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## Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of Traits, Characteristics, and Instructional Practices of Effective Theater Teachers

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# TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTIONS OF TRAITS, CHARACTERISTICS, AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF EFFECTIVE THEATRE TEACHERS

Article by James D. Chrismon and Adam W. Carter

## Abstract

This study was designed to gather similarities and differences in the perceptions of secondary theatre teachers and administrators regarding traits, characteristics, and instructional practices of effective theatre teachers. Current teacher evaluation systems focus on teacher effectiveness on student learning, and typically do not provide valuable feedback for teachers in highly specialized fields such as the arts, and specifically theatre arts.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with eight theatre teachers and eight administrators from eight different schools in a southern state to gather qualitative data on the similarities and differences in perceptions of traits, characteristics, and instructional practices of effective theatre teachers. From these interviews a survey was developed and administered to theatre teachers in a southern state to collect quantitative data. Analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data was run to evaluate themes and statistical significance.

## Introduction

It may be argued that a school administrator can identify good teaching without being an expert in the observed content area. However, the observer rarely goes beyond vague and promotional descriptions (Cantrell & Scantlebury, 2011; Marzano, 2012; The New Teacher Program [TNTP], 2009). Observation rubrics are often merely check lists to help make the cumbersome and time-consuming process of teacher evaluation streamlined for administrators whose duties typically include much more than evaluation of teachers. This strips the humanity and the point of teacher evaluation that strengthens teaching and student learning (Stake & Munson, 2008). This is especially

true if the administrator has not had training or experience in the arts (Duke & Blackman, 1991). If the administrator lacks the pedagogical background in the evaluated subject, the task of providing critical feedback leads to vaguely worded praise and a focus on management rather than content specific feedback regarding teacher performance that influences professional development plans for teachers to improve their practice (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012). When there are no clear evaluative criteria the feedback is highly general and may or may not be of value to the teacher.

Effective teacher evaluation systems are ones that provide specific feedback on a teacher's performance in the classroom for the purposes of furthering the professional growth of the teacher, decision making in hiring and firing, and measuring teacher effectiveness on student growth. Multiple measures must be utilized to fully evaluate a teacher (Hershberg & Robertson-Kraft, 2010; Hong, 2006; Shirbagi, 2011; Strong, Gargani, & Hacifaziloglu, 2011). Quality teaching should be measured through conversations, observations, and the lived moments of teaching (Stake & Munson, 2008). Arts educators are primarily evaluated informally with limited response to exhibition of student work, praise for the teacher, repertoire questioned, and quality of classroom work felt, but rarely measured. Evaluation may lead to needed support for basic program operations, but evaluation of teacher quality and student learning is rare (Hatfield, 2007).

Teacher evaluation is a major function of building administrators, yet they rarely give specific feedback to assist in improving teacher quality when they are not administered with fidelity, follow up conversations, and creating a professional growth plan to improve teachers' work in the classroom. When it comes to the fine arts more emphasis is being placed on non-tested subjects like theatre arts to be responsible for contributing to the total curriculum being taught in the schools. Administrators, teachers, and students alike all see importance in theatre arts and their impact in the school (Omasta, 2012; Seidel, 1991), however most administrators are not specialists when it comes to theatre arts as a subject and what nuances are required for effective teaching in these subjects. With the shifting focus to the entire faculty, the professional growth of all teachers is imperative for the education of every child.

In most cases the teacher, more than the administrator, is the expert in the content field and the pedagogy that goes into teaching a highly specialized subject like theatre (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). This position seems to suggest that the current evaluation process has limited value in evaluating teachers. Quality teaching must be looked at within the specific context and content of the teacher teaching. All teachers can be assessed on general characteristics of teaching and assessment, but this makes little practical sense for specialized arts educators until the evaluation is applied to specific arts teaching and learning situations (Stake & Munson, 2008). Evaluations must reflect what is being dealt with in the arts education curriculum, with a vocabulary of artistic and educational activity, and not simply a general core of facts (Zerull, 1990). Quality teaching is discipline-specific and affects the nature of learning, teaching practices and perceptions, and how to evaluate it, thus, advocating for discipline-

specific evaluation systems (Alok, 2011; Aubrecht, 1984; Braxton & Hargens, 1996; Cashin, 1990, 1995; Geis, 1984; Hutchings & Shulman, 1999).

In order for teacher evaluation to be meaningful, differentiation in evaluation is needed to provide appropriate professional growth plans. If the quality of teaching, and thus student learning, in every subject is the focus of teacher evaluation, then it is imperative that administrators know what is actually going on in classrooms. More importantly, it is essential for administrators to understand quality in arts education is also a matter of experience (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, & Plamer, 2009; Stake & Munson, 2008) and regular encounters with classroom practice and regular reflection between administrators and arts teachers to improve their arts programs quality (Seidel et al., 2009). The current evaluation systems in place for evaluating teachers are not sensitive to the diverse and complex accomplishments of teachers and students. The dialogic practices that link experiential understanding of what students and arts teachers do should stretch arts teacher evaluation in all classrooms toward qualitative, experiential, contextualized descriptions (Stake & Munson, 2008).

Branscome (2012) stated, "Understanding that we are poised on the threshold of change, we must face the reality that forthcoming innovations will directly impact music education" (p.113). This may also be true in theatre education. Stake and Munson found in their 2008 study "the characteristics of program development and operation are similar in all arts, although content and expression are not" (p. 13). Over the history of theatre education, the role of the theatre educator has changed. It began in the form of a "generalist," meaning a teacher out of the content area of theatre and without formal training in theatre, such as an English teacher, would direct the school play or teach a Theatre Appreciation course. Today, the theatre educator is a "specialist" that has been trained in theatre or theatre education. Most schools in the United States have a teacher whose duties primarily include teaching various types of theatre specific courses such as Acting, Playwriting, Musical Theatre, Technical Theatre, and Theatre Appreciation (Omasta, 2012). With this shift to a "specialist" from the "generalist" role of the teacher, more and more the feedback from administrators is general and tend to be a student-centered evaluation that is literally a checklist of generic good teaching indicators instead of a teacher centered evaluation that is content specific to enhance teaching in the specified content of theatre (Henninger, 2002; Maranzano, 2000; Nowacek, 2008; Peterson, 2000; Rush, 1997; Stronge, 2006). There is a great lack of information in the body of knowledge specific to theatre education and, more specifically, theatre teacher evaluation (Nowacek, 2008; Salazar, 1996). Despite the evidence in the research that supports the need for content and context specific evaluation for teachers, most schools and school districts use a system of evaluating teachers that does not differentiate for these different contexts and contents. For purposes of this study Stake and Munson's (2008) findings were applied and any relevant research from across arts disciplines (theatre, music, dance, and visual art) was considered.

For the purposes of this study, teacher traits were defined as any distinguishing quality or characteristic of a person that is inherited. These traits cannot be taught. They are

part of the makeup of the individual. They can be developed further and strengthened through practice and

coaching, but they are innate and unique to the individual. Teacher characteristics were defined as any distinguishing quality of a person that can be shaped, molded, or taught. These are qualities that a teacher may not possess innately but can be learned. Instructional practices were defined as the approaches a teacher may take to engage students in the learning process actively. These practices drive a teacher's instruction as they work to meet specific learning objectives and ensure that their students are equipped with the tools they need to be successful. These can be shaped, molded, and taught.

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore the perceived commonalities and differences of theatre teachers and administrators regarding effective teacher traits, characteristics, and instructional practices of theatre teachers in a southern state. The research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1- What are the perceived commonalities and differences among theatre teachers and administrators regarding traits, characteristics, and instructional practices of effective theatre teachers?

RQ2- Are the themes that arose from the qualitative inquiry able to be validated through statistical analysis?

RQ3- Would the results of performing a Principle Component Analysis be consistent with the traits, characteristics, and instructional practices of effective theatre teachers the survey was designed to measure?

## Overview of Methodology

This mixed methods approach of pragmatic generic qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2015) and exploratory sequential mixed methods (Creswell, 2014) were utilized. Pragmatic generic qualitative inquiry seeks practical and useful answers to real-world issues using mix methods to get diverse perspectives into the problem. Exploratory sequential design begins with qualitative data collection and analysis followed by quantitative data collection and analysis. Eight theatre teachers and eight corresponding administrators totaling 16 participants were selected by the researcher through convenient purposeful sampling. Standardized face to face interviews were conducted with each participant after acquiring appropriate permissions from each participating school and district in the study. The qualitative data of the participant interviews were reviewed, categorized by topic, and strength coded for common themes that emerged relevant to the related literature through a constant-comparative method.

Each participant, identified hereafter by a pseudonym, worked in a public high school in a southern state during the period of the study. The theatre teachers were all certified to teach Theatre Arts or were under special proviso from the state to do so with

appropriate credentials to support the proviso. All teachers had a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience and conducted work relevant to their jobs as theatre teachers during after school hours (see Table 1)

Table 1. *Demographic Information for Theatre Teachers Interviewed*

Table 1

*Demographic Information for Theatre Teachers Interviewed*

Teacher	Degree	Years Experience	Job Requires Work After School
Thomas	BA and Masters	7	Yes
Kimberly	BA and 2 Masters	11	No, but does afterschool work
Lisa	BA	25	Yes
Catherine	BA and Masters	10	Yes
Alice	BA and MFA	13	Yes
Mary	2 BA and Masters	22	No, but does afterschool work
Kenneth	BFA	11	No, but does afterschool work
Hannah	BA and Masters	16	Yes

All administrators (principals and assistant principals) held appropriate credentials in Administrative Leadership or Curriculum and Instruction. Each administrator selected was responsible for the corresponding theatre teacher's formal evaluation. The range of experience as an administrator in the current administrative position, as well as classroom experience as a content teacher varied greatly. Half the administrators interviewed had experience in Theatre Arts as a student, teacher, or participant on

stage, while the other half had no experience aside from seeing productions and watching their theatre teachers teach (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Demographic Information for Administrators Interviewed*

Table 2

*Demographic Information for Administrators Interviewed*

Administrator	Professional Credentials	Years in Current Position	Teaching Experience	Experience in Theatre
Jonathan	BA and 2 Master's	8 years current, (20 total)	28 years	Yes
Maria	BA and 2 Master's	8 years	10 years	No
Scott	BA, 2 Master's, and currently working on Doctorate	1 year	3 years	No
Beverly	BA, 2 Master's, and Doctorate	7 years	14 years +5 years instructional specialist	Yes
Amy	BA, Master's, and Doctorate	3 years	Yes	Yes
Justin	BA and Master's	8 years	Yes	No
Patricia	BA and Master's	8 years	3 years	No
Heather	BA and 2 Master's	4 years	18 years	Yes

Upon reviewing the qualitative data, a survey was developed by the researcher and reviewed by theatre education professors and high school theatre teachers from out of state to address RQ 2. The survey consisted of 12 Likert-like questions and three open-ended questions to confirm themes discovered from the interviews. The survey was administered to theatre teachers in a southern state by utilizing a listserv from the state theatre organization, with appropriate permissions granted. The survey was developed and administered electronically utilizing the online survey platform QuestionPro, an independent research firm to field confidential survey responses. One hundred eleven surveys were sent out via email and 24 emails were returned as undeliverable, due to personnel attrition in the school districts, school districts changing email platforms, and incorrect information on the listserv. Of the 87 surveys actually delivered, 49 were completed (56.32%) in the two-week window allotted for completion. A Chi-square statistical analysis was run on the survey results to address the validity of themes that arose during the qualitative inquiry. To address RQ 3, statistical analyses of the survey results were run including a Principle Component Analysis (PCA) and Cronbach's Alpha to measure how the survey items loaded together into components and how closely related the items were as a group in the components of the themes they were designed to measure. The results of these analyses are detailed in the summary of findings.

## Summary of Findings

RQ 1 that guided this study was designed to address three areas specifically: teacher traits, characteristics, and instructional practices. These were specific to the perceptions of theatre teachers and administrators in the search to find commonalities and differences in views of effective teaching in theatre arts. Findings are summarized with respect to the three areas addressed by research question 1.

**Teacher traits.** The researcher found similarities between theatre teacher and administrator perceptions of the traits of effective theatre teachers in that they appear to be focused on the personal growth of their students. Most theatre teachers and administrators spoke at great length about the importance of relationships with their students and how vital it was to the work they did as theatre educators. Interview and survey respondents underscored the notion that an effective theatre teacher should strive to know his/ her students well and understand them. The participants suggested that an effective theatre teacher strives to impacts students artistically, socially, mentally, and physically.

According to the interview and survey respondents, an effective theatre teacher should foster curiosity and creativity. He/she has eccentricities and individual personality traits that can impact his/her teaching. Additionally, he/she should strive to help students see things from different perspectives and appreciate those differences. An effective theatre teacher should see natural talent in a student and foster that through coaching. An effective theatre teacher can change students' lives. These soft skills can impact students on levels outside the curriculum. They are difficult to quantify and assess. However, these skills are important to the work of a theatre teacher.



Another similarity is effective theatre teachers teach to the affective domain. The affective domain refers to one of three domains in Bloom's Taxonomy and includes the manner in which we deal with things emotionally, such as feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasms, motivations, and attitudes (Krathwohl et al., 1973). Theatre teachers and administrators value what the theatre teacher brings to the theatre classroom in terms of teaching to the whole child. They agree the theatre teacher may do this better than most teachers across curriculums. Seidel (1991) and Omasta (2012) found supporting data in their exhaustive studies on theatre education in the United States. They found the most reliable assessment efforts for what might be considered the least concrete skills (self-confidence, personal growth, and acting) were rated higher than more concrete skills like playwriting by teachers and administrators indicating the more structured and objective the assessment method, the lower its rating by both principal and teachers (Seidel, 1991; Omasta, 2012).

According to interview and survey respondents, an effective theatre teacher is passionate about the crafts of theatre and teaching. Passion is defined as a strong feeling of enthusiasm or excitement for something or about doing something. Passion is different from the affective domain because passion is specifically related to the theatre teacher's feelings, not the student's feelings as in affective domain.

The researcher identified a few differences between theatre teacher and administrator perceptions in teacher traits. Theatre teachers in this study identified traits of individual teacher persona and the ability to foster curiosity in students as being important to be an effective theatre teacher. The theatre teacher respondents reported that uniqueness was important to take into account when being evaluated as this could impact the environment of the classroom and the manner in which learning takes place in a theatre arts class. Theatre teachers felt it was important to strive to foster curiosity in their students. Theatre is exploratory by nature, so an effective theatre teacher should take advantage of opportunities to explore questions, take risks, and go on educational explorations with their students when the moments present themselves. Administrators who do not understand the exploratory nature of theatre may see this as off-task. However, the exploring is where a lot of learning takes place in a theatre arts class. Additionally, an effective theatre teacher should use those moments to strengthen instruction and his/her students.

Administrators believed fostering talent in students is important to be an effective theatre teacher. Seeing innate talent and ability is important to teaching theatre. An effective theatre teacher should see it and foster it. Administrators tended to want to see a final product of talent that has been fostered. This suggested the need for evidence of growth with the students for an administrator to be able to effectively evaluate the teacher.

This information led to questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the survey developed.

1. The work I do afterschool with students should be included as part of my evaluation.

2. The relationships I develop with my theatre students are important for me to be an effective teacher.

3. Building an ensemble in my theatre arts classes is important.

4. It is important to connect theatre content to real-life skills and applications.

**Teacher characteristics.** The similarities between theatre teachers' and administrators' perceptions of teacher characteristics are that effective theatre teachers should be a jack-of-all-trades. Survey findings triangulated the data that support theatre teacher perceptions that affect and subjectivity matter.

The effective theatre teacher should be able to teach all things theatre and be a master of their craft. This alluded to the breadth of content knowledge a theatre teacher must master and be able to teach due to the nature of the subject. In his survey of theatre education in the United States, Omasta (2012) reported 79% of schools surveyed offer at least one theatre course similar to a theatre appreciation course. Additional courses were offered in technical theatre design (29%) and acting (27%), musical theatre (14%), directing, theatre history, playwriting, stage management, and theatre management.

In various studies researchers reported administrators and teachers agreed that theatre plays an important role in developing skills necessary to work with others to solve problems (leadership, problem-solving/critical thinking, and social/cross-cultural skills; Abril & Gault, 2012; Omasta, 2012). Soft skills are the intangibles that cannot be measured or quantified that a theatre teacher teaches through their curriculum. Life skills are different than soft skills. Life skills are the 21st century skills that businesses look for in the work force. The theatre teachers in this study felt theatre teachers do this better than most teachers in the school.

In this study theatre teachers discussed the idea of building the ensemble. Ensemble is a concept that takes into account all the parts of the group when looking at the whole. This group works together for a common goal. An effective theatre teacher should work to develop a sense of belonging and "family" through activities and exercises that develop trust and a sense of community within the class and production.

The notion of process involves the ability to take a student from one point and move them to another in terms of growth. It also includes developing students and works of theatre through rehearsal and performance. Other researchers suggested it is important for educators to see the whole experience in arts education over longer periods of time, not just the final product or performance (Greene, 1995; Maranzano, 2000; Stake & Munson, 2008). To further the point, evaluation of arts teachers must include process as part of the criteria. The product (concert, play, art exhibit, or festival performance rating) must not be the focus of evaluation (Zerull, 1990).

In contrast, administrators felt effective theatre teachers strived to market the theatre program. Administrators felt effective theatre teachers should do this by recruiting

students, producing quality theatre productions, and teaching fun and engaging classes. This is indicative of another contrasting notion that correlates to marketing the theatre program. The impact the theatre program had on the whole school was of significance to administrators. If an effective theatre teacher is marketing their program appropriately the number of students in the program will suggest a thriving need for theatre in the school. Additionally, an effective theatre teacher should strive to be an integral part of the school as a whole. He/she should be an active contributor to school initiatives, work with colleagues, is part of professional learning communities within the school, and create a need for the theatre program to be a part of the school community.

This information led to questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 in the survey developed.

5. My passion for theatre and teaching theatre is vital to the work I do with my students.
6. Evaluators need to understand how to evaluate the subjective nature of theatre arts classes.
7. The affective domain of learning (instilling confidence, self-worth, work ethic, process, working towards and achieving goals, responsibilities, high expectations, creativity, problem solving, curiosity, etc.) is vital to what I teach in a theatre arts classroom.
8. Producing theatre productions is necessary to effectively teaching theatre.
9. An effective theatre teacher must be a “jack of all trades” with a breadth of content knowledge.

**Instructional practices.** The similarities concerning instructional practices of effective theatre teachers finally suggest there is a lack of administrator understanding of the content of theatre. Furthermore, effective theatre teachers should strive to utilize strategies with their students including group work, solo work, qualitative and quantitative feedback, differentiation, participation, and modeling. It was agreed by the theatre teachers and administrators that theatre classrooms are busy spaces. Survey findings triangulated the data that supported theatre teacher perceptions that understanding theatre as a performing art suggests administrators should assess theatre teaching differently.

Most theatre teachers and administrators involved in this study spoke candidly about general concerns when it comes to a theatre arts class. They spoke of administrators not understanding theatre content in an observation and therefore get or give little to no useful feedback to assist theatre teachers in growing professionally. Additionally, theatre teachers in this study felt a lack of confidence in the observation and evaluation systems in place and therefore felt the evaluations they receive were of little use to their practice.

Other researchers found teachers rated class work and productions as having roughly equal potential for teaching students and 90% of theatre programs do some sort of

production every year (typically three or more productions) with 81% of teachers consider play production work to be part of their theatre course work (Seidel, 1991). Administrators and teachers also indicated the most important job responsibilities of theatre teachers were listening, guiding, and directing productions (Seidel, 1991). Finally, an effective theatre teacher should strive to teach for artistic understanding while preparing for performance (Blocher et al., 1997; Duke & Pierce, 1991; Markle et al., 1990).

The researcher confirmed findings in the related literature that an effective theatre teacher produces live theatre and utilizes this for recruitment to build and sustain their programs. This not only gives exposure to the program (comparative to marketing the program), but for theatre teachers it serves as a prime vehicle to put the theory and training found in the classroom to work in an active and engaged way for the students (comparative to process).

Current evaluation practices tend to dismiss the valuable work that extends outside the typical school day and contributes to the instructional programs of the arts and that these are valid sources of authentic instruction that can and should be assessed (Maranzano, 2000). They are indicative of a healthy arts program (Omasta, 2012) and a rich source of evidence of effective instruction (Millman & Darling-Hammond, 1990). The participants in this study agree effective theatre teachers commit great amounts of time beyond the typical school day to accomplish what they need to accomplish for the benefit of their theatre program.

The differences concerning instructional practices of effective theatre teachers finally suggested theatre teachers recognized more instructional strategies specific to the content of theatre than administrators did. Theatre teachers and administrators agreed on a few instructional strategies including modeling and demonstrating, and their students are engaged or involved.

Other researchers found theatre teachers recognize more instructional strategies than administrators. An effective theatre teacher's classes should be based on creating, performing, and responding (Duke & Simmons, 2006; Franklin, 2005). An effective theatre teacher should strive to provide immediate, related feedback that is linked to past work (Blocher et al., 1997; Borich, 1992; Cazden, 1986; Duke & Madsen, 1991; Duke & Simmons, 2006; Franklin, 2005; Kyriakides, 2005; McAllister, 2008; Price, 1983; Stamer, 1999; Van Rossum, 2004; Watkins, 1993; Yarbrough & Henley, 1999; Yarbrough & Price, 1989), be critical without being hurtful, and teach students how to handle criticism (Brand, 1983; Duke & Simmons, 2006; Miller, 2000; Van Rossum, 2004). Additionally, an effective theatre teacher should have a sense of humor (Kelly, 2007; King, 1998; Rohwer & Henry, 2004; Teachout, 1997; Walker, 2008; Wolfe, 1997) with which he/she can balance out the seriousness of constructive feedback and keep a fun and engaging atmosphere with students. This directly links back to knowing his/ her students. An effective theatre teacher should individualize instruction for students (Franklin, 2005; Stake & Munson, 2008). Effective theatre teachers should strive to know their students in order to be able to most effectively individualize instruction for

his/ her students to maximize learning opportunities. An effective theatre teacher should work to have excellent classroom management (Brand, 1983; Hattie, 2009; Korteweg, 1989; Looney, 2011; Popp et al., 2011; Range et al., 2012; Rohwer & Henry, 2004; Sanden, 2012; Van Rossum, 2004). Due to the active and at times “chaotic” nature of a theatre classroom, an effective theatre teacher should strive to maintain excellent classroom management in order to maintain an effective learning environment.

Participants in this study suggested theatre teachers felt an effective theatre teacher should teach an appreciation for theatre, not future stars. Most theatre teachers ascribed to the philosophy of teaching that involved not teaching future stars. They believed an effective theatre teacher should teach kids to love and appreciate the art form and the craft of theatre, and not to go on and be famous.

The administrators felt theatre teachers almost always score well on evaluations. They believed current evaluation systems tend to help theatre teachers during evaluations because they were not specific and left room for administrators to make subjective decisions. In contrast, theatre teachers believed the evaluations are meaningless and did not accurately assess their teaching. According to theatre teachers in this study, this is attributed to administrators not truly understanding the theatre content and what effective teaching in theatre looks like.

Finally, administrators suggested effective theatre teachers should foster talent, grow the students, and grow the program. This was similar to administrator comments on marketing the program. An effective theatre teacher should strive to be like a coach in that they see talent and develop that talent to put out a good product. This in turn should strengthen recruitment of students and boast strong numbers of enrollment in addition to a strong product to market the school as a whole.

This information led to questions 10, 11, and 12 in the survey developed.

10. Evaluators need to understand how learning tends to look different in a theatre arts classroom.

11. Process is a primary focus in my theatre arts classroom.

12. Evaluators need to understand classroom management may look different in a theatre arts classroom than other classrooms.

**Quantitative analysis.** These themes that emerged from the qualitative findings directly led to the development of the survey used in the quantitative component of this study. RQ 2 was designed to examine the statistical analysis of the validity of the themes that arose from the qualitative inquiry. Survey questions 1-12 were presented in Likert-like scale format. Table 3 provides the response distribution, degrees of freedom, and p value for each question.

Table 3. *Chi-Square Test Results for Questions 1-12*

Table 3

*Chi-Square Test Results for Questions 1-12*

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	df	<i>p</i>
1	26	19	2	2	1	49	<i>p</i> = .200
2	40	8	2	0	0	49	<i>p</i> < .001
3	41	8	0	0	0	48	<i>p</i> < .001
4	43	6	0	0	0	48	<i>p</i> < .001
5	41	7	2	0	0	49	<i>p</i> < .001
6	39	8	2	0	0	48	<i>p</i> < .001
7	45	4	0	0	0	48	<i>p</i> < .001
8	33	12	3	0	1	48	<i>p</i> < .002
9	37	10	1	1	0	48	<i>p</i> < .001
10	40	8	1	0	0	48	<i>p</i> < .001
11	28	20	1	0	0	48	<i>p</i> < .010
12	38	8	1	1	0	47	<i>p</i> < .001

As shown in Table 3, respondents clearly demonstrated a patterned preference for the Agree-Strongly Agree categories. Except for Item 1, the Chi-square procedure resulted in statistical significance at or below  $p < .01$ . However, Item 1 contained 3 participants for the Disagree and Strongly Disagree categories that resulted in a non-statistically significant result,  $p = .20$ , for that item. Survey responses at the Agree- Strongly Agree categories comprised 90 % (45 out of 50) of survey responses to Item 1. This was congruent with the qualitative data of the interviews conducted and the qualitative survey results indicating theatre teachers and administrators would like the work the theatre teachers do after school to be considered when being evaluated.

RQ 3 was designed to analyze how the survey items loaded together into components and how closely related the items were as a group in the components of the themes they were designed to measure. The suitability of the PCA was assessed prior to analysis. Inspection of the correlation matrix showed that all variables had at least one correlation coefficient greater than 0.4. PCA revealed four components that had eigenvalues greater than one and which explained 30.5%, 13.8%, 11.9% and 10.6% of the total variance, respectively (see Table 4).

A Varimax orthogonal rotation was employed to aid interpretability. The rotated solution exhibited “simple structure” (Thurstone, 1947). The interpretation of the data indicated that the removal of item 1 and the relocation of item 9 from component 3 to component 1 would increase the Cronbach’s Alpha for both components (see Table 5). These changes resulted in the formation of three components that were consistent with the traits, characteristics, and instructional practices of effective theatre teachers the survey was designed to measure.

Table 4. *Rotated Component Matrix*

Table 4

*Rotated Component Matrix*

	<u>Component</u>			
	1	2	3	4
Q8	.813			
Q10	.703			
Q12	.663			
Q11	.488			
Q7		.931		
Q5		.851		
Q6		.597		
Q2			.888	
Q3			.794	
Q9				.727
Q4				.589
Q1				-.500

*Note.* Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Table 5. *Survey Components as Suggested by the PCA*

Table 5

*Survey Components as Suggested by the PCA*

Survey Item	Cronbach's Alpha
2. The relationships I develop with my theatre students are important for me to be an effective teacher.	.532
3. Building an ensemble in my theatre arts classes is important.	
4. It is important to connect theatre content to real- life skills and applications.	
9. An effective theatre teacher must be a "jack of all trades" with a breadth of content knowledge.	
5. My passion for theatre and teaching theatre is vital to the work I do with my students.	.751
6. Evaluators need to understand how to evaluate the subjective nature of theatre arts classes.	
7. The affective domain of learning (instilling confidence, self-worth, work ethic, process, working towards and achieving goals, responsibilities, high expectations, creativity, problem solving, curiosity, etc.) is vital to what I teach in a theatre arts classroom.	
8. Producing theatre productions is necessary to effectively teaching theatre.	.644
10. Evaluators need to understand how learning tends to look different in a theatre arts classroom.	
11. Process is a primary focus in my theatre arts classroom.	
12. Evaluators need to understand classroom management may look different in a theatre arts classroom than other classrooms.	

## Implications for Practice, Policy, and Research



## IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study provides implications for performance evaluation of theatre arts teachers. The similarities provide useful data that can be used in evaluation of theatre teachers. They provide a base line/common ground to start from in defining and measuring effective teaching in theatre arts. These known and agreed upon areas could prove helpful in classroom observations, conversations between theatre teachers and administrators about practice, planning for professional development, and teacher evaluations.

One recommendation is that an observation instrument should be developed that is specific to the content of theatre arts teachers. Administrators and theatre teachers agree there is a lack of understanding on the part of administrators when it comes to theatre arts content. This study suggests useful information for administrators and theatre teachers on how theatre arts classes are viewed. This can also provide insight to issues in low morale and feelings of isolation that theatre teachers experience in schools.

Administrators tend to feel a successful theatre program is one that makes the school look good to the community and the theatre programs benefits the whole school and thus a theatre teacher is effective when they are able to do this. Theatre teachers feel more of the “real work” they do is evident in class and rehearsals as evidenced over time. It is recommended that administrators look at more opportunities to get into theatre teachers’ classrooms and rehearsals to experience more of the process in which the teachers and students work to see how the teacher is fostering talent and growing students.

The evaluation process is inhibiting the education process. The current product driven mindset is making teachers reach for stellar productions instead of focusing on what they feel is important in the classroom. Administrators and theatre teachers in this study stated administrators tend to feel overwhelmed, school gets in the way of observations, and there is not enough time in the school day to get in the classrooms like they would like to. Most teachers are required to work after school on productions. Most even receive stipends for this work. An administrator could use this time after school to conduct observations of these afterschool rehearsals since they are assigned job duties and are extensions of the work they are doing in the classrooms. Theatre teachers can also extend invitations to administrators to come into their classrooms when they are doing work they want seen. They can also invite administrators to afterschool rehearsals. Including administrators in the work they do could assist with the feelings of isolation commonly felt by theatre teachers and administrators can feel welcome to come in and observe and learn more about the content through the experience of observing and even participating in the lessons as active learners.

Administrators must also have a shift in mindset of the theatre productions as “window dressing” for the school. This study suggests theatre teachers place far less importance on productions than administrators. This can be attributed to theatre teachers

understanding the content better than administrators typically and seeing the big picture as the expert in the field. Administrators who see the product/production as the most important aspect of a theatre program can miss a wealth of good teaching that goes into creating the product. Conversely, an administrator may miss a wealth of poor teaching if the teacher knows they are being evaluated on their productions and how good they assist in making the school look. In essence, theatre teachers can be teaching to the test, instead of the process, which they innately feel is more important to their work in theatre.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

This study provides implications for professional development of administrators, theatre teachers, and policy makers. Administrators could be trained in a class for which there is one teacher teaching the content, or singleton teachers. This would be appropriate as suggested by this study for theatre arts, but can also serve other arts teachers and singleton teachers as well.

Additionally, training for administrators to assist in planning professional growth/development plans for theatre arts teachers would be appropriate as well. Theatre teachers need specific training. If it is known he/she is the expert in the content area, training for meaningful conversations between administrators and theatre teachers should be developed for planning professional development that is appropriate and meaningful for the theatre teacher to grow as an educator. For example, this study found theatre teachers differentiate instruction and engage students better than most teachers in the school. Professional development focused on these best practices may prove counterproductive for these teachers. Targeted professional development in a particular area of theatre such as directing in a particular theatrical style or historical period of theatre may prove more beneficial for the teacher, his/ her work with students, their practice in the classroom and rehearsals, and strengthened final product in productions. These targeted conversations, observations, and evaluations may strengthen practice of teachers in the classroom

Evaluation practices of administrators may be strengthened in that teachers may not always score extremely well on evaluations. It could provide meaningful direction to teachers working to improve instead of continuing to work in isolation not knowing if they are truly being effective or not. It may provide more direction for administrators to be educational leaders and strengthen the work of the teacher, thus strengthening the growth of students.

Policy makers can benefit from this study in that current evaluation systems and practices are not adequate for all teachers. The information from this study could lead to the development of stronger evaluation systems that are more inclusive of teachers without test scores attached to their classes, are performance based in nature, and are more subjective in nature because of the content that is taught.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

This study provides groundwork for future studies to develop and test such an instrument. Such an instrument may prove useful to theatre teachers receiving more specific feedback from administrators to better practice. It could also provide a baseline for conversations between administrators and theatre teachers in planning for professional development. In an effort to make this more beneficial for all parties involved, appropriate and thorough training for administrators should be part of the observation instrument use and evaluation process. This may provide greater confidence for teachers in the evaluation process.

## Conclusions

Theatre teachers and administrators who evaluate theatre teachers have presented a holistic picture of an effective theatre through this study. It is important to acknowledge the similarities found through this study between perceptions of effective theatre teachers between theatre teachers and administrators. The common ground that is proposed by this study suggests administrators and theatre teachers have an understanding of multiple areas of effective teaching in theatre arts. It is also important to acknowledge the differences found in this study between theatre teacher and administrator perceptions of effective theatre teachers. The differences that are proposed by this study suggest administrators and theatre teachers have different priorities for and definitions of an effective theatre teacher.

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