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The Walkthrough Observation: The Elementary Principals' and Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of the Walkthrough Observation Tool

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THE WALKTHROUGH OBSERVATION:

THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS' AND ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF

THE WALKTHROUGH OBSERVATION TOOL AFFECT ON PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Rick A. Walsh

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Title: The Walkthrough Observation: The Elementary Principals' and Elementary
                 Teachers' Perceptions of the Walkthrough Observation Tool Affect on
                 Professional Growth

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        The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of the elementary

principals' and elementary teachers' experiences utilizing the Western Pennsylvania Principal's

Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool as a meaningful tool for professional growth for during

the years 2011 to 2013. The researcher utilized Charlotte Danielson's rubric on Growing and

Developing Professionally to measure the connection between the Walkthrough Observation

Tool and the lived experiences of elementary teachers. The researcher contacted the Directors of

the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy to determine which schools were utilizing the

Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy Walkthrough Tool with fidelity. The experts served

as gatekeepers in the selection of the five public elementary schools that participated in this

study. Elementary schools selected all made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in third grade

reading and math, utilized the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania

Principal's Academy for at least three years, and were all located in the suburbs of Pittsburgh,

Pennsylvania. The researcher used semi-structured interview questions to gather data on the

professional growth of elementary teachers. All of the participant's interviews were transcribed

and member checked to assure accuracy. Finally, the researcher used content analysis to identify

consensus, supported, and individual themes. This research study affirmed the relationship

between the Walkthrough Observation Tool of the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy and the professional growth of elementary teacher. The results of this study indicated the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a framework for elementary teachers to enhance knowledge, to seek out feedback from colleagues, and to participate actively in assisting other educators or contribute to the profession.

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I feel very fortunate to have such caring and talented individuals that help me finish this journey. First, I would like to thank my dissertation committee. Dr. Cathy Kaufman, committee chair, supported and guided me through this lengthy process. She could always find something positive to say and provided a pathway for success. She is a wealth of knowledge and I will always be grateful for her incredible mind. I would also like to thank Dr. Joseph Marcoline and Dr. Valeri Helterbran for providing excellent feedback and making my study relevant with all of the changes occurring in the field of education. I owe a debt of gratitude to Joe Werlinich and Dr. Patricia Dunkis. They are the most caring and knowledgeable educators that I have ever met. They have always been there to support me professionally and provide me with the gift of their time. I feel privileged to be one of a select few that worked on their dissertation at their kitchen table.

Completing ones dissertation is a journey, especially when you are carpooling from the South Hills of Pittsburgh. My most memorable moments during this process usually occurred during the drive to and from the university. I would like to thank Brendan Hyland for his constant support and motivation.

I would like to thank my parents John and Mary; they have always inspired me to achieve the unthinkable. I remember as a child a valuable lesson they taught me about the two ways to make a living. One of them is with your mind.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the sacrifice of my family during this journey. My wife Jackie, thank you for your support and encouragement. Thank you for taking care of the kids during my weekend classes. You are an amazing women and I could not have finished this program without you. I dedicate this work to my three children Jessica, Kevin, and Jenna.

Becoming a life-long learner is not a destination, but a journey. Never stop dreaming and learning.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"A high-quality public school system is essential, not only for parents who send their children to

these schools, but also for the public good as a whole"

(Fullan, 2003, p. 4)

Background

Since colonial days, school districts have searched for strategies to improve the quality of

teaching and learning in the classroom. According to Anderson (1993), community members

performed classroom observations to verify teachers were adhering to local community

standards. Early supervision efforts focused on the delivery of the local curriculum. This

summative approach to supervision was accepted practice through the late twentieth century.

Early in the 1980's, there were numerous models claiming that a formative approach to

supervision was more beneficial to provide ongoing professional growth for teachers. There

have also been initiatives to shift from local academic standards to state and national academic

standards.

A Nation at Risk (1983) recommended significant reform to improve the public school

systems. According to Blasé & Blasé (2001), the report recommended the necessity to reforming

teaching and learning in America's public school system. The report also cautioned against

mediocrity entering our public school system. This prompted lawmakers to raise educational

standards for teachers and tightening teacher certification requirements (Gordon, 2003). This

report also made four very specific recommendations for the teaching profession and school

districts. The first recommendation called for higher standards for teachers focused on

instructional delivery in the classroom. In order to obtain a teaching certification, states began to

implement rigorous teaching certification standards. The second recommendation was for an

effective evaluation system that rewarded excellent teachers and removed unsatisfactory

teachers. It also connected evaluation to salary and tenure. Third, school districts worked to

develop leadership opportunities for distinguished teachers. The final recommendation called for

practicing classroom teachers to be more involved with observing untenured teachers (Nation At

Risk, April 1983, Recommendation D).

The Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) examined student data

at five grade levels. This study compared mathematics and sciences scores from forty-one

countries around the world. In the United States, over 33,000 students in 500 schools were

included in this study. According to Stigler & Hiebert (1999), this study showed that American

students were becoming less competitive with other countries around the world. Public school

principals began to focus on instructional leadership in their schools.

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future published *What Matters

Most: Teaching and America's Future* (1996). The report had three guiding principles and five

recommendations for school systems in the United States. The three principles focused on

opportunities to offer professional development for teachers, to create an environment in which

teacher can teach, and to understand the skill of the teacher impacts on what students learn in the

classroom. The commission recommended five areas to improve public education. Four of the

five recommendations focused on improved teaching and learning in every classroom across the

United States. Specifically, school districts focused on providing ongoing professional growth

opportunities for classroom teachers. The goal was for every classroom across America to have

a highly qualified teacher. These recommendations provided the impetus for individual states to

develop standards, to provide a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, and to require principals to become instructional leaders.

Business, government, and educational leaders from across the United States attended The National Education Summit in 1999 focused on assuring that high academic standards were in every classroom. The summit concluded with each state agreeing to focus on providing every classroom with a highly qualified teacher, to provide higher academic standards for students, and to demand more accountability for schools not meeting academic standards.

Pennsylvania revised procedures for professional educators to maintain professional certification and methods on how to evaluate teachers. All teachers with a professional educator certification were required to complete continuing education hours every five years in order to maintain their certificates. Act 48 required all teachers to earn 180 hour of professional development in their area of certification. The Pennsylvania Department of Education required all school staff members that are applying for Instructional II certification to utilize the new state forms based on Charlottes Danielson's framework. Act 45 of 2007 mandated that principals participate in the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) program to develop their skills as instructional leaders. This legislation required school administrators to participate in a standard-based professional development program focused on instructional strategies that have the greatest impact on instructional delivery to improved student achievement. Act 45 also required principals to earn 180 hours of professional development every five years to maintain their K-12 administrative certification. The Pennsylvania Department of Education suspended Act 48 on August 29, 2011 and Act 45 on June 30, 2011. The moratorium lasted until June 30, 2013. All professional educators that received their certificates during the moratorium would have until June 30, 2018 to complete their required 180 hours of professional development.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB) was signed into law by President George W. Bush. This law by the federal government increased accountability for all public schools. The goal was to reform America's educational system. In order to improve academic achievement, NCLB outlined the importance of providing professional educators with substantial opportunities for professional growth. NCLB recommended to "increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in the school" (U.S. Department of Education, 2001, p. 20). For the first time, the federal government had a larger responsibility in transforming America's education system. The NCLB law gave the federal government power to hold school districts accountable for student achievement. According to Elmore (2004), the law mandated that all states provide annual testing for all students from third through eighth grade. The goal was to provide every child in America an opportunity to meet and exceed academic standards (Estacion, McMahon, & Quint, 2004). The law also required all professional educators to be deemed highly qualified in their areas of certification by the year 2006. Public school administrators had to alter their schools to improve teaching and learning with limited funds and resources. In the year 2014, all students were required to achieve 100% proficiency in reading and math. No matter what district, region of the state, or cognitive ability of students, all schools were required to reach this benchmark.

The U.S. Department of Education Race to the Top initiative (USDE, 2010) was an initiative specifically focused on how effective teachers and principals were at improving student achievement. The initiative required states to gauge each student growth, to develop an evaluation system that differentiates teacher effectiveness in the classroom, to evaluate teachers

yearly, and to use the results for data driven building level decisions. Pennsylvania participated in a pilot study to develop, implement, and evaluate a new teacher effectiveness system. The goal was to improve teacher effectiveness to improve student achievement. Research supports effective teachers had a greater influence to improve of students achievement (Darling-Hammonds, 2000), and effective principals played a significant part in advancing successful systems for teaching and learning (Elmore, 2002). The Obama Administration proposal outlined professional growth opportunities for teachers and allowed time within the school day to collaborate with colleagues (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Pennsylvania implemented a new teacher evaluation system with the financial assistances from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation during the 2013-14 school year. The framework for the new teacher evaluation system included an observation rubric for teachers based upon the research of Charlotte Danielson (Rowland, 2009). This framework addressed the full range of teacher performances from beginner to experienced educator. The state required all school districts, intermediate units, charter schools, career and technical schools to use this evaluation tool.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education decided to merge the Pennsylvania Academic Standards with the Common Core Standards. These new Pennsylvania Common Core Standards not only increase rigor and relevance to the curriculum, but increase accountability for school districts. According to Blasé and Blasé (1998), supervision is a process that engages teachers in ongoing dialogue and reflection for improving teaching and learning. To that end, the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy creates opportunities for the principal to collect data, to provide teachers opportunities for reflection, and to ensure Pennsylvania Common Core Standards were present in teaching and learning. The

Walkthrough Observation Tool connected supervision of the classroom teachers and opportunities for customized professional growth. The walkthrough helped establish rituals that focused on teaching and learning. It also ensured that great ideas do not happen only in a single classroom (Graf & Werlinich, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

School districts across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania confronted with helping all students become proficient by the year 2014. Administrators were looking for meaningful ways to improve the quality of instruction in the classroom and provide ongoing opportunities for teachers to grow professionally. This study focused on the perceptions of elementary principals' and elementary teachers' experiences with the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool and the relationship with professional growth. According to Weisberg (2009), schools generally fail to recognize and identify the variations in teacher performance and to align teacher needs with student needs through effective professional development. School districts were searching for ways to utilize data to diagnose areas to improve teaching and learning (USDE, 2010). There was a void in the research between the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy as a strategy to provide ongoing professional growth for elementary teachers.

Purpose of the Study

According to Toch (2008), an inherent problem with teacher observations was that the principal might approach this task as an obligatory duty, rather than a systematic approach to improve classroom instruction. This systematic approach cannot happen in a single classroom visit, but rather through the continuous gathering of data from the teacher in the classroom. There was insufficient educational research on the impact of Western Pennsylvania Principal's

Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool and the professional growth of elementary teachers. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of elementary principals' and elementary teachers' experiences utilizing the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool as a meaningful tool for professional growth for elementary teachers during the years 2011 to 2013.

School districts in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania have utilized the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy to provide feedback to teachers from their building principals or supervisors. This observational framework provided teachers feedback on their lessons. It also allowed the principal to supervise classrooms on a regular basis and discuss teaching and learning with the classroom teacher.

School districts were facing more rigorous Common Core Standards and increasing accountability for all students to reach proficiency. Students were required to pass the Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA) at the elementary level and the Pennsylvania Keystone exams to graduate from high school. The *NCLB* of 2002 emphasized the importance of having a highly qualified teacher in every classroom and its direct correlation to student achievement. This has made teacher professional growth an area of increased focus for today's school districts. Wiggins and McTighe (2006) outline that for a school to be a learning organization, all faculty members should be professional learners. According to Danielson (2007), continuous growth was the goal of a true professional and is never complete. Since the elementary teacher had to plan and prepare for several content areas, content knowledge was an area for teachers to grow and develop professionally.

Research Design

The researcher chose qualitative methodology for this study to investigate the perceptions of elementary principals' and elementary teacher's professional growth experiences utilizing the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to study individuals in their natural setting, to provide flexibility to the study, and to gain a better understanding of the participant's experiences about the topic. Additionally, the participants were professionals working in the public school system. Qualitative methodology allowed the participants the opportunity to share their personal stories regarding walkthrough observations and professional growth. Merriam (1998) stated that qualitative researchers are fascinated in understanding the meaning that people have formed from their work in the field and how they make sense of their experiences.

This study was a descriptive, qualitative study that determined perceptions of the elementary principals and elementary teachers that have used the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy for at least three years in their district. The sample population for this qualitative study was a homogeneous sampling from participants employed for at least three years in good standing with their employer. The Directors of the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy that have worked with school districts to implement the Walkthrough Observation Tool selected five school districts for this study. Elementary schools selected all made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in third grade reading and math, utilized the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy for at least three years, and are all located the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. These public school districts represented Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana,

Washington and Westmoreland counties. Elementary principals and elementary teachers employed in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania who had implemented the Walkthrough Observation Tool for a minimum of three years were potential participants for this study.

The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview process to ascertain the perceptions of elementary principals and elementary teachers. The researcher digitally recorded the interview in order to attain accurate information during this study. Additionally, the researcher utilized field notes and collected artifacts from the participants as a primary source of information.

The researcher collected documentation from the building principals to analysis. Documents included walkthrough observations forms, faculty meetings agendas, list of "look-fors," and in-service day agendas from the years 2011 to 2013. Additionally, the researcher also incorporated member check, and utilized peer examination in the participating school in order to achieve triangulation. The collection of artifacts, member check, and peer examination ensured reliability of the data collected during this study.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would be of interest to principals, supervisors, professional development coordinators and universities that train supervisors. This study provides administrators with insight into the perceptions of teachers regarding the relationship between the classroom walkthrough observation and the professional growth needs of elementary teachers. Additionally, the study provided in-depth look at the importance of principals' conducting classrooms observations to gather formative data about teacher effectiveness to improve instructional delivery. The walkthrough observation was an instructional leadership strategy that allowed principals to gather firsthand evidence of teaching and learning from

individual classrooms.   This study added to the body of literature related to walkthrough

observation and professional growth needs of elementary teachers.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of the study, the following operational definitions and terms are applied:

Classroom observations: frequent, focused, brief visits to classrooms that allow principals to

observe firsthand the teaching and learning that are occurring in the classrooms (Rossi, 2007).

Suburbs: a residential area adjacent to or within commuting distant of a city.

Walkthroughs: unscheduled, informal classroom observations of 3-15 minutes in length followed

by some feedback to the individual teacher (Downey, et al; Sketta & Fisher, 2002; Wiedeman,

2006; Zepeda, 2005).

Formal Observation: classroom observation for an entire instructional period to evaluate, assess

and assist the employee's professional skills and work performance (Skretta, 2010).

Informal Observation: classroom observations of 15-20 minutes in length or longer that include a

post-observation conference (Zepeda, 2005).

Look-fors: specific observable teaching and learning strategies developed by schools to enable

students to improve student achievement (Graf & Werlinich, 2002).

Self-efficacy: a person that believes they can effectively manage and shape positive outcomes in

their lives (Bandura, 1993).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – a measure of NCLB of 2002 that holds schools accountable

for graduation rates, student attendances, and student achievement on standardized tests

(Keruskin, 2005).

Theoretical Framework

This study grounded in theories of supervision and continued professional growth of classroom teachers. First, the supervision model utilized for this study was the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy model on walkthrough observation. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), walkthrough observations are structured classroom visits that used "look-fors" to focus on the elements of effective instruction. Although specific "look-fors" differ from district to district, they should reflect the local, state, and nation academic standards and the district's expectation for instructional delivery (Graf & Werlinich, 2002). Examples included objectives posted in the classroom, maximizing instructional time, and student engagement (see Appendix A). The goal of the walkthrough was to learn more about instruction in the classroom, validate effective instruction, and create a school community of learners. According to Peterson (2004), the walkthrough observation provided more valuable data source than formal observations. The walkthrough observation tool provided principals with snapshots of classroom instruction. These snapshots become a photo album over time that provided the principal with valuable information for differentiated professional growth opportunities for their faculty. Second, this study grounded in the foundational work of Carl Glickman (2002) on supervision needs of teachers and Phillip Schlechty's (2005) evaluation system of continuous improvement as a motivating factor for teachers. For the purposes of this study, the framework of Charlotte Danielson (2007) on growing and developing professionally served as the primary source for the analysis on professional growth of elementary teachers. These theories focused on continuous professional growth for the classroom teacher. The goal was to provide every child with a highly qualified and effective teacher to meet Pennsylvania Common Core Standards. In order to

achieve this goal, principals charged with finding effective ways to supervise their classroom teachers and provide on-demand professional growth opportunities for their faculties.

Research Questions

The research questions guided this study were based on the existing literature regarding walkthrough observations. This study assisted in the evolution of the walkthrough literature into a more qualitative mode, to discover the needs for elementary principals' and elementary teachers' professional growth. The literature on walkthrough observations was largely anecdotal and theoretical. This study documented the characteristics of the walkthroughs observation in public elementary schools settings. The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What are the perceptions of elementary teachers about the Walkthrough Observation Tool as a means of providing professional growth?

2. What are the perceptions of the elementary principals about the Walkthrough Observation Tool as a means of providing professional growth?

3. What are the perceptions identified by elementary teachers about how the walkthrough observation affects their professional growth as identified in Charlotte Danielson's framework on growing and developing professionally?

4. What are the perceptions identified by the elementary principal about how the walkthrough affected professional growth towards the "look-fors" listed on their district's walkthrough observation form?

5. What other professional or personal experiences were elementary teachers having because of walkthrough observations?

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations to this study that may affect the utility of the results. First, the results of the interview were dependent upon the truthful responses of the participants. The researcher used member checking to provide participants an opportunity to volunteer additional information. Second, there may be additional factors associated to the walkthrough observation and principals' use of the walkthrough that were not identified by the interview questions used in this study. The study was limited to the wording of the questions used by the researcher in designing the interview questions. Third, the results of the study may be limited to the bias of the researcher. The researcher was an elementary principal that has been conducting walkthrough observations for twelve years and has made professional presentations on the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Model. Therefore, the researcher did not have a clinical detachment to the topic. In order to address potential bias of the research, the researcher's current and previous districts of employment were not subject to this study. Fourth, the sample used for this study is small and represents five public school districts in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. That calculates to a small sample of the possible public school districts available for the study. The results from this sample may not be representative to other districts or contexts.

Summary

In summary, school districts were facing more accountability to improve teacher effectiveness for improve instructional delivery in the classroom. Pennsylvania is in the process of implementing a new teacher effectiveness model for all teachers. The new evaluation system will directly connect student achievement with evaluation. Teachers evaluations will consist of observation data, building level data, teacher specific data, and elective data from student

learning objectives. The goal behind these initiatives was to make American students more competitive in a global economy. Federal and state initiatives have brought awareness to quality instruction in the classroom and providing professional growth opportunities for teachers to offer each student a highly qualified teacher. The teacher plays a critical role in any school reform initiatives.

According to Strong (1997), the center of any educational reform must involve the classroom teacher for schools to improve. A highly qualified teacher in every classroom had the most impact on student achievement (English & Anderson, 2005). There was a direct correlation between the classroom teacher's instructional strategies and student achievement in the classroom (Hoy & Hoy 2009; Bickers, 1988; Stufflebeam, 1994). Focusing on the professional growth of classroom teachers had become the focus at the local, state, and federal level. As schools strived for all students to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress and score proficient on state assessments, the classroom teacher will remain the focus for years to come.

Focusing on the mandates of *NCLB,* Pennsylvania Common Core, and ongoing professional growth opportunities for classroom teachers, this chapter established the background and need for the study. This researcher outlined the conceptual framework and basic attributes of the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy framework on the Walkthrough Observation Tool. The researcher discussed how walkthrough observations related to the professional growth of elementary teachers. The researcher listed five research questions, definition of terms, research design, and description of the significance of the study. This chapter concluded with limitations of the research. Chapter II will continue with a review of the literature on supervision models, walkthrough observation, and professional growth related to the concepts outlined in Chapter I.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

"The Walkthrough Observation Tool is a major means of changing the culture of the classroom

and school building to one in which both the actor/director (teacher) and the critic (principal or

teacher) work together to view, discuss and revise the play (lesson) to the satisfaction of all

parties, especially the audience (students)."

(Graf & Werlinich, 2002, p. 4)

Introduction

In the year 2014, all students in the state of Pennsylvania need to demonstrate adequate

yearly growth and score proficient on state assessments. School districts across the state made

teaching and learning a priority. Providing differentiated professional development to a diverse

faculty was difficult and costly. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the impact

of the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy on

elementary principals' and elementary teachers' professional growth.   In Chapter II, the

researcher provided an in-depth literature review of existing research on supervision,

walkthrough observation, and professional growth. It is from these three theoretical concepts

that this researcher submits the ideals of interconnectedness between the walkthrough

observation performed by principals and professional growth of elementary teachers. The

literature review included an examination of the history of supervision practices, teacher

supervision models, walkthrough observations models, and professional growth needs of

elementary teachers.

History of Supervision

Since the Colonial times, education of citizens has reflected the values of the time. The New England Calvinists demanded that the community was literate, so they could read and understand the bible. The early focus soon shifted to include civil government lessons into the curriculum (Alfonso, Firth, & Neville, 1975). In 1647, Massachusetts past the Old Deluder Laws to expanded educational opportunities to include reading, writing, and grammar. This law intended to make community members focus on the moral principles that connected to their religious practices (Olivia & Pawlas, 2004). In order to make sure that teachers were following the approved curriculum, early supervision models began to emerge. Supervisors began to observe teachers to make sure that lessons matched the required local curriculum. According to Anderson (1993), community members would perform classroom observations to verify teachers were adhering to local community standards. Further, the teacher's professional and personal lives were under scrutiny. Teachers had to display allegiance to the government and adhere to strict local morals (Anderson, 1993; Alfonso, Firth, & Neville 1975).

Nineteenth Century Supervision Models

During the nineteenth century, the school population began to grow very quickly and more schools began to open their doors. It was during this time that Horace Mann, Massachusetts Legislator, campaigned for public schools funded by local taxes. Horace Mann also developed the first school that specifically focused on teacher education in America (Olivia & Pawlas, 2004). Public education continued to expand and communities began to look away from community members supervising teachers to superintendents and principals performing that function (Olivia & Pawlas, 2004). In the late 1830's, the role of school administrator began to take shape within the common school system. The role of the school administrator during this

time started to become better defined. According to Spain, Drummond & Goodlad (1956), there is not a specific date that the principals began to emerge in public schools. Around the early 1800, that the responsibilities of the school became more centralized. Public schools began employing head masters or principals to manage the school. These school leaders handled discipline, managed the physical plant, matriculation of students, and established policy and procedures for the buildings.

School systems started hiring principals to observe classroom teachers and be in charge of school buildings. According to Sullivan and Glanz (1999), supervisors did not believe in the ability of the classroom teacher to educate students. They perceived classroom teachers as inept and needing supervision. Supervisors had strict controls, but offered little instructional support to improve teaching and learning in the classroom (Anderson, 1993).

Twentieth Century Supervisory Models

During the beginning of the twentieth century, school supervision practices began to mirror the events of the day. One of the major influences at the beginning of the 20th century was the Industrial Revolution. It was during this time, that school system began growing in size. School administrators began to incorporate business theories into the school system. Fredrick Taylor book entitled *The Principles of Scientific Management* provided a framework to manage large organizations. Both the private and public sectors began to utilize Taylor's scientific management theory. According to Hoy & Miskel (1982), Fredrick Taylor's management theory consisted of five guiding principles. The first management theory consisted of a large daily task. Every employee within the organization regardless of skill level must have clearly defined daily tasks. These tasks should encompass the employee entire day. The second theory described standard working conditions. This required the employee to have consistent resources and

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working conditions. The employee should also have access to a common set of tools to maintain

consistency with completing the job requirements. The third theory consisted of high pay for

success. Employees should be reward financially for successfully completing the job. The goal

was to motivate employees by rewarding them monetarily. The opposing theory focused on loss

in case of failure. This theory wanted to make failure personal to the employee. Employees

would not be rewards for not achieving goals. Finally, Taylor has focused on having expertise in

large organizations. During this time, organizations were becoming larger and more

sophisticated. This was not an easy task to manage such a large organization and required

experienced workers.

The private and public sector both embraced Taylor's scientific management theory. It

was common for school administrators to utilize a business model that focuses on supervisors

providing feedback to employees, providing standard conditions within the classroom, and

providing a model to become more efficient (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001). This

model focused on bringing goals and objectives into the educational setting. Schools began to

resemble factories, using a thirteen-year (K-12) assembly line with directives and curriculum for

each stage. The relationship between administrator and teacher organized in a hierarchical

structure (Smyth, 1991). A well-managed organization established a chain of command and had

clear procedures in order to maintain efficiency. Smyth (1991) wrote about this model as a

Newtonian Machine:

> The school is more or less a well-oiled machine that processes (educates?) children. In
>
> this sense, the education system comes complete with production goals (desired end
>
> states); objectives (precise intermediated end states); raw material (children); a physical
>
> plant (school building); a 13-stage assembly line (grades K-12); directives for each stage

(curriculum guides); processes for each stage (teachers); plant supervisors (principals); trouble shooters (diagnosticians); quality control mechanisms (discipline, rules, lock-step progress). (p. 8)

During the mid-twentieth century, the responsibility for supervision and evaluation was becoming a shared responsibility for a growing number of administrators: assistant superintendents, curriculum coordinators, assistant principals, and consultants. During this time, there came the realization that the scientific approach to manage was not effective in schools. In 1960, McGregor advocated that organizations review their methods of control, instead of placing the failures of the organization on its employees. He wrote, "Human behavior is predictable, but, as in physical science, accurate prediction hinges on the correctness of underlying theoretical assumptions . . . if our attempts to control are unsuccessful, the cause generally lies in our choice of inappropriate means" (McGregor, 1960, p. 11). According to Glanz (2000), supervision did not have a clear focus or conceptual base. Researchers began to investigate other ways to help guide theory and practice in the classroom. It was during this time at the University of Pittsburgh, that Goldhammer (1969) and later Cogan (1972) started to formulate the concept of clinical supervision. Supervisors' beliefs about the teaching and learning process started to change. The process of teacher supervision was becoming more collaborative and collegial than previous supervisory models. It was moving away from the previous model of efficiency to focusing on the teaching and learning process. Goldhammer (1965) defined clinical supervision as a very close professional relationship between the teacher and the supervisor. The purpose was for both to discuss observational data with an intense focus on teaching and learning.

Near the end of the twentieth century, supervision of teachers considered a meaningless exercise by both teachers and supervisors (Danielson, 2007). Frase and Streshly (2000), found

the evaluations system was ineffective and named four areas of concern: inflation of evaluation ratings, lack of substantive feedback, lack of alignment between professional growth plans and evaluation, and failure of supervisors to assume responsibility for teacher evaluations. Teachers often reacted to these types of perfunctory evaluations with resistance. *A Nation at Risk* (1983) recommended significant reform to improve the public school systems. According to Blasé & Blasé (2004), the report recommended a focus on improving teaching and learning in America's public school system. The report cautioned against mediocrity entering our public school system. This prompted lawmakers to raise educational standards for teachers and tightening teacher certification requirements (Gordon, 2003). This report also made four very specific recommendations for the teaching profession and school districts. The first recommendation called for higher standards for teachers focused on instructional delivery in the classroom. In order to obtain a teaching certification, states began to implement rigorous teaching certification standards. The second recommendation was for an effective evaluation system that rewarded excellent teachers and removed unsatisfactory teachers. It also connected evaluation to salary and tenure. Third, school district should work to develop leadership opportunities for distinguished teachers. The final recommendation called for practicing classroom teachers to be more involved with observing untenured teachers (Nation At Risk, April 1983, Recommendation D). This report gained the attention of the American public and lawmakers. The result was more specific teacher evaluation guidelines and the beginning of accountability (Ellet, 2003). Supervision was shifting from a summative process to a more formative process that focused on promoting teacher's professional growth and development (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007).

In 1997, The *Third International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) released and compared student achievement form around the world. This study compared mathematics and

sciences scores from 41 countries around the world. Over 33,000 students and 500 schools were included in this study in the United States. According to Stigler & Hiebert (1999), this study showed that American students were becoming less competitive with other countries around the world. Public school principals called to focus on instructional leadership in their schools to improve instructional delivery to improve student achievement.

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future published *What Matters Most: Teaching and America's Future* (1996). This report recommended that public education in the United States needed reformed at its foundation (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Specifically, the report called for reform of the teaching profession. The report's executive summary listed three very specific guiding principles for the teaching profession and school districts**.** The three principles focused on providing opportunities for professional development for teachers, creating an environment in which teacher can teach, and understanding the skill of the teacher impacts what students learn The commission also made five recommendations for improving schools. Four of the five recommendations focused on improving instructional delivery in every classroom across the United States. The first recommendation stressed the importance of standards in every classroom. This prompted states to begin developing their own standards for teaching and learning. The result was more difficult certification requirements, schools not meeting standards closed, and the creation of the National Board Standard for teachers. The second recommendation pointed out that professional development for teachers must focus around standards for students. Teachers were accountable for student achievement focused around state standards. The third recommendation focused on providing each classroom with a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. The commission recommended providing financial support for disadvantaged districts to pay and retain highly qualified teachers in the classroom.

The goal was to attract highly qualified teachers and retain teachers to reduce turnover. The fourth recommendation encouraged school districts to offer incentives for teachers to improve their content knowledge and skills. Many school districts offered financial incentives for teachers that earned National Board Certification. The commission goal was to reward exemplary teachers and remove incompetent teachers. The fifth recommendation was for school districts to hire and retain principals that focused on instruction in the classroom. These recommendations were impetus for individual states to develop state standards, provide a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, and identify the need for principals to be instructional leaders in the building.

Business, government, and educational leaders from across the United States attended The National Education Summit (1999) to focus on assuring that high academic standards were in every classroom. The summit concluded with each state agreeing to focus on providing every classroom with a highly qualified teacher, to provide higher academic standards for students, and to demand more accountability for schools not meeting standards.

On July 1, 2000, Pennsylvania started to revise the manner in which practicing school professionals maintain certification. Professional educators were required to complete continuing education hours every five years in order to maintain an active Pennsylvania professional certificate. Act 48 requires all teachers to earn 180 hours of professional development in their area of certification. Act 45 of 2007 mandated that principals participate in the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) program to develop their skills as instructional leaders. This legislation required school administrators to participate in a standard-based program professional development program focused on instructional strategies that have the greatest impact on instructional delivery to improved student achievement. Act 45 also requires

principals to earn 180 hours of professional development every five years to maintain their K-12 administrative certification.

On August 29, 2011, Act 24 placed a two-year moratorium on Act 45 and 48 continuing professional educational requirements for school leaders and educators. This moratorium will expire on June 30, 2013. The Pennsylvania Department of Education will still honor Act 45 and 48 credits during this statutorily prescribed two-year suspension. The credits/hours earned during this period count towards the new compliance period window.

The federal and state are also required more accountability for students. In the year 2014, all students statewide were required to achieve 100% proficiency in reading and math in grades 3-8. In 2012-13, high school students were required to pass the Pennsylvania Keystone Exams in the subjects of Algebra I, Literature, and Biology. These exams will become a graduation requirement in the year 2017. In order to graduate, students will need to pass the Keystone Exam or complete a graduation project. No matter what district, region of the state or cognitive ability of students, these districts will be required to reach this benchmark.

Twenty-First Century Supervision Models

On January 8, 2002 President George W. Bush signed into law the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, entitled the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Major provisions of the law included increased accountability for states, school districts, more school choice for families, more flexibility of federal education dollars for school districts, and a stronger emphasis on reading and math (U. S. Department of Education, 2004). This law raised the benchmarks for student achievement every year until all students were proficient by 2014. NCLB forced school districts to focus on continuous improvement of classroom teachers.

In 2009, President Obama launched Race to the Top (RTTT). This is a U.S. Department of Education program funded with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) dollars. The RTTT program was the latest attempt by the federal government to improve the public school system. The focal points of the program focused on reform to the areas of teachers and principals to provide high-quality standards and assessments, to improve achievement in poor performing schools, and to using data to drive instruction. The program represents a $4.35 billion investment in schools. This is the largest investment in school reform. This competitive program awarded monies to nine states and to the District of Columbia in August 2010. The act considered groundbreaking education reform that affected 13.6 million students and 980,000 teachers in 25,000 schools.

In 2012, Pennsylvania joined 22 other states that received money under the federally funded RTTT grant program. Pennsylvania received $41,326,299 to focus on teacher growth, national standards, and improve student achievement. Pennsylvania developed the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards and an evaluation system for all public school employees that used student achievement data. The goal was to increase the number of outstanding teachers working in classrooms. A significant focus of this grant was to implement a statewide teacher evaluation system. Pennsylvania implemented a new teacher evaluation system with the financial assistances from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation during the 2013-14 school year. The framework for the new teacher evaluation system included an observation rubric for teachers based upon the research of Charlotte Danielson (Rowland, 2009). This framework addresses the full range of teacher performances from beginner to experienced educator. The goal of the new evaluation system was to provide better data on the teacher's instructional delivery to meet the needs of students and increase academic achievement. The state required all school districts,

intermediate units, charter schools, career and technical schools to use this evaluation tool.

Research indicated that effective teachers are the primary factor in student learning. Marzano

(2009) found that teachers who are classified as "most effective" were expected to produce

student achievement that is 54% higher than a teacher who is classified as "least effective."

Race to the Top defined an effective teacher as one that utilizes instructional strategies in order to

achieve student learning results (effective teacher = student achievement). Principal's evaluation

focused on providing opportunity for professional growth for their faculty. Since, school

principals do not directly instruct students, an effective principal in someone who established the

climate and culture to develop teacher effectiveness (effective principal = effective teachers).

Currently, many school districts do not measure teacher effectiveness and poor performances are

not addressed (Weisberg, 2009).

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Supervision Models

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In the past, teacher supervision defined by teacher behavior or performance in the

classroom (Ellett, Loup, Naik, Chauvin, & Claudet, 1994). Supervision was a rigid evaluation

tactic that neglected student outcomes and placed restriction on teachers in the classroom (Blasé

& Blasé, 2004). There is much literature on supervision models. In this section, the researcher

will discuss the clinical, developmental, differential and walkthrough supervision models.

Clinical Supervision

According to Hoy & Forsyth (1986), clinical supervision started with Morris Cogan

exploring various methods to manage interns at Harvard University. Cogan (1972) describe

clinical supervision:

> The rationale and practice designed to improve the teachers' classroom performance. It
>
> takes its principal data from the events of the classroom. The analysis of these data and

the relationships between teacher and supervisor form the basis, of the program, procedures, and strategies designed to improve the students' learning by improving the teacher's classroom behavior. (p. 54)

Clinical supervision was a form of developmental supervision designed to give supervisors a system for helping teachers improve instruction and increase professional growth and to help correct the neglect of in-class supervision (Sergiovani & Starratt, 2007). Robert Goldhammer refers to clinical supervision as being an image of face-to-face relationships between supervisors and teachers. Goldhammer (1969) developed a five-step process that principals utilized today. The five stages in clinical supervision are pre-observation, observation, analysis and strategy, supervision conference and post-conference analysis.

The purpose of the pre-observation conference was to identify strategies and purpose for the classroom observation. Goldhammer (1969) recommends building relationships with the teacher and provides a framework. First, Goldhammer recommends to review the teacher's lesson plans before the observation and avoid being critical. If the principal determines the teacher is not prepared or the lesson was going to fail, the principal must persuade the teacher not to proceed with the lesson. Second, the principal should focus on the goals and objectives the teacher prepared for the meeting. During the meeting between the principal and teacher, the principal should not recommend changes. The teacher would not have time to revise the lesson plan, change procedures, and gather materials before the observation. Third, Goldhammer's recommendation is to frame the pre-observation conference using the teacher's terms, not the supervisor. The goal is to have open communication between the principal and the teacher. The principal should create an environment that is non-treating to encourage an honest, open dialog.

The next step was to conduct an in-class observation. The principal's goal was to summarize the teacher's behaviors during the lesson. This allowed the principal share detailed information about the lesson at the post-observation conference. Goldhammer (1969) suggests that the supervisor needs to take copious notes about the observation and avoid any subjective comments about the lesson.

The post-observation provided a venue for the principal and teacher to formulate plans for improved instruction. Acheson and Gall (2003) recommend that the principal structure the post-conference around four key points. The first was to provide objective feedback based upon observation data. Second, the teacher should be encouraged by the principal to reflect upon their lesson. Third, the principal should provide strategies, goals, and techniques for the teacher to consider. Last, the supervisor should encourage the teacher to attempt different methods and provide opportunity for the teacher to compare and contrast the methods.

The clinical supervision approach transformed supervisory practice to focus more on the examination of classroom data and the rapport between principal and teacher (Cogan, 1972; Goldhammer, 1969). The focus was on assisting teachers to improve teaching and learning (Acheson & Gall, 2003). This approach to supervision was very time intensive for all stakeholders. According to Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007), not all teachers required this approach.

Developmental Supervision

The developmental supervision model consists of four approaches. They included directive control assistance, directive informative behavior, collaborative behavior mode, and non-directive behaviors. According to Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2001), developmental supervision objective was to match the teacher's years of experience,

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performance in the classroom, and strengths with the appropriate supervision model. The first

mode of developmental supervision was directive control assistance. This mode involved the

principal designing goals for the teacher to achieve. This approach was for teachers that need

assistance with content knowledge, best research-based strategies, or motivation in the

classroom. Second, directive informational behavior mode allowed the teacher to have limited

input in designing goals. The principal used this approach when teaches were confused about a

particular practice. Third, collaborative behavior mode occurred when the principal and teacher

worked collaboratively on goals and objectives. Principals used this approach with teachers

when both have the same amount of expertise, agree to share the decision-making process, share

equal commitment, and the teacher can function at a high developmental level. Last, non-

directive supervision occurred when the teacher's was able to reflect upon their knowledge,

skills, and expertise. The teacher was able to identify what needs to be changed and is able to

work independently on the task (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001). During this

approach, the teacher designs his or her own goals. The supervisor role was to function as a

facilitator and allow the teacher to reflect upon their goals during the process.

Differentiated Supervision

In the previously described two models of clinical supervision and developmental models

of supervision, the supervisor decided on the evaluation model for the teacher. These models of

classroom observations with pre-conferences and post-conferences were not meeting the needs

of many school systems (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). The traditional supervision model began

to shift to a model that offered more options to teachers. According to Glatthorn (1997),

classroom teachers need to be empowered to choose a variety of options of supervision.

Supervision was shifting to a more customized model for classroom teachers. The focus was on

how to evaluate teachers that would promote a high quality of teaching (Danielson, 2007; Glickman 2001).

Differentiated supervision provided teachers various options on the type of supervision and evaluation. This empowered teachers' options of to match their needs with an appropriate supervision model. According to Glatthorn (1997), differentiated supervision provided the teacher, principal, and school system varying perspectives. The first perspective focused on the importance of professionalizing teaching. Glatthorn (1997) believed that professional educators should have more input into their professional growth. Apart of this process was for teachers to receive feedback from their colleagues. The second perspective focused on the impact a differentiated supervision model would have on the organization. The differentiated supervision model would build a collegial atmosphere within the organization (Glatthorn, 1997). Building a collegial environment creates a climate and culture that allows colleagues to offer advice and provide feedback (McLaughlin & Yee, 1988). The third perspective focused on the supervisor's role in a differentiated supervision model. In the age of accountability, principals were responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of their buildings, continuing to demonstrate Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), and meeting the demands of all stakeholders. Principals reported that they were "bombarded" by so many student needs, teacher and parent concerns, and district and state requirements that they did not have time to focus on individual professional development for teachers (Glickman, 2002). According to Badiali and Levin (1984), supervisors had difficulty finding the time to perform one or two classroom observation for each teacher in their building. They reported that most principals spend only 2.5-10% of their time in classrooms. According to Glatthorn (1997), the principal needs time to conduct clinical observations for teachers that need support in the classroom. A differentiated supervision model

provide more time for principals. This allowed the supervisor to save valuable time and focus time efficiently. The fourth perspective focused on the teacher's perspective regarding the differentiated supervision model. According to Glatthorn (1997), professional growth needs of teachers' vary based on their content knowledge and years of service. In a differentiated supervision model, the goal is to match teachers' needs to appropriate supervisory models (Danielson, 2007; Glickman, 2002). The differentiated model moved formal evaluations away from the principal and allowed teachers to conduct self-assessments. (Danielson, 2007).

Glatthorn's (1997) differentiated supervision model has three developmental options and differentiates supervision from evaluation. It recommended that a differentiated supervision model correlated with a differentiated evaluation model for teachers. The three developmental options are intensive, cooperative or self-directed to meet the various needs of teachers. The first option in Glatthorn's (1997) model was intense development. This very time intensive model was comparable to the clinical supervision model. The intense model intended for teachers that are experiencing difficulty in the classroom and all non-tenured teachers. School districts used this intense evaluation model for making long-term decisions on tenure, promotion, or contract extensions (Glatthorn, 1997). During this option, the supervisor works closely with the teacher to provide support and monitor progress. The second option was cooperative development. During this option, teachers work in small cooperative teams and collaborate about how to grow professionally. Teachers would meet to discuss best practices, conduct action research, and focus on curriculum development (Gatthorn 1997). The third option was the self-directed development. This option permits the teacher to work independently. The teachers were responsible for their own professional development. During this option, teachers generate their own goals to grow professionally and self-reflect upon progress towards their goals.

Wandering Around Supervision

        The supervision model of Wandering Around was developed Hewlett Packard to monitor employees and production. The company formally adopted the Management by Wandering Around (MBWA) as their supervisory approach. The goal was for managers to get out from behind their desks to become visible in the workplace and engage workers. In a book entitled *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies,* Peters and Waterman (1984) conducted a study of seventy-five innovative companies that were effective in responding to change. Peters and Waterman identified eight commonalities among these companies. One of the commonalities was managers' walking around the facility. The goal was for managers and employees to work cooperatively on a shared goal. The managers were involved in the day-to-day operations with their workers (Peters & Waterman, 1984). This approach is an interactive, interpersonal approach to leadership. According to Frase and Hetzel (1990), leaders that participate in MBWA created an environment of collegiality, participation and involvement.

        The business model of MBWA introduced into school systems in the 1990's (Frase & Hetzel, 1990). It emphasize that there are three primary principles to MBWA that are relevant to school systems. The principles were caring, openness, and trust. The first principle of caring about people in the organization was the hallmark of this leadership approach. According to Frase and Hetzel (1990), the goal was for all stakeholders within the organization to communicate and focus on making the organization successful. This principle was not about the individual accomplishments, but the accomplishments of the organization. The second principle was openness. The goal was for the principal to create an environment of open communication between all stakeholders (Frase & Hetzel, 1990). Input and suggestions from teachers should be valued. The principal's responsibility was to create an environment that was respectful of the

teacher's opinion. The third principle of trust was critical in the MBWA model for supervisors. According to Frase & Hetzel (1990), principals need to be cognizant of their words and behaviors that promoted a culture of trust or mistrust. These three principles of caring, openness, and trust with a "well-focused visit" (p. 75) are important to improve an organization's productivity.

In 2002, a study of three schools in Australia that used the MBWA approach found positive results. Supervisors reported a positive impact of their leadership, improved communication with teachers about pedagogy, and a better understanding of teachers' competencies. The reviews of the supervision models provided background to the demands that face supervisors today. The supervision process has developed from a summative approach to a more formative endeavor. This shift represents the importance of teachers as valuable resources within the organization. It also represented the need to continually improve the skills of classroom teachers and provide the necessary professional growth to meet to educational demands of the 21st century.

Walkthrough Models

Due to the effectiveness of MBWA, various uses developed to help administrators conduct classroom observation to focus on instructional delivery of the classroom teacher (Frase & Hetzel, 1990). To narrow the focus for this study, this literature review will focus on a few models from the early stages of the walkthrough to present day models. The models include The Downey Walkthrough, The Learning Walk, iObservation, and the Principal Academy of Western Pennsylvania Model. These models are representative of the various types of tools that currently used by school systems to support the walkthrough observation process.

Downney Walkthrough Model

Carolyn Downey started conducting classroom walkthroughs in the 1960's to become noticeable to classroom teachers. She wanted to send a message to acknowledge the importance of the job done by her faculty (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004). Years later, Carolyn Downey adopted the Madeline Hunter model and began using Hunter's Mastery Teaching strategies as the criteria for walkthrough observations. It was not until Downey attended a training by Sue Wells Welsh that she incorporated "reflective thought" (Downey et al., 2004, p.10) into the walkthrough process. There are five elements to the Downey Walkthrough. They elements included:

1. brief and focused classroom visits

2. reflection

3. data collection

4. post conference

5. making classroom visits informal and collaborative.

The Downey Walkthrough consisted of brief classroom visits lasting for only a couple minutes. The goal was for the principal to collect information on instructional strategies and student achievement from the classroom. These walkthroughs were to supervise teachers and not intended for evaluation of teachers (Downey, et al., 2004). The justification for brief classroom visits was to allow the supervisor to conduct numerous visits throughout the building and throughout the year. According to Downey, principals were able to gather valuable information about individual classroom teachers from brief classroom observations. These brief observations also would give the principal valuable information about the school building.

The Downey Walkthrough goal was for teachers to become reflective practitioners. According to Downey (2004), her walkthrough model designed for the principal to assist the teacher in reflecting upon classroom lesson. This provided the principal an opportunity to identify areas for the teacher to reflect upon in the areas of curriculum and instruction. Downey believed that the teachers needed to be "personally responsible for their growth" (Downey, 2004, p. 3). The goal was for the principal to ask reflective questions to the teachers in order to foster continuous professional growth.

The Downey Walkthrough required the supervisor to collect data in the areas of curriculum and instruction. The goal was to gather data from the classroom to determine the professional needs of the teacher. One of the concerns about 2-3 minute walkthrough observations was collecting data. The principal needed more time to observe the teacher's instructional delivery and to make sure curriculum followed in the classroom (Downey, et al., 2004).

The post-observation consisted of providing feedback to the teacher about the walkthrough observation. Downey (2004) did not believe this needed to occur after every walkthrough observation. The goal was to observe teachers several times to collect enough data to engage in meaningful conversations about curriculum and instruction.

The Downey Walkthrough designed to be informal and collaborative process. The supervisor role was to provide feedback or follow-up about the walkthrough observation. According to Downey (2004), brief meetings provided constructive feedback to improve instruction in the classroom. These meeting also helped the principal to determine how effective the teacher's instructional strategies were during the lesson. According to Peters and Waterman (1984), informal feedback leads to "more action, more experiments, more learning" (p. 124).

Downey recommended that principals utilize a five-step process to provide feedback to teachers. These steps include student engagement, lesson objective, instructional strategies, reviewing student work, and safety in the classroom.

The Learning Walk Model

The Institute of Learning at University of Pittsburgh developed the Learning Walk framework for school administration to focus on classroom instruction. This tool designed for getting smarter about teaching and learning through professional development (Institute for Learning, 2011). The Institute for Learning developed a theoretical framework that focused on effective classroom instruction called Principles of Learning. These Principles of Learning are:

- Organizing for Effort

- Clear Expectations

- Fair and Credible Evaluations

- Recognition of Accomplishments

- Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum

- Accountable Talk

- Socializing intelligence

- Self-management of Learning

- Learner as Apprenticeship

The Principles of Learning goals were for school systems to examine effective instructional practices in the classroom. These principles helped to focus the walkthrough observation on teaching and learning. They also provided a framework for conversations before, during and after the walkthrough observation.

This model has three components: orientation, observation, and debriefing (Institute for Learning, 2011). The orientation provided the participants an opportunity to establish a focus for the walkthrough observation. The observation provided an opportunity to observe teaching and learning. The observation usually lasted about five to ten minutes in length. During this time, participants analyzed student assignments, observe classroom visual aids, and converse with students about what they are learning in class (Institute of Learning, 2011). After visiting the classroom, participants gathered to debrief, to synthesize data from the classroom, and to generate questions for the teachers. Finally, the principal would facilitate a debriefing with the participants and plan for future classroom observations.

The Learning Walk conducted according to three approaches: observational, collegial, and supervisory. First, the building principal conducted frequent observational walkthroughs. This allowed the principal to gather information before conducting a collegial walkthrough with other faculty and staff. The collegial approach conducted by the supervisor and teachers within the building. This approach used to identify concerns with teaching and learning that the principal may have missed. The goal was to promote collegiality within the building. The third approach was the supervisory. This approach involves the building supervisor and a member from central administration. After the observation, the supervisor would write comments and questions to foster a deeper understanding for professional growth (Institute of Learning, 2011). According to Ovando and Combs (2011), when teachers received factual classroom observation data, teachers valued the written feedback from the supervisor. The Learning Walks provided an opportunity for professional growth for all stakeholders within the building. According to the Institute for Learning (2011), walkthroughs should be part of a school district's professional

development plan. The goal is for all stakeholders to develop a shared vision on teaching and learning.

iObservation Model

The iObservation (2011) system provided a framework for principals manage walkthrough observation data, generate observational reports, and store evaluation data. This web-based program allowed the principal or teacher to review classroom data and provided on-demand professional development opportunities from any internet connected devise. The system includes electronic access for the conceptual frameworks of Charlotte Danielson's rubric on professional practice, Robert Marzano's research-based instructional strategies, and Douglas Reeves's research-based elements for leadership.

The Charlotte Danielson's teacher evaluation framework incorporated the four domains of Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities (Danielson, 2007). This framework provided a rubric of state teaching standards for professional practice. This framework allowed teachers to facilitate self-assessment for professional growth by collecting data from the classroom. According to the iObservation website (2011), Danielson has established standards for teaching and provided a systematic approach to enhance teaching practices. The framework instituted common terminology for instruction to connected professional growth for the teacher.

The Robert Marzano framework allowed school district to support the professional growth of master teachers (iObservation, 2011). Marzano's Suite provided resources for school districts to enhance instructional delivery in the classroom. His framework provided forty-one research-based instructional strategies to support effective teaching and learning. The observational feedback provided teachers on-going professional growth about effective

instructional strategies in the classroom. Marzano's online library provided professional

development resources and graduate level courses for teachers.

Douglas Reeves Leadership Matrix is also included with the iObservation. The

Leadership Performance Matrix was an assessment tool designed to support teacher growth and

student achievement. According to the iObservation (2011) website, Reeves's Performance

Matrix provides the tool to support leadership assessment. The Leadership Performance Matrix

provided clear definitions of leadership performance and continuous feedback for veteran, new

and aspiring school leaders. Reeves's framework was a collaborative process that structures

collegial conversations among veteran, new, and aspiring leaders through professional learning

communities. It also promoted observation and evaluation as part of a holistic learning system to

develop effective leadership.

The iObservation system goal was to help school districts connect observational data,

research-based strategies, and a leadership model to help improve classroom instruction to

improve student achievement. The system applied technology in a customizable system for

school districts. According to iObservation (2011), the system helped districts institute a

universal language of effective instruction in the classroom. Its goal was to improve the

teacher's instructional delivery. When teachers utilized best practices in the classroom, the result

should be increased student achievement. The iObservation build trust between the principal and

the classroom teacher. The principal and teacher understand the instructional expectations. The

teacher was also aware of what the principal was looking for during the walkthrough

observation. It engages teachers to reflect on their lessons and encourages collaboration with

within the building and virtual professional learning communities.

School districts had the ability to provide customized feedback for teachers using the iObservation on-line resources. These resources provided research-based instructional strategies, provided state evaluation forms, and provided school districts with the ability to customize their observation forms. The goal of iObservation was to support teaching and learning in the following:

- Establish a common understanding of effective instruction.

- Create a singular focus on enhancing teaching to increase student learning.

- Develop trust with teachers through a focused and fair walkthrough and observation process.

- Engage in reflection and collaboration within virtual professional learning communities.

- Save time and money by eliminating ineffective professional development programs.

- Connect teacher learning to student learning.

- Help principals and administrators monitor and support effective teaching.

- Build capacity and implement for sustainability. (iObservation, 2010, p. 2)

Through the iObservation web-based program, principals and teachers had access to research-based instructional strategies any time. These resources included video demonstrations, early literacy research, and state evaluation forms.

Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Model

In 2002, Otto Graf and Joseph Werlinich designed the Walkthrough Observation Tool, a process in which the observer, usually the principal, collects data by observing classrooms (Keruskin, 2005). This Walkthrough Observation Tool focused classroom supervision on instructional delivery of the teacher. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the Walkthrough Observation Tool allowed teachers to observe and reflect on instructional delivery in the

classroom. The goal was for the supervisor to validate effective instructional strategies and share

the strategies that allowed teachers to create a professional learning community. Graf and

Werlinich (2004) identified specific goals of the walkthrough observation. They included:

1. For principals and teachers to learn more about instruction and learning;

2. To focus teachers and the principal on student work and the learning process;

3. To validate effective teaching practice and ensure continued use;

4. To create a community of learners for adults and students;

5. To open the school and classroom to all staff;

6. To improve decision making about instruction and learning;

7. To design more useful professional growth opportunities.

Graf and Werlinich (2002) developed the Walkthrough Observation Tool to gather information

on teaching and learning.   Graf and Werlinich believed the Walkthrough Observation Tool sent

a clear message that teaching and learning were the primary focal point of the school. They

believed that the walkthrough could positively affect the climate and culture of the school. It

allowed focused collaboration between the principals and teachers. These conversations focused

around lesson development, state standards, and strategies to meet the needs of all students.

"Principals and teachers begin to focus on those things that make a difference in improving

achievement." (Graf & Werlinich, 2002, p. 6)

The walkthrough observation can positively affect the climate and the culture of the

school building. According to Graf & Werlinich (2004), walkthrough observation becomes part

of the building culture when principal conducted classroom observations regularly. Graf and

Werlinich (2002) recommended 15 specific steps process to utilize the Walkthrough Observation

Tool. First, principals should carry out a walkthrough observation to gather base-line data on

teaching and learning within the school. The base-line data helped focus on the instructional needs of the building. The goal was to observe classrooms and gather base-line data of research-based instructional strategies within the school. Second, principals began with meeting with faculty and staff. The principal's goal during this meeting was to set clear expectations for participates in the walkthrough observation. Third, the principal and teachers created a clear focus for future walkthrough observations. The group worked together to identify precise strategies of effective instructional delivery. This step included the recognition of "look-fors" during instructional delivery. Fourth, connect the instructional "look-fors" to the local, state, and national standards. This step developed a universal language for all stakeholders and established indicators focused teaching and learning. Fifth, the principal scheduled walkthrough observation for the building. The principal established a classroom observation schedule for the team to observe several classrooms in the building. The building principal reviewed the list of "look-fors" for the team to focus on during the walkthrough observation. Sixth, the team needed to collect specific artifacts or collect data on specific behaviors observed during the walkthrough. Behaviors may include student or teacher actions during the lesson. The artifacts included student work, resources used during instruction, and classroom physical design. Before the walkthrough observation, It is important that all faculty members were aware artifacts would be collected from the classroom. Seventh, the principal collected and reviewed data from the walkthrough observation. The principal's objective was to determine how and where the "look-fors" were implemented throughout the building. Eighth, observed student behaviors that affect learning in the classroom. The primary focus of the walkthrough observation was to analyze classroom work, strategies, and techniques that positively improved student achievement. During the walkthrough, the information that students provided was valuable data about

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instruction practices in the classroom. Ninth, validate effective teaching in the building. When

principals validate effective instructional practices, the faculty and staff had a better

understanding that improving instruction was essential to improve student achievement. Tenth,

it was important to debrief with teachers after the walkthrough observation. The principal

accomplished this by oral or written feedback, short faculty debriefing meeting, and group

conferences. When the principal offered feedback to faculty and staff, the principal validated

effective instruction and identified areas of improvement in the building. The goal was to

provide an opportunity for reflective dialogue among the principal, faculty, and staff to focus on

continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Eleventh, the principal used a variety of

strategies for debriefing faculty and staff. This step provides the principal with an opportunity to

build and enhance the learning community in the building. During this step, the principal

validated effective instructional practices and encouraged feedback from faculty members.

When teachers share best practices, it created an opportunity for reflection and dialogue within

the learning community. Twelfth, this step required the principal to become an instructional

leader and dialogue with the faculty about effective instructional delivery in the classroom. The

goal was to dialogue with teachers about the teaching and learning process. Thirteenth, this step

focused on creating a school climate and culture focused around improving instructional delivery

and student success.   When the walkthrough observation conducted on a regular basis, it

becomes part of the culture of the building. It is important for principals to establish a visible

presents in the classroom. Fourteenth, the principal, faculty, and staff should create learning

communities to focus on quality instruction. The walkthrough observation provided an

opportunity for ongoing professional growth for all stakeholders. Finally, the last step is for the

building principal was to remind the participants of the code of conduct during the walkthrough

observation. All participants must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times in the classroom. Participants must remain respectful and confidential during and after the walkthrough observation process. The goal is for all stakeholders to build capacity and improve instructional delivery.

According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the Walkthrough Observation Tool required time to implement properly within a school building. It required principals and teachers to develop a list of "look-fors" to clarify the instructional focus. According to Graf and Werlinich (2002):

> Look-fors recognize specific descriptors of certain conditions that when present in the class enable all students to improve their achievement and learning levels. If we believe, for example, that all students can learn in an environment if clear expectations are present, then teachers and the principal must identify what strategies when applied in the classroom establish clear expectations for students. Once identified, teachers and the principal work together to implement those strategies in every classroom throughout the school. (p. 5)

The Walkthrough Observation Tool provided schools an opportunity to focus on improving the climate and culture of the building and improve instructional delivery to improve student achievement (Keruskin, 2005; Rossi 2007). According to Graf and Werlinich (2002), the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a resource for all stakeholders to improve instruction and provide ongoing professional growth.

Walkthrough and Professional Growth

The National Staff Development Council (2009) challenged teachers and administrators to design a professional development system focused on providing effective professional growth

opportunities everyday to improve student achievement. Every school district challenged to create ongoing, sustained, and results-driven professional development. Teachers need to receive feedback regarding their effectiveness from multiple sources of data that include self-assessments, peer observations, and walkthrough observations by the building principal (Marzano, 2009).

In the era of accountability, school districts were all striving for continuous improvement in order to meet the needs of No Child Left Behind (2001) and U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top (2010). The walkthrough observation was an important resource to change teacher's feeling towards professional growth (Downey, 2004). Principals increase teacher effectiveness and satisfaction by frequent observations to classrooms (Andrew & Soder, 1987). Teachers regard principals who were frequent visitors in classrooms and serve as active participants in solving instructional problems as effective leaders (Blasé, 1987). Additionally, appropriate feedback from the principal provided the teacher with an opportunity for reflection (Downey et al., 2004).

The Walkthrough Observation Tool provides a framework for principals to visit classroom to dialogue with teachers about professional growth. When teachers are involved in planning their own professional growth, they were motivated to improve instruction in order to improve student achievement.

In an examination of sixty-nine studies of 2,802 schools, effective leadership behaviors identified as one of the most important factors in implementing change in schools (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). The study identified the importance of the principal's awareness of the strengths and needs of faculty. Monitoring and evaluation were the most important indicators to make changes within the school system. In addition, visibility and situational

awareness were identified behaviors of principals at successful schools (Marzano et al., 2005).

According to Manasse (1985), "to be successful in managing the goal-setting process and

achieving consensus and commitment among staff, a principal first must have a comprehensive

understanding of the school and all of interacting parts" (p.445). Classroom observation

instruments provided data on the effectiveness of teaching, allowed for the collection of

summative and formative data, and considered trustworthy by stakeholders (Little, Goe, & Bell,

2009). While conducting walkthrough observations, the principal's primary responsibility was

to gather data about teaching and learning. In order to provide professional development

opportunities, the principal needed to be aware of the commitment, expertise, and needs of each

teacher (Glickman, 2002; Reeves 2006).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study grounded in the work of Carl Glickman (2002)

on supervision needs of teachers, in Phillip Schlechty's (2005) Six Critical Systems at the Heart

of Educational Innovation, and in Charlotte Danielson's (2007) teacher evaluation framework. It

is from these three views on supervision that the researcher submitted the ideals of

interconnectedness between the walkthrough observation and professional growth of elementary

teachers.

Glickman examined instructional leadership and supervision. His framework focused on

the culture of the school, teacher's growth, developmental leadership, democratic education, and

collegial supervision. This study examined the principal's role in promoting professional growth

for teachers by using the Walkthrough Observation Tool as an approach to supervision.

This research grounded in the research of Phillip Schlechty (2005) whose framework

identified six critical systems to reform schools. He examined how schools can sustain

continuous growth to build better schools for the future. Schlechty outlined six critical systems

for introducing disruptive innovations to revitalize schools. The systems include:

1. Directional System

2. Knowledge Development and Transmission System

3. Boundary System

4. Power and Authority System

5. Induction System

6. Evaluation System

This study focused on Schlechty's evaluation system of continuous improvement as a motivating

factor for teachers. In the book *Creating Great Schools: Six critical Systems at the heart of*

Educational Innovation, Schlechty (2005) defined the evaluation system as the process of

comparing standards to actual performance. The goal was for learning organizations to focus on

continuous improvement for all stakeholders. By focusing of continual improvement within the

evaluation system, all schools stakeholders are motivated to improve towards their goals.

For the purposes of this study, Charlotte Danielson's framework on Growing and

Developing Professionally served as the primary source for the analysis on professional growth

of elementary teachers. This study specifically examined the impact the walkthrough

observation and professional growth as it relates to Charlotte Danielson's (2007) book entitled

Enhancing Professional Practice. Danielson's book outlines a very detailed framework for

teaching. The framework grounded in the constructivist view of teaching, learning, and growing

professionally. The book defined four domains of teaching responsibility: Planning and

Preparation (Domain 1), Classroom Environment (Domain 2), Instruction (Domain 3), and

Professional Responsibilities (Domain 4). According to Danielson (2001), the framework was

the foundation for professional conversations among principals and teachers to enhance their teaching and learning. The first domain focused on planning and preparation. Prior to the lesson, Teachers' must demonstrate knowledge on content, instructional outcomes, resources, and to design a coherent instruction for their classrooms. The second domain focused on the classroom environment. This domain highlights the teacher's ability to produce a classroom environment of respect and the teacher's rapport with students. It also focused on the teacher's skill to promote a culture of learning, to organizing the physical space of the classroom, and to manage classroom procedures and student behaviors. The third domain focused on instruction. This domain targets how teachers communicate with their students during questioning and discussion. It also examined the techniques teachers use during instruction, how teachers engage students in learning, the use of assessments in instruction, and ways they demonstrate responsiveness to the needs of the student during instruction. Finally, the fourth domain's focal point was on professional responsibilities. This included how the teacher reflects on teaching, maintains accurate educational records and communicates with all stakeholders. It also focused on the teacher growing and developing professionally by engaging in professional development opportunities and demonstrating professionalism at all times.

Pennsylvania implemented a new teacher evaluation system with the financial assistances from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation during the 2013-14 school year. The framework for the new teacher evaluation system included an observation rubric for teachers based upon the research of Charlotte Danielson (Rowland, 2009). This framework addresses the full range of teacher performances from beginner to experienced educator. This framework addressed the full range of teacher performances from novice to master teacher. The framework was appropriate for all professional employees from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The state required all

school districts, intermediate units, charter schools, career and technical schools to use this evaluation tool.

Summary

The purpose of this literature review was to examine the history of supervision practices, teacher supervision models, walkthrough observations models, and professional growth needs of elementary teachers. There was a need for school districts to provide ongoing professional development for classroom teachers. The state and federal government continued to demand more rigorous curriculum and more accountability for school personnel. Pennsylvania adopted a new teacher evaluation model that included collecting data on student achievement. Supervision has moved from a summative to a more formative approach for the evaluation of teachers in the classroom. School districts were facing more accountability to improve student achievement. The goal behind these initiatives was to make American students more competitive in a global economy. The federal and state initiatives have brought awareness to the importance of providing ongoing professional growth to classroom teachers to offer each student a highly qualified teacher. It is critical for school system to focus on the quality of the classroom teacher. As schools strive for all students to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress and score proficient on state assessments, the classroom teacher will remain the focus for years to come.

In conclusion, the literature review focused on how supervision has progressed from a summative to a formative model over the years. The research specific to the walkthrough observation and professional development needs of teachers. Therefore, this study added to the current body of literature of the effectiveness of the walkthrough observation and its affect upon the professional growth of elementary teachers.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

"Every visit to a classroom opens the opportunities to collect important data about the teaching

and learning occurring within the classroom"

(Graf & Werlinich, 2002, p. 7)

Introduction

The information in Chapter III describes the methodology utilized in this study. Included

is the Statement of the Problem, Research Questions, Population Sample, and Research Design.

Additionally, this researcher provided a plan for data collection and a description of strategies for

data analysis. This study assisted in the evolution of supervision of teachers, walkthrough

observations, and ongoing professional growth for elementary classroom teachers. The

Walkthrough Observation Tool was an instructional leadership strategy that allowed firsthand

observations of instructional delivery occurring in the classroom. The purpose of this study was

to examine the perceptions of elementary principals' and elementary teachers' experiences

utilizing the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool as a

meaningful tool for professional growth for elementary teachers during the years 2011 to 2013.

This study provided an in-depth look at the importance of principals conducting classrooms

observations to gather formative data to improve elementary teachers' pedagogical skills in the

classroom.

Improving the quality of teaching has been a focus of public schools since colonial days.

According to Anderson (1993), community members would perform classroom observations to

verify teachers were adhering to local community standards. Early supervision efforts focused

on the delivery of the local curriculum. This summative approach to supervision was accepted

practice until the late twentieth century. Over the last three decades, there have been numerous

models recommending a more formative approach to supervision in order to provide professional

growth for teachers. There have also been initiatives to shift from local academic standards to

state and national academic standards. According to Darling-Hammond (1996), a Gallup poll

indicated that that most individuals surveyed believed schools need to focus on improving the

skills of the teacher was a priority. In the era of accountability, school districts were exploring

how to improve the pedagogical skills of teachers. Walkthrough observations were an area in

which school districts focused to increase accountability for teachers and bring about

instructional change in the classroom.   The use of walkthrough observations has demonstrated to

be an effective tool to bring about instructional change in the classroom and increase student

achievement (Keruskin 2005; Rossi 2007).

The theoretical framework for this study was grounded in the work of Carl Glickman

(2002) on supervision needs of teachers and Phillip Schlechty's (2005) six critical systems of

innovation. For the purposes of this study, the analysis of professional growth of teachers

developed specifically from the work of Charlotte Danielson's (2007) framework on professional

practice. The researcher utilized these three theoretical foundations to demonstrate the

interconnectedness between the walkthrough observation and professional growth of elementary

teacher.

Statement of the Problem

What was the perception of the walkthrough observation affect on the elementary

teacher's professional growth?

School districts across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania challenged with

demonstrating academic growth of all students. All students must make Adequate Yearly

Progress and score at least proficient on state assessments. Administrators were always looking

for meaningful ways to improve the quality of instruction in the classroom to provide ongoing

opportunities for teachers to grow professionally. Pennsylvania implemented a new teacher

evaluation system with the financial assistances from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The framework for the new teacher evaluation system included an observation rubric for teachers

based upon the research of Charlotte Danielson (Rowland, 2009). This framework addresses the

full range of teacher performances from beginner to experienced educator.   The Pennsylvania

Department of Education decided to merge the Pennsylvania Academic Standards with the

Common Core Standards. These new Pennsylvania Common Core Standards not only increase

rigor and relevance to the curriculum, but increase accountability for classroom teachers and

school districts. According to Darling-Hammond (2000), schools must not only offer an

education, but they must ensure learning. Accountability has increased in the last few decades

from No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Race to the Top of 2010, and Pennsylvania Common

Core Standards. Major provisions included increased accountability for school district. Today,

school systems must demonstrate annual yearly growth for individual students and strive for all

students to become proficient at grade level.   Therefore, public education continues to be at the

forefront for political leaders at the local, state, and federal (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon,

2001). The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of elementary principals' and

elementary teachers' experiences with the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy

Walkthrough Observation Tool relationship with the professional growth for elementary teachers

during the years 2011 to 2013.

        The problem that served as the focus of this research study was to examine the

interconnectedness between the Walkthrough Observation Tool affect on professional growth of

elementary teachers. This studied focused on the participant's experiences during the years 2011 through 2013. There is a void in the research showing how the walkthrough observation process may benefit the professional growth of elementary teachers. Consequently, researchers and practitioners may then look deeper at the identified strategies and draw implications regarding best instructional practices. It was believed that implementation of best practices increased student achievement and help school districts meet the demands of state and federal mandates.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What are the perceptions of elementary teachers about the Walkthrough Observation Tool as a means of providing professional growth?

2. What are the perceptions of the elementary principals about the Walkthrough Observation Tool as a means of providing professional growth?

3. What are the perceptions identified by elementary teachers about how the walkthrough observation affects their professional growth as identified in Charlotte Danielson's framework on growing and developing professionally?

4. What are the perceptions identified by the elementary principal about how the walkthrough affected professional growth towards the "look-fors" listed on their district's walkthrough observation form?

5. What other professional or personal experiences were elementary teachers having because of walkthrough observations?

Population and Sample

This researcher used purposeful sampling for this study. The researcher selected schools for this study with the assistance of experts. The researcher contacted the Directors of the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy, to determine which schools were utilizing the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Tool. The experts served as gatekeepers in the selection of the five public elementary schools to participate in this study. Elementary schools selected all made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in third grade reading and math, utilized the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy for at least three years, and were all located in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Due to the possibility of bias, this researcher's school of employment was not part of the pilot or formal study.

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, this researcher sent letters to five superintendents of the participating school districts requesting permission to begin this research study in their respective schools. Upon receiving permission from IRB to begin the study, the research e-mailed the building principal and three elementary teachers from each district individually requesting permission to interview. Principals in each of the selected buildings served as the gatekeepers for this study. Only principals who have an affirmative response to utilizing the walkthrough as a means for professional growth were included in this study. Classroom teachers who taught during the years 2011 through 2013 in the NCLB core subjects of language arts, math and science were included in this study. Special area teachers such as music, art, library, computers, and physical educations teachers were not included. In addition, this researcher excluded Title I teachers, school counselors, psychologists, and certified school nurses as part of this study.

Development of an Instrument

The researcher designed the interview questions for this study to determine the influence of walkthrough observations on professional growth for elementary teachers. According to Danielson (2007), continuing professional growth is the mark of a professional educator and is never complete. Danielson's framework on Growing and Developing Professionally encompasses the essences of professional development for teachers and utilized as the framework to help guide interview questions and coding the participant's responses. The rubric (see Table 1) created by Danielson (2007) was utilized to guide this research study.

Table 1

Danielson's Rubric on Growing and Developing Professionally

ELEMENTS	UNSATIFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
Enhancement of content knowledge	Teacher engages in no professional development activities to enhance knowledge or skills.	Teacher participates in professional activities to a limited convenient.	Teacher seeks out opportunities for professional development to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skill.	Teacher seeks out opportunities for professional development and makes a systematic effort to conduct action research.
Receptivity to feedback from colleagues	Teacher resists feedback on teaching performance form either supervisors or more experienced colleagues.	Teacher accepts, with some reluctance, feedback on teaching performance form both supervisor and professional colleagues.	Teacher welcomes feedback from colleagues when made by supervisors or when opportunities arise through professional collaboration.	Teacher seeks out feedback on teaching from both supervisors and colleagues.
Service to the profession	Teacher makes no effort to share knowledge with others or to assume professional responsibilities.	Teacher finds limited ways to contribute to the profession.	Teacher participates actively in assisting others educators.	Teacher initiates important activities to contribute to the profession.

The researcher coded the research questions from the elementary principals and elementary teachers utilizing Danielson's professional responsibilities rubric. The rubric assisted in connecting the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy to ongoing professional growth for the elementary teachers.

Interview Question for Elementary Principals

1. How many years has your school utilized the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough model?

2. What were your procedures when you implemented the Walkthrough Observation tool?

    a. How do you schedule walkthroughs?

    b. How do you validate effective instruction in your building?

3. How often do you conduct walkthrough observations?

    a. How many walkthroughs do you conduct in a day, week, month?

    b. How often do teachers join you during the walkthrough?

4. When conducting the walkthrough observation, what are the "look-fors"?

    a. Can you tell me how the "look-fors" were developed?

    b. What data do you collect during the walkthrough?

5. Do you believe using the Walkthrough Observation Tool influences professional growth within your teachers?

    a. After you debrief your teachers, have they ever pursued opportunities for professional growth to enhance their content knowledge or pedagogical skill?

    b. Have your teachers ever participated in action research? If so, who initiated to research?

    c. How do your teachers respond to your feedback after a walkthrough?

d. After you provided feedback, tell me about a time a teacher requested more information, clarification, or research?

e. After debriefing your teachers, do the teachers ever work cooperatively to assist another teacher?

f. Can you tell me about a time that your feedback initiated a building and/or district professional development activity?

6. How do you provide feedback to your faculty after completing a walkthrough?

a. How do you debrief your teachers after a walkthrough?

b. How do your teachers respond to your walkthrough feedback?

7. Do you have any artifacts on how the Walkthrough Observation Tool data was used to provide professional development to your staff? This may include observations forms, faculty meetings agendas, list of "look-fors," and in-service day agendas from 2011 to 2013.

a. Have you ever shared an instructional strategy or artifact for a walkthrough observation?

b. Have you ever provided training to teachers at a faculty meeting or in-service based on walkthrough observation data?

Interview Question for Elementary Teachers

1. How has your content knowledge been enhanced by the use of the walkthrough observation?

2. What feedback did you receive from the walkthrough observation that has caused you to explore more information?

3. What feedback did you receive from a walkthrough observation that has enhanced your skills in the classroom?

4. How do you discuss your walkthrough observation feedback with your colleagues?

5. Tell me about a time that you received feedback from your colleagues from a walkthrough observation.

6. Based on feedback from the walkthrough observation, were you asked to share or demonstrate strategies with your colleagues? Please explain.

7. What are the building/district walkthrough observation "look-fors"?

    a. How were the "look-fors" developed?

    b. What are the "look-fors" for your classroom?

8. How have the building/district "look-fors" affected your lesson planning? Your instruction?

9. What does the Walkthrough Observation Tool mean to you?

10. What advice would you give a principal that was about to implement the walkthrough observation tool in their district?

11. Tell me about your professional/personal growth experiences before and after your district implemented the Walkthrough Observation Tool?

    a. Compare and contrast - How you discussed teaching and learning with you colleagues?

    b. Compare and contrast - How you would seek feedback on your teaching with colleagues or the building principal.

c. Compare and contrast – Since the Walkthrough Observation Tool was implemented, what has changed with your professional growth/personal experience?

Table 2

Matrix of Research Questions to Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions Principals	Interview Questions Elementary Teachers
1. What are the perceptions of elementary teachers about the walkthrough observation tool as a means of providing professional growth?	Interview Questions N/A	Interview Questions 1,2,3,4,5,6
2. What are the perceptions of the elementary principals about the walkthrough observation tool as a means of providing professional growth?	Interview Questions 5,6,7	Interview Questions N/A
3. What are the perceptions identified by elementary teachers about how the walkthrough observation affects their professional growth as identified in Charlotte Danielson's framework on growing and developing professionally?	Interview Questions N/A	Interview Questions 6,7,8
4. What are the perceptions identified by the elementary principal about how the walkthrough affected professional growth towards the "look-for" listed on their district's walkthrough observation form?	Interview Questions 1,2,3,4	Interview Questions N/A
5. What other professional or personal experiences are elementary teachers having because of walkthrough observations?	Interview Questions N/A	Interview Questions 9,10,11

Rationale for Instrument

This descriptive qualitative study examined the relationship between walkthrough observations and the elementary teacher's professional growth. This approach allowed the researcher to examine "how people learn and make sense of themselves and others" (Berg, 2009, p.8). The goal of this study was to learn about the participant's experiences and to provide a detailed description of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). According to Patton (1980), qualitative research provides depth and breadth of the participant's experiences because it focuses on description of conditions, people, and interactions. This researcher chose to utilize qualitative methodology to gain a more in-depth and interpersonal response to the research questions. Qualitative research permits the researcher to discover and examine participant's experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as:

An inquiry process of understanding based on the distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explores a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

The researcher used a descriptive, qualitative approach to describe the perceptions of elementary teachers and reflect on the essential themes of their experiences (Creswell, 2007; deMarrais, 2004).

The researcher coded the responses from the participants and utilized content analysis to examine the data from the classroom teachers. According to Bogdan & Biklen (1998), the analysis of data requires manipulating, categorizing, and organizing information to determine its meaning. In order to gather data on the participants, the researcher interviewed participants to

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learn more about their perceptions of the Walkthrough Observation Tool and professional growth of the elementary teacher. Interviewing between the researcher and the participants is the most common approach to collecting qualitative data (Merraim, 1998). After gaining approval from the district, the researcher used semi-structured interviews to gain information about the participant's' perceptions of the Walkthrough Observation Tool on professional growth. The semi-structured interviews consisted of structured questions with the opportunity to probe for more information. The goal was for the questions to be fluid in nature to guide the conversation instead of structured inquiries.

<div align="center">**Pilot Procedures**</div>

In order to determine which school districts were utilizing the Walkthrough Observation Tool, the Directors of the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy selected the school for the pilot study. The selected school had been utilizing the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy Walkthrough Tool for at least three years. The elementary school made Adequate Yearly Progress in third grade for reading and math (see Appendix B), utilized the Walkthrough Tool for at least three years, and is located in the suburbs on Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The selected schools all met the criteria for this research study. Once the researcher received approval from IRB for this pilot study, the researcher contacted each participant via e-mail to determine the interest in participating in the pilot study. The e-mail included background of the study and researcher's contact information. Pilot study participants were free to decide not to participate in this pilot study or withdraw at time during the study by notifying the project coordinator or researcher.

For the purpose of this qualitative pilot study, the researcher chose participants that were representative of a larger population in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania suburban public school districts. The selected participants for this study met the criteria to participant in the study. The public school elementary principal and teachers have participated in school districts that utilize the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool. Participates for this study included an elementary principal and three elementary teachers who have participated in the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy between the years 2011 through 2013. The elementary teachers had taught in the NCLB core academic areas of reading, math and science. The age of the participants may vary because of years of experiences and age the participants became a professional tenured employee, but the participants will be at least 25 years of age. The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires principals to fulfill at least five years of experience in a school setting to receive a school principal's certification. Elementary teachers must fulfill at least three years of experience in a school setting to receive an Instructional II certification and granted tenure. Therefore, this study excluded participants with less than five years experiences as an elementary principal and three years experiences as an elementary teacher. Gender was not a criterion and does not have any relevance to this research study.

Data Collection

A pilot study conducted with a sample population of the interview questions and coding completed at a local elementary school in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The researcher submitted a proposal for permission to conduct the pilot study with the purposed sample. Upon receiving permission to conduct the pilot study, the researcher contacted the elementary principals and elementary teachers who meet the criteria established for participation.

The researcher sent an e-mail to invite possible participants for this pilot study. The invitation included background information of the study, purpose of the study, and amount of time required to participate in this pilot study. Once participation confirmed, a date and location was established, and copies of the interview questions e-mailed to the participants. During the interviewing process, an informed consent form was completed and the researcher explained participation in the pilot study and options to withdraw at any time. The researcher asked the participants to provide feedback. The researcher took detailed on how to improve the effectiveness of the interview questions.

Framework for Coding Data

In the book *Enhancing Professional Development: A Framework for Teaching,* Danielson (2007) synthesized the recent research on professional responsibilities for classroom teachers and research on professional development. Based upon her research, she developed three elements, which encompass the essence of growing and developing professionally. They are as follows:

Element 1 -   Enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill

Element 2 -   Receptivity to feedback from colleagues

Element 3 -   Service to the profession

The first element described is Enhancement of Content Knowledge and pedagogical skill. Since elementary teachers plan for several disciplines, content knowledge is an area in which elementary teachers can always grow and develop professionally. According to Danielson (2007), superficial content knowledge is not acceptable practice in a classroom. Teachers need

to have a deeper understanding of content knowledge. Along with ongoing professional growth of content knowledge, teachers need to develop their pedagogical skills. Educational researchers are continually discovering new methods to improve student achievement and enhance student knowledge.

The second element is Receptivity to Feedback from Colleagues. This second element accomplished by the teacher receiving feedback from the building principal, teacher, or conducting an observation of another teacher. This element requires the teacher to welcome and seek feedback on their teaching.

The third element is Service to the Profession. According to Danielson (2007), teachers find opportunities to contribute to the profession. This may include conducting action research in their classroom, supervising student teachers, participating in a study group, or writing articles for professional publication.

According to Bogdan & Biklen (1998), the analysis of data requires manipulating, categorizing, and organizing information to determine its meaning. Information from each interview were organized, categorized, and coded according to Danielson's three elements of growing and developing professionally. The researcher analyzed interview responses based upon the use of the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool to determine the relationship to profession growth of elementary teachers. Additionally, information from the observation, artifacts, and written documents sorted and coded according to themes and patterns. The researcher classified and compare the data with the information provided by the participants for the interview.

Validity and Reliability

The goal of this researcher was to contribute to the literature about walkthrough observations and professional growth of elementary teachers that is authentic and trustworthy. Qualitative researchers utilize different tactics to conduct studies that are valid and reliable. According to Merriam (1998), researchers may use triangulation, member check, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory or collaborative models of research and researcher's bias to increase internal validity. Reliability refers to the extent the researcher can replicate the findings. This qualitative research study allowed the researcher to discover and examine individual beliefs and perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). In order to triangulate the data, the researcher included artifacts, narratives from the participants, and peer examination. The researcher maintained the audit trail during the time of this study. All documents retained from this study are placed in a locked filing cabinet for at least three years in compliance with federal law.

In this study, the first technique this researcher used to enhance validity was triangulation. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), triangulation is very important in the natural environment and researchers should never consider a single source of information without triangulation. The researcher gathered information from interviews with elementary principals and elementary teachers. Additional data for triangulation collected from documents analysis. The documents include agendas from walkthrough observation forms, faculty meetings agendas, list of "look-fors," and in-service day agendas during the years 2011 through 2013. Other documents included observational feedback, lesson plans, and visual aids.

Another technique that the researcher incorporated in this study was member check. The researcher provided the interview participants with a written transcription of the interview. Although Creswell (2007) does not recommend providing transcripts to participants to review, participants need an opportunity to review their responses for accuracy and reliability. After participants had an opportunity to review the transcript, modifications or clarifications were included to ensure accuracy.

The third technique utilized in this pilot study involves the use of peer examination. In addition, the researcher utilized two experts to review the questions and responses of the participants. The Directors of the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy and Dr. Patricia Dunkis, retired assistant superintendent for elementary education reviewed the data and made recommendations. The expert's suggestions helped guide this research study and provided valuable insight with interview protocol and data analysis.

The final technique utilized in this study was to address the concern of the researcher's bias. The researcher addressed this concern by not including his district of employment into the sample population. Furthermore, the researcher entered this study with an open mind to consider contrary results and accept the input of the expert panel.

Procedures

The procedures for this study were modified based on the feedback from the pilot study and expert panel to ensure reliability and validity. According to Creswell (2007), the qualitative researcher "engages in a series of activities in the process of collecting data" (p.118). The template (see Figure 1) created by Creswell (2007) was used to guide the data collection for this study.

Figure 1. Creswell's Process for Data Collection
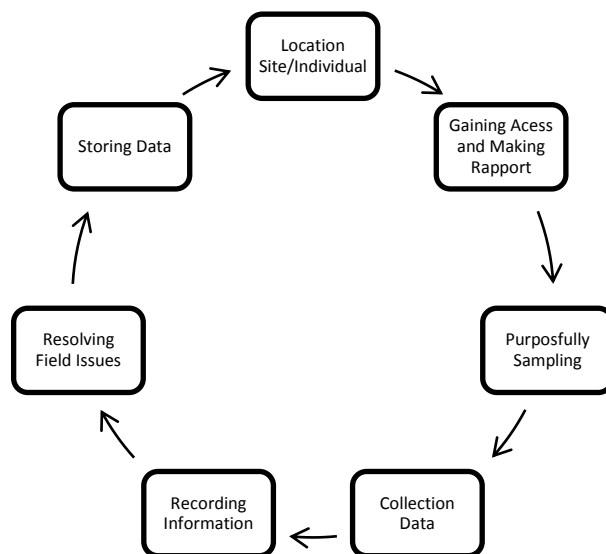
The researcher submitted a proposal seeking permission to conduct this study from the

Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The IRB ensured

that the rights and welfare of human subjects protected during this research study. Following

permission (see Appendix C) to proceed with this study, the researcher contacted the directors

from the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy to determine which schools have been

utilizing the Walkthrough Observation Tool for a minimum of three years were from the Western

Pennsylvania Principal's Academy. The expert panel ensured that the participating elementary

schools are utilizing the walkthrough protocols with fidelity. The experts chose five public

elementary schools located in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to participate in this study.

All school that participated in the study achieved AYP in the subject of reading and math in the

third grade. The researcher collected data and artifacts form the participating school form the

years 2011 to 2013. Due to possible bias, the researcher's elementary school was not be used as

part of this formal study.

Upon approval from Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects and selection of five school districts, the researcher sent a letter to the superintendents (see Appendix D) of the selected school districts seeking permission to begin research in their respective elementary schools. After seeking permission from the superintendent, the researcher contacted the elementary principals (see Appendix E) and elementary teachers (see Appendix F) through e-mail or phone call to explain the background of the study, interview protocol, and informed consent to review prior to the interview date. The participants were free to decide to participate or not to participate in this study. Even if the participant chose to participate in this study, the participant may withdraw at anytime. Once the researcher received information that the participant wanted to withdraw, all documents from the participant were shredded. The mutually agreeable location for the interviews was a quiet location and free of distractions. According to Creswell (2007), this strategy will help participants speak more freely and share ideas.

During the interview, the researcher reviewed the informed consent (see Appendix G) form completed by the participant. The researcher informed the participant that the interview transcripts and artifacts required by federal law to be retained for three years. Before the interview began, copy of the research abstract provided to the interviewee to explain the purpose of the study. The researcher reminded the participants that there are no wrong answers and their participation in appreciated. Creswell (2007) recommends informing the participant the amount of time that will be required to complete the interview and the procedures for utilizing the information. The optimal amount of time for completing the interview will be one hour. As cited in Berg (2009), "researchers believe that most subjects will refuse to engage in an interview once they know it may last for two or more hours" (p.120). In the event the interview extends

beyond one hour, the researcher will offer the participant the choice to continue or schedule a

future date and time to complete the interview.

The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview format. The researcher used

predetermined questions (see Appendix H & I) to elicit the thoughts, opinions, and attitudes from

the participants regarding the Walkthrough Observation Tool (Berg, 2009). According to

Silverman (2010), it is not a concern for the researcher to depart from the scripted questions.

The researcher digitally recorded the interview in order to attain accurate information during this

study. Interviewing required the researcher to exhibit excellent listening skills to focus on the

participants' responses to build a respectful atmosphere. In completing this study, the first step

was to transcribe the responses of each participant form the digitally recorded interview sessions.

The participants had the opportunity to review the transcription and confirm the accuracy of their

responses. This allowed the participant time to reflect on their answers and allowed the

participants to review their responses for accuracy. Participants also had the opportunity to add

or remove information from the transcript to assure accuracy. The researcher utilized a note-

taking device in the event the audio recording fails during the interview. Creswell (2007)

recommends the researcher to prepare interview protocols for note taking before the interview

process. This helped the researcher prepare for each participant by organizing the researcher's

thoughts before, during, and after each interview.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The study utilized the qualitative approach to data analysis. It provided a thorough

description of the relationship between the Walkthrough Observation Tool and the influence this

instrument had on professional growth for elementary teachers. According to Merriam (1998),

the investigation of information is a process of moving back and forth between concrete and abstract bits of data.

Prior to coding the data, the researcher entered the investigation of the data with a fresh perspective (Creswell, 2007). The researcher analyzed transcriptions and compared with the detailed notes from the interview. The detailed notes helped identify themes between the participant's experiences with the walkthrough observation relationship with professional growth of elementary teachers. These notes provided the researcher the ability to identify themes from the participants (Creswell, 2007). The researcher investigated the information and highlight significant statements that provide knowledge of "how the participants experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p.61). The participant's responses analyzed by the researcher and organized into themes. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), themes are broken into consensus, supported, and individual themes. Consensus themes develop when the majority of participants share the same lived experiences. For the purposes of this study, consensus themes were described by eighty percent of the participants, supported themes that were mentioned by approximately fifty percent of the participants, and individual themes that were identified by one or two participants.

The researcher utilized the elements of Growing and Developing Professionally as identified by Charlotte Danielson (2007) to analysis the data. The data collected from the research sample compared to the elements on Danielson's rubric. This allowed the researcher to determine the relationship between the Walkthrough Observation Tool and the professional growth of the elementary teacher.

Summary

     In this chapter, the researcher described procedures for the Statement of the Problem, Research Questions, Population Sample, and Research Design. This qualitative study featured the actual experiences of public school elementary principals and elementary teachers. The participants were criterion selected from public elementary schools in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania under the guidance of an expert panel. Upon completion of the study, the researcher coded the participant's perceptions into Danielson's elements of growing and developing professionally. The presentation of the data in Chapter IV features the accounts of the participants' lived experiences with the walkthrough observation tool in relationship to each elementary teacher's professional growth.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

"Continuing development is the mark of a true professional; it is an ongoing effort that is never

completed." (Danielson, 2007, p.102)

Introduction

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of

elementary principals' and elementary teachers' experiences utilizing the Western Pennsylvania

Principal's Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool as a meaningful tool for professional

growth. Pennsylvania implemented a new teacher evaluation system that included an

observation rubric for teachers based upon the research of Charlotte Danielson (Rowland, 2009).

The Danielson framework addressed the full range of teacher performances from beginner to

veteran teacher. In the era of accountability, school districts are exploring how to improve the

pedagogical skills of classroom teachers. Walkthrough observations were a tool by school

districts to increase accountability for classroom teachers and to improve instructional strategies

in the classroom.

In the book *Enhancing Professional Development: A Framework for Teaching,*

Danielson (2007) synthesized the recent research on professional growth and development for

classroom teachers. Based upon her research, she developed three elements, which encompass

the essence of growing and developing professionally. They are as follows:

Element 1 -   Enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill

Element 2 -   Receptivity to feedback from colleagues

Element 3 -   Service to the profession

For the purposes of this study, the researcher utilized the framework of Charlotte Danielson's (2007) rubric on Growing and Developing Professionally. This rubric served as the primary source for the analysis of the data collected from the interview questions.

In June of 2013, the researcher interviewed elementary principals and elementary teachers from the selected schools determined by the Directors of the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy.   The selected schools all made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in third grade reading and math, utilized the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy for at least three years, and were located in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The researcher utilized a semi-standardized protocol to interview participants who discussed their experiences for approximately 45 minutes. Documents consisting of walkthrough observation forms, faculty meeting agendas, list of "look-fors," and in-service day agendas were also collected. The lived experiences of the participants and documents served as a source of evidence for this research study.

Participants

The researcher contacted the Directors of Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy to identify elementary schools in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania that met the criteria for this study. Five principals and three teachers from each selected elementary school were involved in one-to-one interviews with the researcher.   The researcher used pseudonyms to protect the names of the participating elementary schools, principals, and teachers. For the purposes of this study, elementary schools were identified Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon Elementary schools. The demographic information of the participating elementary principals (Table 1) and teachers (Table 2) are included in the brief summary.

Alpha Elementary School is a K-4 elementary school of 511 students in a suburban district. The male principal has eleven years experience. He has used the Walkthrough Observation as a tool for growth for five years. Three teachers from grades 1, 2, and 5 at Alpha Elementary School took part in the study. The teachers' professional experiences range from four to fifteen years. Two were teaching in a self-contained classroom and taught all subjects, while one taught reading, math, and science. The United States Department of Education recognized Alpha Elementary as a Blue Ribbon School. The school is also located in a school district in which 98% of graduates attend college or university after graduation. The district ranked as one of the top ranked school districts in the *Pittsburgh Business Times* based on Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) over the last three years.

Beta Elementary School, a K-4 school with 1,044 students is also a suburban school. Its female principal has utilized the Walkthrough Observation for all eight years she has been a principal. The three Beta teachers who participated in the study taught all subjects and were from grades 1, 2 and 3. They had years of experience ranging from ten to twenty-six years. The United States Department of Education recognized Beta Elementary as a Blue Ribbon School. It is located in a rapidly growing school district and ranks among the top ten school districts in the *Pittsburgh Business Times*.

Gamma Elementary school, a suburban school containing grades K-5 has 361 students. Its female principal has used the Walkthrough Observation for ten of her fifteen years of experience. Gamma teachers who were interviewed for this study had taught six, thirteen and twenty-five years. Two taught fourth grade reading and math, while the third taught all subjects to second grade. Gamma elementary has consistently ranked in the top ten schools in the

Pittsburgh Business Times. The district population represents a wide range of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

Delta Elementary School has an enrollment of 377 students in a K-5 configuration within a suburban district. For the six of the years he has been principal, the leader of Delta Elementary School used the Walkthrough Observation as a strategy for school improvement. At Delta Elementary School, a sixth grade reading teacher with eight years experience, a fourth grade reading and science teacher with fifteen years experience, and a fourth grade math teacher with twenty-four years experience participated in this study.

Epsilon Elementary School is a K-5 suburban school with an enrollment of 439 students. Its female principal has used the Walkthrough Observation for five of the twelve years she has lead the school. A fourth grade teacher and a fifth grade teacher who teach all subjects and a fifth grade teacher who teaches reading and math participated in this study. They have taught for four, five and ten years, respectively.

Table 3

Demographic Data of Participating Schools 2012-13

Elementary School	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta	Epsilon
Gender of Principal	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female
Years as Principal	11	8	15	6	12
Number Years Utilizing WTO	5	8	10	6	5
School Configuration	K-4	K-4	K-5	K-5	K-5
Enrollment	511	1,044	361	377	439
Geographic Location	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban

Table 4

Demographic Information on Elementary Teacher Participants 2012-13

Elementary School	Years of Experiences	Grade	Subjects Taught
Alpha Elementary			
Teacher One	4	2	All
Teacher Two	10	1	All
Teacher Three	15	4	Reading/Math/Science
Beta Elementary			
Teacher One	12	2	All
Teacher Two	26	1	All
Teacher Three	10	3	All
Gamma Elementary			
Teacher One	25	4	Reading/Math
Teacher Two	13	4	Reading/Math
Teacher Three	6	2	All
Delta Elementary			
Teacher One	24	4	Math
Teacher Two	15	4	Reading/Science
Teacher Three	8	6	Reading
Epsilon Elementary			
Teacher One	10	5	Reading/Science
Teacher Two	5	5	All
Teacher Three	4	4	All

Once the interviews were completed and transcribed, the researcher conducted member checking to ensure accuracy of the participants. This process involved providing transcripts to the participants to review their answers. Creswell's (2007) framework provided the structure to organize the participant's responses. The researcher highlighted noteworthy responses and wrote

notes in the margins of the transcript to connect the experiences of the participants. The

researcher compared the noteworthy responses with the elements of Charlotte Danielson's rubric

on Growing and Developing Professionally. The responses categorized into one of the three

elements of enhancement of content knowledge, receptivity to feedback from colleagues, and

service to the profession. Research question three defined the elements into one of the four

domains of unsatisfactory, basis, proficient, and distinguished. According to Creswell (2007),

this process allows the researcher to organize the data into meaningful units. The researcher

used both textural and structural descriptions of the participants' lived experiences to gather data

on the connection between the Walkthrough Observation Tool and the professional growth of

elementary teachers.

Themes emerged in the data and were categorized according Danielson's (2007) theoretical

perspective of enhancement of content knowledge, receptivity to feedback from colleagues, and

service to the profession. The researcher identified consensus, supported, and individual themes.

For the purpose of this study, consensus themes identified by at least eighty percent of the

participants, supported themes were reflected by approximately fifty percent of the participants,

and individual themes was supported by one or two participants.

Interview Responses Related to Research Question One

What are the perceptions of elementary teachers about the Walkthrough Observation

Tool as a means of providing professional growth?

The first research question focused on the perceptions of the elementary teacher about the

Walkthrough Observation Tool as a means of providing professional growth. The purpose of the

question was to identify ways that the professional growth of elementary teachers was enhanced

when their principals conducted walkthrough observations. The researcher used the elementary

teacher interview questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 to collect data for the first research question.

Charlotte Danielson's conceptual framework on Growing and Developing Professionally served

for the analysis to examine the elementary teacher's responses. Three identical consensus

themes arose during the interviews. The themes correlated with Charlotte Danielson's

framework on Growing and Developing Professionally. The themes were enhancement of

content knowledge, receptivity to feedback from colleagues, and service to the profession. One

individual theme that surfaced revealed that the walkthrough provided opportunities to reflect on

teaching (see Table 5).

Enhancement of Content Knowledge

Analysis of the data indicated the first consensus theme among the participants that the

Walkthrough Observation Tool enhanced their content knowledge. The majority of the

participants specifically discussed participation in ongoing professional development to improve

their content knowledge or pedagogical skill in the classroom. The participants' responses

indicated that the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's

Academy provided opportunities for professional growth to enhance content knowledge and

pedagogical skills. Delta Teacher One exemplified a consensus response regarding enhancement

of content knowledge. The answer from this teacher was representative of a consensus response

from the other participants. The teacher elaborated as follows:

> I would say years ago when we first started with the walkthroughs, they would give us a
>
> list of "look-fors" during visits. The "look-fors" were a list of best practices the principal
>
> would observe during lessons. It made you stop and think about how often I really do
>
> this. If you knew there was not a walkthrough today, would you be doing this anyway?
>
> When the principal completes the walkthrough, sometimes we got immediate feedback. It

made you think about best practice for your classroom. Was it something good to do?

Was it something that I wanted to continue to do?

Epsilon Teacher Three shared how the walkthrough observation provided opportunities to improve pedagogical skills. The teacher answered as follows:

The walkthrough definitely made me dig deeper into things and really a lot more preparation on my part. Instead of just going on what I know, I have done some more research. I wanted to become more familiar with the topics of higher-order thinking questions. Instead of asking questions on the top of my head, I would sit down before a lesson and prepare questions I was going to ask. I made sure that I am not asking just asking simple questions. I have a sheet that has all of the objectives on it and different verbs. I tried to use that to ask my questions. I wanted to make sure not to ask the same type of questions.

Thirteen of the fifteen participants' responses indicated the Walkthrough Observation Tool enhanced content knowledge or pedagogical skills. Teachers reported that they would seek out opportunities for professional growth. The participants shared that the walkthrough observation provided opportunities to enhance their content knowledge or pedagogical skills in the classroom.

Receptivity to Feedback

Analysis of the data indicated a second consensus theme among the participants that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided opportunities for elementary teachers to receive feedback from colleagues. The consensus theme indicated that the teachers sought feedback from both supervisor and colleague during professional collaboration time. Alpha Teacher Two

gave a typical response in regards to seeking feedback from colleagues. The teacher response was as follows:

> Well, I always welcome feedback. I think it is great because I do not believe anyone is the perfect teacher.   We are all trying to be great teachers and we are always trying to make improvements and changes. I think the walkthrough is a valid tool for us to keep changing, growing, and learning every day. I wish we could have open conversations with other teachers about their walkthroughs. I do feel like that is a little private at times. I do appreciate specific feedback on my lessons and general feedback at faculty meetings. It is helpful to have someone observe and give feedback and help you reflect upon your lessons. I do want to continue to grow and improve.

Gamma Teacher Three discussed how teachers in the building participate in the walkthrough observation process. The teachers had opportunities to walk with the building principal and other grade level teachers to observe their colleagues in their building. Gamma Teacher Three shared the experience of observing other classrooms and replied:

> We had teacher-to-teacher walkthroughs that I was part of last year. I had the opportunity to observe other classroom teachers and then had teachers coming into my classroom. It was helpful to see some of the lessons from the third grade teachers. I went into a third grade classroom, for example, and saw a lesson on measurement. I had a chance to observe a hands-on activity. The hands-on activity used measurement and it was interesting because in second grade our unit on measurement happens to be the last unit that we typically focus on for the year. This was helpful to see how the concept introduced in second grade developed in third grade. After the walkthrough, the second and third grade teachers started to discuss the scope and sequence of our lessons. You do

not always get to see that, you know -- that progression of where they go with certain

skills in concept.

All fifteen participants responded that the walkthrough observation provided a framework to

receive feedback from colleagues.

Service to the Profession

The researcher's analysis of the data indicated a third consensus theme among the

participants that the walkthrough observation provided opportunities for elementary teachers to

assist other elementary teachers. Teachers indicated that the building principal provided

feedback during the walkthrough observation, but also collected data for activities to provide

professional growth.   The administrators would recommend an elementary teacher that had

demonstrated best practices for others to observe or have distinguished teachers present at grade

level, faculty, or in-service meetings. Beta Teacher One responded to the experience of sharing a

math routine with colleagues.

The teacher elaborated as follows:

> I was asked to videotape my math calendar routine that I do with the kids. Here is what
>
> happened. I metamorphosed my calendar math activity into a whole bunch of things.   I
>
> added a little language arts, math, science, and higher level questions to meet the needs of
>
> all the kids. What happened was the principal and superintendent conducted a
>
> walkthrough observation and observed my lesson. The superintendent's goal is to get
>
> into every classroom at least once last year. They happened to walk in during my
>
> calendar activity and really liked what they saw. They asked me to videotape the lesson
>
> and it now used for professional development for the primary teachers. It is now the
>
> calendar routine for all of kindergarten, first and second grade in the district.

Fourteen of the fifteen participants responded that the walkthrough observation provided the framework for teachers to assist other elementary teachers.

Interview questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 focused on the connection between the Walkthrough Observation Tool and the professional growth of elementary teachers. The elementary teachers all identified the consensus themes of enhancement of content knowledge, receptivity to feedback, and service to the profession as areas the walkthrough observation assisted in ongoing professional development. Another individual theme that surfaced was reflection on teaching. Two of the teachers indicated that the walkthrough provided an opportunity to reflect on classroom lessons.

Table 5

Themes for Research Question One

Consensus Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
- Enhancement of content knowledge - Receptivity to feedback from colleagues - Service to the profession		Reflect on teaching

Interview Responses Related to Research Question Two

What are the perceptions of the elementary principals about the Walkthrough Observation Tool as a means of providing professional growth?

The second research question focused on the perceptions of the elementary principals on the Walkthrough Observation Tool in connection with providing professional growth of

elementary teachers. The researcher used the elementary principal interview questions 5, 6, and

7 to collect data for the second research question.   Charlotte Danielson conceptual framework on

Growing and Developing Professionally served for the analysis to examine the elementary

principals' responses. The purpose of the question was to identify areas where the Walkthrough

Observation Tool enhances the professional growth of elementary teachers. Three identical

consensus themes arose during the interviews. The themes correlated with Charlotte Danielson's

framework of Growing and Developing Professionally. The themes were enhancement of

content knowledge, receptivity to feedback from colleagues, and service to the profession. Two

principals identified individual themes of accountability and validation of best practices (see

Table 6).

Enhancement of Content Knowledge

Analysis of the data indicated the first consensus theme among the elementary principals

that walkthrough observations enhance the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of

elementary teachers. A consensus among the elementary principals who responded was that the

Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy allowed for

ongoing dialogue and the ability to collect data that provided opportunities for professional

growth. Beta Principal exemplified a consensus response regarding enhancement of content

knowledge. The Beta Principal shared her perceptions about how the walkthrough kept teachers

engaged. The principal response was as follows:

> I think that it allows a conversation to take place. It helps focus the direction for staff
>
> development. I think the other thing that the walkthrough keeps 95-99 percent of my
>
> teachers engaged. It allows for conversations about content, strategies, and classroom
>
> management.   Most of my teachers do a great job with kids without me coming in doing

the walkthrough. I think part of it was because the walkthrough observation was culturally established. I do think I have a couple of teachers for whom the walkthrough keeps them on their toes because they never know when I am going to enter the room.

Alpha Principal indicated that the Walkthrough Observation Tool was a valuable framework to gather data and provide targeted professional growth.

The principal stated:

When set up correctly and when done in a trusting way, I believe the walkthrough can be very effective. Even if you do not have trust, I think the walkthrough can be effective. I think the building principal needs to have a set of expectations that teachers understand and have a way to communicate. It is important to communicate when teachers are meeting expectations in the classroom. I just sent one of my teachers to a classroom management seminar based on data from my walkthrough observation and evaluations.

Four of the five elementary principals' perceptions were that the walkthrough observation framework enhanced the professional growth of elementary teachers. The Walkthrough Observation Tool provided opportunities for professional growth to enhance content knowledge or pedagogical skills.

Receptivity to Feedback

Analysis of the data indicated a second consensus theme among the elementary principals that the Walkthrough Observations Tool provided a framework for elementary teachers to receive feedback from colleagues. The elementary principals perceived that the teachers would seek feedback from both supervisor and colleague. Delta Principal gave a typical response regarding seeking feedback from colleagues. The principal responded as follows:

I remember Joe Werlinich and I early on discussing feedback during a faculty

walkthrough. I had a difficult time reporting out what I recognized during walkthroughs.

Over the years, I have learned the nuances of how to report that to individuals and to the

entire staff. For example, I saw many question strategies in several classrooms that did

not have a lot of rigor or relevance. I was able to discuss a best practice with a very

specific example without naming a teacher's name. So, I got much better at sharing out

with faculty. I share walkthrough data in a variety of ways. Sometimes I will have a

conversation with an individual, a grade level, or the entire faculty. I have learned that

talking about specific examples was much better than talking about generalities. The

teachers are eager to receive feedback and want to improve.

Gamma Principal reported that teachers often approach her to observe lessons or to help find

solutions to concerns in the classroom. The principal reported:

There is accountability to the walkthrough. It established we do not have a "got you"

kind of mentality in the building. I think some districts operate that way, but we do not.

I think teachers realize that I will tell them that something is not up to district

expectations. I usually have them reflect on what they are doing and what research says

for this to be effective. I will offer feedback to the teacher. Our walkthrough process is

not a threatening process. I think the walkthrough allows teachers to approach me with

difficulties in their classroom. Teachers will invite me in to problem solve. It is helpful

to have another set of eyes. I do not know how teachers would receive feedback without

walkthroughs. I have found that my teachers want me to provide feedback.

All five of the elementary principals have indicated that the Walkthrough Observation Tool has

provided a framework for elementary teachers to receive feedback from colleagues.

Service to the Profession

The researcher's analysis of the data indicated a third consensus theme among the elementary principals that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided opportunities for elementary teachers to assist other colleagues. The elementary principals reported that data collected during the walkthrough observation provided valuable information in planning professional development. The administrators would recommend elementary teachers that had demonstrated best practices to present at grade level, faculty, or in-service meetings. Epsilon Principal was typical of responses about how the walkthrough provided opportunities for teams to work collaboratively. The principal elaborated as follows:

> My teachers are good about supporting each other. They are willing to reach out and assist their colleagues. They are just a cooperative group with one another. I believe the walkthrough observation has allowed us an opportunity to work as a team and not in silos. They meet every Wednesday from 8:00-8:40AM during grade level time. This time is our professional development time. During this time, the teachers collaborate on lesson planning, instruction, assessments, and district initiatives. On occasions, I have requested a teacher to share a strategy during a faculty meeting or arrange a time for another teacher to visit a specific classroom to observe.

The Beta Principal collected data and observed lessons in second and third grade math classes during the walkthrough observation. After the principal reported the data back to the teachers, the second grade team decided to address the transition from second to third grade. The principal reported the walkthrough helped promote a culture of active teachers' participation to support their colleagues. The Beta Principal stated:

Second grade teachers decided that they wanted kids in math to have more challenged to

ease the transition between second and third grade. The team created math lessons that

spiral throughout the year. The team wanted to do more. The second grade teachers

approached the third grade teachers and presented the idea of pushing the kids. They

wanted to push these kids beyond what the math program offered. The walkthrough

really does a great job providing data and an opportunity to share with teachers

throughout the building. I was able to spark a conversation and the teachers stepped up

and assisted each other in closing the transition to third grade.

Principal Interview questions 5, 6, and 7 focused on the elementary principals' perceptions of the

connection between the walkthrough observation and the professional growth of elementary

teachers. The consensus themes of enhancement of content knowledge, receptivity to feedback,

and service to the profession were majority themes. Two individual themes that surfaced were

accountability for teachers and validation of best practices.

Table 6

Themes for Research Question Two

Consensus Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
• Enhancement of content knowledge • Receptivity to feedback from colleagues • Service to the profession		• Accountability • Validation of best practices

Interview Responses Related to Research Question Three

What are the perceptions identified by elementary teachers about how the walkthrough observation affects their professional growth as identified in Charlotte Danielson's framework on growing and developing professionally?

The third research question focused on the connection between the Walkthrough Observation Tool and Danielson's (2007) Framework on Growing and Developing Professionally. The researcher utilized the elementary teacher interview questions 6, 7, and 8 to identify themes for the third research question. Charlotte Danielson conceptual framework on Growing and Developing Professionally served for the analysis to examine the elementary teachers' responses. The participant's responses were coded according to the three elements of Danielson's framework. The three elements were enhancement of content knowledge, receptivity to feedback, and service to the profession. The data from the participants categorized into unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished sections on the rubric.

Enhancement of Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Skills revealed the majority of participants responded in the proficient area of Danielson's rubric. Thirteen of the fifteen participants responded in a way that indicated proficiency. Beta Teacher Two provided a distinguished response and Gamma Teacher Three responded with a basic response to the research question. Receptivity to Feedback from colleagues was a supported theme. Approximately half of the participants responded in the distinguished or proficient area of Danielson's rubric. In the area of service to the profession, approximately half of the participants responded in the distinguished and approximately half scored in the proficient section of Danielson's rubric. The data also disclosed one unsatisfactory response from Gamma Teacher One on Danielson's rubric (see Table 7).

Enhancement of Content Knowledge

Analysis of the data indicated consensus among the participants that Walkthrough Observation Tool enhance their content knowledge. The majority of the participants specifically discussed participation in ongoing professional development to improve their content knowledge or pedagogical skill in the classroom. Thirteen of the fifteen participants responded in the proficient section on Danielson's (2007) Framework on Growing and Developing Professionally. The participants' responses indicated that because of their experience with the Walkthrough Observation Tool, they had opportunities for professional development to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skills. Alpha Teacher Two exemplified a consensus response regarding enhancement of content knowledge. The response was representative of the proficient responses. The teacher stated:

> The principal has always done a great job with speaking to us like about our strengths -- what we did well, what he liked that he saw in our lesson but also he gives us the chance to reflect on our own teaching and if you could have done something different what would that have been? – which has always helped me in guiding lessons in the future or the following year when I go back to teach a lesson but always to think about – okay what could I have done differently?

Two participants responded with individual themes. Beta Teacher Two individual theme pointed out a distinguished response to enhancement of content knowledge. The teacher discussed opportunities for professional development and a systematic effort to conduct action research. Beta Teacher Two responded:

> Well, absolutely you're always doing research and I think if you're not doing research, then you're really not doing your job because there's so much out there to use. A good

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teacher is a thief. I think that the principal does a good job of informing the teachers

about grants that are out there or ideas that are out there. I remember the principal about

three weeks ago sending me an email about a map project that is being done in

Oklahoma. The kids were creating their own miniature golf course based from

geometrical angles and measurements.

Gamma Teacher Three indicated a basic level of professional development connected to the

walkthrough observation process. The teacher did not experience a direct connection between

the walkthrough observation and professional growth. Gamma Teacher Three elaborated as

follows:

I do not have any recollection at all of opportunities of professional growth from the

walkthrough.   I mean there are times where there was a conversation or two about what

is happening in the classroom. That kind of thing has come up, but I do not remember a

time that that directly came after or part of a walkthrough.

Thirteen of the fifteen respondents reported that the walkthrough observation provided

opportunities for professional development that enhanced the participants' knowledge or

pedagogical skills. One participant indicated that the walkthrough provided opportunities for

professional development and opportunities to conduct action research. Another participant

responded that the walkthrough observation offered limited opportunities to participate in

professional development. In all, fourteen of the fifteen participants responded in the proficient

or distinguished areas of Danielson's rubric. One participant reported in the basic area on the

rubric.

Receptivity to Feedback

The researcher's analysis of the data indicated two supported themes that teachers were receptive to feedback. The first supported theme indicated a distinguished response according to Danielson's (2007) Framework on Growing and Developing Professionally. Danielson's rubric specifies that the teacher seeks feedback on teaching from other teachers and principals. Approximately half of the participants' responses specified a distinguished response in the area of receptivity to feedback. Alpha Teacher Three gave a typical distinguished response. The teacher answered as follows:

> I think what motivates me most is positive reinforcement. Having that positive reinforcement lets me know that good things are happening. It lets me know to continue to work on those things that helped push kids to success and to move them as learners. This happens within the team. The first grade teams at times will double check to see what the teachers have up on the board or if there is something that maybe we know is missing that we want to try to remind each other to have. One of the specific things that we have been really trying hard is to use learning targets within the classroom. I know that a lot of times those learning targets kind of help guide the lesson for those little ones to make sure that they know what's kind of coming up, what's next. Kind of keeping each other on track as to making sure that those learning targets are up-to-date and really hitting the needs of the students.

Eight of the participants responded in the distinguished section on Danielson's rubric. The study participants indicated that the walkthrough provided a framework for teachers to receive feedback from colleagues.

The other supported theme that teachers were receptive to feedback aligns in the proficient category on Danielson's (2007) Framework on Growing and Developing Professionally. This category reflects the willingness of teachers to welcome feedback from teachers and principals through professional conversations. Approximately half of the participants indicated a proficient response to receptivity to feedback. Epsilon Teacher Two gave a typical proficient response. Epsilon Teacher Two stated:

> We have our monthly in-service meetings and usually focus on common core or rigorous assessments. We sometimes have an after school staff meeting where the principal will discuss observation from the walkthrough. The principal give us individual feedback on their visit to the classroom. This information helps me reflect and plan for future lessons.

All of the fifteen participants indicated either a distinguished or a proficient response for receptivity to feedback. None of the participants indicated an unsatisfactory or basic response.

Service to the Profession

The researcher's analysis of the data indicated two supported themes and one individual theme focusing on service to the profession. The first supported theme was in the distinguished section on Danielson's rubric. The responses indicated that the teachers initiated important activities that contributed to the profession. Approximately half of the participants responded in the distinguished section on the rubric. Gamma Teacher Two related a typical distinguished response to the research question. The teacher elaborated as follows:

> We have had some professional development where a consultant was doing walkthroughs in our building. He noticed a particular strategy of providing a guest book for visitors to the classroom. The guest book policy developed at the building level and shared with all classroom teachers. The consultant liked the idea so much; it became a part of the

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procedures in other school districts. It was just a building wide thing at first.   Different

people had things set up in their classroom and we took turns. We had two 45-minute

sessions or something like that and we went and talked to different people and heard their

spiel and made comments almost like an exit slip activity.

The second supported theme was in the proficient section on Danielson's (2007)

Framework on Growing and Developing Professionally. The responses signified that teachers

would participate actively in assisting other teachers. Approximately half of the participants

responded in the proficient section on the rubric. Delta Teacher Three exemplified a typical

proficient response. The teacher answered the research questions as follows:

Last year, I provided professional development to several other teachers on how I get my

kids to write so much in my classroom. The principal wanted me to share my strategies

with both elementary schools. On two occasions, teachers from around the district came

to observe my classroom. We would discuss how they can get their kids motivated and

what type of writing they can do.

Gamma Teacher One shared an individual theme. The teacher's response indicated an

unsatisfactory rating on Danielson's rubric in the section Service to the Profession. The rubric

indicates that the teacher makes no effort to share knowledge with others or to assume

professional responsibilities. Gamma Teacher One reported, "Not me!" when asked how she

assisted other teachers or contributed to the professional learning community in the district.

Fourteen of the fifteen participants responded in the distinguished or proficient sections

on Danielson's rubric on Growing and Developing Professionally. One participant responded in

the unsatisfactory section.

The elementary teacher interview questions 6, 7, and 8 focused on the connection between the Walkthrough Observation Tool and Danielson's (2007) Framework on Growing and Developing Professionally. The participants responded with a consensus theme in the areas of Enhancement of Content, Receptivity to Feedback, and Service to the Profession. The data (see Table 7) revealed the majority of participants responded in the proficient or distinguished section on Danielson's rubric.

Table 7

Elementary Teacher Responses to Danielson's Framework on Growing Professionally

Alpha Elementary School	Enhancement of Content Knowledge	Receptivity to Feedback	Service to the Profession
Teacher One	Proficient	Proficient	Distinguished
Teacher Two	Proficient	Distinguished	Proficient
Teacher Three	Proficient	Proficient	Distinguished

Beta Elementary School	Enhancement of Content Knowledge	Receptivity to Feedback	Service to the Profession
Teacher One	Proficient	Distinguished	Distinguished
Teacher Two	Distinguished	Proficient	Proficient
Teacher Three	Proficient	Distinguished	Proficient

Gamma Elementary School	Enhancement of Content Knowledge	Receptivity to Feedback	Service to the Profession
Teacher One	Proficient	Proficient	Unsatisfactory
Teacher Two	Proficient	Distinguished	Distinguished
Teacher Three	Basic	Distinguished	Proficient

Delta Elementary School	Enhancement of Content Knowledge	Receptivity to Feedback	Service to the Profession
Teacher One	Proficient	Proficient	Distinguished
Teacher Two	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Teacher Three	Proficient	Proficient	Distinguished

Epsilon Elementary School	Enhancement of Content Knowledge	Receptivity to Feedback	Service to the Profession
Teacher One	Proficient	Distinguished	Distinguished
Teacher Two	Proficient	Distinguished	Proficient
Teacher Three	Proficient	Distinguished	Proficient

Interview Responses Related to Research Question Four

What are the perceptions identified by elementary principals about how the walkthrough observation affected professional growth towards the "look-fors" listed on their district walkthrough observation form?

The fourth research question focused on the connection between the walkthrough observation "look-fors" and the professional growth of elementary teachers. The researcher utilized the elementary principal interview questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 to identify themes for the fourth research question. The Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool requires principals and teachers to participate in the process of identifying specific elements of effective instruction or guiding principles of learning. According to Werlinich and Graf (2002), identifying the "look-fors" creates clear expectations for teachers and assists in building commitment to the process. Each elementary school worked in a collaborative process and developed "look-fors" to identify effective instruction (see Table 8). Upon review of the data, there were three consensus, two supported, and two individual themes (See Table 9).

Analysis of the data indicated three consensus themes among the participants that "look-fors" on the building walkthrough form provided ongoing professional growth opportunities for teachers. The three themes that emerged were receptivity to feedback, student engagement, and reflection on instruction. The majority of the participants specifically discussed participation in ongoing professional development to improve their content knowledge or pedagogical skill in the classroom.

Table 8

Elementary School Walkthrough Observation "Look-Fors"

Alpha Elementary	- Planning and Preparation - Coherent instruction/assessments - Respectful Classroom Environment - Differentiated Instruction
Beta Elementary	- Student engagement - Questioning techniques - Informal assessments - Flexibility to student needs
Gamma Elementary	- Students engaged in learning - Flexible grouping - Elements of choice integrated - Authentic, rigorous learning experiences - Accountable talk - Students accountable for their learning - Review student work to evaluate level or rigor
Delta Elementary	- Application of appropriate strategies - Active instruction - Questioning strategies – accountable talk - Student engagement - Differentiated instruction
Epsilon Elementary	- Questioning strategies - Student engagement - Intellectual engagement - Flexible grouping

Receptivity to Feedback

All five elementary principals shared how the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a

framework to share feedback to teachers. A consensus theme was that teachers were receptive to

the feedback from the Walkthrough Observation Tool. Alpha Principal reported positive

experiences with providing feedback during faculty meetings. Alpha Principal stated:

During faculty meetings, I will share my observations over the last two weeks.   I share

the effective practices. I would also emphasis these were consistent with what we talked

about at the beginning of the year. The faculty is professional about it. They want to

grow as educators.   I think there is a trust here. They do not really have a problem with

it. I have not had any negative reaction. I have had people ask me to observe. The

teachers want me to come into their classrooms and provide feedback.

Delta Principal reported that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a framework for

teachers to request feedback from the principal. The principal reported:

That is the power of the walkthrough. It is more than feedback to a classroom teacher. It

is about how you give it and the trust in the relationship that you developed to be a

member of the classroom. Teachers will see me in the building and request for me to

observe a particular lesson. I really appreciate the teachers asking for my feedback. It

lets me know they are willing to receive feedback and grow professionally.

Student Engagement

Elementary principals identified student engagement as a consensus theme on how the

Walkthrough Observation "look-fors" provided professional growth to classroom teachers. Beta

Principal reported that all faculty members were aware that student engagement was one of the

"look-fors" in the building. The principal reported that teachers are more aware of their

questioning strategies and assessments to engage all students during instruction. Beta Principal

gave a typical response regarding student engagement. The principal answered the research

question as follows:

 I am looking for that teacher-student engagement. I am looking for how the teacher

responds when the child does not get something. I am looking for the questioning

techniques, how are they are informally assessing student learning. I am looking to see

when a student suddenly understands a topic. What strategies are the teachers using

during instruction? How does the teacher stop, regroup, or adjust the lesson?   I have that

relationship with many of the teachers. We are all colleagues with the same goal. There

are times our grade level or faculty meetings will focus on differentiation of lesson to

engage all learners. We will even offer professional development on how to improve

student engagement. Everyone in the building knows that this is one of our "look-fors"

and the expectations for making sure all students are engaged in every lesson.

Reflection

Reflection was a consensus theme among the participants. The elementary principal reported

that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided opportunities for teachers to reflect upon the

feedback from the "look-fors" from the Walkthrough Observation Tool. Gamma Principal gave a

typical consensus response. The principal elaborated as follows:

Well, people have to know the expectations. Once the teachers know the expectations are

in the classroom, they can make sure that they fulfill those expectations in their daily

practice. The walkthrough really encourages them to be reflective about their practice and

ask questions on how to grow as a teacher. Teachers are encouraged to ask questions

with colleagues or the principal. Reflecting on the feedback from the walkthrough allows

teachers to improve their skills. It also allows them to evaluate their level of proficiency

in a given area. It allows them to reflect on their skill level and compare it to the district

expectations. They know I am looking for these "look-fors" during the walkthrough.

Truly, I think there is a lot of the learning. Teachers are very smart. They are able to

reflect and seek out assistance from other colleagues in the building. They know the

faculty members that can assist them. There have also been times that teachers have

reflected upon my feedback from the walkthrough and approached me about professional

development opportunities offered outside the district.

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The Epsilon Principal reported that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided opportunities for teacher to reflect and grow professionally. The Epsilon Principal reported:

> I have a good staff. I think most of them either do actively reflect or at least intentionally reflect on the feedback from the walkthrough observation. The total impact of walkthrough during my six years as principal has been very powerful. Teachers feel comfortable discussing the walkthrough observation feedback with me. They want to have a dialogue on how to improve their skills in the classroom.

Curriculum Gaps

The analysis of the data revealed two supportive themes. Principals reported the walkthrough assisted with identifying curriculum gaps within the building. The walkthrough gave them an opportunity to gather information on the scope and sequence at different grade levels. Beta Principal gave a typical response. The principal answered the interview question as follows:

> The walkthrough really does a great job providing data and an opportunity to share with teachers throughout the building. I was able to spark the conversation and the teachers stepped up and assisted each other in closing the transition to third grade. The walkthrough provided me the opportunity to observe the curriculum first hand. This provided me with the needed information to begin having conversations with teachers and close a gap in our curriculum. It gave me a very different perspective.

Professional Learning Communities

Elementary principals identified professional learning communities as a supportive theme. The elementary principals reported a connection between the Walkthrough Observation Tool and professional learning communities in the building. Principals reported how small

conversations with individual teachers sparked larger conversations with the grade level or building. Beta Principal provided a typical response. The principal elaborated as follows:

> About two years ago, I noticed during the walkthrough observations that the teachers were having difficulty with essential questions. Our teachers really had not had a lot of work with essential questions and I discovered that the other administrators were having the same concern. It was not a weakness district wide, but in pockets within the district. I reported this concern back to the grade level teams. We discussed how everyone needed to have this embedded in his or her lesson plans. Everyone in the building began to research essential questions. Once it felt like the teacher was beginning to get a handle on this topic, we broke into the smaller teams and started to work in curricular areas. There were groups that focused on language arts, math, science, and social studies.

Accountability

There was one individual theme of accountability. Two principals reported that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided an opportunity to make sure teachers are meeting state and district expectations. The principals reported that the walkthrough observation allowed them to share effective instructional practices and address ineffective practices. The Alpha Principal stated:

> First, the data from the walkthrough is collected. Central office administrators view this data. Second, the walkthrough form allows me to compile a list of effective practices. I can disseminate this information through email or share at a faculty meeting. If the lesson is ineffective, then obviously that is part of trying to help somebody become effective. Typically, I would address the concern in my write-up and share this

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information with the teacher. I would talk to that person individually and if needed

formally.

The elementary principal interview questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 focused on the connection

between the Walkthrough Observation Tool and the professional growth of elementary teachers.

Consensus, supportive, and individual themes identified the connections between the

Walkthrough Observation Tool and the professional growth of elementary teachers.

Table 9

Themes for Research Question Four

Consensus Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
• Receptivity to feedback • Student engagement • Reflection of Instruction	• Curriculum gaps • Professional Learning Communities	• Accountability

Interview Responses Related to Research Question Five

What other professional or personal experiences are elementary teachers having because of

walkthrough observations?

The fifth research question focused on the professional or personal experiences the

elementary teachers experienced with the Walkthrough Observation Tool. The researcher

utilized the elementary teacher interview questions 9, 10, and 11 to identify themes for the fifth

research question. The analysis of the data indicated two consensus, one supported, and one

individual theme (see Table 10).

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Professional Growth

Professional growth was a consensus theme among thirteen of the fifteen participants. The participants responded that the opportunity to grow professionally was a professional experience related to the Walkthrough Observation Tool. The participants described how the walkthrough observation provided ongoing conversations to improve pedagogical skills in the classroom. Alpha Teacher Three gave a typical response about how the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided professional growth. Alpha Teacher Three reported:

> Well, I always welcome walkthrough feedback. I think it's great because I don't believe anyone's the perfect teacher and we're always trying to make improvements and changes. I think it is a valid tool for teachers that allow us to change, grow, and learn each day. I kind of wish we would have more conversations with – and open conversations with our own teachers about how their walkthroughs went. I do feel like that is a little private at times and I wish it were more open. I can say openly discuss with other faculty members the great things around the building. I can use some examples in my classroom and to be able to learn and grow.

Feedback From Colleagues

Twelve of the fifteen participants reported that feedback from colleagues was a positive professional experience of the Walkthrough Observation Tool. Participants reported how feedback from colleagues provided an extra set of eyes on classroom instruction. Gamma Teacher Two shared a typical professional experience on how the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided feedback from colleagues. Gamma Teacher Two stated:

> The walkthrough is a good way for us to see where I am professionally. Maybe there are areas I need to work on or catch what somebody else did at my grade level. It provides

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an extra set of eyes. Maybe I am working with a group on one side on the classroom and the principal could tell me how engaged other students were on the other side of the room. Therefore, it is helpful. I think it is helpful to sit down with the principal. I enjoy the feedback about what I could maybe work on or if there is something that worked really well.

Validate Effective Practices

Validating effective practices in the classroom was a supported theme. Seven of the fifteen participants reported the personal experiences of how the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided an opportunity for others to validate effective practices in their classroom. Participants appreciated hearing validation from the principal about effective classroom strategies. Epsilon Teacher Two gave a typical supportive response. The teacher elaborated as follows:

> I rather enjoy it. I like seeing whether it is a one of the principals or the superintendents coming in or even a fellow colleague coming in and then seeing what we're doing in the classroom makes me personally feel like what I'm doing is being noticed and not overlooked. I appreciate hearing positive comments about what I am doing well in the classroom. It motivates me to do a better job. The walkthrough validates what I am doing in the classroom. I do not think it affects the students at all. They take notice that there are people in the classroom, but they just go about their business and do what they need to do.

Accountability

Accountability was an individual theme that arose during the analysis of the data. Beta Teacher Three reported the importance of knowing the building "look-fors." The teacher reported that the Walkthrough Observation Tool served as an accountability tool. The teacher

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expressed the importance of planning lessons that directly connected with the Walkthrough Observation Tool. Beta Teacher Three stated answered as follows:

Well, I think it affects everything in your lesson planning. You have to be 100 percent prepared for somebody to walk into your classroom. I think you want to make sure that you have incorporated the things that they want to see. They want you to be properly modeling the lesson or they want to see the kids engaging with each other. They want to see the types of activities that are not just pencil and paper. They want to see the kids try to problem solve and figure things out. I think for me, if I know somebody has a chance of coming into my room, I want to make sure it's all there because I don't want to get caught without being prepared.

The elementary teacher interview questions 9, 10, 11, and 12 focused on the professional and personal experiences elementary teachers had with the walkthrough observation. Consensus, supportive, and individual themes identified the experiences of the elementary teachers Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy.

Table 10

Themes for Research Question 5

Consensus Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
• Professional growth • Feedback from Colleagues	• Validate effective practices	• Accountability

Comparing and Contrasting Walkthrough Experiences

During the interviews of the participants, the researcher collected information from the elementary teachers to compare and contrast professional experiences before and after the Walkthrough Observation Tool adoption in their elementary building. It is important to note, seven of the elementary teachers had experiences only with the Walkthrough Observation Tool. Due to their years of service, they only worked in a building that implemented the Walkthrough Observation Tool. The teachers listed below:

- Alpha Teacher One

- Alpha Teacher Two

- Beta Teacher One

- Gamma Teacher Three

- Delta Teacher Three

- Epsilon Teacher Two

- Epsilon Teacher Three

The seven elementary teachers reflected on how they would grow professionally or personally without the walkthrough observation framework. Gamma Teacher Three stated a typical response:

> I think it would be my job to invite the principal into the room. How else would I receive feedback on my teaching? Who would I have conversations with about my lessons. The walkthrough observation is a formal process that I know and I am used to it. I think that it is equally as important to the principal. How would the principal know anything about my ability to teach in the classroom or my interests in particular subject. They would have no background to make informed decisions.

Eight of the elementary teachers had professional experiences before the walkthrough observation implementation in their districts. The teachers either had more than ten years of experience or had worked previously in another district that did not implement the Walkthrough Observation Tool. The teachers were:

- Alpha Teacher Three

- Beta Teacher Two

- Beta Teacher Three

- Gamma Teacher One

- Gamma Teacher Two

- Delta Teacher One

- Delta Teacher Two

- Epsilon Teacher One

These teachers had an unique perspective of comparing their professional and personal experiences before and after the walkthrough observation. Beta Teacher Two gave a typical response:

> Professional, the walkthrough has made us more focused because the principal can observe at anytime. I do think it keeps you on our toes and aware of what you are supposed to be doing. I feel more expert at what we are doing because of the walkthrough. You are having an opportunity to grow professionally by having conversations with colleagues. The walkthrough has caused me to handle constructive criticism better than I did before. I have seen many things evolve because of the walkthrough. Since the principal is always in our classrooms, it helped us to develop the same plan to be on the same page with my grade level. It has caused us to

talk about what we are teaching and what we are doing as a group and between grade

levels. Before the walkthrough, we all worked independently. The principals would only

visit our room once a year for a clinical observation. It was more or less a dog and pony

show.

The elementary teacher interview questions 9, 10, 11, and 12 focused on the professional and

personal experiences elementary teachers had with the walkthrough observation. All fifteen

teachers reported positive professional and personal experiences with the Walkthrough

Observation Tool. The teachers reported that the Walkthrough Observation Tool promoted

collegiality and collaboration among colleagues.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher provided data from elementary principals' and elementary

teachers' lived experiences with the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough

Observation Tool. The researcher interviewed five elementary principals and three teachers

from each building for this study. The interviews provided the researcher information about the

effect of the Walkthrough Observation Tool on the professional growth of elementary teachers.

Noteworthy responses from the participants were highlighted and notes written in the margins of

the transcripts connected the lived experiences of the participants. The researcher coded the data

utilizing the elements from Charlotte Danielson's (2007) rubric on Growing and Developing

Professionally. Themes emerged in the data and categorized according to Danielson's (2007)

theoretical perspective of enhancement of content knowledge, receptivity to feedback from

colleagues, and service to the profession. Themes quantified into consensus, supportive, and

individual categories.   Both the principals' and teachers' consensus themes aligned with

Charlotte Danielson Growing and Developing Professionally Rubric. A majority of the

participants shared how the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a framework for

elementary teachers to grow professionally. In Chapter V, the researcher uses the data presented

in this chapter to answer the five research questions. The final chapter also includes personal

reflections and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"Schools abound with opportunities for teachers to learn from one another."

(Danielson, 2007, p.104)

Introduction

In Chapter IV, the researcher interviewed and collected artifacts from participants in five school districts in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The information collected focused on the connection between the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy and the relationship with the elementary teacher's professional growth. Chapter V provides meaning to information in the previous chapters by reviewing past research and extrapolating the results into future practice. This chapter connects the statement of the problem, literature review, and methodology to the perceptions of the participant's experiences with the walkthrough observation and the professional growth of elementary teachers. The data analyzed from the participants provided answers to the five research questions. Finally, this chapter provides recommendations for future research.

In Chapter I, the researcher stated the purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of elementary principals and elementary teachers' experiences utilizing the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool as a meaningful tool for professional growth for elementary teachers during the years 2011 to 2013. In the era of accountability, school districts explored how to improve the pedagogical skills of classroom teachers. Many school districts utilized the walkthrough observations as a tool to increase accountability for classroom teachers and to improve instructional strategies in the classroom. Pennsylvania implemented a new teacher effectiveness model that included an observation rubric

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for teachers based upon the research of Charlotte Danielson (Rowland, 2009). In the 2013-14 school year, a piece of the teachers evaluation includes an overall school performance profile. The school performance profile will account for fifteen percent of the overall evaluation score. Eventually, the overall teacher evaluation score will include fifty percent observation data, fifteen percent building level data, fifteen percent teacher specific data, and twenty percent student learning objectives.

The study employed a qualitative approach to examine the relationship between walkthrough observations and the elementary teachers' professional growth. This approach allowed the researcher to examine "how people learn and make sense of themselves and others" (Berg, 2009, p. 8). The goal of qualitative research was to learn about the participant's experiences and to provide a detailed description of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This researcher chose to utilize qualitative methodology to gain a more in-depth and interpersonal response to the research questions.

In June of 2013, five principals and three teachers from each selected elementary school located in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania were involved in one-to-one interviews with the researcher. All five elementary schools were identified by the Directors of Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy as schools that use Walkthrough Observations Tool as a strategy for school improvement. The selected schools all made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) in third grade in the areas of reading and math from 2011-2013. The researcher interviewed each participant for approximately 45 minutes. Documents consisting of walkthrough observation forms, faculty meeting agendas, list of "look-fors," and in-service day agendas were also collected. The lived experiences of the participants and documents served as a source of evidences for this research

study. The participant's experiences organized into themes. Themes emerging in this study were broken into consensus, supported, and individual themes. Consensus themes develop when the majority of participants share the same lived experiences. For the purposes of this study, consensus themes was supported by eighty percent of the participants, supported themes was mentioned by approximately fifty percent of the participants, and individual themes was identified by just one or two participants.

In this final chapter, the researcher critically reflected upon the five research questions and previous literature to determine significance of the data collected.
The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What are the perceptions of elementary teachers about the Walkthrough Observation Tool as a means of providing professional growth?

2. What are the perceptions of the elementary principals about the Walkthrough Observation Tool as a means of providing professional growth?

3. What are the perceptions identified by elementary teachers about how the walkthrough observation affects their professional growth as identified in Charlotte Danielson's framework on growing and developing professionally?

4. What are the perceptions identified by the elementary principal about how the walkthrough affected professional growth towards the "look-fors" listed on their district's walkthrough observation form?

5. What other professional or personal experiences were elementary teachers having because of walkthrough observations?

The researcher interviewed five elementary principals and three elementary teachers from each

building and collected relevant documents to uncovered themes. The emerging themes and

review of literature provide information for the researcher to answer the five research questions.

Responses Related to Research Question One

What are the perceptions of elementary teachers about the Walkthrough Observation

Tool as a means of providing professional growth?

The Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy

is an approach that allowed principals to gather data from the classroom to provide customized

feedback to the teacher, grade level, or faculty. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the

walkthrough observation opens the school environment to share best practices. Principals collect

data on teaching and learning that occur in classrooms throughout the school setting. The

observation data provides targeted professional growth for teachers.

The first research question focused on the elementary teachers' perceptions of the

Walkthrough Observation Tool as a strategy to provide professional growth. The researcher

analyzed the responses of the elementary teachers to identify areas of professional growth when

their principals conducted walkthrough observations. Charlotte Danielson's conceptual

framework on Growing and Developing Professionally served for the analysis to examine the

elementary teacher's responses. In Chapter IV, the elementary teachers identified three

consensus themes and one individual theme that connected the Walkthrough Observation Tool

and Danielson's framework. The three consensus themes were enhancement of content

knowledge, receptivity to feedback from colleagues, and service to the profession. Surprisingly,

only one teacher connected reflection and the Walkthrough Observation Tool with continuous

professional growth.

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Analysis of the data indicated the Walkthrough Observation Tool enhanced the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of the elementary teachers. According to Danielson (2007), content knowledge is an area in which professional educators can grow professionally. The elementary teachers who participated in this study taught several subjects throughout the school day. They had a particular challenge with understanding all of the subjects well enough to plan rigorous lessons and respond to student needs in the classroom. The difficulty for elementary teachers was that the academic standards kept changing. Another challenge was that teachers needed to incorporate more rigorous and relevant questions into their lesson planning. Ongoing professional growth to improve their content knowledge and pedagogical skills was an expectation in all of the sample elementary schools. According to Blasé and Blasé (1998), there is a direct correlation between instructional supervision and teacher performance in the classroom.

Enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skills was a consensus theme among the elementary teachers. Fourteen of the fifteen elementary teachers responded that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided opportunities to improve their content knowledge or pedagogical skills. The walkthrough observation established a process for meaningful dialogue to enhance classroom instruction. The elementary teachers responded that the Walkthrough Observation Tool allowed them to seek out customized professional growth opportunities.

Another consensus theme among the elementary teachers indicated that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a framework for teachers to receive or provide feedback to colleagues. According to Danielson (2007), schools provide opportunities for faculty to learn from colleagues. All of the teachers reported common planning time or professional learning communities established within their buildings. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the

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Walkthrough Observation Tool established a ritual that focused on teaching and learning. The elementary teachers reported that the walkthrough changed the culture of the classroom from working alone in a silo to collaborative.

Receptivity to feedback was a significant consensus theme among the elementary teachers. All fifteen elementary teachers were receptive to feedback from other faculty members or building principal. The teachers reported that the Walkthrough Observation Tool opened up the school environment and gave everyone the opportunity to share best practices.

Based on the data collected from the walkthrough observation, principals had elementary teachers present at grade level, faculty, or in-service meetings. According to Danielson (2007), teachers are not always on the receiving end of professional development, but find ways to contribute to the profession. The elementary teachers conducted action research, participated in professional learning communities, and worked on enhancing the curriculum. The Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a framework that promoted a collective responsibility for all stakeholders. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the shared responsibility builds a "we" concept for educating children.

Service to the profession was a consensus theme among the elementary teachers in this study. Fourteen of the fifteen teachers reported opportunities for teachers to learn from one another. The elementary teachers reported that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided opportunities to discuss teaching strategies, initiate curriculum recommendation, or coach other colleagues.

Conclusions Regarding Research Question One

It was apparent the elementary teachers' consensus themes aligned with Charlotte Danielson framework on Growing and Developing Professionally. The elementary teachers

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indicated that the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy enhanced their professional growth. All of the consensus themes and the individual theme provided elementary teachers an avenue to enhance their knowledge, to receive feedback from colleagues, to participate in professional learning communities, or to reflect on teaching. The researcher affirmed the Walkthrough Observation Tool necessitated collegiality from all stakeholders. The design of the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy design allows for buy-in of all stakeholders. Everyone was aware of the "look-fors" and had time to prepare for a classroom observation. This process allowed the stakeholders to build trust. The visibility of the elementary principal and validation of best practices provided an opportunity to move classrooms from silos to a culture of collaboration. School districts should incorporate a walkthrough process that incorporates the consensus themes from this research question and framework of the Walkthrough Observation Tool to maximize the professional growth of their elementary teachers.

Responses Related to Research Question Two

What are the perceptions of the elementary principals about the Walkthrough Observation Tool as a means of providing professional growth?

According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), every classroom observation is an opportunity to collect data about teaching and learning in the classroom. The data provided the principal information to offer professional development to an individual teacher, grade level or faculty. The Walkthrough Observation Tool framework provided the foundation for teachers to seek out opportunities for professional development, to seek out feedback from colleagues, and to initiate activities to contribute to the professional development of the elementary building.

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The second research question focused on the perceptions of the elementary principals on the Walkthrough Observation Tool as a framework to provide professional growth to elementary teachers. The researcher analyzed the responses of the elementary principals to identify areas of professional growth for elementary teachers related to the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool. In chapter IV, the elementary principals identified three consensus themes and two individual themes during the interviews. Charlotte Danielson's conceptual framework on Growing and Developing Professionally served for the analysis to examine the elementary principal's responses. The themes were enhancement of content knowledge, receptivity to feedback from colleagues, and service to the profession. Two principals identified themes of accountability and validation of best practices.

Analysis of the data indicated a consensus theme among elementary principals that the Walkthrough Observation Tool enhanced the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of elementary teachers. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the walkthrough process should reflect the district's standards for curriculum and instruction. This process allows the development of a common language for all stakeholders in the building or district.

Enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skills was a consensus theme among the elementary principals. Four of the five elementary principals responded that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided opportunities to improve the elementary teacher's content knowledge or pedagogical skills. Specifically, the elementary principal's perception was that the Walkthrough Observation Tool established a process for meaningful dialogue for elementary teachers to seek out opportunities for professional growth. One of the steps identified by Graf and Werlinich (2004) in the walkthrough observation process was to collect data that influenced learning in the classroom. The elementary principals all indicated that they

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collected data on student learning behaviors, student classroom work, teacher behaviors, and classroom activities. The data allowed the elementary principals to provide customized professional development from individual teacher, grade level, or entire faculty.

Another consensus theme among the elementary principals indicated that the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a framework for teachers to receive or provide feedback to colleagues. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), an important step in the walkthrough observation is to debrief the classroom data collected with teachers. They believe feedback is a critical step in the walkthrough observation process. The purpose of the feedback was to validate effective teaching and encourage its continued use in the classroom. It also provided opportunities to engage in discussions about areas on improvement. The elementary principals indicated that this process allowed the elementary teachers to engage in other conversations with grade levels.

It was significant that receptivity to feedback was a consensus theme among the elementary principals. All five elementary principals perceived that their elementary teachers were receptive to feedback from colleagues. The elementary principals reported the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a framework to engage elementary teachers in discussions, professional growth, and to promote a learning community throughout the building.

The third consensus theme indicated that principals perceived elementary teachers assisted colleagues throughout the building. According to Graf and Werlincih (2004), the walkthrough observation provided opportunities for teachers to talk about instruction and to learn from each other, and to coach one another. They believe the walkthrough creates a school culture entrenched in the improvement of teaching and learning. It creates a culture of continuous improvement, not just an isolated event. The elementary principals affirmed the

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walkthrough observation provided a framework for teachers to assist their colleagues and initiate

important activities that improved teaching and learning for all stakeholders.

Service to the profession was a significant consensus theme among the elementary

principals in this study. All five principals reported opportunities for teachers to assist in the

professional growth of others in the building. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), when

teachers discover a way to connect centered on teaching and learning, everyone in the

organization benefits. The data indicated that the Walkthrough Observation Tool enhanced the

culture of the elementary building to promote professional growth for all.

Conclusions Regarding Research Question Two

It was apparent the elementary principals' consensus themes aligned with Charlotte

Danielson framework on Growing and Developing Professionally and the Western Pennsylvania

Principal's Academy protocol on the Walkthrough Observation Tool. The elementary principals

indicated that the Walkthrough Observation Tool enhanced the professional growth of all

stakeholders in their elementary buildings. All of the consensus themes and individual themes

provided elementary principals an opportunity to enhance the elementary teachers' knowledge,

to provide opportunities for feedback from colleagues, to participate in professional learning

communities, and to hold teachers accountable for district expectations. All of the elementary

principals have been utilizing the Walkthrough Observation Tool for at least five years. The

researcher had an opportunity to collected data of the lived experiences from five high

performing elementary schools. The Walkthrough Observation Tool provided the elementary

principals a non-threatening framework to engage teachers. Once the "look-for" were

established, all stakeholders understood the expectations. The researcher affirmed the

Walkthrough Observation Tool necessitated a framework that provided ongoing professional

growth to all stakeholders in an elementary building. School districts should incorporate a walkthrough observation process that incorporated the consensus themes from this research question and the Walkthrough Observation Tool framework to maximize the professional growth of their elementary teachers.

Responses Related to Research Question Three

What are the perceptions identified by elementary teachers about how the walkthrough observation affects their professional growth as identified in Charlotte Danielson's framework on growing and developing professionally?

The third research question focused on the connection between the Walkthrough Observation Tool and Charlotte Danielson's rubric on Growing and Developing Professionally. Charlotte Danielson's conceptual framework on Growing and Developing Professionally served for the analysis to examine the elementary teacher's responses. According to Danielson (2007), teachers demonstrate a commitment to ongoing professional growth by their behaviors in the classroom. These behaviors included opportunities for professional growth to enhance content knowledge, to welcome feedback from colleagues, and to participant assisting other educators.

The elementary teachers' responses supported the key steps of the Walkthrough Observation Tool. The key steps correlated with Danielson's three elements of Growing and Developing Professionally. These steps of the Walkthrough Observation Tool and Danielson's three elements of Growing and Developing Professionally included:

- Connect the "look-fors" to established standards (Enhancement)
- Schedule the Walkthrough that focus on the "look-fors" (Receptivity)
- Identify types of data to be collected (Enhancement)
- Observe student behaviors (Enhancement)

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- Validating effective practices (Receptivity)

- Debrief with teachers ((Receptivity)

- Coach each other (Service)

- Create a school culture embedded in improvement (Service)

- Create a learning community (Service)

In Chapter IV, the elementary teachers identified three consensus themes and that connected the Walkthrough Observation Tool and Danielson's rubric on Growing and Developing Professionally. The three consensus themes were enhancement of content knowledge, receptivity to feedback from colleagues, and service to the profession. The data categorized into unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished sections on the Danielson's rubric.

Enhancement of Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Skills revealed the majority of participants responded in the proficient area of Danielson's rubric. Thirteen of the fifteen elementary teachers indicated a proficient response on Danielson's rubric (see Table 7). According to Danielson (2007), a proficient response indicated that the teacher seeks out opportunities for professional development to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skills. One teacher responded in the distinguished category on the rubric. A distinguished response indicated the teacher seeks out opportunities for professional growth and makes a regular effort to conduct research. Another teacher responded with a basic response. This indicated that the teacher participated in professional activities to a limited extent.

It was apparent that enhancement of content knowledge was a significant consensus theme among the elementary teachers. Fourteen of the fifteen elementary teachers indicated a

proficient or distinguished response that the Walkthrough Observation Tool enhanced their content and pedagogical skills in the classroom.

Receptivity to feedback revealed the majority of all of the participants responded in the proficient or distinguished section on Danielson's rubric on Growing and Developing Professionally. A distinguished response indicated the teachers seek out feedback on teaching from supervisors or other colleagues. Eight of the fifteen responded in the distinguished category (see Table 7). A proficient response indicated the teacher welcomed feedback from supervisors or other teachers during professional collaboration. Seven of the fifteen elementary teachers responded in the proficient category.

It was apparent that all of the elementary teachers connected the framework of the Walkthrough Observation Tool to opportunities to collaborate with the building principal or other professional educators in the building. All fifteen of the elementary teachers responded in the proficient or distinguished category of Danielson's (2007) rubric on Growing and Developing Professionally. The elementary teachers reported opportunities to learn from their colleagues. This consisted of common planning time, professional learning communities, and opportunities to work on district curriculum.

Service to the profession indicated that the majority on the elementary teachers participated actively to assist other teachers or participated in district opportunities to improve teaching and learning. A distinguished response indicated the teacher initiated important activities to contribute to the profession. Seven of the fifteen elementary teachers responded in this area of the rubric (see Table 7). A proficient response indicated the teacher participated actively to assist other educators. Seven of the fifteen elementary teachers responded in the area of the rubric. Only one elementary teacher responded in the unsatisfactory area of the rubric.

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An unsatisfactory response indicated the teacher made no effort to share knowledge with colleagues or assumed professional responsibilities.

It was apparent that fourteen of the fifteen elementary teachers responded in the proficient or distinguished category. Teachers were not only on the receiving end of professional growth opportunities, but contributed to the learning community. Some of the activities included conducting research, participating in curriculum development, and leading grade level meetings.

Conclusions Regarding Research Question Three

It was apparent the elementary teachers' responded that the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool provided opportunities for professional growth. The majority of the elementary teachers indicated that they had opportunities for professional growth that corresponded with Charlotte Danielson's framework on Growing and Developing Professionally. Elementary teachers pointed towards the opportunities to seek out professional development, to receive feedback on teaching from colleagues, and to contribute to the profession. The Walkthrough Observation Tool allowed for teachers to buy-into the process of continuous improvement. All stakeholders understood the expectations throughout the elementary building. The Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a consistent process for colleagues to discuss teaching and learning. School districts should incorporate a walkthrough observation process that incorporated the elements from Danielson's rubric and Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy steps to implement the walkthrough observation. The key factors indicate that the Walkthrough Observation Tool framework offered significant professional growth for elementary teachers.

Responses Related to Research Question Four

What are the perceptions identified by elementary principals about how the walkthrough observation affected professional growth towards the "look-fors" listed on their district walkthrough observation form?

The fourth research question focused on the connection between the walkthrough observation "look-fors" and the professional growth of elementary teachers. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the developments of "look-fors" required principals and teachers working together to recognize specific behaviors of successful instruction. The process engaged teachers to establish a focus for walkthrough observations. When all stakeholders participated in the process, classroom teachers had a clear understanding and were more committed to the process. Each of the five elementary schools worked in a collaborative process and developed "look-fors" that identified effective instruction for their elementary school.

Each of the five elementary schools identified specific "look-fors" for their buildings. The elementary principals reported the Walkthrough Observation Tool framework provided a structure for ongoing professional growth opportunities for elementary teachers. As specified in Chapter IV, the five principals identified three consensus, two supported, and two individual themes.

Consensus themes included:

- Receptivity to feedback
- Student engagement
- Reflection of teaching

Supported themes included:

- Curriculum gaps

- Professional learning communities

Individual Themes included:

- Accountability

The elementary principals' consensus themes included receptivity to feedback, student engagement, and reflection of instruction. All five elementary principals identified receptivity to feedback as a consensus theme. The Walkthrough Observation Tool provided common language for elementary teachers to discuss teaching and learning with the building principal. Four out of five principals indicated that student engagement was a consensus theme. Four of the elementary school listed student engagement as a specific "look-for" on the building observation forms. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), observing student behaviors was a major focus of the walkthrough observation. This included level of student engagement, quality of student work, and conversations with students about what they learned. The third consensus theme focused on reflection of instruction. Four of the five elementary principals indicated reflection on instruction as a consensus theme. The elementary principals debriefed teachers after the conclusion on the walkthrough observation. This is also a critical step in successful implementation of the Walkthrough Observation Tool. The principals used the following debriefing strategies:

- Oral feedback

- Student feedback

- Written feedback

- Debriefing the faculty

- Clinical supervision conference

The perception of the elementary principals' indicated debriefing strategies provided elementary classroom teachers opportunities to reflect on their lessons.

Two supported themes arose during the interview with the elementary principals. The elementary principals reported that the "Look-fors" identified curriculum gaps and sparked professional learning communities throughout the building. Three elementary principals reported that data retrieved from the classroom and conversations with classroom teachers revealed gaps within the curriculum. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), multiple visits to the classroom provided data on strategies used in the classroom, pace of the curriculum, and student assessment data. The second supported theme identified professional learning communities. Three elementary principals reported the Walkthrough Observation Tool created a learning community that embraced all stakeholders to contribute for continuous improvement.

The analysis of the data identified one individual theme of accountability. Two of the five elementary principals stated the Walkthrough Observation Tool assured district expectations within the classroom. The walkthrough observation allowed the principal to collect data, to validate effective strategies, and to engage teachers in discussion about continuous improvement. According to Danielson (2007), professional engagement with teachers is job embedded. The principals stated the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided customized ongoing professional growth opportunities for elementary teachers.

Conclusions Regarding Research Question Four

It was apparent the elementary principals' responded that the walkthrough observation "look-fors" positively affected the professional growth of elementary teachers. The elementary principals reported the "look-fors" on the walkthrough observation forms provided common language for all stakeholders in the building. The Walkthrough Observation Tool designed for

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teachers and principals to work collaboratively to generate a list of effective instruction or guiding principles. All five elementary buildings established a list of different "look-fors" and all five building made AYP. The walkthrough framework allowed individual building to focus specifically on their needs. It is not a one size fits all approach. The process also created clear expectations for classroom teachers. It was evident the aforementioned themes required collaboration among principals and teachers. As stated in Chapter IV, all of the elementary schools were high achieving schools. All of the elementary schools had different "look-fors" on their building observation forms. The researcher asserted the Walkthrough Observation Tool framework allowed each elementary school to customize improvement strategies based upon each buildings data. The researcher affirmed the Walkthrough Observation Tool necessitated collegiality from all stakeholders. School districts should include a walkthrough process that incorporates the themes from this research question to maximize the professional growth of their elementary teachers.

Responses Related to Research Question Five

What other professional or personal experiences are elementary teachers having because of walkthrough observations?

The walkthrough observation connects instructional supervision to ongoing improvement of instruction in the classroom. According to Blasé and Blasé (1998), supervision engages teachers in ongoing conversations and reflections for the purpose of improved teaching and learning in the classroom. The Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy was an approach that allowed principals to gather data from the classroom to provided customized professional growth to elementary teachers.

The fifth research question focused on the professional or personal experiences the elementary teachers experienced with the Walkthrough Observation Tool. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the Walkthrough Observation Tool goal was to create a school environment entrenched around improving teaching and learning. Principals must be visible in the classroom in order to make the walkthrough part of the school culture.

Three teachers from each of the five elementary schools were interviewed in order to identify the professional or personal experiences related to the walkthrough observation. The elementary teachers reported the walkthrough observation provided opportunities to improve classroom performance. As specified in Chapter IV, the fifteen elementary teachers identified two consensus themes, one supported theme, and one individual theme during the interviews.

Consensus themes included:

- Professional growth

- Feedback from colleagues

Supported theme included:

- Validate effective practice

Individual theme included:

- Accountability

The elementary teachers' consensus themes included professional growth and feedback from colleagues. Thirteen of the fifteen elementary teachers identified professional growth as a consensus theme. According to Danielson (2007), the mark of a true professional is continuous improvement. The Walkthrough Observation Tool designed for principals to collaborate and validate best practices. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the walkthrough created a

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school environment entrenched in improvement of teaching and learning. The second consensus theme the elementary teachers identified was feedback from colleagues. Twelve of the fifteen elementary teachers identified this as a consensus theme. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the walkthrough observation recommended including classroom teachers on learning walks. They believe the inclusion of teachers in the walkthrough observation process would be a potent tool.

Seven of the fifteen elementary teachers identified the walkthrough validated effective practices in the classroom. A critical step in implementation of the Walkthrough Observation Tool was to validate effective practice in the classroom. According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), an important step was for the building principal to validate powerful teaching practice, guiding principles, and effective strategies demonstrated by students. The elementary teachers welcomed feedback from the principal or other teachers in the building. This theme also aligned with Charlotte Danielson (2007) rubric on Growing and Developing Professionally. The elementary teachers responded at the proficient or distinguished levels of performance that indicated professional growth.

The analysis of the data identified one individual theme of accountability. Only one of the fifteen elementary teachers connected the Walkthrough Observation Tool with accountability. The teacher prepared and presented lessons that aligned with the district's walkthrough observation "look-fors." According to Graf and Werlinich (2004), the goal was to connect the "look-fors" to the established curriculum and district expectation. This allowed all stakeholders to develop a common language focused on instruction. The "look-fors" established by all stakeholders provided clear examples around teaching and learning.

Conclusions Regarding Research Question Five

It was evident that the elementary teachers had positive professional and personal experiences with the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy. The elementary teachers indicated that walkthrough observations provided professional growth and feedback from colleagues. Other experiences included validation of effective practices and accountability. It is important to note, only seven of the elementary teachers had experiences with the Walkthrough Observation Tool. Due to their years of service, they only worked in a building that implemented the Walkthrough Observation Tool. The seven elementary teachers reflected on how they would grow professionally or personally without the walkthrough observation framework. Eight of the elementary teachers had professional experiences before the walkthrough observation implementation in their districts. The teachers either had more than ten years of experience or worked previously in another district that did not implement the Walkthrough Observation Tool. These teachers had an unique perspective of comparing their professional and personal experiences before and after the walkthrough observation.

The researcher asserts the Walkthrough Observation Tool framework allowed elementary teachers a positive professional and personal experience. The researcher affirmed the Walkthrough Observation Tool necessitated collegiality and collaboration from all stakeholders. School districts should incorporate a walkthrough process that utilizes the themes from this research question to maximize the professional growth of their elementary teachers.

Suggestions for Further Study

Qualitative studies by their design may not produce a generalization to other participants or settings. This study included a small sample of five principals and three teachers from each

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selected elementary school. Conversely, qualitative research provides understanding and descriptions of an individual's personal experiences and describes in rich detail the lived experiences of the participants. The consensus, supported, and individual themes from this study could be explored in more depth and breadth to discover increased levels of understanding between the walkthrough observation and professional growth of teachers. Additional recommendations for future research include the following:

- Replicate this study with other suburban elementary schools

- Replicate this study using middle or high school teachers

- Replicate this study in rural or urban school districts

- Conduct this study utilizing another walkthrough framework

- Conduct this study with a quantitative methodology

- Conduct this study with school not making Adequate Yearly Progress

- Conduct this study with K-12 teachers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This Qualitative study examined the connection between the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy and the professional growth of elementary teachers. As described in this study, the Walkthrough Observation Tool provided a framework for elementary schools to improve collegiality and collaboration from all stakeholders. When the elementary principal was visible and validated best practices, all stakeholders had shared responsibility of continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Utilizing the rubric from Charlotte Danielson's (2007) Growing and Developing Professionally, the elementary principals' and elementary teachers' responses indicated significant professional

growth. The elementary principals and teachers indicated the Walkthrough Observation Tool

provided professional growth. The consensus themes included:

- Enhancement of content or pedagogical skill

- Receptivity to feedback from colleagues

- Service to the profession

- Student engagement

- Reflection of instruction

- Professional growth

The Pennsylvania Department of Education implemented the New Teacher Effectiveness

Model during the completion of this research study. The framework for the new teacher

evaluation system included an observation rubric for teachers based upon the research of

Charlotte Danielson (Rowland, 2009). This framework addressed the full range of teacher

performances from beginner to experienced educator. The conclusions from this study will

provide school districts a framework to implement a process of improving instruction, to utilize a

study aligned with Charlotte Danielson's framework, and to promote a culture focused around a

shared responsibility for students. In addition, The Pennsylvania Department of Education

decided to merge the Pennsylvania Academic Standards with the Common Core Standards.

These new Pennsylvania Common Core Standards not only increase rigor and relevance to the

curriculum, but increase accountability for school districts.   According to Blasé and Blasé

(1998), supervision is a process that engages teachers in ongoing dialogue and reflection for

improving teaching and learning. To that end, the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the

Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy creates opportunities for the principal to collect data,

to provide teachers opportunities for reflection, and to ensure Pennsylvania Common Core Standards are present in teaching and learning.

Finally, the researcher affirmed that the data from this study indicated a connection between the Walkthrough Observation Tool of the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy and the professional growth of elementary teachers. I found that conducting this study validated my personal beliefs about the walkthrough observation process. The study allowed me to ascertain information from elementary principals and elementary teachers about their perceptions of the walkthrough process. I personally believed that walkthrough observation improve teaching and builds relationships between administrations and teachers. Upon completion of this study, I have a better understanding of how the walkthrough observation tool promotes quality instruction and provides ongoing customized professional growth.

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Appendix A

Sample Walkthrough Observation Form (look-fors/descriptors)

Teacher _____

Class _____

Observer _____

Date _____

Behavior highlighted this month

_____

Observations on performance of highlighted behavior

_____
_____
_____
_____

Instructional strategies and thinking skills also observed:	*Evidence of personalized, rigorous learning observed (briefly describe):*
___ Objectives on the board	___ Differentiation
___ Maximizing instructional time	
___ Proximity	___ Reading/writing in content areas
___ Student engagement	
___ Closure	___ Higher order thinking skills
___ Monitoring comprehension	
___ Background knowledge	___ Technology integration
___ Questioning	
___ Visualizing	___ Cross-curricular connections
___ Inferring	
___ Determining importance	___ Authentic, inquiry, project-based
___ Summarizing	
___ Sequencing	*Comments:*

Classroom Visitation Descriptors

Instructional Strategies and Thinking Skills

Objectives on board
- The objective, aligned to standards and eligible content, is posted and known by students
- Students know what they need to know, why they need to know it and how they will know that they know it
- The objective includes what the student needs to do to demonstrate learning, the conditions under which the performance is to take place and the criteria for acceptable performance
- Samples of quality work are examined and rubrics are used to assess student work

Maximizing instructional time
- Classroom routines (giving directions, checking homework for completion, beginning homework in class, record keeping) are efficient so that instructional time is increased
- Time allocated for the opportunity to learn and time students spend on task are maximized to promote academic time and student learning
- Instructional time is best used by differentiating instruction to meet the appropriate level of difficulty for students
- Good questioning strategies help make the most of instructional time

Proximity
- Good teachers "work the crowd" to keep students on task
- Good teachers are physically close to, within arms' reach of all students in the room
- Placement of teacher and student desks promotes teachers being physically close to students
- Good teachers move around the class during seatwork time to monitor progress

Student engagement
- Maintaining instructional momentum and having smooth transitions increase engagement
- Lessons are planned so that all students are actively engaged in all parts of the lesson
- Time for passive student engagement is limited
- Good teachers maintain eye contact with students, know what is going on in the classroom and monitor students' attending behavior

Closure
- Closure at the end of lesson helps students bring organization to their learning
- Students are asked to summarize the key points of their learning and ask clarifying questions
- Good teachers spend at least 5 and as many as 10 minutes on closure

- Closure helps teachers decide if additional practice is needed or whether to move on

Monitoring comprehension
- Help students become aware of their thinking, monitor their understanding and keep track of their sense of meaning
- Help students note the obstacles and confusions that derail their understanding and break down their creation of meaning
- Give students a variety of strategies to help repair meaning when it breaks down
- Ensure students know when, why and how to use different strategies to maintain and further understanding

Background knowledge
- Before introducing new knowledge, good teachers help students recall what they already know or think they know and ask that they think they may be learning about
- Background knowledge is effectively elicited with advance organizers
- Advance organizers focus on what is important instead of what is unusual
- Higher level advance organizers produce deeper learning and help structure information that is not organized

Questioning
- Questions focus on what is important rather than what is unusual
- Higher level questions produce deeper learning than lower level questions
- Waiting briefly before accepting responses increases the depth of student answers
- Ask questions before a learning experience to establish a mental set for students to process the learning experience

Visualizing
- Nonlinguistic representations elaborate on or add to knowledge
- Creating graphic organizers helps students organize information visually
- Making physical models, generating mental pictures and drawing pictures also help
- Kinesthetic activities that involve movement can also help student visualize information

Inferring
- Ask students to use current information to make predictions about information that has not yet been revealed
- Have students identify their inferences (opinions, assumptions) and the information they used to make them
- Help students evaluate the validity of their inferences by examining additional information and help students change their inferences in light of additional information
- Help students understand the notion of proof

Determining importance
- Look for evidence that students gain important information from textual and visual features
- Teach students to sift and sort the important information from the details by using information for specific purposes
- Help students make the distinction between what they think is most important and what the author thinks is most important
- Ask students to cite and evaluate the worth of evidence used in forming opinions and understanding the big ideas

Summarizing
- To summarize, students decide what information to delete, substitute and keep
- To do this effectively, students analyze information at a fairly deep level
- Being aware of the structure of information helps in effectively summarizing
- To effectively summarize students select or invent a topic sentence

Sequencing
- Thinking strategies are explicitly taught but are used holistically to create meaning
- Students are able to move flexibly between thinking strategies according to the demands of specific texts and tasks
- The acquisition of knowledge always involves noticing new information and determining its importance
- Students learn how to recognize what they know, what they don't know, what they need to know and how to gain that knowledge

Evidence of Personalized, Rigorous learning

Differentiation
- Content, instructional strategy, learning product and assessment are modified to meet students' learning needs
- Students are given choice in content, instruction and assessment
- Instructional choices about curriculum, instruction and assessment take into account information about student prior learning, abilities and interests
- Instruction is set at the level of difficulty appropriate for students so that they are neither bored nor frustrated

Reading and writing in the content area
- Teachers incorporate reading into their lessons and model critical reading skills that help students learn to read critically
- Teachers incorporate writing into their lessons in a variety of ways
- A common writing rubric is used to assess the quality of formal writing in all subject areas

- Teachers model good writing at all times in their classes

Higher order thinking skills
- Students can analyze, synthesize and evaluate information as well as recognize, recall and and apply information
- Students learn to be critical thinkers who can analyze arguments, see other points of view, reach sound conclusions and defend personal positions
- Students learn to think creatively, originally, appropriately and ethically
- Students learn to be metacognitive thinkers able to control themselves, their knowledge and their thinking processes

Technology integration
- Digital technologies are used to support anytime, anywhere learning through social networks which promote powerful student engagement
- Students are technological literate, can assess the value of online information and use technology ethically
- Teachers keep current with technological innovation so that their classrooms remain relevant in the lives of their students
- Teachers use electronic tools for information and instructional management easily and confidently

Cross-curricular connections
- Students understand that knowledge is connected and that disciplines are specifically defined perspectives, languages or lenses used to guide inquiry
- Teachers work with colleagues in other disciplines to make cross-curricular connections for students though common essential questions and joint projects
- Understanding is deepened by orchestrating and focusing student learning in ways that can be reinforced across subject areas
- Teachers working together across disciplines can help students understand real world applications of knowledge

Authentic, inquiry, project-based learning
- Projects are the centerpiece of the curriculum, not an add on or extra at the end of an unit
- Students engage in real-world activities and practice the strategies of disciplinary inquiry
- Students work collaboratively to solve problems that matter to them
- Technology is integrated as a tool for discovery, collaboration and communication
- Teachers collaborate to design, implement and assess projects

Appendix B

Participant Elementary Schools AYP Data

Elementary School	Academic Years	Made AYP Reading	Made AYP Math
Alpha Elementary School	2011-13	Yes	Yes
Beta Elementary School	2011-13	Yes	Yes
Gamma Elementary School	2011-13	Yes	Yes
Delta Elementary School	2011-13	Yes	Yes
Epsilon Elementary School	2011-13	Yes	Yes

Appendix C

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
www.iup.edu

Office of the Assistant Dean for Research
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Stright Hall, Room 113
210 South Tenth Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1048

P 724-357-7730
F 724-357-2715
www.iup.edu/research

May 8, 2013

Rick A. Walsh
242 Village Drive
Canonsburg, PA 15317

Dear Mr. Walsh:

Now that your research project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, I have reviewed your Research Topic Approval Form and approved it. However, this approval is **CONDITIONAL PENDING OUTSIDE READER APPROVAL for one member of your current committee**. Dr. Joseph Werlinich has not yet obtained the required approval to serve on your committee. **IMPORTANT:** You may commence your research but you cannot defend or graduate until committee eligibility is resolved. The conditional approval will expire in one year.

Your RTAF indicates your anticipated graduation date as May 2014. You must apply for graduation by May 1, 2014. This means that your dissertation must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research by April 15, 2014 if you desire to graduate by your anticipated date. For deadlines for subsequent graduation dates, please access http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=16683.

The Thesis/Dissertation Manual, additional resources, and information to help you start writing can be found at http://www.iup.edu/graduatestudies/thesis/default.aspx.

Also, The Applied Research Lab provides free assistance with statistical analysis and research design-- both quantitative and qualitative--to all IUP students. The ARL can also provide assistance in the use of the features in Word and Acrobat you'll need to correctly format your thesis/dissertation. For more information, please visit: http://www.iup.edu/arl/default.aspx.

You are now eligible to receive a FREE copy of Adobe Professional! This software will help you to create an electronic thesis or dissertation. It can be picked up at the IT Support Center, G35 Delaney Hall. If you live off campus, you can send an email from your IUP email account to it-support-center@iup.edu. Please indicate you are a graduate student requesting Adobe Professional and include your Banner ID, mailing address, and which version - Windows or Mac.

Finally, if you change your topic, the scope or methodology of your project, or your committee, a new Research Topic Approval Form must be completed. I wish you well and hope you find this experience to be rewarding.

Sincerely,

Hilliary E. Creely, J.D., Ph.D.
Assistant Dean for Research

xc: Dr. Edward Nardi, Interim Dean
      Dr. Robert Millward, Graduate Coordinator
      Dr. Cathy Kaufman, Dissertation Committee Chair

HEC/bb

Appendix D

Sample Superintendent Letter

Dear Dr/Mr/Mrs _____:

I am currently a doctoral student working under the supervision of Dr. Cathy Kaufman at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I am conducting a qualitative research study on the perception of the walkthrough observation affect on the elementary teacher's professional growth.

The Directors of the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy selected your elementary school because it met the criterion for the study. The criterion included the elementary schools currently making Adequate Yearly Progress, currently implementing the walkthrough observation, and your district in located in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Specially, I am requesting permission to interview (Principal) of (elementary school) and a minimum of three elementary teachers selected by your building principal.

My goal is to schedule the interview during the next six weeks. The interviews should last less than one hour. The interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed for the participant to review for accuracy. If the interview extends beyond one hour, we can continue with the participant's approval or reschedule for another time. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime. Once the researcher received information that the participant wanted to withdraw, all documents from the participant will be destroyed. The information obtained from this study will be strictly confidential. The name of the participants, elementary school building, and school district will not disclosed.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Upon completion of the study, the results will be available to the participants upon request. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call (724-935-4631) or email (rwalsh@pinerichland.org).

Thank you in advance for your time and for your consideration in participating in this research study.

Sincerely,

Rick A. Walsh

Rick A. Walsh

Appendix E

Sample Principal Letter

Dear Dr/Mr/Mrs _____:

I am currently a doctoral student working under the supervision of Dr. Cathy Kaufman at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I am conducting a qualitative research study on the perception of the walkthrough observation affect on the elementary teacher's professional growth.

The Directors of the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy selected your elementary school because it met the criterion for the study. The criterion included the elementary schools currently making Adequate Yearly Progress, currently implementing the walkthrough observation, and your district in located in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Specially, I am requesting permission to interview you and request that you give me three teachers that I could interview. Of course, they would have to agree to participant in this study.

My goal is to schedule the interview during the next six weeks. The interviews should last less than one hour. The interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed for the participant to review for accuracy. If the interview extends beyond one hour, we can continue with the participant's approval or reschedule for another time. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime. Once the researcher received information that the participant wanted to withdraw, all documents from the participant will be destroyed. The information obtained from this study will be strictly confidential. The name of the participants, elementary school building, and school district will not disclosed.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Upon completion of the study, the results will be available to the participants upon request. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call (724-935-4631) or email (rwalsh@pinerichland.org).

Thank you in advance for your time and for your consideration in participating in this research study.

Sincerely,

Rick A. Walsh

Rick A. Walsh

Appendix F

Sample Teacher Letter

Dear Dr/Mr/Mrs _____:

I am currently a doctoral student working under the supervision of Dr. Cathy Kaufman at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I am conducting a qualitative research study on the perception of the walkthrough observation affect on the elementary teacher's professional growth.

The Directors of the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy selected your elementary school because it met the criterion for the study. The criterion included the elementary schools currently making Adequate Yearly Progress, currently implementing the walkthrough observation, and your district in located in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

My goal is to schedule the interview during the next six weeks. The interviews should last less than one hour. The interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed for the participant to review for accuracy. If the interview extends beyond one hour, we can continue with the participant's approval or reschedule for another time. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime. Once the researcher received information that the participant wanted to withdraw, all documents from the participant will be destroyed. The information obtained from this study will be strictly confidential. The name of the participants, elementary school building, and school district will not disclosed.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Upon completion of the study, the results will be available to the participants upon request. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call (724-935-4631) or email (rwalsh@pinerichland.org).

Thank you in advance for your time and for your consideration in participating in this research study.

Sincerely,

Rick A. Walsh

Rick A. Walsh

Appendix G

Informed Consent Form

The Walkthrough Observation: The Elementary Principals' and Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of the Walkthrough Observation Tool Affect on the Professional Growth

Dear _____

      You are cordially invited to participate in a study to be conducted by Rick A. Walsh under the supervision of Dr. Cathy Kaufman, education professor in the Administration and Leadership Studies Program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of elementary principals' and elementary teachers' experiences with the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy Walkthrough Observation Tool as a meaningful tool for professional growth for elementary teachers during the years 2011 to 2013. This qualitative research study is to examine the impact of the Walkthrough Observation Tool from the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania on the elementary teachers' professional growth.

The interview should take approximately 1 hour and involves a series of questions focused on the perceived experiences of your participation with the walkthrough observation.

Your participation in this study is of course <u>voluntary</u> and no known risks are involved. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time. Even if you chose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the project coordinator or the primary researcher identified below. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. Additionally, any identifiable information about you or your elementary school will be kept private. The information obtained in this study may be published or presented at conferences, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential. In addition, all data will be retained for at least three years in compliance with federal regulations.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the included voluntary consent form provide it to the researcher at the interview site. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have concerning participating in this worthwhile study.

Sincerely,

Rick A. Walsh

Rick A. Walsh

<u>Primary Researcher</u>   <u>Project Coordinator</u>
Rick A. Walsh   Dr. Cathy Kaufman
Doctoral Student, IUP   Admin & Leadership Studies, IUP
Wexford Elementary School   Davis Hall, Room 126
250 Brown Road   570 South maple Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15090   Indiana, PA 15705
P: 724-935-4631   P: 724-357-3928

Informed Consent Form (continued)

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

_____

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

_____

Signature

_____

Date

_____   _____

Phone number   email

_____

Best days and times to reach you

_____

Current Position

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____   _____

Date   Investigator's Signature

Appendix H

Interview Protocol Elementary Principal

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Rick A. Walsh

Interviewee (code):

Position of interviewee: **Principal**   Teacher

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this qualitative research study. You were selected to participate in this study because you currently working in an elementary school building that has been utilizing the classroom walkthrough observation in your building for at least three years. The purpose of this study is to investigate your perceptions of the classroom walkthrough observation and its influences on the professional growth of elementary teachers.

This interview should take no longer than one hour to complete and will be recorded for accuracy. If our interview extends beyond that time, we can either continue with your permission of reschedule for another time. Your responses to the questions will be digitally recorded and transcribed. I will e-mail a transcript of your responses to review for accuracy. You will have an opportunity to adjust your responses as needed. All information will be confidential and your identity will remain anonymous. In the study, you will be referred to as the principal.

Do you have any questions that you would like me to answer before we begin? We will now begin the interview and recording.

Interview Question for Elementary Principals

1. How many years has your school utilized the Western Pennsylvania Principal's Academy Walkthrough model?

2. What were your procedures when you implemented the Walkthrough Observation tool?

    a. How do you schedule walkthroughs?

    b. How do you validate effective instruction in your building?

3. How often do you conduct walkthrough observations?

    a. How many walkthroughs do you conduct in a day, week, month?

    b. How often do teachers join you during the walkthrough?

4. When conducting the walkthrough observation, what are the "look-fors"?

    a. Can you tell me how the "look-fors" were developed?

    b. What data do you collect during the walkthrough?

5. Do you believe using the Walkthrough Observation Tool influences professional growth within your teachers?

    a. After you debrief your teachers, have they ever pursued opportunities for professional growth to enhance their content knowledge or pedagogical skill?

    b. Have your teachers ever participated in action research? If so, who initiated to research?

    c. How do your teachers respond to your feedback after a walkthrough?

    d. After you provided feedback, tell me about a time a teacher requested more information, clarification, or research?

    e. After debriefing your teachers, do the teachers ever work cooperatively to assist another teacher?

  f. Can you tell me about a time that your feedback initiated a building and/or district professional development activity?

6. How do you provide feedback to your faculty after completing a walkthrough?

  a. How do you debrief your teachers after a walkthrough?

  b. How do your teachers respond to your walkthrough feedback?

7. Do you have any artifacts on how the Walkthrough Observation Tool data was used to provide professional development to your staff? This may include observations forms, faculty meetings agendas, list of "look-fors," and in-service day agendas from 2011 to 2013.

  a. Have you ever shared an instructional strategy or artifact for a walkthrough observation?

  b. Have you ever provided training to teachers at a faculty meeting or in-service based on walkthrough observation data?

Thank you for your participation in this interview. Within the next few weeks, I will forward a transcript of your responses for you to review. Please review the information and notify me with approval or revisions. Also, would you be willing to participate in a follow up phone interview? If you have any further questions, please feel free to call (724-935-4631) or email (rwalsh@pinerichland.org).

Appendix I

Interview Protocol Elementary Teacher

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Rick A. Walsh

Interviewee (code):

Position of interviewee: Principal   **Teacher**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this qualitative research study. You were selected to participate in this study because you currently working in an elementary school building that has been utilizing the classroom walkthrough observation in your building for at least three years. The purpose of this study is to investigate your perceptions of the classroom walkthrough observation and its influences on your professional growth.

This interview should take no longer than one hour to complete and will be recorded for accuracy. If our interview extends beyond that time, we can either continue with your permission of reschedule for another time. Your responses to the questions will be digitally recorded and transcribed. I will e-mail a transcript of your responses to review for accuracy. You will have an opportunity to adjust your responses as needed. All information will be confidential and your identity will remain anonymous. In the study, you will be referred to as the teacher.

Do you have any questions that you would like me to answer before we begin? We will now begin the interview and recording.

Interview Question for Elementary Teachers

1. How has your content knowledge been enhanced by the use of the walkthrough observation?

2. What feedback did you receive from the walkthrough observation that has caused you to explore more information?

3. What feedback did you receive from a walkthrough observation that has enhanced your skills in the classroom?

4. How do you discuss your walkthrough observation feedback with your colleagues?

5. Tell me about a time that you received feedback from your colleagues from a walkthrough observation.

6. Based on feedback from the walkthrough observation, were you asked to share or demonstrate strategies with your colleagues? Please explain.

7. What are the building/district walkthrough observation "look-fors"?

    a. How were the "look-fors" developed?

    b. What are the "look-fors" for your classroom?

8. How have the building/district "look-fors" affected your lesson planning? Your instruction?

9. What does the Walkthrough Observation Tool mean to you?

10. What advice would you give a principal that was about to implement the walkthrough observation tool in their district?

11. Tell me about your professional/personal growth experiences before and after your district implemented the Walkthrough Observation Tool?

a. Compare and contrast - How you discussed teaching and learning with you colleagues?

b. Compare and contrast - How you would seek feedback on your teaching with colleagues or the building principal.

c. Compare and contrast – Since the Walkthrough Observation Tool was implemented, what has changed with your professional growth/personal experience?

Thank you for your participation in this interview. Within the next few weeks, I will forward a transcript of your responses for you to review. Please review the information and notify me with approval or revisions. Also, would you be willing to participate in a follow up phone interview? If you have any further questions, please feel free to call (724-935-4631) or email (rwalsh@pinerichland.org).