

2-3-2015

# A Case Study of Teaching Principals, Administrators with Class, Examining the Perceptions of Administrators and Teachers

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A CASE STUDY OF TEACHING PRINCIPALS, *ADMINISTRATORS WITH CLASS*,  
EXAMINING THE PERCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Karl Richard Scheibehofer

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December 2014

Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
School of Graduate Studies and Research  
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Title: A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*, Examining the Perceptions of Administrators and Teachers

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Administrators are continually involved in trying to enhance learning within their schools. With new requirements regarding teaching observations and the implementation of Common Core standards, school administrators are being asked to take on a new set of administrative tasks. One important task of principals is to be directly involved in classroom instructional practices and increase their influence as instructional leaders.

This case study examined how principals and teachers in a suburban school district located in Southeastern Pennsylvania perceive the program, *Administrators with Class*. It is a program where once per semester the superintendent requires administrators/principals to return to the classroom to teach. In the meantime, the teacher of record is afforded the opportunity to visit peer classrooms. This study specifically looks to uncover the impact of this program as it relates to principal and teacher relationships, classroom techniques, and the perception of principals as instructional leaders. To uncover the perceptions of the program, the study utilizes qualitative coding techniques derived from surveying and interviewing participants in the program. This research will fill the gap in the literature that exists in regard to teaching principals, specifically the evaluation of an existing program that includes grades K-12. The superintendent and 20 selected administrators participated in face-to-face or telephone interviews, while 14 selected teachers completed a survey on Google Doc. A total of 34 individuals participated in the study. The study was completed during the second year of the

program's existence.

Examining a program such as *Administrators with Class* may provide options for principals looking to meet the demands of fulfilling their role as instructional leaders. Learning about the experiences and perceptions principals and teachers are having while participating in the program provides insights in determining the effectiveness of the program and examining the level of trust and confidence teachers have in their principals as instructional leaders.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey I have taken to fulfill my dream of becoming Dr. Karl R. Scheibehofer would not be possible without the influence and guidance of so many individuals. I am truly blessed to have worked with professors from East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. My extended family from Cohort IV and co-workers from Palisades School District, you have all been instrumental throughout the process. I can't thank you enough for your encouragement, support, and guidance.

A huge thank you to the members of my dissertation committee. Your wisdom, knowledge and passion are amazing. Dr. Bob Millward, thank you for encouraging me to see this topic from various angles, improving my writing, and teaching me how to properly conduct a case study. Dr. Douglas Lare, thank you for believing in me and giving me the opportunity to prove myself. You were always a phone call away, offering support while challenging my level of thinking. I was able to take something productive from every conversation we had. You truly made this journey memorable. Dr. Angelo Senese, thank you for your words of encouragement and providing me with various resources and experiences to think about.

I would also like to thank all of the participants in my pilot and field study. Your insights and level of expertise truly helped to make this study possible. I learned a lot from each and every one of you. I was able to learn about the program through the interview process and enjoyed my time with you. Your patience and willingness to assist are greatly appreciated.

I would like to acknowledge several of my colleagues who always offered support, guidance, and advice when I needed it most. Rich Heffernan, Karen Hornberger, Kate Kieres, Lori Tirjan, Sue RB, Monica Losinno, Nina Campellone and Sue Reiss, thank you for always being there for me and allowing me to bounce ideas off of you – your feedback and insights are greatly appreciated. Rich, I

am amazed at the level of support and flexibility you provided for me; I can't thank you enough. A special thank you must go to Dr. Lisa Lobasso for guiding me through this entire process; you are one of a kind. Finally, Lucy Stanovick, it was such a pleasure working with you. Your wisdom and encouragement truly helped my writing process. You are truly missed.

Above all, my family. I can remember coming home from my very first class and coming home to my biggest fans. The love and support I received was amazing. To my mother, Barbara Scheibenhofer, you are my inspiration and have always been there for me, offering more love and support than I could ever ask for. You always said I could do this, and without you it wouldn't be possible. I love you! To my sister, Brenda, thank you for always being there for me. My father-in-law, Randy Swope, always encouraged me to keep going and reminded me the end was near.

To my wife, Kim, thank you for taking on the family responsibilities when I was away attending classes or working on my paper. You always believed in me and provided unconditional love which I am so grateful for; I love you. To my precious children, Tyler and Kayla, thank you for understanding why daddy needed to be away taking classes and working on assignments. I hope you see that hard work and dedication pays off. Nothing in life worth having comes easy. Try your best, never quit, and have fun. I love you dearly.

To my grandfather, Richard Zeigler, and grandmother, Stephanie Zeigler, thank you for smiling down from heaven and guiding me through this. I miss you and love you both!

To my dad, Corporal Karl J. Scheibenhofer, I did this for you. You were my inspiration to finish this journey. I know you were watching me the entire time, giving me strength when I needed it most. I miss you every second of the day and continually strive to make you proud. Please tell everyone in heaven, WE did it!

## DEDICATION

For Mom and Dad, this dissertation is dedicated to you.

I feel your love and support every day. Without you this wouldn't be possible.

I am so proud to be your son.

For Kim, Kayla, and Tyler, the three of you fill my heart with pride, joy, and laughter.

You complete me, and I couldn't be more blessed.

I love you all dearly.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose of the Study.....	10
Research Questions.....	14
Theoretical Framework.....	14
Overview of Methodology.....	17
Definition of Terms.....	18
Limitations.....	18
Summary.....	19
II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	22
The Principalsip: A Historical Look.....	22
Expectations for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century.....	32
Instructional Leadership.....	33
Role of the Principal as Instructional Leader.....	40
Studies of Teaching Principals.....	44
Supervisory Strategies to Enhance Instruction.....	58
Gaps in the Literature.....	59
Summary.....	60
III METHODOLOGY.....	62
Introduction.....	62
Research Problem.....	62
Research Purpose.....	62
Research Questions.....	63
Research Design/Rationale.....	64
Nature of the Study.....	65
Setting.....	65
Selection of Participants.....	66
Instrument.....	66
Research Study Phases.....	67
Pilot Study.....	67
Field Study – Authorization.....	71
Field Study – Principal Interviews.....	73
Field Study – Teacher Interviews.....	74
Interview Setting.....	75

Chapter	Page
Coding of the Data.....	75
Summary.....	75
IV RESULTS.....	77
Qualitative Pilot Analysis.....	78
Validity and Reliability of the Instrument.....	78
Teacher Analysis – Pilot Study.....	79
Description Statistics.....	81
Qualitative Analysis of Teaching Interview Questions.....	82
Research Question 1(1a-1d).....	83
Research Question 2 (2a-2d).....	86
Research Question 3(3a-3d).....	90
Research Question 4(4a-4c).....	93
Qualitative Analysis of Administrator Interview Questions.....	95
Research Question 1.....	97
Research Question 2 (2a-2g).....	102
Research Question 3(3a-3b).....	108
Superintendent Interview Results.....	113
Chapter Summary.....	116
V CONCLUSIONS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	118
Introduction.....	118
Discussion of Findings.....	120
Teacher Perceptions Research Question 1.....	120
Administrator Perceptions Research Question 1.....	121
Superintendent Perceptions.....	123
Teacher Perceptions Research Question 2.....	124
Administrator Perceptions Research Question 2.....	126
Superintendent Perceptions.....	127
Teacher Perceptions Research Question 3.....	128
Administrator Perceptions Research Question 3.....	129
Superintendent Perceptions.....	131
Research Implications.....	131
Feedback – Providing the Results.....	135
Recommendations for Future Research.....	142
Chapter Summary.....	145
REFERENCES .....	147

Chapter	Page
APPENDICES.....	158
Appendix A - Letter to Principal and Teachers.....	158
Appendix B - Principal Interview Questions.....	159
Appendix C - Teacher Interview Questions.....	161
Appendix D - Superintendent Interview Questions.....	163
Appendix E - Superintendent/District Request for Approval.....	164
Appendix F - Superintendent/District Consent Form.....	165
Appendix G - Principal/Teacher Consent Form.....	167
Appendix H - Letter Requesting to See the Study.....	168
Appendix I - Research Description.....	169
Appendix J - Site Authorization.....	172
Appendix K - Transcript to Expert Panel.....	173

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Demographics.....	83
2	Charlotte Danielson’s Framework Domains.....	85
3	Overall Perceived Goals/Expectations of the Program.....	87
4	Suggested Types of Changes.....	89
5	Factors Considered When Lesson Planning.....	92
6	Value of Feedback/Inception of Administrators with Class.....	93
7	Indicators the Determine Principal Awareness.....	95
8	Overall Scale Rating.....	97
9	Advantages and Disadvantages.....	110

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Principals face difficult challenges on a daily basis. One of the noted challenges principals face is finding ways to spend more time in the classroom analyzing instruction with teachers (Fink & Resnick, 2001). Research as far back as eight decades ago suggests that principals then had only a small number of teachers to direct and relatively simple administrative duties to perform. A large portion of the principal's time was spent teaching (Pierce, 1935).

Today, principals are spending a large portion of their time dealing with managerial responsibilities, rarely having the opportunity to provide instructional leadership in the classroom. Without spending time in the classroom, the principals' knowledge of teaching can become outdated, causing them to provide insufficient feedback to teachers, which could ultimately hinder student achievement. Still, the principal as an instructional leader is an expectation listed in most job descriptions. If principals spend all of their time managing, they run the risk of distancing themselves from instruction, which can result in a gap between the administration and the teaching staff. Principals' comments in faculty meetings and post-observation conferences indicate that know what good instruction looks like, but are they currently doing it? Knowing and doing are two separate things. This is where a breakdown in trust between administration and teachers can occur. If a gap exists between theory and practice among teachers and administration, the teaching/learning process in the school will ultimately suffer.

One of the main functions of the principal is to serve as an educational leader in order to enhance the education and learning of all pupils. Most principals are expected to select, manage, motivate, and evaluate their team of teachers so their schools meet their academic goals

(Johnson, 2008). Day-to-day managerial skills, such as effectively organizing tasks and personnel, developing rules and procedures, and evaluating employees are:

“typical in almost any field. Instructional leadership implies more than just finding good people who can teach. Instructional leaders are school principals who communicate an explicit and comprehensive vision of how children learn, visit classrooms regularly, assess teaching strengths and weaknesses, and offer critical feedback and advice”

(Johnson, 2008).

Principals tend to find various tasks/responsibilities added to their daily routines, yet very few are removed. This makes it difficult for a principal to handle the role of being an instructional/managerial leader. Educational literature indicates that most public school principals are still primarily managers (Dembrowski, 2007; Samuels, 2008). It is easy to see why principals in public schools become frustrated at times. Time that could be spent on instructional practices is consumed by distractions that other administrative or clerical personnel could easily handle. If we assume that a primary function of the principal is to analyze instruction, the question then becomes, how can principals reorganize their responsibilities to make it possible to spend more time in the classroom analyzing instruction?

In addition to scheduled teacher observations throughout the school year, there are plenty of professional development and training opportunities for principals to learn how to identify and improve instructional practices. However, how many principals have the ability to model what good teaching looks like if the opportunity seldom exists? A strong case could be made for principals to return to the classroom to teach, offering a unique approach to increase the credibility of principals as instructional leaders.

Lare (1995) and Kelley-Brockel (1998) suggest that a possible solution to help transition principals who simply manage to principals who are instructional leaders would be to have them shoulder the responsibility of teaching. Shoemaker (2010) states that having principals “return to the classroom to teach would allow them to model instructional practices that have been known to increase student achievement. It would also allow principals to demonstrate their ability to model the practices and strategies they require teachers to use.” More importantly, the act of the teaching principal could increase the confidence teachers have in their principal when instructed to make changes in their teaching practice.

Shoemaker (2010) suggests that having principals return to the classroom to teach could increase support provided to staff in relation to instructional decisions and allow principal responsiveness to teacher concerns. Lare (1995) found that “having a principal who teaches could have a positive influence on the teachers’ perceptions in respect to the principal’s ability to teach and understand the teachers’ daily routines.”

Imagine if building-level administrators were given the opportunity to implement the very strategies they were encouraging their professional staff to use. For example, if a principal actually attempted to differentiate instruction as it was presented in a workshop, teachers might gain additional confidence and be more inclined to try more differentiated activities/projects. If a principal is attempting to insert interventions within the lesson, teachers might be more inclined to emulate this practice to better serve struggling learners. The quality of pre/post observation conferences could also increase as principals would be speaking from the perspective of similar classroom experiences. The experiences described above can be further explored within a case study where principals are required to teach in a prescribed capacity.

The superintendent of a school district located in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, has created an opportunity for principals to get back into the classroom to teach. It is a program that affords administration the opportunity to encourage teachers to adopt specific strategies across subject areas, visit their colleagues, participate in action research, and examine student work. The superintendent believes that it is unrealistic to think principals could teach a class on a daily basis because the multitude of tasks demanded by the role is too great. For that reason, he requires a minimum of one experience each per marking period. This equates to a minimum of four periods (45 minutes in length) at the secondary level or a half-day experience at the elementary level. The guidelines for *Administrators with Class* are as follows:

- Minimum of one experience each marking period
- Minimum of four periods per experience (secondary) or half-day per experience (elementary), with at least one experience outside area of certification
- As least one experience out of the administrator's current building
- Within one week following the experience, a reflection to be submitted to the assistant superintendent and superintendent
- Reflections encouraged to be shared with peers and teaching staff
- Classroom teacher impacted by experience to schedule peer observations for the time when administrator is teaching classes
- Documentation of peer observation turned into principal within a week following the experience
- Date, time, location, and teacher where experience occurs to be posted on Google Doc at least three days prior to experience.



The vision comes from the realization that principals are asked to critique a teacher's performance through formal and informal observations. This is accomplished without ever teaching that particular class, subject, or student. The superintendent believes that in order to become a good instructional leader, there has to be a degree of identification between the practitioner and the principal. The principal is the individual who is required to go into the classroom and provide feedback about what is happening and what the teacher is doing. One of the motivations for creating the program is to increase the capabilities of his building principals as instructional leaders and have a greater impact on what is happening in the classroom. This allows principals to demonstrate that instructional leadership involves leadership of teaching and of using best instructional practices. A need for this type of leadership and vision in schools is supported by the emergence of standards-based accountability and the demands that principals take responsibility for student performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers work with students in the classroom; it is the place where instruction occurs. Administrators should be working with teachers in the classroom sharing similar experiences, but it isn't happening on a consistent basis. Administrators are charged with conveying what good teaching looks like, but how are they to demonstrate this to their faculty if they are not spending quality time in the classroom? Are principals good teachers? Are they developing a comprehensive picture of teaching and developing a common language to discuss what they have observed? Experts such as Charlotte Danielson state that good teaching is based upon a standardized framework. A standardized framework produces a more comprehensive evaluation plan and provides an important anchor point for assessing teacher practice. In 2013 during one of her Teachscape training videos, Charlotte Danielson spoke of the importance of principals

focusing on teachers' questioning skills, lesson interactions, and level of student engagement.

What experience do principals have to recognize these components? Do they have they experienced themselves?

Once a teacher meets the necessary state requirements to become a building level administrator he or she is usually removed from the classroom and no longer teaches. Educators spend a lot of time talking about good instructional strategies, but what do good instructional strategies look like in the classroom? For some administrators it could be 15 or 20 years since they taught on a regular basis. Instead, they are armed with educational theories and instructional strategies learned from required text while taking courses in their master's program or workshops on observation techniques. Does an administrator truly understand how difficult it is to put strategies into place such as checking for understanding, guided practice, classroom management, and transitions while trying to keep a classroom of students focused and engaged?

Principals can learn a lot by spending time in the classroom. When visiting a classroom, principals are encouraged to use an observation schedule and to look at the teaching strategy to better understand whether students are simply gaining information for later recall or whether actual learning is occurring (Marshall, 2009). Principals need to know what they are looking for in the classroom to gain the trust of both the teacher and superintendent (Marshall, 2009). The best way to become good at something is practice. Principals are responsible for creating a simple and clear vision of good teaching. Principals who are able to spend more time in the classroom will be more attuned to the unique issues of a class, more focused on a few key change levers, and more capable of achieving improved responses and follow-up from teachers (Marshall, 2009).

Principals can recognize effective instruction, but when is the last time have they experienced it themselves? Outside the observation process which includes conducting pre- and post-conferencing, can principals truly relate to the experiences a teacher has within the classroom? This can produce a credibility disconnect between administration and teachers. Principals could generate a more direct approach to improving instruction by coaching and mentoring teachers through sharing similar teaching experiences. Efforts should be made to operate more in the realm of practice and not theory.

Principals can easily forget some of the aspects associated with teaching on a regular basis such as meeting individual student needs, classroom interruptions, monitoring student progress, fulfilling the day's objectives, behavior concerns, student issues, and fatigue. Teachers might feel that their principal has lost touch with teaching and has nothing valuable to contribute. There is a big difference between discussing observation techniques with teachers as opposed to actually teaching a classroom full of fourth graders. To help build credibility between administration and the teaching staff, maybe it is time for administrators to consider demonstrating that they understand what it is like being in the classroom by teaching themselves.

Experts disagree about the amount of time principals need to spend in the classroom supervising and evaluating teacher performance. Some noted advantages to having principals in the classroom include being able to work with low performing teachers and getting them to "own" the problem, thus enabling the teacher to get a quantified understanding of his/her performance (Ribas, 2005). Noted disadvantages include teachers becoming too occupied with their final evaluation and having difficulty refocusing on commendations and recommendations. Teachers could feel threatened, causing a greater decline in teacher performance (Ribas, 2005). As it relates to this case study, it is important to note that it was never the superintendent's vision

to have principals model effective teaching strategies in the classroom. Instead, this approach gave principals the opportunity experience their teachers' daily routines.

Administrators are well aware of their responsibilities to demonstrate yearly increases in student achievement. Under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) (Public Law 107-110), which re-established the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, all students attending public schools are expected to reach a level of proficiency within identified subjects by the year 2014. The law is aimed at increasing accountability for all public schools. The NCLB Act of 2001 requires that each state establish a timeline for adequate yearly progress. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is a measurement defined by NCLB that allows the U.S. Department of Education to determine how every public school and school district is performing academically based on standardized tests. The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, also known as PSSA, measures student achievement in reading, mathematics, science, and writing according to Pennsylvania's academic standards (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2012). The 2010-11 targets were 67 percent proficient or advanced in math and 72 percent proficient or advanced in reading. The overarching goal is to have 100% of the students achieve a predetermined level of proficiency by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Levels of student achievement are changing. Replacing PSSA testing in grades 9-12 are the Keystone Exams, which students need to pass in order to graduate from high school beginning with the graduating class of 2017.

“Traditionally, principals were expected to set clear goals, allocate resources to instruction, manage the curriculum, monitor lesson plans, and evaluate teachers” (Grigsby, Schumacher, Decman, Simieou, 2010). In Grubb and Flessa's (2006) study, principals reported being responsible for instructional leadership, managerial tasks, improving student scores on

accountability measures, speaking to angry parents, disciplining students, hiring and firing teachers, and overseeing meal and bus schedules.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century will bring additional demands, requiring principals to focus on the teaching and learning processes, develop leadership capacity in teachers, create conditions for professional learning, and emphasize the use of data to inform instructional program decisions (King, 2002).

Grigsby, Schumacher, Decman, Simieou (2010) state the principal is the “individual best positioned within the school to evaluate the curriculum and evaluation process”. Bringing the principal back into the classroom could help the principal emphasize and respect to a greater degree the daily routines of teachers. The superintendent of the school district examined in this study did not expect principals to use this program to specifically improve instruction, and the effectiveness of the program is yet to be determined. It may have the potential for principals to better understand students and the teaching staff. It could also support the researcher’s theory that teaching principals may have a positive impact on teacher/administrator relations.

When looking to improve classroom instruction, a building-level principal should consider teaching as a means to get more involved in the classroom to share best practices. This experience could also generate an increased awareness of what is happening in the classroom including a better understanding of curriculum gaps and inconsistencies. Other prescribed benefits could include an increased understanding of professional development needs, quality conversations about instruction practices, and developing a common language around instruction.

Today's children will need creativity, problem-solving abilities, passion for learning, a dedicated work ethic and lifelong learning opportunities in order to be successful, as described

by Thomas L. Friedman in *The World Is Flat*. Students can develop these abilities through instruction based on best practice teaching strategies.

Using best practices can increase rigor within the curriculum by developing thinking and problem-solving skills through integration and active learning. Best practices motivate, engage, and prompt students to learn and achieve. Four best practices for teachers include teaching a balanced curriculum, offering an integrated curriculum, differentiating instruction to meet individual student needs, and providing active learning opportunities for students to internalize learning (Daniels & Bizar, 1998). A principal who is able to quickly recognize best practices within a classroom could establish an increased awareness and better understanding of what is happening in the classroom.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This case study will interview selected principals from elementary, middle, and high-school levels along with teachers whose classes are actually being taught by their principal. This will be done to acquire their perceptions about the program, *Administrators with Class*. This is critical because if principals are to play a crucial role in improving teaching and learning, they must know how to enhance academic content and pedagogical techniques while working with teachers. They need to gain trust and credibility among their teaching staff. They need to be able to recognize when teachers are not reaching their potential and need mentoring. There has to be something in place by which teachers can gain input into their practice. If they are observed only once or twice per year, then whatever is in place will have little impact on their teaching practice. If based upon sound educational principles, a teacher's practice could benefit from sharing similar classroom experiences with teaching principals especially during pre- and post-observation discussions.

Marshall (2009) talks about the necessity of principals conducting a considerable number of classroom visits with follow-up discussions and brief write-ups. Having these discussions increases the opportunity for teacher input and stronger artifacts/student data being collected when the teacher is evaluated. This is a difficult task to accomplish if the principal is not directly involved in classroom instruction and sharing educational philosophies and strategies with their teachers.

Is having building level administrators more directly involved in the classroom teaching the best way for superintendents to improve teaching and learning in their buildings? This case study sought to reveal the overall strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement needed for the program *Administrators with Class*. This will add to the literature by acquiring the perceptions of teaching principals and selected teachers within the elementary, middle, and high school levels in the selected school district.

During preliminary discussions between the school board and superintendent about the program *Administrators with Class*, it became apparent that the school board wanted to improve the quality of instructional leadership within the district's buildings. They quickly realized that some administrators that had not been in the classroom for 20 years. The strategy adopted by the board was to follow the recommendations of the superintendent to implement *Administrators with Class*. The board provided the superintendent with the authority to require his building-level administrators to return to the classroom to teach. They understood and accepted that this was going to be a work in progress, a program/model no other school district in Pennsylvania currently provides.

The superintendent felt strongly that in order to be a good instructional leader there had to be a degree of identification between the practitioner and the administrator. The plan was to

have principals experience the daily routines teachers experience, thus providing principals with a whole new appreciation for what goes on in the classroom and causing them to reflect upon those experiences. All teaching principals were required to write out their reflections and share them with the superintendent. Promoting reflective practice among teachers and administrators is one of the main vehicles for improvement. This model is not attached to a specific theory but it takes into account that educators tend to follow a different track once they leave the classroom to become administrators.

School boards are often motivated to save tax dollars. One possible benefit of a teaching principal could be eliminating the need for a substitute teacher for that day, a perception quickly realized once the program came to fruition but which was not an initial goal.

The superintendent described the administrative team as “good and highly professional.” They appreciated the passion and intuition to improve the quality of instructional leadership in all buildings. This would also include addressing the instructional gap that can exist between teachers and administration.

The superintendent’s thought process was to not have the principals model effective teaching strategies; rather, they were to have an opportunity to carry out the same routines they expected the teachers to perform. When the principal went into the classroom to teach, that teacher was out doing peer observations. This process afforded teachers in the building an opportunity to see what was going on in other classrooms. One of the intended goals of this case study was to determine if anything specific was taken from the experience. Conducting peer observations allowed teachers to share ideas, strategies, and interventions. In a sense it was professional development for them. Otherwise they would not have participated in this project



because they simply wouldn't have had the time unless they did it during their prep time, which was highly unlikely.

The program *Administrators with Class* is an evolving model with no other examples for comparison. The superintendent and building-level administrators learned as they went through the process. The foundation and requirements were thoroughly planned out, but adjustments will be needed as the program evolves and more principal reflections are studied.

Conducting a case study on this program will provide the superintendent and teaching principals with valuable feedback. The study reveals the advantages and disadvantages of the program. As advantages, teachers can begin to appreciate the fact that administrators might not be far removed from teaching experiences. Principals also have an opportunity to implement an instructional strategy themselves and reflect upon it. The disadvantages might include students are losing their teacher for day and the quality of instruction might not be comparable. On the administrative end, the principals are being pulled from their daily duties and some obligations will either be put on hold or delegated to someone else.

The research on principals returning to the classroom to teach is scarce. The introduction to supervision of instruction as an additional administrative task led to the gradual elimination of the teaching component of the principalship (Grady, 1990). A few researchers such as Flatt (1987), Lare (1995), Kelley-Brockel (1998), and Shoemaker (2010) have researched the model of a teaching principal. Research on this topic is increasing as principals continue to look for ways to improve the teaching and learning processes in their buildings. Being more involved in the classroom and having a direct approach with teachers by coaching and mentoring them about curriculum and instruction can be a good place to start.

The primary goal of this case study is to examine the program and determine the perceptions administrators and teachers have of *Administrators with Class*. The results of the study will provide the superintendent with insights by examining the perceptions of selected teachers and administrators from each building. Is it having a profound impact on principals as instructional leaders and what impact is it having on teaching and learning processes?

The results of this study will provide building and district level administrators data regarding the impact of this program by revealing the perceptions of the faculty members and administrators participating. In order to harness a true understanding of the impact of the program, various research questions were posed to uncover the perceptions of all participants.

### **Research Questions**

1. What was the superintendent's motivation for implementing *Administrators with Class*?
2. Are goals of the program being implemented?
3. Who is evaluating the impact of the program? How is this being done?
4. What is the perception of teaching principals and faculty members on the impact of the program? Has the program affected their practice?
5. What impact has the program had on the teacher-principal relationship?
6. Is the principals' feedback on instruction now viewed as more credible?
7. Do administrators perceive that this program has the potential to enhance student learning?
8. Do building level administrators believe teachers' perceptions of them will change as instructional leaders if they teach?
9. Has the principals' vision of how students learn changed as a result of this program?

## Theoretical Framework

Principals can no longer function as building managers; they now have to become leaders who can develop a team delivering effective instruction. What better way to understand and support good teaching than to practice it? Teaching may provide the opportunity for principals to increase their credibility, creativity, and collaboration with teachers (Goldys, 2009). It is a way for principals to become participants instead of spectators. Observing teachers and asking questions about how to improve learning can build trust and strengthen the relationship between administrators and teachers.

The literature is replete with theories and studies that address the role of the principal. It is time to talk about the importance of principal-teacher relationships, rather than merely leadership styles or behaviors (Walsh, 2005). Schools now face pressures to increase student performance on standardized tests. This new pressure now requires a stronger relationship between teachers and administrators. Trust relationships involve risk, reliability, vulnerability, and expectation (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). The more interaction administrators and teachers have over time, the more likely their willingness to trust one another. As teachers begin to feel better about themselves and what their collective missions are as a result of significant interactions with their principals, one might assume they become more effective in the classroom. Can a model such as *Administrators with Class* enhance relationships between administration and teachers?

Daily interactions with principals can establish trust and support from teachers. One of the best known studies of trust in schools was conducted by Bryk and Schneider in 2002. Collectively they analyzed the relationships between trust and student achievement. Their findings are based on case study data that included surveys of teachers, principals, and students.

The study was conducted by the Consortium on Chicago School Research. Bryk and Schneider were able to establish a connection between the level of trust in a school and student learning. It is important to note that trust alone does not directly affect student learning, but it does foster conditions that are more conducive for learning.

Principals can influence the working patterns of teachers by establishing effective collaboration. They can begin to examine teaching practices more critically and seek better alternatives for creating improvements in classroom instruction. Working collaboratively through the kinks of a teaching strategy, such as checking for understanding, allows an educator to revise or recreate an approach to make learning successful. By strengthening the bond between teachers and administrators, principals may create opportunities for themselves to learn with their staffs. It is important to be open to suggestions, know the good, bad, and ugly of teaching, and most importantly be a principal who is there for his or her teachers.

When the superintendent approached the school board of directors, the program was pitched as a way to improve the quality of instructional leadership within all buildings to address the instructional gap that often exists between teachers and administration. To gain the necessary support to begin this program, it was necessary to change from the traditional way of thinking about preaching instructional strategies/theories to exercising the actual art of teaching.

There is no substitute for experience. Researchers such as Lare (1995), Kelly-Brockel (1998), and Shoemaker (2010) support this position. All three researchers who expressed an interest in researching teaching principals found it to be a positive experience in building relationships. Principals in Lare's (1995) study acknowledged the importance of being visible while also sharing a common teaching philosophy that all students should be actively engaged in

the learning process. Shoemaker's (2010) study revealed an increased credibility about classroom instructional initiatives leading to increased student learning.

If effective, *Administrators with Class* could be viewed as a means to improve the working relationships between teachers and administration. Closing the instructional gap that can exist between administration and teachers might just start with examining the relationships and trust principals have with their teachers.

Principals are responsible for implementing change and improving the quality of instruction. Principals are also held accountable for student performance. Implementing a program such as *Administrators with Class* could also change the climate and culture of a building and increase the perception of principals being viewed as instructional leaders by their colleagues.

While districts generally have strengths and successes to build on, they must improve in a number of areas to make their vision a reality. Each year superintendents are given various goals such as creating budgets that show a shift of district resources to instructional programs, increasing technology usage, decreasing the dropout rate, safeguarding programs to ensure special education needs are being met, and assessing programs for effectiveness and cost efficiency. In order to improve the teaching and learning process of a district, superintendents should consider a plan that focuses the energy on leading principals through the leadership behaviors of directing, coaching, collaborating, and sending them back into the classroom to teach.

### **Overview of Methodology**

Historically, the principal served in the role of both teacher and manager. The expectation that the building-level principal teach nearly faded away as the position evolved in the 20<sup>th</sup>

century. At present, some would say the responsibilities of the principal funnel them towards being managers, yet educational initiatives aim to improve the academic performance of all students to a level of proficiency. Examining the perceptions of teaching principals just might demonstrate that the success of these initiatives rests upon the leadership abilities of principals as instructional leaders.

The data will be collected through a series of interviews with administrators, select teachers, and the superintendent. Recordings will be made to help identify selected themes, categories, patterns, and relationships within participant responses (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). The role of interviewer, recorder, data organizer, and data analyst will be conducted by the researcher.

The study will utilize the methodologies inherent to case study inquiry. Qualitative case studies allow the researcher to explore individuals or organizations within an organization, a critical component of data collection when evaluating programs. The researcher will conduct the case study using a large suburban school district located in southeastern Pennsylvania.

### **Definition of Terms**

Teaching Principal/Administrator – An assistant and/or principal who integrates time on a daily basis to provide direct instruction to students. To qualify to participate in this case study, the administrator must be a participant in the *Administrators with Class* program.

### **Limitations**

Limitations to this study reflect varying factors. This case study is limited to the administrators of one school district for the duration of only one school year. The principals in this study were not randomly selected but chosen as a convenience sample determined by their participation in *Administrators with Class*. The teachers who volunteered to participate in this

study did not necessarily need to improve their practice. It is important to note the every principal who participated in this model was the one who evaluated the performance of the teacher on an annual basis.

This study is intended to add to the existing research and literature on the teaching principal. Whether or not more building-level administrators move in the direction of becoming teaching principals is yet to be determined. The purpose of this study is to provide feedback on a program that affords principals the opportunity to return to the classroom to teach. Ideally, this study will determine whether teaching principals can have a positive impact on administrators and teachers' instructional practices, thus narrowing the gap in instruction and learning between administrators and teachers.

### **Summary**

Over time, as school populations grew, the principal began to take on more managerial tasks. Until the 1930's master teachers performed the dual role of performing managerial duties and their teaching responsibilities. This was relevant until increasing school demands caused the role of the principal to develop into one primarily focused upon school management. However, with today's emergence of standards-based accountability and the focus on student achievement, principals are asked to take a more active role in student learning. One way for a principal to be acknowledged as an instructional leader is to become a "teaching principal," a concept not foreign to the principalship.

Today the principalship has emerged as a dynamic role unique in its influence on students, faculty, and the community at large. The literature states that demographic shifts in the student population, along with increased accountability through legislation, have led to changes in school curriculum and instruction. These changes have translated into principals being held

accountable for the academic improvement of all students with a continuous focus upon improved classroom instruction. Phillips (2010) states that in order to have credibility as an instructional leader, the principal should also be a practicing teacher.

Several studies on principals have been conducted, but none has been a case study that focuses solely upon a program such as *Administrator with Class* where principals are required to teach. According to the superintendent in the school district in this study, the strength of the program depends greatly upon the effort the administrator puts into preparing for the teaching experience as well as the effort he/she puts into the reflective piece after the experience. Based on observations of administrators' teaching experiences, the superintendent has witnessed some very good lessons as well as ones that were not very good. After the lessons have been taught the superintendent reviews the submitted reflections. In doing so it was discovered that administrators are generally able to identify areas where they did well or struggled. Administrators also have the ability to share their teaching experience with their teaching staffs during faculty meetings. The superintendent believes teachers appreciate the efforts of administrators returning to the classroom to teach. It is also believed that this model can help administrators have a greater impact on instruction by providing valuable feedback during post-observation conferences given their experiences teaching. Furthermore, in their reflections principals are able to provide their insights as to how they would use the teaching experience in helping teachers improve instruction.

A principal can know everything there is about being a leader, all the theories and styles of leadership, but that does not mean he/she is a good leader. When teaching a class, principals can see firsthand the daily and constant adjustments made during a lesson and have a greater understanding of the fact that each student does learn differently. Will teaching principals



become more empathic to the fact there will be good days and bad days and recognize that not every lesson taught is a complete success? Without answers to these types of questions, one cannot truly determine the impact this program does have on administrators and teachers in the district. Teaching principals have the ability to become teachers of teachers by facilitating lifelong learning by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and climate based upon high expectations for both students and faculty.

The vision and established goals of the program directly focuses upon improving the teaching/learning process in this district. This case study will examine the perceptions of the superintendent, administrators, and purposively selected teachers of the district to acquire critical feedback on the impact of *Administrators with Class*.

One would be hard pressed to find a school that doesn't have the goal of increasing student achievement. The *Administrators with Class* approach could be an inexpensive way for principals to demonstrate their leadership abilities in the classroom to accomplish such a goal. If the impact of this program is significant, other superintendents and principals may consider a similar approach for their districts and schools.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“Many schools operate according to a division of responsibilities. Teachers are responsible for what happens behind closed classroom doors, while principals handle activities such as budget management, defining and maintaining the school’s organizational structure, managing relations with the school community, resolving conflicts, shaping the school climate, and managing the school’s daily routine” (Elmore, 2004). As principals handle these types of responsibilities, it becomes difficult for them to connect with the process of teaching and learning which can prevent them from establishing their identity as instructional leaders. This raises the question of whether a model can exist in a school system that consistently supports principals in the role of instructional leaders.

This study seeks to determine whether there is a need for teaching principals as well as determine if it is a productive way to strengthen a principal’s status as an instructional leader. A case study examining the program *Administrators with Class* will be used to determine the value of teaching principals. The outline of topics included in the literature review are a historical look at the principalship, expectations for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, instructional leadership, role of the principal as instructional leader, studies of teaching principals, and gaps in the literature. The idea that principals should serve as instructional leaders, not just generic managers, is widely subscribed to among educators (Fink & Resnick, 2001).

#### **The Principalship: A Historical Look**

The birth of the school principalship has been the subject of hundreds of studies, mainly of how the principalship originated, how it evolved, and what factors are currently shaping the current and future responsibilities of the job. The principalship has expanded as it has evolved,

driven by the demographic shifts in the student population along with accountability requirements introduced by legislation. Today, school principals appear to have the greatest influence on student outcomes when their efforts are instructionally focused (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). When we look back into the early history of American schooling, schools did not always have principals since teachers were called upon to perform all tasks pertinent to running a school.

Dr. Kermit Buckner states, “In the early twentieth century, as schools began to grow from one-room schoolhouses into schools with multiple grades and classrooms, a need arose for someone to manage these multifaceted organizations” (as cited in Sergiovanni, 2001). Teachers originally balanced the responsibilities of the classroom along with managerial responsibilities, a concept referred to as “principal teacher.” Since the late 1800s, when the position of the principalship originated, the role embraced the combination of teacher and manager who took care of occasional clerical duties. Influenced by society, increased population, added duties, higher levels of accountability, and student achievement, the “principal teacher” is now accorded a separate administrative title. According to Shoemaker (2010), researchers who have written about the history of education generally have varying opinions on the forces that have come to influence the development of the administrator’s role.

According to Pierce (1935), the responsibilities of the principal teacher were to function as the head of the school. The principal teacher was charged with regulating the classes and course of instruction of all the pupils whether they occupied his or her room or the rooms of other teachers. This included discovering any defects in the school and applying remedies, making defects known to the visitors, and giving necessary instruction to assistants. The job also included classifying pupils and instructing assistants, safeguarding school houses and furniture,

and keeping the school clean. The responsibility of the assistant teachers was to regard the principal teacher as the head of the school, observe his or her directions, guard his or her reputation, and to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the rules and regulations adopted for the government of the school (Pierce, 1935).

As schools continued to grow in population, principal teachers began splitting their responsibilities between teaching and managerial tasks. The term “principal” began to emerge, appearing in the Common School Report of Cincinnati as early as 1838 (Pierce, 1935). With school populations booming and the American education system becoming an enormous enterprise, superintendents were beginning to adopt a big business philosophy of scientific management. Emphasis was placed on efficiency and management, causing the delegation of local supervision and managerial responsibilities to shift to the “principal teacher.”

Pierce (1935) attributes the introduction of grading, the organization of students into large groups of similarly aged students, and creation of academic departments to the necessity of having one individual leading the school. As the freeing of principals from teaching duties began to occur, the role began to evolve. Initially, the role of the principal was not clearly defined, since part of the day was still spent teaching in classrooms, with the rest spent on clerical duties in the school (Pierce, 1935). An approach most often used was to make the principal and the head assistant jointly responsible for the highest responsibilities in the school. When the principal was scheduled to visit classrooms, the head assistant would assume the principal’s responsibilities. The importance of monitoring instruction was beginning to be recognized by superintendents, launching the supervision of teachers by building principals.

Principals were now given “the right to graduate pupils on the basis of the principals’ standards, the right to have orders or suggestions to teachers given only through the medium of

principals, and the right to vote in transfers and assignments of teachers connected with their schools” (Pierce, 1935, p.211). They also had the right to “direct teachers, enforce safeguards to protect the health and morals of pupils, supervise and rate janitors, require cooperation of parents, requisition educational supplies, graduate students on the basis of the principals’ standards, supervise teachers, and assign and transfer teachers.” This helped to mark an increase in prestige of a principal (Pierce, 1935).

As the position of principal continued to evolve, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), founded in 1921, believed the progress and well-being of the individual child must be at the forefront of all elementary and middle school planning and operations (NAESP, 2011). The association went on to state how it “supports elementary and middle level principals as the primary catalyst for creating a lasting foundation for learning, driving school and student performance, and shaping the long-term impact of school improvement efforts.” According to Beck and Murphy (1993), this proved to be a significant influence on the principalship as the educational community began to recognize the importance of the position itself, not to mention the effectiveness of the individuals serving in that role as people felt that leadership needed to be centralized. Even university-based educators, by creating special courses of study to prepare educational leaders, began to contribute to the thought process that principals were professionals (Tyack and Hansot, 1982). An image of what the principalship should look like began to be envisioned by teachers and the central office alike.

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an economic surge of large scale businesses catapulted the need to do a better job of effectively managing and leading administrative organizations, not excluding the world of education (NCPEA, 2011). This evolution of administrative, management, and leadership frameworks challenged the conventional thinking of the past.

Educator tasks now began to mirror the corporate world, focusing on accounting procedures, budget issues, public relations, and annual reports (Campbell, et al., 1987). In his research, Shoemaker (2010) recalls how Tyack and Hansot (1982) pointed out how administration in the 1930s focused on practical issues within the realm of fiscal and business administration, personnel, and building and equipment management.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s the education administration field in its attempt to become more theory driven began to embrace a rational scientific method. From this, the belief and expectation grew that every school administrator should be grounded in the science and theory of administration. “With the emergence of theory based research influenced by the social and behavioral sciences in the 1950’s, programs required change” (Iannacone, 1976, p. 22).

The training of educational administrators in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was viewed as a “three-way framework of practice, professional knowledge, and academic scholarship” (Sharma, 2009, p. 55). The administrative profession now faced the problem of finding a balance within preparation programs. “The last fifty years have seen one long conversation circling around relevance, knowledge base, research, theory development, scholarly activity, and relevance” (Sharma, 2009, p. 55).

The principal’s role continued to evolve during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, accompanied by the attempts to reform preparation programs with the creation of university-based administration training courses (Shoemaker, 2010). This view was shared by Shoemaker (2010) when he describes the “increased links between professionals from different locations and disciplines. The centralization of society was joined with the increasingly large role played by the United States on the international stage, rapid advances in technology, and the development of school systems which were becoming more complex and crowded.” Leaders in the field of

education have continued to call for reform in leadership programs. As the states deregulated provisions for leadership preparation, the doors began to open up for new emerging principals. Researchers such as Korach (2005) and Fullan (2008) described the changes as political challenges calling for new kinds of learning and communication methods if schools were to achieve their improvement and accountability goals (Kirk, 2010).

The 1960s left an impact on education marked by the tragic assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Vietnam War. The school principal of the 1960s was evaluated on the performance or quality of performance of his/her students as measured by standardized tests (Beck & Murphy, 1993). It was also believed the performance of the teachers was directly related to the leadership style of the principal.

As described by Shoemaker (2010), the role of the principal was also shaped by numerous events that occurred in the 1960's, such as the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the 1954 Civil Rights Movement, and the Coleman Report in 1966. The Coleman Report was a study conducted by James Coleman, a renowned American sociologist, theorist, and empirical researcher, indicating that family backgrounds in relation to socioeconomic status were strong indicators of academic success (Kowalski & Reitzug, 1993). These events seemed to mark a period when the role of the principal transitioned from being primarily a manager to one that included being an instructional leader. The 1960s and '70s saw numerous upheavals which directly affected public schools as teachers became more militant battling for and against civil rights, community control over schools, anti-poverty programs, and the end of the Vietnam War (Only a teacher, n.d.). Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor of education, stated, "We need to move now to a professional approach, which holds people accountable for doing what's good for kids, for teaching and learning. That requires change both

on the part of the unions and on the part of school boards, administrators and parents, and community participants in the process as well.”

The 1960s reshaped the role of public education, becoming front-page news as the battleground in the War on Poverty. Following the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, major reforms in public education began to develop. Some of these reforms included desegregation, federal aid to schools, programs aimed at neglected populations, legislation guaranteeing racial and sexual equality, new entitlements for handicapped pupils, state laws demanding accountability, and minimum standards for promotion and graduation (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). In spite of the Civil Rights Act, some schools still refused to allow blacks the opportunity to attend traditionally white schools. In fact, the Office of Education drew up desegregation deadlines to comply with the act, and the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 provided the office with the possibility of withholding funds from districts that were noncompliant.

The Civil Rights Act enabled the Department of Justice to take segregated districts to court (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 gave leverage to women in gaining equal access in education. This was an effort to remove gender bias and challenge occupational discrimination. With these changes in education created by school reform, the late 1960s found school administrators in an environment far different from what they had known in the early 1950s. Now they had become bureaucratic leaders.

According to Beck and Murphy (1993), the 1970s saw the principals' role continue to evolve as the educational administration literature began calling for principals to be more responsible for developing positive relationships among staff and students. “In general, the



metaphors embedded in discussion of these relationships underscore the belief that principals are expected to relate to superintendents, teachers and students in ways consistent with a defined chain of command and hierarchy of status” (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p.106). Receiving some attention in the literature, community involvement began to play a role in the educational process. Building principals were expected to recognize the importance of creating harmony between the school and community by create alliances that would improve upon their professional success and acceptance by the community at large. Beck and Murphy (1993) view the principalship as a job that can be learned; they go on to state that principals act in accordance with directives from their immediate supervisors, not some spiritual idea or patriotic belief. “Theory is to be tested and used by administrators, and its usefulness and their effectiveness are to be judged according to the kinds of products produced” (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 113).

Humanistic trends continued into the 1980s as the directional flow of influence shifted. The community—including politicians, businesspersons, and academics in college and universities—reached into the schools in an effort to guide and shape the educational process (Beck & Murphy, 1993). Now, the principal is expected to serve as an instructional leader, guiding both teachers and students through the learning process. The principal of the 1980s was also asked to be visionary, a facilitator of personal and professional development, and instrumental in developing and communicating his or her institution as an ideal school. Beyond these expectations lies the responsibility of the principal to function as a change agent. Beck and Murphy (1993) agree with and reference the work of Murphy, Hallinger, Weil, and Mitman (1983), stating that principals are to “intervene” directly and constantly to ensure priorities are focused upon the central mission of the school. “It suggests that leading in the instructional arena allows and even mandates that principals become actively involved in the classrooms.”

In this decade of reform, principals were now encouraged to re-enter the classrooms, not necessarily as teachers of children, but as teachers of teachers and as overseers and directors of the teaching/learning experience (Beck & Murphy, 1983). The role of instructional leader is a relatively new concept that emerged in the early 1980's, influenced largely by research that found effective schools generally had principals that stressed the importance of leadership in this area (Brookover & Lezotte, 1982). "If principals are to take the role of instructional leaders seriously, they will have to free themselves from bureaucratic tasks and focus their efforts toward improving teaching and learning" (Phillips, 2010). Building administrators should get back into the classroom in order to get in touch with the fundamental functions of the school, and most importantly, the teaching and learning process (Beck & Murphy, 1983). The instructional leader of the 1980's was presented as an efficient, task-oriented, top-down manager focused on curriculum and instruction rather than buildings and budgets (Lashway, 2002).

In the early 1990s the principalship continued to be shaped by larger social and historical forces. As America's position as the leader of productivity and technical inventions was challenged by countries such as Japan, West Germany, and France, the focus quickly became the American school system and leaders who guided them. Friedman (2005) states that jobs traditionally performed in the United States were now being outsourced to China, Russia, and India. America's ability to compete in the world market was quickly eroding. Beck and Murphy (1993) state the results from the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) report that it did not take long for reformers to draw a connection between a stagnant economy and a deteriorating education system.

With the definition of success changing to higher levels of student achievement being expected and the demographics of America changing, coupled with hard economic times, it was

quite obvious educational reform was needed. To help establish a basis for change, the expectations for principals continued to focus upon their being instructional leaders, a focus which continues to the present.

With the principal's role increasingly being defined in terms of instructional leadership, a concept that first surfaced in the 1980s, the ideal instructional leader in the 1990s was portrayed differently. The ideal instructional leader was described as democratic and community-minded, building consensus around a vision rooted in agreed-upon standards for student learning, with a commitment to be accountable for results (Lashway, 2002).

President George W. Bush, along with several governors from around the country, set out to develop a set of goals that would articulate a national vision for public school improvement. The results were a set of educational objectives known as "Goals 2000." The goals established a framework in which to identify world-class academic standards, measure student progress, and provide the support that students may need to meet the standards. The message was clear; expectations and increased accountability for public schools were of significant importance.

The "Goals 2000" initiative was viewed by many as the predecessor to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) that became law on January 8, 2002. Introduced by the Bush administration, its purpose was to raise achievement and close achievement gaps. NCLB supports standards-based education reform which is based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual student outcomes. The act requires states to develop assessments in basic skills to be given to all students in certain grades, if those states are to receive federal funding for schools. The act does not assert a national achievement standard; standards are set by each individual state (United States Department of Education, 2002).

If a school is to succeed in achieving the goal of 100% of all students becoming proficient on the mandated state assessments by the year 2014, as stated in NCLB, it is imperative the building principal focus on becoming more involved with classroom instruction.

With such lofty expectations, educators for the past ten years have been sounding the alarm about NCLB's approach to raising student achievement. The current U.S. President, Barack Obama, has announced a plan to provide relief to states from many of No Child Left Behind's more onerous provisions. According to the National Education Association (2011), states can apply for waivers associated with Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by means of timelines, school improvement, and accountability requirements. They can also request flexibility in using federal education funds in the way that best meets their needs. These provisions could help set more realistic goals for schools while still improving academic standards and ensuring success for every student.

The principals' role became more defined during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, highlighting a principal who focuses upon managing a safe school building, managing bus schedules, developing master schedules, ordering books and supplies, enforcing district and school policies, and performing managerial tasks. It doesn't emphasize the importance of getting more involved with classroom instruction. Aspiring principals might ask, what can 21<sup>st</sup> century principals do to give themselves the opportunity to get more involved with classroom instruction?

### **Expectations for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will require the predominant role of the principal to be defined in terms of instructional leadership (Green, 2010). As instructional leader, the principal will be required to focus on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision-making, and accountability. Within the role of instructional leader lies the key

responsibility of leading the process of evaluation, reflection, feedback, and measurement, which are all components of the teaching and learning process.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century school leader is an individual with a vision for the future who can articulate that vision with all stakeholders (Green, 2010). This definition supports the belief that school leaders are instructional leaders responsible for developing and supporting a collaborative school culture focused on teaching and learning (Green, 2010). The question then becomes, how can a principal fulfill this new mandatory role as instructional leader?

### **Instructional Leadership**

Recent research studies reveal that the average principal spends around 18 percent of his or her time in area of instruction and curriculum and three percent on teacher evaluations. This means on average the principal spends about 80 minutes a week on teacher evaluation, about three minutes per teacher per week (Murphy, Hallinger, & Heck, 2013). If principals rarely have the opportunity to provide instructional guidance within the classroom, how can they provide appropriate instructional guidance for teachers and be viewed by their peers as instructional leaders? Historically, the principalship has struggled with whether the principal is an instructional leader, building manager, and a member of a school family of professional educators or a mid-level management representative of the central administration (Smith & Andrews, 1989). The principalship involves the leadership of learning, a critical player who gives directions and focus to a school to bring about student learning and achievement (Matthews & Crow, 2003). Bennis and Nanus (1985) note there are more than 350 definitions of leadership recorded in the literature. While the term leadership has hundreds of varying definitions within different organizations, the role of instructional leader by school leaders is a concept that emerged in the early 1980s.

Examining the definition of leadership to understand the purpose of principal leadership, Rost (1991) defines leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 102). With this definition of leadership serving as the foundation of this study, the message is clear: instructional leadership involves the intention to change and reform schools in ways that improve teaching and learning for all students. “Essential in the concept of an instructional leader is the notion that learning should be given top priority while everything else revolves around the enhancement of learning” (Phillips, 2010).

Tichy (1997), Sorcher and Brant (2002), and Goleman, Boyatziz and McKee (2004) demonstrate that effective leadership from different perspectives in education, business, government and non-profit organizations embraces the concept that leadership is envisioning a mission, developing a strategy, inspiring people, and changing culture (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010, p. 35) Principals are not only learners themselves; they are also leaders of learning, which includes examining the learning environment and influencing reform that encourages school improvement in learning (Matthews & Crow, 2003). As the role of the principal evolved throughout the years, one of the reasons to free principals from their teaching assignments was so that they could devote more time to instructional supervision. Those who have examined the role of the principal as building manager versus instructional leader suggest that the overall role orientation is related to the way principals perceive their time commitments and the way they actually spend their time (Smith & Andrews, 2003). “Instructional leadership refers to the knowledge and skills principals possess to effectively support the academic program” (Grigsby, Schumacher, Decman, Simieou, 2010).

During the educational reform movements of the 1980s, the assumption was that the principal was in the best position to be the instructional leader and should be directly involved with teachers in improving instruction, creating a learning climate in the school, and facilitating development of the curriculum (Matthews & Crow, 2003, p. 32). Research suggested that effective schools were generally led by a principal who stressed instructional leadership; principals were to understand the school environment first, which included teachers and students, and then diagnose what was appropriate instructional leadership.

Often dictated by the development of education administration theory, attention to instructional leadership wavered in the first half of 1990s as discussions of school-based management and facilitative leadership took center stage (Lashway, 2002). This was only temporary as the passing of NCLB placed the focus back on the need for schools to be accountable and principals to be able to provide evidence of reported success, thus the focus returned to instructional leadership. These societal pressures of accountability and equity that emphasize learning for all students can be seen in the focus of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) 2001, National Association of Elementary School Principals 2001, and Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000.

Since the adoption of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), principals are spending significant amounts of time on the development of effective classroom teachers (Varrati & Smith, 2008). The mandates of NCLB require every student to reach a proficient level of achievement by the year 2014 in all testing areas. What this does is charge the principal with a greater responsibility to monitor teachers' instruction, always striving to improve their practice. Although the principal may not have specific knowledge of every curricular area taught, the expectation is that his/her knowledge should at least embrace the general trends in each subject area (Smith & Andrews,

1989). Dr. Kermit Buckner states, “Principal qualifications have been subject of debate during the 1980s and 1990s as pressure has increased to make schools more accountable for student achievement under NCLB” (as cited in Sergiovanni, 2001).

Buckner also states, “The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) took an active role in identifying principal qualifications in the 1980s through the creation of an assessment process. Then in the mid-1990s the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) decided to review principal qualifications” (as cited in Sergiovanni, 2001). The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards have recently been developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA) to help strengthen preparation programs in school leadership for aspiring administrators (Van Meter & Murphy, 1997).

Legislation dictates the level of accountability schools face for the performance of their students on national and state assessments, thus causing the role of the principal to change. Educational literature is indicating that now is the time to reevaluate the role of building-level administrators, who currently sit in the middle as state and local policymakers try to balance the views of *empowerment* of select groups and the *restructuring* of education.

The principal is a key player promoting student learning. How we define leadership of the school principal seems to be determined by test scores. Persell and Cookson (1982) reported the following behaviors to be associated with strong instructionally driven principals:

- (a) demonstrating a commitment to academic goals, (b) creating a climate of high expectations, (c) functioning as an instructional leader, (d) being a forceful and dynamic leader, (e) consulting effectively with others, (f) creating order and discipline, (g) marshaling resources, (h) using time well, and (i) evaluating results.



A study conducted by Krajewski in 1978 found that principals placed the highest value on instructional leadership activities, such as supervision of instruction, curriculum development, and staff development, and the lowest value on management functions, including community relations, discipline, and other pupil services. Ironically, these same principals spent less time on instructional improvement activities than they did on routine management functions. According to Boleman and Deal (1991), school leaders may spend more of their time managing than leading, leaving the principal's determination of success to lie somewhere between the balance of being a manager and leader simultaneously. Fullan (1991) and Phillips (2010) both agree that successful principals need to establish synergy within their role as manager-administrator and instructional leader.

Continuing study on leadership by the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) group reports there is a significant, positive correlation between effective school leadership and student achievement. The report also indicated that instructional leadership matters the most, although other key areas of principal behavior, such as high visibility in the community, are of great importance. However, a principal's focus on instruction, curriculum, and assessment is most important in terms of promoting student achievement (Smith & Andrews, 1989).

Phillips (2010) suggests that being effective instructional leaders involves setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans and evaluating teachers. Blasé and Blasé (2000) defined instructional leadership as “exhibiting specific behaviors, such as making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling effective instruction, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional development opportunities,

and giving praise for effective teaching” (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010). Teacher perceptions can also help to understand how principals’ instructional leadership impacts classroom instruction.

Alig-Mielcarek (2003) conducted a study of teachers’ perceptions about characteristics of school principals that influence teachers’ classroom instruction. She concluded that the behaviors associated with instructional leadership positively influence classroom instruction. “When instructional leaders monitor and provide feedback on the teaching and learning processes, there were increases in teacher reflection and relatively informed instructional behaviors, a rise in implementing new ideas, greater variety in teaching strategies, more response to student diversity, and more discretion to make changes.”

Researchers such as Phillips (2010), Fullan (1991), and Whitaker (2003) understand the importance of instructional leadership and agree that principals need to know what is occurring in the classroom. Principals need to work closely with both teachers and students for a true appreciation of what transpires in the classrooms, which produces a greater tendency for principals to address any and all instructional issues efficiently. Shoemaker (2010) suggests that “a teaching principal who works closely with students can develop teaching techniques and methods for understanding teacher perspectives and can use that knowledge as a basis for making curricular decisions.” Additional research conducted by Murphy, Hallinger, and Heck (2013) concluded that teachers are influenced by those they perceive as credible sources of knowledge on instructional issues, especially those with content-based knowledge. This is important to note when discussing the instructional gap that sometimes exists between administrators and teachers.

To achieve credibility as an instructional leader, the building principal should become a practicing teacher, yet Lare (1995) and Kelly-Brockel (1998) state that principals teaching as part

of their work day is not a common practice. In order for this to change, Phillips (2010) suggests that principals will have to free themselves from bureaucratic tasks and focus their efforts on improving teaching and learning. The task of being an instructional leader is both complex and multidimensional, requiring the principal to possess interpersonal, planning, instructional, and research and evaluation skills (Phillips, 2010, p.4).

As school leadership has received increased attention, so has the role of the principal. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) stated, “Every educational reform report of the last decade concludes that the United States cannot have excellent schools without excellent leaders. A key leverage point for meeting major challenges facing the nation’s schools, therefore, is effective leadership” (NPBEA, 2002, p.2). Educational leadership remains a dominant expectation for principals as the emphasis once again shifts to principals being instructional leaders. Instructional leaders are often described as those who make learning a priority for all students, reflect upon their practice, and lead the initiative for educational reform. Authors of a 2004 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) study concurred with the need for strong instructional leaders, finding that principal leadership accounts for 20% of a school’s impact on student achievement.

By the 1920s, with the passage of compulsory education laws, American education had become an enormous enterprise. Big business philosophy of scientific management with emphasis on efficiency and measurement took precedence while the principal was consumed with budgeting and data management duties. Before the principalship was even a century old, it had already acquired the roles of instructional leader and building manager, and these roles continue to coexist, sometimes in conflict with each other.

## **Role of the Principal as Instructional Leader**

One possible approach that is worth considering is having the instructional leader of the building (principal) become an instructor (teacher). As cited in Marks and Printy, 2003, instructional leadership focuses on leadership functions directly related to teaching and learning (Murphy, 1988). In a broader view, instructional leadership also refers to all other functions that contribute to student learning, including managerial behaviors (Donmoyer & Wagstaff, 1990; Murphy, 1988). In reality, instructional leadership encompasses everything a principal does during the day to support the achievement of students and the ability of teachers to teach (Sebring & Bryk, 2000). Therefore, principals are responsible for informing teachers about new educational strategies, technologies, and tools that improve instruction.

Much has been written in the literature concerning the importance of instructional leadership responsibilities of the principal.

As cited in Marks and Printy, 2003, Murphy (1990) noted that principals in productive schools where the quality of teaching and learning was strong demonstrated instructional leadership both directly and indirectly. Although these principals practiced a conventional rather than a shared form of instructional leadership, they emphasized four sets of activities with implications for instruction: (a) developing the school mission and goals; (b) coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (c) promoting a climate for learning; and (d) creating a supportive work environment (Murphy, 1990).

These types of activities support and maintain the focus on why the school exists: to help all students learn (Blasé, Blasé, & Phillips, 2010; Smylie, 2010).

Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) defined six dimensions critical to strong instructional leadership. They include identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, providing individual support, providing intellectual stimulation, providing an appropriate model, and expecting high performance. Various models of instructional leadership have been formulated and studied, but how many of them provide principals the opportunity to gain credibility in the classroom by teaching to strengthen their positions as instructional leaders?

In order to implement thriving programs within their schools, principals will need to develop an array of leadership strategies. One strategy in particular, teaching principals, has the ability to create opportunities for principals and teachers to collaborate and discuss instructional strategies to increase student achievement (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). “Teaching principals are perceived to be more involved in instructional leadership than their non-teaching peers, by virtue of the fact that they are intimately involved at the classroom level” (Williamson & Galton, 1998; Vulliamy & Webb, 1995).

Many states require that teachers spend three to five years in the classroom before being eligible to move into a leadership position. Some teachers meet this minimum threshold and then move on; the more common trend is to spend a decade or more as a teacher prior to moving exclusively into a leadership role (Fiore & Curtin, 1997). The teaching experience that a future principal receives prior to entering administration is beneficial for understanding the trials and tribulations that teachers experience on a daily basis.

Principals are viewed as having the greatest power to transform or maintain the climate and culture of a school. They have the ability to make improvements in instruction a top priority and to implement steps to bring that vision to realization. Today, principals should consider embracing instructional leadership opportunities that involve creating a strong school culture,

enabling teachers to collaborate with principals in redesigning the instructional program so that all students can learn.

The culture of a building must have the continual acceptance of the principal's philosophy to continually train and mentor staff, so that together they can accomplish the goal of improving student performance. Instructional leadership practices for today's principals are facilitated through human interaction (Green, 2010). Principals returning to the classroom to teach could positively influence the culture of a building by fostering a trusting, cooperative, and open environment, generating higher levels of satisfaction, cohesion around school goals, and commitment among the faculty.

Teaching principals could initiate a change in the culture of any building or district. Green (2010) has identified four critical components that leaders can use to bring about sustained change. When the program *Administrators with Class* was implemented four dimensions described by Green can be associated with how the superintendent established a cultural shift in his district, creating an opportunity for his building-level principals to be more involved in classroom instruction.

The Four Dimensions are defined as:

- Understanding Self and Others--A school leader's in-depth understanding of his/her own beliefs, values, and personal qualities and the beliefs, values, and personal qualities of the individuals whom they lead (Green, 2010, p. 25).
- Understanding the Complexity of Organizational Life--A school leader's ability to recognize that schools are multifaceted organizations, and this understanding addresses the school's structure, climate, and culture (Green, 2010, p. 64).

- Building Bridges through Relationships--A school leader's ability to establish and nurture relationships that include, but are not limited to, the following: Principal/Teacher, Teacher/Teacher, Teacher/Student, and School/Community (Green, 2010, p. 130).
- Engaging in Leadership Best Practices--A school leader's ability to identify and implement programs, activities, or behaviors that are research-based and have proven to generate specific outcomes in a variety of settings (Green, 2010, p. 153).

Utilizing these four dimensions of principal leadership to implement the act of teaching principals can have a positive impact on a school's culture. It is important to remember that to sustain change, regardless of an individual's leadership style, universal characteristics appear when considering the qualities of effective leaders: sense of vision, ability to set goals and plan, personal charisma, strong communication skills (particularly verbal and negotiation abilities), strong sense of self and personal convictions, relationship and empathy skills, and the ability to motivate and influence others (Sample, 2002).

“Good principals must be viewed as guides and coaches, leaders who establish high expectations and common direction ... [they] regularly observe classrooms, guide lesson planning, create common planning time, monitor student learning, collect data, and use the results to influence plans” (Young, 2004, p. 51). Blasé and Blasé (2000) suggest that learning should be the top priority of an instructional leader with everything else centered on the enhancement of learning. In other words, to have credibility as an instructional leader, the principal should also be a practicing teacher.

It is quite certain that the position of the principal will continue to expand and evolve through the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. As accountability for improved student performance increases, the necessity for principals to re-enter the classroom to teach and become more involved with instruction becomes more apparent.

### **Studies of Teaching Principals**

Recently the demand has been for principals to be instructional leaders as well as managers. Only with the demand for principals to fill their role as instructional leaders has the notion of teaching principals become an area of interest, consequently making it difficult to find literature on the topic. There is limited recognition of the unique challenges faced by teaching principals who take on the dual roles of school management and classroom teaching. Moreover, it is difficult to find literature on teaching principals in larger public school settings. More research has been done on teaching principals in smaller schools, where the model of teaching principals is more common.

A mixed-method research design was developed by Gamage (1998) exploring current issues, challenges, and concerns of principals who teach every day in three school systems in New South Wales, Australia. In-depth interviews of teaching principals were conducted from three entities: State, Catholic, and Seventh-Day Adventist schools.

The study revealed that “while teaching principals face many challenges, there are many facets of their role that they found enjoyable.” The teaching principals have the privilege of being more involved with the community and its members. The most rewarding aspect of their role was simply being in class teaching. Many full-time principals regret having to leave the classroom behind (Lyall, 1993; McPake, 1998), whereas teaching principals have the best of both worlds.



Along with the benefits experienced by teaching principals, challenges were also reported. Teaching principals found it difficult to balance the demands of teaching and management responsibilities since the introduction of school-based management and the increase in accountability requirements. The difficulty comes with striking a balance between the responsibilities of teaching a class and effectively managing a building, knowing that parents and community members will judge them based upon student progress, and authorities will continue hand them a growing list of accountability requirements. Because teaching principals have increased their workload to include management responsibilities, their ability to function as instructional leaders are compromised.

Principals being teachers is rare, which is why it is difficult to find studies on the topic. To find additional literature on teaching principals, one might try looking in private school literature. Here one finds actual stories and experiences from administrators/headmasters who chose to teach and manage a building simultaneously. The anecdotal evidence on teaching principals provides us with particular instances of this phenomenon. The personal experience of teaching principals is a reminder of the strong traditions in smaller private schools. In some cases principals were merely fulfilling small-school expectations, but more importantly, they were keeping in touch with instructional practices.

In his article “From Head of School to Classroom Teacher,” Richard Parker speaks of his experience being a teaching principal. For 12 years, from 1990 to 2002, Parker was the headmaster of Chestnut Hill Academy, an independent school located in Pennsylvania. Prior to that time, he worked at Proctor Academy in New Hampshire for 13 years, the last seven as an assistant head and dean of students. When he began as a headmaster, he continued to teach one section of English each semester. He appreciated the chance to teach; in fact, he enjoyed

teaching so much that one day he realized he found teaching more rewarding than managing a building. He quickly realized that 90 percent of his time was devoted to being a manager, yet he desired to be working more with students.

After 19 years in administration, Richard Parker is back in the classroom teaching English at Holderness School in New Hampshire. He admits that he has much to learn about his subject area and the art of teaching, but he speaks highly of the life experiences he brings to the classroom. He quickly realized that he was spending the same number of hours preparing for lessons as had dedicated to running a school. Parker still considers himself to be in a leadership role as students, parents, colleagues, and the current head of the school seek him for advice. In some ways he is still using his experiences as headmaster but without the burden of final responsibility (Parker, 2006). His message isn't about accountability or student and teacher performance; it is about relationships with students, parents, faculty and staff; it is about teaching. The act of being a teaching principal afforded him the opportunity to look at his life differently, listen to his inner voice, and take on a new adventure.

In contrast to the teaching principal model in smaller private schools, a number of professionals in the field have researched teaching principals within larger sectors of public education, including Flatt (1987), Lare (1995), Kelley-Brockel (1988), and Shoemaker (2010).

Today, most building administrators seek a balance in their role between manager and instructional leader with a good portion of their time still spent functioning primarily as managers. Fittingly, Lare (1995), Kelley-Brockel (1998), and Shoemaker (2010) all state that possible solutions to help to transition managing principals to instructional leaders is for them to take on the responsibility of teaching. An overall description of each study with measured results and future recommendations will be discussed in the following sections.

Flatt (1987) as cited in Shoemaker 2010 completed the earliest research on the topic of the teaching principal. She examined the task behavior of five elementary school principals in the state of Tennessee who taught for a portion of their school day. Having student populations of 300 or less, the five principals had to teach at least 15% and no more that 65% of the time, along with supervising no fewer than five teachers. Flatt's 1987 study aimed to collect data and answer the following four questions:

1. How do elementary principals spend their time?
2. What is the content of their work?
3. What similarities and differences can be noted among these principals concerning their observed work behavior?
4. How does the work behavior of teaching principals compare to studies of supervising principals? (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010, p. 39)

The study revealed that the principals experienced frequent interruptions throughout their day. Flatt noted that some interruptions that occurred at the beginning of the day filtered throughout the rest of the day, causing a series of additional interruptions. She called this phenomenon "domino eruptions." Ultimately, the interruptions described in her study did not allow the time that principals needed to reflect, plan, and appraise the effectiveness of the day's activities, all characteristics associated with being an instructional leader.

Flatt (1987) pointed out two advantages of the teaching principal; one was that it helped limit discipline issues, and second, the teaching experience helped the administrators to understand the problems teachers faced on a daily basis. All the principals who participated noted they truly enjoyed their jobs.

The disadvantages cited in Flatt's study revolved around the disruptions often faced, limiting consistency in completing administrative and teaching tasks. The act of juggling to balance administrative and teaching responsibilities could be demanding, yet she notes the same disadvantages could be associated with the job of a purely administrative principal.

Developing the study of teaching principals even further, Lare's (1995) qualitative study included male and female principals and a central office administrator. Before being asked to participate in Lare's study, the subjects were not currently teaching in any capacity. His study would serve as a first-time experience of teaching for the volunteer principals. As cited in Shoemaker 2010, Lare's purpose was to "study the impact of a teaching building administrator upon faculty/administrator relationships, student/administrator relationships, and administrator job satisfaction." Lare's 1995 study aimed to collect data based upon the following research questions:

1. With respect to the faculty, will their perceptions of the administrator change? In what ways?
2. Will the perception of the students taught by the principal change? If so, in what ways?
3. Will the perceptions of students not taught by the principal change? If so, in what ways?
4. With respect to the administrator, will his/her perceptions of faculty, students, fellow administrators, staff, and parents change? In what ways?
5. How will the administrator's sense of job satisfaction change as a result of his/her participation in the project? (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010, p. 41)

This study conducted by Lare (1995) included three elementary principals, one middle school assistant principal, and two high school principals. Lare, serving as an assistant superintendent at the time, also participated in the study. Each participant agreed to teach at least 40 minutes a day four times a week for six months while also meeting seven times as a group to discuss the progress of the study. In all, seven distinctive cases emerged, each collecting data from teachers and students through interviews, observations, journals, videotapes, field notes, and questionnaires.

All seven administrators were motivated to participate in this study by their internal drive to be recognized as solid instructional leaders by modeling effective instructional practice. Each participating administrator felt strongly about the importance of being visible throughout the day and being actively engaged throughout the learning process. Collaboration and shared decision-making were also notable administrative styles shared by the participants.

Lare's (1995) study set out to reveal what distinctive changes would take place in schools where principals re-entered the classroom to teach. His study and collection led to four critical discoveries.

1. Many of the teachers suggested that this concept went against the traditional role of the principal while making references to increased credibility (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010, p. 43).
2. A strong bond grew between the students the administrators taught compared to the students the administrators did not teach. This type of behavior is supported by Grady (1990), McRobbie (1990), Lare (1995), and Marshall (1993) (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010, p. 43).

3. Administrators experienced conflicts between their administrative and teaching responsibilities similar to the participants in Flatt's (1987) study. Six of the seven participants were able to find solutions to the conflicts, while one was not. An inference taken from this discovery seemed that job satisfaction rested upon the principal's ability to find solutions for the conflicts (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010, p. 43).
4. The participants experienced satisfaction through both teaching and administrative duties and stated that the teaching component enhanced their administrative responsibilities (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010, p. 44).

Additional observation notes from Lare's (1995) study reference that teachers generally support the concept of administrators returning to the classroom because it demonstrates that the principal is modeling the behavior of an instructional leader by placing an emphasis on the teaching/learning process. An inference that can be safely made is that teachers want to be appreciated by everyone involved in the education process including colleagues, parents, students, and administrators. His study supported this idealism as teachers wanted administrators to be aware of the problems they faced during their scheduled hours of instruction. Also noted from this study, as mentioned by some of the participants, included new channels of communication among colleagues, providing the opportunity to share failures as well as suggestions on how the lessons could be improved. This improved communication was made possible because teachers were periodically freed up to observe other colleagues while the administrator of record was teaching.

The disadvantages cited in Lare's (1995) study were somewhat similar to those of Flatt's (1987), as a small number of participants from a specific location were studied. Lare, being the

primary researcher and a participant himself, could have steered the participants, responses one way or the other. Lare (1995) mentions a limitation concerning the length of time the administrators performed the teaching principal task. The time allotted for the study (six months) would not include all of the challenges faced by a principal during an entire school year. Although his study revealed that the teachers viewed their principals as exceptional, he questioned whether the results would differ if the participating principals were viewed as incompetent administrators/teachers.

Lare's (1995) study revealed an overall positive experience shared by administrators and teachers, causing Kelley-Brockel (1998) to question why the administrators in Lare's study stopped teaching once his study was completed. Kelley-Brockel (1998) utilized a survey research methodology titled "Principals in Public Education". Identified in the research were also factors that support or hinder teaching and non-teaching principals. As cited in Shoemaker, 2010, the study aimed to collect data based upon the following research questions:

1. What proportion of building administrators in public education are teaching principals?
2. What are the demographics characteristics of teaching principals?
3. What reasons are cited for teaching by teaching principals?
4. What are the perceived drawbacks and obstacles to being a teaching principal?
5. What population of non-teaching principals would consider becoming teaching principals?
6. What are the demographic characteristics of non-teaching principals?
7. What conditions would encourage non-teaching principals to return to the classroom to teach (Shoemaker, 2010, p. 46).

The survey “was sent to a random sample that consisted of 1,800 elementary, middle/junior high, senior high, and combined K-8 and K-12 public school principals, selected in a mathematical pattern calculated by Market Data Retrieval” by means of computer. The gender breakdown consisted of “747 female principals and 1,053 male principals.” Of those receiving the survey questionnaire, 849 principals returned it. The population chosen “for Kelley-Brockel’s (1998) study all currently held the official title of principal in the public school education system” (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010).

The data collected was “entered into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) statistical software using a .05 level of probability to determine the significance.” Verifying the survey instrument used for the study was the Delphi Technique (Weaver, 1971). “The survey instrument used included a total of 60 items identifying three different groups of principals. The three groups consisted of non-teaching principals, current non-teaching principals (who at one time in their careers were teaching principals), and teaching principals. Teaching principals were asked to complete 39 items on the survey, while the non-teaching principals were asked to complete 18 items” (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010). Included in the demographic information of both non-teaching and teaching principals were years of experience, gender, geographic locations, responses by school level, position held, grade distribution, and years serving as a principal.

Ninety-five point two percent of the respondents (808 of the 849) “were non-teaching principals, of whom 20.6% had been teaching principals.” What would determine one of their respondents from becoming a teaching principal and would their level of interest in teaching increase if they would gain credibility as an instructional leader? They were also asked if they currently knew anyone who was a teaching principal. This was the main reason they chose to



become non-teaching principals, yet 60.1% would consider returning to the status of teaching principal if the circumstances were right. Increased credibility as an instructional leader was another reason 57.2% of the non-teaching principals would consider becoming teaching principals.

Roadblocks preventing principals from becoming teaching principals were identified in the survey as well as solutions, including “having fewer administrative duties, increased personnel assistance in the office, and increased support from their faculty and superintendent” (cited by Shoemaker, 2010).

The teaching principals surveyed, representing 4.8% (41 out of the 849 returned surveys), focused “on obstacles that make the role of a teaching principal difficult, the benefits from being a teaching principal, and the drawbacks associated with being a teaching principal.”

Supplementary questions included in the survey incorporated “years spent as a teaching principal, reason for being a teaching principal, number of periods taught along with subject(s) taught, and length of each period taught” (cited in Shoemaker, 2010). Demographics for the teaching principals in this survey were from the elementary level located in western rural areas of the United States. Most of the teaching principals who participated indicated they were teaching principals for one to three years.

Overall, the teaching principals indicated having a positive experience teaching while also serving in the capacity of an administrator and would consider doing so in the future. The teaching principals also indicated that they were given the role of teaching principal, or it was assigned as a component of their contract.

When looking at the data in Kelley-Brockel’s study, several benefits, drawbacks, and obstacles can be noted. Benefits included getting to know the students better, becoming more

familiar with the demands of the classroom, and enhanced credibility with the students, faculty, parents, school board, and superintendent. Modeling good instructional techniques and increased job satisfaction were also noted. The number one obstacle described by Kelley-Brockel (1998) facing teaching principals was dealing with time constraints. Anticipated obstacles such as student population, financial incentives, and/or expectations of the school board or superintendent were not identified as obstacles. Drawbacks included taking on too many responsibilities and feeling overwhelmed, leading to burnout. This was felt by almost half of the teaching principals.

Research indicates the idea of a principal teaching is not a new concept; Kelley-Brockel's (1998) research supports the concept of a teaching principal by showing that the experience a principal receives from teaching strengthens his status as an instructional leader. She made eight recommendations to promote the concept of a teaching principal that should be addressed by educators, school boards, and school communities. Her recommendations included: (a) make well known the benefits experienced by teaching principals to enhance the jobs of principals in public education (knowing the students better, understanding the demands of the classroom, increased credibility with students, increased job satisfaction, modeling effective teaching strategies, increased credibility with faculty, school board, and community); (b) educate nonteaching principals and central office administrators on the benefits that teaching principals experience by institutions of higher learning, current teaching principals, and central office administrators and by national, state, and local educational organizations; (c) create the right conditions so the non-teaching principal will consider teaching by reducing the managerial tasks required and/or increase office personnel; (d) examine expectations of the institutions and possibly alter their concepts in regard to the importance of principals returning to the classroom

to teach during the school day. (Every effort should be made by school districts to give principals the opportunity to teach and remain principals); (e) give principals more autonomy in the determination of state and local mandated initiatives, along with meeting building-level deadlines; (f) address the issues of attempting to do too much along with burnout which results from unresolved role conflict stress from managing dual roles; (g) increase personnel assistance in the office and support from faculty and the superintendent, and reduce student population to help eliminate barriers for teaching principals, creating greater preparation time and uninterrupted teaching; and (h) educate current and future educational teachers and administrators about the role of a teaching principal and provide a forum for teaching principals to network.

Kelley-Brockel's study affirmed that important benefits are derived from being a teaching principal yet only a small proportion of principals serve in the dual role. She concluded her study by making fifteen recommendations geared towards overcoming obstacles and drawbacks that need to be studied in order to encourage non-teaching principals to return to the classroom or consider the idea in the first place. Some of the recommendations included a variation in the length of time a teaching principal serves in that role, choice of subject matter and time of day, training in principal certification to impact the attitude towards teaching, and the study of leadership styles to ascertain if particular leadership types lend themselves towards assuming the role of teaching principal.

A recent study relevant to the obstacles preventing a principal or assistant principal from being a teacher or co-teaching building-level administrator was conducted by Shoemaker (2010). His study utilized a quantitative and qualitative mixed-methods approach to provide a descriptive analysis of the working elements and the impact of a teaching building-level administrator. His

research described the barriers that could prevent a principal from teaching and identified supports that would help find time in his/her busy schedule to teach on a regular basis. A secondary purpose of the study was to “examine the principals’ beliefs about what effect a teaching principal had on teachers’ perceptions and attitudes of the building-level administrator as an instructional leader.” As evidenced in Shoemaker 2010, over a four-month period, data was collected through the use of surveys sent to K-6 principals in northeastern Pennsylvania, interviews of teaching building-level administrators located in Pennsylvania, and one teaching building-level administrator in the state of Oregon. Shoemaker (2010) study sought to collect data that would answer the three questions:

1. What are the impediments that can be identified which prevent a principal or assistant principal from becoming a teaching or co-teaching building-level administrator?
2. What elements need to be in place that would allow a principal or assistant principal the time to teach or co-teach on a recurring basis?
3. Do building-level administrators believe teachers’ perceptions will change if they teach or co-teach? If so, in what way(s)? Will the act of a building-level administrator teaching impact the perceptions of how he or she is perceived by teachers, parents, and community members?

Shoemaker (2010) discovered that a heavy management workload was the greatest impediment to a building-level administrator teaching, along with a lack of time to plan effective instruction. Two responses from the survey that were not mentioned as impediments and had no impact on building-level administrators’ decision to teach were “the lack of confidence to be an effective teacher” and “the lack of knowledge about effective teaching strategies.”

Shoemaker (2010) discovered that building-level administrators identified “having additional administrative support would help principals and assistant principals who contemplate teaching. A second support that could have a positive influence on their decision to teach was to have a teacher with whom they could exchange roles. Co-teaching was recognized as a third support that would make it possible for a building administrator to teach.”

Shoemaker (2010) was fortunate to have a positive “co-teaching” experience “with a very good teacher who had a similar philosophy about teaching and discipline that Friend (2005) agreed that co-teaching partners need to have the same philosophies, teaching skills, beliefs, and convictions about discipline”. Shoemaker (2010) experienced several interruptions to his teaching while participating in the co-teaching model. Some of the interruptions were regarding trainings and appointments during teaching hours. His solution to the interruptions was to keep the central office informed of his teaching responsibilities, meetings, and training opportunities so certain aspects of his job could be scheduled around his teaching schedule.

Shoemaker (2010) discovered through his quantitative and qualitative data collection that administrators strongly believed positive benefits of teaching existed, such as “Increased credibility about a ‘classroom’ instructional initiative introduced,” “Increased credibility about principal’s ability to lead an effective school,” “Improved relations with the teachers in their school,” and “Increased confidence of the principal as an education leader.” Shoemaker, 2010 indicated the “majority of the building level administrators who participated in his study agreed that a benefit of a teaching principal was improved teacher morale and increased empathy for teacher responsibilities.”

The disadvantage cited in Shoemaker’s (2010) study stated that his research focused only on K-6 elementary principals and assistant principals. More specifically, it did not “determine

the impact of a co-teaching building administrator upon faculty/administrator relationships, student/administrator relationships, teacher job satisfaction, and raising student achievement. Students were not interviewed during the process.” The interviewees expressed a positive influence a teaching principal would have on students. Student perceptions and academic progress were not taken into account.

The research of Lare (1995), Kelley-Brockel (1998), and Shoemaker (2010) indicates that teacher and building-level administrators’ perceptions are influenced in a positive manner when they teach on a daily basis. All three studies indicated that discussions between the teaching principal and teachers increased and were centered on instructional issues, creating a greater empathy for teachers’ workloads. Additionally, both teachers and administrators felt the experience added a sense of credibility to the administrator, and teacher observations became more meaningful, further establishing the principal as an instructional leader.

All four researchers reported the experience for the teaching principal as a positive one, while in some cases it even strengthened the status of that principal as an instructional leader. So why are teaching principals so rare? What is their motivation and vision for teaching? What are the perceptions of their faculty members? Has it affected teacher practice in any way, and has it strengthened the status of the principal as an instructional leader? What is missing from the literature is sufficient evidence that teaching principals are even in demand.

### **Supervisory Strategies to Enhance Instruction**

Instructional leadership is being shared with teachers, and in its most progressive forms it is being cast as coaching, reflection, collegial investigation, study teams, explorations into uncertain matters, and problem solving (Glanz & Neville, 1997). Building-level administrators

participating as teaching principals can become coaches, investigate teaching strategies, and reflect with teachers in a collaborative manner.

Studies conducted on the interaction between principal and teachers have produced some findings regarding the influence of principals' instructional leadership on classroom instruction. Blasé (1987) describes "several instructionally related impacts on teachers' time on task, expectations for student achievement, focus, and problem-solving orientation." A similar study linked principals' leadership with "teachers' consideration and tolerance for students, planning, creativity, and monitoring student learning" (Blasé & Roberts, 1994).

Principals need to emphasize the study of teaching and learning and be willing to model teaching skills. An effective strategy to improve instruction for principals is for them to talk with teachers to promote reflection. Blasé & Blasé suggest the following strategies to "promote reflection and improve instruction: making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling, using inquiry, soliciting advice and opinions, and giving praise." These types of strategies can easily be implemented by principals through a program such as *Administrators with Class*. Provided the opportunity, principals could demonstrate teaching techniques to model good instruction. Modeling best practices followed by a conference with the teacher creates a non-offensive way to improve instructional practice. This can also cultivate a respectful and trusting relationship with the teacher, the theoretical platform of this study.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

It is difficult to find literature pertaining to principals returning to the classroom to teach in any capacity. Four studies researching teaching principals were found: those conducted by Flatt (1987), Lare (1995), Kelley-Brockel (1988), and Shoemaker (2010). Each study focused on

different aspects of the teaching principal, and each was experimental in design rather than an existing K -12 program seeking feedback such as *Administrators with Class*.

As cited in Shoemaker 2010, “Flatt (1987) focused on observing the behavior of five elementary teaching principals in schools located in Tennessee.” Lare (1995) performed a qualitative research study in Pennsylvania that focused on seven administrators in public education. These individuals chose to become teaching principals over a six-month period. His goal was to “determine if a teaching principal would have a direct impact on the perception of faculty, students, and themselves as principals”. The Kelley-Brockel (1998) study set out to identify the number of principals in the United States who served in the dual role of principal and teacher (as cited in Shoemaker, 2010). Shoemaker (2010) focused on identifying the impediments that would prevent a principal from teaching while also examining the elements that may allow a principal to find time to teach on a regular basis.

Each researcher set out to determine a certain aspect of teaching principals, whether it involved task behaviors, perceptions, impediments, or simply identifying the number of principals who served in dual roles; each study was limited in some capacity. Each was limited to the number of participants involved, and the schools in which principals taught varied in size, socioeconomic status, and geographic location. Additionally, the timeline and the time of year in which the studies took place varied. Three of the four studies were conducted prior to NCLB.

A need exists to expand upon the literature of teaching principals by examining the impact of *Administrators with Class* to determine whether the teaching principals improve the relationship between administration and teachers.



## Summary

The researcher believes the implementation of teaching principals allows building-level administrators to model their instructional expectations, increase the confidence of teachers, and gain credibility. This seems logical since historically principals emerged from the teaching ranks and continued teaching while serving as administrators. Well over 100 years ago, when the American educational system was being developed, master teachers were asked to perform managerial duties (Shoemaker, 2010). Later, the principalship became a separate role (Beck and Murphy, 1993; Campbell, Fleming, Newell, & Bennion, 1987). For a return to their traditional role, principals who pride themselves on dealing with strictly managerial duties must become instructional leaders by setting clear goals, allocating resources, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, and evaluating teachers. In essence, the principal must make instruction a top priority.

The literature and research relevant to this study have been presented in this chapter. Educational leadership remains a dominant expectation for principals as the emphasis continues to be on raising student achievement and accountability. The idea of a principal teaching is not a new concept, and returning to that model may have a far-reaching positive impact on American education.

Chapter Three of this study specifically identifies the case studies, using qualitative measures to investigate the impact of the program *Administrators with Class*. Chapter Four will present the analysis of the interviews and surveys collected, while Chapter Five will present a summary of the findings in response to the research questions, the conclusions, and suggestions for further study.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

This case study involved interviewing school administrators and teachers regarding the program *Administrators with Class*. The study set out to discover how principals and teachers perceive the program through an interview process. The interview questions were also designed to determine the impact the program has on teaching strategies/classroom instruction techniques. It examined how the program is assessed and offers a vision for the program's future.

Examining a program such as *Administrators with Class* may provide ideas for principals seeking ways to enhance teaching strategies. Learning about the experiences and perceptions principals are having while teaching should help to determine the effectiveness of the program. The theoretical disposition is centered on the idea that teaching principals can improve their relationships with teachers by working closely with them. Determining the effectiveness of the program can be accomplished by understanding the perceptions of the principals and selected faculty members participating in the program.

#### **Research Problem**

Few studies have explored in detail the concept of building-level administrators returning to the classroom to teach one class per semester. A case study such as *Administrators with Class* offers a model of teaching principals and determines if it can narrow the instructional gap between teachers and administrators. The case study also explores how the program impacts the relationship between administrators and teachers by revealing the perceptions of both.

#### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to interview selected teachers and teaching principals at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. This was done to acquire their perceptions of *Administrators with Class*. The district superintendent was also interviewed to explore the motivation behind offering the program.

### **Research Questions**

This case study is motivated by the following research question: How do principals and teachers perceive the program *Administrators with Class*? An exploration of the perceptions of teaching principals and faculty members working with *Administrators with Class* will assist in contributing to the research on teaching principals. This question leads to other important questions as it relates to the study:

2. What is the superintendent's reason for implementing *Administrators with Class*?
3. What is the principals' perception of *Administrators with Class*?
4. What is the teachers' perception of *Administrators with Class*?
5. Does the program have an impact on classroom instructional techniques?
6. Does the program have an impact on student learning?
7. Does the program impact principal/teacher relationships?
8. Does the program increase the level of trust between administration and teachers?

The strength of this case study will come from obtaining information from multiple sources including interviews and principal reflection notes (explained in more detail below). The intent was to analyze the data to help determine if *Administrators with Class* is a viable option for administrators to consider. For example, why was the program adopted? On what basis are teachers chosen to have an administrator teach their class? Is it a valuable endeavor for the principals and teachers involved? What effect does it have on the relationship between

administration and faculty? The answers to these questions are critical to harness a true understanding of the impact of the program.

### **Research Design/Rationale**

Several methods were considered when deciding on the best research methodology for the study. The methodologies chosen are characteristic of case study in qualitative inquiry (Stake, 1995). In order to acquire a deeper understanding of the perceptions of the program, purposeful sampling was utilized. One superintendent, fourteen teachers, and twenty administrators participated in the study.

A case-study approach allows the researcher to determine whether a program is effective from multiple perspectives (Swanborn, 2010). In this instance, the researcher sought to attain a greater depth of information about the program by including interviews and principal reflection documents (Swanborn, 2010).

A case study provides the best format to identify the perceptions of all participating administrators and determine the impact the program has upon teaching, enhancing relationships, and improving the overall quality of instructional leadership. It also allows the researcher to analyze the described goals of the program. Therefore, the interview questions focus on student learning, quality of instructional leadership, trust capacity, program goals, and the merits of the teaching principal.

The twenty principals from elementary, middle, and high school, along with the fourteen teachers, participated in either face-to-face or telephone interviews based upon the participants' schedules. The interviews revealed how both principals and teachers perceived *Administrators with Class*. These findings are particularly important as they can provide information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

It took approximately four months to collect the necessary data (November 2013-February 2014). Each interview was approximately 30 minutes in length, with follow-up questions posed throughout the interview. The data gathered from the interviews were categorized according to the research question and theory they relate to. All interview responses were immediately transcribed and coded into thematic categories.

Reviewing the collected data helped to reinforce or dismiss the researchers' theoretical perspective that this program has the potential to strengthen the relationship between administrators/teachers along with the perceptions of the program.

### **Nature of the Study**

During the summer of 2012, the researcher made several phone calls and sent emails to over 900 subscribers throughout the state of Pennsylvania through Penn-Link (online communication resource for superintendents) in search of teaching principals. Nearly ninety-eight percent of the responses indicated that building-level principals were not currently teaching in any capacity. Subsequently, the researcher was informed about a district in southeast Pennsylvania with a superintendent who had implemented a program requiring all administrators K -12 to teach twice a year (once per semester) for one half day. In July of 2012, the researcher along with his co-chair visited that district. During this initial meeting with the superintendent it was mutually agreed that this program was a reasonable fit for a case study to explore the effectiveness and impact of the program.

### **Setting**

The case study took place in a large suburban comprehensive school district in southeastern Pennsylvania encompassing grades K through 12. The district is approximately 44 square miles in area and serves approximately 7,705 students in 12 schools: seven elementary,

two middle, one 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade center, one 9<sup>th</sup> grade center, and one high school (10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade). Due to the rapid growth of the school district since 1990, many of the grade configurations in the school buildings have changed a number of times. As of 2009 during a two year time span, the population has continued to increase as the growth was recorded at 8.77%. The ethnic distribution of the student body of the district is 87% white, 4.9% black, 5.1 Asian, 1.9% Hispanic and 0.2% Native American. The current high-school graduation rate is 86.2%.

### **Selection of Participants**

By means of purposeful sampling, 20 teaching principals and 14 teachers whose classes were being taught by their principals, along with the superintendent of the district, were invited to participate in this study during the first semester of the 2013-2014 school year. These participants are the population of this study due to their involvement in *Administrators with Class*. Investigating the principals' and teachers' beliefs may produce results that expand the current literature on teaching principals.

The superintendent expects participation in the program from all of his K-12 administrators. The program requires all administrators to select one teacher per semester whom they will replace by teaching his/her class for one 45-minute period. The study took place in the fall 2013 and spring of 2014 with the permission of the superintendent, the school administration, and approval of the Institutional Review Board of East Stroudsburg University.

### **Instrumentation**

Qualitative Phase - The goal of the qualitative phase is to gain greater insight and understanding of the perceptions teachers and principals have of the *Administrators with Class* program. To elicit this perspective, teaching principals and select teachers from a large suburban school district located in Pennsylvania were interviewed. Using an interview guide that

consisted of pre-determined questions participants were asked to describe their perspective of the program.

### **Research Study Phases**

Two distinct phases were utilized to conduct the research for this case study: a pilot study and the field study. The pilot study took place in a district with rural status, achievement, and graduation rates similar to the district where the actual case study took place. The pilot study district has an administrator and various teachers with experience working with a teaching principal. The participants were chosen based upon their experience and knowledge working with a principal in a co-teaching capacity.

#### **Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted to establish content validity by examining the interview questions/survey by experts in the field. The main objective was to determine the extent to which the statements related to the research questions and the overall clarity of the statements (Lancaster, Dodd & Williamson, 2004).

The superintendent of school district chosen for the pilot study was contacted to request approval to conduct it (see Appendix B). Upon approval from the superintendent, the remaining participants (teaching principal/selected teachers) were invited to participate as a group. The invitation to participate was explained in an email with attached letter (see Appendix J) explaining the purpose and possible impact of the study.

They were informed that their participation was voluntary. The interviews were scheduled at a mutually agreed-upon time and conducted in the principal's office. Prior to participating in the pilot study, the participants were asked to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix G). The discussions were recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

The expert panel consisted of seven participants with experience in research on teaching principals. One superintendent, one administrator, and five teachers participated in interviews to assist in evaluating the interview questions and statements to establish validity. The expert panel also focused on the clarity of the interview questions, administrative procedures, and instructions. Responses were recorded and transcribed, and qualitative coding techniques were used to identify themes.

The expert panel was made aware of the researcher's intent to transcribe the interview responses and immediately begin coding. At this point the researcher looked for trends. The researcher was anticipating the interview format to change based upon the information received as the study progressed. Based upon the literature review and theory, the anticipated categories included relationships, communication, feedback, expectations, and trust. The categories were subject to change as the interview responses progressed and newly formed emerging coding took place. After the information gathered through the pilot study was collected and coded, the researcher sought an outside person to read the transcript and categorize the data to test for similarity.

To further establish content validity, Dr. Greg Shoemaker was the chosen administrator to participate in the pilot study. His research and expertise in the field of teaching principals through *Examining the Work Elements and Impact of a Building Level Administrator*, along with taking on the role of a teaching principal in his own building in a co-teaching capacity, enhanced the validity of the interview questions. He was asked to analyze the interview questions with reference to both the teachers and principals participating in the study. Based upon the literature review of Flatt (1987), Lare (1995), Kelly-Brockel (1988), and Shoemaker (2010), priori codes were developed. The priori codes, which were subject to change as the pilot and full study



unfolded, included relationships, communication, feedback, expectations, and trust. He was asked to determine whether questions were missing, incomplete or ambiguous, or unnecessary.

The first set of interview questions solicited responses about the overall perceptions/beliefs of *Administrators with Class*. The responses were based upon past experiences as teaching principals. Responses about the perception/belief about the program focused upon the program's potential for getting principals to teach in the classroom, thus raising the level of acceptance. Because the principal has a better handle on instructional practices, conferences with teachers after principals have substituted in the classroom might have greater value. The respondents discussed possible disadvantages, such as if the principal does not do well teaching. Is it often assumed that principals are good teachers, and/or can the principal be effective using the Danielson model of supervision and evaluation? Charlotte Danielson has developed ideas for teacher evaluations while working for the Educational Testing Service (ETS) publishing a series of books since 1996.

During the interview, Shoemaker recommended that follow-up questions, such as the reason(s) the principal chose to enter the classroom, why he or she wanted to become an administrator, and the principals' attitude about education, be included. The consultant raised concerns about how only one day of teaching can make a difference and how can the perceptions of principals change if no one is seeing him or her teach (reference to *Administrators with Class* qualifications). Last, the consultant felt it was important to ask follow-up questions to find out how the program was described to the students along with who was doing the actual planning of the lesson to be taught.

The second set of interview questions focused on the impact *Administrators with Class* would have on classroom techniques such as questioning strategies or the Danielson Framework

model. It was difficult for the consultant to answer each question without participating in the program, but he did stress that the experience could increase the level of confidence the teachers have in their principals. Common planning time, also mentioned by teacher respondents, could help pinpoint specific strategies the principal is looking to utilize.

The final set of interview questions pertained to the possible impact *Administrators with Class* on principals as instructional leaders. Dr. Shoemaker saw as an opportunity to increase the use of the Danielson Framework model. Additional responses included common themes such as improved relationships between the students/principal and teacher/principal, and enhanced discussions on teaching strategies during post-observation conferences. A concern raised by both the teachers and administrator on the expert panel centered on the requirement of teaching one day per semester.

The administrator stated that the program was “a step in the right direction,” stressing the importance of interactions between the teacher and administrator after the experience. This individual also recommended a co-teaching approach to help encourage instructional dialogue between the teachers and administrators.

The participants were asked for feedback on the proposed interview questions by assessing and evaluating the questions as outlined in the interview guide to make sure they fully understand them (see Appendix B). The participants in the pilot study were asked questions regarding the clarity of the questions:

- a. Were any of the questions confusing? If yes, follow-up questions will be asked to identify the specific verbiage that was unclear or confusing.
- b. Should any questions that were not asked be added? Omitted?
- c. Did the interview questions relate directly to the study?

The researcher examined the participants' verbal and non-verbal responses to clarify any misunderstandings. As the expert panel reviewed the interview questions, the researcher began formulating appropriate follow-up questions to be used in the primary study. The expert panel's responses were recorded and immediately transcribed. This process mirrored the approach which would be used in the field study. The transcripts would serve as the primary sources of data for content analysis. Since the purpose of the study was to identify and describe the perceptions of principals and select teachers, the researcher utilized priori coding to place the data into appropriate categories.

The pilot study was instrumental in helping the researcher to hone his interviewing skills. It also assisted in identifying key questions that needed to be added, omitted or refined and giving interview, note-taking, and transcription practice to the primary researcher. This process served to create a more effective plan for interviewing the participants in the field study.

### **Field Study - Authorizations**

The researcher received IRB approval from East Stroudsburg University. Authorization from the research site school district superintendent and building principals to conduct the research was also acquired. Once all necessary approvals were gained, the researcher provided a copy of the East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania's IRB to the superintendent and building-level principals upon request.

In November 2013, once the pilot study was completed, the researcher sent out a request-for-approval letter to the superintendent of the research site to conduct the study (see Appendix E). This provided an opportunity for the researcher to introduce himself, provide a brief description of the study, define the risks and benefits, and seek permission for building-level

administrators to complete a survey. The superintendent was then provided with informed consent forms (see Appendix F).

To examine the impact of the program, the researcher concentrated on 20 teaching principals from the district and the 14 teachers whose classes were taught by the principal. Interviewing the selected principals and teachers elicited different perspectives and gained a rich, descriptive end product to help shed light on the public's understanding of *Administrator's with Class* (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

The interview questions (see Appendix D) were designed to uncover the reasons for creating the program, its requirements, its expected impact, its future plans, and its documentation review from reflection logs of teaching principals from the 2011-2012 school year. The researcher then contacted the superintendent by email to gather the names of building-level administrators and teachers who were currently participating in the program.

Upon receiving permission from the superintendent, 20 teaching principals and 14 selected teachers were emailed the following a description of the study, a letter requesting the interview recipient to participate in the study (see Appendix G), an informed consent document for interview participants as described by the Instructional Review Board Protection of Human Subjects Guidelines, and participants request to receive the results of the study (see Appendix H).

The 20 building-level principals were asked to participate in interviews to gather their perceptions about the impact of the program and their relationships with the teachers regarding instructional matters. The teachers were asked to complete a survey created on Google Doc relating to their particular situation and perceptions of the program (see Appendix B).

Participating principals were given the option to conduct the interviews by phone, face to face, or

Skype. A mutually agreeable time and location for the interviews was identified. The interviews took place from January of 2013 through February 2014 and were recorded and then transcribed.

### **Field Study - Principal Interviews**

Conducting interviews of teaching principals served as one of the key components to answer the main research question(s) of this study. The primary research question and interview questions were generated by reviewing the literature from Flatt (1987), Lare (1995), Kelly-Brockel (1988), and Shoemaker (2010) and theories surrounding the topic of teaching principals. The researcher generated follow-up questions from the pilot study and field study to acquire a deeper understanding of the impact of *Administrators with Class*.

The principals being interviewed were permitted to select one of three ways to be interviewed, phone, face to face, or Skype. Regardless of the method chosen, all interviews were scheduled at a mutually agreed-upon time. Prior to the start of the interview session, the research study was explained, and participants were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Once this step was completed, the researcher and participant reviewed the consent forms indicating their willingness to participate. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The researcher asked follow-up questions when clarification or more in-depth information was needed. Audio tapes were used to record interviews with the teaching principals.

In order to establish a consistent framework for the principal interviews, an interview guide was created (see Appendix B). The principal interviews consist of approximately 13 statements. The first four interview questions (1a-1d) related to the participants' overall perceptions/beliefs about the program. Questions 2a-2g were all associated with the impact *Administrators with Class* could have on classroom techniques. Questions 3a-3b specifically dealt with any impact the program could have on principals as instructional leaders.

## **Field Study - Teacher Interviews**

To enrich the study, interviews in the form of a survey were conducted with teachers whose classes were being taught by their principal. This approach was taken to generate an awareness of how each participant perceived his or her personal experience and provide insights on the program. The superintendent provided the names of 35 teachers who were participating in *Administrators with Class*. After various attempts' the researcher was able to get 14 teachers to participate in the study.

The teachers were notified by email and asked to sign up for the study using Doodle Poll. Once this step was completed, the researcher reviewed the consent forms with the participants. The teachers were then directed to complete the survey about their perceptions of the program located on a Google Doc. Completing the survey took approximately 30 minutes. The researcher was not provided the opportunity to ask follow-up questions. All responses were recorded and transcribed with the use of qualitative coding techniques to identify themes.

In order to establish a consistent framework for the interviews, an interview guide was created (see Appendix C). The teacher survey consisted of approximately 13 statements. The first four interview questions (1a-1d) related to the participants' overall perceptions/beliefs about the program. Questions 2a-2g were all associated with the impact *Administrators with Class* could have on classroom techniques. Questions 3a-3b specifically dealt with any impact the program could have on principals as instructional leaders.

### **Interview Setting**

Before each interview took place, the consent document guidelines were reviewed with the participant as dictated by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. The researcher was responsible for laying the groundwork for each interview. Each

interviewee was made aware that the interview could be stopped at any time for any reason. The researcher did not elicit a specific type of response from the interviewee. All interviews were recorded with the prior consent of the participants and transcribed for analysis.

### **Coding of the Data**

As each interview was completed, the responses were recorded and transcribed immediately for coding. The researcher searched for words or phrases that suggested how the data aligned with the research questions or whether the words and phrases suggested other themes. Interview questions were adapted or changed based upon the information received. The type of interview statements evolved as the study proceeded and follow-up questions were asked. The data was coded and placed into the established thematic categories. A table was constructed to categorize the research question and theory the response related to. The procedure used is termed emerging coding. The emergent codes consisted of the ideas, concepts, actions, relationships, and meanings that were revealed in the data. This served as a personal filing system for the data collected. As the data was collected, the coding scheme became more refined. The priori codes, which were subject to change, included relationships, communication, feedback, expectations, and trust.

### **Summary**

An intrinsic case study is generally characterized by selecting the case, determining and defining the research question(s), defining the data to be gathered and analyzed, collecting data in the field, evaluating and analyzing the data, and preparing the report (Stake, 1995). This qualitative research method provided the researcher the opportunity to investigate *Administrators with Class* in its natural setting and in real-life situations.

This chapter identified the research methods of this study. It included an overview of the study, research problem and questions, the research design, the research context, a description of the participants, and various methods of instrumentation and data collection. The chapter also explored the development of the recording procedures, documentation of data gathering methods, and procedures for analyzing the data. The necessary safeguards and consent procedures to protect the individuals involved in the study were implemented.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This case study identified the perceptions of selected elementary, middle, and high school teachers and administrators from a school district participating in the program *Administrators with Class*. The interview process was designed to determine the effectiveness of the program. The interview questions evolved after examining the literature on teaching principals from researchers such as Flatt (1987), Lare (1995), Kelley-Brockel (1998), and Shoemaker (2010). Prior to conducting the interviews, a pilot study was designed and implemented to test the feasibility of the methods and procedures utilized in this study.

Teachers participating in the study responded to interview questions created by the researcher using a Google Doc. A Google Doc is a free, web-based office suite offered by Google to enable users to share documents. This approach was suggested by the superintendent of the program as a time-saving approach due to the number of anticipated respondents. A drawback to this approach was the inability of the researcher to ask follow-up questions. Teacher responses were retrieved for analysis and coding. Once that step was completed, the building-level administrators were interviewed using face-to-face or telephone interviews. Administrator responses were recorded for analysis and coding. Finally, the superintendent was questioned in a face-to-face interview.

This study examined the effectiveness of *Administrator with Class*, specifically, the motivation for implementing the program, its impact on instruction, teacher/administrator relationships, and how the program is evaluated. Positive and negative aspects of the program emerged as well as suggestions for improvement.

This case study stems from the limited research on teaching principals but most notably the challenges principals face in finding ways to spend more time in the classroom so that they can analyze instruction with teachers (Fink & Resnick, 2001).

### **Qualitative Pilot Analysis**

#### **Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

The pilot study was conducted with administrators and teachers who are known to have experience with teaching principals. Following the IRB's protocol authorization and permission (Appendix J) were granted, an email (Appendix K) was sent to each of the identified administrators/teachers explaining the research study and requesting that they participate in the pilot study. The pilot study participants were informed that their confidentiality would be protected and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. If questions or concerns arose, they could contact the chair of the IRB, Dr. Shala Davis, and her contact information was provided.

Content validity was established for the interview questions by discussing each question with all seven of the participants in the pilot study. Separate interviews were conducted with each participant to discuss and analyze the questions. Each participant with experience working with teaching principals confirmed that the interview questions met the study's criteria.

The pilot study supported the validity and reliability standards of the interview questions. The feedback received from the pilot study helped to refine the interview questions for the full case study. Appropriate follow-up questions were also developed as a result of the pilot study. Participants in the pilot study were able to provide the necessary follow-up questions based upon experiences working with teaching principals. The follow-up questions added depth and clarity to the participants' responses. The final interview questions designed to collect data on the

perceptions of the teachers and administrators participating in *Administrators with Class* were used in the case study.

Seven participants participated in the pilot study. One superintendent, one administrator, and five teachers were interviewed in a face-to-face setting. The researcher conducted interviews with each participant in order to evaluate the interview questions and statements to establish validity and create appropriate follow-up questions. The pilot study revealed the potential of a program such as *Administrators with Class*.

It is important to note that the participants in the pilot study gained their experience working with an administrator in a co-teaching capacity. This experience heightened the concern about *Administrators with Class* regarding planning for the lesson, the inability of the selected teacher to observe administrator “leading by example,” and the absence of genuine dialogue about the experience.

### **Teacher Analysis – Pilot Study**

The teachers who participated in the pilot study briefly discussed the assumption that all principals are good teachers. Although intrigued by the potential of such a program, they questioned how a one day or a single classroom session could make a significant difference. The teachers questioned the planning for the lesson and wondered how the lesson was perceived by the students. One teacher in the pilot study questioned whether this program was created merely as a cost savings initiative, “This is like being a substitute for a day.” The recommendation was made to find out the level of involvement by the school board. One consistent theme in the pilot study was whether this program could build positive relationships between teachers and administrators. One teacher stated that it could be a “breath of fresh air” to have someone in the classroom who is having the same experience.

The teacher respondents were asked to describe their educational background, academic major, years teaching, and experiences being evaluated by administrators. The first research question solicited responses about the number of times each year that they are observed by their principal. Overall, the feedback was described as beneficial, but one participant stated it was generic and lacked “meat.” The majority of the respondents felt it was necessary to reword one interview question on describing the kind of feedback that was received; the wording was changed to solicit the value of feedback received.

The second question addressed the overall perceptions/beliefs about the program. Although the teacher respondents did not participate in *Administrators with Class*, they reflected upon their own experiences teaching while co-teaching with their principals during the previous academic year. Teacher perceptions regarding this type of program elicited responses such as that students were proud and excited, the principal developed a sense of empathy with teachers, and students saw administrators in a different light, viewing them as teachers and not just principals.

Although the teacher respondents talked about the potential of a program such as *Administrators with Class*, they questioned the limited amount of time the principal spends in the classroom. The teacher respondents described the difficulty in establishing common planning time with the principal and the extra time and effort that would be needed from the teacher. Teachers were concerned that some of the material would need to be retaught since it would be taught differently. One respondent stated that teachers can become suspicious about why their classes were chosen to be taught by their principal and how genuine the experience is.

Additional questions included describing the potential impact of this type of program on classroom techniques. The responses included common themes stating that the experience had

very little impact on teaching techniques but it did help recognize the value in the teachers' practice – things teachers felt had been taken for granted by principals. Respondents reported difficulty in preparing the lesson for a principal to teach because the principal is not aware of behavioral issues, student interest, and/or ability levels. Respondents suggested common planning time of the principal and teacher would help rectify the situation.

Finally, respondents were asked to describe what impact, if any, this type of program could have on principals as instructional leaders. The respondents indicated a mutual level of respect after the principal's teaching experience. Having a principal in the classroom shows how much he or she truly cares about the education process. The teachers felt overall acceptance of this type of program is a key to its success. The advantages discussed were building positive relationships with administration, which included increased trust and mutual respect. The disadvantages mentioned were having the principal called out of class to handle emergency issues, having the students adjust to a different teaching style, having to re-teach lessons if students were confused, and increased workload for the teachers.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

After the pilot study was completed and interview questions verified, the full study was conducted. Data collection for the case study took place in a large suburban comprehensive school district encompassing grades K through 12 in southeastern Pennsylvania. The school district was chosen because the superintendent required principals to teach in a classroom twice per year. The intent of the program is to encourage the K- 12 administration team to spend more time in the classroom analyzing instruction with teachers.

During the month of November 2013, a total of 35 emails were sent to teachers requesting their participation in commenting on the *Administrators with Class* program. The list

of teachers was provided to the researcher by the superintendent of the selected school district. Teacher interview questions (Appendix C) were electronically sent to the 35 teachers through the creation of an electronic Google survey. A total of 14 (40%) teachers participated in the program. Teachers were given one week to complete the interview questions on the Google document. All responses were confidentially recorded for analysis. One week after the initial email was sent to the sample population, a reminder email was sent requesting participation from those who had not yet responded. Names of the participants who did not choose to participate in the program were removed before the second email request was sent. A third and final attempt to request participation in the study was made by extending the deadline one additional week. The final email gave the current number of participants, a reminder of the importance of the study, and a request that the recipients consider taking the time to complete the interview questions. No additional responses were received.

### **Qualitative Analysis of Teacher Interview Questions**

Teacher responses were collected by using an electronic survey called Goggle Doc. Google Doc was used by the researcher to protect the identity of the teacher respondents. This recommendation was made by the superintendent due to the amount of time required to schedule and conduct interviews with participating administrators.

Using the responses recorded on Google Doc, the researcher was able to analyze the data and look for common themes. Teacher responses to each interview question were carefully reviewed, tallied, and calculated for percentages based upon the total number of responses. For example, if 8 of the 14 teachers taught in grades 9-12, they constituted 57% of the teachers who participated in the survey.

Some of the interview questions provided teachers with the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions. A summary of those responses provided from Google Doc gave the researcher an opportunity to code each response based upon its frequency. These calculated percentages were used to help calculate the perceptions of the teachers.

To help determine if teacher experience influenced their perceptions of *Administrators with Class*, participants were asked to reveal some demographic information. In this part of the study teachers were asked if they were observed, how often, and describe the feedback they received as it related to their own teaching strategies.

**Research Question 1 (1a – 1d)**

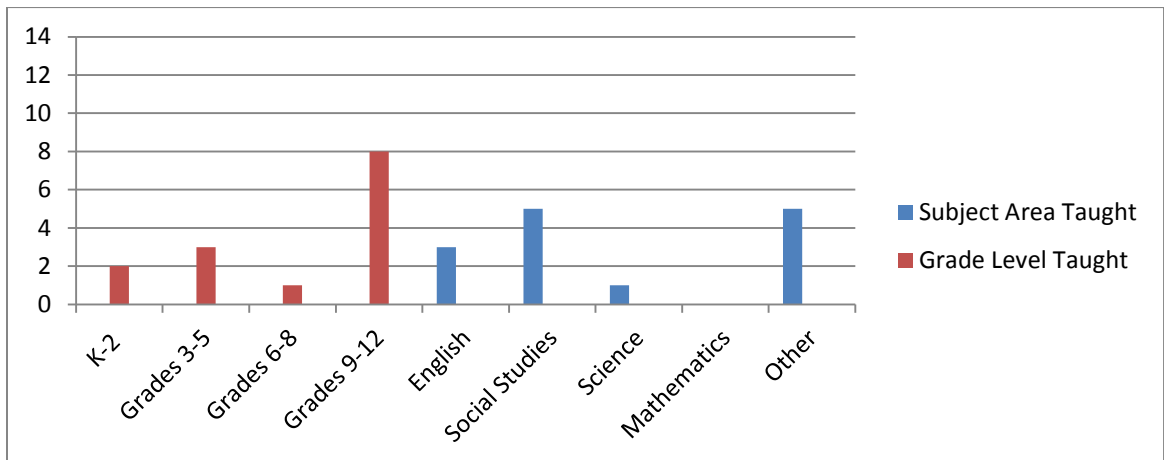
Please describe your educational background, academic, major, years teaching, and administrative experiences?

*(1a.) What grade level and subject area do you teach?*

The first research question asked the respondents to describe the grade level they were currently teaching, subject area taught, and perception of the current observation process. Table 1 represents a summary of the demographic data collected.

Table 1

*Demographics*



Of the 14 respondents, the grade level breakdown was as follows: 2 (14.3%) grades K-2, 3 (21.4%) grades 3-5, 1 (7.1%) grades 6-8, and 8 (57.2%) grades 9-12. Subject area taught by the teachers is represented by 3 (21%) English, 5 (36%) social studies, 1 (7%) science, 0 (0%) mathematics and 5 (36%) other.

*(1b.) Are you observed by your principal? How often?*

Created as an open-ended question, teachers reported how often they were observed by their principal. Thirteen (93%) reported being observed “formally.” Seven (50%) indicated they are “formally observed once per year” and 2 (15%) indicated they are “formally observed twice per year.” Two (15%) indicated they are “formally observed once every three years.” One respondent reported being observed 2 to 5 times per month; however, they did not indicate if these were formal or informal observations. Six (46%) reported being “informally observed several times per month by means of informal observations (walk-throughs) occurring on a continual basis throughout the year.” One respondent reported being observed by means of walk-throughs by a member of an action research plan piloting the new Pennsylvania Phase II evaluation plan implemented by the state and defined by Charlotte Danielson (Danielson’s work is the basis of the current PDE 426, 427, and 428 teacher evaluation forms).

Teachers were then asked to respond to a sub-question requiring them to describe the feedback they receive in regards to their own teaching strategies. Table 2 represents the specific domains listed by the teachers. This question was open ended, providing the teachers the opportunity to specifically describe the feedback they receive. Common themes that emerged showed a direct correlation to Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching (2011) a research-validated instrument for teacher observation, evaluation, and development. Feedback described by the teachers who completed the interview questions were clustered into the Four Domains of



Teaching Responsibility. The domains are Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities. All fourteen (100%) respondents indicated receiving specific feedback in the category of planning and preparation; 12 (85.7%) indicated receiving specific feedback in classroom management; eight (57.1%) received specific feedback within instruction; only one (7.14%) received specific feedback in the category of professional responsibilities.

Table 2

*Charlotte Danielson's Framework Domains*

	Domain(s)	Respondents Received Feedback	# of Responses
1	Planning and Preparation	100%	14
2	Classroom Environment	85.7%	12
3	Instruction	57.1%	8
4	Professional Responsibilities	7.14%	1

*(1c.) Describe the value of feedback you receive from your principal.*

Teachers were asked to determine if the feedback they receive from principals after being observed was valuable. Responses were positive in nature as feedback was described as valuable and practical. It is assumed the teachers responding to this question did so under the impression they were speaking in relation to the observation process not associated with this program.

Asking this question may lead to determining whether principals participating in the program improved the quality of the feedback they provided to teachers.

Respondents indicated that recommendations have been incorporated into their daily teaching routines. One of the respondents stated, “I just found it valuable that administrators would get back into the classroom so that they can relate to what our experiences are every day.” Further teacher comments included, “Principals help teachers identify areas that need improvement and provide feedback regarding student engagement and the depth of knowledge of the lesson.”

*(1d.) Describe your perception of the teacher supervision process.*

This sub-question was not associated with how teachers perceived the program but rather sought teacher perceptions of the supervision process in general. Respondents immediately spoke of the added responsibility placed on the teacher to collect student data. One respondent added, “The teacher supervision process is highly successful. The implementation of the walk-throughs gives the administrator more of a chance to see what the teacher is doing on a daily basis and not just a onetime formal observation.” Two of the teachers found the new state model to be cumbersome and unrealistic, complicated and time consuming.

Respondents spoke of “clear and achievable expectations” and “a chance to see what the teacher is doing on a daily basis and not just a onetime formal observation,” functional components for a program like *Administrators with Class* to be considered successful.

### **Research Question 2 (2a – 2d)**

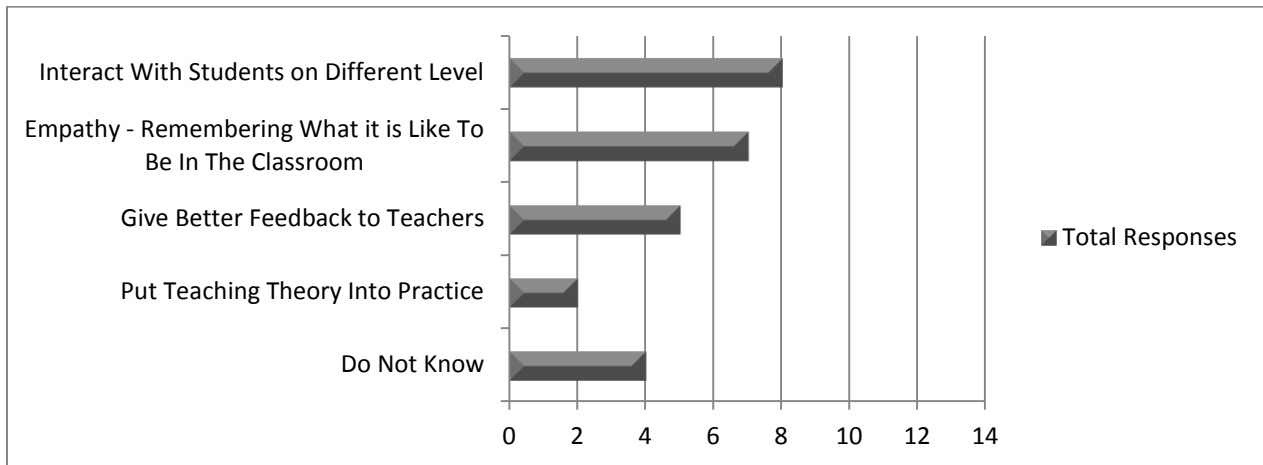
What are your overall perceptions/beliefs about the program?

*(2a.) Please describe what you perceive as the goals and expectations of the initiative titled Administrators with Class.*

This question was created to determine the teachers’ overall perceptions/beliefs about the program, the impact of having a principal teach a class, and how the program is evaluated. Table 3 represents the types of themes arising from the teachers’ responses.

Table 3

*Overall Perceived Goals/Expectations of the Program*



Eight (57%) of the respondents felt the overall expectation of the program was to interact with students on a different level. Seven (50%) said the program allowed administrators to remember what it is like to be in the classroom and have empathy for teachers, and five (36%) said it provided administrators with the opportunity to give better feedback to teachers. Additionally, two (14%) of the respondents felt the expectations were to put teaching theory into practice, while four (28%) were not aware any expectations of the program. With respondents speaking in such general terms, one might conclude that there was an absence of clearly defined goals and expectations, which can cause teachers to sound as if they are not “sold” on the value of this program.

*(2b.) Describe the impact of having a principal teach a class.*

Teachers seemed to have mixed perceptions when describing the impact of having a principal teach a class, raising the question of whether teachers felt the program was beneficial. Some teachers described the program as an opportunity for both teacher and administrator to grow personally and professionally. One teacher stated, “Students were able to see their principal in a different setting.” That comment was followed by a similar one: “It was good to have the administrator put his spin on the class that I teach and give the students a little different flair to what happen on a day-to-day basis.” One respondent felt it was valuable to observe other teachers while the principal was teaching his/her class. The value of creating opportunities for students to interact with their principal who normally do not get that chance was mentioned. A collaborative relationship between the teacher and principal was evident: “The principal did not get defensive when I had to intervene with students to support their instructional effort.”

Several teachers questioned the value of the experience, saying, “It is not valuable and I usually have to spend the next day re-teaching the material to feel comfortable with how my students understand the information.” Another teacher said, “I prepared lessons for the principal as I would for a sub. The principal did follow the lessons, although it took longer to cover the topic than I would have liked.” A similar thought was expressed by another teacher: “I don’t think one day in a classroom following someone else’s routines and plans is an authentic teaching experience.” In conclusion, the remarks seemed broad and general but almost at a superficial level, with the teachers indicating that having a principal teach a class had little effect.

*(2c.) Describe how Administrators with Class is evaluated.*

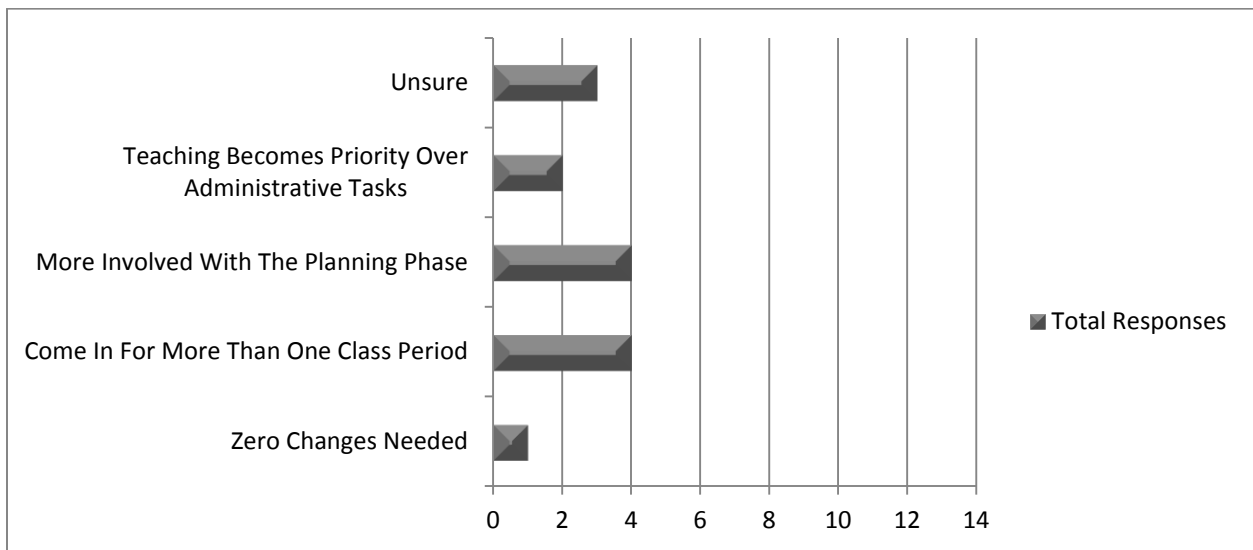
All the teachers indicated they were “not sure” how the evaluation process works. One teacher indicated that it appears to be an interaction between building and district administrators.

(2d.) *If you were given an opportunity to change any aspect of Administrators with Class, describe some of the changes you would make.*

Table 4 represents the themes that emerged and areas teachers suggested change.

Table 4

*Suggested Types of Changes*



One teacher remarked, “Principals could be more involved with the planning phase.” Another teacher wrote, “I would have them come in for more than one class period with the same class. Perhaps have them teach a whole section.” Another teacher stated that administrators should turn off their cell phones; when they are teaching/covering classes that should be their priority. Two teachers (14%) said that administrators should be able to delegate managerial responsibilities in order to make teaching a priority. Over half the teachers believed that administrators need to be in the classroom for more than one day to truly get a feel for each grade level. One teacher felt the program merely saved the district the cost of a substitute teacher: “I would have administrators teaching class on more of a regular schedule, instead of just when the teacher is absent.” Two teachers had similar suggestions: “I think the administrator

should have to plan the lessons (perhaps in collaboration with the teacher),” and almost verbatim, the other teacher said, “The administrators should be able to come up with their own lesson plan.” Several teachers were unsure of what changes needed to be made in this program, and one teacher suggested no change was necessary. One teacher wrote, “The concept of the program appears to be based on a fallacy that administrators are superior teachers.”

### **Research Question 3 (3a – 3d)**

What impact does Administrators with Class have on classroom techniques?

Teachers described the influence the program has on improving classroom techniques. This included the conference leading up to the scheduled date the principal would teach and included their overall perception of pre- and post-observation conferences in relation to the program.

*(3a.) Describe the impact, if any, on your classroom teaching techniques.*

Ten (71%) teachers stated the program did not have an impact on their teaching techniques. “It’s time consuming for me, the teacher, preparing a lesson.” Another teacher indicated, “I do not think it has greatly changed my techniques.” According to this teacher, “There has been no change to my teaching due to this initiative.” One teacher indicated there wasn’t enough information to respond meaningfully to the question.

Four teachers felt the program did have an impact their teaching techniques. One teacher said, “I have a chance to observe another teacher while the administrator is teaching my class.” Another teacher added, “I think what this has done though is create more of comfortable dialogue for me with my administrator.”

*(3b.) Please describe the process that you followed leading up to the scheduled date your principal would be teaching your class.*

Teachers described their individual experiences leading up to the day the principal taught the class. One teacher responded, “The principal schedules a date, then I provide him with the topic and lesson.” Another teacher added, “We talked about the content he would be teaching, what level class he would be working with, ideas for implementing material, and tactics that have worked and did not in that particular class.” One teacher responded, “The day before teaching he came to the classroom to meet the children.” A different step in the process was described this way: “The administrator would ask what topic the class is currently covering and what goal the administrator would like to achieve with the class.” One teacher commented, “I am pretty sure I treated the half day as I would with any substitute.”

A summary of the process follows:

- Principal schedules a date/time.
- Teacher and administrator discuss the topic of the lesson – lesson plans are created by the teacher and followed by the principal.
- Teacher and administrator discuss content, student ability level, and ideas for implementing materials – classroom procedures also discussed.
- Goals of administrator discussed during visit day prior to teaching lesson.
- Follow up is scheduled to discuss positives and negatives of the experience.

*(3c.) How would you describe your overall perception of the pre- and post-observation conferences?*

Three (21%) teachers mentioned the importance of reviewing the lesson with their administrator, providing an opportunity to explain how they teach that concept, knowledge of students, and expectations of the lesson. Six (42%) teachers felt it was helpful to get feedback on how to improve the lesson, a good opportunity to discuss a teacher’s practice, and determine if

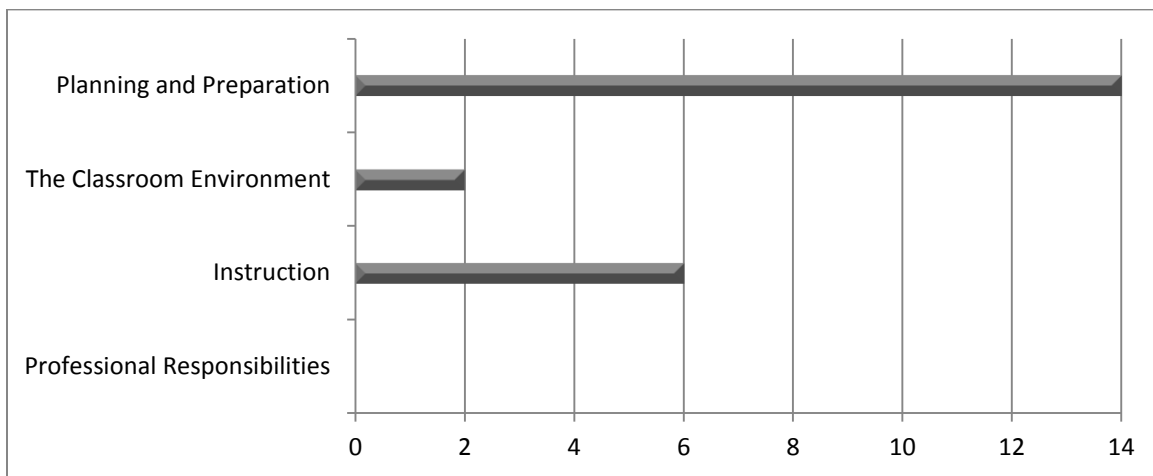
they were successful in meeting the lesson objectives. Three teachers stated that these types of conferences did not take place. Two teachers felt the conferences were not helpful but did not specifically state why.

*(3d.) As you plan your lessons, describe the variables that guide your planning? (What factors did you take into consideration...student interest, ability level, etc.)*

Common themes or variables taken into consideration were placed in categories/domains found in Table 5 based upon Charlotte Danielson’s Supervision and Evaluation Model.

Table 5

*Factors Considered When Lesson Planning*



In the domain of Planning and Preparation, 14 (100%) teachers spoke of variables such as knowledge of content, knowledge of students’ ability levels, selecting appropriate instructional goals, and knowledge of resources such as the use of technology. In the domain of the Classroom Environment, two (14%) teachers mentioned variables such as student behavior and managing classroom procedures. In the domain of Instruction, six (43%) teachers mentioned variables such as engaging students, providing feedback, and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness. In the domain of Professional Responsibilities there were zero variables mentioned.



**Research Question 4 (4a – 4c)**

What impact, if any, does Administrators with Class have on principals as instructional leaders?

*(4a.) Describe the level of feedback you have received from your principal after an observation or during the post-conference since the inception of Administrators with Class.*

Table 6 represents the responses from the teachers in relation to the program’s possible impact on principals as instructional leaders.

Table 6

*Value of Feedback since the Inception of Administrators with Class*

Valuable	Not Valuable	No Change	Not Applicable
57%	21%	14%	7%
8	3	2	1

Teachers who described the feedback as valuable indicated that it was helpful, relevant, and worth implementing suggested changes. One teacher said, “Feedback that helps improve my methods is valuable and helpful.” Another teacher said, “I receive great feedback after an observation. The administrator always shows me ways to improve the lesson.” One teacher indicated the experience helps administrators develop greater empathy and appreciation for teachers. Another teacher added, “I think it is good to have administrators see what the classroom environment is, and I think they have more of an empathy for teachers, which is appreciated.”

Four teachers felt differently stating, “I haven’t experienced a change in the value of feedback” and “not much feedback.” Two teachers said that the program “felt a little rushed”

and they experienced no change from the pre- to the post-conference. Two teachers responded by saying, “no value” and “not applicable.”

*(4b.) Describe how Administrators with Class has affected the overall climate of the building.*

Four (29%) teachers indicated that it did have an effect on the overall climate of the building while 10 (71%) teachers indicated they had not noticed any changes. One teacher felt that staff is “generally receptive to having an administrator spend a day in the shoes of a teacher,” while another teacher added that “students are enjoying having a guest speaker.”

*(4c.) Describe the impact, if any, of having a principal teach a class.*

Three themes emerged: improved relationships, a better understanding of daily teacher routines, and no impact. The themes were developed based upon the frequency of teacher responses. Two (14%) teachers stated that the impact can be associated with improving student/administrator relationships: “improved relationships with students,” and “I think the students may get a different understanding of who the administrator is.” Six (43%) teachers said that administrators now have a better understanding of teacher expectations: “I feel the impact is huge in the aspect that their expectations should be more realistic once they have tried to fulfill all the requirements of the day,” and “I was asked, do you expect this entire plan will get completed?” Six (43%) teachers said they detected no real impact: “The program seems to be based on a fallacy that administrators are or were superior teachers,” and “If an administrator wanted to teach they would have stayed in the classroom.”

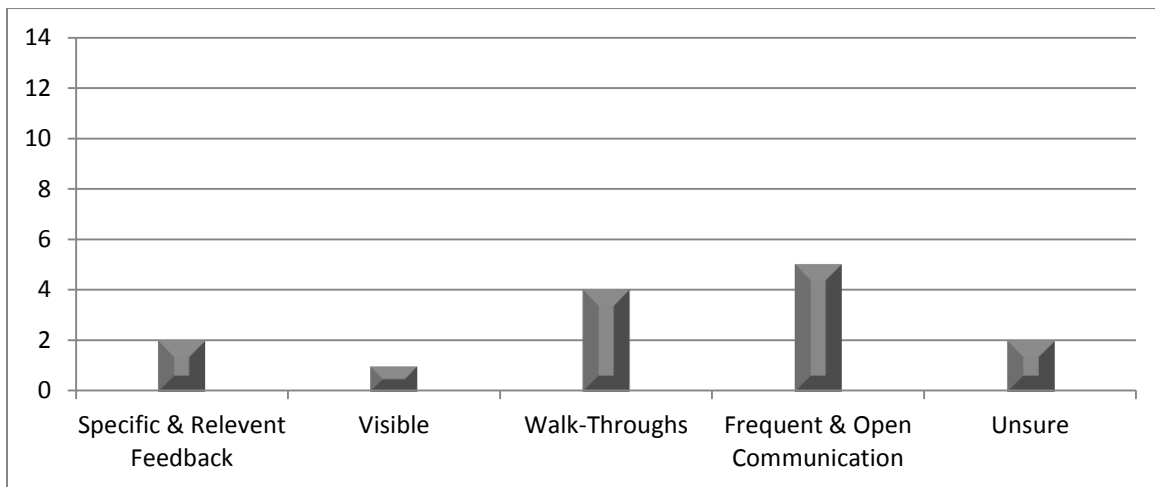
*(4d.) How can you determine if the principal has a sense of what goes on in the classroom on a daily basis?*

Table 7 represents how teachers determine if the principal has a sense of what goes on in the classroom on a daily basis. Replies were placed into five categories based upon the frequency

of responses. All responses were analyzed and placed into the category that best described it. The choices were specific and relevant feedback, visibility, walk-throughs, frequent and open communication, and unsure.

Table 7

*Indicators That Determine Principal Awareness*



Two (14%) teachers indicated that they determined whether principals understood what goes on in the classroom through specific and relevant feedback; four (29%) indicated it was evident in walk-throughs; five (36%) indicated that it was by frequent and open communication; and one (7%) stated it was evident by the visibility of the principal. Two teachers indicated they were unsure but suggested having an administrator shadow a teacher in a non-evaluating way through the course of a day would be more beneficial.

**Qualitative Analysis of Administrator Interview Questions**

A different approach was taken when analyzing the administrative data compared to the teacher data. Teachers who participated in the interview process remained completely anonymous even to the researcher. Once the teacher completed the Google Doc there was no way to tell who the individual responding was because of how the interview questions were set

up. This prompted the researcher to analyze the data by looking for common themes, leading to the creation of categories. Once the categories were established, the researcher tallied the number of times the responses fit into the established categories. Administrator responses were gathered in face-to-face and telephone interviews, which provided opportunities to ask follow-up questions.

In January of 2013, a list of 35 administrators eligible to participate in the program was created by the superintendent and emailed to the researcher. An email requesting their participation was then sent to all 35 administrators. Twenty (57%) administrators responded. Each administrator was given the option of a face-to-face, Skype, or telephone interview. Eight (40%) administrators choose face-to-face, 12 (60%) administrators chose phone interviews, and zero choose Skype. To simplify things, the researcher created a Google Doc with a doodle poll attached. By clicking on the link provided, the administrator was able to schedule either a face-to-face or phone interview during the designated time/days. Due to inclement weather and school closings, interviews needed to be rescheduled on two separate occasions.

The face-to-face and phone interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. Each interview was recorded using a program called Audacity. Notes were taken during each interview. Once the interviews were completed, the researcher transferred all of the responses onto a spreadsheet. While the answers were being transferred, the researcher once again carefully listened to each interview to check for accuracy. Each administrator was given a specific code; for example, A (F) stands for Administrator A, with the (F) representing a face-to-face interview. For each administrator who participated in a phone interview, the code resembled, G (P): Administrator G with the (P) representing a phone interview.

Once the spreadsheet was completed, the researcher began looking for common themes/responses in each interview response, which led to the creation of specific categories. Once the categories were created, the researcher used different color highlighters for the common themes. Examining the highlighted responses enabled the researcher to tally answers and compare and contrast responses, adding depth and clarity in determining the perceptions of the administrators. Each interview question described below relates to factors associated with the perception administrators possess of *Administrators with Class*.

Research Question 1

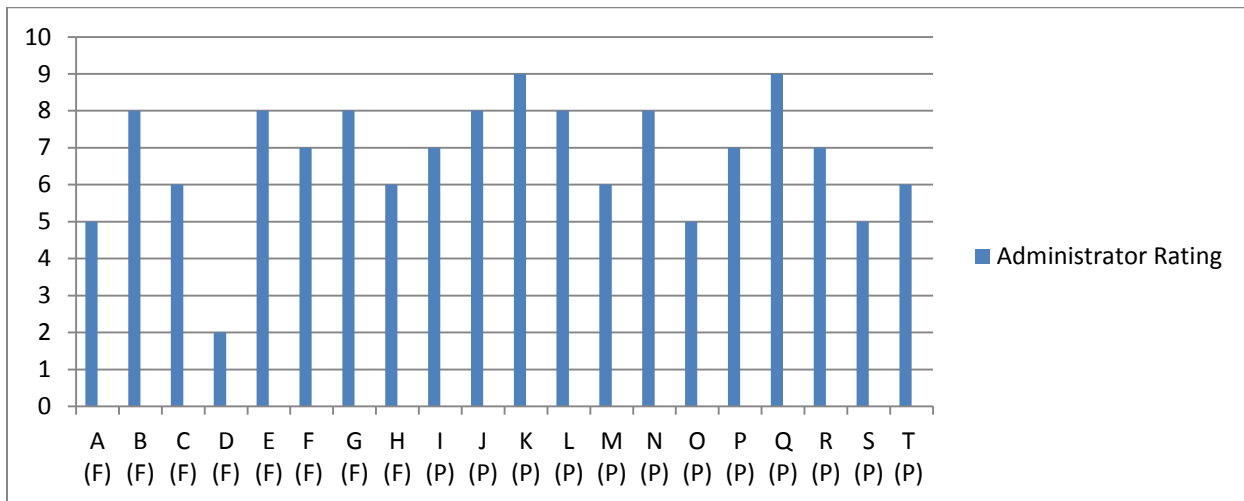
*What are your overall perceptions/beliefs on a scale from 1-10, ten being very positive and one being very negative, of Administrators with Class?*

Each interview session began with the researcher asking the administrators to provide their overall perceptions/beliefs about the program on a scale from 1-10 to determine a positive or negative feel for the program.

Table 8 displays the results of the 20 administrators' responses to this question:

Table 8

*Overall Scale Rating*



Sixteen (80%) administrators rated the program above a five, three (15%) rated the program at a five, and two (10%) rated the program below a five. Administrator D (F) believed that in order for the program to be successful, “clearer expectations and explanation of the goals” would be beneficial. Additionally, administrator D (F) mentioned the possibility of teachers having a “why me?” attitude related to poor intentions due to the absence of clear expectations and goals. Although giving a rating of 6 and 7, two (10%) of the administrators, M (P) and I (P), both mentioned a similar concern: participation in the program is required by the superintendent, but it has unclear goals and purpose, and “What is this information used for?”

### **Research Question 1 (1a – 1e)**

*(1a.) Please describe what you perceive as the goals of Administrators with Class.*

One administrator in the study believed the goals of the program were to “gain a greater perspective of what is going on in the classroom.” This was a common theme for all but two administrators. Twenty percent of the participants mentioned connecting with students and getting one step closer to students as notable goals.

Twenty percent of the administrators believed the goals revolved around cost saving initiatives, in particular having administrators take the place of substitute teachers. Further goals mentioned included changing the perception of principals as instructional leaders, providing opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers, visibility – a way to get administrators out of the office, improved public/community relations, opportunities for discussion of instructional leadership, and best practices.

*(1b.) Describe the impact, if any, that teaching one period per semester has on enhancing student learning.*

Sixty percent of the principals indicated that the program had minimum impact on student learning. Their concerns can be included in three specific variables: minimal impact, purposeful, and last minute. Many principals said that the program has “very little impact. It takes time to develop positive relationships with students and teachers. One day or period is not long enough.” (February 4<sup>th</sup> 2014)

Administrator T (P) echoed this by saying, “One day or period per semester is only a snapshot – no impact on student learning is taking place.” (January 27, 2014)

Forty percent of the administrators wondered if the program does enhance student learning. Administrator A (F) indicated he gets to view teacher lesson plans and create opportunities/discussion for feedback on teaching techniques. Administrator E (F) put it this way:

It’s better than having a traditional substitute. It helps to continue to drive instruction forward, and productive use of time. One suggestion would be to ask the students how they feel about the program. I try to make this as seamless as possible. (January 28, 2014)

*(1c.) How is Administrators with Class assessed?*

All administrators stated they submit a one-page narrative/reflection based upon their experience to the superintendent and occasionally the assistant superintendent. All administrators stated that feedback provided by the superintendent is general in nature and received on an “occasional and/or minimal” basis. Administrator D (F) said that the superintendent “asks questions if he has any; no response might mean things are good.” Administrator S (P) stated it was a brief topic during an administrative retreat. Administrator T (P) mentioned that a couple of examples of submissions are occasionally shared by the superintendent with all the administrators. In summary, the answers to this question seem pretty consistent with the

majority of the administrators stating that beyond their submitting the required summary of the experience, feedback from district office personnel is minimal.

*(1d.) How would you describe your relationship with the teacher whose class you chose to teach?*

One administrator described the relationship to be “positive and friendly,” which was a theme expressed by a majority of the respondents. There seems to be a trusting relationship between administration and teachers. Administrator O (P) said that he “wants teachers to know their class is in good hands in the absence of the teacher.” Administrator N (P) spoke of selecting teachers who are not intimidated by the process. Administrator E (F) explained the relationship in this manner:

Teachers were accommodating and open to the process. They were very receptive even when administrators sought teachers from other buildings. (January 28, 2014)

Administrator K (P) had a similar response in saying:

Collaborative with open communication between administration and teachers. It is easy to do when the staff knows each other and feedback is given by both parties [teachers and administrators]. (January 28, 2014)

Administrator T (P) goes on to state:

Teachers are very collaborative and open to the idea. The kids really like it: a great experience for kids to view an administrator as an instructional leader. (January 27, 2014).

Some administrators felt differently. Administrator L (P) mentioned that it takes time to build relationships and that this felt more like a mentoring relationship. Administrator E (F) mentioned, “It’s a good starting point of a relationship, especially when you can meet with them



ahead of time to ask and answer questions.” This interview question helped document the “positive and friendly” relationships that exist between teachers and administrators in the district. *(I.e.) If you were given the opportunity to change any aspect of Administrators with Class, describe some of the changes you would make.*

Administrators offered varying variety suggestions for changes. Six (30%) administrators suggested having clearer expectations and explanation of the goals. Those principals explained it this way:

So why are we doing this? We need a clear explanation: what does this mean? There needs to be some debriefing to close the loop with the entire administration team. This could be used as professional dialogue, talk, we can do it differently. (January 28, 2014)

Administrator M (P) echoed those thoughts:

Clear-cut long-term purpose – define the goal – why and how are we using the experience, is it to make teachers and students better? I get the feeling some administrators are putting it off to the last minute – let’s do it right!

Ten percent of the administrators suggested a co-teaching approach stressing the importance of planning and teaching together, which would result in better communication. It was suggested that the co-teaching approach would free up the administrator if an emergency occurred.

Administrators also mentioned collecting data to make stronger discussion points, setting up mandatory pre- and post-conferences, avoiding planning by relying on drop-ins, locking in class/subject for one year, isolating the experience, making it a part of the curriculum, videotaping the experience and breaking down the performance, holding meetings once per month for administrators to discuss the experience, and having the teacher stay to take notes

while the administrator teaches. When asked, each administrator offered various suggestions for change, the most common being the establishment of clearly defined goals and expectations.

### Research Question 2

Describe the impact that Administrators with Class has on classroom techniques such as questioning strategies or the Danielson Framework?

### **Research Question 2 (2a – 2g)**

*(2a.) Describe how you choose teachers to participate in the program?*

Responses to this question varied from intentional (purposefully selecting) teachers to participate in the program to unintentional (asking for volunteers). Seven (35%) administrators purposefully select teachers based upon “peer observations for novice teachers, behavior management concerns, observe teaching assistants, see the curriculum in action, gain personal experience in other content areas, and experience same type of challenges struggling teachers may have.” Fifteen percent of the administrators would simply ask for volunteers based upon the good relationships established in the building.

Twenty percent of the administrators feel that the program helps alleviate the problem of finding substitute teachers by choosing the teachers/class based upon the absence of the teacher, meaning substituting for that teacher. Administrator K (P) explained how the program or philosophy helps out when there is a lack of substitutes:

I have substituted in every grade level except the library. This helps out if a lack of substitutes exists. The expectation is for the principal to substitute, especially in the spring when teacher absences increase. (February 18, 2014)

Administrator O (P) made similar remarks, stating that the experience sometimes takes place when there is an emergency and a teacher is out or goes home sick and there is no one

available to cover the class. Administrator P (P) said it depends on the need to fill in in the absence of a substitute or to provide an opportunity for a teacher to peer observe.

Administrators were not hesitant to mention the good relationship that exists between teachers and administrators. Administrator N (P) said the selection of teachers varies from building to building and teachers are always professional and seem comfortable with the process. Administrator E (F) echoed that view, explaining how teachers are willing to participate and work with principals.

*(2b.) Once you selected a class, please describe the process that followed leading up to the scheduled date you would be teaching the class.*

*(2d.) As you planned your lesson, describe the variables that guided your planning. (What factors did you take into consideration...student interest, ability level, etc?).*

Responses to these two interview questions were combined because the responses by the administrators became redundant. While describing the process leading up to the scheduled lesson, the administrators would discuss the variables that guided their planning. Therefore, in reporting the findings, the answers to these questions will be combined.

Answers to this interview question varied in how contact with the teacher was initiated. Nine (45%) administrators used email as a means to communicate with teachers, while eleven (55%) chose face-to-face contact. Regardless of how administrators communicated with the teachers, the substance of the discussions was similar. After the agreement was made to participate in the experience, the discussions immediately turned to the following: review of the lesson plans and materials, goals of the lesson, planned activities, strategies used, priorities the teacher might have, non-negotiable items, technology, and the dynamics of the students.

Lesson plans are typically created by the teacher, and the administrator changes certain strategies if necessary. Administrator B (F) said the teacher typically leaves plans as they would for a substitute, but the administrator wants to be prepared. Administrator G (F) talked about the substitute mentality when meeting with the regular classroom teacher. Administrator E (F) felt that teachers needed to put more time into lesson plans in preparation for the administrator to take over. Even with the level of preparation that takes place, one administrator I (P) said it felt like they were going in “ice cold.” Administrator P (P) and S (P) responded by saying:

The teacher does the planning and administrator fills in and reviews afterwards. It helps give principals a better appreciation of what substitutes do each day. (January 27, 2014)

Teacher plans lessons, and the principal is the substitute. It would be better if the teacher and administrator developed the lesson together. (January 27, 2014)

Although all administrators spoke of conducting some sort of pre-observation conference, very few spoke of conducting a post-observation conference. Five administrators spoke of minimum to zero follow up with the teacher after the experience. Administrator S (P) explained it this way:

Sit down ahead of time to review plans and materials to help kids, and when the experience is over you walk out and have zero follow up with the teacher (January 27, 2014)

Administrator T (P) added that meeting and discussing the lesson and materials ahead of time is a part of the collaborative process, but the follow up with the teacher is missing, other than the administrator writing a reflection piece to the superintendent. Two administrators briefly spoke of the process if a class/teacher selected is outside of their content area, both saying it is more difficult and requires a lot more work, with them often having to take the lesson home and rewriting it.

(2c.) Describe your overall perception of pre- and post-observation conferences facilitated in your building.

(2g.) Describe what impact, if any, *Administrators with Class* will have on how you use your observation model to observe teachers.

Responses to these two interview questions were also combined because the responses by the administrators became redundant. While they were describing the impact, if any, *Administrators with Class* has on pre- and post-observation conferences, it quickly became apparent how closely related the responses were to how the program might impact the observation model they currently use. Therefore, in reporting the findings, the answers to these questions will be combined.

Similarity in responses created a theme for the primary researcher to analyze. Administrators responded to the question by stating whether the program had any impact on pre- or post-observation conferences along with the perception of impact on the observation model itself. Seven (35%) administrators felt the program did have an impact on the observation model, 12 (60%) felt the program did not have an impact on the observation model, and one (5%) was not sure. A breakdown of the responses for both perceptions is given below.

Administrator A (F) felt the program impacted the pre- post-conferences to a degree as it provided an opportunity for the administrator to draw on things they experienced while teaching. Administrator C (F) stated that the program helped provide more face-to-face time for instructional discussion. It also provided the opportunity to spend more time with teachers, to walk in their shoes: “It’s a wake-up moment for administrators.” Administrator G (F) explained how the formal observation process used in *Administrators with Class* echoed that of the Danielson model. Administrator H (P) mentioned how the program has an impact on the

observation model by requiring the administrator to look for specifics such as small and large group interactions. “It helps script the formal observation conferences, allowing the administrator to focus on certain areas.” Thirty-five percent of the administrators had similar responses about the impact the program has on the observation model and pre- post-conferences.

Administrator K (P): Yes – the principal makes or breaks the program – it’s the effort one puts into it – it has the potential to bridge the gaps and open communication with staff.

(February 18, 2014)

Administrator L (P): Yes – it helps with reflection. Next steps: what can I offer them and who can I have them peer observe? I use the program to free up teachers for support, since the new observation model binds us to a script. (January 29, 2014)

Administrator N (P): Philosophically, yes, but you can’t quantify it – good to see administrators in the classroom. It helps us relate to teacher experiences. (January 29, 2014)

Administrator O (P): Teachers relate to my perceptions of how best practices can be implemented in the classroom. (February 4, 2014)

Administrator P (P): Discussion keeps administrators in touch with the climate and culture of the classroom – helps with the flow of discussion. (January 27, 2014)

Administrator Q (P): Yes, it can. Gives administrators a fresh perspective, offer strategies and suggestions. If administrators knew the specific goals of the program, it could be even better. Right now it is just an assignment. More clear direction is needed. (January 27, 2014)

Administrators who felt the program did not have an impact on the observation model shared minimal follow up as to why they felt that way. Many of the administrators just stated

“no” or simply stated, “The program has zero impact on pre- post-conferences.” Four administrators mentioned that they were bound by the new Danielson observation model and conversations were inquiry based. Administrator J (P) described it as a formal observation process aligned with Danielson’s Domains, a process critical to determining a teachers’ areas of need. Administrator T (P) mentioned how the Danielson model controls the structure of pre-post-conferences, where conversations are based upon collaboration.

Administrator R (P) expressed his perceptions this way:

If it wasn’t a mandated program, how many would participate? The program has not influenced pre- post-conferences, but it does continue to sharpen the blade of instructional strategies. (January 27, 2014)

*(2f.) Describe how Administrators with Class enhances teacher effectiveness.*

One administrator A (F) believed the program provides administrators with a greater sense of what is occurring in the classroom, helping to generate constructive feedback to help drive instruction. Administrator D (F) saw potential growth in terms of professional development and freeing teachers to observe peers. Two of the administrators spoke of opportunities to become more familiar with daily classroom routines and offer recommendations. An example given to support this perception was the use of visual aids: “students remember examples that are visual.” Administrator J (P) agreed that modeling good pedagogy by utilizing the program could have a positive impact on teacher effectiveness. Administrator K (P) spoke of the potential to use questioning strategies to enhance teacher effectiveness along with mirroring building and district-level initiatives. Administrator S (P) suggested that if the program was repeated multiple times in the same building it would generate steady dialogue with teachers and enhance effectiveness.

Some administrators were not sure whether the program had an impact on teacher effectiveness. Administrator B (F) explained he/she had never asked anyone but did recognize a commitment to a level of accountability: “Remember, the teacher is out of the equation.” Administrator M (P) said that the district does not use the data collected from administrators, and thus conversations about teacher effectiveness do not exist. Administrator R (P) explained that the effectiveness of the program was difficult to ascertain because evidence of impact after the experience is not documented, but he/she did mention that teachers are generally positive about learning new strategies. Administrator T (P) stated he/she was unsure: “How can teaching one class with the teacher not present enhance teacher effectiveness?”

### **Research Question 3 (3a – 3b)**

What impact, if any, does Administrators with Class have on principals as instructional leaders?

*(3a.) What is your perception of yourself as an instructional leader?*

This question was important because schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will require the role of the principal to be defined in terms of instructional leadership (Green, 2010). The principal as instructional leader will be required to focus on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision-making, and accountability. Within the role of instructional leader lies the key responsibility of leading the process of evaluation, reflection, and feedback, all components of the teaching and learning process.

Some administrators said that the program has made minimal contributions to their instructional leadership role, while others stated that it helps them to understand rigor, clear objectives, focus, activities, and prior knowledge in the classroom. Two administrators spoke of how difficult it is to escape “managerial duties.” Administrator B (F) explained it this way:



Can't get away from managerial duties. walk-throughs help; the program itself has not helped. It is tough maintaining new things. The new observation model guides the process. (January 28, 2014)

Administrator T (P) stated:

What is good about being a leader is that we can always improve but do we have time to balance managerial/instructional responsibilities? The program sends the message we [principals] do know how to teach and can address specific instructional process.

(January 27, 2014)

There were administrators who felt the program did contribute to their status as an instructional leader. These individuals spoke of having the opportunity to model good behavior such as organization, technology integration, being on time, and having materials ready.

Administrator L (P) said, "Yes, it does help. I am high-lighting others' strengths as mentors not just administrators." Administrator K (P) thought of it in this way:

It gives a realistic lens from the eyes of a teacher. It rejuvenated my focus, helped me to reprioritize. The program forced me to be more visible and active. You need to be honest, active, and more sensitive to teacher needs. (February 18, 2014)

Ten percent of the administrators said that they already visit the classroom on a regular basis and were not surprised about the push to get administrators back into the classroom:

"Administrators should be good teachers first." Administrator S (P) said they inspire to be instructional leaders: "Model the behavior, make strong connections to professional development because expectations keep changing. It's challenging, so we need to learn and keep growing."

*(3b.) What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a principal teach a class?*

The final interview question was designed to uncover the advantages and disadvantages of having a principal teach a class. This question targets administrative feedback after the teaching experience, and is intended to help determine the program’s worthiness. The responses to this interview question can be best analyzed by listing the advantages and disadvantages mentioned and looking for common themes. Table 9 provides a summary of the responses:

Table 9

*Advantages and Disadvantages*

Respondent	Advantage(s)	Disadvantage(s)
A (F)	Connection with students, gain perspectives of teacher challenges	Greater quality of instruction comes from teacher
B (F)	Spending time with students, builds relationships, principal gains empathy, good for public relations	How does it benefit teachers? Managerial things get in the way
C (F)	Students see administrators teaching, opens up instructional conversations – it’s the nature of who we are and what we do	Hard to find time to do it correctly
D (F)	Face time with students, expert teachers modeling good practice, free up teachers to observe peers	Teachers out of classroom, poor intentions, lack of clear expectations, minimal impact on student learning
E (F)	Visibility, real life experiences such as a ringing phone, travel time, making split-second decisions	Glorified dog and pony show, overhyped, can the students still move forward?
F (F)	Visibility, time spent with students, regaining understanding of what it is like to be a teacher	Fill in for substitute – never know where you are needed – experience gets bumped quickly – prioritize
G (F)	Students get to know administrators better, greater awareness of curriculum, opens up professional dialogue	Time to complete, unclear goals, what does it mean, next steps, revisit data and create benchmarks for discussion
H (P)	Connection with students builds upon relationships	Regular teacher is the best solution – feels like a substitute teacher
I (P)	Seeing students in a different light	Outside of content area makes things difficult
J (P)	Keeps us in touch with teacher realities and in tune with teachers	Time to complete, minimal feedback for administrators, managerial duties take

		over
K (P)	Interaction with students, collaboration, visibility, make it a part of your day	Time to perform experience and reflect with staff and colleagues. What did we learn from this and how can it benefit my building?
L (P)	Spending time with students, gives people time to grow	Missing connections, feels like a substitute job, concern of pulling teachers from class
M (P)	Great opportunity to participate in instruction, helps get out from managerial duties	At times experience is not beneficial, lacks consistency
N (P)	Better understanding of classroom dynamics and initiatives in practice	Some teachers are apprehensive but valuable learning experience
O (P)	Get to know students on a different level, teacher can take time to observe peers or use as prep time – better relate to teacher practice	Time to prepare for lessons, crisis bumps experience
P (P)	Students see administrator as teacher, hands on the pulse of classroom, positive message for parents, community, students and teachers	Kids do not benefit (instruction) time commitment writing reflection instead of discussing experience
Q (P)	Humbling experience, visibility, offer support	Time away from other duties
R (P)	Climate of class, challenges teachers have, demographics of the class, face to face time	Time to conduct experience (scheduling)
S (P)	Visibility, appreciation for teachers, demonstrates principals can also teach	Logistics – time/set-up, no real direction, managerial tasks often limit experience
T (P)	Time with students, teacher empathy	Curving out the necessary time, balance, lacking depth

When analyzing the advantages of having an administrator teach a class, nearly all administrators mentioned greater visibility and spending time with students. These results are similar to Kelley-Brockel's (1998) findings where benefits included getting to know the students better, becoming more familiar with the demands of the classroom, and increased visibility with the students and faculty. Administrators also mentioned empathy and having a greater appreciation of teachers. Administrator E (F) mentioned visibility and real-life experiences such as dealing with a ringing telephone, travel time between classes, and making split-second decisions as advantages to the teaching experience. Administrator F (F) agreed, describing it as

regaining an understanding of what it is like to be a teacher, providing a greater appreciation for teachers, and creating a new channel of communication.

Lare's (1995) study had similar findings as the experience provided the opportunity to share suggestions on how to improve the lessons as well as failures. In Lare's (1995) study, teachers were periodically freed up to observe other colleagues while the administrator of record was teaching, a similar approach to that of *Administrators with Class*. None of the administrators clearly stated that the program strengthened their status as instructional leaders, yet it does provide them opportunity to spend more time in the classroom. This could explain the disconnect 40% of the administrators describe in the program.

When analyzing the negatives in relation to having an administrator teach a class, common themes emerged such as time commitment to complete the experience, balancing managerial skills, removing the teacher from his/her class, establishing clear goals, and time to evaluate the experience/feedback. Similar types of conflicts between administrative and teaching responsibilities were described in Lare's (1995) and Kelley-Brockel's (1998) studies. Shoemaker (2010) discovered in his study that a heavy management workload was the greatest impediment preventing an administrator from teaching, along with a lack of time to plan effective instruction. Solutions identified in his study included having fewer administrative duties, increased personnel assistance in the office, and increased support from the faculty. Shoemaker's (2010) study was based upon a co-teaching experience between the administrator and teacher unlike *Administrators with Class* which is set up to have the administrator replace the regular teacher during the experience.

## **Superintendent Interview Results**

Seven interview questions were asked of the superintendent in relation to his/her perceptions of the program. The interview session took place on January 28<sup>th</sup> 2014, in the district office in a face-to-face setting.

*(1) Describe your goals for the program?*

Initially mentioned was the professional and personal commitment leaders have in their buildings and knowledge that the quality of instruction students receive has an overall impact on their success.

To be strong and effective instructional leaders, each and every one of us needs to be highly involved in the classroom, providing guidance and input into instructional practices. This fact, however, is often at odds with the reality of today's schools.

Administrators have traditionally not taught in the classroom once entering into administration. As a result, a gap exists between theory and practice (January 28, 2014).

Administrators are required to return to the classroom once every grading period. A unique opportunity to return to the classroom may provide administrators the ability to connect with students and teachers in a way that bridges the traditional gap between those in the classroom and building principals.

*(2) Describe the feedback from the school board, PSEA union president, and administration regarding the program? Describe any feedback that you received from your teachers and principals.*

The school board is aware of the program from a distance. An annual report is sent to them concerning the number and variety of classroom experiences. Teachers have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to observe their peers while the administrators teach their

classes. All administrators write feedback/reflections statements providing an overview of the experience, with the goal being to get them to reflect upon their experience to help them to achieve their instructional leadership goals.

*(3) From your perspective, describe the areas of strength of this program. Describe areas for improvement.*

It takes effort from administrators to make this program truly effective.

The effectiveness of the program greatly depends upon the effort the administrator puts into preparing for the teaching experience and the thought they put into the reflective piece of the experience. I go around and visit the classrooms while the administrators are teaching, and I have seen some very good lessons as well as some that were not very good. I try to make mental notes of what I see so that I can ask specific reflective questions about their experience. I have found that the administrator is able to identify areas where they did well or struggled as they write their reflection on the experience. I believe this is what helps the administration bridge the gap between theory and practice, thus making them a more effective instructional leader. (January 28, 2014)

Strengths of the program were described as creating the opportunity for administrators to get back into the classroom as practitioners rather than as observers. A weakness mentioned involved the concern over the “quality” of the experience: proctoring a test, for example, as opposed to actually instructing students using high-impact instructional practices.

*(4) Describe how the program has been received by the principals and teachers. What do you perceive are some of the reasons why more principals are not teaching?*

Overall, the superintendent believes the program has been positively received and the rationale for the program regularly reviewed with administrators and teachers. The other

administrators seem to differ on this point. It has been difficult to carve out time to complete the experience. A complaint the superintendent has heard is how easy it is to put off time in the classroom when other tasks/problems arise. It has been recognized that administrators wear many hats, and while research highlights the need for more instructional leadership, that often takes a back seat to other, more immediate demands.

*(5) Describe the impact this program has on the district.*

Overall impact has been to highlight the importance of the principal being an instructional leader. It is easy to coach from the bleachers but more difficult to stand on the sideline and make the moment-to-moment calls, and the same goes for teaching.

The number of decisions that have to be made in the normal class period are enormous.

Having our administrators back in front of the classroom helps them to identify with just how difficult it is to manage the many aspects of the classroom: behavior, motivation, keeping students engaged, the numerous unscheduled interruptions, not to mention the unending questions from the students, many that have nothing to do with the lesson objective. (January 28, 2014)

*(6) Describe any changes that you have made in the program since its inception.*

An original plan for the program called for an entire day experience. This proved almost impossible and was cut back to half a day. Now the administrators only need to complete an “experience,” which can consist of a lesson or class period. The reasoning for this change boils down to the pressure of job responsibilities. Even spending a half of a day in a classroom without being constantly interrupted was difficult while trying to balance instructional and managerial tasks.

(7) *Describe your overall theoretical position for this program.*

“Educators are faced with the task of meeting expectations from a variety of oftentimes competing factions including political, societal, cultural, and business interests,” the superintendent said. An inference can be made that the superintendent understands the amount of pressure administrators feel to perform and the significant impact quality instruction has on student success. Implementation of this program supports the superintendent’s philosophy that administrators need to be highly involved in the classroom so they can provide guidance and input that is relevant to what teachers experience every day.

#### **Chapter IV Summary**

Chapter IV presented the research findings for the case study examination of *Administrators with Class*. Evidence and analysis of the data presented in this chapter were taken from the interviews of the teachers, administrators, and superintendent of a rural school district located in southeast Pennsylvania. The interviewees describe a program with good intentions creating an opportunity for administrators to experience empathy for teacher daily routines and responsibilities. The program is built on a foundation of trusting relationships between teachers and administrators.

Themes of administrators having increased visibility and connections with students were conveyed along with teachers experiencing growth through peer observations. It can be inferred that this is a program with good intentions that just might flourish with more clearly established goals and expectations.

In the next chapter, suggestions are offered for future research that may build upon the existing literature on teaching principals.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS, SUMMARY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

Research shows that as far back as eight decades ago principals had a small number of teachers to supervise and only simple administrative duties to perform. Today principals are spending more time dealing with managerial responsibilities and spending less time in the classroom. To investigate whether it is feasible for principals to return to the classroom to teach, a case study was performed on the program *Administrators with Class*.

The philosophy behind *Administrators with Class* suggests that the time has come for principals to become participants in the classroom rather than spectators. Principals often read books about best practices, network with other principals about instruction, and analyze standardized test scores with teachers. Reading and hearing about teaching and even observing teachers are quite different from actually teaching a lesson in front of students. Principals should make an effort to be more involved with teachers and being directly involved in instruction to increase their status as instructional leaders.

Some experts believe the best way for principals to become instructional leaders is to be active in the classroom. Returning to the classroom to teach provides such an opportunity. Their credibility as classroom teachers strengthens their position as instructional leaders (Wylie, 1997). Kelley-Brockel (1998) agrees, stating that the experience a principal receives from teaching strengthens his or her status as an instructional leader.

The principal's role as instructional leader requires the focus to be on strengthening teaching and learning, which includes evaluation, reflection, and feedback. Instructional leadership practices for today's principals are facilitated through human interaction (Green,

2010). Principals returning to the classroom to teach could positively influence the culture of a building by fostering a trusting, cooperative, and open environment which in return can generate higher levels of satisfaction and commitment among the faculty.

This case study examined the perceptions of teachers and administrators who participate in *Administrators with Class*, a program that requires administrators to return to the classroom to teach. The study consisted of questions that examined whether the program increased credibility and collaboration with teachers, has an impact on classroom techniques, and enhances student learning. Data was collected through interviews with a school district superintendent, selected teachers, and building-level administrators who participated in the program.

The findings of this study support the need for a program that facilitates administrators returning to the classroom to teach if the program is built upon clearly defined goals and expectations. Many of the themes expressed by the participants confirmed much of the existing research on the topics of teaching principal, specifically the studies conducted by Flatt (1987), Lare (1995), Kelly-Brockel (1998), and Shoemaker (2010).

The three research questions this case study examined are:

Research Question 1: What are your overall perceptions/beliefs about the program?

Research Question 2: Describe the impact that *Administrators with Class* has on classroom strategies/student learning.

Research Question 3: What were the superintendents reasons for implementing the program, *Administrators with Class*?

The participants chosen for this study met the criteria by participating in *Administrators with Class*. The school district utilized for this study was chosen because the superintendent

instituted a program requiring all administrators to return to the classroom and teach in some capacity.

In reality, the program afforded administrators an opportunity to spend time in the classroom with students, not teachers. The teachers prepare the lessons and leave them for the administrator to implement before leaving their classrooms to observe peers. The principal teaches the lesson and then provides a written reflection to the superintendent about the experience, receiving minimal feedback.

This chapter will elaborate on the perceptions of the selected teachers, administrators, and superintendent who participated in the program. According to the superintendent, the goals of the program are being met because administrators experience empathy toward a teacher's daily duties and teaching responsibilities. On the other hand, several of the teachers and administrators who were interviewed for this study are unclear about the goals and expectations of a program that has reported minimal if any impact on classroom instruction, teaching techniques, and student learning.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Discussion of Research Question One**

The first research question sought to determine the teachers' overall perceptions/beliefs about the program. A sub-question also asked the participants to describe the perceived goals and expectations of the program. Teacher responses suggested they "think" or "believe" the intentions were to give administrators a better understanding of what goes on in the classroom on a daily basis. This uncertainty can cause an inference that a lack of clear goals and expectations causes teachers to question whether the program is worth the time spent. They believe the intent was to have valuable interactions with teachers about what is happening in classrooms and the

challenges they face. Others mentioned that the goals were to provide opportunities for administrators to put their teaching theories into practice. Four of the fourteen teachers said they had no idea what the goals or expectations were, with one stating, “Basically, the general teacher impression was this was a new ‘hoop’ that the new superintendent was imposing on the building administrators.”

If given the opportunity to change any aspect of the program, teachers mentioned greater involvement by the principal. This meant having the principal more involved in the planning of the lesson and teaching classes on a more regular basis. Suggestions also included having administrators turn off their cell phones, making the teaching experience a priority. A few of the respondents were unsure of what they would change.

Mixed perceptions on the effectiveness of the program were revealed. Some teachers felt the program provided an opportunity for students to interact with their principal while also providing opportunities for both the teacher and administrator to grow personally and professionally. On the other hand, 10 (71%) of the teachers said the program did not have an impact on teaching techniques and spoke of amount of time to plan the lesson for the principal only to occasionally have to reteach it the following day. Twenty-eight percent of the teachers felt the administrators need to be in the classroom for more than one day to truly get a feel for each grade level and content area. The authenticity of teaching one day in a classroom following someone else’s routines and plans was also called into question.

Administrators had similar responses to the teachers in stating that they believed the goals of the program were to gain a greater perspective about what is going on in the classroom. Administrators also felt the goals and expectations of the program were unclear. Twenty percent of the administrators believed the goals were centered on cost-saving initiatives, specifically to

take the place of substitute teachers. Other perceptions worth mentioning included changing the perception of principals as instructional leaders, providing opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers, increased visibility, favorable public and community relations, and instructional leadership opportunities for principals.

If given the opportunity to change the program, the administrators' most common response called for clearly defined goals and expectations. The majority of the administrators were unsure how the program was evaluated outside of their being required to email the superintendent a one-page summary after the experience. Feedback on the submitted reflections was described as periodic, with an occasional example shared by the superintendent with all the administrators.

Administrators suggested collecting data to make stronger discussion points during administrative meetings or retreats. It was suggested that mandatory pre- and post-conferences be set up with teachers to discuss lesson plans and generic make-up of the class. One administrator said, "Avoid actually planning the experience and rely on drop-ins instead." Making the teaching an integral part of the curriculum and videotaping the experience to evaluate the administrators' performance was also suggested. Meetings once per month for administrators to discuss the experience would help generate true discussion and dialogue. It would be more beneficial to have the teacher present or co-teaching with the administrator during the experience. The dialogue and true discussion after the experience would also be valuable.

There were mixed views from the administrators on the program's effectiveness. When asked to rate the program on a scale from 1 to 10, 10 being very positive and one being very negative, the calculated average was 7.9, with only 5% recording a rating below a five. Echoing

the theoretical foundation of the study, a trusting relationship between administration and the teachers appeared prevalent. Administrators described the experience as a great opportunity to spend more time with students. Although administrators seemed to understand the essence of the program, 30% believed that in order for it to be successful “clearer expectations and explanation of the goals” would be beneficial. Sixty percent of the principals felt the program had minimal impact on enhancing student learning and on the observation process/model that currently exists. Ten percent of the administrators suggested a co-teaching approach to establish collaborative planning of the lessons. A suggested revision to the program would be setting clear goals and expectations from the very beginning along with delegation of managerial responsibilities. This could be done during a faculty meeting or administrator retreat during the summer following a discussion of the results from the following school year.

#### Superintendent Perceptions

The superintendent set out to create an opportunity for administrators to return to the classroom to teach. This allows administrators to connect with students and teachers in a way that bridges the traditional gap between those in the classroom and building-level administrators. The superintendent said that the effectiveness of the program greatly depends on the effort the administrator puts into preparing for the teaching experience along with the thought process put into the reflective piece of the experience. The reflection piece serves the purpose of helping administrators “improve their instructional leadership goals.”

During the interview the superintendent conveyed one strength and one weakness of the program. The superintendent said that teachers have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to observe their peers while the administrators teaching their classes. Administrators have

expressed appreciation for the concept of returning to the classroom to teach but face the difficult task of finding the time to complete the experience.

While the research documents the need for instructional leadership, it often takes a back seat to other, more immediate managerial demands. The superintendent expressed a concern over the “quality” of the experience. An example was given of an administrator proctoring a test as opposed to actually instructing students using high-impact instructional practices. This could be attributed to the lack of clear goals and expectations. It seems the superintendent and administrators/teachers are often not on the same page. Addressing this concern might increase teacher and administrator efforts to heighten the experience.

### **Discussion of Research Question Two**

The second research question sought to determine the impact *Administrators with Class* has on classroom techniques. Twenty-eight percent of the teachers interviewed felt the program impacted teaching techniques in a positive way. Teachers having the chance to observe another colleague during the time the principal was teaching their class was noted as a positive experience. Teachers also felt it helped create a comfortable dialogue with their administrator when talking about teaching techniques, which meets one of the superintendent’s goals. Seventy-one percent of the teachers did not feel that the program had an impact on teaching techniques largely because the teacher was not present while the principal was teaching.

Teachers were asked to discuss the process leading up to the experience. The teachers collectively described the general process as follows: scheduling a date/time, developing lesson plans, discussing student ability levels, exchanging ideas for implementing the goals of the lesson. Teacher perceptions of the pre- and post-conferences varied, as 21% of the respondents mentioned the importance of reviewing the lesson with their administrator. This provides an

opportunity to explain how they teach that concept, knowledge of students, and expectations of the lesson. Six (42%) of the respondents felt it was helpful to get feedback on how to improve the lesson, which provided a good opportunity to discuss a teachers' practice and determine if teachers were successful in achieving the lesson objectives. Twenty-one percent of the respondents stated that these types of conferences do not exist, and 14% of the respondents felt the conferences were not helpful. Addressing these concerns could help the program become more valuable for the participants.

When discussing factors considered when planning for the lesson based upon the Charlotte Danielson Supervision and Evaluation Model, all fourteen teacher responses fell into Domain 1, Planning and Preparation. This domain focuses on the knowledge of content, student ability, and selecting appropriate goals for the lesson. Classroom Environment and Instruction were the other two domains mentioned. Zero responses fell into Domain 4, Professional Responsibilities.

The teachers described taking into consideration the following characteristics when planning for a lesson: prior knowledge, ability level, classroom dynamics, content, use of technology, difficulty of material, engaging all students, student interest, and time. One teacher said, "The most important variable is how I am going to use the academic curriculum to promote and train the emotional and social regulatory skill sets that my students need to be successfully included into the regular education setting." Another teacher brought up a valid point saying, "I had to consider what the administration could teach due to limited knowledge on the content." The teachers clearly have a lot to consider when preparing for a lesson to address the needs of their students. When an administrator takes over the class, they want to make sure students' needs continue to be met.



Administrators were asked to describe their thought process behind choosing a teacher to replace for a class. The responses to this question varied from intentional (purposefully selecting) teachers to participate in the program to unintentional (asking for volunteers).

Administrators purposefully selected teachers based upon the following criteria: undertaking peer observations for novice teachers, addressing behavior management concerns, observing teaching assistants, gaining personal experience in other content areas, and experiencing same type of challenges struggling teachers may have. Occasionally, administrators simply asked for volunteers based upon good relationships established in the building. A few administrators mentioned choosing the teachers/class based upon the absence of that teacher; in other words, they became the substitute teacher for the day.

Administrators described the use of email as a means to communicate with teachers while some choose face-to-face contact to initiate the experience. Regardless of how initial contact was made, the substance of the discussions (day and time selection) was very similar. After the agreement was made between the teacher and administrator, the process went as follows: review of the lesson plans and materials, the goals of the lesson, and the planned activities and strategies to be used. Also discussed were priorities the teacher might have such as what is not negotiable in class, the dynamics of the students, and technology use.

Administrators spoke of the challenges and rewards of teaching outside of their content areas, describing the need to put in additional time to prepare. Co-planning would be beneficial for both the teacher and administrator to reduce the anxiety but more importantly to address the inference that the principal was serving as a substitute teacher. Administrators feeling like substitute teachers could easily change. A possible revision would be to set clear goals and expectations as described in previous paragraphs and have follow-up discussions with specific

feedback. It is interesting to note that very few post-observation conferences took place after the experience.

The superintendent was not specifically questioned about the impact on classroom strategies/student learning but did mention visiting classroom himself to observe the experience. In doing so the superintendent observed some very good lessons as well as some that were not. Mental notes were made, for example, “Why did you choose that particular strategy.” The superintendent noted that administrators were able to identify the areas where they did well or struggled while writing their reflection for submission. One hundred percent of the administrators said they submitted a one-page narrative/reflection based upon their experience but that the feedback provided by the superintendent was “occasional and/or minimal.” Providing administrators with consistent feedback after the experience could help define clearer goals and expectations for the participants.

The superintendent was aware of the fact that administrators traditionally have not taught in the classroom once entering into administration and described a gap between theory and practice. The superintendent believed this program helps the administrators bridge the gap between theory and practice, thus making them more effective instructional leaders. The superintendent supported the direction of the program by stating, “To be strong and effective leaders, each and every one of us needs to be highly involved in the classroom, providing guidance and input into instructional practices. This fact, however, is often at odds with reality of today’s schools.” The superintendent used the one-page reflections handed in by the administrators to decide whether the program is beneficial. The data collected in the interviews did not detect a formal assessment of the program *Administrators with Class*, which leads the

researcher to believe the results of this case study will provide critical feedback on the program for the participants.

### **Discussion of Research Question Three**

The third research question sought to determine what impact, if any, *Administrators with Class* has on principals as instructional leaders. The intent was to determine if administrator feedback to teachers has improved as a result of administrators participating in the program. Fifty-seven percent of the teachers described the instructional feedback received from principals as valuable, indicating that it was “helpful, relevant, and worth implementing suggested changes.” Not all of the teachers felt the same way; 21% interviewed stated that the feedback was not valuable, 14% explained that it produced “no change,” and 14% said that the question was “not applicable.” The program did not seem to have an impact on pre- and post-observation conferences as the new supervision and evaluation program guides the conversations.

Forty-three percent of the teachers felt the program provided administrators with a better understanding of teacher experiences, but only 29% indicated that the program has had a positive effect on the overall climate in their building. Throughout the case study both teachers and administrators spoke positively of the relationship between both parties. The administrators specifically spoke of how receptive the teachers were to the experience, while 14% of the teachers noted the positive effect the program has on student and teacher relations with the administrator.

Teachers answered questions in relation to the impact, if any, of having a principal teach a class. Responses indicated that the program made an impact on student/administrator relationships, permitted administrators to experience empathy for teacher daily practices, and/or witnessed no real impact. Fourteen percent of the teachers said that the impact can be associated

with improving student/administrator relationships, 42% that administrators now have a better understanding of teacher expectations, and 42% that no real impact was detected.

Teachers indicated that principals have a sense of what goes on in the classroom on a daily basis but it was not determined whether this could be attributed to the program. An example of this was expressed by teachers declaring that they receive specific and relevant feedback from walk-throughs, frequent and open communication, and visibility of the principal. Two teachers felt it would be more beneficial to have an administrator shadow a teacher in a non-evaluating way through the course of a day. The program can be credited with developing greater empathy and appreciation for teachers and substitute teachers, but there was no clear evidence given by administrators that the program has had an impact on them as instructional leaders.

Administrators had different views when discussing their perceptions of the impact the program might have had on principals as instructional leaders. Some said the program did not contribute to their instructional leadership role, yet others said it helped them to understand rigor, clear objectives, focus, activities, and prior knowledge in the classroom. Administrators spoke of having the opportunity to model aspects such as organization and technology integration. One administrator said, "I am not at all surprised by the push to get administrators back into the classroom."

Thirty-five percent of the administrators felt the program has minimal or no influence on how they are perceived as instructional leaders. One administrator put it this way: "Not really, I already visit the classroom on a regular basis...administrators should be good teachers first." Another administrator was satisfied with his or her status as an instructional leader outside the

program, saying that it could enhance the administrator's status if the program was done the correct way with more reflection time with the teacher.

Nearly all of the administrators mentioned having greater visibility and spending time with students as a positive component of the program. Some administrators mentioned empathy and having a greater appreciation for teachers and their daily responsibilities and routines. Administrators mentioned experiencing real-life situations such as dealing with a ringing telephone, travel time between classes, and making split-second decisions as advantages to the teaching experience. Having the opportunity to share suggestions for improvement and celebrate successes was important to the administrators.

One of the most common challenges mentioned by the administrators was how difficult it is to escape the managerial responsibilities of their jobs to complete the teaching experience. This was also a struggle identified by the superintendent. Time commitment to complete the experience, balancing managerial skills, removing the teacher from his/her class, establishing clear goals, and time to evaluate the experience/feedback were common concerns discussed.

The superintendent believes that to be strong and effective instructional leaders, each and every one needs to be highly involved in the classroom, providing guidance and input to instructional practices. The superintendent talked about the professional and personal commitment to education and how the quality of instruction students receive has an overall impact on their success. The superintendent believes requiring administrators to return to the classroom to teach helps them to identify with just how difficult it is to manage the many aspects of the classroom such as behavior, motivation, keeping students engaged, and numerous unscheduled interruptions. Traditionally, administrators have not taught in the classroom after entering administration. The superintendent said, "I have often heard teachers complain that

administrators have lost touch with what is happening in the classroom.” From the teachers’ perspective administrators could lose credibility by virtue of not being connected to the classroom.

The superintendent feels the program is an evolving process. The responses from teachers and administrators suggest that the program helps administrators empathize and increase their respect for teachers and substitute teachers, improves the relationships between administrators and students, and provides teachers with the opportunity observe their peers. Negative aspects of the program include having students lose their teachers for the day and pulling the administrators out of their duties.

### **Research Implications**

The interviews in this case study revealed several key findings about the impact *Administrators with Class* has on instruction, teacher/administrator relationships, and how the program is evaluated. *Administrators with Class* does provide an opportunity for principals to spend more time in the classroom with students. The program attempts to address the challenges principals face as described by Fink & Resnick (2001) and Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach (2003) in seeking to spend more time in the classroom analyzing instruction with teachers.

Teachers and administrators said that they believed the program was designed to give administrators a perspective into what happens in a classroom on a daily basis, to stay in touch with instructional practices, and experience a class period in the life of a teacher. Administrators often mentioned the ability to spend more time with students and greater visibility as important aspects of the program.

It was evident that a good working relationship exists between the teachers and administrators. Teachers were often described as being open to the process and willing to assist the administrators, even though teachers might find it difficult to give up class time with their students. These characteristics support the theoretical foundation of the study, which stresses the importance of relationships, particularly between the teachers and principals. Teachers noted the positive effect the program has on student and teacher relations with the administrator. Positive relationships that exist between the teachers and principals could be a contributing factor why the program has been extended for a third year.

Other than turning in a one-page summary of the experience, participants were unsure of how the program was assessed. Specific data was scarce when determining whether the program had an impact on student learning. Impact on student learning was often described as minimal as the realization was reached that quality instruction is achieved when the regular teacher was present. Administrators did mention that the program has the potential to have an impact on classroom instructional techniques because the experience provides the opportunity to put strategies and initiatives into practice.

The program seemed to have a minimal impact on how administrators and teachers utilize their observation model. Responses indicate that the Danielson Supervision and Evaluation model dictates that process. It was difficult to determine whether the program made an impact on administrators' status as instructional leaders. Some administrators said that the program made minimal contributions to their instructional leadership status, while others said it helps them to understand rigor, clear objectives, focus, activities, and prior knowledge in the classroom.

Finally, several administrators mentioned the level of difficulty required to complete the experience given the number of managerial responsibilities of the principal. The literature suggests that principals need to change their leadership style from managerial to instructional, but principals in this study found it a challenge to complete the teacher experience because of managerial responsibilities.

Based on these findings, a few implications can be made for superintendents who are looking for reasons to consider a program such as *Administrators with Class*. First, the goals and expectations of the program must be clearly defined. The findings of this study based upon administrator and teacher responses support the fact this is a critical step in the process. The program should be focused upon specific objectives with clearly defined goals and roles for each participant. This could eliminate the perception some administrators have as being just a substitute teacher for the day. It becomes difficult for administrators to teach effectively outside of their specific content area, as this caused administrators to feel as if they were substitute teachers following lesson plans.

On several occasions administrators expressed the need to debrief after the experience not only with the superintendent but with other principals as well. Scheduled professional dialogue sessions after the experience would help to keep everyone focused on the described goals of the program but more importantly open the dialogue on instructional practice among them.

It is difficult for teachers to give up class time, but by the same token there is value in observing peers for professional growth and development. Perhaps a sound solution to these concerns is adopting a co-teaching experience of the administrator and teacher. Shoemaker (2010) shared a positive co-teaching experience with a teacher possessing similar philosophies on teaching and discipline. His study discussed how administrators would experience constant



interruptions while teaching. To minimize the distractions, he suggested keeping the main office informed of the scheduled experience so responsibilities could be delegated to others when possible.

A genuine argument can be made concerning the level of “buy in” an administrator has in comparison to the level of ownership they have with a particular class. In other words, when the administrator is co-planning with another teacher rather than solely participating in the planning and preparation aspect of the lesson, the delivery of the lesson would be more productive and student enrichment detectable. Just the comfort level of knowing the material and increased level of competence can make a big difference. This groundwork getting principals more involved in the planning and preparation process could be of equal value to teachers by giving them greater confidence in their ability to become instructional leaders.

#### Feedback – Providing the Results

This is a story about a superintendent’s vision to help close the instructional gap between administrators and teachers. It also provides administrators with the opportunity to experience empathy for teachers’ daily classroom routines. Creating this program is a good idea but it is not currently working and changes are needed. The researcher will make an appointment to meet with the superintendent in November of 2014 to discuss the results of the study. The researcher will focus upon the results of the teacher surveys and interviews of the administrators. During this meeting the researcher will also suggest working collaboratively with the administrators to create new goals and expectations. The superintendent will be asked to describe what type of change agent was utilized when implementing the program. To help implement the described changes the researcher will suggest using a process similar to Dr. John Kotter’s 8 step process for leading change from the book titled, *Leading Change*. This could prove to be an awkward

experience as the data confirms the superintendent and administrators are not currently on the same page. Upon request each participant in the study will also receive a summary of the results.

Research suggests that principals must constantly be in learning mode, and for the most part they are, taking classes, researching web sites, and reading journals and books on current instructional practices. Best practice suggests that administrators work alongside teachers strengthening the teacher/administrator bond. Principals should always be teachers, learning with staff, open to teacher suggestions, and finding ways to increase the amount of time they spend in the classroom analyzing instruction.

### **Conclusions**

The researcher has long wondered whether it is feasible for a principal to return to the classroom to teach. The school district which is the basis for this case study, where administrators are required to do so, provided an example. As an assistant principal for the past nine years, struggling to find a balance between managerial and instructional leadership responsibilities, the researcher was eager to examine the effectiveness of the *Administrators with Class* program. Examining the perceptions of teachers and administrators participating in the program helped the researcher explore its effectiveness.

A lot of assumptions surround this topic, such as the supposed disconnect between administration and teachers when it comes to discussing classroom practices or that a trusting relationship exists between the superintendent and administration. Other assumptions include the belief that principals are invariably good teachers and that the program is a cost-saving initiative. Examining the realities of these assumptions was difficult because the program for the study covered only one year. It is difficult to determine whether trust between teachers and

administrators increased during the study, but it was evident that they did have a trusting relationship.

The level of trust between principals and teachers alone supports the theoretical basis of the study. Relationships between teachers and principals are viewed as important indicators of a school's readiness for reform and the ability to sustain it (Sebring & Bryk, 2000). The program, *Administrators with Class* is beginning its third year; this doesn't happen if principals and teachers do not trust one another. Bryk and Schneider (2002) were able to establish a connection between trust in a school and student learning. It is reasonable to assume that the more interaction between principals and teachers the greater the likelihood they are willing to trust one another.

The study consisted of three main research questions and a series of follow-up questions. Interview questions were able to determine the type of impact the program has on student learning, effect on teacher/administrator relationships, impact on teacher effectiveness, and how teachers are selected. Also revealed were advantages and disadvantages of the program, recommendations for change, and how the program is evaluated.

Conducting this study has added to the existing literature on teaching principals, but most importantly it makes recommendations to superintendents who are considering adopting a program like *Administrators with Class*.

After reviewing the data it became evident that the superintendent, administrators, and teachers have different perceptions of the program. Some said the program provides valuable opportunities, while others said it was an obligation, something more added to their plate. Right now goals are individualized and not holistic because not everyone is on the same page. This

could result from the effects of not having clear goals/expectations. As one administrator said, “So why are we doing this? We need a clear explanation, what does this mean?”

The program exists because the superintendent requires his administrators to participate in it. The vision of the superintendent in creating such a program is worth mentioning. A possible explanation could be experiences. This individual never lost sight of the importance of staying connected to the classroom. This appears to be a unique program. To implement it, the superintendent needed to buy in from the school board and administrators, which is not always an easy task. For example, the researcher attempted to conduct a pilot study at the school where he is currently the assistant principal but was not permitted to do so by the superintendent. The superintendent did not want to give the school board a reason to redefine the responsibilities of the assistant principal. A possible compromise would be to use the approach of Shoemaker (2010): using a co-teaching model. This way if the teaching principal needed to leave the classroom, the students would still be supervised and instruction could continue.

A future study of this program would ask different questions that were more in line with the superintendent’s intentions for it. Asking the right questions in conjunction with the superintendent’s intent could foster greater transparency of the program’s stated goals.

From the superintendent’s perspective, the program is reaching its goal of providing administrators with the opportunity to spend more time in the classroom reconnecting with teachers and their daily responsibilities, but what value does the program have for the administrators? The data indicate that administrators reported individual value in spending more time with students, experiencing empathy for teacher responsibilities, and sensing improved relationships with teachers.

It is difficult to reach the full potential of the program spending only one hour twice a year teaching a class or covering as a substitute teacher. Even finding the time to complete the task was problematic as administrators noted their difficulty completing the experience because of their managerial responsibilities. This problem could be avoided if taking the co-teaching model approach were implemented.

The interviews revealed a positive impact on the relationships between teachers and administrators. Administrators spoke of improved visibility and better connections with students as a result of the program. Minimal impact was detected on improving classroom instructional techniques and there was limited information about how the program was assessed.

After the recorded interview sessions were completed, occasional side conversations ensued. The researcher couldn't help but notice a change in the attitude of some of the administrators. At times it seemed that if given the choice administrators would terminate the program. They exhibited frustration at having to complete another task while trying to balance their managerial and instructional responsibilities. The apparent disconnect between administrators and the central office is detrimental to the program, leaving open to question the level of trust between administration and central office. With the superintendent being fairly new to the position, administrators may still be trying to figure this person out and not yet be quite sure what to expect.

Good things are happening as a result of the program, but adjustments need to be made. For instance, although the length of superintendent contracts are unpredictable, a new superintendent should spend a year or two in the position before implementing such a program. It is important to build trust with the administrative team before creating goals and expected outcomes collaboratively. If administrators feel they are a part of the planning process, greater

buy in should occur, resulting in the adoption of explicit goals and outcomes. It would be beneficial to hold administrative meetings every other month to have genuine discussions about teaching experiences. Creating a standardized feedback form to be completed after each experience would help produce talking points for the meeting. Asking the right questions on the feedback form could establish a common language to be shared with the administrative team and faculty.

Good teaching is often defined as instruction that leads to effective learning. Several strategies are known to be effective, such as writing instructional objectives, use of active learning in terms of problem solving, creative thinking and generating questions, the use of cooperative learning and assessment, and evaluation of teacher quality (Quality Management Journal, 1999). Each district approaches training teachers and administrators in a way that best suits their students' needs.

During the time the researcher spent interviewing teachers and administrators he often reread the remarks of teachers and listened to principals talk about the program and found himself questioning the program from a logistical and supervisory perspective. According to Danielson, a principal who wants to improve teaching within his or her building must create a common language for talking about and assessing teaching and enunciate clear, concrete levels of performance for teachers to use in reflecting upon their professional growth.

During the interview process the administrators were not asked if they received their Teachscape certification in association with the Danielson Supervision and Evaluation model. Teachscape partners with educators and offers online professional learning resources that result in measurable growth in teacher practice. The software tools offered allow educators to assess their skills and competencies. Receiving certification through Teachscape demonstrates that the

administrator has viewed and analyzed classroom videos and student work, reflected on the effectiveness of demonstrating teaching strategies, engaged in professional discussions, shared best practices, and completed activities based on the best practices modeled in videos (Teachscape.com, 2014). In addition to maintaining a master's of education in educational administration, this certification could install greater confidence that the principal can demonstrate outstanding teaching techniques and lead an above-average lesson far more effectively than a substitute teacher.

Determining the impact *Administrators with Class* has on the teacher evaluation process, student learning, and impact on teacher effectiveness is difficult. Responses from teachers and principals in these areas did not specifically state whether it had an impact. Originally, the superintendent established as a goal of the program the creation of an opportunity for principals to reconnect with teachers' daily routines and responsibilities, but this wasn't the perception of the principals.

It didn't take long to understand why some felt like substitute teachers during their experience, especially when teaching outside their content areas. Principals should not be used as substitute teachers. If this program were reorganized, administrators may not feel this way. This teaching experience would be more meaningful if the principal were more involved in the planning process and the teaching experience lasted longer than one class period twice a year.

As it currently stands, neither the teachers nor the administrators receive constructive feedback. When the principal is in the room teaching, the teacher of record is peer observing elsewhere. Other than a brief conversation about the lesson plans before the experience, teacher and administrator interactions and discussions are minimal. Completing the reflection sheet for the superintendent and occasionally receiving feedback doesn't provide the administrators with

much direction. The best route to an impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning is to implement a co-teaching model approach for an entire semester to establish continuity.

Demonstration teaching could provide the principal with an opportunity to validate clear examples of teaching strategies while connecting theory to actual practice. Implementing a co-teaching model could provide principals with the opportunity to try this approach. Working together planning and delivering the lesson is a good place to start enhancing instruction.

The teacher should not be out of the classroom observing other teachers during this experience. That can be done during their prep period if necessary. The principal and teacher should work collaboratively in planning and delivering the lesson. If the building has an assistant principal, he or she should be alerted to cover any issues that might arise. If not, an administrator from the next closest building should be alerted.

Greater communication between the superintendent and the principals is necessary. When asked what they would change about the program, teachers and administrators said they would like clear goals and objectives. Sitting down with the administrative team and clearly stating the goals and objectives of the program at the beginning of each school year is a good place to start. Administrators seem to long for constructive feedback on their experiences beyond their one-page reflection. People want to know if what they are doing is meeting expectations and, if not, what corrections should be made. Administrators should be provided with professional development and time to discuss their experiences, which would increase the value of the experience for the participants.

Programs such as *Administrators with Class* have the potential to create a strong professional learning community that might not currently exist within a district. In an article titled “One Piece of the Whole” by Linda Darling-Hammond, the importance of learning



together is discussed, “Productive professional learning and effective coaching require communal engagement in sustained work on instruction over time” (pg. 13). She goes on to say that collaborative teams can improve teaching and learning by designing and critiquing curriculum and lessons, observing and coaching one another, developing and scoring common classroom-based assessments to measure progress, analyzing student work and data, and figuring out the best strategies to boost student learning. “Strong professional learning communities,” she concludes, “require leadership that establishes a vision, creates opportunities and expectations for joint work, and finds the resources needed to support the work, including expertise and time to meet” (pg. 13).

A program such as *Administrators with Class* can be used as an initiative to develop a strong professional learning community amongst many other things. The literature review and results of this case study raises the question about the potential for this type of program and what it can bring to a district. Can this type of program be collaboratively developed by the superintendent, administrators, and teachers to support teacher learning and evaluation needs in an effective way? If it can, *Administrators with Class* has significant potential. It remains a difficult task based on the way that our schools are currently structured. Outside of experiencing teacher empathy there seems to be minuscule chance this type of program can expand into the areas of supporting teacher learning and evaluation.

Due to the tremendous responsibility imposed on principals to demonstrate yearly increases in student achievement, greater efforts need to be made to find ways for principals to spend more time in the classroom analyzing instruction with teachers. It is unclear how an administrator’s schedule could handle this task. This might be the reason it was so difficult to find a school district which offers this type of program.

The program *Administrators with Class* does seem like a step in the right direction. It might not have an impact on student learning or teacher effectiveness but it does place administrators back in the arena where they belong, the classroom.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This study sought to determine the perceptions of teachers and administrators in relation to the program *Administrators with Class*. To consider the option of having a building-level administrator return to the classroom to teach, the researcher would make the following recommendations:

1. All of the participants in this study were teachers or principals. Replicate this study but include students. It would be interesting to interview students and analyze how they perceive the program and the level of instruction they are receiving when their principal is teaching the class. The researcher believes small-group discussions with students may have provided further information. What are they saying about the program? What is the value of education they receive when the principal teaches the class? What are the students' perceptions of administrators as instructional leaders?
2. Since there are few studies of teaching principals, it would be interesting to find another school district outside the state of Pennsylvania that has implemented a similar program for a comparison. This study expanded upon the recommendations of past studies by Flatt (1987), Lare (1995), Kelley-Brockel (1998), and Shoemaker (2010). It examined building level administrators at all three levels, elementary, middle, and high school but did not have data to compare with similar programs.
4. Further research could also include piloting a school district utilizing the recommendations of this study. The researcher of this study could be involved with the planning and preparation for the implementation of the program, stressing the importance

of creating clear goals, expectations, and reflection/follow-up. Examine the administrators schedule to create either a co-teaching experience with the teacher and administrator and/or have the administrator teach the class by him- or herself on a more consistent basis, i.e. a semester. Careful planning would be necessary as administrators in this study mentioned the level of difficulty in creating even a one-time experience.

5. Future research could also involve replicating a similar study which involves the inclusion of the researcher in the experience. It is difficult to get a true pulse of the perceptions of each participant in a 45 minute interview. Getting more involved in discussions after a shared experience could really add depth/insight to the data. The participants were only meeting the researcher for the first time. Whether to tell the researcher the truth was mentioned in conversations off the record.

6. Provide a summary of this case study to the participants in *Administrators with Class* in the hope that the findings of the study will prompt the necessary changes. Once the changes were in place for one year, go back to the district and interview the same participants to see if the recommended changes were effective.

### **Chapter Summary**

This case study was designed to uncover the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and superintendent of the effects of *Administrators with Class*. The lack of previous research shows that requiring administrators to return to the classroom to teach is not common. This program places itself in a relatively new educational arena. Conducting a study of this magnitude sets implications for future research on teaching principals and recommendations for future similar programs.

When reviewing the literature of Flatt (1987), Lare (1995), Kelley-Brockel (1998), and Shoemaker (2010), the concept sounds good, but why aren't principals continuing with the practice of returning to the classroom to teach? Examining the perceptions of teachers and administrators in this study helps to answer that question.

The interviews demonstrated that teachers and administrators did not feel the program had clear goals or objectives or had a significant impact on classroom instruction, teaching techniques, and student learning. It did provide a unique opportunity for administrators to work closely with teachers and students by spending time teaching in the classroom. This matched the superintendent's goals and objectives for the program. Determining whether the program was successful and worthwhile seems to depend on who was asked. The theory behind the concept received substantial support, but the success of its implementation remains in question.

The study supports prior literature on teaching principals and presents an argument for how superintendents could utilize a program like *Administrators with Class*. Administrators should be conscious of the amount of time spent in the classroom analyzing instruction. Teachers need to feel confident when discussing their observations with administration, assured that both parties are speaking the same language and the administrator truly understands what is going on in the classroom.

Continued research in the area of teaching principals and programs such as *Administrators with Class* gives administrators something to consider when deciding how to spend more time in the classroom interacting with both students and teachers.

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## APPENDIX A

### Letter to Principals and Teachers East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**Title:** A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*; Examining the Perceptions of Teaching Principals.

**Primary Investigator:** Karl R. Scheibenhofer

**Institution:** East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I know that you are continually involved in trying to enhance learning in your school. With the new requirements regarding teaching observations and the implementation of the common core, school administrators are being asked to take on a new set of administrative tasks. I know that you are also involved in your superintendents' initiative entitled, *Administrators with Class*.

I would like to do a case study that includes teachers and school principals' perception of this initiative. The study requires the participants to complete a 30 minute interview regarding their individual experiences while participating in *Administrators with Class*. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed. The questions are designed to determine how principals and teachers perceive *Administrators with Class*. They are also geared to determine the impact of this program on classroom techniques.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate, I will contact you individually to set up a time, place and method of interview (face to face, Skype, or phone) that works best for you.

You will not be identified in the study in any way. If at any time you are uncomfortable with the questions or the situation, you may stop the interview. All data will be maintained and locked in a file cabinet in the residence of the researcher.

In order for me to move forward in this process, the East Stroudsburg University IRB is requesting receipt of a signed consent letter on your school district letterhead. I am providing a detailed explanation of the purpose and procedures that would be implemented during this research study. The consent letter should be faxed to 610-847-2562, Attn: Karl R. Scheibenhofer and the original letter should be sent to: Karl R. Scheibenhofer, 3166 Dovecote Drive Quakertown, PA 18951.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of my request to conduct a research study at your school district. Should you have any questions regarding this request please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 610-636-0248 or email at [kscheibenhofer@palisadessd.org](mailto:kscheibenhofer@palisadessd.org).

Yours Truly,

Karl R. Scheibenhofer  
Primary Researcher/Doctoral Student

## APPENDIX B

### Principal Interview Questions Research Study Interview Guide East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**Title:** A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*; Examining the Perceptions of Teaching Principals.

**Primary Investigator:** Karl R. Scheibehofer

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Sessions: 1

Duration of Sessions(s): 30 minutes

**Research Question 1:** What are your overall perceptions/beliefs on a scale from 1-10, ten being very positive and one being very negative, of *Administrators with Class*?

Interview Questions:

- 1a. Please describe what you perceive as the goals of Administrators with Class?*
- 1b. Describe the impact, if any that teaching one day per semester has on enhancing student learning?*
- 1c. Describe how is Administrators with Class assessed?*
- 1d. Describe your relationship with the teacher whom you chose to teach their class?*
- 1e. If you were given the opportunity to change any aspect of Administrators with Class, describe some of the changes you would make?*

**Research Question 2:** Describe the impact that *Administrators with Class* has on classroom techniques such as questioning strategies or the Danielson framework?

Interview Questions:

- 2a. Describe how you selected the subject that you wanted to teach.*
- 2b. Once you selected a subject, please describe the process that followed leading up to the scheduled date you would be teaching that class?*
- 2c. Describe your overall perception of pre observation conferences and post observation conferences?*



*2d. As you planned your lesson, describe the variables that guided your planning? (What factors did you take into consideration...student interest, ability level, etc)*

*2f. Describe the impact, if any, how Administrators with Class impacts teacher effectiveness?*

*2g. Describe what impact, if any, Administrators with Class will have on how you use the Danielson Framework to observe teachers?*

**Research Question 3:** What impact, if any, does *Administrators with Class* have on principals as instructional leaders?

Interview Question:

*3a. Describe your supervisory techniques for observing teachers.*

*3b. Describe advantages and disadvantages of having a principal teach a class?*

## APPENDIX C

### Teacher Interview Questions Research Study Interview Guide East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**Title:** A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*; Examining the Perceptions of Teaching Principals.

**Primary Investigator:** Karl R. Scheibenhofer

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Sessions: 1

Duration of Sessions(s): 30 minutes

**Research Question 1:** Please describe your educational background, academic, major, years teaching and administrative experience?

Interview Questions:

*1a. What grade level and subject area do you teach?*

*1b. Are you observed by your principal? How often?*

*1c. Describe specific feedback you have received regarding your own teaching strategies. (Follow up)*

*1d. Describe your perception of the teacher supervision process. (Follow up)*

**Research Question 2:** What are your overall perceptions/beliefs of the program?

Interview Questions:

*2a. Please describe what you perceive as the goals and expectations of the initiative entitled, *Administrators with Class*?*

*2b. Describe the impact of having a principal teach a class? (Follow – up)*

*2c. Describe how *Administrators with Class* is evaluated?*

*2d. If you were given the opportunity to change any aspect of *Administrators with Class*, describe some of the changes you would make?*

**Research Question 3:** What impact does *Administrators with Class* have on classroom techniques?

Interview Questions:

*3a. Describe the impact, if any, of Administrators with Class on your classroom teaching techniques.*

*3b. Please describe the process leading up to the scheduled date your principal would be teaching your class?*

*3c. How would you describe your overall perception of pre observation conferences and post observation conferences?*

*3d. As you plan your lessons, describe the variables that guide your planning? (What factors did you take into consideration...student interest, ability level, etc)*

**Research Question 4:** What impact, if any, does *Administrators with Class* have on principals as instructional leaders?

Interview Question:

*4a. Describe the kind of feedback you receive from your principal after an observation or during the post conference.*

*4b. Describe how Administrators with Class has affected the overall climate of the building.*

*4c. Describe the impact, if any, of having a principal teach a class.*

## APPENDIX D

### Superintendent Interview Questions Research Study Interview Guide East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**Title:** A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*; Examining the Perceptions of Teaching Principals.

**Primary Investigator:** Karl R. Scheibenhofer

**Institution:** East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose:** The purpose of this case study is to learn more about the impact of *Administrators with Class*, the reasons for its implementation and described goals of the program.

1. Describe the feedback from school board, PSEA union president and administration regarding the program? Describe any feedback that you got from your teachers and principals?
2. From your perspective, describe the areas of strength of this program. Describe areas for improvement.
3. Describe how this program has been received by the principals and teachers. Five years from now, describe your vision for the program.
4. Describe the impact this program has had on the district?
5. Describe any changes that you have made in the program since its inception?
6. Describe your overall theoretical position for this program?

## APPENDIX E

### Superintendent/District Request for Approval

**Title:** A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*; Examining the Perceptions of Teaching Principals.

**Institution:** East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

September 2013

Dr. David Goodin  
Spring-Ford Area School District Office  
857 South Lewis Road  
Royersford, PA 19468-2711

Dear Dr. Goodin,

This letter is being written to request your permission to conduct a case study of *Administrators with Class* within your school district.

This research study will explore the perceptions of teachers and principals.

The study will include the superintendent, nineteen building level administrators and the nineteen faculty members whose class is being taught by their principal. Each interview will last approximately 30 minutes. All session will be audio-taped and transcribed for review. There is minimal risk for those who participate in the study. All data gathered will be coded to maintain confidentiality of all participants and results written in summary form to protect the identity of the participants in the study. Any information collected will be kept confidential. The research records will be kept private and stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office.

In order for me to move forward in this process, the East Stroudsburg University IRB is requesting receipt of a signed consent letter on your school district letterhead. I am providing a detailed explanation of the purpose and procedures that would be implemented during this research study. The consent letter should be faxed to 610-847-2562, Attn: Karl R. Scheibehofer and the original letter should be sent to: Karl R. Scheibehofer, 3166 Dovecote Drive Quakertown, PA 18951.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of my request to conduct a research study at your school district. Should you have any questions regarding this request please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 610-636-0248 or email at [kscheibehofer@palisadessd.org](mailto:kscheibehofer@palisadessd.org).

Sincerely,

Karl R. Scheibehofer  
Assistant Principal of Palisades High School/Palisades School District  
Educational Leadership Doctoral Student  
East Stroudsburg University/ Indiana University of Pennsylvania

## APPENDIX F

### Superintendent/District Consent Form

**Title:** A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*; Examining the Perceptions of Teaching Principals.

**Institution:** East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

#### **Research Description:**

Principals have a tough job, and it's only going to get tougher. One of the noted challenges principals face is finding a way to balance leadership and management duties. There never seems to be enough time in the day to provide the necessary leadership and handle operational responsibilities. Throughout a typical day the principal will wear many hats: being a manager, administrator, instructional leader, and curriculum leader during different times of the day. Increasingly, more attention is given to managerial and administrative tasks while the role of being an instructional leader is neglected. The No Child Left Behind legislation has influenced schools to implement research based programs. Building level principals are expected to be agents of change and lead their staffs to make the necessary changes. A staff's confidence in the building level administrator's instructional ability can have a positive effect on the climate and culture of the building in addition to implementing necessary changes. Currently, there are very few building level administrators who teach on a regular basis. This is ironic because building level administrators have the greatest capacity to affect change in a teacher's instructional practice. Some researchers believe the return of a principal to the classroom in some capacity is a possible solution. Imagine being able to model and perform the very same tasks teachers are expected to perform. The researcher of this study has identified a school district in southeastern Pennsylvania where a forward thinking superintendent has implemented a directive requiring all building level administrators to teach twice per year, once per semester. The researcher of this study wants to identify the reasoning(s) behind the superintendent's decision to implement a program that requires the building level principal to return to the classroom, its effectiveness, and if the teaching principals believe they are perceived as better instructional leaders as a result of participating in this program.

#### **Risks and Benefits:**

All confidentiality precautions have been addressed therefore there are no foreseeable risks to the building level administrators who are involved in this study by completing the surveys and interviews. There are several benefits of this study. The research will provide valuable information about the perceived effects of the program, including the perceptions of teaching principals as instructional leaders. The results of the analysis of the data can be useful to administrators who are considering the act of teaching during the student day as well as superintendents considering the implementation of such a program. It could be useful to administrative educational programs when designing future preparation courses. The results will

also be beneficial to building level administrators who wish to incorporate the results of the study into the teacher evaluation process/mentoring of new building level administrators.

**Compensation**

There is no compensation involved in any component of the research design.

**Confidentiality:**

The data for the use in this study will be kept strictly confidential with sample population participants, identities of the schools and school districts remaining confidential. Participants are not to disclose their name, school, and school district anywhere on the survey material. During the interview process the identities of the participant, school and school district will remain confidential. Individuals seeking the results of the study will be asked to complete a separate self-addressed, stamped envelope indicating their desire to receive the study material.

All data will be kept securely locked in a file cabinet in the residence of the researcher. At the conclusion of the study, the code sheet will be destroyed.

**For More Information:**

For answers to questions in reference to the research you may contact the Principal Investigator of the Research Study, Karl R. Scheibenhofer, at 610-636-0248; kscheibenhofer@palisadessd.org. If you have any concerns about the study, please contact Dr. Douglas Lare, ESU co-chair at 570-422-3431; dlare@po-box.esu.edu

**Voluntary Participation/Right to Withdraw:**

Your participation in the study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Subjects may withdraw at any time without penalty. You may discontinue participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

- Yes, I agree to have my school district participate in this doctoral research study.
- No, I do not agree to have my school district participate in this doctoral research study.

Signature	Title	Date
Witness Signature	Title	Date

**APPENDIX G**

**Principal/Teacher Consent Form**

**East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania**

**Title:** A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*; Examining the Perceptions of Teaching Principals.

**Primary Investigator:** Karl R. Scheibenhofer

**Institution:** East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Supervision, student learning, improving teaching, and teacher observations are only a few of the many important tasks undertaken by a principal on a daily basis. Your district is currently into its second year of implementing *Administrators with Class*. This study looks to uncover the impact of this program as it relates to principal and teacher relationships, classroom techniques and the perception of principals as instructional leaders.

If you agree to participate, you will take part in a 30 minute interview either face to face, Skype or by phone at a time that is convenient to you. The short interview will focus on your personal experience and perceptions related to *Administrators with Class*.

Any information you provide as part of your participation in this study will be kept confidential. In reporting the results of this study, your identity will remain anonymous. I will not identify you by name, by school or by gender.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision as to whether or not you participate will not affect your relationship with your school or colleagues. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Karl R. Scheibenhofer by phone at 610-636-0248 or by e-mail at kscheibenhofer@palisadesd.org. The consent letter should be faxed to 610-847-2562, Attn: Karl R. Scheibenhofer and the original letter should be sent to: Karl R. Scheibenhofer, 3166 Dovecote Drive Quakertown, PA 18951.

**Statement of Consent:** I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX H**

**Letter Requesting to See the Results of the Study**

**East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania**

**Title:** A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*; Examining the Perceptions of Teaching Principals.

**Primary Investigator:** Karl R. Scheibenhofer

**Institution:** East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

September 2013

Dear Mr. Scheibenhofer,

- Yes, I am interested in receiving a copy a summary of your study.
- No, I am not interested in receiving a summary of your study.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

School

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number

This project seeks the approval of East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Dr. Shala Davis, IRB Administrator, (570) 422-3536 x3336

Dr. Joseph Miele, IRB Chair, (570) 422-3536 x3345

## APPENDIX I

### Research Description East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**Title:** A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*; Examining the Perceptions of Teaching Principals.

**Primary Investigator:** Karl R. Scheibehofer

**Institution:** East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

#### **Rationale:**

Principals have a tough job, and it's only going to get tougher. One of the noted challenges principals face is finding a way to balance leadership and management duties. There never seems to be enough time in the day to provide the necessary leadership and handle operational responsibilities too. Throughout a typical day the principal will wear many hats: being a manager, administrator, instructional leader, and curriculum leader during different times of the day. Many times, more attention is given to managerial and administrative tasks while the role of being an instructional leader is neglected. The No Child Left Behind legislation has influenced schools to implement research based programs. Building level principals are expected to be agents of change and lead their staffs to make the necessary changes. A staff's confidence in the building level administrator's instructional ability can have a positive effect on the climate and culture of the building in addition to implementing necessary changes. Currently, there are very few building level administrators who teach on a regular basis. This is ironic because building level administrators have the greatest capacity to affect change in a teacher's instructional practice. Some researchers believe the return of a principal to the classroom in some capacity is a possible solution. Imagine being able to model and perform the very same tasks teachers is expected to perform. The researcher of this study has identified a school district in southeastern Pennsylvania where a forward thinking superintendent has implemented a directive requiring all building level administrators to teach twice per year, once per semester. The researcher of this study wants to identify the reasoning(s) behind the superintendent's decision to implement a program that requires the building level principal to return to the classroom, its effectiveness, and if the teaching principals believe they are perceived as better instructional leaders as a result of participating in this program.

#### **Procedures:**

The case study being conducted will be qualitative in nature. An approval letter to conduct the study will be sent to the superintendent along with the Informed Consent Form. Once approval has been received, the Director of Human Resources will be contacted for the correct names of building level administrators, specific positions and mailing addresses of building level administrators in the district who are currently teaching. The researcher will ask the superintendent to take part in an interview. The interview will focus directly on the reasons for implementing the program, published goals, requirements, and impact of the program. The interview should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. The researcher will then contact and provide a packet containing a description of the study and letter requesting the participation of nineteen teaching principals (from each level – elementary, middle, and high school) along with the nineteen teachers who were replaced by those principals. Three different methods of interviewing will be offered to each participant: face to face, Skype or telephone. Returned packets will indicate willingness to participate in the study. Participating individuals will receive an official letter requesting the recipient to

participate in the study along with a copy of the interview questions. The location of the face to face interviews will be determined by the interviewees. The questions will be related to their particular situation and involvement in the program. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed for analysis. Each interviewee will have the opportunity to read transcripts for accuracy. The researcher will then review the reflection logs from the past two years that are handed in to the superintendent once the experience is completed.

**Subject Population:**

The case study will take place in a large suburban comprehensive school district encompassing grades K through 12 in southeastern Pennsylvania. It is comprised of twelve schools incorporating seven elementary buildings, two middle schools (one 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade center), and one high school (10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade) and one 9<sup>th</sup> grade center. Nineteen teaching principals and nineteen teachers will be asked to take part in an interview. The data will include a summary of principal reflections handed into the superintendent after each teaching experience.

**Potential Risks:**

There are no foreseeable risks to the building level administrators who are participating in this study by the use of interviews.

**Consent Procedures:**

An approval to conduct the study will be delivered to the superintendent of record located in southeastern Pennsylvania. The informed consent document will fulfill the requirements of the East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. The informed consent document will introduce the principal investigator of the research study and provide a brief description of the study. The risks and benefits of the study are outlined within the document. The compensation features and confidentiality procedures will be reviewed. The Superintendent will be directed to individuals associated with the study in the event additional information is needed. It will be reinforced that the study is voluntary and individuals have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. A self-addressed, stamped envelope will be provided for the return of the approval to conduct the study document.

Upon receiving permission from the consenting Superintendent for building level administrators to review the study and return the packet, the individual in charge of human resources for each participating school district will be contacted by telephone to obtain the names, specific positions, and mailing addresses of individuals being asked to participate in this study.

Identified administrators will be forwarded a packet. The packet will be forwarded to the individual's office and will include:

- A description of the study.
- A letter requesting the recipient to participate in the study with an attached self-addressed, stamped envelope.
- Returned packets will indicate consent to participate in the study.
- Letter requesting to receive the results of the study with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Building level administrators who return packet indicating willingness to participate will be sent:

- A description of the study.

- A letter requesting the recipient to participate in the study with an attached self-addressed, stamped envelope.
- An informed consent document will be sent to interview participants as described by the Institutional Review Board Protection of Human Subjects Guidelines.
- A copy of interview questions.
- A request to receive the results of the study with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

**Safeguarding the Subjects:**

Interview Participants: The data from this study will be kept strictly confidential. The sample population participants, identities of the schools, and school district will also remain confidential. A separate self-addressed, stamped envelope will be provided to return the survey separately from any other material. During the interview process the identities of the participant, school, and school district will remain confidential. Individuals seeking the results of the study will be asked to complete a form indicating their desire to receive the study materials. By means of separate mailings, willingness to participate in the interview process and request for study results will be confidentially maintained.

All data will be kept securely locked in a file cabinet with identification codes kept in a separate location. Once the study is completed, the code sheet will be destroyed.

**Benefits of Study:**

The research will provide valuable information about the perceived effects of the program, including the perceptions of teaching principals as instructional leaders. The results of the analysis of the data can be useful to administrators who are considering the act of teaching during the student day as well as superintendents considering the implementation of such a program. It could be useful to administrative educational programs when designing future preparation courses. The results will also be beneficial to building level administrators who wish to incorporate the results of the study into the teacher evaluation process/mentoring of new building level administrators.

## APPENDIX J

### Site Authorization Superintendent/District Letter of Approval for Pilot Study

#### East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**Title:** A Case Study of Teaching Principals, *Administrators with Class*; Examining the Perceptions of Teaching Principals.

**Primary Investigator:** Karl R. Scheibenhofer

**Institution:** East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Dear Dr. Dennis L. Riker, Ed. D:

My name is Karl R. Scheibenhofer and I currently serve as an administrator in the Palisades School District. Educationally, I have been working to obtain my doctoral degree and this study is being done in partial fulfillment of a doctoral degree in Administration and Leadership offered by Indiana University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with East Stroudsburg University. By granting me permission to interview your principals, you will be contributing to the body of knowledge on the perceptions of teaching principals. The findings of this study will be important to superintendents, principals and teachers. Your agreement to permit your principals to participate in the study is completely voluntary.

The purpose of this case study is to research and determine how principals and teachers of a suburban school district located in Pennsylvania perceive the program, *Administrators with Class*. It is a program where principals are required to teach once per semester for the entire day replacing the teacher of record. Meanwhile, the teacher of record is afforded the opportunity to visit peer classrooms. This study specifically looks to determine the impact of this program as it relates to principal and teacher relationships, classroom techniques, and the perception of principals as instructional leaders.

Prior to conducting this study it is necessary for me to establish content and construct validity for the interview guide that will be utilized by conducting a pilot study. Due to the level of knowledge and experience of your administrators, I am requesting your permission to conduct my pilot study at Palisades High School. The pilot study will include principals from your elementary, middle and high school buildings. I am seeking permission to gather data through interview/group discussion followed by a question and answer session for the purpose of gaining feedback regarding the utility of the interview instrument.

In order for me to move forward in this process, the East Stroudsburg University IRB is requesting receipt of a signed consent letter on your school district letterhead. I am providing a detailed explanation of the purpose and procedures that would be implemented during this research study. The consent letter should be faxed to 610-847-2562, Attn: Karl R. Scheibenhofer and the original letter should be sent to: Karl R. Scheibenhofer, 3166 Dovecote Drive Quakertown, PA 18951.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of my request to conduct a research study at your school district. Should you have any questions regarding this request please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 610-636-0248 or email at [kscheibenhofer@palisadessd.org](mailto:kscheibenhofer@palisadessd.org).

Sincerely,

Karl R. Scheibenhofer  
Primary Researcher/Doctoral Student

## APPENDIX K

### Transcript to Expert Panel University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Good Afternoon,

My name is Karl R. Scheibenhofer, and I currently serve as an administrator in the Palisades School District. Educationally, I have been working to obtain my doctoral degree at East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

The purpose of this case study is to research and determine how principals and teachers of a suburban school district located in Pennsylvania perceive the program, *Administrators with Class*. It is a program where principals are required to teach once per semester for the entire day replacing the teacher of record. Meanwhile, the teacher of record is afforded the opportunity to visit peer classrooms. This study specifically looks to uncover the impact of this program as it relates to principal and teacher relationships, classroom techniques, and the perception of principals as instructional leaders.

I am working to establish an expert panel to establish content and construct validity for my interview guide. Panel members will be asked to carefully review the interview statements and to make a judgment about how well the interview questions represent the intent of the case study. You will be asked to assess the clarity and structure of the interview questions in an effort to avoid wordiness, jargon, unbalanced response options, and redundancy which all impact the quality and usefulness of an instrument (Creswell, 2008).

Given your experience and knowledge in the field of education, I am seeking your participation on the expert panel. If you agree to participate on the panel please let me know via email by September 20th, 2013. Upon agreement I will send out an invite to participate in a group meeting to review and discuss the interview guide. If you are unable to make the group meeting, other arrangements will be made. You will receive the interview guide via email one week prior to our scheduled meeting. I ask that all revisions and recommendations be returned to me via email by September 27, 2013.

I thank you in advance for your time and appreciate any support you can offer me in the completion of this research study. If you have any questions, please contact me via phone at 610-636-0248 or email at [kscheibenhofer@palisadessd.org](mailto:kscheibenhofer@palisadessd.org).

Sincerely,

Karl R. Scheibenhofer  
Primary Researcher/Doctoral Student  
East Stroudsburg University/Indiana University of Pennsylvania