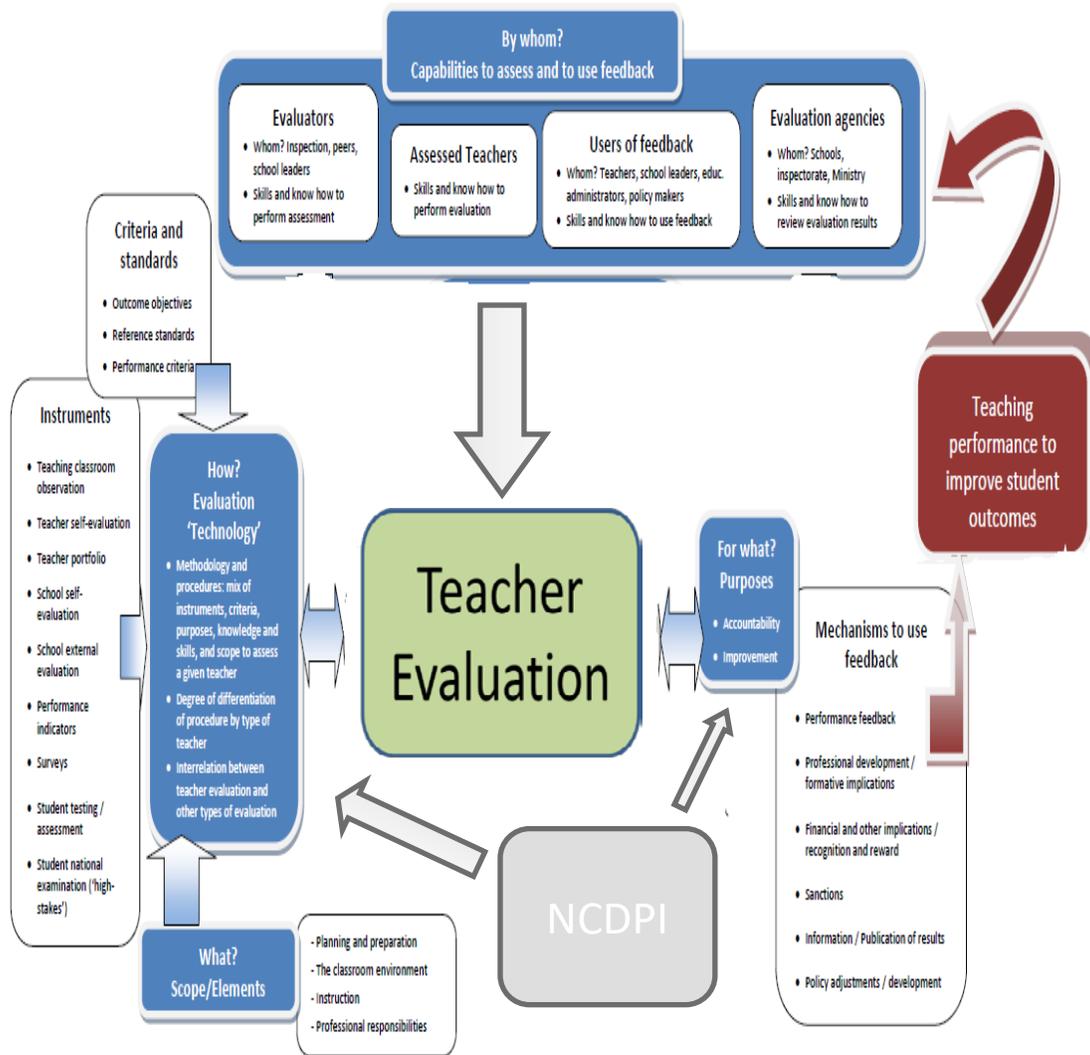


Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework for Teacher Evaluation

Adapted

OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

Figure 1.1: Teacher Evaluation

Significance of the Study

The replacement of the TPAI-R with the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process in 2010 by the North Carolina SBE represented a dramatic shift in how the SBE desires teachers to be evaluated. The SBE tasked the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission with developing standards which would be the basis for teacher evaluation (McRel, 2009). The standards “include the skills and knowledge needed for the 21st century teaching and learning” (p. 5). However, as is often the case with teacher evaluation instruments, those that create the instrument, in this case the SBE, are not the ones that utilize the instrument. In most public schools in North Carolina the person(s) that evaluate teachers are the principals. The principals are the practitioners who will use the Evaluation Process and therefore have to understand it the best and apply it as it is intended.

This study focused on how principals in a rural North Carolina county utilize the process and the observational/evaluative tool it contains. The significance of this study was to increase the body of knowledge in regards to principals’ observational practices through the use of the TPAI-R as compared to their observational practices through the use of the Evaluation Process. This study specifically pertains to the instruments’ application to teacher evaluation.

In addition, a greater understanding of how principals view not only the process but also how the implementation of the process has affected their observational and evaluative practices is important as it relates to their future use of the instrument. The information obtained from the principals in this study will help their peers, especially those to the profession, to better understand the Evaluation Process, its value as an observational tool as compared to the TPAI-R, and offer insight into others’ experiences as they applied it to the

observation and evaluation of the teachers in their school. The information obtained from the teachers in this study provide similar insights; however, their thoughts, feelings, and opinions as the ones being observed will provide a different perspective from which to examine the instruments as well as any changes that may have occurred to principals' observational practices. Finally, the study will add to the body of research on teacher evaluation instruments and specifically to the Evaluation Process, a document that, due to its relative newness, has not been studied to a great extent in terms of its implementation in the field.

Chapter Summary

The North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process was implemented in every school system in the state beginning in the 2010-2011 school year. It took the place of the TPAI-R that had previously been used. The change to the Evaluation Process represented a dramatic shift in the philosophy of the State Board of Education in regards to teacher evaluation. Previous instruments were basically checklists of items that a principal could observe and then rate the teacher based on whether the teacher did or did not do what they were supposed to do. For example, did the teacher write the objective for the day on the board? The Evaluation Process is referred to as a growth model. Not all of the items in this model are observable in the classroom, and the focus is on helping a teacher to grow professionally from observation to observation as well as from year to year. Other key differences are the focus on teaching students 21st Century Skills, diversity, cultural awareness, and on the teacher's ability to extend himself/herself beyond the four walls of the classroom to collaborate with peers, parents, and the school community in general.

The conceptual framework for this study is one adapted from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development--a comprehensive framework of teacher evaluation that takes into account the purposes of teacher evaluation as well as the role of

those that are responsible for conducting teacher evaluations. Slight changes were made in the model since the original design of the model incorporated a national scope whereas this study is limited to a model used on the state level.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the perspectives of principals on the Evaluation Process and how their observational and/or evaluative practices have changed, if at all, under the process as compared to their practices while using the previous instrument, the TPAI-R. This qualitative case study will investigate the following research questions:

1. What experiences did principals have when they implemented the new rubric?
2. How do principals perceive the value of the new process?
3. How has the new Evaluation Instrument affected principals' perceptions of what it means for a teacher to be effective?
4. How has the implementation of the Evaluation Process changed the principals' observational practices, i.e., what they look for during an observation as compared to what was looked for when using the TPAI-R?

The emphasis will be on the thoughts, feelings, and insights of the principals as the primary users of the instrument and how they may have changed from the time when other instruments were used. However, teacher data will also be collected to provide additional data in regards to any changes in principals' observational practices.

Teacher evaluation in general has been widely studied in North Carolina and in the United States as a whole. Much research has been done on how and why teacher evaluation is conducted as well as what to do with the results of the evaluation once it is completed.

These are topics that are explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This study investigates how principals in a rural North Carolina county perceived the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process and how their observational practices changed as a result of the implementation of this process as compared to observational practices employed when the TPAI-R was in use. Teacher evaluation has and continues to be used for a variety of purposes. As such, there are numerous strands in the literature that can be identified and pursued for study. Additionally, the instruments used to evaluate teachers are varied across the United States, with each state ultimately responsible for developing the instrument used to evaluate the teachers in their respective state. Furthermore, many states give wide latitude to districts and boards of education to develop and implement evaluation instruments (Furtwengler, 1991).

The literature strands identified for the purpose of this study were the purpose of teacher evaluation, the perspective of principals on teacher evaluation, and the historical context of teacher evaluation in North Carolina. The literature demonstrates the importance of the perspective of the principal on evaluation instruments, the implementation of evaluation instruments, and the dramatic shift in philosophy represented by the change from using the TPAI-R to the Evaluation Process to evaluate North Carolina's teachers. However, an examination of the literature also highlighted the gap that exists in regards to an examination of rural principals' perspectives on the Evaluation Process itself, which further justified the need for this study.

In the report prepared by Santiago and Benavides for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2009) it states, "Teacher evaluation has typically

two major purposes. First, it seeks to improve the teachers own practice by identifying strengths and weaknesses for further professional development – the improvement function. Second, it is aimed at ensuring that teachers perform at their best to enhance student learning – the accountability function” (p. 7). These two purposes represent a prevalent strand found in the literature in regards to teacher evaluation and evaluation instruments, that being the purpose for teacher evaluation. A second strand found in the literature as applicable to this study is the perspective of principals, especially in regards to state-mandated teacher evaluation instruments. Based upon my review of the extant research, key research has been completed in these areas by Thomas Kersten, Marla Israel, Kinnard White, Dean R. Smith, and Tandra Cunningham. In addition, important background information has been published by the NCDPI and SBE.

The historical context of teacher evaluation, especially in North Carolina, represents a third strand of literature that is relevant to this study. Much of the literature for this strand of the study is found in documents published by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education. Of particular interest to this study is information on the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process. The principals in this study were required by SBE policy to transition from use of the TPAI-R to the Evaluation Process, two very different instruments. Although literature on the Evaluation Process is limited due to its 2010 implementation, the TPAI and TPAI-R have been a frequent topic of discussion in the teacher evaluation literature. The literature review illustrates the importance of the principals’ perspectives on evaluation instruments. According to Kersten and Israel (2005):

Educators have watched teacher evaluation processes evolve from simple end of the year checklists or summative narratives to more sophisticated clinical processes and

reflective teacher evaluation models. Simultaneously, building-level administrators have experienced a dramatic increase in both the amount of time and skill required to implement these teacher evaluation processes while balancing the ever-increasing daily demands of administration. (p. 49)

The literature is also used as a comparison basis to examine the principals' perspectives on the Evaluation Process with respect to the accepted purposes of teacher evaluation; i.e. from the perspective of the principals in the study, does the instrument serve as a basis for improving teaching as well as holding teachers accountable for their efforts in the classroom? Kersten and Israel (2005) state, "In practice, the present approaches to teacher evaluation may or may not be judged by school administrators to have positive impacts on teaching and learning. However, the process of teacher evaluation itself may yield other necessary benefits beyond the improving of teaching and learning emphasis" (pp. 50-51).

Finally, the literature was used to gain a perspective from an historical standpoint of the TPAI-R to the Evaluation Process. Dawson (1998) states, "Teacher evaluation is cyclical, meaning that as a topic of reform, teacher evaluation is more critical at some times than at other times" (p. 4). I would argue that in North Carolina, this is a time in which teacher evaluation is a critical topic. Examination of the historical context also provides relevant background information to the thoughts, viewpoints, and insights provided by the principals. The principals experienced the transition from the use of the TPAI-R to observe and evaluate teachers to the use of the Evaluation Process.

The literature streams identified for this study were connected by the task of teacher evaluation. The task of evaluating teachers gives rise to evaluation instruments. These instruments have evolved over time as the purpose of teacher evaluation has evolved, giving

rise to the historical context. In North Carolina, the task of teacher evaluation falls primarily to the principals. McRel states (2012), “The principal or a designee (hereinafter “principal”) will conduct the evaluation process in which the teacher will actively participate through the use of self-assessment, reflection, presentation of artifacts, and classroom demonstration(s)” (p. 1). As the practitioners that use the evaluation instrument, their perspectives on the instrument, how it is used, and how it drives their observational practices becomes crucial information when examining the implementation of the Evaluation Process. These perspectives are related to their past experiences, but they are also tied to the teacher evaluation instrument itself (See Figure 2 below).

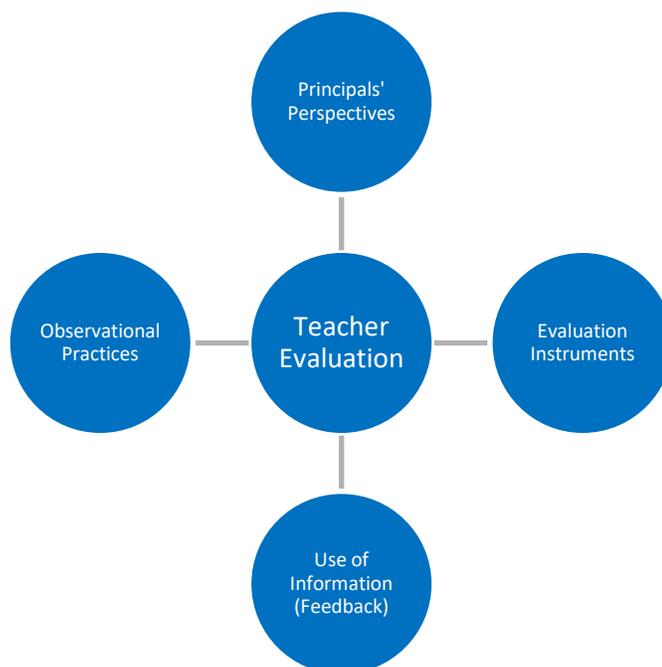


Figure 2.1: Teacher Evaluations as the Central Theme

Although the perspective of the principals is central to this study, teacher evaluation remains the central issue as an overriding theme of the research. States and even districts within a state can and do have various evaluation instruments. These instruments vary from check box instruments to narratives written by the observer. Observers can also have varied practices such as scripting, recording, using walk-throughs and observing for extended time periods. Principals can likewise provide feedback in varied forms such as through written comments and post-observation conferences with the teacher. The principal's perspective on evaluation and the evaluation instrument in essence becomes the reality of how the instrument is applied. However, the one constant is teacher evaluation itself. All of these are offshoots of the need for teacher evaluation and the measure of accountability that it is believed to bring to the teaching profession. As stated by Dawson and Acker-Hocevar (1998), "Educational accountability is a continuous expectation of the supporters of public education. At times, the outcry for quality education is loud, at other times, it is audible, but soft. Yet, at almost no time is it inaudible. Much of this push for accountability centers upon the evaluation of teachers. Seemingly, American society believes that schools are only as good as are their teachers" (p. 4).

The Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

Markley (2004), in his essay on effective teaching states, "The evaluation of teachers is not a new issue. Teacher evaluation existed in the days of the one-room school. The initial purpose was to determine job continuation and pay increases. Evaluation tended to happen at the local level with standards that were based upon local education objectives" (p. 1). However, he also acknowledges how teacher evaluation has changed. He states, "The high-pressure educational world of today demands accountability of its practitioners.

Legislators are reluctant to increase educational funding without exacting a corresponding increase in accountability. This increase in accountability means that educational leaders must be able to assess and identify quality teachers” (p. 1). Santiago and Benavides (2009), in the OECD report, identified two purposes of teacher evaluation: “Teacher evaluation has typically two major purposes. First, it seeks to improve the teachers own practice by identifying strengths and weaknesses for further professional development – the improvement function. Second, it is aimed at ensuring that teachers perform at their best to enhance student learning – the accountability function” (p. 7).

Teacher evaluation systems have undergone, or are currently undergoing, changes in many states. Laine and Behrstock-Sherratt (2012) state, “To improve their eligibility to access federal funding, and to simultaneously achieve their school improvement goals, since 2009, 36 states plus Washington, DC, and hundreds of school districts have passed teacher evaluation reforms, and 33 states have additionally passed principal evaluation reforms” (p. 3). In regards to the changes in the evaluation instruments they report:

A meaningful, accurate evaluation system achieves a number of important purposes. As in any field, evaluations provide those managing the organization a clearer sense of each employee’s strengths and weaknesses so that decisions about promotion, professional development, assignment, and when necessary, dismissal can be made in a more thoughtful manner. In schools, there is an additional emphasis on the role of evaluations in providing detailed, constructive feedback to all teachers, including those that are considered generally effective already, with data that can inform continuous improvement in practice. It is now commonly understood that teacher effectiveness is the single most important school-level factor affecting student

achievement – with principal effectiveness a close second. It is clear, therefore, that the continuous improvement of teacher and principal effectiveness must be an integral part of any efforts aimed at raising student achievement. (p. 3)

McCloskey and Egelson (1993) believe that evaluation of this type is not conducted very well. They divide evaluation into two categories, summative and formative. They state, “Summative evaluations serve organizational decision-making purposes. Decisions about tenure and merit pay may be based on such evaluations” (p. 8). In regards to formative evaluation they state, “A formative evaluation system provides feedback or information that encourages teachers’ professional growth” (p. 8). Additionally, McCloskey and Egelson (1993) state that, “If teachers and schools are to break out of molds and adopt new approaches to teaching, then an evaluation system designed to encourage individual teacher growth is not a luxury but a necessity” (p. 8).

According to Rindler (1994), “Programs that utilize rating sheets or check lists and provide little other feedback either oral or written, cannot hope to have much of an impact on teacher growth. The attributes of feedback would seem particularly important for experienced teachers” (p. 3). Furthermore, Rindler (1994) states:

Teacher evaluation can be seen as having two purposes. Evaluation that is done to inform administrators for purposes of maintaining teacher accountability, deciding promotions or continued employment, or in granting salary increases is often referred to as summative evaluation. Summative evaluation differs from formative evaluation which focuses on teacher development. When the purpose of evaluation in an IEP is perceived by the teachers as being oriented towards teacher growth rather than toward

teacher accountability, there is a greater likelihood that teacher growth will occur. (p. 3)

Similarly, Johnson (1998) states:

development focused teacher evaluations have the potential to help nearly all teachers improve their practice, while accountability focused evaluations are aimed at only the small percentage of teachers whose job status is in question. In addition, development focused teacher evaluations provide specific information on how teachers can improve instruction rather than just information on whether a teacher is deficient or adequate. (p. 2)

Teacher evaluation as a process and evaluation instrument as a tool for teacher observation and evaluation both have the challenge of being formative and summative in nature. The idea is that teacher evaluation is used by administrators and by the teachers themselves to improve and grow in their abilities. However, an intrinsic part of the evaluation of any employee is to determine if the employee is performing at a level sufficient to maintain employment.

According to Halverson and Clifford (2006):

Reform-based teacher evaluation artifacts provide a unique opportunity to examine how the hopes of policy design meet the realities of existing practice. On one hand, teacher evaluation programs promise the ability to formatively and summatively assess new practices in terms of desired outcomes. Clear, legitimate access to teaching is necessary for supporting teachers to improve practice. Evaluation programs also provide accountability measures necessary to address staff quality issues and to provide grounds for dismissing poor teachers. (p. 580)

These two purposes of teacher evaluation and evaluation programs, teacher growth and teacher accountability, are also components of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process. This is indicated by the first two items in a bulleted list provided on page one of the McRel (2009) handbook. These two items state that the evaluation process will, “Serve as a measurement of performance for individual teachers” and will, “Serve as a guide for teachers as they reflect upon and improve their effectiveness” (p. 1). Although the list contains six additional items, the importance of these two items is clear.

Principal’s Perspectives on Teacher Evaluation Systems

The second strand of literature that was explored was the perspective of the principal on teacher evaluation instruments or systems. The rural setting was chosen for this research in part due to the fact that the background and experiences of the researcher occurred in a rural setting. Additionally, funding issues can effect training and professional development opportunities that school systems provide. Rural districts can have a difficult time acquiring the needed funding to implement policies and initiatives implemented by the state as explained below.

Policies, practices, mandates, and other, often top down initiatives, do not necessarily impact urban, suburban, and rural settings in the same way (Eady & Zepeda, 2007). Chance, as quoted by Eady and Zepeda (2007) states, “The burden of compliance and the costs have been and will continue to be felt by the rural/small schools because of their size, isolation, and limited finances to implement required mandates” (p. 2). Eady and Zepeda (2007) state that, “Because of size, rural and small schools often employ fewer administrators than their urban and suburban counterparts. Much of the time, a single administrator must adequately supervise staff, evaluate staff, and provide staff development” (p. 6).

Rural schools often lack the resources they need in order to carry out their basic mission of educating the children they serve. Eady and Zepeda (2007) conducted a study involving rural middle school principals and their perceptions, in part, on the implementation of Georgia's *A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000*. In their study they state:

The three principals reported that the impact of ruralness on how *A Plus* was implemented was greater for some rural principals than for others. For example, the principal whose rural community is farthest away from a major metropolitan area explained that *A Plus* disregards geographical differences related to students and resources. (p. 5)

In North Carolina, the funding discrepancies between poorer, rural schools and districts and other more wealthy schools and districts led to a court case widely known as the Leandro court case. Fabrizio (2006) states:

For over a decade, the State of North Carolina has been involved in a legal case, *Leandro, et al. v. State of North Carolina and State Board of Education*, commonly referred to as *Leandro*. This litigation began in 1994 and has been one of the major topics of discussion among education policymakers in North Carolina since that date. (p. 92)

Although this was a rather involved case, one of the results was that certain rural districts were provided additional funding by the state to help close the funding differential between those districts and their more wealthy peers. According to Fabrizio (2006), one of the directives given by the presiding judge in the case, Howard Manning, was for public schools to “assure that principals were hiring and retaining teachers who could implement effective instructional programs” (p. 97). Therefore, in North Carolina it has been made a requirement

that effective teachers are hired, regardless of the setting, i.e. rural, suburban, or urban.

Effective teacher evaluation is paramount to this charge. Laine and Behrstock-Sherratt (2012) believe that:

Closing persistent achievement gaps as well as raising achievement for all students will simply not be possible without recruiting and retaining sufficient teachers of the highest quality for every classroom. An effective accountability system must be anchored in a teacher evaluation system that is informed by research and best practice and includes teacher voice in the design and implementation. (p. 4)

One of the key components to effectively conducting teacher observations and evaluations is time, a commodity that the rural principal, as well as principals in general, often lack. In a study, Kersten and Israel (2005) found that:

Respondents overwhelmingly (more than 50%) spend an enormous amount of time (more than 10 hours per teacher each year) on the evaluation process with non-tenured faculty. With such a large expenditure of time, it is understandable that completing the process could take precedence over meaningful conversations that could directly affect teaching and learning. This is contrary to what best practice in teacher evaluation should be. When understanding the potential benefits of teacher evaluation, a reexamination of what type, how much, and for whom, possibly along non-tenured/tenured lines, is necessary if we want best practices in teacher evaluation to be conducted in a meaningful, mindful manner. (p. 61)

Regardless of student population, time was consistently cited by principals in the literature as a limiting factor in their ability to effectively evaluate teachers, regardless of the

instrument being used. In a study on the Missouri Performance-Based Teacher Evaluation Model, Killian (2010) revealed that:

After data analysis, it was determined that both secondary school administrators and teachers felt that the Missouri Performance Teacher Evaluation Model is a tool that can be used for positive or negative actions. The constructed response answers convey the perception of knowledgeable evaluators, conducting beneficial post-observation conference feedback which can benefit both teacher and student.

Conversely, the survey responses indicated that if evaluators have no time to actually stay and see what is going on in a specific classroom, providing helpful feedback is less likely, thus making the Missouri Performance-Based Teacher Evaluation Model process an ineffective tool for classroom improvement. (p. 64)

Similarly, in a report issued by the Tennessee Department of Education (2012) after the first year of implementation of their new evaluation system one of the common themes stated was that, “Administrators consistently noted the large amount of time needed to complete the evaluation process. In particular, administrators wanted to spend less time observing their highest-performing teachers and more time observing lower performing teachers” (p. 3).

Obtaining the needed resources for principals to effectively evaluate teachers was also noted by Derrington (2011). She states “...educators must consider the expertise, support, and authority principals will need when using multiple sources of effectiveness to evaluate teachers. Perhaps no principal can implement this process single-handedly in a school, particularly a large, comprehensive high school” (p. 54). As evaluation instruments are revamped in many states across the country greater expectations are placed on principals

to successfully implement the evaluation process. According to Laine and Behrstock-Sherratt (2012):

High quality teacher evaluation systems also include multiple measures of effectiveness, and each of these measures must be carefully developed and tested for their validity (e.g., accuracy) and reliability (e.g., consistency). Evaluators must be rigorously trained on using the measures appropriately. Multiple evaluators should spend adequate amounts of time observing teachers on more than one occasion, comparing notes, and sharing detailed written feedback with teachers, while also coaching them to improve in areas of weakness. (p. 3)

This is a difficult task for principals to undertake while still performing the multitude of other tasks with which they are charged as leaders of their school such as being instructional leaders, maintaining order, attending and supervising athletic and other extra-curricular activities, meeting with parents, and otherwise making sure the school is operating according to community, state, and district expectations. However, the perspective of the principal is a vital link in the overall teacher evaluation process. As Kersten and Israel (2005) note, “As first line evaluators charged with improving the quality of teaching and student learning in their schools, these building-level administrators can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of teacher evaluation as a tool” (p. 50). The perspectives of rural principals on the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process were explored in this research.

The Historical Context of Teacher Evaluation Instruments

The historical context of teacher evaluation represents a third strand of literature that is relevant to this study. Although this study focuses on two instruments used in North

Carolina, it is also important to provide information on the general history of teacher evaluation. According to Markley (2011):

The evaluation of teachers is not a new issue. Teacher evaluation existed in the days of the one-room school. The initial purpose was to determine job continuation and pay increases. Evaluation tended to happen at the local level with standards that were based upon local education objectives. The industrial revolution brought about some changes in the evaluation process as schools became larger and unions started to exert their influence. Unions started to set specific evaluative criteria for teachers and rules for dismissal and advancement. These criteria tended to be minimal and were still dominated by local boards of education. During the 1950s, more men entered the teaching profession. There also emerged an increase in professional activity and union membership. Sputnik and The Cold War focused additional attention on education by raising fears that Soviet students were better educated than American students. (p. 1)

Teacher evaluation in and of itself was not a part of the early educational process in the United States, largely because, as Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston (2011) phrased it, “education was not considered a professional discipline or field of study” (p. 12). Over time, that perception began to change.

By the 1800s there had been a shift in how teachers were viewed and the skills that were needed. Teaching began to be viewed more as a profession. As stated by Marzano, Frontier and Livingston (2011):

The period from the beginning of formal education in the United States up to the mid-1800s saw the dawning of the awareness that pedagogical skills are a necessary

component of effective teaching. Although there was little or no formal discussion about the specifics of these skills, the acknowledgement of their importance might be considered the first step in the journey to a comprehensive approach to developing teacher expertise. (p. 14)

The identification of the skills and the importance of the skills needed to be an effective teacher, the need for a way to evaluate whether or not a teacher possessed these skills would follow. Dawson and Acker-Hocevar (1998) listed character traits, checklists, skills, student achievement, and standards among others as items and methods used in the evaluation of teachers since the introduction of the concept (pp. 8-14). According to Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston (2011), Elwood Cubberly developed one of the earliest teacher evaluation methods. It is described in his 1929 book titled *Public School Administration*, and is built on the work of Edward Thorndike. (p. 14).

In the years since there have been many evaluation instruments based on many criteria. Marzano, Frontier and Livingston (2011) outline several time periods in which various thoughts on teacher evaluation held sway. Included in these are post World War II during which the teacher as an individual was the focus, the era of clinical supervision in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and the Hunter Model based on the work of Madeline Hunter and finally a shift from supervision to evaluation in the early 2000s (pp. 16 – 27), which is the current thought process in teacher evaluation. They conclude:

True pedagogical development comes from teacher self-reflection that results in clear goals for improvement. Clear criteria for success that involve both teacher behavior and student achievement have roots in the emphases in the first decade of the 21st century on student achievement as the ultimate criterion for teacher effectiveness with

teacher behavior as a causal factor. Finally, recognizing expertise is also supported by the emphasis on teacher evaluation in the first decade of the 21st century. If student achievement is not linked to teacher evaluation, teachers have little incentive to develop into experts. (p. 27)

As evidenced by the six standards contained in the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process the instrument reflects this shift in thought from supervision to evaluation. Among the standards contained in the instrument are leadership, content knowledge, and teacher reflection (McRel, 2015).

According to Popham (2013), “Our federal government wants better public schools and, to make them so, it wants America’s public school teachers to be evaluated more appropriately. Today’s increasing attention to teacher evaluation in most of our nation’s states was spurred directly by two significant federal initiatives. Both of those programs were aimed at comprehensive school improvement, and both of them called for the installation of more rigorous teacher-evaluation programs in a state’s schools” (p. 3). The two federal programs referenced by Popham are the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the 2011 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Program.

In regards to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Popham (2013) specifically references the Race to the Top (RTT) fund, which established a grant program. He states, “One key provision of this unprecedented RTT program called for states who wanted to receive a hunk of this federal largesse to establish more rigorous teacher evaluation programs using multiple measures in which evidence of student growth was to play a prominent role” (p. 4). Similarly, Popham (2013) says that the ESEA Flexibility Program

“reiterated a call for the use of multiple measures in appraising teachers, and stressed again that student growth was to be employed ‘as a significant factor’ in a teacher’s evaluation” (p. 4).

The Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) at Education Development Center, Inc. (2012) conducted a study on five states that had implemented statewide systems of performance-based teacher evaluation systems as of 2010-2011. It is stated in the study that “Interest in educator effectiveness, specifically in teacher evaluation, has grown in recent years, partly in response to the emphasis on effective teachers that is evident in Race to the Top, the competitive federal grant awards program” (p. 1). The study set selection criteria to determine the states that would be included. As a result, “Five states met the selection criteria. Four of the five (Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee) are Race to the Top winners; the fifth state, Texas, did not apply for the competitive grant” (p. 4).

In a brief description of North Carolina’s evaluation system the study (2012) said the following: “The North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process (NCTEP) was introduced statewide in the 2010/11 school year. Its purpose is to assess teacher performance in relation to the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and to develop the growth of practitioners. The evaluation is based on five domains, which require that teachers demonstrate leadership, establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students, know the content they teach, facilitate learning for their students, and reflect on their practice” (p. 6).

Although piloted as early as August 2008 (REL), beginning with the 2010-2011 school year the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) mandated the use of the newly developed North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process (Evaluation Process) for use in

all public school systems in the state to conduct teacher observations and evaluations. This process was developed by McRel in collaboration with the N.C. State Board of Education and the N.C. Professional Teaching Standards Commission. The action of mandating the use of the new Evaluation Process eliminated the use of the previous evaluation tool called the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument – Revised (TPAI-R) which had been in use in its revised form since 1997. This action was the culmination of a process that had begun several years earlier. According to the evaluation manual developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) in cooperation with McRel, in 2006-2007 the State Board of Education adopted 21st Century Standards for the evaluation of teachers. In 2008, the SBE approved the policy adopting the Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers and the Teacher Evaluation Process which provided the reasoning as well as the actual instrument that would be used to evaluate teachers (McRel, 2009).

The fact that North Carolina had created a statewide teacher evaluation instrument, the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (TPAI) and then its successor, the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument-Revised (TPAI-R), is not surprising when some basic historical facts are examined. According to Holdzkom (1990):

The state of North Carolina contributes, on average, 67% of all school finances to the 134 districts in the state. Moreover, a uniform salary schedule ensures that all teachers of comparable experience and training will be paid the same salary (from state funds), regardless of the local district's ability to pay. Rather than allocate an average salary per teacher, the state fully funds the salary of teachers hired by local school systems. In exchange, the state expects school districts to be accountable for

educating children. One of many methods intended to ensure that accountability is the Teacher Performance Appraisal System. (p. 783)

The TPAI was held in a positive light by many across the nation as a teacher evaluation instrument. In regards to the TPAI White, Smith, and Cunningham (1988) state:

The rating of teaching performance is not only big business, it is serious business in that decisions based on these ratings ranging from certification to merit pay can have significant consequences for teachers. Because of personal consequences resulting from teaching ratings these ratings must yield valid information about teaching performance. (p. 1067)

The North Carolina Teaching Performance Appraisal Instrument (TPAI), designed for rating teaching performance of beginning teachers, has received widespread national attention, having been adopted or adapted by a number of school systems outside North Carolina. White, Smith, and Cunningham (1988), who were researching the instrument, concluded that the instrument “may have merit as an instrument to measure teaching skills” (p. 1074). While this may not seem to be a resounding endorsement, the authors originally were skeptical of the instrument as evidenced by their statement:

Although an argument can be sustained for the content validity of the TPAI based on the fact that the teaching practices rated in the instrument were derived from a synthesis of over 600 research studies of classroom teaching practices related to student achievement, little original research has been conducted to provide evidence for the validity of inferences about teaching skills made from TPAI ratings. (p. 1068)

The revised version of the TPAI, the TPAI-R, was a four-page document that listed eight major functions on which teachers were to be evaluated. Each function was rated once

using a scale that consisted of four possible ratings from which the evaluator could choose. They were above standard, at standard, below standard, and unsatisfactory (TPAI-R, 2001). It was the instrument in use when the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process began to be phased in across the state. The Teacher Evaluation Process was a response to growing criticism, not just in North Carolina but across the nation, that teacher evaluation was in need of some major changes. Derrington (2011) believes that:

The principal's role as supervisor and evaluator of teachers will continue as a fundamental component of the teacher assessment process, but a more comprehensive model of formative and summative evaluation that incorporates a larger body of evidence will produce a better-rounded picture of a teacher's competencies. In a teacher-development-centered evaluation process, classroom observation is only one component. Many other sources of evidence exist, including the teachers' self-reflection, conversational learning time with peers, student achievement data, and stakeholder feedback. (p. 51)

The National Council on Teacher Quality prioritized, state-by-state, areas that were in need of change or reform in education. In regards to North Carolina, the number one item listed by the Council (2010) was to, "Ensure that teacher evaluations assess effectiveness in the classroom" (p. 5). The Council reported:

The fundamental purpose of teachers' formal evaluations should be to determine whether the teachers are effective in the classroom. To achieve this purpose, evaluations must be based primarily on teachers' impact on students. While it is certainly appropriate to include subjective factors, such as classroom observations, North Carolina should adopt a policy that requires objective evidence of student

learning – including but not limited to standardized test scores – to be the preponderant criterion of teacher evaluations.

In order to ensure that teachers' strengths are optimized and weaknesses addressed, it is critical that teachers are evaluated with sufficient frequency. North Carolina should require that all non-probationary teachers be evaluated annually regardless of their previous performance. Currently, local school boards may adopt rules that would allow for certain categories of tenured teachers to be evaluated less frequently. Although it may be the state's intention that these waivers not be applied liberally, the state's policy is too vague to ensure that is the case. North Carolina's winning bid for Race to the Top funds includes a significant focus on teacher evaluation. However, although the state's proposal calls for student performance to be a significant factor in teacher evaluations, it does not adequately articulate whether 'significant' still translates to a preponderant factor when student growth is added as an explicit element to North Carolina's current evaluation process for teachers. (p. 5)

By the time the National Council on Teacher Quality came out with its recommendations the state had already moved forward with significant changes to its teacher evaluation policies and with the teacher evaluation instrument, which was now called the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process. Breedlove (2011) asserts:

The North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process has kept some elements of the previous teacher evaluation process, but the new policy has also brought about some marked changes. The most obvious change is in the evaluation itself, which was changed to a rubric format that also allows for the use of artifacts and other data in addition to the traditional classroom observation. This new process calls for more

involvement by the teacher, including conversations with the evaluator, self-assessment, and a greater emphasis on plans for individual professional growth.

These changes began with the adoption of a revised set of standards for teaching and the development of rubric for measuring them. (p. 66)

The Evaluation Rubric is an eleven-page document and has five standards in lieu of the eight major functions. However, each of the standards is sub-divided into specific items called elements. Each element contains specific skills under the five areas of what is referred to as the evaluation rubric. The instrument does not refer to these as ratings until the summary evaluation, but they can be used each time an observation is conducted with the process. When the Evaluation Process was initially unveiled these ratings were to be used in each observation. Subsequent procedural adjustments have given principals more flexibility to look for specific items during an observation instead of all of them. However, if a principal examines each element once during an observation, he/she will have “rated” the teacher for a total of 25 items and 147 specific skills (McRel, 2009).

Since the initial publication of the Teacher Evaluation Process, a sixth standard was adopted in February 2012 (McRel, 2012). Standard VI is titled “Teachers Contribute to the Academic Success of Students” and specifically involves the use of data to determine if a teacher is being effective in terms of having a positive impact on students’ academic growth (McRel, 2012). This data is obtained from tests that students take at the end of their coursework in a variety of subjects. Some of these tests are specifically End-of-Course (EOC) tests that are also used in the accountability system for schools and districts, while others are tests called common exams that are given expressly for the purpose of providing

data for teachers' Standard VI but are not part of the accountability system for the school or the school district (NCDPI, 2012).

In the Evaluation Process, five ratings are used. McRel (2012, p. 20) states:

Teacher performance will be noted as follows:

Developing: Teacher demonstrated adequate growth toward achieving standard(s) during the period of performance, but did not demonstrate competence on standard(s) of performance.

Proficient: Teacher demonstrated basic competence on standard(s) of performance.

Accomplished: Teacher exceeded basic competence on standard(s) of performance most of the time.

Distinguished: Teacher consistently and significantly exceeded basic competence on standard(s) of performance.

Not Demonstrated: Teacher did not demonstrate competence on or adequate growth toward achieving standard(s) of performance. (Note: If the "Not Demonstrated" rating is used, the Principal/Evaluator must comment about why it was used.)

Breedlove (2011) outlines other changes to the instrument and process including Self-Assessment, Artifacts, Plans for Professional Growth, and Collegial Conversations. She states (2011) "...this use of self-assessment for all teachers used in conjunction with a Professional Development Plan (PDP) represents a focus on professional growth and reflection that was not previously articulated within Board policy on personnel evaluations" (p. 68). Artifacts can be used by teachers in their effort to be rated proficient or above.

According to McRel (2012) an artifact is, “A product resulting from a teacher’s work. Artifacts are natural by-products of a teacher’s work and are not created for the purpose of satisfying evaluation requirements. Artifacts are used only when the evaluator and teacher disagree on the final rating. Teachers may use them as exemplars of their work” (p. 2). Although there are many items that can be used as artifacts, one of the most common would be a teacher’s lesson plans that could show, for example, how technology was used to facilitate instruction of a particular topic.

In regards to professional growth, Breedlove (2011) relates that, “The 2008 version of the teacher evaluation policy renames this growth plan document the Professional Development Plan, but that form can be designated as one of three types of growth plans: Individual, Monitored, or Directed” (p. 69). She further explains that these various designations are used depending on the ratings that the teachers receive on their evaluations as determined by the principal. Teachers who receive ratings of Proficient or above would receive an Individual Plan. Teachers that perform poorly and have one or more Standards rated as Developing or Not Demonstrated would receive a Directed Plan. A Monitored Plan would be indicated for a teacher who is rated as Developing in one or more Standards and it is determined that they need some assistance to become proficient in those areas (pp. 69-71).

The final change that Breedlove noted, collegial conversations, in this sense is a catch-all phrase for various means of communication. The Rubric for Evaluating Teachers, according to McRel (2012), contains multiple elements in which words such as collaborates, advises, participates, and communicates are used. The term professional learning community is specifically used in several elements, and a teacher cannot be rated as proficient in one of the items unless they actively participate in this process. Working together and

communicating with peers is considered to be a basic practice for teachers in the Evaluation Process and it is an expectation that this is done.

The change to the Evaluation Process represented a dramatic shift in the philosophy of the State Board of Education in regards to teacher evaluation. Previous instruments were basically checklists of items that a principal could observe and then rate the teacher based on whether the teacher did or did not do what they were supposed to do. For example, did the teacher write the objective for the day on the board? The Evaluation Process is referred to as a growth model. Not all of the items in this model are observable in the classroom, and the focus is on helping a teacher grow professionally from observation to observation as well as from year to year. Other key differences are the focus on teaching students 21st Century Skills, diversity, cultural awareness, and on the teacher's ability to extend himself/herself beyond the four walls of the classroom to collaborate with peers, parents, and the school community in general.

This study addressed the question of how has the implementation of the Evaluation Process affected principals in a rural North Carolina county's observational and evaluative practices as compared to their practices while using the TPAI-R. Since principals are the practitioners that are responsible for teacher evaluation in North Carolina, any change in their observational practices as a result of implementation of the Evaluation Process are immediately relevant and thus is the focus of the research that will be conducted. The practice of teacher evaluation is not easy and principals are not infallible. Popham (2013) makes the following comments;

It is the myriad particulars of individual teachers that, even if recognized, make the pursuit of mistake-free teacher evaluation senseless. However, as

long as teacher evaluators realize that they are engaged in what will be sincere, but not impeccable, attempt to appraise teachers, this is a quest well worth undertaking. To the extent that teacher evaluators do as effective a job as they can, then the maximum number of students will benefit from a mistake-minimizing teacher-evaluation process. If we can be fair to teachers, and can improve the quality of schooling they provide, then this is clearly an aspiration to be pursued. (p. 24)

When the SBE mandated the use of the Evaluation Process and effectively replaced the TPAI-R, they also ushered in the use of an online evaluation tool that replaced the paper form that was typically used for the TPAI-R. Technology has made it possible for a principal to conduct an observation, and therefore collect observation data quickly and easily. According to the NCDPI website, “The evaluation of teachers and school administrators is housed in an online environment that eliminates the need for paper, streamlines the process, and facilitates the use of data at the school, district, and state level” (NCDPI, 2014, Online Evaluation Tool section).

In lieu of the paper/pencil observation forms prevalent with the use of the TPAI-R, the observation tools are now in electronic form as part of software packages. In a news release from March 12, 2013 NCDPI detailed the following information:

Truenorthlogic, a vendor that specializes in human capital management systems for K-12 education agencies, is providing the technology software which will house the educator evaluation model that was implemented in every school district in 2011. The system provided by Truenorthlogic will

improve on the processes already in place by creating a more streamlined, more intuitive and more user-friendly experience.

This shift in vendors from McRel, which also used an electronic form, to Truenorthlogic occurred less than four years from the first pilot programs of the Evaluation Process.

Paper/pencil observation forms can certainly change, but as long as the basic process is the same it takes little adjustment on the part of the observer. This is not so when software packages change. While the basic form of the instrument remained the same, the differences in the software packages required principals to undergo training on how to use the software. Depending on how comfortable a principal is with technology and varying computer software programs, the potential exists for a principal to hold a positive or negative view of the instrument based, at least in part, on the software needed to access and use the instrument electronically and not on the value of the instrument as an observational tool.

Regardless of how a principal may feel about computer software programs, the use of technology cannot take out the subjective nature of teacher evaluations. Whether using a computer software program or a paper/pencil form, the judgment of the principal remains a key factor. Popham (2013) states, “Distressingly, no matter how much thought, planning, and even prayer we might devote to devising a foolproof teacher-appraisal program, when appraising teachers’ abilities, we will always make mistakes. Teacher evaluators who yearn for an error-free teacher appraisal are destined to be disappointed. Mistakes will, unfortunately, be made” (p. 23).

This study focused on the use of the North Carolina Evaluation Process and how principals’ observational practices changed as compared to their practices when using the TPAI-R. In the next chapter, the methodology of the study will be detailed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Justification for Qualitative Methods

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year all public schools were mandated by the SBE to use the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process to observe and evaluate all classroom teachers. The instrument replaced the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument - Revised (TPAI-R) which had been used since 2001. The TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process are drastically different, with the Process being created around new standards developed at the insistence of the State Board of Education (SBE) by a commission created for this purpose. As stated in McRel's evaluation manual, the new standards "include the skills and knowledge needed for the 21st century teaching and learning" (2009, p. 5). This shift in philosophy by the SBE forced a corresponding change by principals in how they evaluate teachers in order to be able to use the instrument as intended.

The change to the Evaluation Process represented a dramatic shift in the philosophy of the State Board of Education in regards to teacher evaluation. Previous instruments were basically checklists of items that a principal could observe and then rate the teacher based on whether the teacher did or did not do what they were supposed to do. For example, did the teacher write the objective for the day on the board? The Evaluation Process is referred to as a growth model. Not all of the items in this model are observable in the classroom, and the focus is on helping a teacher to grow professionally from observation to observation as well as from year to year. Other key differences are the focus on teaching students 21st Century Skills, diversity, cultural awareness, and on the teacher's ability to extend himself/herself

beyond the four walls of the classroom to collaborate with peers, parents, and the school community in general.

The problem that this study addressed is, how has the implementation of the Evaluation Process affected the observational and evaluative practices of principals in a rural North Carolina county as compared to how those practices were executed when using the previous instrument, the TPAI-R? Since principals are the practitioners that are responsible for teacher evaluation in North Carolina, their perspectives on the Evaluation Process are immediately relevant. The new vision of teaching as defined by the SBE has to be interpreted by the principals when conducting their observations and evaluations of classroom teachers. As stated by Kersten and Israel (2005) “the present approaches to teacher evaluation may or may not be judged by school administrators to have positive impacts on teaching and learning” (p. 50). An individual principal’s views on teaching and learning may or may not match that of the SBE and therefore may or may not match the basic philosophy expressed in the Evaluation Process. However, because use of the Process and the Evaluation Rubric it contains is mandated by the state, its use is not an option.

This study was conducted from the theoretical perspective of social constructivism. This was applicable to the study because it was conducted from the perspective of the principals. The study explored the principals’ thoughts, feelings, insights, beliefs, and understandings in regards to the Evaluation Process and its implementation as compared to the implementation of the previous instrument, the TPAI-R. The study sought to ascertain how these perceptions may have changed from their experiences with the previous evaluation instrument as well as how their own evaluation practices may have changed.

The conceptual framework used for this study was adapted from the framework developed by the OECD (2009) for use in examining the many parameters of teacher evaluation on a national level. This framework was chosen because it represented a comprehensive analysis of teacher evaluation inclusive of the purposes of teacher evaluation and the role of those that are responsible for conducting teacher evaluations. The framework as presented in the OECD document acknowledges that, “Teacher evaluation issues cannot be studied in isolation” (2009, p. 4). This lends credence to the fact that the perspective of the principals who are charged with the implementation of the Evaluation Process is relevant data.

Creswell (1994) defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting” (pp. 1-2). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) define qualitative research as, “An approach to social science research that emphasizes collecting descriptive data in natural settings, uses inductive thinking, and emphasizes understanding the subjects point of view” (p. 274). This study was a qualitative study because it focused on the point of view of principals in a rural North Carolina county on the Evaluation Process. Not all principals and assistant principals in the county were contacted. For example, an assistant principal with only one year of experience at the time of the study would not be contacted since the TPAI-R would not have been in use in North Carolina during that time frame, therefore the assistant principal would not have any experience using that instrument. Three principals were interviewed in their own schools, in the setting most familiar to them. Principals, Assistant Principals, and teachers were recruited using email contact as the first recruiting effort. Phone contact was then made to

those that responded positively to verify their willingness to participate. Prospective participants had the right to decline. The research participants were selected from among those that responded positively to the invitation to participate. Participants for the principal interviews were chosen based on the criteria of being school principals and/or assistant principals that had used both the TPAI-R and the North Carolina Evaluation Process to evaluate teachers. Participants were also chosen to represent all three school levels, elementary, middle, and high school, to provide diversity to the sample of administrators since the study does not focus on any one particular school level. The participants were asked to describe and relate their personal experiences and issues in regards to the Evaluation Process. The schools that the participants work each had a total of three administrators on staff that conducted observations.

Each participant was interviewed using a list of interview questions that were open-ended and designed to encourage participants to share their experiences and practices while utilizing both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process, with a focus on what they did before the implementation of the Process and what they do now. The interviews were audio recorded and field notes were taken as an additional data source. The interviews were conducted in person by the researcher. Each participant completed a questionnaire to obtain basic background information. This information was used to build a picture of the participant that was used to assist in the identification of themes or trends in the overall data during the data analysis process. The shortest of the three principal interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes while the other two lasted approximately 45 minutes each.

Participants for the teacher focus group were also recruited using email contact. The teachers must have met the criteria of having been evaluated by both instruments.

Participants were given a questionnaire to obtain background information and were interviewed as part of a focus group. Teacher participants had various experiences in terms of grade level(s) taught and educational degrees obtained. The focus group interview lasted approximately 1.5 hours.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007) inductive reasoning can be defined as, “Thinking from the particular to the general. In qualitative research, letting the analysis emerge during data collection rather than structuring a study around a hypothesis or narrow questions” (p. 272). In this study, principals were asked to share their experiences, their thoughts and insights, without a preconceived hypothesis on what those thoughts might reveal. The research questions guiding this study were broad and general, and sought to encourage revelation of these experiences in any manner the participants chose, including providing examples and stories. The study sought to obtain rich descriptions of the evaluation process from the perspective of the principals participating in the study. The data obtained from the principals was examined and analyzed to reveal the themes that emerged from the research.

Case Study Approach

The research for this qualitative study was conducted in the form of a case study. Punch (1998, p. 150) as quoted by Silverman and Marvasti (2008) states, “The basic idea is that one case (or perhaps a small number of cases) will be studied in detail, using whatever methods seem appropriate. While there may be a variety of specific purposes and research questions, the general objective is to develop as full an understanding of that case as possible” (p. 162).

In regards to using the case study for research, Yin (2003) says that, “As a research strategy, the case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena” (p. 1). The research for this study took the form of an explanatory case study. The reasons for this were due to the fact that the study focused on the question of how the implementation of the Evaluation Process affected the observational and evaluative practices of principals in a rural North Carolina county as compared to how those practices were executed when using the previous instrument, the TPAI-R. Yin (2003) states “In contrast, ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories, and experiments as the preferred research strategies. This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence” (p. 6).

Although some historical perspective is needed for this study since the TPAI-R is an instrument that was used in the past, the research for this study is in the form of a case study. Yin (2003) asserts:

The case study is preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated. The case study relies on many of the same techniques as a history, but it adds two sources of evidence not usually included in the historian’s repertoire: direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events. Again, although case studies and histories can overlap, the case study’s unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations – beyond what might be available in a conventional historical study. (p. 7)

The implementation of the Evaluation Process by rural principals in a county in North Carolina is a case that was examined through the insights of the principals themselves as well as insights provided by teachers that have been observed/evaluated under both instruments. The central question focused on how have principals' observational/evaluative practices changed as a result of the transition from the TPAI-R to the Evaluation Process. Interviews served as the primary data collection method for these participants. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) assert, "Individuals who share a particular trait but do not form groups can be subjects in a qualitative study, but interviewing is usually a better approach here than participant observation. What they share will emerge more clearly when you individually solicit their perspectives rather than observe their activities" (p. 62).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the perspectives of principals on the Evaluation Process and how their observational and/or evaluative practices changed, if at all, under the process. What did principals do before the Process was implemented and what do they do now? Have there been changes in practice, and if so, what are those changes? This qualitative case study investigated the following research questions:

1. What experiences did principals have when they implemented the new rubric?
2. How do principals perceive the value of the new process?
3. How has the new Evaluation Instrument affected principals' perceptions of what it means for a teacher to be effective?
4. How has the implementation of the Evaluation Process changed the principals' observational practices, i.e., what they look for during an observation, particularly in comparison to what they looked for when using the TPAI-R?

The emphasis was on the observational practices of the principals as the primary users of the instrument and how they may have changed from the time when the TPAI-R was used. Data was collected from principals, who are the observers, as well as from teachers, who were being observed. As the primary observers and evaluators of the teachers in the schools, insights into the principals' practices in regards to the Evaluation Process in general and the Evaluation Rubric in particular were vital information in the determination of whether the Teacher Evaluation Process was being utilized as intended by the State Board of Education.

Recruitment of Participants and Sample Selection

The participants in the study were recruited from a rural county in North Carolina. Participants were recruited through email contact that outlined the criteria for participation such as experience with both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process. The recruitment took place and interviews were conducted during the months of August and September of 2015. Those that responded positively were then contacted by phone to confirm their willingness to participate and also to further explain the nature of the study and next steps in the research. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. According to Silverman and Marvasti (2008), "Purposive sampling allows you to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which you are interested" (p. 166). Patton (2002) states, "Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases (N=1), selected purposefully" (p. 230). Furthermore, he states, "The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling" (p. 230).

The focus of this study was how principals' observational practices in a rural county in North Carolina have changed through the implementation of the Evaluation process as compared to the practices they utilized during the time that the TPAI-R was the evaluation instrument being used. Principals and assistant principals were recruited that have used both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process. In addition, ten teachers responded to the email recruitment for participants. Each met the criteria of having been observed/evaluated by principals using the TPAI-R and also by the Evaluation Process. For the simple reason of resource conservation, participants were recruited from the county in which the researcher worked.

A total of three principals, one each from three different schools, were recruited to participate in the study through interviews. The principals were chosen due to their years of experience as an administrator, which overlapped both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process, and due to the fact that the three individual schools in which they worked allowed for a diverse sample of administrators since they represented one each from the elementary, middle, and high school levels. In addition, teachers were recruited to participate in interviews through focus groups. The participants were recruited using email and phone contact followed up by written request. Participants were selected from among those that responded favorably to the request to participate with the goal of acquiring participants from both the elementary and secondary levels. Race, gender, ethnicity and similar factors were not the focus of this study. That combined with the fact that there was a small number of principals participating in the study meant that this information was not considered when selecting the participants. The participants were not compensated for their participation in the study.

Data Collection

Prior to the start of data collection, approval by the Internal Review Board (IRB) was obtained by completing the required IRB form and documentation. A copy of the IRB form was distributed to the participants prior to the collection of any data. Data was collected from the participants in two primary ways. Initially, a self-administered questionnaire, Appendix A, was distributed to the participants to obtain basic background information. The questionnaire for administrators contained items inquiring about the participants' school level, overall years' experience as an administrator, years' experience using the TPAI-R, years' experience using the Evaluation Process, size of school, average number of faculty members that the participant observes using the Evaluation Process each year, the experience the participant had prior to becoming a principal (classroom teacher, guidance counselor, etc.), and the average amount of time spent per observation on beginning teachers and on tenured/career teachers. This information was used to build a picture of the principal in terms of his/her demographic information and as background information that was useful in identifying themes or trends in the overall data during the data analysis process. The questionnaire for teachers, Appendix B, solicited similar information, with the focus being on teaching experience and experience being observed with both instruments.

The primary method of data collection for the administrators was in the form of formal participant interviews. Each participant was interviewed using a list of interview questions that were open-ended and designed to encourage participants to share their experiences and practices while utilizing both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process, with a focus on what they did before the implementation of the Evaluation Process and what they do now. The interviews were tape-recorded and field notes were taken as an additional data

source. The interviews ranged from approximately 30 minutes for the shortest to approximately 45 minutes for the longest.

The teachers were interviewed as part of a ten teacher focus group. The focus group was interviewed using a list of interview questions similar to those used for the principals, and were also open-ended and designed to encourage participants to share experiences they had being observed with the TPAI-R instrument and the Evaluation Process.

After the interviews were transcribed, the principal participants were provided the opportunity to verify the transcripts. This procedure was conducted for the principal interviews after the interviews had been transcribed to allow for verification of accuracy, corrections, and to allow for clarifications. This step was important in this study since the participants are peers of the researcher and a working relationship had to be maintained during the study and after the study had been completed. Although each was provided the opportunity to verify the data , all three of the principals declined to make any corrections, additions, or deletions to their interview transcriptions. Pseudonyms were used for the county, school system, and all participants in the study to maintain a level of anonymity and to protect the participants from possible bias after the study had been concluded.

The interview questions asked of the principals in this study were as follows:

1. What are your thoughts in regards to the differences between the new Evaluation Process and the TPAI-R?
2. How would you describe your experiences in transitioning to the new process?
3. Tell me about a time when something went well while using the new process.
4. Tell me about a time when something did not go well while using the new process.

5. How has implementation of the new Evaluation Process affected your role as a principal?
6. How do you perceive the value of the new process?
7. How has the implementation of the new process affected your perception of what it means to be an effective teacher, if at all?
8. Do you perceive the new process to be a better or worse instrument than the TPAI-R? Why or why not?
9. How do you feel in regards to the amount of time involved in using the new process as compared to the TPAI-R?
10. How has the implementation of the new process affected your observational practices? Has it changed what you do and/or look for when you go into a teacher's classroom?
11. What feedback have you received from the classroom teachers in regards to the new process?
12. Tell me about the training you received prior to using the new process. Do you feel the training was sufficient? What would you have changed about the training?
13. What do you see as the primary focus of the new process?
14. What other thoughts in regards to the new Evaluation Process would you like to share?

The interview questions asked of the teachers who participated in the focus group were as follows:

1. What are your thoughts in regards to the differences between the new Evaluation Process and the TPAI-R?
2. How would you describe your experiences in transitioning to being observed/evaluated with the new process?
3. Tell me about a lesson that went well while being observed with the new process.
4. Tell me about a lesson that did not go well while being observed with the new process.
5. How has implementation of the new Evaluation Process affected your teaching?
6. How do you perceive the value of the new process?
7. How has the implementation of the new process affected your perception of what it means to be an effective teacher, if at all?
8. Do you perceive the new process to be a better or worse instrument than the TPAI-R? Why or why not?
9. How do you feel in regards to the amount of time involved in using the new process as compared to the TPAI-R?
10. Has the new process changed what you do as a teacher when you know you are going to be observed?
11. What feedback have you received from the administrators in regards to the new process?
12. Tell me about the training you received prior to using the new process. Do you feel the training was sufficient? What would you have changed about the training?

13. What do you see as the primary focus of the new process?

14. What other thoughts in regards to the new Evaluation Process would you like to share?

The interview questions were created from the research questions and aligned with the purpose of the study. Follow-up questions based on the participants' responses were asked for the purposes of clarification or probing as the researcher saw the need during the interviews. However, the three principals were very thorough in their responses and therefore only a few clarifying questions were used such as "can you tell me more" and "can you expand on that".

Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires was placed into a spreadsheet for ease of review. Frequencies and percentages were identified for questions such as years of experience. The data was analyzed to identify trends and themes. The analysis was open-ended with no preconceived hypothesis. This data was analyzed in conjunction with the interview data to further identify trends and themes.

The interview data was coded using an open coding process. Themes were identified from the data and then data reduction was conducted based on commonalities of the discovered themes and topics for final analysis. In addition, the themes identified from the principal data was compared to those that emerged from the teacher focus group data to determine common themes as well as any themes found in one but not the other. The theme of inter-rater agreement, which was prevalent in the teacher focus group data but not the principal data, was determined in this manner.

Once the data analysis was complete the themes and topics identified in the findings were compared to the existing literature on teacher evaluation. Since the Evaluation Process is a relatively new process, existing literature and research on the instrument is not very prevalent; however, the research data obtained was compared to the latest research on teacher evaluation practices. Comparing the themes from the data to the existing literature and an examination of the two instruments allowed for triangulation. Silverman and Marvasti (2008) state that, “Triangulation refers to the attempt to get a ‘true’ fix on a situation by combining different ways of looking at it or different findings” (p. 260). In addition to the interview data from the principals and the teacher focus groups, the documents containing both evaluation instruments and directions for use were examined. The directions for use for the Teacher Evaluation Process are very detailed and make numerous references to the purpose and mission of the instrument. In general, the Evaluation Process was much more detailed than the TPAI-R. The TPAI-R contained some explanations and directions, but overall lacked the depth of the new Evaluation Process. This provided for three distinct data points.

Ethical Issues

The primary ethical issue that could have arisen from the study would be the identification of the participants. To minimize this risk, pseudonyms were used for the system and the participants to help insure the anonymity of all parties involved. However, the implementation of the Evaluation Process is state-mandated. Since it was not developed, purchased, or mandated by the local school system the perceptions of the process provided by the participants would have minimal impact on the system. In addition, the use of focus

groups adds an additional layer of anonymity for the teacher participants. As such, any potential for a negative reaction by the system or individuals within the system was minimal.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited in that it focused on rural principals' observational/evaluative practices using the TPAI-R and the North Carolina Evaluation Process. A total of three principals, one each from three different schools, were recruited to participate in the study through interviews. The principals were chosen due to their years of experience as an administrator, which overlapped both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process, and due to the fact that the three individual schools in which they worked allowed for a diverse sample of administrators since they represented one each from the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The participants in the study were recruited from a rural county in North Carolina. Participants were recruited through email contact that outlined the criteria for participation such as experience with both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process.

This meant the impact of the study was primarily restricted to other rural principals in North Carolina. In addition, the sample size was limited to three principals and focus groups of teachers from the same schools as the principals. It is possible that with a larger sample size the findings could vary. Furthermore, the participants chosen to participate in the study were restricted to those that also have experience with the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process in order to provide perspective in relation to how the principals' observations and evaluations have changed. This possibly makes the interest of the study further restricted to those that also have experience with both evaluation methods.

Additionally, the North Carolina Evaluation Process has been used since 2009 in most school systems. The interviews for this study were conducted in August and September

of 2015. This 6 year time lag means that participants, by necessity, relied more heavily on memory to relate information on the TPAI-R than they did for the Evaluation Process which they are currently utilizing. This time lag may affect the participants' perceptions of the TPAI-R. For example, if they had an observation or evaluation by an administrator using the TPAI-R that resulted in a negative experience, that perception of negativity could potentially become harsher over time, or conversely dim with time. Regardless, this would alter the participants' level of objectivity.

Researcher Subjectivity Statement

The purpose of this study was to investigate how transitioning from the TPAI-R observation/evaluation instrument to the Evaluation Process has affected principals' observational and evaluative practices. The principals participating in this study were from a rural county in North Carolina. As the former principal of a rural high school in the county in North Carolina in which the study took place, the researcher has used the Evaluation Process to evaluate teachers on numerous occasions and therefore has naturally developed his own thoughts, feelings, and understandings about the process. In addition, the researcher participated in training sponsored by the NCDPI on how to use the instrument, and received instruction on how to train others to use the instrument. Consequently, the researcher was selected by his school system to provide training to other principals on the Evaluation Process. The training was conducted using a team of trainers in each training session; however one of the principal participants selected for this study participated in sessions conducted by the researcher. The other two participants were not employees of the school system during the time that the researcher conducted the trainings.

The tenure of the researcher as an administrator began in the year 2000. At that time the TPAI-R was the teacher evaluation instrument in use. As a result, the researcher has approximately nine years' experience in using the TPAI-R. Since the school system was a participant in the pilot phase of the implementation of the Evaluation Process the researcher had two years' experience utilizing the Process as of the conclusion of the 2010-2011 school year. It would be a fair statement to say that through this use the researcher has developed his own opinions and thoughts about the instrument, its implementation process, and its use as an observational/evaluative tool.

During the 2010-2011 school year the researcher, along with the other administrators at his school, was responsible for the evaluation of 55 teachers. As some teachers require only one observation and others require three administrative observations, the researcher completed approximately 70 teacher observations and/or evaluations using the Evaluation Process. Since the size of the faculty at the school remained constant for the subsequent two-year time period, approximately the same number of observations were completed by the researcher in the previous school year.

In addition to using the instrument, the researcher was selected by his school system to receive initial training from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction on the use of the Evaluation Process/Instrument as part of the train-the-trainer implementation strategy that the NCDPI utilized. The researcher then served as a trainer for principals, assistant principals, and central office personnel in the school system in which he is employed. It is possible that one of the principal participants participated in training conducted by the researcher.

Although much subsequent training have taken place that did not involve the researcher and the instrument has continued to evolve over time, it is at least conceivable that this fact could have an effect on the responses of that particular participant. The other two principal participants were in a different school system and therefore could not have been trained by the researcher. Had this happened it could have negatively affected the results of the study. However, ultimately the data obtained from the interviews demonstrated consistency, therefore the researcher does not believe this to have had a negative impact.

The researcher acknowledges that it is conceivable that a participant may be reluctant to answer questions related to training if they were trained in part by the researcher and/or if they felt their responses may be deemed as reflecting negatively on themselves or the researcher. However, there was no evidence that this occurred. Overall, the researcher does not feel this was an issue since there were multiple trainers in each training session and the information relayed in the training session came directly from the SBE and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. In addition, since the initial training session, the researcher had not further contact with the participant in regards to the Evaluation Process; therefore there is no reason to believe this influenced the participants' responses. Nevertheless, it is something that needs to be acknowledged as being in the realm of possibilities.

The fact that the researcher is a former high school principal makes the diversity of the study an important feature. By having equal numbers of elementary, middle, and high school principals in the study it balanced the study and helped to negate any subjectivity that may have been introduced by the researcher having a strong high school background.

Chapter Summary

An individual principal's views on teaching and learning may or may not match that of the SBE and therefore may or may not match the basic philosophy expressed in the Evaluation Process. This may seem a fairly obvious statement but these views form the basis of the principal's perceptions about the Evaluation Process as a whole and the Evaluation Rubric as a tool in teacher observation/evaluation. This study was a qualitative study because it focused on the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of a small sampling of principals and teachers in a rural North Carolina county on the Evaluation Process. Principals and teachers were interviewed in their own schools, in the setting most familiar to them. They were asked to describe and relate their personal experiences and issues in regards to the Evaluation Process.

The research for this qualitative study was conducted in the form of a case study. The implementation of the Evaluation Process by rural principals in a county in North Carolina is a case that was examined through the perspectives of the principals themselves. Interviews were used as the primary data collection method for these participants. Data was collected primarily in the form of formal participant interviews. The interview data, after transcription verification, was coded using an open coding process. Themes, categories, and trends emerged from the data with no preconceived hypothesis used in the analysis. Once the themes were identified, data reduction was conducted based on commonalities of the discovered themes and topics for final analysis. The themes from the principal data were compared to those that emerged from the teacher focus group data to determine common themes as well as any themes that emerged from one set of data that were not prevalent in the other set of data. The findings of the study are presented in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Findings

The Research Process

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the perspectives of rural principals on the North Carolina Evaluation Process and how their observational and/or evaluative practices have changed, if at all, under the process as compared to the previous instrument, the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument - Revised. What did principals do before the Evaluation Process was implemented and what do they do now? Have there been changes in practice, and if so, what are those changes? The focus of this study is how principals' observational practices in a rural county in North Carolina have changed through the implementation of the Evaluation Process as compared to the practices they utilized during the time that the TPAI-R was the evaluation instrument being used.

To investigate this problem, data was collected from principals, who are the observers, as well as from teachers, who are being observed. As the primary observers and evaluators of the teachers in the schools, insights into the principals' practices in regards to the Evaluation Process in general and the Evaluation Rubric in particular are vital information in the determination of whether changes in evaluative practices have occurred. Principals and assistant principals were recruited that have used both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process. In addition, teachers were recruited that have been observed/evaluated by principals using the TPAI-R and also by the Evaluation Process.

A total of three principals, one each from three different schools, were recruited to participate in the study through interviews. In addition, teachers were recruited to participate

in interviews through a focus group. The primary method of data collection for the administrators occurred in the form of formal participant interviews. Each participant was interviewed using a list of interview questions that were open-ended and designed to encourage participants to share their experiences and practices while utilizing both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process, with a focus on what they did before the implementation of the process and what they do now. The interviews were tape-recorded and field notes were taken as an additional data source.

Prior to the interviews, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the participants to obtain basic background information. The questionnaire for administrators contained items inquiring about the participants' school level, overall years' experience as an administrator, years' experience using the TPAI-R, years' experience using the Evaluation Process, size of school, average number of faculty members that the participant observes using the Evaluation Process each year, the experience the participant had prior to becoming a principal (classroom teacher, guidance counselor, etc.), and the average amount of time spent per observation on beginning teachers and on tenured/career teachers.

The teachers were interviewed as part of a focus group. The focus group was interviewed using a list of interview questions similar to those used for the principals and were also open-ended and designed to encourage participants to share experiences they had while being observed with the TPAI-R instrument and the Evaluation Process. Similar to the administrators, a questionnaire for teachers was distributed and completed by them to solicit background information, with the focus being on teaching experience and experience being observed with both instruments.

Transcripts of each principal's respective interview were provided to them for their review. Each had the opportunity to make any additions and/or amendments that they felt were needed. All three of the principals interviewed for this study declined to make any changes or additions to the transcript. One declined to read over the transcript and the other two reported that the transcript was accurate and therefore did not need any revisions. Pseudonyms were used for the county, school system, and all participants in the study to maintain a level of anonymity and to protect the participants from possible bias after the study has been concluded.

Once the data was collected it was analyzed to identify themes and topics. These were compared to the existing literature on teacher evaluation where possible. Since the Evaluation Process is a relatively new process, existing literature and research on the instrument is not very prevalent; however, the research data obtained was compared to research on teacher evaluation practices.

The two evaluation instruments were examined to note any similarities and/or differences between the two. In addition, since the TPAI-R is a revised version of the original Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (TPAI), it is important to briefly examine that instrument to identify key components of the two to gain perspective on what the revisions were that led to it being called the TPAI-R, the "R" meaning revised.

Finally, the researcher has considerable experience using both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process. As an additional point of reference a comparison will be made between the perspectives of the participants with the researchers' personal experiences and perspectives relative to the two instruments. Additionally, while a classroom teacher the researcher was evaluated using the TPAI and the TPAI-R.

An Examination of the Two Instruments

The TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process are very different in their design. The differences between the two instruments were very intentional. McRel (2012) highlighted this at the beginning of the evaluation process document. “According to the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission, the different demands on 21st century education dictate new roles for teachers in their classrooms and schools” (p. 4). The document goes on to define what teachers need to know and be able to do through eight bulleted items as follows:

- Leadership among the staff and with the administration is shared in order to bring consensus and common, shared ownership of the vision and purpose of work of the school. Teachers are valued for the contributions they make to their classroom and the school.
- Teachers make the content they teach engaging, relevant, and meaningful to students’ lives.
- Teachers can no longer cover material; they, along with their students, uncover solutions. They teach existing core content that is revised to include skills like critical thinking, problem solving, and information and communications technology (ICT) literacy.
- In their classrooms, teachers facilitate instruction encouraging all students to use 21st century skills so they discover how to learn, innovate, collaborate, and communicate their ideas.
- The 21st century content (global awareness, civic literacy, financial literacy, and health awareness) is included in the core content areas.

- Subjects and related projects are integrated among disciplines and involve relationships with the home and community.
- Teachers are reflective about their practice and include assessments that are authentic and structured and demonstrate student understanding.
- Teachers demonstrate the value of lifelong learning and encourage their students to learn and grow.

In essence, since the North Carolina State Board of Education felt that the roles of teachers had changed, the way in which teachers were evaluated had to change as well. McRel (2012) explained it by saying, “The North Carolina State Board of Education charged the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission to align the Core Standards for the Teaching Profession (1997) with the newly adopted mission. To this end, Commission members, 16 practicing educators from across the state, considered what teachers need to know and be able to do in 21st century schools” (p. 7).

The TPAI-R was the revised version of the original Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (TPAI) and contained the same eight major standards as the TPAI (NCDPI Report, 1986, p. 27). The original TPAI was piloted in the 1981-82 school year in twenty-four school districts (NCDPI Report, p. 4). The report (NCDPI Report) further states that:

Regarding the performance appraisal system, it quickly became obvious that whatever practices the teacher was being held accountable for, these practices should have been proved to be effective by research, that the teacher should have been trained in these practices, and subsequently should be evaluated in terms of how well the teacher performed these practices on the job. To assure that such was the case in North Carolina, the State Department of Public Instruction in 1983 instituted a search

of the literature and has identified the practices now contained in the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (TPAI). (p. 7)

The fact that the TPAI, and thus the TPAI-R, was based on an examination of the literature and teacher best practices is important as it addresses the fact that there was a definite intent on the part of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina State Board of Education to create an instrument that actually could be used to evaluate teacher performance. Holdzkom (1991) stated,

When the North Carolina General Assembly called on the DPI to develop a system to evaluate teacher performance, a good deal of thought was devoted to the question of evaluative criteria. While everyone involved in the discussion had favorite teaching methods or practices, everyone also agreed that mere personal preference was not a legitimate basis for determining what constitutes satisfactory performance. Legal and ethical guidelines suggested that evaluative criteria should be related to effectiveness in the job of teaching, while still allowing teachers wide latitude for making instructional decisions. (p. 783)

The TPAI was subsequently mandated for use in North Carolina through State Board of Education policy. According to the report, the policy stated that (NCDPI report), “Beginning July 1, 1987, all local education agencies will be required to use the new research-based criteria, procedures, and processes for teacher evaluation” (p. 8)

The TPAI contained the same eight major standards, but there were differing numbers of descriptors for the standards than in the TPAI-R. Additionally, the TPAI used a rating scale that incorporated six ratings which included the ratings of Well Above Standard and Superior (NCDPI report, p. 31). The TPAI-R was a four-page document that listed the eight

major functions on which teachers were to be evaluated. Each function was rated once using a scale that consisted of only four possible ratings for the evaluator to choose from. The ratings used for the standards were above standard, at standard, below standard, and unsatisfactory (TPAI-R, 2001). As found in the TPAI-R evaluation instrument, the eight major functions, in order are:

- Management of Instructional Time
- Management of Student Behavior
- Instructional Presentation
- Instructional Monitoring
- Instructional Feedback
- Facilitating Instruction
- Communicating within the Educational Environment
- Performing Non-Instructional Duties

Each of these major functions contained a list of specific items that the evaluator looked for during the observation to help guide them in their observation of the teacher, although only one rating was provided for the function as a whole (TPAI-R, 2001).

The Evaluation Rubric is an eleven-page document and has five standards that a principal observes either during teacher observations or from other evidence observed or submitted by the teacher in lieu of the eight major functions. In addition, as part of their summary evaluation teachers are provided a rating on a sixth standard through student growth data collected by NCDPI. This data is generated primarily, though not exclusively, through standardized testing. While this standard is a significant component of a teacher's evaluation under this process, it is not part of the principal's responsibilities as an

observer/evaluator. As a result, teachers may have very strong thoughts, feelings, and opinions on this standard. However, Standard 6 does not directly affect the task of the principals; therefore their thoughts, feelings, and opinions on this standard may or may not be quite as strong as it is for Standards 1-5.

Each of the five standards that principals are responsible for rating is sub-divided into specific items called elements. Each element contains specific skills under the five areas of what is referred to as the evaluation rubric. The instrument does not refer to these as ratings until the summary evaluation, but they can be used each time an observation is conducted with the process.

The Evaluation Process and the TPAI-R are vastly different. Items that were major functions in the TPAI-R are elements under the standards in the Evaluation Process and some are not included at all, merely inferred through the items under the elements. For example, Management of Student Behavior, Major Function II in the TPAI-R, is basically contained in the first element of Standard II of the Evaluation Process, although worded very differently. In addition, none of the six descriptors that an evaluator was to look for in this function of the TPAI-R are a part of the Evaluation Process. The standard that comes closest to being the same in both instruments is facilitation of instruction. The title is similar in both instruments and some of the descriptors are included in the elements and items in the Process. By comparison, Management of Instructional Time, Major Function I in the TPAI-R, is only vaguely, at best, included in the Evaluation Process.

A comparison of the two instruments quickly reveals that the Evaluation Process is a much more comprehensive document than the TPAI-R. Even though it contains fewer standards, the elements and items contained within the standards make it very detailed. The

Process also references 21st century learning, technology, collaboration, and the development of critical thinking skills throughout the document. In addition, it recognizes the importance of the teacher leader, making this topic Standard I out of the five that comprise the portion that the principal rates.

Participant Background Information

Three school administrators were interviewed for the purpose of this study. Each administrator was interviewed independently of each other at their respective school. In addition, ten teachers were interviewed as part of a focus group. All of the participants are educators in the same rural school district in North Carolina.

Participant A, who will be assigned the pseudonym Mary, is a middle school principal. She has over 20 years total experience as a school administrator. She estimates that she averaged about 40 observations/evaluations per year while using the TPAI-R which would extrapolate to well over 500 completed using this instrument. In terms of the Evaluation Process she estimates that she averages about 33 observations and approximately 35 summary evaluations annually. This equates to over 200 observations and about the same number of summary evaluations total.

Participant B, who will be assigned the pseudonym Sue, is a high school assistant principal. She has been a school administrator for a total of 19 years. She estimates that she averaged about 90 observations/evaluations annually while using the TPAI-R which would total over 1200 for her career. She estimates that she has averaged 70 observations or summary evaluations annually for a total of over 350 to date.

Participant C, who will be assigned the pseudonym Jane, is an elementary school principal. She has over 31 total years of experience as a school administrator. She estimates

that she averaged about 75 observations or evaluations per year using the TPAI-R or over 1500 total. She estimates that between observations and summary evaluations that she averages about 125 uses of the instrument annually which equates to over 1200 total for her career so far.

The teachers participating in the focus group ranged in years of experience from a low of 9 years to a high of 23 years. The average experience level of the group was 15 years. Of the ten teachers exactly half of the group had a Bachelor's degree while the other half had obtained their Master's degree. All ten indicated that they received, on average, three observations per year for both the TPAI-R and the Teacher Evaluation Process. Four of the teachers stated that they had used both the TPAI-R and the Observation Rubric to conduct peer observations during their career. Four additional teachers had not used the TPAI-R to observe a peer but they had used the Observation Rubric. The remaining two members of the group have not used either instrument to observe their peers.

Emergent Themes

An open coding process was used to identify themes in the data. Khandkar (2009) states that, "Open Coding includes labeling concepts, defining and developing categories based on their properties and dimensions" (p. 1). Khandkar (2009) expands this definition by saying:

The first step in qualitative data analysis is to go through the data (i.e. text) to break down in to pieces to examine closely, compare for relations, similarities and dissimilarities. Different parts of the data are marked with appropriate 'codes' to identify them for further analysis.

A concept is a labeled section of data that a researcher identifies as significant to some facts that data represents. Concepts are abstract representations of events, objects, actions, or interactions and they allow researchers to group similar information to better understand the data. (p. 2)

Additionally, Glaser and Laudel (2013) indicate that coding has evolved over time. They state, “This idea has migrated from the grounded theory approach into general qualitative data analysis. Today coding also is a recommended technique of qualitative data analysis in other approaches that do not explicitly subscribe to a grounded theory approach” (paragraph 39).

The data from the three principal interviews was examined for similarities and dissimilarities to determine what, if any, patterns emerged. Glaser and Laudel (2013) state, “The contribution of methods to the search for patterns in the data is their support of ordering the data according to various principles (time, actors, actions, locations, and so on)” (paragraph 30). As patterns were detected, particularly the repetition of phrases and key words by the principals in the study, they were examined for common themes.

In the examination of the data from the principal interviews three themes emerged. The first theme is the amount of time needed to complete an observation or evaluation. The second theme is that the Evaluation Process affects how teachers are expected to teach. The third theme is the use of the Evaluation Process and its effect on their evaluative practices, which addresses the focus of this study. The examination of the teacher focus group data supports these three themes. However, an additional theme emerged from the focus group that was not mentioned by the principals. That theme is that the teachers have a common concern about the degree to which varying administrators differ in their interpretation of the

teacher's performance when viewing the same or similar activities. This is known as inter-rater agreement, often called inter-rater reliability. Each of these themes is explored separately below.

Time

The first theme that emerged from the data was the amount of time needed to complete an observation. According to McRel's document North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process (2009), "A formal observation shall last at least forty-five minutes or an entire class period" (p. 17). This indicates that the length of a formal observation can vary from school to school or even within the same school based on the length of a class period. This time period only indicates the length of the actual observation, i.e. the amount of time an observer should physically be present in the classroom. It does not include the amount of time for a pre-conference, post-conference, or the time an observer may take reviewing the results of the observation to make comments or notes.

Although the specifics varied slightly from principal to principal, their perception of how much time was needed to complete an observation was a topic that was repeatedly mentioned, but sometimes with conflicting data. The bluntest of the three was Sue who in regards to the amount of time needed to use the Evaluation Process stated, "I think it stinks. It takes forever to get done. The difference is it takes longer to complete the instrument." In her response to the question on time in her questionnaire, she reiterated that stance providing a timeframe of 90 minutes to complete an observation at the high school level using the Process as compared to about 20 minutes to complete an observation using the TPAI-R.

Similar to Sue, Mary stated, "Although I am getting used to the new system I can complete the other (TPAI-R) quicker. I am finding ways to speed up the new system."

However, when completing the questionnaire she seemed to contradict that statement, saying that she spent the same amount of time for both, about 45 minutes. She did clarify that for the post-conference it depended on the needs of the teacher and what needed to be discussed.

Jane seemed to contradict herself from the questionnaire to the actual interview. In the interview she stated, "To me, it is not as much time (for the Evaluation Process). I am a scheduler. When they (the teachers) arrive at school they know when I'm going to do their evaluations. I run that way." When answering the questionnaire, she stated the same position, but was not as demonstrative in her view. She stated, in regards to the TPAI-R that she spent "about an hour and a half at best". Whereas on the Process she stated, "On this process I do not take as much time. It probably would be best if I did, but I don't." Later, in discussing the two instruments inclusive of the time needed to meet with the teachers after the observations she stated that she spent, "Probably two hours (on the TPAI-R) but maybe a little less now (with the Evaluation Process). Now, about an hour and a half because technology has improved." What makes this interesting is that Jane indicated in the questionnaire that she did not really use the technology while conducting the observation.

The effect of utilizing the technology and/or software program used to deliver the Teacher Evaluation Process was an interesting sub-category of the theme of time spent completing observations with the Process as compared to the TPAI-R. When speaking of the Evaluation Process principals sometimes did not distinguish between the evaluation instrument itself and the electronic software program into which the Evaluation Process is embedded. The electronic format is the primary way that principals access the instrument to conduct observations and evaluations although paper copies can be printed. The TPAI-R

was, for the most part, utilized through a paper/pencil format or later through a document that could be typed into, but the fundamental way that it was used by the principal was the same.

When asked about the difference between the Evaluation Process and the TPAI-R Mary stated, “The difference is all that technology and going from paper to computer and all this clicking. It takes longer and technology should be faster.” She went on to say “...when I am sitting in there listening to that lesson I am just concentrating on that lesson and not thinking about what the teacher did outside of class and I am doing all that clicking. The new system is easy to keep up with and good because if it gets lost it is on the State but it is too much clicking and preparing for the evaluation and the status of the teacher.”

Although Jane seemed to embrace the technology, she did not really use it during the observation. She stated, “I take my computer in with me and I still use hard copies because that is engrained in me, but I do not script anymore. So I take a blank copy with me and I write all over that and when I do the post-conference I use that and then I put it in the computer.” Very similarly, Sue states, “The way I used to do it I took a copy of the observation with me and wrote notes. The one on the computer (the Evaluation Process) I am scripting almost like the TPAI. Then I go through the notes (to complete the form).”

While discussing which instrument she considers to be better Mary is very straightforward about how she feels. “To be honest, I would go back. I would prefer, if I had that instrument (TPAI-R) on the computer – I can write better than all that clicking. I would go back to that. The more I use it (the Evaluation Process) I am liking it and getting used to it. I just wish they would fix all that clicking.” The clicking Mary is referring to is a by-product of the software program used to deliver the Rubric for the Evaluation Process. Using the software program an observer will use the computer to check, or click if using a computer

mouse, the box next to the items under each element contained in the standards. This would only be done if the observer determines that the teacher is meeting the criteria described in the item.

The teacher focus group referred to the check boxes in the Rubric on seven different occasions during the interview. This was from multiple teachers on multiple questions. The teachers also indicated time as an issue, but only from the perspective of a peer observer. One teacher stated that, “Lot of time involved. I did four peer observations and if you are sitting back there back and forth with the person, we still couldn’t get it done.” Time not being a major theme from the perspective of the teachers may be due to the fact that regardless of what instrument is being used, the TPAI-R or the Evaluation Process, the teacher’s role is essentially the same. They teach their class for the designated time dictated by the school’s schedule regardless of whether or not an administrator is sitting in the classroom. Teachers do have to complete a Self-Assessment using the Evaluation Process, (McRel, 2009), but aside from that the involvement of the teachers include participating in the pre-conference, development of a plan for professional growth, the observation and the post-conference. This was true in both instruments.

One component mentioned by the teachers that was not mentioned by the administrators was the window to complete an observation post-conference. According to the McRel (2009) manual, “The principal shall conduct a post-observation conference no later than ten school days after each formal observation” (p. 18). One teacher noted this by saying, “If you don’t do it in that window...post-conference within ten days...can’t get it done.”

The Effect on Teaching

The second theme that emerged from the data was the effect that the Evaluation Process has on the way teachers teach. The administrators and many of the teachers in the focus group spoke of how the use of the Evaluation Process had affected teaching, although in various ways. One of the ways that was indicated by the administrators was the amount of reflection that teachers now do. In discussing observations Mary stated that, “This process really makes teachers reflect and they have to bring those artifacts because they want to grow, and I think teachers really want to grow and their goal is to be accomplished. They want to be distinguished and they think proficient is bad.” Also referring to the accomplished rating on the Rubric, Sue said that, “I think it is hard to get everything in and the teachers have to prove that they do something on a regular basis to get accomplished.”

Jane spoke about reflection as well, although she worded it differently. She said that, “Talking to teachers afterwards you see their take-a-ways. Watching the students leading and learning. Learning and teaching have changed and the expectations have changed so much. Teachers are really becoming facilitators.” She continued by saying:

An effective teacher is not a teacher that has a quiet classroom and I think that is what we looked for prior to 2010. Now I am looking for collaboration, the talking, the teacher’s answering the questions with an answer so the student can get the answer. No longer is walking in the classroom and the teacher says they are doing their work and the classroom is quiet. What work are they doing?

While discussing a situation in which she felt an observation did not go well, Jane highlighted a difference she perceived between the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process.

The classroom I was in my teacher had a great lesson planned. But she only skimmed the lesson. It did not go well for her. It probably would have gone well years ago, but I was looking for so much more. I had to talk to her about only being on the surface; the feedback was not what I was looking for. That was not much of a factor in the TPAI-R. So, she is having to make some changes.

Initially in the focus group interview the teachers echoed the thoughts of the administrators in several comments. For example, one teacher stated, "I always thought with the old one I was performing, but with the new one they are looking at more of me as a teacher and what I do as a teacher." Another comment was that, "I felt with the newer one it is looking more about what the students are doing and how they perform, not just how the teacher is teaching." Yet a third teacher said, "My first observation I was like...what do you mean I am not accomplished or distinguished? I had to self-reflect." Similarly, another teacher stated, "At first you really had to go above and beyond and still didn't get there. I remember having to show artifacts and even when I did I still wasn't at distinguished. I had to sit down with the principal and discuss it." One person though had a different take on being an effective teacher. She said simply, "Being an effective teacher is test scores. It doesn't matter how they measure during the year."

After these comments were made the tone of the teacher focus group interview shifted as the teachers began to relate more and more negative experiences with the instrument and the practices of the administrators that had used it to observe them. Some teachers did directly comment on the TPAI-R. One teacher said, "I'm trying to remember the TPAI-R...like classroom management and discipline. It is not on this new instrument or maybe it is with the check marks. I think classroom management is important." This

omission was echoed by Jane as she stated, “I have a problem tying discipline in and to me that is important. The new process does not allow for that.” Another teacher stated in regards to the TPAI-R that, “I like the old one better because you can see what they wrote, not just looking at a computer.” A third teacher phrased it by saying, “The old one was more scripted and you can see what they saw and what they want. Not just a check mark. Hall duty and kids walking in a straight line you can’t check on that (the Evaluation Process) instrument.”

However, in regards to the Evaluation Process they were very vocal. One teacher stated that it is “too rigid. You can’t be distinguished without knowing what you are being asked of. You need a thesaurus to understand.” The same teacher continued by saying that it “wasn’t written by someone that has been in a classroom.” When asked directly how it has affected their teaching during the interview only one teacher spoke up. Her comment was, “Performing, in order to get all of our checks. So I have done the lesson from the day before. Do not start anything new so that you may not fail. We second guess ourselves. The kids know you have a stranger in the room. The anticipation of getting it wrong...we all know some teachers can fake it.”

When the question was asked in the interview regarding the teacher’s perception of the value of the Evaluation Process one teacher made the quip “Not Observed” which drew a prolonged bout of laughter and comments from the teacher group. Although this phrase is not a part of the Rubric, everyone in the room knew the teacher was referring to the category “Not Demonstrated” which is described in the McRel manual to be used “when the teacher is performing below expectations and is not making adequate growth toward becoming proficient on the element. This rating is also used when the principal is not able to check any

of the descriptors for the element being rated” (2009, p. 20) and is one of the rating categories in the Rubric. It is generally considered to be the most negative of the ratings.

The idea of some teachers seeming to support a positive effect on teaching while others take a more negative approach is supported in the literature. In the report *Teacher and Principal Perceptions of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System* by Davis, Bangert, Comperatore, and Smalenberger (2015), the following was noted:

According to both teachers and principals, feedback was focused on teaching practices. Participants stated that each standard was discussed during feedback sessions, along with teacher’s assigned rating and evidence for the rating. During feedback sessions, teachers received copies of observers’ notes, along with suggestions for improvement. Teachers stated that feedback sessions varied in length and that typically the observers were interested in seeing their lesson plans and how their teaching aligned with the objectives. Principals tended to observe less experienced teachers about three or four times a year and seasoned teachers about one or two times. (p. 11)

However, some feedback included in the report showed that this is not always the case. The report stated (2015):

Both principals and teachers shared a wide array of reactions to the timeline and quality of feedback. Principals reported that feedback on observations was comprehensive and immediate. Specifically, principals indicated that feedback occurred within a day or two after observations. In some instances, teachers reported receiving a satisfactory level of feedback on their evaluation, but others indicated a lack of feedback. Although some principals indicated that they fully utilized the

feedback loop, others described this process as one that needed the most improvement. Both teachers and principals expressed that their post-evaluation sessions often felt rushed. (p. 12)

Breedlove (2011) also noted that teachers' perceptions of the evaluation process could vary greatly. In her research she found that some teachers felt that "evaluation helped them grow professionally" whereas others, especially experienced teachers, "held a less favorable view of the efficacy of the process" (pp. 72-73).

The Effect on Principals' Practices

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how principals' observational and/or evaluative practices have changed, if at all, under the Evaluation Process as compared to how they performed this task under the TPAI-R. The three principals in the study all indicated, to varying degrees, that the transition to the Evaluation Process did, in fact, have an effect on them in the performance of this task. Two did so very overtly while the third was more subtle but provided evidence in her responses that indicated that she changed her practices as well. Evidence from the teacher focus group supported this as well; however, as previously stated the teachers were much more focused on inter-rater agreement than any other component of the evaluation process.

During her interview, Jane made several points about changes she has made to her observational practices. In response to the question of how has implementation of the Evaluation Process affected your role as a principal she had this to say:

It really shouldn't. As a principal I am their teacher and coach. But it has given so much more information as a principal to coach. We are so much more specific about talking about data, differentiation, higher order thinking skills, rubrics. Yes, it has

changed. I am more of a supporter and teacher now. I have good staff; I don't have to be the bad guy.

Mary also had a lot to say in response to this question. She stated:

It gives me a chance to reflect on how teachers can improve because at my school you better be ready to tell a teacher why they are not accomplished. So it is helping me to start looking at strategies on ways to help the teacher. It forces me to look at strategies on how to become an accomplished teacher. So, when I know a teacher is coming in I better have my facts down as to why the teacher is not a distinguished teacher. But it helps me and I am helping her when I sit down with the teacher to tell them how and what improvements they can make to become accomplished or distinguished. I grow.

Sue's response was more succinct but still meaningful. Her response was, "I think you become more of an instructional leader. You have to know all the categories, elements, and standards to be able to determine whether or not the teachers are meeting the standards, elements and indicators."

Although all three administrators indicated significant changes in their role as a principal, they did not necessarily carry those thoughts over to the direct question of has the Evaluation Process changed what you do or look for when you go into a teacher's classroom. Two of the three, Sue and Jane, provided responses indicating that it had changed what they look for while in the classroom, although not necessarily in the same way. Jane indicated the following:

Yes, it does change what I look for. I am looking for actual skills. I like to look at a grade level at a time. Even when I do my walk-throughs I do grade levels. We are

schedule driven. We adjusted scheduling time, like science. We adjusted our schedule for that. We adjusted and I expect them to honor their time with the subject. I walk into their room with a schedule. It has changed what I am looking for and changed the whole school.

Sue stated that, “Yes, I am constantly looking for the indicators that are on the standards. What I can check off. Prior to the implementation of the new instrument on the computer we were flipping pages looking for standards.”

Mary, who at times waffled between which instrument she felt was better, was the only one of the three who indicated that she has not changed what she looks for while in the classroom. She stated, “Not really. I am still looking for the same things during observations. I am more focused on what the teacher has now and what the teacher has asked me to look for because of the pre-conference.” I found this interesting since the two instruments are very different and also due to the fact that during the interview she spoke several times about differences in the two instruments as well as things she now does differently. However, she did focus on the technology aspect of the Evaluation Process far more than the other two principals. She referenced the technology in 9 of the 14 interview questions, more than the other two combined.

From the teacher perspective, their comments were more focused on meeting the parameters of the Evaluation Process and whether or not the administrators are using the instrument with fidelity. A sampling of the teacher comments are as follows:

If you looked at the announced observation you have to make sure you are going to get the boxes checked or show the artifacts. You are preparing more for the observations. Some is not measurable. How do I prove the diversity and culture in

my classroom? I'm not thinking about that while I am thinking about teaching the subject. The only reason I would pull this document is to meet the requirements.

Another teacher said, "Some administrators will not dig deep enough to know what you are doing in the community or volunteering. I have to keep up with everything." Other feedback on the observational practices include, "You will never be distinguished and if you are the person observing doesn't know what they were doing" and "If you are struggling work on it and get to proficient. Have artifacts to back it up. If we don't see artifacts we will go back in and change your evaluation." As noted previously, the teachers were far more focused on the issue of inter-rater agreement than other aspects of the observation/evaluation process, a theme that is explored more fully in the next section as well as the overall negative feelings about the observation process.

Inter-rater Agreement

Inter-rater agreement was not mentioned at all by the three principals that participated in the study. This is not surprising since the study was focused on whether or not their observational practices had changed since the transition from the TPAI-R to the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process. However, it was such an overriding theme from the teacher focus group interview that it cannot be ignored as a resulting theme emerging from the research. Even though the specific term was not used by any member of the group, many of the comments made by the teachers in relation to principals' observational practices were linked directly to this issue. According to Graham, Milanowski, and Miller (2012), there is a distinction between inter-rater reliability and inter-rater agreement.

Practitioners, researchers, and policymakers often refer to the measurement of consistency across evaluators' judgments about a person or object as "inter-rater

reliability.” This broad use of the term masks important technical distinction between inter-rater agreement and inter-rater reliability. High reliability scores indicate that observers tend to rate teachers in the same relative order, while agreement measures the extent to which scorers agree on the absolute level of performance (the numerical score). When measures of inter-rater agreement and inter-rater reliability are high, educators can be more confident that their scores are consistent and fair. (p. 4)

Beginning with the second interview question and persisting through the end of the interview the teachers continued to bring the discussion back to the concept of inter-rater agreement and an overall negative view of observations and those who conduct them. As the interview progressed, the comments became increasingly negative about the observation/evaluation process in general. All remained professional in that no administrator’s name was ever mentioned or identified in any manner, but that does not mean that all of the comments were necessarily professional.

The first comment was rather benign and was made in relation to the transition to the Evaluation Process. That comment made was, “I think it is subjective. One administrator may see things different from another administrator that might come in.” Another teacher later in the interview spoke to the same issue, “To me personally, because everyone does not use it the exact same way, how do you measure that and what is the value of it? How is that fair?” Graham, Milanowksi, and Miller agree. “Typically, rater agreement is more important to educators when tying high-stakes decisions about promotion, retention, or compensation to evaluations because they often make decisions based on a score threshold” (p. 6).

One teacher provided the following statement about their experiences with the observation process.

I think it stinks. I think it is like testing at the end of the year to fail. They are trying to make sure they don't check the distinguished. They don't want us to feel good about what we are doing. I have a problem with people judging how I do things since I can't see how they do things. Two administrators walk past each other and I am teaching the same way. I don't like anyone observing me anyway. Regardless of the instrument, I don't like it.

Another added, "Some of it goes back to ABC money. Harder for teachers to reach goal – they don't get money."

The comments sometimes cited specific examples, but regardless continued to become increasingly negative. For instance one teacher said, "I was observed from 2:55 to 3:00 and we were in transition, getting papers off the floor, getting book bags." Another stated that they had a snap shot observation and "I got developing and got the email less than five minutes after they left the room." Another teacher felt that the entire process did not really matter. She phrased it by saying, "I have lots of people before me that have taught me and I work hard and have good relationships with my kids so what does it matter? Who wants my job? Does it matter if you get proficient unless you are on the bottom of the pole?" The same teacher later stated, "For lack of a better phrase...I don't care anymore. I just do what I do. It doesn't matter anymore."

While teacher frustrations regarding inter-rater agreement are easy to understand, phrases such as those stated above are hopefully the exception rather than the rule. Inter-rater agreement is not an exact science. As Graham, Milanowski, and Miller (2012) put it,

“Even detailed rubrics, trained raters, and good evidence will not make performance assessment a completely objective process. Some professional judgement will always be called for in assessing performance in professional jobs” (p. 27).

Researcher’s Experiences

The researcher has been evaluated as a teacher by the TPAI and the TPAI-R. In addition, as an administrator the researcher has used the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process to conduct teacher evaluations. This was recognized as a potential bias to the research. However, it also provides the opportunity to compare the researcher’s experiences with those reported by the study participants.

Like some of the participants in the focus group, as a teacher it was always interesting to read the script that the administrator wrote as he/she was conducting the observation/evaluation. It sometimes brought to light things that you did as a teacher that you did not realize that you were doing. Things such as repeating certain words or phrases excessively, addressing one side of the room more than another, not circulating throughout the classroom, or calling on certain students more than others are a few examples of things that could be learned from reading the notes of the observer. However, the same sort of information can be obtained from simply video recording a class or two and examining it critically. It is also easy to get a peer to observe your class with an eye toward looking for such tendencies. Also, it is important to note that using the Process does not prohibit an administrator from scripting if he/she chooses to do so.

Teachers and administrators mentioned items, such as student discipline, that are not overtly a part of the Evaluation Process but were major functions in the TPAI-R. It is important to note that while the Process has its standards, elements, and items, it also

provides ample opportunity for comments and discussion. The instrument can seem prescriptive at first examination, but the opportunity for comment and discussion is built into the instrument itself as highlighted in the McRel document and also into the pre and post-conference tools for observations and for the evaluation (2012, p. 33). This can be used to note any items that the administrator feels a teacher needs to work on to improve the quality of their instructional practices whether specifically contained in the document or not.

One of the issues discussed by the administrators and the teachers was the “clicking” that is a source of annoyance for both groups in regards to the Evaluation Process. The clicking is not actually a part of the instrument but is rather a part of the software program that is used to facilitate the use of the instrument. During an observation or evaluation an administrator has to “click” to check an item that the teacher is giving credit for demonstrating, or not demonstrating, as the case may be.

As a user of the Evaluation Process the researcher has frequently experienced frustration as well as observed the frustration of teachers during pre and post-conferences for observations and the review of professional development plans. During the conferences the administrator and the teacher must endure a series of “clicking” to sign, finalize, and mark complete the documents. In addition, there is a specific order to the “clicking” such that the administrator and the teacher must alternate accessing the documents and refresh the computer screen in order to move forward and complete the signing process. However, as frustrating as this may be it is a good check and balance system to ensure that both the teacher and administrator have been provided the opportunity to review and discuss each document.

Overall, while the simplicity of the TPAI-R is appealing, the comprehensive nature of the Evaluation Process is hard to ignore. While both instruments are research based, the Process is designed with an eye toward the future. The TPAI-R, while a good instrument when it was instituted, is based on research that is now forty to fifty years old.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the perspectives of principals on the Evaluation Process and how their observational and/or evaluative practices have changed, if at all, under the Evaluation Process. In an examination of the data three themes emerged from the principal data and one overriding theme from the teacher focus group in regards to observational practices. The three themes from the principal data were the amount of time needed to complete an observation or evaluation, the Evaluation Process effects how teachers are expected to teach, and the use of the Evaluation Process and its effect of principals' evaluative practices.

The examination of the teacher focus group data supports the three themes identified from the principal data. The overriding theme from the teacher focus group data was not concerned about how observational practices may or may not have changed from one instrument to the next but rather the degree to which varying administrators differ in their interpretation of the teacher's performance when viewing the same or similar activities.

The examination of the instruments themselves and a comparison of their major components provided an additional reference point. While having some similarities, the differences are many. This was intentional as the State Board of Education moved to align its mission and professional teaching standards with the instrument by which teachers are evaluated.

Chapter Five will summarize this study. In addition, it will provide conclusions reached by the researcher and offer recommendations for practice and further study.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The problem this study addressed was to examine the change from the use of the TPAI-R by principals in a rural North Carolina county to the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process and determine how it has affected their classroom observation/evaluation practices, if at all. This study examined, through principal and teacher interviews, how or if the use of the Evaluation Process, and specifically the observational/evaluative instrument contained in the process, has affected the observational and evaluative practices of the principals who are tasked with implementing this change with the necessary degree of fidelity. The study explored principals' and teachers' thoughts, feelings, and insights about the Evaluation Process and how the use of the instrument associated with the Process affected the evaluators' observational practices as compared to how they performed this task under the previously used TPAI-R instrument.

Purpose of the Study

The adoption of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process by the SBE represents a drastic shift in how teachers' performance in the classroom is evaluated. The purpose of this study was to ascertain how principals' observational and/or evaluative practices have changed, if at all, under the North Carolina Evaluation Process as compared to how they performed this task under the TPAI-R. As an additional data point, teachers' thoughts, feelings, and opinions on principals' evaluative practices as a result of this transition were included in the research design.

The intent of the research questions used in this study was to ascertain how principals in a rural county in North Carolina have altered their observational and evaluative practices

through the use of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process. This will be examined in reference to their observational and evaluative practices while using the TPAI-R.

Summary of the Findings

The summary of findings of the study will be addressed by an examination of the data in relation to the original research questions and the themes that emerged from an examination of the principal interview data and the teacher focus group data. The study investigated the following research questions:

1. What experiences did principals have when they implemented the new rubric?
2. How do principals perceive the value of the new process?
3. How has the new evaluation instrument affected principals' perceptions of what it means for a teacher to be effective?
4. How has the implementation of the evaluation process changed the principals' observational practices, i.e., what they look for during an observation as compared to what was looked for when using the TPAI-R?

Three themes emerged from the principal interview data that were supported by the teacher interview data. The first theme is the amount of time needed to complete an observation or evaluation with the instruments in the study. The second theme is that the participants in the study believe that the Evaluation Process affects how teachers are expected to teach. The third theme is that the use of the Evaluation Process affects the principals' evaluative practices, which is the focus of this study.

The examination of the teacher focus group data supported the three themes that emerged from the data from the principal interviews. However, an additional theme emerged from the focus group interview that did not appear anywhere in the principal interview data.

That theme from the focus group interview that became apparent during an examination of the interview data is that the teachers have a concern about the degree to which varying administrators differ in their interpretation of the teachers' performance when viewing the same or similar activities. This inter-rater agreement was central to the teachers' story.

Each of the three principals interviewed related different perspectives about how they implemented the instrument in the transition from the TPAI-R to the Evaluation Process. Mary addressed the difficulty in adjusting to the terminology of Developing, Proficient, Accomplished, and Distinguished. She indicated she liked the term Developing versus Below Standard, as was used in the TPAI-R because "it is more friendly." However, as was typical throughout her interview, she spoke in regards to the software program utilized to deliver the instrument electronically. She stated that she has learned that "when they come in here to have the post-conference when they click, you click, then they click. I used to let them go and click later but no more because I would have to go run them down." Jane bemoaned the difficulty in tying discipline into the Evaluation Process, stating she has "a hard time putting that into Standard One." Sue, on the other hand, focused in on the good training she had that made the transition easier. When asked in the interview specifically about training, all three indicated that, although there were a few glitches, they felt the training was adequate and that they felt prepared when they began using the instrument.

The second research question asked about principals' perceptions of the value of the Evaluation Process. This question was answered ambiguously by all three principals in the study. They all felt that there were positive components and negative components to the Evaluation Process, and throughout the interviews each addressed items that they liked about the Process and items that they did not like. Mary's issues, as stated previously, often were

provided from the standpoint of how the software affected the usability of the instrument. However, she also indicated that the instrument asked her to look at what a teacher did outside of the classroom as well as inside of the classroom.

Jane indicated that she needed to be in the classroom “all the time” so she “gets to the document all the time.” As stated in Chapter 4 she had concerns about the difficulties of including some items such as discipline, but she also spoke of how the instrument “goes beyond the surface” and forces the teachers to delve deeper into instruction and also forces her, as the observer, to look for much more, particularly at what the students are doing, when she is in the classroom. She stated that now she is “looking for collaboration, the talking, the teacher’s answering questions with an answer so that the student can get the answer.” In other words, she emphasized the teacher helping students to synthesize the information at their disposal to discover the answers to their own questions instead of just providing a straightforward response to their queries.

Sue was the most direct in regards to the issue of the value of the Evaluation Process. She stated that it is a “double-edged sword. I like the simplicity of the TPAI-R versus the new evaluation. The new evaluation is tedious. You don’t see everything every time you go into an observation. It could be more cut and dry, if it could be less subjective.” She further indicated that, “With the TPAI-R you can get observations done and conference with teachers. You can give strategies to the teachers. Areas of concern and areas of strength can be provided to the teacher at the conference, with the new instrument, not so much.”

The first theme that emerged from the interview data, the time needed to complete observations using the two instruments pertains most directly to the first research question. It addresses the implementation of the Evaluation Process, which includes the transition

between the TPAI-R and the Observation Rubric. It also includes the actual manner in which principals carry out an observation in the classroom. In regards to time, the process of completing observations using the Rubric was described by the principals in various ways ranging from “tedious” to “looking for ways to speed it up” to stating that the Process was quicker but attributing it to the “technology”. The teachers also stated that there was a “lot of time involved.” Mary additionally stated that “going in with the computer I feel like I am not watching what is really going on.”

The technology which delivers the Evaluation Process was a definitive sub-theme to the data. The “clicking” as it was referred to by the participants is a direct reference to the software program that is used to deliver the Process. When conducting an observation while using a laptop or similar device, the observer has to check the items under each element in the Process that he/she observes the teacher implementing in the classroom. To do so they have to click, if using a computer mouse, to check it off. In addition, when conducting pre and post conferences, the observer and teacher must go through a series of back and forth “clicking” to complete the process.

For example, when the teacher and principal sit together to review an observation, the principal would typically review the observation with the teacher, highlighting the various items, elements, and standards of the instrument, providing feedback, and answering any questions the teacher may ask. Once this process is complete and no changes are needed, the principal must “click” to finalize the observation, which causes the instrument to go through a reload. The principal must then go back into the observation to click “mark complete”. This causes it to reload again and for a “green check” to appear beside the tab for the document. The observer will then go into the post-conference evaluator acknowledgement,

where data involving the conference should have been entered, and click on the acknowledge button. This causes the document to reload. Once it does so, the evaluator must then go back into this document to click on the mark complete button to complete this phase of the process, and once again the document will reload. The teacher must then go into the “teacher acknowledgement” document and click on the acknowledge button, causing a reload, and then go back into the document to click mark complete, causing another reload. This allows for “green checks” to appear beside these documents showing completion; however, in order to see these checks the page must be refreshed (McRel, 2009).

This constant back and forth, going in and out of the documents that make up the evaluation process and trying to be sure that the green checks appear, can be a source of frustration for both the principal and the teacher. Mary referred to this often in her interview and the teachers referred to clicking and checks multiple times during the focus group interview. Although the software program used to deliver the instrument is not the instrument itself, it was obvious that there was no distinction made between the two. In addition, the scripting aspect of the TPAI-R, in which the observer would basically write down almost everything they saw and heard during the observation, was seen as a positive for that instrument and by some participants as a negative since scripting is not necessarily done in the Process.

The administrators and many of the teachers in the focus group spoke of how the use of the Evaluation Process had affected teaching, although in various ways. One of the ways that was indicated by the administrators was the amount of reflection that teachers now do. In discussing observations Mary stated that, “This process really makes teachers reflect and they have to bring those artifacts because they want to grow, and I think teachers really want

to grow and their goal is to be accomplished. They want to be distinguished and they think proficient is bad.” Jane spoke about reflection as well, although she worded it differently. She said that, “Talking to teachers afterwards you see their take-aways.” Jane indicated that previous to 2010 (when the TPAI-R was in use) items such as having a quiet classroom was a primary focus of what was looked for by an administrator. Now she is looking for things such as collaboration, talking, students leading the learning, and the teacher as the facilitator. Now when she enters a classroom that is quiet she questions what work the students are doing. Sue added that “teachers have to prove that they do something on a regular basis.”

The teachers feel like they now have to “perform” for the administrator during an observation in order to “get all of our checks”. Additionally, they feel that being perceived as an effective teacher is still about test scores, and that how they are measured during the year does not matter. One of the ways that they indicated that the implementation of the Evaluation Process had changed what they do is the inclusion of artifacts to influence how a principal may rate them on the rubric. In the original McRel manual (2009) an artifact is defined as follows:

Artifact - A product resulting from a teacher’s work. Artifacts are natural by-products of a teacher’s work and are not created for the purpose of satisfying evaluation requirements. Artifacts are used only when the evaluator and teacher disagree on the final rating. Teachers may use them as exemplars of their work. (p. 2)

The manual provided several examples of artifacts including lesson plans, the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, Professional Development, Student Achievement Data, Student Dropout Data, School Improvement Plan, and School Improvement Team.

The manual has been tweaked some over the years and the version that is currently on the NCDPI website states that an artifact is, “A product resulting from a teacher’s work. Artifacts are natural by-products of a teacher’s work and are not created for the purpose of satisfying evaluation requirements. Artifacts can be presented by the teacher to the evaluator to provide evidence of descriptors in the rubric” (McRel, 2015). The key difference between the two definitions is the reason listed that a teacher should provide an artifact. In the first, the reason centers on when the principal and the teacher disagree. In the more recent definition it is to provide “evidence of descriptors in the rubric”, with no mention of the necessity of a disagreement of the final rating.

This provides some evidence that the process has evolved some since its implementation. The teachers in the focus group discussed providing artifacts, especially in the transition period when the Evaluation Process was first implemented. One teacher stated, “I remember having to show artifacts and even when I did I still wasn’t at distinguished. I had to sit down with the principal and discuss it.” Another stated “we were told about artifacts and I have the book in my room to prove what I was doing. I felt like I wouldn’t have a job.” A third teacher said, “If you are struggling, work on it and get proficient. Have artifacts to back it up.” Additionally, she felt that if not provided it would affect their rating. In regards to this she added the comment that, “If we don’t see the artifacts we will go back in and change your evaluation.”

The final research question is mirrored by the third theme that emerged from the data. This involves the issue of the affect that the implementation of the rubric on the observational and/or evaluative practices of the principals. The data from the interviews from the three principals in the study all indicated, to varying degrees, that the transition to the

Evaluation Process did, in fact, have an effect on them in the performance of this task.

Evidence from the teacher focus group supported this as well. Although the exact manner of how they felt their observational practices have been changed varied between the three principals, they all felt that it had changed from when they used the TPAI-R.

All three principals touched on how the instrument has changed them in terms of how they help to teach the teachers, and thereby help teachers to improve their instructional practices. Jane, for example, discussed the change brought about by the implementation of the Process by saying “it has given so much more information as a principal to coach. We are so much more specific about talking about data, differentiation, higher order thinking skills, rubrics. Yes, it has changed. I am more of a supporter and teacher now.” A similar theme was indicated by Sue as she said, “I think you become more of an instructional leader.” Likewise, Mary related that “it is helping me to start looking at strategies on ways to help the teacher. It forces me to look at strategies on how to become an accomplished teacher.” Some of the teacher data supported what the principals were saying. Early in the teacher focus group interview the following comments about the instrument:

- With the new evaluation process there is more classroom visits and more detailed.
- With the new one they are looking at more of me as a teacher and what I do as a teacher.
- Definitely more specific and looks for more specific....
- I felt with the newer one it is looking more about what students are doing and how they perform....

To varying degrees the three principals also indicated that the instrument focuses what they look for during an observation. They now are more focused on specific skills and the specific items listed on the instrument. They all also indicated some frustration about how to include some of the things that they consider important to being a good teacher but that are not specifically included as an item on the rubric. These include how the teacher handles student discipline and what the teacher does outside of the classroom.

The teachers provided additional feedback to this question, although much of the feedback would be considered negative perceptions of the ability of the principals to conduct objective observations and evaluations. Many comments were made about the subjective nature of observations and evaluations and the inconsistencies between different administrators as they conducted the observation or evaluation. One teacher summed it up with the statement, “One administrator may see things different from another administrator that might come in and see different.”

Discussion of Study’s Findings

The literature strands identified for the purpose of this study were the purpose of teacher evaluation, the perspective of principals on teacher evaluation, and the historical context of teacher evaluation in North Carolina. In the report prepared by Santiago and Benavides for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2009) it states, “Teacher evaluation has typically two major purposes. First, it seeks to improve the teachers own practice by identifying strengths and weaknesses for further professional development – the improvement function. Second, it is aimed at ensuring that teachers perform at their best to enhance student learning – the accountability function” (p. 7). These two purposes represent a prevalent strand found in the literature in regards to

teacher evaluation and evaluation instruments, that being the purpose for teacher evaluation. The findings of the study align very well with the conceptual framework as developed by the OECD. The framework shows the complex interconnectedness of the components of teacher evaluation including the evaluator, teachers, the feedback loop, agencies involved, the purpose, technology used to convey the instrument, the instrument itself, improving student outcomes, and standards (2009). The comprehensive nature of this framework lends itself to an inclusiveness of the findings of the study, especially in terms of the State Board of Education as the agency, principals as the evaluators, teachers, the technology software used, and the instruments being compared.

A second strand found in the literature as applicable to this study is the perspective of principals in regards to state-mandated teacher evaluation instruments. Historical context of teacher evaluation, especially in North Carolina, represents a third strand of literature that is relevant to this study. Much of the literature for this strand of the study is found in documents published by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education.

Teacher evaluation as a process and evaluation instruments as a tool for teacher observation and evaluation both have the challenge of being formative and summative in nature. The idea is that teacher evaluation is used by administrators and by the teachers themselves to improve and grow in their abilities. However, an intrinsic part of the evaluation of any employee is to determine if the employee is performing at a level sufficient to maintain employment.

According to Halverson and Clifford (2006):

Reform-based teacher evaluation artifacts provide a unique opportunity to examine how the hopes of policy design meet the realities of existing practice. On one hand, teacher evaluation programs promise the ability to formatively and summatively assess new practices in terms of desired outcomes. Clear, legitimate access to teaching is necessary for supporting teachers to improve practice. Evaluation programs also provide accountability measures necessary to address staff quality issues and to provide grounds for dismissing poor teachers. (p. 580)

The Teacher Evaluation Process was developed by North Carolina to align the mission of the State Board of Education with the standards developed by the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission (McRel, 2012). This initiative was further developed by the state's participation in the federal Race to the Top program, which provided grant money to qualifying states to enhance their educational programs. According to a U.S. Department of Education report (2013),

Race to the Top States are developing comprehensive systems of educator effectiveness by adopting clear approaches to measuring student growth; designing and implementing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals; conducting annual evaluations that includes timely and constructive feedback; and using evaluation information to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, and tenure decisions. (p. 10)

The U.S. Department of Education documented North Carolina's progress toward meeting the requirements of the Race to the Top program for the school year 2011-2012. In its report (2013, p. 2) it was noted that "North Carolina made progress in implementing a qualifying evaluation system for teachers and principals by modifying its existing statewide

evaluation system, the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES). All participating LEAs used the online Educator Evaluation System, a single electronic portal, to complete all steps of the evaluation process in SY 2011-2012.”

According to the report, Race to the Top funds allowed the state to expand “its existing evaluation system to explicitly include data on student growth” (p. 10). This data is compiled in Standard VI of the Evaluation Process. The Evaluation Process, inclusive of all six standards, supports the two-fold purpose of teacher evaluation, improvement and accountability, as stated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

This is also a component of the findings of the research through the principal and teacher interviews. All three principals in the study spoke of the use of the Evaluation Process as a way to improve teacher practice. Mary stated that, “It gives me a chance to reflect on how a teacher can improve” and “it forces me to look at strategies on how to become an accomplished teacher.” Jane added that “it has given me so much more information as a principal to coach. We are so much more specific about talking about data, differentiation, higher order thinking skills, and rubrics.” Although the teachers expressed more overall negative sentiments about the Process there were some supporting comments such as, “Definitely more specific and looks for more specifics.”

One of the concerns consistently brought up by the teachers in the study was concern about the feedback from administrators and its lack of consistency. This is echoed by information in a report sponsored by the Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation – North Carolina (CERENC). Davis, Bangert, Comperatore, and Smalenberger (2015) reported that principals and teachers had varying views about feedback. The report stated that

Both principals and teachers shared a wide array of reactions to the timeline and quality of feedback. Principals reported that feedback on observations was comprehensive and immediate. Specifically, principals indicated that feedback occurred within a day or two after observations. In some instances, teachers reported receiving a satisfactory level of feedback on their evaluation, but others indicated a lack of feedback. Although some principals indicated that they fully utilized the feedback loop, others described this process as one that needed the most improvement. (p. 12)

The perceptions of the principals in the study regarding the Evaluation Process were, for the most part, positive in nature. Although not without some concerns, the three principals indicated an overall preference for the Process over the TPAI-R. In the CERENC document Davis et al. reported (2015) both teachers and principals “expressed that the new evaluation system has prompted deeper and more substantive conversations centered on student achievement” and also spoke about increased collaboration between teachers as a result of using the new process (p. 4).

Implications of the Study for Policy and Practice

The use of the TPAI-R in North Carolina has been well documented in the literature; however, the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process was fully implemented by the SBE in the 2010-2011 school year, thereby creating a gap in the literature involving the implementation of the Evaluation Process, especially as compared to the TPAI-R. Principals’ insights on this change are crucial to developing a body of research on this Process and the observational/evaluative tool contained therein.

This research offers evidence that the transition from the TPAI-R to the Evaluation Process changed how principals conduct observations of their teachers. This may be welcome information for the North Carolina State Board of Education since changing the observational practices of principals, and also the instructional practices of teachers, was the goal of the transition. In the introduction of the McRel manual (2009) it states:

The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century. This mission requires a new vision of school leadership and a new set of skills that teachers must use daily in order to help their students learn 21st century content and master skills they will need when they graduate from high school and enroll in higher education or enter the workforce or the military. (p. 1)

The findings of the study support that this change has taken place in the observational practices of the principals who participated in the study. All three principals provided information that supported the fact that what they now look for in an observation correlates to the specific items and elements contained in the Evaluation Process. While there were components of the TPAI-R that they liked, and some components of the Evaluation Process that they did not like, none of the principals gave any indication that they did anything short of their best to use the Process with fidelity. There is a popular saying in regards to employee and an employer relationship that says what gets monitored gets done. When principals look for the specific skills contained in the items of the Evaluation Process, teachers have little choice but to strive to demonstrate these skills in the classroom or risk receiving poor ratings on their final evaluations. That is not to indicate that the teachers may

or may not totally agree with the benefit of implementing these skills in the classroom, merely to say that in the end they have little choice in the matter.

Another component of the research that was highlighted by both teachers and administrators was that the Evaluation Process did not contain a way to report on some of the intangibles that are a part of teaching such as student discipline and contributions that teachers may make to the educational environment of the school. This was also supported by Davis et al. One of the findings of the report that led to a list of five recommendations in regards to the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES) (2015) was that,

Both teachers and principals shared that a missing aspect of NCEES centered on the relationships and bonds teachers form with their students. Participants indicated that the evaluation did not fully recognize everything that a teacher does with her or his students. Research should be used to determine how a relationship component could be documented, tracked, and calculated, potentially including the use of student surveys, as is the practice in other states. (p. 24)

The addition of such a component would enhance the instrument and provide a way for principals to recognize teachers for doing so many of the things that impact the culture of a school and in essence helps a school to be successful in its core mission of educating students.

To address the issue of inter-rater agreement, it would be beneficial for North Carolina to provide continuing hands on training to all administrators, both new and veteran, to ensure that there is a high degree of agreement from observer to observer. More intense training on this issue, not only within a district but statewide, could help teachers feel more confident that the observations and evaluations they receive are as accurate as possible.

Furthermore, additional practice in using the instrument may also increase the competence level, and confidence level, of administrators in the implementation of the instrument as they evaluate the teachers in their school.

The NCDPI currently has some resources available to principals to assist with learning to use the Evaluation Process and to help with the issue of inter-rater agreement. However, there is no existing requirement for principals to use these or other resources to learn proper use of the instrument or to improve their proficiency in using the instrument. The data from the teacher focus group indicated that inter-rater agreement was very important to the teachers.

A policy that requires principals to complete training on use of the instrument, especially as it relates to inter-rater reliability, could potentially close the gap between how principals and teachers view the level of fidelity that the Evaluation Process is utilized. The training can be facilitated by the administrative team in a school, or a school system, viewing a video of a teacher in a classroom and conducting an observation based on the video. Once completed, the observers would compare notes and provide feedback to each other on why they scored the teacher the way they did. This could be especially beneficial if there were exemplars that the team could use for comparison purposes.

Even if policy does not dictate for administrators to engage in professional development to improve inter-rater agreement, the administrative team in a school can complete the training as part of best practice. Particularly within a school, it could be very effective for the administrative team to enter a classroom and observe a teacher conducting a lesson and complete an observation followed up by the feedback process. This could be somewhat intimidating to a teacher for two or more administrators to be in her classroom

observing at the same time, therefore it would be important to conference with the teacher in advance and fully explain the purpose. It may also be useful to select a teacher leader in the school for this purpose. One potential advantage to observations of a teacher leader in the building versus watching video is that teachers would be able to see firsthand that the administrative team is striving to be as consistent as possible with the utilization of the Evaluation Process.

Finally, although not a part of the instrument itself, tweaking the software program used to deliver the evaluation process (the NCEES system) so that it is more user friendly would be of benefit to both administrators and teachers. The back and forth necessity of “clicking” as it was so often worded should be streamlined to reduce the frustration of using the instrument. Teachers and administrators alike in the study made no distinction between the evaluation process and the NCEES system used to deliver the instrument. As a result, frustration over using the software became a negative about the instrument itself.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research into this and related topics might usefully focus on one of two variations. One would be to include a larger sample of principals, whether focusing on rural or expanding to other settings such as principals in urban schools. A second area that may be of great value is further research on the topic of inter-rater agreement of the principals that use the Evaluation Process. This topic, while not brought up by the principals, was of great interest to the teachers in the focus group.

Despite the best efforts of the researcher to keep the discussion in the group focused on the implementation of the Evaluation Process as compared to the TPAI-R, the teachers continually referenced how the results of their observations often varied greatly depending on

the principal who was conducting the observation. This issue, called inter-rater agreement, became the overriding theme that emerged from the data of the focus group interview and merits further attention given the use of the Process in the teacher evaluation process and the attention given by school leaders and policymakers to what constitutes effective teaching.

This research indicates that principals did, in fact, change their practices in relation to observations and evaluations as a result of the transition from the TPAI-R to the North Carolina Evaluation Process. However, as discussed previously, the Evaluation Process was implemented in a top-down format from the State Board of Education. A potential area of further research is to investigate if the shift in principals' observational practices occurred because they truly believe in the stated mission and vision of the State Board of Education or if it is simply out of necessity in terms of the mandate to use the Evaluation Process. In other words, did this shift in philosophy drive the creation of the instrument or did the creation of the instrument drive the shift in philosophy, and if the shift is valid does it matter?

One final area of future research would be the fidelity of the feedback loop. Are principals in fact making recommendations to teachers in the post-conferences that help teachers to improve their practice? In the language of the Evaluation Process, are the principals helping the teachers to move from proficient to accomplished or distinguished?

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study are restricted to the perceptions of three principals and a focus group of teachers in a rural school system in North Carolina. This means the impact of the study is primarily restricted to other rural principals in North Carolina. In addition, the sample size is limited to three principals and a focus group of teachers from the same school system. It is possible that with a larger sample size the findings could vary as it is possible

that if the sample was taken from principals in more urban areas the results could differ. In addition, in order for the study to address the transition from the TPAI-R to the Evaluation Process, the principals in the study had to have used both instruments, which in turn forces the issue that the principals in the study were experienced principals who, at the time of the transition, had developed a certain level of comfort using the TPAI-R. Principals that have only used the Evaluation Process may not have the same perceptions about the instrument, although they would lack the context of the transition from the TPAI-R.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn by the researcher on this research are based on the central question. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the perspectives of rural principals on the North Carolina Evaluation Process and how their observational and/or evaluative practices have changed, if at all, under the Evaluation Process as compared to the previous instrument, the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument - Revised. What did principals do before the Process was implemented and what do they do now? Have there been changes in practice, and if so what are those changes?

In the case of the three rural principals interviewed for this study, the study shows that their observational practices have changed. The TPAI-R was designed with a more open-ended question format. It encouraged principals to script their observations and these notes were in turn shared with the teachers during post-conferences. With the North Carolina evaluation process, observations are based on the specific items under the elements that are contained within the standards. Having to “check off” these items during an observation and provide a rating for them in the evaluation changed what the principals look for during the observation. Although principals can still script, and at least one principal in the study still

does, in the end the principal has to look for detailed items and specific skills or actions that the teacher may display while providing instruction. Focusing on these specifics has some potential positive aspects as well as potential negative aspects. The study revealed that the principals realized they were looking for more specific details. The question that they pose is if this perhaps is at the expense of the big picture. The teachers certainly seemed to think so as many frustrations were revealed in their focus group interview.

The principals all felt that the instrument helped them in some way to be able to help teachers improve their instructional practices. From their focus group interview, the teachers expressed feelings of resentment toward the attempt to change how they taught and felt they were performing for the benefit of checking off the boxes beside the specific items contained in the rubric. This reference to performing when the administrator is in their classroom also indicates that the teachers' instruction is not necessarily the same during an observation as it is at other times. If this is in fact the case then it defeats the entire purpose of the observation.

The focus on inter-rater agreement among the teacher focus group was a definitive theme from their interview. As the interview progressed the comments became increasingly negative in regards to principals' practices and also to observations and how principals used the instrument in observations. Their frustration on this matter at times almost monopolized the focus group interview. As this issue never came up in any of the principal interviews the conclusion can be drawn that to principals this was not a major concern. However, this would definitively be an issue to explore in future research.

From the perspective of the researcher who has used both the TPAI-R and the Evaluation Process, while the simplicity of the TPAI-R is appealing, the comprehensive

nature of the Process is hard to ignore. While both instruments are research based, the Evaluation Process is designed with an eye toward the future. The TPAI-R, while a good instrument when it was instituted, is based on research that is now forty to fifty years old. The Process is aligned with the mission of the State Board of Education and with professional teaching standards. Inter-rater agreement, while certainly an important issue for teachers, is an issue that can exist regardless of the instrument being used. What is most important is if the Evaluation Process, as implemented by the principals, has the capability of improving teacher practice and of providing a means of evaluating teacher practice. From the perspective of this researcher, the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process, although perhaps in need of some improving, accomplishes these dual roles of an evaluation instrument far better than the TPAI-R.

Summary

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2009) had this to say about teachers and teacher evaluation:

As the most significant resource in schools, teachers are critical to raise education standards. Improving the efficiency and equity of schooling depends, in large measure, on ensuring that teachers are highly skilled, well resourced, and motivated to perform at their best. Raising teaching performance is perhaps the policy direction most likely to lead to substantial gains in student learning (OECD, 2005). In turn, the effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching is central to the continuous improvement of the effectiveness of teaching in a school. It is essential to know the strengths of teachers and those aspects of their practice which could be further developed. From this perspective, the institution of teacher evaluation is a vital step

in the drive to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning and raise the educational standards. (p. 3)

It is apparent from this research that principals' observational practices have changed from the use of the TPAI-R to the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process. The Process focuses on the skills needed for teachers to be effective in the classroom. The principals in this study focused on looking for those skills while conducting observations and when providing the final evaluation for their teachers. The aspects of the Evaluation Process that most directly involve principals are the components that are intended to measure Standards 1-5. While a great effort was made for the instrument to be as objective as possible, the simple fact of observing and providing a rating has intrinsic subjective components, even when using a rubric. Standard 6, which is intended to be more objective as it is based on student test data among other factors, is now being included in teacher evaluations in North Carolina but not for all teachers in the same way.

Principals bear a great deal of responsibility for conducting teacher observations and evaluations with fidelity. In order to help teachers improve their craft, meaningful feedback from observations and evaluations is critical. More research into the use of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process can help determine if the instrument is being utilized as intended and that there is consistency in the use of the instrument by administrators. Additionally, more research is needed on the effectiveness of the instrument in making positive changes to teacher instruction to insure that the overall goal of increased student growth and achievement is being met.

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Appendices

Appendix B: Teacher Focus Group Questionnaire

Teacher Questionnaire

Instructions: Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. The background information collected will be used for the sole purpose of identifying trends and themes in the data that is collected during the interviews. This information will NOT be used in any manner that will identify you in the study.

1. What level (elementary or secondary) of school do you currently serve as a teacher?
2. How long have you been in your current position?
3. How many overall years of experience do you have as a teacher at any level?
4. What is the highest degree that you have attained?
5. Approximately how many years of experience do you have being observed or evaluated as a teacher by a building level administrator that used the TPAI-R?

Appendix C: TPAI-R

TPAI-R Full Review---Experienced Teachers

Teacher _____ Assignment _____

School _____ Date _____

Instructions:

- Based on the evidence from the formal observation of an entire class period, the pre-conference notes, rating form, and discussion, artifacts, and the Individual Growth Plan, the evaluator is to rate the teacher’s performance with respect to the 8 major functions of teaching listed below.
- The evaluator must add pertinent comments at the end of each major function for which a rating of Above Standard, Below Standard, or Unsatisfactory is given.
- The teacher is provided an opportunity to react to the evaluator’s ratings and comments.
- The evaluator and the teacher must discuss the results of the appraisal and any recommended actions pertinent to it.
- The teacher and the evaluator must sign the instrument in the assigned spaces.
- The instrument must be filed in the teacher’s personnel folder.
- The rating scale will include the four Levels of Performance described below.

4 Above Standard

Performance is consistently high. Teaching practices are demonstrated at a high level. Teacher seeks to expand scope of competencies and undertakes additional appropriate responsibilities.

3 At Standard

Performance within this function area is consistently adequate/acceptable. Teaching practices fully meet all performance expectations at an acceptable level. Teacher maintains an adequate scope of competencies and performs additional responsibilities as assigned.

2 Below Standard

Performance within this function area is sometimes inadequate/unacceptable and needs improvement. Teacher requires supervision and assistance to maintain an adequate scope of competencies and sometimes fails to perform additional responsibilities as assigned.

1 Unsatisfactory

Performance within this function area is consistently inadequate or unacceptable and most practices require considerable improvement to fully meet minimum expectations. Teacher requires close and frequent supervision in the performance of all responsibilities.

1. Major Function: Management of Instructional Time	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

- 1.1 Teacher has materials, supplies, and equipment ready at the start of the lesson or instructional activity.
- 1.2 Teacher gets the class started quickly.
- 1.3 Teacher uses available time for learning and keeps students on task.

Comments _____

2. Major Function: Management of Student Behavior	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

- 2.1 Teacher has established a set of rules and procedures that govern the handling of routine administrative matters.
- 2.2 Teacher has established a set of rules and procedures that govern student verbal participation and talk during different types of activities---whole class instruction, small group instruction.
- 2.3 Teacher has established a set of rules and procedures that govern student movement in the classroom during different types of instructional activities.
- 2.4 Teacher frequently monitors the behavior of all students during whole-class, small group, and seatwork activities and during transitions between instructional activities.
- 2.5 Teacher stops inappropriate behavior promptly and consistently, yet maintains the dignity of the student.
- 2.6 Teacher analyzes the classroom environment and makes adjustment to support learning and enhance social relationships.

Comments _____

3. Major Function: Instructional Presentation	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

- 3.1 Teacher links instructional activities to prior learning.
- 3.2 Teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning activities that make these aspects of subject matter understandable and meaningful for students.
- 3.3 Teacher speaks fluently and precisely.
- 3.4 Teacher provides relevant examples and demonstrates to illustrate concepts and skills.
- 3.5 Teacher assigns tasks and asks appropriate levels of questions that students handle with a high rate of success.
- 3.6 Teacher conducts the lesson or instructional activity at a brisk pace, slowing presentations when necessary for student understanding but avoiding unnecessary slowdowns.
- 3.7 Teacher makes transitions between lessons and between instructional activities within lessons effectively and smoothly.
- 3.8 Teacher makes sure that assignment is clear.
- 3.9 The teacher creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
- 3.10 The teacher uses instructional strategies that encourage the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- 3.11 The teacher uses technology to support instruction.
- 3.12 The teacher encourages students to be engaged in and responsible for their own learning.

Comments _____

4. Major Function: Instructional Monitoring	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

- 4.1 Teacher maintains clear, firm, and reasonable work standards and due dates.
- 4.2 Teacher circulates to check all students' performances.
- 4.3 Teacher routinely uses oral, written, and other work products to evaluate the effects of instructional activities and to check student progress.
- 4.4 Teacher poses questions clearly and one at a time.
- 4.5 Teacher uses student responses to adjust teaching as necessary.

Comments _____

5. Major Function: Instructional Feedback	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

- 5.1 Teacher provides feedback on the correctness or incorrectness of in-class work to encourage student growth.
- 5.2 Teacher regularly provides prompt feedback on out-of-classwork.
- 5.3 Teacher affirms a correct oral response appropriately and moves on.
- 5.4 Teacher provides sustaining feedback after an incorrect response by probing, repeating the question, giving a clue, or allowing more time.
- 5.5 The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

Comments _____

6. Major Function: Facilitating Instruction	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

- 6.1 Teacher has long- and short-term instructional plans that are compatible with school and district curricular goals, the school improvement plan, the NC Standard Course of Study, and the diverse needs of students and the community.
- 6.2 Teacher uses diagnostic information obtained from tests and other formal and informal assessment procedures to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.
- 6.3 Teacher maintains accurate records to document student performance.
- 6.4 Teacher understands how students learn and develop and plans appropriate instructional activities for diverse student needs and different levels of difficulty.
- 6.5 Teacher uses available human and material resources to support the instructional program.

Comments _____

7. Major Function: Communicating within the Educational Environment	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

- 7.1 Teacher treats all students in a fair and equitable manner.
- 7.2 Teacher participates in the development of a broad vision of the school.
- 7.3 Teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and community agencies to support students' learning and well being.

Comments _____

8. Major Function: Performing Non-Instructional Duties	Above Standard	At Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory

- 8.1 Teacher carries out non-instructional duties as assigned and/or as need is perceived to ensure student safety outside the classroom.
- 8.2 Teacher adheres to established laws, policies, rules, and regulations.
- 8.3 Teacher follows a plan for professional development and actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
- 8.4 Teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her decisions and actions on students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community.

Comments _____

Evaluator's Summary

Comments _____

Teacher's Reactions to Evaluation _____

 Evaluator's Signature and Date

 *Teacher's Signature and Date

**Signature indicates that the written evaluation has been seen and discussed and does not necessarily indicate agreement.*

Appendix D: North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Rubric

Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers (Required for Self Assessment and Observation)

This form should be used for the teacher self-assessment, classroom observation, and the summary evaluation.

Name: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ District: _____

Evaluator: _____ Title: _____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Standard I: Teachers demonstrate leadership

Observation	a. Teachers lead in their classrooms. Teachers demonstrate leadership by taking responsibility for the progress of all students to ensure that they graduate from high school, are globally competitive for work and postsecondary education, and are prepared for life in the 21 st century. Teachers communicate this vision to their students. Using a variety of data sources, they organize, plan, and set goals that meet the needs of the individual student and the class. Teachers use various types of assessment data during the school year to evaluate student progress and to make adjustments to the teaching and learning process. They establish a safe, orderly environment, and create a culture that empowers students to collaborate and become lifelong learners.				
	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Understands how they contribute to students graduating from high school. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses data to understand the skills and abilities of students.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Takes responsibility for the progress of students to ensure that they graduate from high school. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides evidence of data driven instruction throughout all classroom activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes a safe and orderly classroom.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates to students the vision of being prepared for life in the 21 st century. <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluates student progress using a variety of assessment data. <input type="checkbox"/> Creates a classroom culture that empowers students to collaborate.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses classroom assessment data to inform program planning. <input type="checkbox"/> Empowers and encourages students to create and maintain a safe and supportive school and community environment.	
b. Teachers demonstrate leadership in the school. Teachers work collaboratively with school personnel to create a professional learning community. They analyze and use local, state, and national data to develop goals and strategies in the school improvement plan that enhances student learning and teacher working conditions. Teachers provide input in determining the school budget and in the selection of professional development that meets the needs of students and their own professional growth. They participate in the hiring process and collaborate with their colleagues to mentor and support teachers to improve the effectiveness of their departments or grade levels.					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Attends professional learning community meetings. <input type="checkbox"/> Displays awareness of the goals of the school improvement plan.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Participates in professional learning community. <input type="checkbox"/> Participates in developing and/or implementing the school improvement plan.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Assumes a leadership role in professional learning community. <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborates with school personnel on school improvement activities.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborates with colleagues to improve the quality of learning in the school. <input type="checkbox"/> Assumes a leadership role in implementing school improvement plan throughout the building.	

Observation	c. Teachers lead the teaching profession. Teachers strive to improve the teaching profession. They contribute to the establishment of positive working conditions in their school. They actively participate in and advocate for decision-making structures in education and government that take advantage of the expertise of teachers. Teachers promote professional growth for all educators and collaborate with their colleagues to improve the profession.				
	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Has knowledge of opportunities and the need for professional growth and begins to establish relationships with colleagues.	... and Contributes to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> improvement of the profession through professional growth. <input type="checkbox"/> establishment of positive working relationships. <input type="checkbox"/> school's decision-making processes as required. 	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Promotes positive working relationships through professional growth activities and collaboration.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Seeks opportunities to lead professional growth activities and decision-making processes.	
	d. Teachers advocate for schools and students. Teachers advocate for positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning. They participate in the implementation of initiatives to improve the education of students.				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Knows about the policies and practices affecting student learning.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Supports positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Participates in developing policies and practices to improve student learning.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Actively participates, promotes, and provides strong supporting evidence for implementation of initiatives to improve education.	
	e. Teachers demonstrate high ethical standards. Teachers demonstrate ethical principles including honesty, integrity, fair treatment, and respect for others. Teachers uphold the <i>Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators</i> (effective June 1, 1997) and the <i>Standards for Professional Conduct</i> adopted April 1, 1998. (www.ncptsc.org)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Understands the importance of ethical behavior as outlined in the <i>Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators</i> and the <i>Standards for Professional Conduct</i> and <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates ethical behavior through adherence to the <i>Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators</i> and the <i>Standards for Professional Conduct</i> and <input type="checkbox"/> Knows and upholds the <i>Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators</i> and the <i>Standards for Professional Conduct</i> and <input type="checkbox"/> Models the tenets of the <i>Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators</i> and the <i>Standards for Professional Conduct</i> and encourages others to do the same.	
Comments					

Examples of Artifacts:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Class rules and procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> National Board Certification |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Journals | <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in The Teacher Working Condition Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Discipline records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student handbooks | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Learning Communities | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student work | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership in professional organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School improvement planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Formal and informal mentoring | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service on committees | <input type="checkbox"/> Surveys | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant data | | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Standard II: Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students

Observation	a. Teachers provide an environment in which each child has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults. Teachers encourage an environment that is inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible.				
	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Appreciates and understands the need to establish nurturing relationships.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes an inviting, respectful, inclusive, flexible, and supportive learning environment.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Maintains a positive and nurturing learning environment.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages and advises others to provide a nurturing and positive learning environment for all students.	
b. Teachers embrace diversity in the school community and in the world. Teachers demonstrate their knowledge of the history of diverse cultures and their role in shaping global issues. They actively select materials and develop lessons that counteract stereotypes and incorporate histories and contributions of all cultures. Teachers recognize the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and other aspects of culture on a student's development and personality. Teachers strive to understand how a student's culture and background may influence his or her school performance. Teachers consider and incorporate different points of view in their instruction.					
✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledges that diverse cultures impact the world.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Displays knowledge of diverse cultures, their histories, and their roles in shaping global issues.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Uses materials or lessons that counteract stereotypes and acknowledges the contributions of all cultures.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Promotes a deep understanding of cultures through the integration of culturally sensitive materials and ideas throughout the curriculum.	
✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates awareness of the diversity of students in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledges the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-economics, and culture on a student's development and attitudes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently incorporates different points of view in instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/> Capitalizes on diversity as an asset in the classroom.	
c. Teachers treat students as individuals. Teachers maintain high expectations, including graduation from high school, for students of all backgrounds. Teachers appreciate the differences and value the contributions of each student in the learning environment by building positive, appropriate relationships.					
✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Holds high expectations of students.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates high expectations for all students.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages and values contributions of students, regardless of background or ability.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Helps students hold high expectations for themselves and their peers.	

Observation	d. Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of students with special needs. Teachers collaborate with the range of support specialists to help meet the special needs of all students. Through inclusion and other models of effective practice, teachers engage students to ensure that their needs are met.				
	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes that students have a variety of learning needs. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Is knowledgeable of effective practices for students with special needs.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborates with specialists who can support the special learning needs of students. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides unique learning opportunities such as inclusion and research based effective practices for students with special needs.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Understands the roles of and collaborates with the full range of support specialists to help meet the special needs of all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Effectively engages special needs students in learning activities and ensures their unique learning needs are met.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipates the unique learning needs of students and solicits assistance from within and outside the school to address those needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Adapts instruction for the benefit of students with special needs and helps colleagues do the same for their students.		
e. Teachers work collaboratively with the families and significant adults in the lives of their students. Teachers recognize that educating children is a shared responsibility involving the school, parents or guardians, and the community. Teachers improve communication and collaboration between the school and the home and community in order to promote trust and understanding and build partnerships with all segments of the school community. Teachers seek solutions to overcome cultural and economic obstacles that may stand in the way of effective family and community involvement in the education of their students.					
<input type="checkbox"/> Responds to family and community concerns.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates and collaborates with the home and community for the benefit of students.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes obstacles to family and community participation and conscientiously seeks solutions to overcome them.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Promotes trust and understanding throughout the school community.		

Comments

Examples of Artifacts:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student profiles | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications with parents/ community | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student surveys | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development on cultural attitudes and awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation with ESL teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> Use of technology to incorporate cultural awareness into lessons | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons that integrate international content | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of referral data and use of IEPs | | |

Standard III: Teachers know the content they teach

Observation	a. Teachers align their instruction with the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i>. In order to enhance the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> , teachers investigate the content standards developed by professional organizations in their specialty area. They develop and apply strategies to make the curriculum rigorous and relevant for all students and provide a balanced curriculum that enhances literacy skills. Elementary teachers have explicit and thorough preparation in literacy instruction. Middle and high school teachers incorporate literacy instruction within the content area or discipline.				
	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates an awareness of the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> and references it in the preparation of lesson plans. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Elementary:</i> Begins to integrate literacy instruction in selected lessons. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Secondary:</i> Recognizes the importance of integrating literacy strategies within the content areas.	. . . and <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understands the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> , uses it in preparation of lesson plans, and applies strategies to make the curriculum rigorous and relevant. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Elementary:</i> Integrates effective literacy instruction throughout the curriculum. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Secondary:</i> Incorporates a wide variety of literacy skills within content areas to enhance learning.	. . . and <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develops and applies strategies based on the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> and standards developed by professional organizations to make the curriculum balanced, rigorous and relevant. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Elementary:</i> Evaluates and reflects upon the effectiveness of literacy instruction. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Secondary:</i> Evaluates and reflects upon the effectiveness of literacy instruction within content areas.	. . . and <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assists colleagues in applying such strategies in their classrooms. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Elementary:</i> Makes necessary changes to instructional practice to improve student learning. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Secondary:</i> Makes necessary changes to instructional practice to improve student learning.		
b. Teachers know the content appropriate to their teaching specialty. Teachers bring a richness and depth of understanding to their classrooms by knowing their subjects beyond the content they are expected to teach and by directing students' natural curiosity into an interest in learning. Elementary teachers have broad knowledge across disciplines. Middle school and high school teachers have depth in one or more specific content areas or disciplines.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates a basic level of content knowledge in the teaching specialty to which assigned.	. . . and <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates an appropriate level of content knowledge in the teaching specialty to which assigned.	. . . and <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applies knowledge of subject beyond the content in assigned teaching specialty. Motivates students to investigate the content area to expand their knowledge and satisfy their natural curiosity.	. . . and <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extends knowledge of subject beyond content in their teaching specialty and sparks students' curiosity for learning beyond the required course work.		

Observation	c. Teachers recognize the interconnectedness of content areas/disciplines. Teachers know the links and vertical alignment of the grade or subject they teach and the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> . Teachers understand how the content they teach relates to other disciplines in order to deepen understanding and connect learning for students. Teachers promote global awareness and its relevance to subjects they teach.				
	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understand the links between grade/subject and the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> . <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Displays global awareness.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates knowledge of links between grade/subject and the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> . <input type="checkbox"/> Promotes global awareness and its relevance to the subjects.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates knowledge of the links and vertical alignment of the grade or subject area and the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> . Relates content to other disciplines. <input type="checkbox"/> Integrates global awareness activities throughout lesson plans and classroom instructional practices.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborates with teachers from other grades or subject areas to establish links between disciplines and influence school-wide curriculum and teaching practice. <input type="checkbox"/> Promotes global awareness and its relevance to all faculty members, influencing curriculum and teaching practices throughout the school.		
d. Teachers make instruction relevant to students. Teachers incorporate 21 st century life skills into their teaching deliberately, strategically, and broadly. These skills include leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility. Teachers help their students understand the relationship between the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> and 21 st century content, which includes global awareness; financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy, and health awareness.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identifies relationships between the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> and life in the 21 st century.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies relationships between the core content and 21 st century content.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Integrates core content and 21 st century content throughout lesson plans and classroom instructional practices.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Deepens students' understandings of 21 st century skills and helps them make their own connections and develop new skills.		

Comments

Examples of Artifacts:

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Display of creative student work | <input type="checkbox"/> Content standards | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use of <i>NC Standard Course of Study</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson plans | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Standard IV: Teachers facilitate learning for their students

Observation	a. Teachers know the ways in which learning takes place, and they know the appropriate levels of intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of their students. Teachers know how students think and learn. Teachers understand the influences that affect individual student learning (development, culture, language proficiency, etc.) and differentiate their instruction accordingly. Teachers keep abreast of evolving research about student learning. They adapt resources to address the strengths and weaknesses of their students.				
	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Understands developmental levels of students and recognizes the need to differentiate instruction. 	<p>... and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Understands developmental levels of students and appropriately differentiates instruction. 	<p>... and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Identifies appropriate developmental levels of students and consistently and appropriately differentiates instruction. 	<p>... and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Encourages and guides colleagues to adapt instruction to align with students' developmental levels. 	
✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Assesses resources needed to address strengths and weaknesses of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Reviews and uses alternative resources or adapts existing resources to take advantage of student strengths or address weaknesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Stays abreast of current research about student learning and emerging resources and encourages the school to adopt or adapt them for the benefit of all students. 	
	b. Teachers plan instruction appropriate for their students. Teachers collaborate with their colleagues and use a variety of data sources for short- and long-range planning based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. These plans reflect an understanding of how students learn. Teachers engage students in the learning process. They understand that instructional plans must be consistently monitored and modified to enhance learning. Teachers make the curriculum responsive to cultural differences and individual learning needs.				
✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Recognizes data sources important to planning instruction. 	<p>... and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Uses a variety of data for short- and long-range planning of instruction. Monitors and modifies instructional plans to enhance student learning. 	<p>... and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Monitors student performance and responds to individual learning needs in order to engage students in learning. 	<p>... and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Monitors student performance and responds to cultural diversity and learning needs through the school improvement process. 	
	c. Teachers use a variety of instructional methods. Teachers choose the methods and techniques that are most effective in meeting the needs of their students as they strive to eliminate achievement gaps. Teachers employ a wide range of techniques including information and communication technology, learning styles, and differentiated instruction.				
✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Demonstrates awareness of the variety of methods and materials necessary to meet the needs of all students. 	<p>... and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Demonstrates awareness or use of appropriate methods and materials necessary to meet the needs of all students. 	<p>... and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Ensures the success of all students through the selection and utilization of appropriate methods and materials. 	<p>... and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Stays abreast of emerging research areas and new and innovative materials and incorporates them into lesson plans and instructional strategies. 	

Observation	d. Teachers integrate and utilize technology in their instruction. Teachers know when and how to use technology to maximize student learning. Teachers help students use technology to learn content, think critically, solve problems, discern reliability, use information, communicate, innovate, and collaborate.				
	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Assesses effective types of technology to use for instruction.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates knowledge of how to utilize technology in instruction.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Integrates technology with instruction to maximize student learning.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Provides evidence of student engagement in higher level thinking skills through the integration of technology.	
	e. Teachers help students develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. Teachers encourage students to ask questions, think creatively, develop and test innovative ideas, synthesize knowledge, and draw conclusions. They help students exercise and communicate sound reasoning; understand connections; make complex choices; and frame, analyze, and solve problems.				
✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Understands the importance of developing students' critical thinking and problem solving skills.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates knowledge of processes needed to support students in acquiring critical thinking skills and problem solving skills.	. . . and Teaches students the processes needed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> think creatively and critically, <input type="checkbox"/> develop and test innovative ideas, <input type="checkbox"/> synthesize knowledge, <input type="checkbox"/> draw conclusions, <input type="checkbox"/> exercise and communicate sound reasoning, <input type="checkbox"/> understand connections, <input type="checkbox"/> make complex choices, and <input type="checkbox"/> frame, analyze and solve problems. 	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages and assists teachers throughout the school to integrate critical thinking and problem solving skills into their instructional practices.	
	f. Teachers help students work in teams and develop leadership qualities. Teachers teach the importance of cooperation and collaboration. They organize learning teams in order to help students define roles, strengthen social ties, improve communication and collaborative skills, interact with people from different cultures and backgrounds, and develop leadership qualities.				
✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides opportunities for cooperation, collaboration, and leadership through student learning teams.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Organizes student learning teams for the purpose of developing cooperation, collaboration, and student leadership.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages students to create and manage learning teams.	. . . and <input type="checkbox"/> Fosters the development of student leadership and teamwork skills to be used beyond the classroom.	

Observation	g. Teachers communicate effectively. Teachers communicate in ways that are clearly understood by their students. They are perceptive listeners and are able to communicate with students in a variety of ways even when language is a barrier. Teachers help students articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively.				
	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates the ability to effectively communicate with students. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provides opportunities for students to articulate thoughts and ideas.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Uses a variety of methods for communication with all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Consistently encourages and supports students to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Creates a variety of methods to communicate with all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes classroom practices, which encourage all students to develop effective communication skills.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipates possible student misunderstandings and proactively develops teaching techniques to mitigate concerns. <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes school-wide and grade appropriate vehicles to encourage students throughout the school to develop effective communication skills.		
h. Teachers use a variety of methods to assess what each student has learned. Teachers use multiple indicators, including formative and summative assessments, to evaluate student progress and growth as they strive to eliminate achievement gaps. Teachers provide opportunities, methods, feedback, and tools for students to assess themselves and each other. Teachers use 21 st century assessment systems to inform instruction and demonstrate evidence of students' 21 st century knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uses indicators to monitor and evaluate student progress. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assesses students in the attainment of 21 st century knowledge, skills, and dispositions.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Uses multiple indicators, both formative and summative, to monitor and evaluate student progress and to inform instruction. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides evidence that students attain 21 st century knowledge, skills and dispositions.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Uses the information gained from the assessment activities to improve teaching practice and student learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides opportunities for students to assess themselves and others.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Teaches students and encourages them to use peer and self-assessment feedback to assess their own learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages and guides colleagues to assess 21 st century skills, knowledge, and dispositions and to use the assessment information to adjust their instructional practice.		

Comments

Examples of Artifacts:

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation of differentiated instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Display of technology used | <input type="checkbox"/> Materials used to promote critical thinking and problem solving | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development | <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative lesson planning | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use of student learning teams | | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Standard V: Teachers reflect on their practice

Observation	a. Teachers analyze student learning. Teachers think systematically and critically about student learning in their classrooms and schools: why learning happens and what can be done to improve achievement. Teachers collect and analyze student performance data to improve school and classroom effectiveness. They adapt their practice based on research and data to best meet the needs of students.				
	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished	Not Demonstrated (Comment Required)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes the need to improve student learning in the classroom.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Provides ideas about what can be done to improve student learning in their classroom.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Thinks systematically and critically about learning in their classroom: Why learning happens and what can be done to improve student achievement.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Provides a detailed analysis about what can be done to improve student learning and uses such analyses to adapt instructional practices and materials within the classroom and at the school level.	
	b. Teachers link professional growth to their professional goals. Teachers participate in continued, high-quality professional development that reflects a global view of educational practices; includes 21 st century skills and knowledge; aligns with the State Board of Education priorities; and meets the needs of students and their own professional growth.				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Understands the importance of professional development.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Participates in professional development aligned with professional goals.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Participates in professional development activities aligned with goals and student needs.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Applies and implements knowledge and skills attained from professional development consistent with its intent.	
	c. Teachers function effectively in a complex, dynamic environment. Understanding that change is constant, teachers actively investigate and consider new ideas that improve teaching and learning. They adapt their practice based on research and data to best meet the needs of their students.				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Is knowledgeable of current research based approaches to teaching and learning.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Considers and uses a variety of research based approaches to improve teaching and learning.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Actively investigates and considers alternative research based approaches to improve teaching and learning and uses such approaches as appropriate.	... and <input type="checkbox"/> Adapts professional practice based on data and evaluates impact on student learning.	

Comments

Examples of Artifacts:

- | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Completion of professional development | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Formative assessments | <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in professional learning community | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student work | <input type="checkbox"/> Formative and summative assessment data | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development Plan | | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers Signature Page

 Teacher Signature

 Date

 Principal/Evaluator Signature

 Date

 Peer Signature, if applicable

 Date

 Comments Attached: Yes No

 Principal/Evaluator Signature

(Signature indicates question above regarding comments has been addressed).

 Date

 Peer Signature, if applicable

(Signature indicates question above regarding comments has been addressed).

 Date

Note: The teacher's signature on this form represents neither acceptance nor approval of the report. It does, however, indicate that the teacher has reviewed the report with the evaluator and may reply in writing. The signature of the principal or evaluator verifies that the report has been reviewed and that the proper process has been followed according to North Carolina State Board of Education Policy for the Teacher Evaluation Process.