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The Use of Classroom Walk-Through Observations as a Strategy for Improving Teaching and Learning: Teacher Perspective

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with

Mark Weller and Tom Sorenson

December 2009

A dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Leslie A. McEntire

Signature: Leslie McEntire Date 12/7/09

The Use of Classroom Walk-through Observations as a Strategy for Improving Teaching and Learning: Teacher Perspective

Leslie A. McEntire

This dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

At Lindenwood University by the School of Education.

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Dr. John Oldani, Committee Member	12/7/09 Date
Dr. Velma Burse, Committee Member	12/7/09 Date
Dr. Monica Coffey, Committee Member	12/7/09 Date

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Coffey, Dr. Burse, Dr. Bice, and Dr. Oldani for serving on my committee and helping me along the way. A special thanks to Dr. Vandenberg who was a tremendous help through this process.

I would also like to thank my partners in this research, Tom Sorenson and Mark Weller. We made a great team and I appreciate them both very much.

A special thank you goes to my family. Without their support, I don't think I could have done this. I appreciate all that they have done more than they will ever know. And of course, I thank God for all of His blessings.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of classroom walk-through observations and their effect on Communication Arts and Mathematics Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores, summer school placement, discipline referrals, and retention.

This study was conducted in three Midwestern Middle Schools. This study focused on classroom walk-through observations. If the principal increased the number of classroom walk-through observations, would it have an impact on Communication Arts and Mathematics MAP scores, summer school placement, discipline referrals and retention? This study will attempt to determine if classroom walk-through observations had an impact on Communication Arts MAP scores, Mathematics MAP scores, Summer School placement, discipline referrals and retention.

The data from this study was from the school years 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008. Classroom walk-through observations began in the ABC School District in the year 2006. The ABC School District used a walk-through form that is very detailed. The findings showed that yes, there was a decrease in discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention, and there was an increase in student achievement in regards to Communication Art MAP test scores and Mathematics MAP test scores. It cannot be concluded that the classroom walk-through observations are the reason for the increase in student achievement.

When educators look at the changes that education has gone through over the last twenty years, the focus is on the growth of the students and how the changes have impacted their student achievement. Classroom walk-through observations are one of the

many changes that have occurred in education. Can brief classroom observations regarding best practices have a positive impact on student achievement and school climate? There is not one single thing that is a fix for the problems that are occurring in the educational realm, but by examining different key points, educators can decipher which programs are working and which ones are not working. A possibility exists that the statistical data cannot provide the desired information.

Table of Contents Page

List of Tables

List of Figures Page

Chapter One-Introduction

Origin of the Project

Let me begin this study by discussing a classroom walk-through observation. A classroom walk-through observation is a quick way to see the content that is taught in the class as well as the delivery method. The classroom walk-through observations are conducted by an administrator in the school, and they give a three to five minute snapshot of a teacher's instructional method and of the students' engagement in the lesson. The ABC School District utilizes a walk-through form that was created by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in 2006. The classroom walk-through observations are unscheduled and can be done at any time during the school year as well as at any time of the day. The ABC School District had a scheduled number of classroom walk-through observations that were to be performed by each building over a certain period of time, but the number of classroom walk-through observations that actually took place did not add up to the number scheduled.

This project was a collaborative effort of three educators: myself, a teacher in a neighboring district to the ABC School District; Mark Weller, an assistant principal at Middle School B in the ABC School District; and Tom Sorenson, a counselor at Middle School B in the ABC School District. Tom focused primarily on the student's perspective and Mark focused primarily on a leadership role. My focus was to look at our study from a teacher's perspective, because I am a recipient of classroom walk-through observations but at a different level and in a different district than the other two researchers. I have experienced classroom walk-through observations for two years. I have always enjoyed when my principal comes into my classroom. She performs a five-minute classroom

walk-through observation and provides feedback at the end of the day of the observation. I personally feel that it is a learning experience for me as well as for my principal. I can grow professionally from any comments that she provides and the principal becomes a part of the classroom just by her presence.

Mark, Tom and I met each other in the Educational Specialist Program at Lindenwood University. The three of us started the program together and had all of our classes together. We became partners in all of the group work projects in all of our classes. Our districts are geographically adjacent, and both districts service students with lower socio-economic backgrounds. We had dialogue about our students and how we wanted them to be successful and we discussed different things that our districts were doing to close the achievement gap. Mark and Tom mentioned that in their district, administrators were performing classroom walk-through observations. This collaborative project came about after we had discussed classroom walk-through observations and wondered if they could really have an impact on improving student achievement, while also contributing to decreased discipline referrals, summer school placements, and the number of students being retained.

We began by meeting with the superintendent of the ABC School District to ask his permission to perform this study. He was glad that this study was being performed because he was curious as well. After meeting with the superintendent, we began gathering data from all of the classroom walk-through observations performed by administrators in each of the three middle schools in the ABC School District. Due to the massive amount of data gathered throughout the entire school district over a two-year period, we limited our research study to only the three middle schools in the ABC School

District. This part of the research process was supported by the assistant superintendent of testing and evaluation and was completed through the use of the ABC School District Intranet, which allows most district data to be available to all district administrators with passwords. We then focused on gathering data and began to analyze the data. Almost immediately, we noticed an improvement trend in the area's Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores, and decreases in discipline referrals, summer school placement, and the total number of retained students, which indicated a potential correlation. Going beyond the data, we then looked at the observation form itself as a data collection instrument and discussed the limitations, potential improvements to the form and its use, and how the classroom walk-through observations affected each of us from our own professional perspective.

Mark is an administrator in the ABC School District and uses the form for his observations in the classroom. Tom is a student counselor in the same school while I am a teacher in a neighboring district where classroom walk-through observations are also performed. Mark gathered the data from the classroom walk-through observations and I researched the effectiveness of the classroom walk-through observations. Later, Tom analyzed the data. We all wanted to see the effect that classroom walk-through observations had on the ABC School District. The ABC School District is very thorough in gathering their data and entering it into a database which includes every classroom walk-through observation performed. The data can be sorted in any way desired so each of us began sorting the data by what was most important to each of us. As a teacher, I felt two of the most important parts were student engagement and instructional delivery. As an assistant principal, Mark focuses on all aspects of the form. He believes that all

sections of the form are important, but the one that stands out as the most important is the instructional strategies that are being used. Tom finds that all are important as well, but his focus is on the students, so he finds the most important part of the form is the student engagement.

While we were examining the data that were gathered, we noticed that some schools had many more observations than others. The results of the observations will be discussed in chapter 4, but one school had only twelve classroom walk-through observations in one year. This illustrated the inconsistency in the amount of classroom walk-through observations from school to school within the same district. Table 1 illustrates the expected number of classroom walk-through observations from each of the three middle schools in the ABC District. The expected number of classroom walk-through observations was determined by using the number of classrooms and an expected classroom walk-through once every two weeks. Table 1 illustrates that all three middle schools fell short in their number of classroom walk-through observations in both years.

Table 1

Expected and Actual Number of Classroom Walk-through Observations

School	# of teachers	Weeks/school	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
A	65	36	2340 (346)	1170 (213)
B	54	36	1944 (180)	972 (291)
C	38	36	1368 (12)	684 (10)

Note. The number in parenthesis is the actual number performed for that year.

This study examined classroom walk-through observations and their impact on student achievement in the areas of Communication Arts MAP scores, Mathematics MAP scores, discipline, summer school placement, and retention of students. The data used were from the ABC School District. The classroom walk-through observations form that was used in the study by the ABC School District is illustrated in the Appendix.

The ABC School District provided a set of definitions to apply to the terms used on the classroom walk-through observations form. The following is a list of terms most useful for understanding the ABC School District walk-through form (DESE 2006).

ABC School District Classroom Walk-through Observation Definitions

Advance organizers. Lets the student recollect and convey prior knowledge to new content that is about to be taught (Vandeven, 2006).

Class discussion. Exchange of ideas between students: Open response questions used for promoting dialogue between the students (Vandeven, 2006).

Cooperative learning. Students work together in small or large groups that can be chosen by the teacher or the student. The group will work on a topic collaboratively (Vandeven, 2006).

Cues. Gives the student an idea of what they are going to be learning (Vandeven, 2006).

Differentiated instruction. Present a variety of ways to present curriculum to meet the learning styles of all students (Vandeven, 2006).

Direct instruction. Teacher directly delivers information to students (Vandeven, 2006).

Distance learning. "The teacher and the student are separated by both time and/or location (real-time electronic field trips, video conferencing, etc.)" (Vandeven, 2006, p. 32).

Extended thinking - Depth of Knowledge (DOK 4). The capability to investigate, explore, discover and construct a multiple step process to solve problems and bear reasons for the decision that was made (Vandeven, 2006).

Extensive. "E" is for extensive. "During the observation, the instructional strategy is used approximately 90% or more of the time" (Vandeven, 2006, p. 30).

Group work. Students working collaboratively with partners or in groups (Vandeven, 2006)

Hands-on/experiments/laboratory work. An activity that will promote an increase in the content subject matter and create dialogue between students and the teacher (Vandeven, 2006).

Homework/practice. Students independently complete work that was taught in a previous lesson (Vandeven, 2006).

Learning centers. A place where students will participate in certain learning activities (Vandeven, 2006).

Nonlinguistic representation. Teacher presents subject matter in a way that is visual, auditory, and kinesthetic and involves exploration using different modalities (Vandeven, 2006).

Peer Evaluation. Students evaluate each other (Vandeven, 2006).

Questions. Ask students about knowledge they have on a certain subject (Vandeven, 2006).

Question and answer. Students are given a problem and must provide a response (Vandeven, 2006).

Recall (DOK 1). Identify facts or reiterate concepts (Vandeven, 2006).

Reinforcing effort/providing feedback. Teachers state the objective and dialogue with the student explaining their strengths and weaknesses on the completed task (Vandeven, 2006).

Research generating and testing hypotheses. Students predict and hypothesize about a given item (Vandeven, 2006).

Seatwork. Work that is completed at the student's desk which includes worksheets, or reading to reinforce knowledge of a certain subject matter (Vandeven, 2006).

Similarities and differences. Identify items that are either alike or different and can classify them accordingly (Vandeven, 2006).

Skill/concept (DOK 2). Student can apply learned skills to basic concepts (Vandeven, 2006).

Slight. "S" is for slight. "During the observation, the instructional strategy is used approximately 50% to 74% of the time" (Vandeven, 2006, p. 30).

Moderate. "M" is for moderate. "During the observation, the instructional strategy is used approximately 75% to 89% of the time" (Vandeven, 2006, p. 30).

Standard English. A person can correctly identify and pronounce words in the English language correctly (Vandeven, 2006).

Strategic thinking (DOK 3). Being able to solve a problem by developing a plan (Vandeven, 2006).

Student presentations. Students present their researched information and present their discoveries and presentations to the class (Vandeven, 2006).

Teacher engagement. The teacher is engaged in the students learning (Vandeven, 2006).

The form that the ABC School District uses contains many different sections for many aspects of observations. The observer checks the grade and subject being observed. The observation form has a rating scale that consists of an E, an M, and an S, which stand for *extensive*, *moderate*, and *slight* respectively. The administrator will check the column that is observed. The E, M, and S are used in evaluating the instructional delivery as well as the instructional strategies observed. The box labeled "Teacher" is used to determine what curriculum is being taught, whether it is the Teacher's Guide or supplemental material. The observer also looks at the student engagement level and will check one of high, moderate, low, or disengaged. The teacher engagement is also commented on with either a yes or a no. The classroom is observed to see if student work is displayed and if a scoring guide is displayed to show the grading scale of the student work. The observer also checks whether the classroom environment is conducive to learning. The physical and instructional climate are both observed. The Depth of Knowledge (DOK) is also observed. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE, 2006) created a DOK scale that measures the level of knowledge that is being taught. The four levels are as follows:

1. Level 1-Recall
2. Level 2-Skill/Concept
3. Level 3-Strategic Thinking

4. Level 4-Extended Thinking (p. 35).

Level 1 is the lowest level, and level 4 is the highest level. The desired observation would be at least a level 3. Another section on the classroom walk-through observations form is the use of technology. The observer examines to what extent technology is being used and completes the appropriate section of the form. The three levels of technology integration are:

1. Level 1 - Centers on acquiring and practicing technical skills: technology is something to learn
2. Level 2 - Automates traditional teacher and student roles: technology is optional
3. Level 3 - Expands role and/or products: technology is essential. (DESE, 2008, p. 43)

The observer must complete many different areas of the form, which may defeat the purpose of a walk-through observation. The observer could be too busy reading the form to be able to adequately observe the students, teachers, as well as the classroom learning environment.

Problem Statement

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires that all students are to be reading at their grade level by 2014. The NCLB act originated in 2003, after a steady decline in state assessments for students in grades K-12.This act accentuated the power of assessments. The former U.S. Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, stated that the focus of NCLB is to ensure that every child in America achieves high standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

As Marzano (2001) confidently stated, “We stand at what many consider a unique point in the history of U.S. education–a point at which the potential for truly meaningful school reform may be greater than it ever has been” (p. 1). The topic of student success has been a major concern in education for more than 20 years.

A Nation at Risk was written by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983. This report brought to light some of the problems facing the public school system. It mentioned that educators needed to make a commitment to the quality of education. A Nation at Risk set the stage for many reforms that are still in force today. As quoted in *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983),

> All children, regardless of race, class or socioeconomic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself. (p. 3)

The 1983 report included several specific indicators of risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), such as

1. “Scores had consistently declined in verbal, mathematics, physics, and English subjects as measured by the College Board’s Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT)” (p. 5). The classroom walk-through observation study focused on Middle Schools, however, the decline in test scores has been occurring in elementary, middle, and high schools.

2. "Nearly 40 % of 17-year-olds could not draw inferences from written material; only one-fifth could write a persuasive essay; and only one-third could solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps." DESE created the DOK levels to help decrease this percent. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5)

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2007) synthesis of research concluded that "although many studies pointed to outcomes that show some teachers contributed more to their students' academic growth than other teachers, almost no research could systematically explain the considerable variation in a teacher's ability for promoting student learning" (Goe, 2007, p. 15). When focusing on declining test scores and the incapability to use elementary reading skills, educators have to make a change so that students are achieving to their fullest potential.

An administrator being visible in a classroom can benefit the students learning. Teachers need to know that the classroom walk-through observations are to be used as a positive way to impact student achievement. Summative evaluations primarily focus on the outcomes and a formative evaluation is used primarily to improve programs. Mathers, Oliva, and Laine (2008) stated that "summative and formative evaluations can help the administrators of a school district determine where professional development needs to be focused" (p. 3). When administrators conduct the classroom walk-through observations, they can see at a glance what is going on in the classroom. They use a checklist and walk-through periodically throughout the school year.

School districts' policies on teacher evaluation vary immensely throughout the United States. There have only been two studies done in the United States that have

examined teacher evaluation policies with a wide population. One was by Ellet and Garland in 1987 and the other was by Loup, Garland, Ellet, and Rugutt in 1996. Both of these studies used the Teacher Evaluation Practices Survey. Ellet and Garland surveyed 100 of the largest school districts in the United States (Loup et al.). They found that teacher evaluations were mostly used to determine whether a teacher should be dismissed or needs remediation. They should be used as a learning tool and help the teacher to grow professionally, not always to suggest negative outcomes. Loup et al. conducted their survey, as a follow up study to Ellet and Garland's. The survey by Loup et al. focused on the superintendent's opinion of their evaluation procedures. It was a decade later but interestingly, the outcomes were very similar. The goals of educators are still basically the same today as they were in 1983 and in 2003.

Rationale for the Study

The rationale for the study is that student achievement is low and teachers need to be held accountable for the students' learning. Classroom walk-through observations are one way to see if the teachers are teaching the required curriculum at each grade level. The observation will briefly document strategies the teacher is using and monitor the students' learning behaviors during the lessons. If classroom walk-through observations do not increase student achievement, then maybe they are not worth the administrator's time and effort. Although the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest (Brandt, Thomas, & Burke, 2008) has researched the effectiveness of classroom observations and the effect on student achievement, there has not been an investigation within the public schools of Missouri.

The following questions were addressed in the study:

1. What is the relationship between the number of classroom walk-through observations in a particular school and subsequent performance on the Communication Arts portion of the MAP test in grades 6, 7, and 8?
2. What is the relationship between the number of classroom walk-through observations in a particular school and subsequent performance on the Mathematics portion of the MAP test in grades 6, 7, and 8?
3. What is the relationship between the number of classroom walk-through observations in a particular school and the number of discipline referrals?
4. What is the relationship between the number of classroom walk-through observations in a particular school and the number of students enrolled in that schools summer school program?
5. What is the relationship between the number of classroom walk-through observations in a particular school and the number of students retained at the end of that school year?

Independent Variable

The number of ABC School District classroom walk-through observations served as the independent variable for this study. The independent variables of our study were the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted at each middle school. The relationship between classroom walk-through observations that were conducted over a two year period and MAP Communication Arts test scores, MAP Mathematics test scores, number of discipline referrals, summer school placement, and the number of students retained in their academic grade were analyzed.

Dependent Variables

The first dependent variable of the study was the achievement data from the Communication Arts portion of the MAP Test measured in April of each year over a three year period.

The second dependent variable of the study was the achievement data from the Mathematics portion of the MAP Test measured in April of each year over a three year period.

The third dependent variable of the study was the number of students enrolled in summer school at each middle school at the end of each year school year.

The fourth dependent variable of the study was the number of students retained in his or her academic grade at the end of each school year.

The fifth dependent variable of the study was the total number of discipline referrals received by assistant principals at each middle school each year.

Hypotheses

Null hypothesis #1. There will be no significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and score on the Communication Arts portion of the MAP test.

Null hypothesis #2. There will be no significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and score on the Mathematics portion of the MAP test.

Null hypothesis #3. There will be no significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the total number of discipline referrals at each middle school at the end of each year.

Null hypothesis #4. There will be no significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the number of students enrolled in the summer school program of each middle school at the end of each year.

Null hypothesis #5. There will be no significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the number of students retained in his or her grade level at the end of each academic year in each middle school.

Alternative hypothesis #1. There will be a positive correlation between correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and score on the Communication Arts portion of the MAP test.

Alternative hypothesis #2. There will be a positive correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and score on the Mathematics portion of the MAP test.

Alternative hypothesis #3. There will be a negative correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the total number of discipline referrals at each middle school at the end of each year.

Alternative hypothesis #4. There will be a negative correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the number of students enrolled in the summer school program of each middle school at the end of each year.

Alternative hypothesis #5. There will be a negative correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the number of students retained in his or her grade level at the end of each academic year in each middle school.

When I looked at the data, I realized the most important element missing from the ABC School District classroom walk-through observations is feedback to the teacher. A teacher never knows what the administrator wrote on the form, because there is never a discussion of the classroom walk-through observations. As a classroom teacher, I want to know my strengths and weaknesses. This study can be taken further by surveying the ABC School District teachers to understand their perception of the value of the classroom walk-through observations.

The lack of feedback from the administrators in the ABC School District is a major drawback. Observations are done, but what are the reactions to the classroom walk-through observations?

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to the ABC School District classroom walk-through observations process. The limitations include the following:

1. The beginning of the process established no clear outcomes. The purpose of the classroom walk-through was not defined. The administrators were told to perform the classroom walk-through observations and that was it.
2. Teachers and administrators were not trained. The administrators were told to perform classroom walk-through observations and they did it without any formal professional development on the proper way to conduct the classroom walk-through observations.
3. Teachers received no feedback on the data. The administrators performed the classroom walk-through observations, the data were entered into the

computer, and it was never looked at again. Teachers did not receive feedback from the administrators.

4. Walk-through observations were performed inconsistently from school to school. None of the middle schools in the ABC School District conducted the amount of scheduled classroom walk-through observations. There was no consistency in the number of classroom walk-through observations.
5. Administrators only observed the same classrooms all year. The different administrators in each of the ABC School District middle schools did not change the classroom observed. They always observed the same classrooms.
6. Different administrators perceived the questions differently. The form is subjective and can be interpreted differently by each administrator.
7. First year implementation requested administrators to visit each classroom once a week. Second year of implementation requested administrators to visit each classroom once every two weeks. In actuality, this did not happen. The administrators realized after the first year that they would reduce the number of scheduled classroom walk-through observations.
8. The data only represented the three middle schools. This could have been expanded throughout the rest of the schools in the district.
9. This study left open the possibility that the statistical data cannot render the desired information.

Summary

When educators examine the changes that education has gone through over the last twenty years, the focus is on the growth of the students and how the changes have

impacted their student achievement. Classroom walk-through observations are one of the many changes that have occurred in education. Can brief classroom observations regarding best practices make a significant positive impact on student achievement and school climate? There is not one single thing that is a fix for the problems that are occurring in the educational realm, but by examining different key points, teachers and administrators can decipher which programs are working and which ones are not working. A possibility exists that the statistical data cannot provide the desired information; therefore, I examined additional data.

Chapter Two focuses on the literature that was gathered in regards to the classroom walk-through observations process as well as the main points of the study, which include student achievement, discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology of the study. Chapter Four focuses on the statistical analysis of the study, which is a causal-comparative methodology. Chapter Five focuses on the teachers' perspective as well as a concentration on feedback given to teachers on the observation.

Chapter Two-Review of Literature

Introduction

If the data we have generated proves useful in addressing the need for improvement in the academic areas of Communication Arts and Math scores, and school climate areas of discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention, then we need some background information from the literature on each of these areas. The first part of this literature review examines past and current ideas and methods that address the need for improvement in the areas including our dependent variables. The general literature contains other studies that have examined teacher evaluations and classroom walk-through observations. The general literature covers topics within the research with additional literature on teacher perspective.

Teacher Evaluation

Education was just a given for the students and how well they performed was up to them. That is no longer the case. Teacher accountability is a key part in the success of the student's learning. Teacher observations are a way to see what is being taught in the class as well as the delivery method of the content being taught.

Two types of evaluations. Teacher observations were used to examine the delivery of the curriculum content as well as the behavior of the students (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). There are a variety of ways to evaluate a teacher. One way is for the teachers to evaluate themselves. This can be done by analyzing the data from the student's assessment of the lesson. Teachers can see where their strengths and weaknesses lie. Teachers can also have someone video their lesson for them to evaluate their instructional delivery. Another method for evaluating a teacher is peer evaluation. This can be done

within the grade level, school, or district. Another method of evaluation is for an administrator to perform teacher evaluations. A summative teacher evaluation is usually done by an administrator or immediate supervisor. The formative evaluation is beneficial because it can help to inform the teacher of what was noticed during the evaluation. It would not be beneficial if an administrator used a formative evaluation as a means for assessing teachers for their salary raise or for tenure. A plus to summative evaluations is that they are planned and teachers and administrators have pre and post meetings in regards to the evaluation. A con to the summative method is that if a teacher is having a bad day, the teacher is still measured on his or her teaching on that bad day. "A formative evaluation is a tool used to improve instruction" (Barrett, 1986, as cited by Mathers, Oliva, & Laine, 2008, p. 4). The formative reports are used by the principal to capture a moment in time in a classroom.

Summative and formal evaluations have been a topic of interest in recent literature. School administrators are realizing the importance of evaluations and how they play a large part in professional development. The formative evaluation can be used as method to identify improvement needed. The summative evaluation can be used to evaluate a teacher's performance (Mathers, Oliva, & Laine, 2008). Both evaluations are important, but they should only be a part of analyzing the teachers' success. Feedback is one of the most important parts of an evaluation. A teacher can learn from the areas of weakness that are noticed and improve his or her teaching in that area. Without the feedback, a teacher does not know where he or she is falling short.

Formative and summative evaluations can be used as an instrument to determine what professional development needs to be implemented. "Using evaluation results to

create and implement professional development plans may improve how current resources are being spent, send a message to teachers that their professional growth is valued, and decrease turnover rates" (Mathers et al., 2008, p. 12). Summative evaluations can be used as a diagnostic tool for administrators to make decisions regarding tenure and salary.

In the ABC School District, there is no formal training provided for the evaluators in regards to what they are to look for in classrooms during instruction. The evaluators do have an observation checklist that is used, but is there consistency as to how it is used? It is a limitation that is consistent throughout all of the research. The lack of professional development in the area of classroom walk-through observations jeopardizes the reliability of the observation. Administrators are put into the roles of principals, and assistant principals, and then told to observe the teachers. Unfortunately, there has not been professional development in the area of teacher observations and evaluations for the administrators. Classroom walk-through observation procedures vary from school district to school district. What is important to one school district might not be important to another.

Reliability and validity of teacher evaluations. Reliability and validity are important in teacher evaluation. "An evaluation instrument is considered reliable if two or more evaluators use the same evaluation instrument and come to the same conclusion" (Mathers et al., 2008, p. 5). A way that reliability can be increased is to make sure that the observation tool has clearly defined methods of use and that it is rather straightforward in its directions. This can be achieved by using an evaluation instrument that has been created by the observer for which professional development has been

attended on its use (Mujis, 2006). Without the professional development in the use of the evaluation instrument, the reliability of the classroom walk-through observation is threatened.

The evaluation instrument must also be valid. The instrument needs to measure what it intends to measure. “With adequate data, developers can descriptively and statistically demonstrate the link between teacher performance and student outcomes such that the excellent teaching performance being measured in fact produces the desired improvement in student behaviors, performance, and learning” (Mathers et al., 2008 p. 5).

Teacher evaluation feedback. According to Sweeney and Manatt (1986), teachers who are non-tenured are usually evaluated annually and teachers who are tenured are evaluated once in a five year period unless there has been an unsatisfactory. All teachers should receive frequent observations. Administrators are often too busy to visit the classroom to observe what is going on. Further, if they do visit the classroom and perform a classroom walk-through observation but do not give any feedback to the teacher, the number of classroom walk-through observations would not make a difference.

“Research convincingly demonstrates that when certain instructional strategies are implemented appropriately, they can increase student achievement” (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001, p. 1). The feedback from an evaluation is an integral part of the teacher evaluation. This will allow teachers to guide their development in the areas of their strengths and weaknesses. Laws mandate that teachers be evaluated, but unfortunately, many districts do it just to say they do it. “This compliance attitude toward teacher evaluation leads to inadequate allocation of time and resources necessary to ensure

effective evaluations" (Zerger, 1988, p. 512). The results from a classroom observation can help a teacher to become a stronger educator.

Research on teacher evaluation programs. Teachers should be involved in the creation and implementation of the evaluation instrument. Additionally, according to Marx (2007), classroom walk-through observations should relate to school mission statements as well as on teacher performance. Teachers need to be involved in the evaluation process, whether it be creating the classroom walk-through form, or conducting peer observations. Marx stated that classroom walk-through observations should incorporate collaboration between the administrators, the teachers, and the students.

Classroom Walk-Through Observations

Classroom walk-through observations are intended to be a quick and non-threatening way to give administrators a snapshot of student learning (Downey et al., 2001). Classroom walk-through observations are just about three minutes in length. The classroom walk-through observations technique is based on the work of Carol Downey, who began researching this technique in 1992. Downey's technique is based on the idea that it will promote professional dialogue between the teacher and the observer about the teacher's instructional delivery methods. These dialogue sessions will be a valuable learning tool for the educator in the classroom. The Downey classroom walk-through observation is based on positive relationships with all of the stakeholders in the educational system. The classroom walk-through observations technique is said to benefit both teachers and students.

Hopkins (2005) listed five benefits of classroom walk-through observations.

1. Principals get into the classroom more. This is a benefit because it allows administrators to see firsthand what is going on in the classrooms.
2. Effective use of a principal's time. This is a benefit because this can increase teacher effectiveness. When principals are visible and are conducting unscheduled classroom walk-through observations, the teachers and students never know when a classroom walk-through observation will occur. The teachers are accountable for the students learning and will be ready for a classroom walk-through observation at any time.
3. Enables administrators to really know teacher strengths and weaknesses. By being in the classrooms, an administrator can see what is going on. The administrator can identify strengths and weaknesses by conducting frequent classroom walk-through observations.
4. Principals improve rapport with the teachers as well as with the students. By having an administrator in the classroom, it lets the students and the teacher know that the administrator really cares. The administrator wants to see the learning that is occurring as well as the climate of each classroom.
5. Classroom walk-through observations provide a basis for reflection and sharing effective practices for faculty individually and as a whole.

Classroom walk-through observations should always be followed by a meeting with the observer and the observee to discuss what was noticed during the classroom walk-through observation. This is a very important aspect of the classroom walk-through observation. This dialogue can be valuable in bringing about change.

> The purpose of the classroom walk-through observation is to support teachers who are continuously improving their practice. After the goal of supporting teachers is reached, teachers are encouraged to set growth targets and to search out researched practices and try them. (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004, p. 13)

Classroom walk-through observations give administrators a chance to see what content is being taught in the classrooms as well as interactions between the students and teacher. Classroom walk-through observations create a dialogue that will improve the teacher's instructional methods as well as increase the student's achievement. Research supports that by being visible in the classroom, administrators will keep the students and the teachers on task. If there is feedback after a classroom walk-through observation, the teacher and administrator can work together to make sure that what is occurring is what is best for the students' learning. Feedback from the classroom walk-through observation can help the teacher to be a reflective teacher that will work to be the best teacher they can be.

Ideally, there are no judgments made about the teacher's practice. It is a growing process. Reflection is a key factor in the classroom walk-through observations because it gives the person performing the observation a quick picture of the classroom and what takes place during instruction. It is the administrators' duty to make sure that there is time set aside for discussion and feedback during the observation process. The main purpose of the observation process is to increase student achievement and that can be done by collaboration and reflection. Educators need to look at the positives as well as the negatives to make sure the students' needs are being met. Reflection is a way for teachers

to analyze their classroom practice and take charge of their professional growth. Administrators should listen to what the teacher has to say in regards to professional development. Teachers can take charge of their professional growth by attending professional development that would be beneficial to them (Johnston, 2006).

The goal of the classroom walk-through observation is to gather data in a short amount of time. An important element that the administrators are looking for is to see if the students are on task and that they seem to understand what they are doing. The administrator will look for the curriculum content that is being taught as well as the instructional methods used to teach the curriculum. Two main questions that teachers should keep in mind are

1. Is my lesson aligned with the grade level equivalents (GLE's)?
2. Are my students on task?

Further research by Downey et al. (2004) revealed a five-step observation structure:

1. Student orientation to the work. Do the students appear to be attentive when you first walk in the room? As a teacher in the classroom, I always want my students to be on task. When an administrator conducts a classroom walk-through observation in my class, I know that one of the main elements observed is the student's orientation, because that is where the learning takes place.
2. Focus on curricular decision points. The main objective of the lesson should be posted as well as the GLE. I always write the objective and GLE on the board and explain to students before beginning the lesson that after the lesson

is taught, this is what they should learn. I always begin with the objective and revert back to it after the lesson has been taught.

3. Instructional decision point. The instructional practices conducted by a teacher are very important to a student's learning of the curriculum content. A variety of strategies should be used in teaching the lesson to make the needs of all students are met.
4. "Walk the walls." An administrator will observe the classroom for evidence of learning. As a teacher, I always display students' work. I have a scoring guide, the stated objective, and the GLE that was covered in the prior lesson. Observers in the classroom can see what was taught previously and what the objective and GLEs were for that lesson. They can also see how the students achieved on that specific objective.
5. Safety and health issues. All classrooms should have a safe and orderly environment. In my school district, we are required to have the emergency plans posted by the door as well as an evacuation route. (p. 21)

In 1970, Hewlett Packard executives began a strategy that they called Management by Walking Around (Hopkins, 2005). This strategy allowed the management to get a quick view of what was going on in their company. The process did not take a lot of the executive's time, but it allowed them to see just what was going on in all aspects of their company. This is a holistic leadership approach. Peters and Waterman, (1982) found that companies that use this strategy are a step ahead of their competition. Classroom walk-through observations are based on the same philosophy as Management by Walking Around. When people are out and about and observe firsthand what is going

on, steps can be taken to be successful in every endeavor. The primary goal, of course, is student achievement.

Johnston (2006) concluded that

> Administrators are expected to coach, mentor, and support teachers as they approach the difficult task of promoting high levels of student achievement. In a standards-based, accountability-oriented environment, one of the most promising strategies for providing this leadership is the classroom walk-through observations. (¶ 2)

The more classroom walk-through observations, the more likely the teacher is going to be teaching the students the content that needs to be taught. Classroom walk-through observations can gather data on the content being taught as well as the instructional delivery of the teacher.

Marsh et al. (2005) reported on research of an in-depth study conducted by The Rand Corporation. The study was of three urban school districts. The results of their findings were that teachers did not find the classroom walk-through observations as useful as the administrators. This was primarily because feedback was rarely given to the teachers. A teacher would not benefit from a classroom walk-through observation if there was never dialogue on the observation. I value the feedback that is given to me by my administrator. The feedback will allow me to grow as a teacher and without that feedback I would not know my shortfalls.

History of Assessments

History of the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). According to the Department of Education and Secondary Education,

> The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) is one of several educational reforms mandated by the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. As a result of this legislation, the State Board of Education directed the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to identify the knowledge, skills, and competencies that Missouri students should acquire by the time they complete high school and to assess student progress toward these academic standards. DESE staff worked with educators, parents, and business professionals from throughout the state to develop the Show-Me Standards and to create the MAP as a tool for evaluating the proficiencies represented by the Standards. (2007, p. 2)

DESE created a measuring instrument to determine the reliability of the MAP test. Teachers have voiced their concerns over being measured by this one test. According to Table 2, the reliability of the test is at a high margin.

Table 2

MAP Scale Score Reliability and Coefficients

	1997	1998	1999	2000
Mathematics				
Grade 4	.919	.921	.915	.913
Grade 8	.931	.927	.927	.929
Grade 10	.936	.940	.929	.940
Communication Arts				
Grade 3		.920	.915	.913
Grade 7		.932	.905	.907
Grade 11		.939	.919	.917
Science				
Grade 3		.907	.903	.903
Grade 7		.915	.875	.918
Grade 10		.916	.908	.882
Social Studies				
Grade 4			.918	.923
Grade 8			.906	.921
Grade 11			.925	.885

The MAP data are used to determine how well the students perform in comparison with the GLE's and the Missouri Show Me Standards. The MAP data's importance has been on a steady increase in the last decade. This is because of the NCLB Act. The NCLB Act holds teachers accountable for the students learning.

Instructional Strategies

Principals and assistant principals are expected to be instructional leaders. In the past, "They have tended to focus on the content of instruction rather than the process of instruction" (Jones, 2007, p. 322). The ABC School District, however, focuses their classroom observations on the instructional strategies that are used. While researching the different instructional strategies to include on the classroom walk-through observation form, the primary focus was on the Marzano strategies. The Marzano strategies are based on the beliefs of Robert J. Marzano. "There is more than thirty years of research that provides some highly consistent answers to the question of what types of instructional strategies work best to improve student achievement" (Marzano, 2001, p. 1). Marzano stated that there are nine instructional strategies proven to improve student achievement (p. 1). These strategies are included on the ABC School District classroom walk-through observations observation form. They are as follows:

1. Identifying similarities and differences
2. Summarizing and note taking
3. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
4. Homework and practice
5. Representing knowledge
6. Learning groups

7. Setting objectives and providing feedback
8. Generating and testing hypothesis
9. Cues, questions, and advance organizers. (p. 1)

Marzano is a private consultant in Aurora, Colorado. As an educational researcher, Marzano is involved in translating research and theory into classroom practice for educators throughout the United States. If the administrators use the form to evaluate teachers based on the data that has been gathered, then administrators should use the classroom walk-through observation to help the teacher to grow as an educator. Research supports that feedback is one of the most important components of a classroom walk-through observation.

According to the National Staff Development Council, appropriate professional development will help educators use teaching strategies that will best fit their students' needs (Killion, 2000). There are a variety of teaching strategies that teachers can use that will make sure that each child can learn. In the classroom as an educator, I always use a variety of teaching strategies. The students are assessed on the different strategies and my district focuses on all of Marzano's strategies, but the primary focus is on identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note taking, and reinforcing effort and providing recognition. When analyzing the GLE's that are on the MAP test, there are more of these three strategies than any of the others. The learning outcome of the students is the primary focus of educators, and a teacher should follow the curriculum content for the grade level that is being taught.

Solomon, Agam, and Shiff (2005) strongly believed that educational reform is a difficult accomplishment in education today but we need to learn from collaborative

efforts as well as mistakes that have occurred in the past. Educators never give up trying to do their best for the students. Educators need to concentrate on fixing the system that is so vitally important to the future of our country.

Academic Predictors

Student discipline. Student discipline consumes much of the time of teachers and administrators. Discipline referrals are always a problem in the public school system. Quite often, assistant principals are used as disciplinarians instead of assisting the principals. Discipline referrals can affect student achievement due to the amount of instructional time that is missed. There are many policies that school districts follow to handle discipline issues. One such policy is the "Zero Tolerance Policy." This policy came about after the 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act was written. This federal law requires that school districts suspend or expel any student that brings any kind of weapon to school. According to Black (2002), under the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, nearly 3.2 million students, approximately 7% of the school population, were suspended in 1995 alone.

According to that National Center of Educational Statistics (2009),

> Forty-eight percent of public schools reported taking at least one serious discipline action against a student including suspension of five days or more, transfer to specialized school, or expulsion during the 2005-2006 school year. Out of approximately 39,600 schools reporting these incidents, there were a total of 830,700 serious disciplinary actions taken. The most recurring incident resulting in serious discipline action was physical attacks or fights, with 32%. The percent of violations for possession of weapons other than a firearm was 19%, compared

> 54to 17%, during the 2003-2004 school year. The numbers are staggering in comparison to the 35% of public schools reported taking discipline action for a physical fight or assault during the 1999-2000 school year. Student discipline is on the rise and is becoming more and more of a deterrent to the educational process. (¶ 2)

DESE promotes a Positive Behavior System. The outline of the School-wide positive behavior program is listed below:

1. Incorporates the best practice in professional development and system change (teams)
2. Emphasizes the use of assessment information to guide intervention and management decisions
3. Focuses on the use of a continuum of behavioral supports
4. Focuses on increasing the contextual fit between problem context and what we know works
5. Focuses on establishing school environments that support long term success of effective practices (3-5 years). (DESE, 2007, p. 18)

The staff must be trained in this program. This program is often used in the Missouri School Improvement process. The ABC School District uses the Positive Behavior System. It is used in many districts throughout Missouri. One of the factors of this study is to see if classroom walk-through observations have a decrease in discipline referrals. The findings will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Summer school. "Nationwide about five million students, or 10% of students attending elementary through high school, were enrolled in summer school" (Cooper,

2001, p. 1). The continuing demand is rising. In the school district in which I work, students are required to attend summer school if they are not reading on grade level. The students reading level is tested at the end of summer school again and if they are at grade level, they will be promoted to the next grade. If they are not reading on grade level, they will be retained. My school district is not the only district that has this policy. Mathews (2000) found that many school districts follow this same procedure. During summer break, Cooper, (2001) found that students lose one month of instruction. This information was obtained from a meta-analysis study from a University of Missouri professor. The main subject areas in which this loss occurred was mathematics and spelling. An explanation of this result rests on the observation that both math facts and spelling skills involve the acquisition of factual and procedural knowledge, whereas other skill areas–especially math concepts, problem solving, and reading comprehension–are more conceptually based (Cooper, 2001).

Retention. According to Jimerson, Anderson, and Whipple (2002), "Approximately 2.4 million students are retained every year. The United States spends approximately 13 billion dollars to retain these students" (p. 445). The benefit of retaining a student should be analyzed before the retention is put into place.

> There are more boys retained than girls. More minority students are retained than white students. Retained students are more likely to display aggressiveness, to have a history of suspension or expulsion, to act out in the classroom, or display behaviors associated with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Conduct Disorder (Jimerson et al., p. 450).

When it comes to long-term outcomes of retained students, there does not seem to be any positive impact on the student. Students that are retained have higher standardized test scores for the next year or two, but the benefit of retention usually stops there. Students that have been retained have a sizably larger dropout rate than students that have been promoted to the next grade level. Jimerson et al. also found that retention was one of the largest predictors of high school drop outs. Students that were retained in any grade were two to eleven times more likely to drop out of school than students who were not retained.

To reduce the number of student retentions, educators need to start with early identification and interventions. Quite often, this does not happen until the fourth grade and above. One intervention that often occurs is summer school placement. The students are required to attend summer school to improve their reading scores so they can be promoted to the next grade.

School climate. Cohen (2006) suggested that school climate is primarily a feeling of one's experience in school. Freiberg (1999) and Cohen reviewed research and identified ten dimensions that have a strong impact on school climate.

1. Environmental
2. Structural
3. Safety
4. Teaching and learning
5. Relationships
6. Sense of school community
7. Morale

8. Peer norms
9. School-home-community partnerships (mutual support and ongoing communication
10. Learning Community. (Cohen, p. 214)

School climate can have a major impact on all of the stakeholders involved in education. Character education programs can have a positive impact on school climate. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) studied the research on school climate. Their findings were that in order to have a responsive school climate, there needs to be prevention for the at-risk students and proper health care combined with a safe learning environment for the students.

Education plays a vital part in molding a person and influencing them to help determine their future. Education is a way for students to change the path that they are on. Students with lower socio-economic backgrounds can work to break the cycle of living the way that their families have always lived (Green, 2005). Recent research indicates that minorities are performing well below non-minority students on standardized tests. This creates an achievement gap between subgroups (Green, 2005). In my school district, there is usually one subgroup that does not meet Adequate Yearly Progress. All of the students in my district are primarily in a lower socio-economic class. The students in the ABC School District are also predominantly in the lower socio-economic class. Research also finds that teachers who educate students who live in an urban setting have more challenges than teachers who educate students who live in a rural setting. Most cities also experience problems such as lower socioeconomic background, an unstable home environment as well as gang activity. Green also stated that it is hard for students and

parents to make a relationship between home and school and to realize that everyone should be working together to achieve the common goal of promoting productive, ethical decision making adults.

The NCLB Act of 2001 began to hold schools, teachers, and school districts accountable for academic success among all of their students. However, we may question whether or not this took in to account all of the possible attributes of failing schools. Many subgroups have since been identified and labeled as "failing." These subgroups, for example are categorized by race, socioeconomic, and disability. The question that we then must ponder is: How do educators provide quality education to these students and bring their academic performance up to meet and exceed standards and expectations? In the book *The Art and Science of Teaching*, Marzano (2007) refers to the 2001 work of Pickering and Pollock by stating

> There are certainly other aspects of classroom pedagogy that affect student achievement. In fact, we might postulate that effective pedagogy involves three related areas: (1) the instructional strategies used by the teacher, (2) the management techniques used by the teacher, and (3) the curriculum designed by the teacher. (p. 6)

Although there is no single strategy that will provide instant academic gains and satisfaction, there are several characteristics of effective schools that result in improvement. "Effective schools have effective leadership" (Green, 2005, p. 14). In the book *The Assistant Principal's Handbook*, Glanz quoted prior work from Sullivan and Glanz (2004), stating, "Supervision is a dynamic, ongoing, and collaborative process that involves strategies to enhance instructional improvement" (as cited in Glanz, 2004, p.

77). The principal and assistant principals are responsible for promoting school-wide improvement and carrying out the building's mission, vision, and values. "Whether a school operates effectively or not increases or decreases a student's chances of academic success" (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 3). Effective leaders tend to be highly task oriented with a clear definition of the mission of the school. High expectations are maintained for teachers and students. School principals must also maintain a business-like atmosphere that is safe, professional, and conducive to learning (Green, 2005). Safety must be instilled in the staff and students to establish and maintain a safe and orderly environment so that teaching and learning can occur. Marzano et al. (2005, p. 88) identified some action steps to develop a safe and orderly environment:

1. Establish rules and procedures for behavioral problems that might be caused by the school's physical characteristics or the school's routine. The rules that are by the school district should be followed and remain consistent from building to building.
2. Establish school-wide rules and procedures for general behavior. Classroom walk-through observations make the administrator more visible throughout the school building and the visibility of the administrator is often a deterrent for inappropriate behavior.
3. Establish and enforce appropriate consequences for violations of rules and procedures. Follow through is an important aspect of education.
4. Establish a program that teaches self-discipline and responsibility to students. A character education program can be integrated throughout the curriculum.

The administrator can see at a quick glance if there is a rapport between the students and the teachers.

5. Establish a system that allows for the early detection of students who have high potential for violence and extreme behaviors.

Marzano et al. (2005), also cited the 2003 work of Cotton as identifying categories of principal behavior that positively affect academic climate including dependent variables such as student achievement, attitudes, behaviors, and dropouts, teacher attitudes, and behaviors. The Marzano et al. (2005) categories are

1. Vision and goals focused on high levels of student learning
2. High expectations for student learning
3. Visibility and accessibility
4. Positive and supportive climate
5. Communication and interaction
6. Shared leadership, decision making, and staff empowerment
7. Collaboration
8. Instructional leadership
9. Discussion of instructional issues
10. Classroom observation and feedback to teachers
11. Support of teacher autonomy
12. Professional development opportunities and resources
13. Protecting instructional time
14. Monitoring student progress and sharing findings
15. Use of student progress for program improvement

16. Recognition of student and staff achievement. (pp. 24-25)

From a teacher, along with teaching the content, must come the ability to communicate clearly identified learning objectives. When a classroom walk-through observation is performed, the administrator should be able to identify with the list above. In a classroom that has minimal disruptions, the level of success is likely to be much higher than that which has frequent interruptions. When a classroom walk-through observation is performed, the administrator quietly walks into the room and sits and observes. There is no interaction between the administrator and the teacher. The teachers should continue on with their lessons so the administrator can gather the information of the lesson as well as the climate of the classroom. It is important for the school and district to offer continuing education opportunities and professional development. This is particularly important in the areas of weakness.

The stakeholders in education need to all understand that they are to work together in a collaborative manner. Communication needs to play a vital role in the education of students. Parental involvement is very important to the success of students. When the parents have a voice, they have a feeling of involvement. It is important to promote community involvement so that all of the stakeholders can reach a common goal, which is the education of the students. Everyone needs to see and have access to the positive things taking place in schools.

Instructional Leadership

There is a growing demand for principals and assistant principals to be instructional leaders rather than simply managers. Weller and Weller stated that there is an effort throughout the United States that calls for administrators to become more

involved in instructional implementation of the curriculum, not just the administrative aspects (as cited in Glanz, 2004). A seemingly intractable problem still faces assistant principals, the improvement versus evaluation dilemma. Assistant principals often deal with the discipline issues and thus do not get to focus on the improvement aspect of the school system. This dilemma creates the conflict of evaluating teachers and genuinely assisting teachers to become great instructors. In some instances, teachers may not want to address issues with the principal because they do not want to appear incompetent or inadequate in regards to their job performance. Instructional leaders must create an environment that lends itself to collaboration and effective communication. The classroom walk-through observations could be the non-evaluative tool needed to assist in instructional improvement and practices.

A modern approach to teaching and learning is collaboration. For instance, Professional Learning Communities encourage and offer the time and structure for collaboration among teachers, grade level teams, and subject areas. This model encourages teachers to move away from the past notion of teachers teaching in isolation. Glanz (2004) referred to the 2000 work of Sullivan and Glanz when he stated that "the history of supervision as a principal or assistant principal indicates a progressive movement away from bureaucratic inspectional approaches to more democratic participatory" (p. 12). There needs to be a shift from isolation and bureaucracy in education to teamwork in a collaborative environment. Glanz believed that principals and assistant principals can overcome the dilemma of improvement and evaluation. He offers the following suggestions to make the necessary changes to evaluate and improve instruction (Glanz, pp. 12-13):

1. Acknowledge the past and articulate a vision for the future. Classroom walk-through observations give educators the chance to look at what has been done in the past and what could be done better.
2. Create a democratic learning community. Classroom walk-through observations give the administrator a snap shot of the climate in a classroom.
3. Serve as a role model by encouraging collegiality. When an administrator meets with the teacher for their feedback session, this creates collaboration between the individuals.
4. Support shared governance opportunities. Teachers work hard in their classrooms and throughout the school in general. I like to know that I have an opportunity to have a voice and that my voice is heard and respected.
5. Focus on fundamental instructional issues. Teachers always use a variety of teaching strategies and on the ABC School District walk-through form, the strategies are identified.
6. Communicate an “ethic of caring”. Students need to know that the teacher cares about them. An administrator can see the rapport of the students and teachers from a classroom walk-through observation.
7. Empower others and give them the credit. Classroom walk-through observations are a way for administrators to identify this aspect. During the feedback session, the administrator can acknowledge what was observed and commend the teacher for their expertise in the process of educating children.
8. Build trust by your actions. An administrator should always lead by example.

Summary

With the changes in times including increased violence and drug use, job loss and poverty, the mixing of cultures, community struggles, and the advances in technology, education has sometimes struggled to keep up in the United States. This has sparked a concern of teacher effectiveness. “An educational leader should offer her or his expertise by both formally and informally observing classroom interaction” (Glanz, 2004, p. 78). Whether formal or informal, teachers have been supervised in one form or another since the onset of education. “Observations play a key role in supervision” (Glanz, 2004, p. 78). Recent struggles in public education have called for dramatic changes to improve instruction. At times the results of this have been seen as causing a sense of division between teachers and administrators. Things seem to constantly change, and due to all the demands, changes, and initiatives placed in front of them, teachers have felt overwhelmed, frustrated, and unappreciated. Teachers and administrators need to work in a collaborative capacity that provides a feeling of support through genuine help and assistance. The formal evaluation process does not necessarily provide the sense of support and encouragement.

Standardized tests have been implemented nationwide to determine the success of schools and districts. The federal government has placed high stakes on these tests as they can determine the worth of a school or district to the point of labeling them as “in need of improvement.” This places much of the focus on the test and how to align curriculum to meet the standards of the test which often results in a lot of time teaching to the test rather than simply doing what is right and in the best interest of students. This causes educators to operate out of fear and intimidation rather than rationality. Discipline,

summer school placement, retention, and dropout rates are increasing and students are not reaching their full potential from an education standpoint. These are some of the areas that need to be addressed, and this must start with effectiveness in the classroom to engage the students in learning.

There have been many attempts to deal with necessary school reform and educational improvement, but no one particular initiative has resulted in the outcomes that meet the requirements set forth by the federal, state, and local governments. The purpose of this study was to investigate one strategy that could be very beneficial to school leaders and administrators across the country. That strategy is the classroom walk-through observation. The classroom walk-through observation can provide a quick non-evaluative collection of data. This time efficient process makes sense as it allows principals and assistant principals the time to get in to classrooms while maintaining management operations as well.

Chapter Three-Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this causal-comparative study was to investigate and evaluate the effect of structured classroom walk-through observations on student achievement (MAP scores for Communication Arts and Math), and school climate areas including discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention of students. This causal-comparative study attempted to determine a causative relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. The ABC School District has collected, recorded, and generated data on classroom walk-through observations including the school years of 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. Prior to that point, the district had no formal way of assessing student and teacher engagement or measuring the classroom climate in regards to effective teaching strategies. The classroom walk-through observations have been intended to serve the purpose of identifying strengths and weaknesses in order to modify and provide instruction, assessment, and programming that will assure that all children receive the best educational opportunities possible. We evaluated and analyzed data to determine potential relationships between classroom walk-through observations and the dependent variables. This analysis used correlation coefficients and t-tests, and our intention was that the results could have supported classroom walk-through observations as an effective instructional tool. The results of this study also provide discussion for improvement of the classroom walk-through observations observation process and classroom walk-through observations form.

The data gathered from the observations has been organized into a variety of categories to analyze best practices in teaching and learning. The observation data may be

broken down categorically by school, grade level, subject, group size, teacher materials, instructional delivery, instructional strategies, technology, depth of knowledge, and classroom learning environment. The categories developed on the observation form have been created based on the knowledge, research, and findings of educational gurus such as Robert Marzano, Timothy Waters, and Brian McNulty, authors of the book entitled *School Leadership That Works,* published in 2005. In this book, the authors stated, "Whether a school operates effectively or not increases or decreases a student's chances of academic success" (p. 3). With this in mind, it is the mission of the ABC School District to ensure that all students are well equipped with the knowledge base and learning experiences necessary to provide positive contributions to our ever-changing global society. The hypotheses of this research project suggest that the number of walk-through observations performed would correlate with statistically increased MAP scores for Communication Arts and Math, fewer discipline referrals, fewer students requiring summer school, and fewer students being retained.

Hypothesis

The central hypothesis was that the ABC School District classroom walk-through observations would positively affect the school-wide academics and climate in the areas of: achievement on the MAP in the areas of Communication Arts and Math, discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention. The hypothesis of this research project suggests that the number of classroom walk-through observations performed would correlate with statistically increased MAP scores for Communication Arts and Math, fewer discipline referrals, fewer students requiring summer school, and fewer students

being retained. A more detailed discussion of these hypotheses was discussed in chapter one.

In order to gauge the effectiveness of the classroom walk-through observations, this causal-comparative study analyzed whether or not a correlation between observation reports and student achievement does exist. The results of the classroom walk-through observations have been compared to the student performance outcomes in the MAP areas of Communication Arts and Math, in addition to school climate factors such as discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention.

Participants

The participants in this study were all teachers and students of the ABC School District at the middle school level. The district administrators, primarily building level principals and assistant principals, completed an observation form each time they performed a classroom walk-through observations. The observation form gauges the observer's perception of the level of teaching and learning that takes place during the time of the classroom walk-through observations. This process is meant to evaluate the classroom physical environment, student and teacher engagement, and overall productivity by both teachers and students that participate.

Students were not recruited because the source of the information used in this study was from the Missouri Assessment Program data located on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website, as well as student record data regarding discipline referrals, summer school placement and retention. District administrators were not recruited either because they have implemented classroom walk-through observations as a standard practice since the school year of 2006-2007.

During this research study, there was no significant change in the secondary administrative staff involved at either the middle school or district level. Both school years analyzed included the same working administrative staff including seven assistant principals, three head principals, one director of secondary education, and one superintendent. That being the case, if there was a standard approach and expectation that had been determined on how to specifically conduct the classroom walk-through observations, there should have been a lot of consistency in programming and the performance of the classroom walk-through observations.

Sampling Procedure

During the 2006-2007 school year, the ABC School District superintendent, along with the support of the cabinet (consisting of all assistant superintendents), requested that all classrooms be observed once per week for approximately five minutes by the principal or assistant principal. That request however, was transformed for the 2007-2008 school year (second year of the study). During the second year of research in this study, principals and assistant principals were requested to then observe each classroom once every two weeks for approximately five minutes rather than once per week like the previous year. This alteration to the observation schedule was a result of assistant principals claiming that they do not have enough time to perform that amount of observations and still have enough time to deal with student discipline and other organizational tasks.

Each observation reflects multiple areas of emphasis in classroom teaching and learning. The data is compiled through the utilization of the district observation form. Building level principals are then responsible for collecting and turning all completed

observation forms in to the district's central office. The director of technology services then logs all data onto the districts intranet server that can be viewed by district administrators. Classroom walk-through observation data is also shared periodically at cabinet meetings, all administrator meetings, assistant principal meetings, with department heads, and also at each building. The data from the classroom walk-through observations will also provide the district with ideas and concepts for providing professional development to the teachers by identifying strengths and weaknesses in instructional strategies.

The sequence of procedure for this causal-comparative study was as follows. First, data were generated and collected from classroom walk-through observations by principals, assistant principals, and other district administrators for the 2006-2007, 2007-2008 school years. Next, a comparison was made among the number of students advanced and proficient on the Communication Arts and Math portion of the MAP test during the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 school years. Last, a comparison was made among the number of discipline referrals, summer school placements, and retentions for the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 school years.

Research Setting

The ABC School District is located in suburban St. Louis, Missouri and covers 92 square miles across the heart of North St. Louis County. The district is state wide and nationally recognized as an innovative and progressive school district, as it is one of the highest achieving districts in the state of Missouri among districts with similar demographics. The district is made up of a hard working community of families that encompasses all or nearly all of 11 municipalities. Within the district, there are a total of

23 schools, 17 of which are elementary school buildings, 3 middle schools, and 3 high schools. All three levels of education including elementary, middle, and high have been recognized under The Exemplary Schools Program, sponsored by the United States Department of Education.

At the time of the study, the research population included all ABC School District middle school classrooms. The range of grades consisted of grades seven and eight. All subject areas were observed. Allocation of classrooms to administrators for performing classroom walk-through observations varied from building to building and on a yearly basis. Each building had the freedom to delegate classroom observation responsibilities as they wished or saw as necessary. During the first year of classroom walk-through observations, each building was responsible for observing or attempting to observe every classroom once per week. As administrative duties require much time spent on discipline and other managerial type responsibilities, the observation requirement was scaled back to one visit to each classroom every two weeks for the second year that the classroom walk-through observations were performed. This could have caused a limitation for the study due to the change in one of few consistencies in performing the observations.

The ABC School District typically carries an enrollment of approximately 12,000 students throughout the entire district. The district is very diverse in both ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Of those 12,000 students, approximately 2,100 attend one of the three middle schools. Over the three-year focal window of this project, The ABC School District had an enrollment of 12,264 students during the 2005-2006 school year, 12,165 students during the 2006-2007 school year, and 12,104 students enrolled, during the 2007-2008 school year. During all school years that have been studied, the building

administration has remained the same. Middle School A had a head principal and three assistant principals, Middle School B had one head principal and three assistant principals, and Middle School C had a head principal and one assistant principal.

Middle School A had a total enrollment of 961 students during the 2005-2006 school year. Of those 961 students, 617 or 64.2% were identified as Black, 313 or 32.6% were identified as White, 15 or 1.6% were identified as Hispanic, 12 or 1.2% were identified as Asian, and 4 or 0.4% were identified as American Indian. The January membership for Middle School A indicated that 406 of the 937 students enrolled at that time were classified as free and reduced lunch students, which made up a total of 43.3% of the student body. During this school year, Middle School A maintained a total of 845 students enrolled the entire school year for a stability rate of 88% (see Figures 1-4).

Middle School A had a total enrollment of 980 students during the 2006-2007 school year. Of those 980 students, 662 or 67.6% were identified as Black, 296 or 30.2% were identified as White, ten or 1.0% were identified as Hispanic, 11 or 1.1% were identified as Asian, and 1 or .1% was identified as American Indian. The January membership for Middle School A indicated that 464 of the 972.5 students enrolled at that time were classified as free and reduced lunch students, which made up a total of 47.7% of the student body. During this school year, Middle School A maintained a total of 879 students enrolled the entire school year for a stability rate of 90% (see Figures 1-4).

Middle School A had a total enrollment of 895 students during the 2007-2008 school year. Of those 895 students, 620 or 69.3% were identified as Black, 252 or 28.2% were identified as White, 12 or 1.3% were identified as Hispanic, 11 or 1.2% were identified as Asian, and there were no American Indians. The January membership for

Middle School A indicated that 435 of the 890.52 students enrolled at that time were classified as free and reduced lunch students, which made up a total of 48.8% of the student body. During this school year, Middle School A maintained a total of 814 students enrolled the entire school year for a stability rate of 91% (see Figures 1-4).

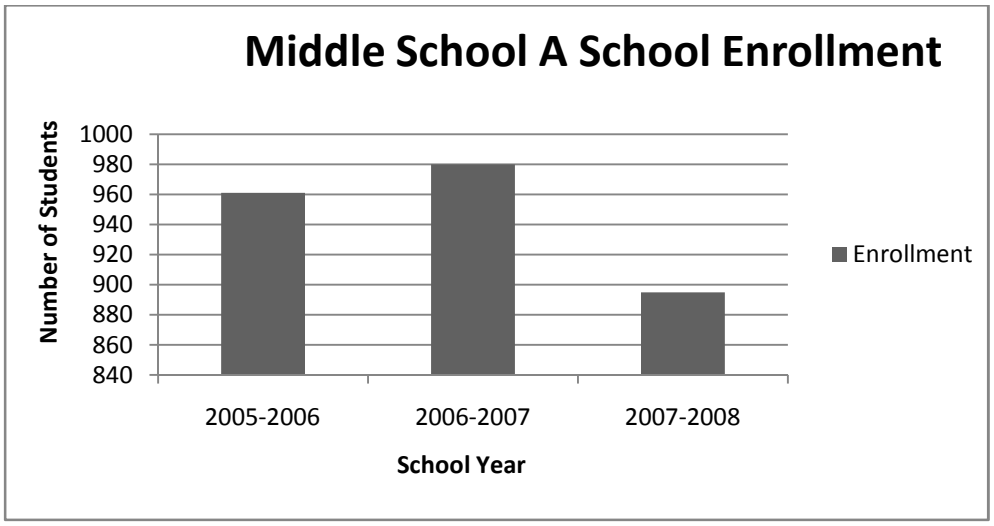

Figure 1. Middle School A school enrollment.

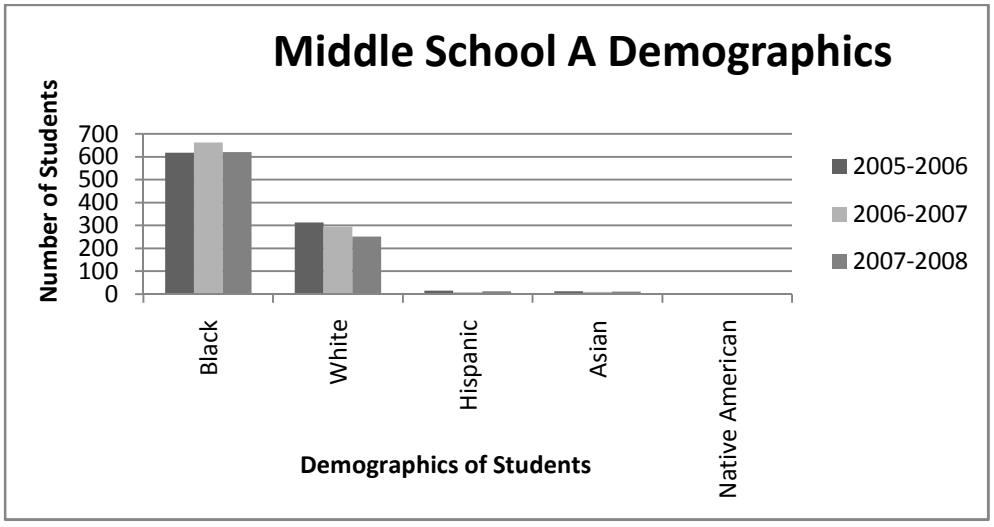

Figure 2. Middle School A demographics.

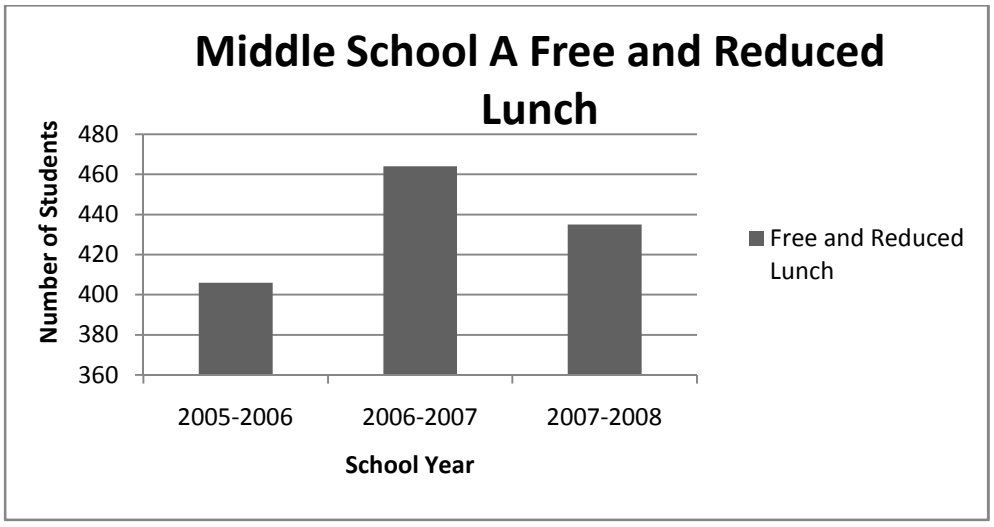

Figure 3. Middle School A free and reduced lunch.

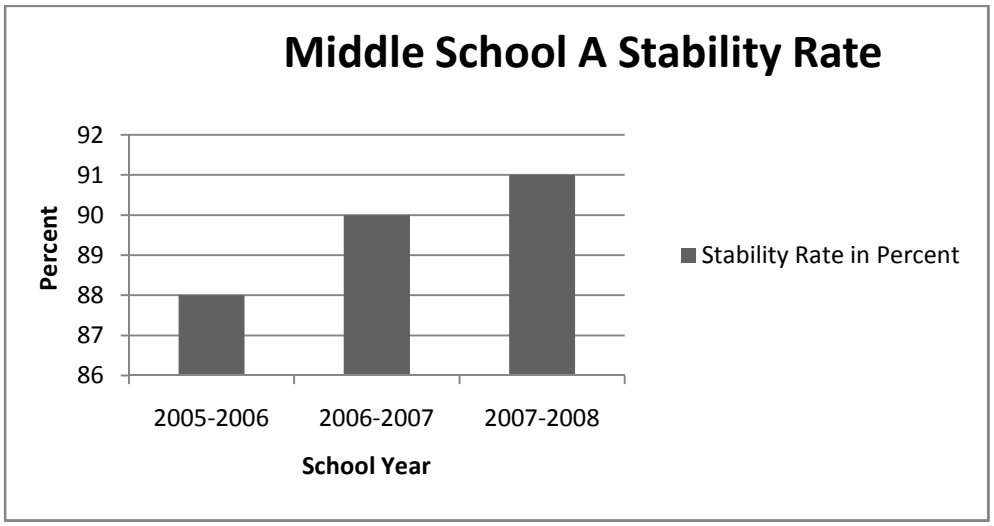

Figure 4. Middle School A stability rate .

Middle School B had a total enrollment of 769 students during the 2005-2006 school year. Of those 769 students, 631 or 82.1% were identified as Black, 120 or 15.6% were identified as White, 12 or 1.6% were identified as Hispanic, five or 0.7% were identified as Asian, and there were no American Indians. The January membership for

Middle School B indicated that 558.69 of the 769.45 students enrolled at that time were classified as free and reduced lunch students, which made up a total of 72.6% of the student body. During this school year, Middle School B maintained a total of 680 students enrolled the entire school year for a stability rate of 88% (see Figures 5-8).

Middle School B had a total enrollment of 715 students during the 2006-2007 school year. Of those 715 students, 609 or 85.2% were identified as Black, 98 or 13.7% were identified as White, 3 or 0.4% were identified as Hispanic, 5 or 0.7% were identified as Asian, and there were no American Indians. The January membership for Middle School B indicated that 494 of the 704.56 students enrolled at that time were classified as free and reduced lunch students, which made up a total of 70.1% of the student body. During this school year, Middle School B maintained a total of 560 students enrolled the entire school year for a stability rate of 78% (see Figures 5-8).

Middle School B had a total enrollment of 703 students during the 2007-2008 school year. Of those 703 students, 605 or 86.1% were identified as Black, 84 or 11.9% were identified as White, 7 or 1.0% were identified as Hispanic, 6 or 0.9% were identified as Asian, and 1 or 0.1% was identified as American Indian. The January membership for Middle School B indicated that 510 of the 696.89 students enrolled at that time were classified as free and reduced lunch students, which made up a total of 73.2% of the student body. During this school year, Middle School B maintained a total of 591 students enrolled for the entire school year for a stability rate of 84% (see Figures 5-8).

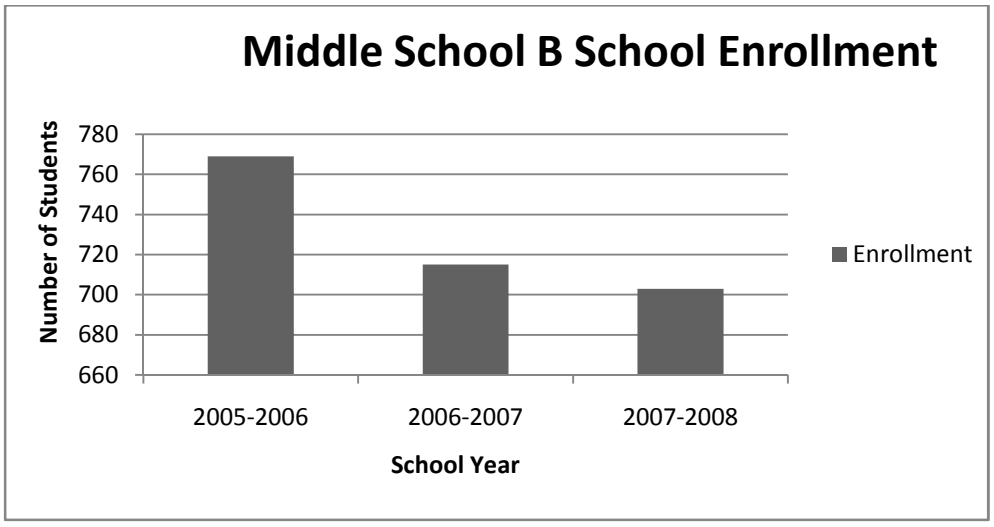

Figure 5. Middle School B school enrollment.

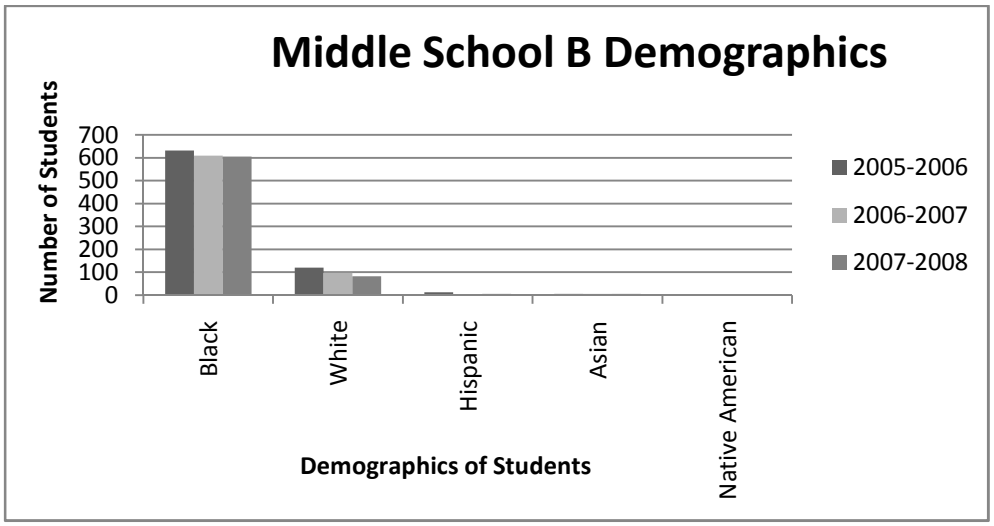

Figure 6. Middle School B demographics.

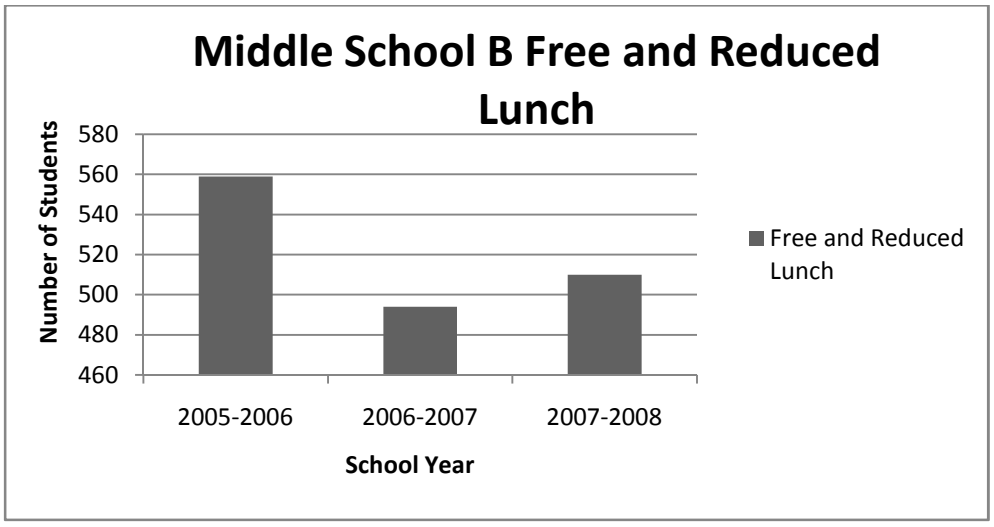

Figure 7. Middle School B free and reduced lunch.

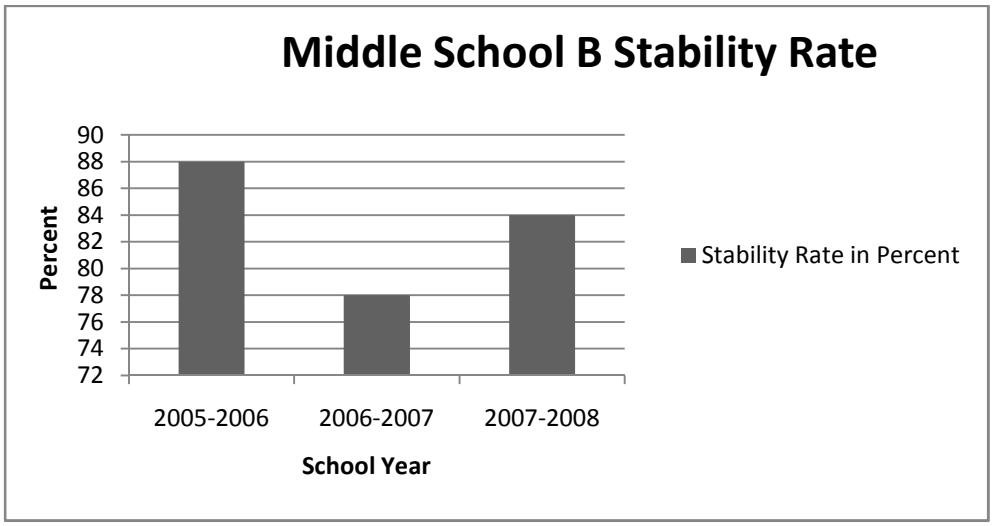

Figure 8. Middle School B stability rate.

Middle School C had a total enrollment of 390 students during the 2005-2006 school year. Of those 390 students, 377 or 96.7% were identified as Black, 10 or 2.6% were identified as White, 1 or 0.3% was identified as Hispanic, 1 or 0.3% was identified as Asian, and 1 or 0.3% was identified as American Indian. The January membership for

Middle School C indicated that 322 of the 373 students enrolled at the time were classified as free and reduced lunch students for January membership, which made up a total of 86.3% of the student body. During this school year, Middle School C maintained a total of 291 students enrolled the entire school year for a stability rate of 75% (see Figures 9-12).

Middle School C had a total enrollment of 368 students during the 2006-2007 school year. Of those 368 students, 355 or 96.5% were identified as Black, 13 or 3.5% were identified as White, and there were no Hispanics, Asians, or American Indians. The January membership for Middle School C indicated that 317.5 of the 359 students enrolled at the time were classified as free and reduced lunch students, which made up a total of 88.4% of the student body. During this school year, Middle School C maintained a total of 282 students enrolled the entire school year for a stability rate of 77% (see Figures 9-12).

Middle School C had a total enrollment of 364 students during the 2007-2008 school year. Of those 364 students, 348 or 96.5% were identified as Black, 15 or 4.1% were identified as White, none were identified as Hispanic, 1 or 0.3% was identified as Asian, and there were no American Indians. The January membership for Middle School C indicated that 302.5 of the 341.5 students enrolled at that time were classified as free and reduced lunch students, which made up a total of 88.6% of the student body. During this school year, Middle School C maintained a total of 283 students enrolled the entire school year for a stability rate of 78% (see Figures 9-12).

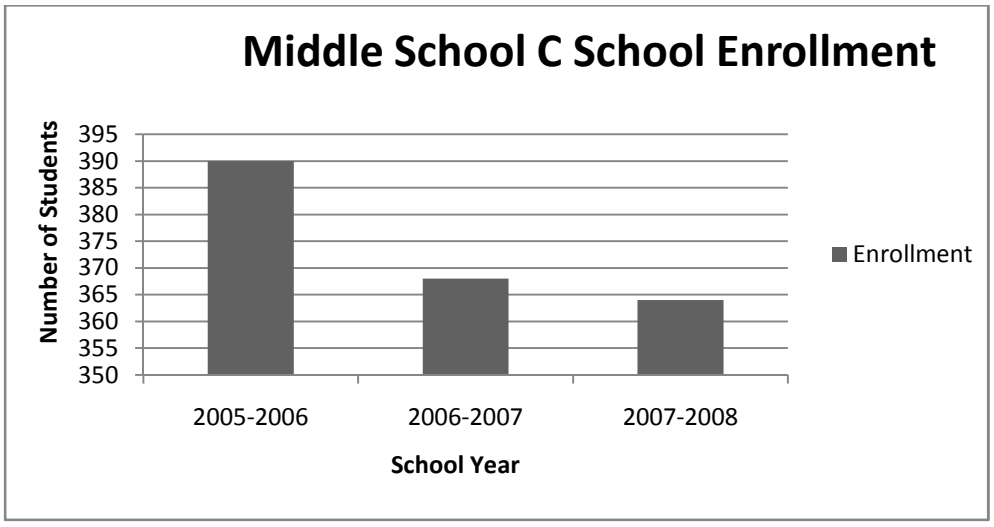

Figure 9. Middle School C school enrollment.

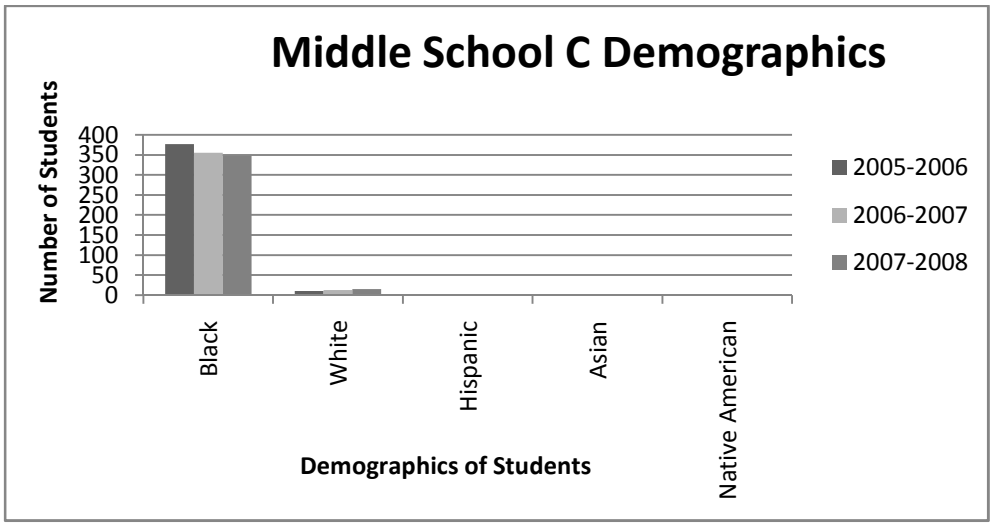

Figure 10. Middle School C demographics.

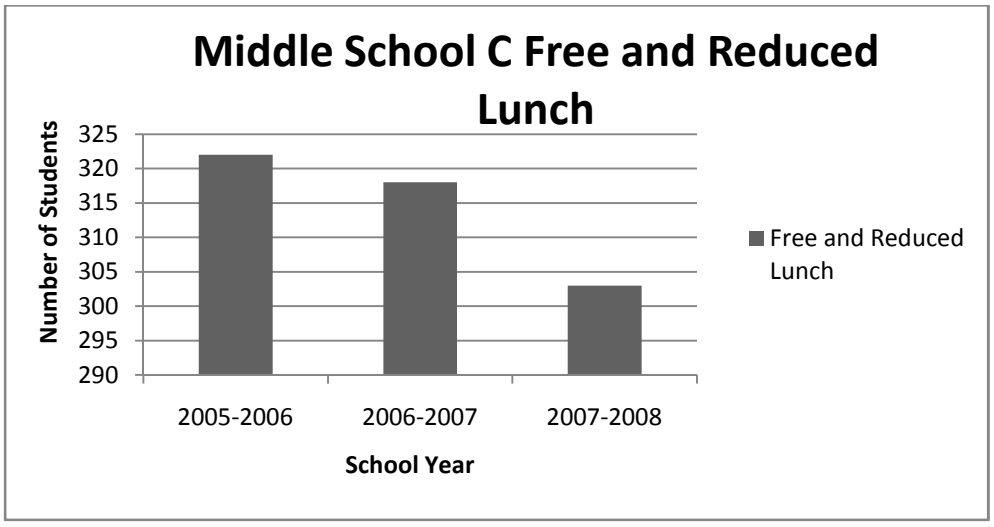

Figure 11. Middle School C free and reduced lunch.

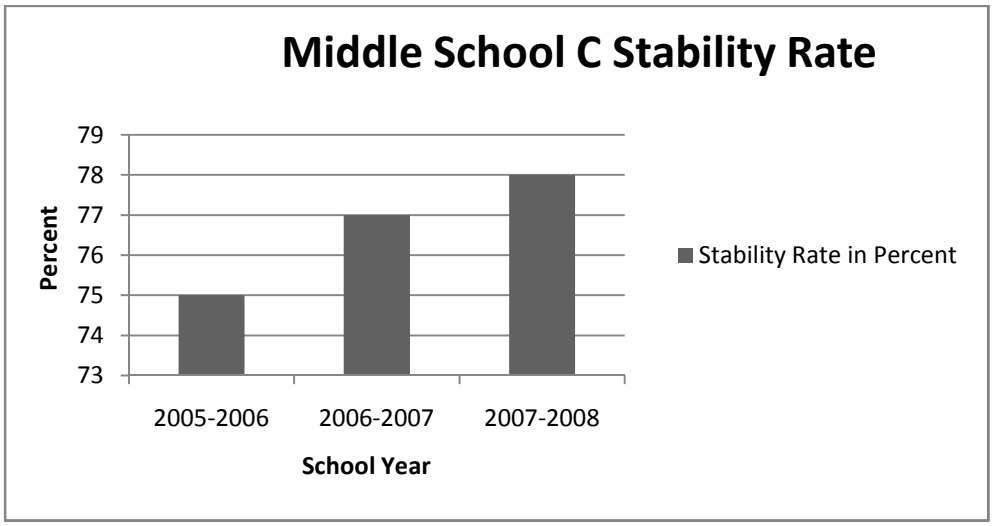

Figure 12. Middle School C stability rate.

The ABC School District has a very diverse student, teacher, and community population. The district is known for its outstanding persistence and accomplishments in education by embracing the diverse community that it serves. The district has a task force to address racial issues known as High Achievement For All. High Achievement For All

is made up of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members. This study was designed to provide clarity regarding the effectiveness of The ABC School District classroom walk-through observations and further validate the district motto of "High Achievement for All."

Research Design Procedure

The ABC School District developed a classroom walk-through observations observation form under the leadership of the Superintendent of Schools. The initial meeting took place with the Superintendent to gain knowledge of the history of classroom walk-through observations and current procedures for the implementation of them. The Superintendent encouraged and supported this study.

This causal-comparative educational research study resulted in a potential correlation between the independent and dependent variables along with the reasons, or causes, for the existing condition by performing the correlation coefficient and t-test. The study was considered an ex post facto (after the fact) since both the effect and alleged cause have already taken place and the study is in retrospect. The variables were not manipulated. The treatment groups were pre-existing so individuals were not randomly assigned, but were simply established, identified, and compared as the three existing middle schools in the ABC School District. The study suggested that a relationship existed between the independent variable–the ABC School District classroom walk-through observations–and the dependent variables–MAP scores in the content areas of Communication Arts and Math, discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention.

Each of the three schools had the same characteristics, but to differing degrees and/or amounts. For example, for the three years studied, the student population of Middle School A ranged from 895-980, whereas Middle School B ranged from 703-769, and the range for Middle School C was 364 and 390. The prevailing subgroup of all three schools was that of Black students. White students were the second largest subgroup for each school; however, a large gap existed population-wise between the two groups. Over the three years studied, Middle School A had 67.03%, Middle School B had 84.47%, and Middle School C had an average of 96.57% Black students. The population of White students for Middle School A was 30.33%, for Middle School B was 13.73%, and for Middle School C was 3.4%. The free and reduced lunch count for Middle School A was 46.6%, for Middle School B was 71.97%, and for Middle School C was 87.77%.

In an effort to reduce the achievement gap, and avoid the label of "In need of Improvement," school districts nationwide have implemented many new initiatives such as the classroom "classroom walk-through observations" observation. This project included gathering and analyzing data from the ABC School District in regards to the classroom walk-through observations that were performed by each school's principal and assistant principals. Over ten thousand classroom walk-through observations were performed throughout the twenty-three schools throughout the district 2006-2007, 2007-2008 school years. This study, however, focused on just the three participating middle schools in the ABC School District: Middle School A, Middle School B, and Middle School C.

The classroom walk-through observations form identified multiple factors indicating a positive educational experience including the following: teacher resources

including textbooks, curriculum guides and verification sheets, supplemental materials, instructional strategies, teacher and student engagement, student work, instructional delivery, depth of knowledge, technology, and classroom learning environment. Marzano's (2001) research stated that if these correlates of effective schools are evident in both the classrooms and building wide, then students have a greater chance of achieving at high levels.

In particular, this causal-comparative study focused on analyzing all collected data pertaining to the three middle schools based on the classroom walk-through observations observation reports. The study then attempted to identify the possible correlation of the classroom walk-through observations to improved MAP scores in the areas of Communication Arts and Math in addition to a decrease in discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention.

Summary

States all across the country have attempted to establish academic benchmarks and mandate rigorous standardized testing in an attempt to improve student achievement. The drive to set higher academic standards had a death grip on most schools and school districts, potentially becoming unaccredited schools. Unaccredited schools risk the potential of being run by the state or even shut down. With the stakes rising and the urgent need for school reform as a must, The ABC School District implemented a very detailed classroom walk-through observation form that allows principals and assistant principals the opportunity to spend more instructional observation time in the classroom to evaluate teacher effectiveness and student learning. Unfortunately, there was no supportive process for structuring the way classrooms were observed or timely teacher

feedback. When utilized, the ABC School District classroom walk-through observation tool provides a realistic snapshot of the classroom that is gathered over a fairly short amount of time, typically lasting between five and ten minutes. The purpose of the snapshot is to collect and respond to data collected in regards to teaching and learning behaviors taking place throughout the entire district. Once data is collected, it can be analyzed and used to determine strengths, weaknesses, and assist in identifying professional development activities and opportunities. The response to the data, and the feedback from the data, are two weaknesses of the classroom walk-through observations observation. Green (2005) referred to his prior work in 2002 stating

> Staff development is important to improving achievement, and also in helping teachers overcome racial, ethnic, religious and social class biases that may negatively impact teaching and learning. Effective teachers do not accept failure on the part of their students, and they accept responsibility when their students fail to learn. They do not blame parents, resources, or other factors beyond their control when students fail to learn. (p. 17)

This research study used the data gathered by the classroom walk-through observations as well as the MAP results in the areas of Communication Arts and Math, discipline referrals, and summer school and retention data. Teachers must be equipped with the proper resources for success. In addition to effective resources, a teacher must support the resources with effective teaching strategies and engaging activities in order to produce high achievement and student outcomes. When teachers are effectively utilizing class-time, and incorporating identified instructional strategies that work, then

achievement on many levels of student performance will rise. The classroom walk-through observations provide an instructional tool that can collect, analyze, and distribute data if used systematically. If used properly, the results and response to the data may enhance the learning experience and outcomes for all students including race, gender, and disabilities. This makes it possible for the district to carry out the vision of all students having the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes to become productive ethical decision making members of society.

Chapter Four-Results

Introduction

In an effort to raise achievement, classroom walk-through observations were implemented in all ABC School District schools in 2006-2007. Before that time, there had been no formal way of collecting data on classroom observations. This study was condensed to only the three middle schools in the district. Since implementation, there have been 1,052 classroom walk-through observations performed at the middle school level. The classroom walk-through observations in the ABC School District were performed by district administrators, including principals and assistant principals. The number of observations performed varied for each middle school as did the number performed in each subject area. As a research study team, we compared the impact of the independent variable, classroom walk-through observations, on the dependent variables of academic performance in the MAP areas of Communication Arts and Math and school climate factors of discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention at grade level. To determine the causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables, we conducted the correlation coefficient and t-test calculations using the data.

There were no classroom walk-through observations performed in the 2005-2006 school year, and 1,052 were performed over the next two school years. We compared the baseline year with no classroom walk-through observations and the two years that the observations were performed to the three years of data including MAP scores in Communication Arts and Math with the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008 MAP scores. We looked at the comparison to determine if there is an improvement in scores due to the classroom walk-through observations. In addition to the academic element, we also

compared the total number of discipline referrals, summer school placements, and total number of retained students for the same school years.

Participants

The participants in this study were all teachers and students of the ABC School District at the middle school level. The District administrators, primarily including building level principals and assistant principals completed an observation form each time they performed a classroom walk-through observation. The observation form gauges the level of teaching and learning that takes place during the time of the classroom walk-through observation. This process measures the classroom physical environment, student and teacher engagement, and overall productivity by both teachers and students that participate.

Students were not recruited since the source of the information used in this study was from the Missouri Assessment Program data located on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website, as well as student record data regarding discipline referrals, summer school placement and retention. District administrators were not recruited either because they have implemented classroom walk-through observations as a standard practice.

During this research study, there was no significant change in the secondary administrative staff involved at either the middle school or district level. Both school years analyzed included the same working administrative staff including seven assistant principals, three head principals, one director of secondary education, and one superintendent. That being the case, there has been a lot of consistency acknowledged in programming and the performance of the classroom walk-through observations.

Hypothesis

The ABC School District classroom walk-through observations will positively affect the school-wide academics and climate in the areas of: achievement on the MAP in the areas of Communication Arts and Math, discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention. This study will reveal a positive increase in the area of MAP scores, while also showing a decrease in the areas of discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention.

Questions

The following questions were addressed in the study:

1. What is the relationship between the number of classroom walk-through observations in a particular school and subsequent performance on the Communication Arts portion of the MAP?
2. What is the relationship between the number of classroom walk-through observations in a particular school and subsequent performance on the Math portion of the MAP?
3. What is the relationship between the number of classroom walk-through observations in a particular school and the total number of discipline referrals that occur at that school?
4. What is the relationship between the number of classroom walk-through observations in a particular school and the number of students enrolled in that schools summer school program?

5. What is the relationship between the number of classroom walk-through observations in a particular school and the number of students retained in that school at the end of that school year?

Null hypothesis #1. There will be no significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and scores on the Communication Arts portion of the MAP test.

Null hypothesis #2. There will be no significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and scores on the Math portion of the MAP test.

Null hypothesis #3. There will be no significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each school year and the total number of discipline referrals at each middle school at the end of each school year.

Null hypothesis #4. There will be no significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each school year and the total number of students enrolled in the summer school program of each middle school at the end of each school year.

Null hypothesis #5. There will be no significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each school year and the number of students retained in his or her grade level at the end of each school year in each middle school.

Alternative hypothesis #1. There will be a positive correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and scores on the Communication Arts portion of the MAP test.

Alternative hypothesis #2. There will be a positive correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and scores on the Math portion of the MAP test

Alternative hypothesis #3. There will be a negative correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each school year and the total number of discipline referrals at each middle school at the end of each school year.

Alternative hypothesis #4. There will be a negative correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each school year and the total number of students enrolled in the summer school program of each middle school at the end of each school year.

Alternative hypothesis #5. There will be a negative correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the number of students retained in his or her grade level at the end of each school year in each middle school.

Research and Analysis of Data

The analysis of the correlation coefficient and t-test calculations addressed the research questions and related hypotheses.

Independent Variables

ABC School District classroom walk-through observations. The independent variables of the study were the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted at each middle school. The relationship between classroom walk-through observations and student achievement and classroom walk-through observations and

school climate was analyzed over a two-year period that classroom walk-through observations were conducted.

Dependent Variables

Communication Arts portion of MAP test. The first dependent variable of the study was the achievement data from the Communication Arts portion of the MAP Test measured in April of each year over a three-year period.

Math portion of MAP test. The second dependent variable of the study was the achievement data from the Math portion of the MAP Test measured in April of each year over a three-year period.

Number of discipline referrals at each middle school. The third dependent variable of the study was the total number of discipline referrals written at each middle school during each year of the study.

Summer school enrollment numbers at each middle school. The fourth dependent variable of the study was the number of students enrolled in summer school at each middle school at the end of each year school year.

Number of students retained in their academic grade at each middle school. The fifth dependent variable of the study was the number of students retained in their academic grade at the end of each school year.

Treatment of the Data

Correlation coefficient calculations and t-test analysis were applied to determine if a strong linear relationship existed between the independent and dependent variables. Following the analysis, the correlation coefficient was used to calculate a t-test in order to determine the significance of the correlation coefficient. This allowed us to look for a

statistically significant correlation between the independent and dependent variables. This model allowed an exploration of the relationship between classroom walk-through observations and achievement on the MAP test, discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention. In 2005-2006 there were no classroom walk-through observations performed. Over the next two school years, a combined 1,052 observations were performed in the three middle schools.

Beyond the Data

Going beyond the data, this research team also analyzed and discussed the parts of the classroom walk-through observations that appeared most meaningful from our unique perspectives. I determined the effectiveness and made suggestions for improvement from a classroom teacher-centered perspective, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the classroom walk-through observation process. Tom determined the effectiveness and made suggestions for improvement from a student-centered perspective, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the classroom walk-through observation process. Mark determined the effectiveness and made suggestions for improvement from a school climate-centered perspective, also identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the classroom walk-through observation process. It appeared to the team that the observation process could be a positive tool for improving teaching and learning but was missing necessary ingredients to potentially be an effective tool. The team discussed and recommended suggestions in Chapter 5 for improvement to the observation form and process to make it both systematic and results driven.

Conclusion

The correlation coefficient indicated that a correlation exists between the independent and dependent variables. The t-test calculations revealed a significant difference between the value of r and 0 in several cases, thus indicating the relationships are not likely due to chance (see Tables 5-18). For the dependent variable of MAP scores we rejected the null for all three middle schools for both subjects. In those cases, we accepted the alternate hypothesis and the difference between r and 0 was not due to chance. School C showed the strongest correlation of .9233 between classroom walk-through observations and MAP scores in the subject area of Communication Arts. School A showed a slightly weaker correlation of .870 between classroom walk-through observations and Math. The highest t-test value was school C with a value of 2.399, which fell short of the critical value of 4.303. Correlation coefficients and t-test calculations are summarized in Tables 5-7.

Results

Middle School A performed 346 in 2006-2007, and 213 in 2007-2008 totaling 559 or 53.14% of the total observations. Middle School B performed 180 in 2006-2007, and 291 in 2007-2008 totaling 471 or 44.77% of the total observations. Middle School C performed the smallest number of classroom walk-through observations among the three middle schools over the period of time studied. They performed a total of 12 classroom walk-through observations in 2006-2007, and 10 in 2007-2008, totaling 22 or 2.09% of the total observations (see Table 3 and Figure 13).

Table 3

Walk-Through Observations by School

SCHOOL	2006-2007 Frequency	2007-2008 Frequency	2-YEAR Frequency	Percentage Of Total
Middle school A	346	213	559	53.14%
Middle school B	180	291	471	44.77%
Middle school C	12	10	22	2.09%
Total	538	514	1052	

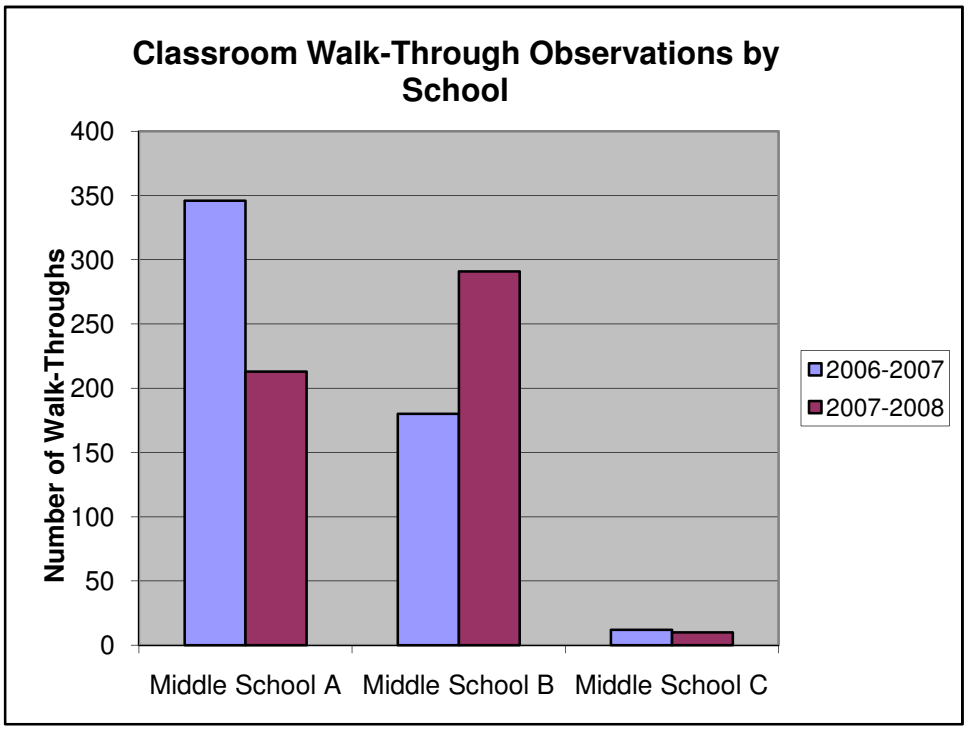

Figure 13. Number of classroom walk-through observations performed at each school during each school year.

The number of observations in each subject area varied by school and school year performed. The majority of observations were concentrated in the four core subjects, Communication Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies, with a lower number observed in the elective subjects. Principals and assistant principals often concentrated their observations in the core areas since The Missouri Assessment Program assesses Communication Arts, Math and Science (see Table 2).

A limitation to the study was the actual number of classroom walk-through observations compared to the expected number of classroom walk-through observations by the ABC school district. Middle School A had approximately 65 teachers during each of the school years studied. Over a 36 week school year, there were 2,340 expected observations for the 2006-2007 school year, with each class being observed once per week. The total number of observations performed fell well short with only 346 observations reported. For the 2007-2008 school year, it was expected that each classroom would be observed once every two weeks, bringing the expected total of observations to 1,170. The number of total observations still well short of the expected total with only 213 observations reported. Middle School B had approximately 54 teachers during each of the school years studied. Over a 36 week school year, there were 1,944 expected observations for the 2006-2007 school year, with each class being observed once per week. The total number of observations performed fell well short with only 180 observations reported. For the 2007-2008 school year, it was expected that each classroom would be observed once every two weeks, bringing the expected total of observations to 972. The number of total observations still well short of the expected total with only 291 observations reported. Middle School C had approximately 38 teachers

during each of the school years studied. Over a 36 week school year, there were 1,368 expected observations for the 2006-2007 school year, with each class being observed once per week. The total number of observations performed fell well short with only 12 observations reported. There is not any consistency throughout the ABC School Districts Middle Schools and the number of classroom walk-through observations. For the 2007-2008 school year, it was expected that each classroom would be observed once every two weeks, bringing the expected total of observations to 684. The number of total observations still well short of the expected total with only 10 observations reported. Middle School C did not conduct classroom walk-through observations that were consistent with the other two middle schools. Due to the limited amount of data collected from Middle School C, it is possible that the results may be skewed.

Table 4

Walk-Through Observations by Subject and School

	Frequency					
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2006-2007	2007-2008	2006-2007	2007-2008
Middle School	A	A	B	B	C	C
Subject						
Communication Arts	104	72	51	99	3	3
Mathematics	45	28	35	20	3	2
Science	48	33	33	38	2	2
Social Studies	43	32	33	70	4	3
Fine Arts	21	13	6	7	0	0
Health / P.E.	36	20	6	35	0	0
Practical Arts	13	4	9	5	0	0
Special Ed.	16	2	0	8	0	0
Foreign Language	9	8	6	4	1	0
Other	11	1	1	5	0	0
Total	346	213	180	291	12	10

MAP Scores

This study looked for a statistically significant correlation between the numbers of classroom walk-through observations performed and MAP scores in Communication Arts and Mathematics for the 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 school years. Student achievement on the MAP test is quantified by the number of students that earned advanced or proficient scores on the MAP assessments. In 2005-2006 there were no classroom walk-through observations performed. During the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years combined, 1052 observations were performed. The correlation coefficient test was computed to determine if a strong linear relationship existed between the number of classroom walk-through observations and the percentage of students scoring advanced and proficient on the Communication Arts and Math MAP tests (see Tables 5 -7).

Table 5

Middle School A MAP Scores and Classroom Walk-Through Observations Performed for 3-Year Period with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Frequency	Adv-Prof. Comm. Arts.	Adv-Prof. Math
2005-2006	0	41.30%	36%
2006-2007	346	42.90%	41.80%
2007-2008	213	43.90%	42.70%
	correlation coefficient r =	0.7094801	0.870312872
	t-test t=	1.005	1.764

Note. Positive. Reject the null. Accept Alternative. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05

r^2= .503 Communication Arts; r^2= .757 Math

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 50.3% of the variability in Communication Arts and 75.7% of the variability in Math MAP Scores.

Table 6

Middle School BMAP Scores and Classroom Walk-Through Observations Performed for 3-Year Period with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	Adv-Prof. Com. Arts.	Adv-Prof. Math.
2005-2006	0	24.60%	22.90%
2006-2007	180	22%	22%
2007-2008	291	29.30%	28.90%
	correlation coefficient r =	0.52450335	0.710978083
	t-test t =	0.615	1.009

Note. Moderate positive. Reject null. Accept Alternative. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05 r^2= .275 Communication Arts; r^2= .505Math

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 27.5% of the variability in Communication Arts and 50.5% of the variability in Math MAP scores.

Table 7

Middle School C MAP Scores and Classroom Walk-Through Observations Performed for 3-Year Period with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	Adv-Prof. Comm. Arts	Adv-Prof Math
2005-2006	0	14.20%	7.60%
2006-2007	12	19.40%	13%
2007-2008	10	21.10%	14%
	correlation coefficient r =	0.923041508	0.954767306
	t-test t =	2.399	3.197

Note. Strong positive. Reject null. Accept Alternate. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05

r^2= .852 Communication Arts; r^2= .911 Math

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 85.2% of the variability in Communication Arts and 91.1% of the variability in Math MAP scores.*Discipline Referrals*

Each school records the number of discipline referrals for the academic year into a student information system. It is believed that due to an increased presence by administrators in the classroom there will be a decrease in discipline referrals resulting from inappropriate behavior. The study hypothesis stated classroom walk-through observations will correlate with statistically significant fewer discipline incidents for the 2006-2007 academic school year (see Tables 8-10).

Table 8

Middle School A Number of Discipline Referrals with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	Discipline Referrals	School Enrollment	Average Incidents Per Student
2005-2006	0	3218	961	3.35
2006-2007	346	3376	986	3.42
2007-2008	213	4123	895	4.61
		correlation coefficient r =	0.181148016	
		t-test t =	0.184	

Note. Mild positive. Reject null. Reject alternate. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05

r^2= .033

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 3.3% of the variability in discipline referrals.

Table 9

Middle School B Number of Discipline Referrals with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	Discipline Referrals	School Enrollment	Average Incidents Per Student
2005-2006	0	4797	769	6.24
2006-2007	180	3254	721	4.51
2007-2008	291	2316	714	3.24
		Correlation coefficient r =	-0.99885995	
		t-test t=	-15.98	

Note. Strong positive. Reject null. Accept alternate. Likely due to chance. Alpha: .05

$r^2 = 0.99$

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 99% of the variability in discipline referrals.

Table 10

Middle School C Number of Referrals per Student with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	Discipline Referrals	School Enrollment	Average Incidents Per Student
2005-2006	0	3265	390	8.37
2006-2007	12	2186	368	5.61
2007-2008	10	1829	364	5.02
		correlation coefficient r =	-0.948637595	
		t-test t =	-2.98	

Note. Strong negative. Reject null. Accept alternate. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05

$r^2 = 0.89$

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 89% of the variability in discipline referrals.

Summer School Placement

Each year, middle school students in the ABC School District that have failed three, four or five semester classes are required to attend summer school. Each Middle school enrolls their own students based on all students' semester grades. The study hypothesis stated that classroom walk-through observations will reduce the amount of students that require summer school (see Tables 11-14).

Table 11

Number of Students Attending Summer School for Each Middle School as per Year Studied

Middle School	Summer 2005-2006 # of Students	Summer 2006-2007 # of Students	Summer 2007-2008 # of Students
A	137	96	161
B	153	124	118
C	31	38	47

Table 12

Middle School A Percentage of Students Attending Summer School with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	# of students in Summer School	School Enrollment	% of Students in Summer School
2005-2006	0	137	961	14.25%
2006-2007	346	96	986	9.73%
2007-2008	213	161	895	17.99%
	Correlation coefficient r =	-0.430780794		
	t-test t =	-0.477		

Note. Moderate Negative. Reject null. Accept Alternate. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05

r^2= .184

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 18.4% of the variability in the number of students attending summer school.

Table 13

Middle School B Percentage of Students Attending Summer School with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	# of students in summer school	School Enrollment	% of students in summer school
2005-2006	0	153	769	19.80%
2006-2007	180	124	721	17.19%
2007-2008	291	118	714	16.53%
	correlation coefficient r =	-0.980945138		
	t-test t =	-5.059		

Note. Strong negative. Reject null. Accept alternate. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05

$r^2 = 0.96$

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 96% of the variability in the number of students attending summer school.

Table 14

Middle School C Percentage of Students Attending Summer School with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	# of Students in Summer School	School Enrollment	% of Students in Summer School
2005-2006	0	31	390	7.94%
2006-2007	12	38	368	10.33%
2007-2008	10	47	364	12.91%
	correlation coefficient r =	0.763653077		
	t-test t =	1.84		

Note. Positive. Reject null. Reject Alternate. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05

$r^2 = .583$

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 58.3% of the variability in the number of students attending summer school.

Retention

Each year students that fail six or more semester classes for the year are considered for retention in the same grade. From the grade data each middle school determines the list of retained students. The study hypothesis stated that classroom walk-through observations will significantly decrease the number of students being retained in the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years (see Tables 15-18).

Table 15

Students Retained at Each Middle School

Middle School	2005-2006 # Of Students	2006-2007 # Of Students	2007-2008 # Of Students
A	83	57	51
B	64	70	5
C	32	16	5

Table 16

Students Retained at Middle School A Conducted with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	Students Retained	Student Population	% of Population Retained
2005-2006	0	16	961	1.66%
2006-2007	346	57	986	5.78%
2007-2008	213	70	895	7.82%
	Correlation coefficient r =	0.750514434		
	t-test t =	1.14		

Note. Positive. Reject null. Reject alternate. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05

$r^2 = .563$

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 56.3% of the variability in the number of students retained.

Table 17

Students Retained at Middle School B Conducted with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	Students Retained	Student Population	% of Population Retained
2005-2006	0	5	769	0.65%
2006-2007	180	51	721	7.07%
2007-2008	291	5	714	0.70%
	correlation coefficient r =	0.142337728		
	t-test t =	0.144		

Note. Mild positive. Reject null. Reject alternate. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05

$r^2 = .020$

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 2% of the variability in the number of students retained.

Table 18

Students Retained at Middle School C Conducted with Calculated Correlation Coefficient and T-Test

	Classroom walk-through observations Frequency	Students Retained	Student Population	% of Population Retained
2005-2006	0	32	390	8.2%
2006-2007	12	16	368	4.35%
2007-2008	10	5	364	1.37%
	correlation coefficient r =	-0.822142008		
	t-test t =	-1.45		

Note. Strong negative. Reject null. Accept alternate. Not due to chance. Alpha: .05

r^2= .675

We were 95% confident that the number of classroom walk-through observations explained 167.5% of the variability in the number of students retained.

Summary Conclusions from the Data

Results of this study indicated moderate correlation between independent variables of classroom walk-through observations and dependent variables of Communication Arts and Math MAP scores, discipline referrals, the number of students required to attend summer school, and the number of students retained at grade level. For the dependent variable of MAP scores, we rejected the null for all three middle schools. In all three cases, we accepted the alternate hypothesis, and determined the difference

between r and 0 was not due to chance. Although several correlations were close to one or negative one, four of five problems indicated weak significant correlation.

After analysis of the data, we determined the following: For the dependent variable of MAP scores the null was rejected for all three middle schools. In all three cases, we accepted the alternate hypothesis, and determined the difference between r and 0 was not due to chance. For the dependent variable of discipline referrals, for schools B and C, we rejected the null and accepted the alternate. For school B, our results were likely due to chance and School C results were not due to chance. For school A, we rejected the null and rejected the alternate. For the dependent variable of summer school, we rejected the null and accepted the alternate for schools A and B. For school C, we rejected the null, but also rejected the alternate due to the number of students requiring summer school increasing rather than decreasing. This caused our correlation and t-test scores to be positive instead of negative, therefore the alternate had to be rejected as well. For the dependent variable of retention, we rejected both the null and alternate for schools A and B due to increasing retention numbers. For school C, we rejected the null and accepted the alternate, and determined our results were not due to chance.

Therefore, the following conclusions were made: For all subject schools, there was a positive correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and score on the Communication Arts portion of the MAP test. For all subject schools there was a positive correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and scores on the Math portion of the MAP test. In Middle School B, a significant correlation existed between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the total number of

discipline referrals each school year. The correlation coefficient was positive when the hypothesis was worded such that we expected a negative. In schools A and C, there was a significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the total number of discipline referrals each school year. For all study schools, there was a significant correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the number of students enrolled in summer school for each middle school at the end of each school year. For all study schools, there was no significant negative correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted each year and the number of students retained in their grade level at the end of each school year.

The above summary conclusions focus specifically on the data contained from the study. We need, however, to reconsider the possibility that this study has hidden limitations.

Possible Limitations of the Study

There are a number of possible limitations with the classroom walk-through observations utilized by the ABC School District.

1. Lack of training for the teachers and administrators
2. No response on observation form for assessments, including tests, quizzes, common assessments
3. No procedural feedback for improvement based on data to the teachers or administrators
4. Inconsistencies in the amount of observations performed per building
5. Variance in student enrollment and staffing per building

6. Variance in student demographics and socioeconomic status
7. Variance in administrator per student
8. Administrator perception of questions may differ
9. No consistency in the allocation of classrooms visited by the administrator
10. The first year of implementation requested administrators to visit each classroom once per week and the second year of implementation requested administrators to visit each classroom once every two weeks
11. No specific connection that can be established between the classroom walk-through observations data and the test scores
12. This study also lends the possibility that the statistical data cannot render the desired information

While all of the above are possible limitations to the study, the next section will further discuss the possible limitations revealed by the research team.

In the beginning of this study, we were very enthusiastic about determining if the classroom walk-through observations had a potential impact on Communication Arts and Mathematics MAP scores, discipline referrals, summer school placement, and retention. We began the study by looking only at the impact that the classroom walk-through observations had on the above listed items. After we began the study, we realized that there were many factors that could possibly impact the above items, not just the classroom walk-through observations.

Let us first look at the Communication Arts and Mathematics MAP scores. The difficulty of using the MAP scores as an indicator of increased student performance is that different groups of students are being compared from year to year. A possibility

exists that the statistical data can't provide the desired information. O. Vandenberg (personal communication, June 5, 2009) stated that the study

> Assumes that the MAP scores provide reliable and valid evidence of improvement of academic achievement within the schools-although virtually everybody I speak to, and I think this includes the three co-researchers for this project, agree that the MAP scores really cannot be taken very seriously as indicators of school quality. So, how can the MAP scores serve as the sole evidentiary lynchpin for such a study?

Dr. Vandenberg (personal communication) further stated

> Schools are hugely complex institutions, and how they perform constitutes hugely difficult phenomena to understand and reduce to statistical data. The terminal danger of the one-treatment-produces-results approach to educational research is that it ignores the complexity of the phenomena in the hope that "one little treatment" will provide the lodestone.

The complexity of the educational system has been a concern from the beginning of the study. When we began looking at the data, comparing the data to the amount of classroom walk-through observations, we realized that there were so many more factors that could possibly impact educational outcomes that existed well beyond the previously determined limitations. In spite of these criticisms, we believe that the classroom walk-through observations should still take place, but under a systematic approach to further enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

In Chapter One, I indicated that in this dissertation I would focus on the study from a teacher's perspective. I will now turn to that focus in the final chapter.

Chapter Five-Discussion

Introduction

This study analyzed the correlation between the number of classroom walk-through observations and MAP scores in Communication Arts and Mathematics and the number of Summer School placements, retention, and discipline referrals. The number of ABC School District Classroom walk-through observations served as the independent variable for this study. The independent variables of this study were the number of classroom walk-through observations conducted at each middle school. The relationship between classroom walk-through observations conducted over a two year period was analyzed. The MAP scores for the three Middle Schools in the ABC School District were used to provide the data for a complete look at how the schools are scoring on the assessments administered in April of every year. The dependent variables for this study are student achievement as measured by

1. MAP Communication Arts test scores
2. MAP Mathematics test scores
3. Summer School Placement
4. Number of Students Retained in their Academic Grade
5. Number of Discipline Referrals

A limitation to the study was the actual number of classroom walk-through observations compared to the expected number of classroom walk-through observations by the ABC school district. Middle School A had approximately 65 teachers during each of the school years studied. Over a 36 week school year, there were 2,340 expected observations for the 2006-2007 school year, with each class being observed once per

week. The total number of observations performed fell short with only 346 observations reported. For the 2007-2008 school year, it was expected that each classroom would be observed once every two weeks, bringing the expected total of observations to 1,170. The number of total observations still fell well short of the expected total with only 213 observations reported.

Middle School B had approximately 54 teachers during each of the school years studied. Over a 36 week school year, there were 1,944 expected observations for the 2006-2007 school year, with each class being observed once per week. The total number of observations performed fell short with only 180 observations reported. For the 2007-2008 school year, it was expected that each classroom would be observed once every two weeks, bringing the expected total of observations to 972. The number of total observations still fell short of the expected total with only 291 observations reported.

Middle School C had approximately 38 teachers during each of the school years studied. Over a 36 week school year, there were 1,368 expected observations for the 2006-2007 school year, with each class being observed once per week. The total number of observations performed fell short with only 12 observations reported. For the 2007-2008 school year, it was expected that each classroom would be observed once every two weeks, bringing the expected total of observations to 684. The number of total observations still well short of the expected total with only 10 observations reported.

Middle School A had the largest number of classroom walk-through observations. Before the implementation of classroom walk-through observations in the school year 2005-2006, Middle School A had 41.30% advanced and proficient in Communication Arts and 36% in Mathematics. In 2006-2007, there were 346 classroom walk-through

observations and the scores went up to 42.90% in advanced and proficient in Communication Arts and 41.80% in advanced and proficient in Mathematics. In the school year 2007-2008, there were 213 classroom walk-through observations and the scores went up to 43.90% in advanced and proficient in Communication Arts and to 42.70% in advanced and proficient in Mathematics.

Middle School B had the second largest number of classroom walk-through observations. Before the implementation of classroom walk-through observations, in the school year 2005-2006, Middle School B had 24.60% advanced and proficient in Communication Arts and 22.90% in Mathematics. In 2006-2007, there were 180 classroom walk-through observations and the scores decreased to 22% advanced and proficient in Communication Arts and 22% advanced and proficient in Mathematics. In the school year 2007-2008, there were 291 classroom walk-through observations and the scores went up to 29.30% in advanced and proficient in Communication Arts and to 28.90% in advanced and proficient in Mathematics.

Middle School C had the smallest number of classroom walk-through observations, and their amount of advanced and proficient students was the least of all of the three middle schools. There was still an increase in the two years that the classroom walk-through observations were being measured. Before the implementation of classroom walk-through observations in the school year 2005-2006, Middle School C had 14.20% advanced and proficient in Communication Arts and 7.60% in Mathematics. In 2006-2007, there were 12 classroom walk-through observations and the scores went up to 19.40% proficient in Communication Arts and 13% advanced and proficient in Mathematics. In the school year 2007-2008, there were 10 classroom walk-through

observations and the scores went up to 21.10% in advanced and proficient in Communication Arts and to 14% in advanced and proficient in Mathematics.

Teacher Motivation

What really motivates a teacher? That is a question that can be answered many different ways by many different people. Diamantes (2004) taught a graduate class in education. He had his students survey the teachers in their school to understand the biggest motivating factor. Most answers were good pay and good working conditions. This study examined five different school districts and a total of 85 teachers were surveyed.

Ellis (1984), on the other hand, argued that what really motivates teachers is a sense of trust and a sense of achievement. Pastor and Erlandson conducted a survey in 1982 to see if teachers were motivated by intrinsic rewards or extrinsic rewards. The findings were the same as Ellis, in the fact that teachers were motivated by intrinsic rewards. The teachers wanted participation in decision-making, use of valued skills, freedom and independence, challenge, expression of creativity, and opportunity for professional development. Ellis (1984) also stated that an organized classroom walk-through plan would allow teachers to receive the feedback that they so desire.

One of the elements missing from the ABC School Districts classroom walk-through observations process is the feedback. Twenty-five years after the survey was completed by Pastor and Erlandson, the importance of feedback is still the same.

What motivates teachers is the notion that they are making a difference in the lives of students. Teachers are motivated by intrinsic rewards, and the students' learning is a large part of what motivates them. Teachers are in the profession of pedagogy to

make a difference and that is a reward in itself. Receiving feedback is a way for administrators to motivate teachers.

Implications for Effective Schools

The data analysis from this study indicated a correlation between the test scores and the number of classroom walk-through observations that were conducted. There was also a decrease in Summer School placement, retention, and discipline referrals. When an administrator is visible throughout the day, it might keep the teacher and the students on task. Teacher accountability comes into effect when the teacher's effectiveness is measured by the student's achievement.

In Chapter One, I discussed the classroom walk-through observation form that is used by the ABC School District. I think there are too many items listed on the form. An observation that is only five minutes in length cannot cover all of the things listed on the sheet. If observations are performed as they are supposed to be done, then they will see different things at different times of the day. As a teacher, I would like the form to include student engagement, instructional strategies, teacher feedback, and depth of knowledge. Those four items are very important. I have created a new observation form that I would like to see implemented. It would allow for teacher feedback after the observation. The feedback would only take a small amount of time, but should be a very important part of the classroom walk-through observations. The following form is the classroom walk-through observation form that I would implement.

ABC School District

Classroom walk-through observations Form

School _____Grade_____Date_____

Teacher_____Observer_____

Lesson Plan Posted	Yes	No

Instructional Delivery_____

Objective of Lesson

_____

_____

Instructional Strategies

Class Discussion	Yes	No
Independent Seat Work	Yes	No
Cooperative Learning	Yes	No
Marzano's Strategy		

_____

DOK Level	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Student Engagement	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	

Summary of Classroom walk-through observations

_____

_____

_____

Teacher/Observer Discussion Appointment

Date _____Time_____

Figure 14. Revised classroom walk-through observations form.

The classroom walk-through observation form that I created contains the most important items to me as a teacher. The first item on the form is for recording if the lesson is posted. Lesson plans should be posted daily outside of the classroom door. When the observer walks in, he or she should have an idea of the lesson's focus. I find

this to be a very important part because it shows that the teacher is prepared and knows what is going to be taught.

The next item on the form is the instructional delivery of the lesson. How is the lesson being taught? Is there a class discussion, independent seat work, cooperative learning, or any other method? This is important because all students learn differently. Using a variety of delivery methods is important in meeting the needs of all students.

The next item on the form is for the objective of the lesson. The lesson objective should be what the students are expected to know after the lesson is taught. The lesson is posted so the students know what they are going to learn, and then after the lesson is taught, they can reflect on the objective and see if they have met the objective of the lesson.

The next item on the form is the section for instructional strategies. This section will be filled in listing the method of the strategy being used to teach the lesson. Marzano's strategies (2001) would be used here. The nine strategies are

1. Identifying similarities and differences
2. Summarizing and note taking
3. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
4. Homework and practice
5. Representing knowledge
6. Learning groups
7. Setting objectives and providing feedback
8. Generating and testing hypothesis
9. Cues, questions, and advance organizers. (p. 1)

The next item on the classroom walk-through observations form is the DOK level. This is the depth of knowledge level that is used by DESE and the level should vary in the lessons.

MO DESE (2006) listed the DOK levels as

1. Level 1-Recall
2. Level 2-Skill/Concept
3. Level 3-Strategic Thinking
4. Level 4-Extended Thinking. (p. 4)

The next item on the classroom walk-through observations form is the section for student engagement. This is just a high, medium, or low answer. A quick observation of the students would result in an answer.

The next section is for a summary of the classroom walk-through observations. This is where the lesson will be summarized and any particular points of interest noted. This is a valuable part of the classroom walk-through observations form because it will give an overview of what was observed. The meeting between the observer and teacher will look at this section and discuss the lesson.

The last section on the form is the place for the appointment for the feedback to the teacher. The ABC School District's form is missing this vital piece. The new form will have a date and time for the feedback session. The feedback session should not take very long, but it is important that is does occur.

As a classroom teacher, I find it very valuable to receive feedback from my administrator after a classroom walk-through observation. I know that teachers are always learning just as the students are, and professional growth is a must in the field of

education. I always examine what my administrator noticed and pay close attention to any recommendations that she might make. Teachers are in the business of educating children and that is a job that I take very seriously. I want to do my best, and teachers can learn from the feedback of an administrator.

My district does not use the same form for the classroom walk-through observations as the ABC School District. My district uses the Go Observe Observation Process. It is a software program that observers can use during their classroom walk-through observations. My district uses the software with the Palm Pilot. The use of the Palm Pilot helps administrators to script the activities that are occurring during the classroom walk-through observation. This program allows the observer to calculate the time spent on certain activities. When the classroom walk-through observation is complete, the program will compile the information gathered and generate a report. This report is then given immediately to the teacher. The data is not gathered and aggregated as it is in the ABC School District. If a combination of both districts' methods could be used for classroom walk-through observations, then the observation process would be valuable to not only the administrator, but to the teachers as well.

Recommendations

The biggest missing piece in the classroom walk-through observation used by the ABC School District is the lack of feedback to the teacher. The teacher is observed but is never given any feedback on what was noticed in the observation process. I did an informal survey of ten teachers in my school district, which is a neighboring district to the ABC School District. I asked the question, what is most important to you when our principal does an observation? All ten of the teachers that I interviewed stated that the

feedback was most important to them. We are given a report on what was seen, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of what was observed.

As a classroom teacher, I value feedback. My perspective in this study is from a teacher's viewpoint. The research in regards to feedback from classroom walk-through observations is not at all surprising. Aiex (1993) stated,

> In regard to specific formats of the classroom walk-through observation form, 1) the format needs to be consistent with the teaching styles practiced in the schools, so its use is compatible with the teaching practices observed; 2) through the use of a lesson observation form, specific baseline data can be systematically collected for the purpose of improving instruction; and 3) lesson observation feedback can be clearly and precisely communicated to teachers based on observable instructional variables. (p. 2)

Feedback that is given should always begin with a positive statement of what was observed. The data that was collected needs to be the focus of the feedback discussion. The feedback must be what was noted in the observation, not from any recollection of the administrator. The feedback discussion should be a time for collaboration. The goal of the process is to make sure the teacher is doing what is best for educating the students while, at the same time, the administrator's recommendations are valued.

Boyd (1989) stated, "A teacher evaluation system should give teachers useful feedback on classroom needs, the opportunity to learn new teaching techniques, and counsel from principals and other teachers on how to make changes in their classrooms" (¶ 2). The lack of feedback is a barrier in the classroom observation process. It is great for an administrator to get into the classroom to see what is going on, but the teacher

needs to be given feedback to be able to make any changes that would benefit the students and the teacher as well. Boyd (1989) has five points that all feedback conferences should include.

1. Give feedback using a positive delivery
2. Collaborate with the teacher to discuss ideas and changes that could be made
3. Remain focused on achieving the goals of the evaluation
4. Find a median between changes and positive feedback
5. Provide the teacher with changes that will not be too overwhelming

Edge (1993) found

> That the hardest part of the observation process comes after the observation, when feedback was given to the teacher. There wasn't a framework to help guide him through the process. He created a framework for observations and found the feedback framework very useful. (¶ 2)

An important point is to be a good listener. Edge also believed that the framework is most effective when it is discussed and agreed upon beforehand.

Research has been done on the importance of feedback from an observation. Many times feedback may not occur because the observer is not comfortable in that situation. A structured document would be a great tool to have as a guideline for discussion between the teacher and observer after the observation has taken place.

Peer Evaluation

There are many quality teachers who are working hard in their own classrooms but never get to go around to observing other teacher's classrooms. Peer evaluation is a great way for teachers to learn from each other. Great teachers always want to be their

best and are always learning. A way that this can be done is by visiting other classrooms and seeing firsthand what is going on in other classrooms. Feedback is important in peer observations as well. Discussion is a way to share lessons as well as techniques that have worked while sharing what has been a problem. Educators all learn from the mistakes they make and sharing those mistakes will benefit everyone. Reflection is a very important aspect of growing as a teacher and sharing reflections with peers is a valuable tool (Roberts & Pruitt, 2003). Working together in a collaborative effort, would allow teachers to share more. One way to allow time for collaboration is to make sure that planning times are the same for a grade level team.

Toch (2008) stated that in the Toledo school system, "Both principals and teacher teams are referring more veteran teachers to peer review in the wake of NCLB, because they don't want to work with people who are pulling the whole school down" (p. 35). Most teachers enjoy the peer observations. Teachers find peer evaluation a valuable tool. Toch (2008) quoted a Toledo teacher, "Peer evaluation is an investment, not a cost" (p. 36). Peers can go into a classroom and observe a lesson being taught and the peer evaluator can use the classroom walk-through observations form and check off what is being observed. During planning time, the teachers can discuss how they thought the lesson went and what was observed. The evaluation is not for the administrators, but as a tool that will help both educators grow as teachers. Taking time to go into other teachers' classrooms can be beneficial to all of those involved.

A way to make this happen for the school is to hire a substitute for the day and have the substitute float from room to room so that all of the teachers can do classroom walk-through observations of teachers in their grade level and, if there is more time,

observe different grade levels. Many grade levels have the same planning time and that would be a time to share what was observed. If the planning time is not the same, the observation can be discussed after school. The discussion will not necessarily take long and the teacher who was observed could be given a copy of the completed classroom walk-through observations form to look at and reflect on.

Factors to Include in Future Studies

The results of this study could possibly be strengthened by also including elementary schools through the high school. Another possible alternative would be to give a pre/post assessment to measure the growth of the students while measuring the number of classroom walk-through observations. The pre/post assessment could include other subject areas in addition to Communication Arts and Mathematics.

Professional development for administrators to learn the classroom walk-through observations process would be another factor that could be studied. This study looked at classroom walk-through observations and their effect on student achievement. A study could be done on professional development for administrators that will include training for the classroom walk-through observations. Measurement can be made before the professional development was attended and after, to see if there is a difference in student achievement at the year end.

Feedback from an administrator after a classroom walk-through observations has been done is one of the most important support tools that an administrator can give a teacher. It allows the teacher to be seen from the outside and the teacher can see where he/she needs to improve as well as his/her strengths.

Summary

Student achievement has been a concern of public education for many years. A school district's performance on the MAP tests determines whether the district will be accredited. The school district must meet Adequate Yearly Progress. If students are continually declining in performance, something must be done. Classroom walk-through observations are one of the focuses of the ABC School District. Many different strategies are being used throughout the United States. The classroom walk-through observation was the topic chosen to research because it is being used in many school districts.

I see the value of the classroom walk-through observation and as I conducted research for this study, I learned so much about myself and how much I have to grow as an educator. I can see myself as the teacher and as the administrator.

The focus needs to be on student learning. Teachers always have so many things to think about as they prepare their lessons to implement, but the main focus is the student learning. Administrators are always looking for the student learning that is occurring, while the teacher is trying to focus on all of the aspects of the lesson.

This collaborative project involved the perspectives of an assistant principal, a counselor, and a teacher. All three of us saw the importance of the classroom walk-through observation process but for different reasons. My perspective was from a teacher's point of view. When I looked at the form used by the ABC School District, it helped me to become aware of all the aspects that it focused on. As a teacher who has been teaching for many years, I know what to look for in the students as well as how to present information for the students to be able to understand what is being taught. The form breaks apart all of the parts of a teacher's delivery and analyzes each different

aspect. The instructional strategies section is based on Marzano et al.'s (2001) strategies and the primary focus in my neighboring district is the use of the first three: identifying similarities and differences, reinforcing effort and providing recognition, and non-linguistic representations (p. 1). In the ABC School District, the focus is on all of the strategies.

The ABC School District form could be modified to meet the needs of the teachers as well as the administrators. My recommendation would be to create a new form that eliminates many of the items that are on the ABC School Districts form. The form that the ABC School District uses contains many different sections for all many aspects of observations. The grade and subject that are being observed are checked. The observation form has an E, an M, and an S (extensive, moderate, and slight). The administrator will check the column that is observed. The E, M, and S are used in evaluating the instructional delivery as well as the instructional strategies observed. The box named Teacher is used to determine what curriculum is being taught, whether it is the Teacher's Guide or supplemental material. The observer also looks at the student engagement level and will either check high, moderate, low, or disengaged. The teacher engagement is also commented on with either a yes or a no. The classroom is observed to see if student work is displayed, a scoring guide is there to show the grading scale of the student work, and the observer also checks whether the classroom environment is conducive to learning. The physical and instructional climates are both observed. The DOK (Depth of Knowledge) (DESE, 2008) is also observed. Another section on the classroom walk-through observations form is the use of technology. The observer looks for technology being used and to what extent it is being used and this is documented on

the form by checking the technology being used as well as in what level it is being used. The three levels are

1. Level 1-Centers on acquiring and practicing technical skills: technology is something to learn
2. Level 2-Automates traditional teacher and student roles: technology is optional
3. Level 3-Expands role and/or products: technology is essential. (DESE, 2008, form MO 500-2644)

The new form would have a section for student engagement. This is a very important piece of information. Student learning is the main objective of each and every lesson. There could be a rating scale of high, medium and low. The objective listed is important to me as a teacher. I always teach with the end in mind. What do I want the students to learn from the lesson? If the teacher lists what the objective is, then after the lesson is taught, the teacher can ask the question about the objective and the students should have learned what was taught.

Another section that should be included is the instructional delivery of the curriculum. The ABC School District form has a section for the instructional delivery method but it has points that could be eliminated. It is important that the objective is verbally stated or preferably posted. The students will know what they are going to learn before the lesson is taught. The new form should have a section that has a spot for the objective of the lesson. The instruction should be aligned with the school district's curriculum. Another section within the instructional delivery section should be what

technique is being used. Is technology being used, group work, class discussion, or seatwork such as assessments or worksheets.

A classroom walk-through observation will give a quick idea of what has been going on in the classroom. The work displayed will show what the students have been working on. The work displayed should include the objective and the GLE that it covers as well as a scoring guide. The original form has a section for student work but I feel there are points that could be eliminated.

The rating scale that the ABC School District uses is Yes, No, Not applicable, or Extensive, Moderate, and Slight. I agree with the rating scale. It will give an idea of what can be seen in the short visit.

After the visit, the administrator should type up a quick comment on the lesson and give the teacher a copy of the observation form. The feedback can be valuable. I recommend that the ABC School District use a program to be able to quickly gather the data and print out a report that can be given to the teacher. The forms can be kept in a file and compared to the prior reports of previous classroom walk-through observations.

Downey et al. (2001) strongly suggested "the classroom walk-through observations process has an effect on students at all socio-economic levels, but they have the greatest impact on the students who come from low socioeconomic homes" (p. 156).

The research that was used in this study helped me to understand the effect of the classroom walk-through observations process. With the data that has been gathered by the ABC School District, this was an excellent opportunity to see what effect, if any, that classroom walk-through observations had on a teacher and on the students.

Classroom walk-through observations had a positive correlation with student

achievement, if only for the reason that the administrator is visible and the teacher is staying focused on the lesson that is being taught. After gathering the data, researching all of the points that deal with this study, and doing the analyzing of all of the data, I cannot say that classroom walk-through observations are the reason that test scores increased, summer school placement went down, retention decreased, and discipline referrals were reduced, but in my opinion, they probably had a positive impact on the items in the list. Communication is a very important part of success and with visibility and communication as an administrator, this can be nothing but a positive for all of the stakeholders in education.

Stemberg (2008) strongly believed that "students can own their lives and that the great leaders of society and of communities as well as families, are those who care about others and not just about themselves" (p. 18). The teachers in a school are all working together as a team to make sure that they are doing the absolute best that we can for students. This study was done to see if all of the time and effort put into classroom walk-through observations is really worth it. The answer is that this is possible but I cannot say that there is statistical data to prove that classroom walk-through observations are worth it. As long as educators keep the students as the main focus, the educational world will be a better place for our students.

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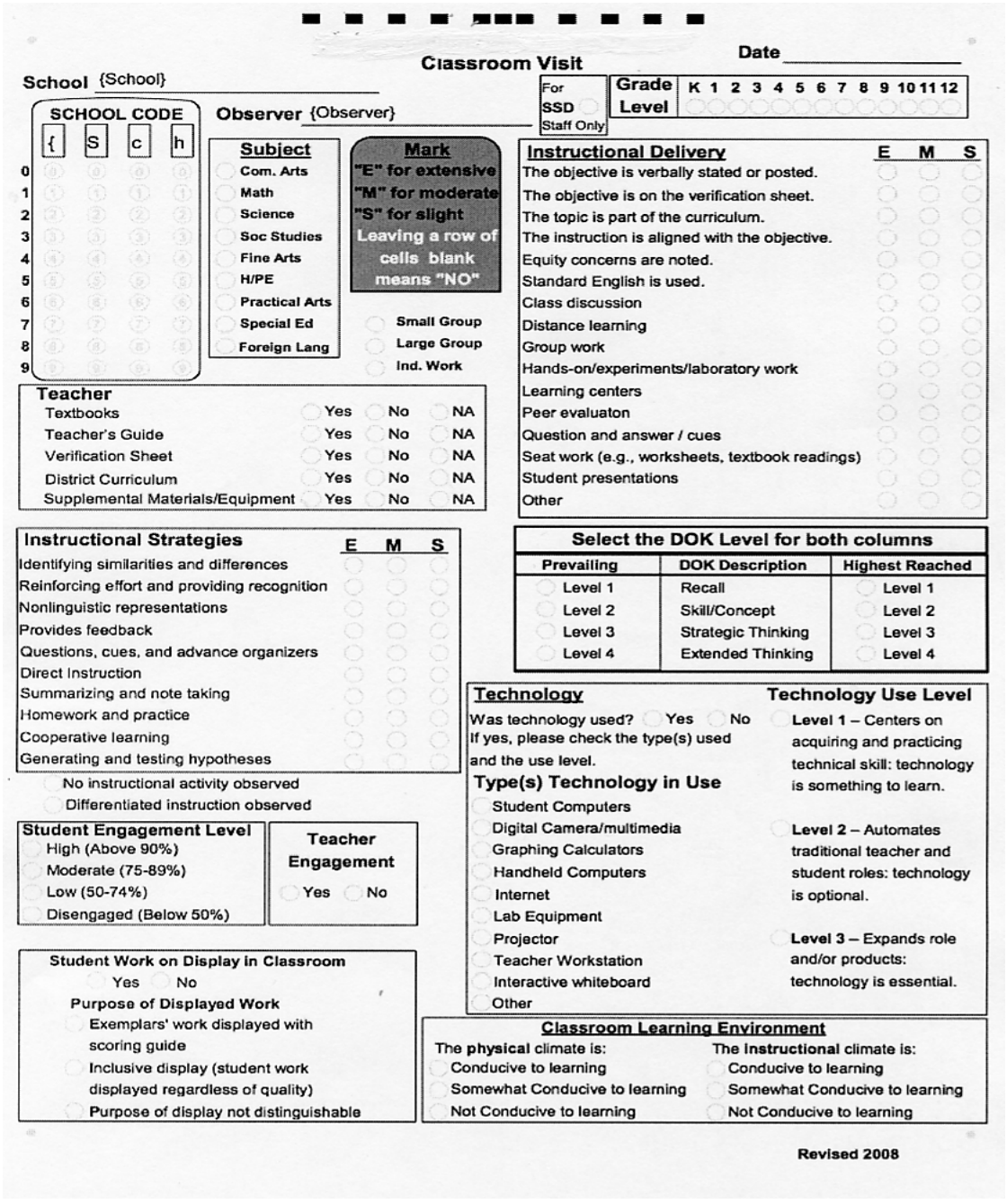
Appendix

ABC School District Walk-through Observation Form



Classroom Visit Date _____

School {School}

SCHOOL CODE { S c h

Observer {Observer}

For SSD Staff Only

Grade Level: K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Subject
- Com. Arts
- Math
- Science
- Soc Studies
- Fine Arts
- H/PE
- Practical Arts
- Special Ed
- Foreign Lang

Mark
"E" for extensive
"M" for moderate
"S" for slight
Leaving a row of cells blank means "NO"

- Small Group
- Large Group
- Ind. Work

Instructional Delivery E M S
- The objective is verbally stated or posted.
- The objective is on the verification sheet.
- The topic is part of the curriculum.
- The instruction is aligned with the objective.
- Equity concerns are noted.
- Standard English is used.
- Class discussion
- Distance learning
- Group work
- Hands-on/experiments/laboratory work
- Learning centers
- Peer evaluaton
- Question and answer / cues
- Seat work (e.g., worksheets, textbook readings)
- Student presentations
- Other

Teacher

Textbooks	Yes	No	NA
Teacher's Guide	Yes	No	NA
Verification Sheet	Yes	No	NA
District Curriculum	Yes	No	NA
Supplemental Materials/Equipment	Yes	No	NA

Instructional Strategies E M S
- Identifying similarities and differences
- Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
- Nonlinguistic representations
- Provides feedback
- Questions, cues, and advance organizers
- Direct Instruction
- Summarizing and note taking
- Homework and practice
- Cooperative learning
- Generating and testing hypotheses

No instructional activity observed
Differentiated instruction observed

Select the DOK Level for both columns

Prevailing	DOK Description	Highest Reached
Level 1	Recall	Level 1
Level 2	Skill/Concept	Level 2
Level 3	Strategic Thinking	Level 3
Level 4	Extended Thinking	Level 4

Student Engagement Level
- High (Above 90%)
- Moderate (75-89%)
- Low (50-74%)
- Disengaged (Below 50%)

Teacher Engagement
Yes No

Technology
Was technology used? Yes No
If yes, please check the type(s) used and the use level.

Type(s) Technology in Use
- Student Computers
- Digital Camera/multimedia
- Graphing Calculators
- Handheld Computers
- Internet
- Lab Equipment
- Projector
- Teacher Workstation
- Interactive whiteboard
- Other

Technology Use Level
- **Level 1** – Centers on acquiring and practicing technical skill: technology is something to learn.
- **Level 2** – Automates traditional teacher and student roles: technology is optional.
- **Level 3** – Expands role and/or products: technology is essential.

Student Work on Display in Classroom
Yes No

Purpose of Displayed Work
- Exemplars' work displayed with scoring guide
- Inclusive display (student work displayed regardless of quality)
- Purpose of display not distinguishable

Classroom Learning Environment

The **physical** climate is:	The **Instructional** climate is:
Conducive to learning	Conducive to learning
Somewhat Conducive to learning	Somewhat Conducive to learning
Not Conducive to learning	Not Conducive to learning

Revised 2008

Retrieved from http://moare.com/pages/uploaded_files/4thcyclemsip.com

Vitae

Leslie McEntire currently teaches fourth grade at Fairview Intermediate School in the Jennings School District, St. Louis, Missouri. Teaching experiences have included grades three and four as well as Gifted Education. She is currently the director of the FAST program which is the after school program at Fairview Intermediate. She is also the Coordinator for Character Education in the Jennings School District.

Educational studies have resulted in certification in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University, certification in Gifted Education from Maryville University, a Master of Education Degree in special education and as a reading specialist from Fontbonne University, and a Bachelor of Art in Education Degree from Fontbonne University.