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# The Potential Of Rethinking The Teacher Observation And Evaluation Model

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# THE POTENTIAL OF RETHINKING THE TEACHER OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION MODEL

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## ABSTRACT

Today, across the United States of America, on-going efforts are underway to transform the teacher evaluation system into a useful and manageable tool for improving teaching and learning in the classrooms. Currently, school districts in Maine are required to implement teacher observation and evaluation systems as a method of improving instructional practices in the classrooms. According to Mezirow's adult learning theory, adults learn best when the learning fits into their frame of reference that has been long cultivated through maturity into adulthood, and they become invested in what they are learning. School districts have an opportunity to make teacher observations and evaluations a meaningful tool to nurture teacher growth, endorse success, and hold poor performing teachers accountable.

Participant teachers and administrative leaders from one rural school district in Maine embraced the idea of creating a culture in which autonomy and accountability could coexist through the process of creative tension. In this qualitative study, the researcher explored the use of SWIVL devices to self-observe and evaluate one's own teaching practices in a way that gave teachers empowerment and expectation to see firsthand what their teacher practices looked like and to align them to the district's teacher performance evaluation and professional growth (T-PEPG) rubric. Full participant teachers engaged in self-observation and evaluation, which then led to initiating discourse with their building administrators about their professional strengths and needs. Video is a powerful tool for growth and professional development because it allows for conversations that are more professionally rich.

Twenty-four participant teachers and two building administrators were initially surveyed to get a breadth of knowledge and understanding surrounding the current culture in relation to the district's T-PEPG process. Then, four participant teachers continued also to engage in self-observation and evaluation, along with initiating discourse with their respective building administrator. These full participant teachers and two building administrators were interviewed prior to and after they experienced the self-observation protocol to gain in-depth insight into any possible changes in perceptions of the T-PEPG process as it might relate to instructional practices and professional strengths and growth needs. The participant teachers completed a minimum of three self-observations and evaluations, and initiated a minimum of two conversations with their administrator in between the preobservation and postobservation interviews.

Providing opportunity or choices related to change, allowing innovation to grow organically and through natural means, and offering alternative approaches is imperative to a successful protocol system. The themes of a desire to have a culture in which autonomy and accountability are allowed and expected to coexist emerged in the research findings. Recommendations include actions for districts to rethink their teacher evaluation policies and practices; they are urged to consider enhancements such as self-observation and evaluation to empower teachers with the expectation of accountability for their own professional growth and performance.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

In this study, the researcher explored teacher self-observation and evaluation as a model of empowering teachers with the expectation of knowing firsthand (a) what their instructional practices look like, (b) how to critique their own practices in alignment with the best practices model adopted by the school district, and (c) how to initiate discourse with their building administrator concerning their strengths and professional development needs. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the impact of empowering teachers with the expectation of using self-observation to critique their own instructional practices as a professional development determination for growth and development. The researcher also examined the effect that this "flipped model" design had on administrators' perceptions and on their current practices in relation to teacher observations and evaluations. The researcher anticipated that the insight gleaned from this study would bring new perceptual awareness to the consequences of creating a culture that motivates adults to take charge of their professional growth and development needs as determined by self-observation and evaluation of their own instructional practices.

The researcher's purpose for this study was to provide additional insight to the educational community about the impact of empowering teachers, as adult learners, to "sit in the drivers' seat" with the expectation of taking charge of critiquing their own instructional practices by observing and evaluating themselves and by aligning their self-observations with the best practice models, and then by initiating discourse with their administrators about their strengths and areas of professional development need. One might ask, "Why was this so important?" One answer is that, according to Moss (2015), "a specific problem endemic to teacher perceptions about teacher evaluations is that many teachers perceive their evaluation as a superficial,

episodic event that is disconnected from their daily classroom teaching and learning" (p. 7). On the contrary, thinking about the craft of teaching should be a continuous and on-going process for teachers.

Therefore, the researcher's intent was to use a qualitative case study methodology to explore this issue in a real-life setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As suggested by Fritz (1984), this case study generated a "creative tension" (p. 55) by studying the results that one desired (i.e., the vision) and knowing what one had (i.e., the current reality). The difference or discrepancy between the current reality and the vision generates a creative tension (Fritz, 1984). In public schools across the nation, the current reality is that many day-to-day instructional practices are not nearly as effective for student learning in positive ways as they could be. The vision is to have effective instructional practices in all classrooms so that students can learn throughout their years in public education and, upon graduating, be prepared to enter the global society ready for college and a career. A creative tension is generated if adult learners are aware of the discrepancy. Therefore, the researcher conceived the idea that flipping the present model of teacher observation and evaluation might bring about the needed awareness.

A comprehensive data collection and analysis was used to discern the perceptual impact on the research participants who agreed to observe and evaluate themselves as a part of this research study, which also had an impact on the building administrators. Advances in technology made this process relatively innocuous by using SWIVL (2019) devices for videotaping in each classroom. No disruption was created by allowing people to hold video cameras or allowing teachers to try to find the perfect location to capture video footage. Each SWIVL device that was used for this research held an iPad to capture video footage by rotating the iPad around as the teacher moved about the room during the lesson. It was also synchronized with a lanyard worn by the teacher, which captured the audio. In addition, the SWIVL devices that were used in this

research had additional microphones that were used to capture student conversations during small-group, student-centered learning. This additional technology allowed teachers to hear student conversations that might have otherwise been lost.

This chapter begins with an overview of the problem that frames the study and the surrounding circumstances, which leads to the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the conceptual framework. Then, the assumptions, possible limitations, and the rationale and significance are then introduced. Lastly, the researcher defines the key terminology and summarizes the salient concepts in a brief conclusion.

## Statement of the Problem

The problem that was studied within this research was the insufficient growth and advancement of teachers' instructional practices in the public school system. Policymakers have enacted into law T-PEPG requirements in Maine through a strategic phase-in process that started in the 2014–2015 school year with full implementation expectations required to be completed in the 2017–2018 school year (Maine Revised Statutes, 2011). The statute, Title 20-A: Education, Part 6: Teachers, Chapter 508: Educator Effectiveness, gives some autonomy to school districts in developing and implementing a T-PEPG system for educators, which includes "multiple measures of effectiveness" (State of Maine, 2018). Although educational reform is meant to create systems ultimately to improve student learning, the method with which teachers' instructional and assessment practices are observed and evaluated for alignment to a formalized curriculum and student assessment is ineffective at best (Quinn, 2014).

This formalized teacher observation and evaluation system involves a systematic approach that typically includes a certain number of preconferences, observations, evaluations, and postconferences per teacher per year. School districts may use a tiered system that uses teacher tenure to determine number of observations and evaluations required each year. Other

districts may make determinations about the level of needed support and observations according to how well the teacher has scored on previous observations. These models typically lend themselves to focusing strictly on evaluating what is observed rather than looking more deeply at what teachers can do to improve practice (Quinn, 2014). In addition, the onus of these observations and evaluations most often lies on the building administrators.

Currently, building leaders in public education are charged with a plethora of time-consuming demands, for they are challenged at the state and federal level to improve educator effectiveness and, ultimately, learning outcomes within their respective schools (Tucker & Stronge, 2005). Although teacher observations and evaluations are only one of these time-consuming demands, school administrators spend hundreds of hours conducting preobservation conferences, formal observations, postobservation conferences, write ups, and conversations associated with teacher evaluations. Despite these hours and efforts devoted to trying to ensure effective instructional practices in all classrooms, "in most schools what actually gets taught when the door is closed varies dramatically from teacher to teacher" (DuFour & Marzano, 2009, p. 3).

In addition, the magnitude of other responsibilities admittedly prevents administrators from spending as much time in classrooms as they would hope. In the business of the day, even the best-laid plans can go awry for building leaders when unexpected circumstances need immediate attention. This haphazard practice of teacher observation and evaluation is not truly effective in supporting insight into the professional development needs of the teacher or the improvement of instructional practices. Having conversations around what the administrator observed and critiqued during the few opportunities for classroom visits does not always lead to a mutual understanding of any purposeful decisions that are made behind these observable practices. In addition, when the administrators can come to the classrooms, they can no longer

get an accurate understanding of a teacher's effectiveness by sitting in the back of a class, taking notes, and completing a rubric (Quinn, 2014; Schafer, 2018). Roaming about the classroom and listening in on student conversations gets to the heart of student understanding and learning. However, it is nearly impossible to script and roam effectively.

Teaching and learning have many dimensions. When teachers are observed, the perceptions of what was observed can vary from person to person. In addition, the behind-the-scene intentionality that produces observable practices cannot always be witnessed. However, through deep and thoughtful conversation, guided by the teachers, observers are led to awareness and understanding of this intentionality. Teachers, as adult learners, value autonomy and responsibility in the way that their professional growth needs are determined. When teachers avail themselves of professional development opportunities, each teacher must take the responsibility to interpret the professional development content, apply it to his or her current practices, and translate it into specific action in the classroom (Fishman et al., 2013). However, teachers are often unaware of what their teaching looks like. Therefore, Knight (2014) stated that they do not often feel the need to change their current practices, until they see themselves in action, and then they are truly compelled to change.

Educational reform is only as good as the systematic approach within which it is created. Change is most effective and sustainable when those directly related to the implementation are empowered and expected to participate in the decision-making process that determines how the change will be put into practice (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Meyers, 2007). Improving the triangulation of alignment between curriculum, instruction, and assessment measures requires a systematic approach that, according to Knight (2014), should involve teachers seeing what their teaching looks like, which is what the researcher has achieved in this study. Thus, the researcher asked: Rather than holding building administrators accountable for initiating teacher

observations, evaluations, and conferencing, could the autonomy and accountability be shifted to the teachers?

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was (a) to gain insight into the impact of empowering teachers and expecting them to observe their own instructional practices and to critique themselves in alignment with the formal observation criteria that the district had adopted (see Appendix H for the School District T-PEPG Rubric Placemat), and then (b) to use this awareness and insight to initiate meaningful conferences with administrators that would lead to consequential professional development experiences. According to Mezirow (2002),

> A defining condition of being human is that we have to understand the meaning of our experience. For some, any uncritically assimilated explanation by an authority figure will suffice. But in contemporary societies, we must learn to make our own interpretations rather than act on the purposes, beliefs, judgments, and feelings of others (p. 5).

Empowering teachers to take ownership of observing and critiquing their own instructional practices directly in the classroom gives teachers not only autonomy for appropriately aligning their classroom instructional and assessment practices with research-based best practices, but also the expectation and accountability to then use the results to determine their own strengths and professional development needs.

Knight (2014) highlighted insight into teachers' typical initial reactions, saying, "It hurt to watch the recording, but that 45 minute video made me want to improve" (p. 22). When people record themselves doing their work, they see that reality is often different from what they thought it was (Knight, 2014). Flipping the empowerment and expectation of observations and evaluations to the teachers and requiring them to critique the observations before initiating a

conference with their administrators required an additional variable of videotaping the classroom instructional practices.

Researchers have shown that a video is a powerful tool for growth and professional development (Hill & Grossman, 2013; Kane, Gehlbach, Greenberg, Quinn, & Thal, 2015; Knight, 2014). Although the work of these researchers was related to teacher input in self-critiquing personal instructional practices, much of their research, to date, involved voluntary observations while working with perhaps an instructional coach. A next plausible step in this type of research would be to investigate the flipped teacher observation and evaluation model to determine the impact it would have on building administrators who are currently charged with that duty, and on the personal lens of the teachers who would observe and critique themselves for professional development and evaluative purposes. This shift in the way teacher observations and evaluations models are currently used could lead to improved instructional practices, which would desirably improve student learning. According to Creswell (2015), a problem should be researched if the study of it "potentially contributes to educational knowledge or adds to the effectiveness of practice" (p. 61).

Researchers have supported the value of professional development through using videotaping lessons for previewing and critiquing (Hill & Grossman, 2013; Kane et al., 2015; Knight, 2014). Holding teachers accountable for their own professional development obligations through certification requirements every few years has given way to states requiring school districts to adopt formalized teacher observation and evaluation models. In this research, all of the components of the current teacher observation and evaluation model that the school district used and were researched in this study continued to be used, but were structured in a different way. Data that supports the impact of self-observation and critiquing with empowerment of continued professional growth provided the foundation for this research of flipping the model of

the teacher observation and evaluation system to empower teachers with the accountability expectations.

## Research Questions

This study was guided by the desire to know how the conditions and factors of the teacher observation and evaluation system of implementation affected the perceptions of both teachers and building administrators. The central phenomenon and overarching research question for full-participant teachers was, “How do the conditions and factors of the teacher observation and evaluation system implementation affect your instructional practices?” A similar question was asked of the building administrators. “How do the conditions and factors of the teacher observation and evaluation system implementation affect your teachers’ instructional practices?” For the pre-self-observation interviews, a subset of four questions provided a greater amount of in-depth of the overarching question. A second question was asked in the preobservation interviews of teachers and administrators to gain insight into perceptions before participating in the flipped model design: “Do you think the integration of self-observation and evaluation would affect teachers’ perceptions of their own professional development and growth needs? If so, in what ways?”

Once the self-observations, self-critiquing, and conferencing were completed, the researcher asked a second round of interview questions that elicited responses to determine any changes in perceptions because of the experience. The goal of this research was to study how teachers and administrators would perceive the current T-PEPG model and its impact on instructional practices in the classroom, and whether their perceptions changed because they used the flipped model design that had the same district expectations for teacher T-PEPG.

## Conceptual Framework

A comprehensive literature review provided insight into current research surrounding classroom instructional practices, in particular studying relentless and often-futile efforts to support professional development measures that were aimed at having a direct impact on educator effectiveness, which would ultimately have a positive effect on student learning. An analysis of the literature shows how little impact teacher observations and evaluations currently have on improving instructional practices and has policymakers and educators "racing to design new systems" (Taylor & Tyler, 2012, p. 79). The purpose of this study was not to place blame on good intentions and hard work. Rather, it was to dive into current research and to continue to learn from the sometimes-painful results.

Transformative learning is the process of making meaning according to individual frames of reference that are two-dimensional (Mezirow, 1994). The first dimension is a broad set of predispositions that come from assumptions and expectations that create people's meaning perspectives (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2014; Mezirow, 1994). A second dimension of making meaning is meaning scheme, which is the "constellation of concept, belief, judgment, and feeling which shape a particular interpretation" (Mezirow, 1994, p. 223). Interpretations can be changed more easily with simple discourse, but frames of reference are created by long-standing predispositions and are not easily altered. People do not make transformative changes if what they are learning matches their existing frames of reference (Mezirow, 2002). In addition, many people have a strong tendency to reject ideas that fail to fit their preconceptions, labeling them as unworthy of consideration (Mezirow, 2002). Preconceptions continue to increase as people mature into adults.

Andragogy was first "popularized" in 1980 when Knowles (1980, as cited in Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL) Center Staff, 2011, p. 1) contrasted it with pedagogy,

showing the differences between the two. Knowles (1980, as cited in TEAL Center Staff) stated that pedagogy "is the art and science of teaching children" (p. 1), whereas, andragogy is the art and science of helping adults learn (p. 1). According to Knowles (2014), adults have a significant knowledge base and world experience that forms their perceptions; as they continue to mature, these ingrained perceptions become their reality. With this adult learning theory, Knowles (1980, as cited in TEAL Center Staff, 2011) proposed that, when adults are self-directed, they will take the initiative to "plan, carry out, and evaluate" (p. 2) their own learning experiences. Coupling Knowles' (2014) findings, that adults learn best when they are in charge of their own learning, with Mezirow's (2004) theory of transformative learning conceptualized this current study.

Adults desire the autonomy to choose what they learn, and much of their motivation comes from recognizing why they need to know something and the immediacy of its application (Knowles et al., 2014; Pink, 2009). Looks of boredom or disengagement in staff development meetings might be indicative of this lack of autonomy. Knight (2014) claimed that most people (including teachers) do not internalize a need to learn or change until they see themselves in action. Mezirow (1978, as cited in Merriam, 2017) identified the transformative learning theory as being able to make sense of the learning experience, and then identifying a change in belief, attitude, or perspective. According to Mezirow (2002), when circumstances allow, transformative learners move toward a "frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience" (p. 5).

Autonomy and accountability have proven successful in many arenas because they create "players" instead of "pawns" (Pink, 2009, p. 86). In systems thinking, understanding the system's boundaries and the people who belong to the system helps to determine the "forces at play and the interactions of those forces" (Senge, 2012, p. 418). The way systems operate can engender people to behave in certain ways (Senge, 2012). According to Senge (2012), "The

ability to recognize the hidden dynamics of complex systems, and to find leverage, goes hand in hand with engagement" (p. 418). Although this statement seems like an oxymoron, Fritz (1984) described, in the theory of creative tension as it relates to personal growth, how accountability can coexist with autonomy. Later, Fritz's ideas were summarized by Senge (2012):

> The juxtaposition of vision (what we want) and a clear picture of current reality (where we are relative to what we want) generates what we call creative tension: a force to bring them together, caused by the natural tendency of tension to seek resolution. The essence of personal mastery is learning how to generate and sustain creative tension in our lives. (p. 77)

Using the current resources of the teacher T-PEPG system in a different way that collocates teacher autonomy and teacher accountability can be seen in Mezirow's (1994) theory of transformative learning. According to Mezirow (1994), "Cultures and situations determine which of these structures, elements, and processes will be acted upon and whose voice will be heard" (p. 222). Empowering teachers with the expectations of accountability for their own observations and evaluations creates a system that Mezirow (1994) described as necessary to "critical reflection and rational discourse as processes of adult learning" (p. 222). Teachers, as professional educators, should be autonomous and prepared to analyze critically and to make decisions on their own about their own learning and professional growth expectations.

Empowering teachers to take charge of self-observing their classroom instructional practices and initiating discourse with their administrators manifested a meaning perspective shaped by their own introspection and interpretations. Positioning that perspective alongside the expectation of self-evaluation provided specific and concrete evidence that was aligned with the district T-PEPG rubric. Videotaping afforded the necessary confirmation of reality that could otherwise be lost to perception or interpretation. According to Knight (2014), "Teachers have too

much to think about while teaching to also be able to step back and oversee everything that is happening in their classes" (p. 6). This design mitigated human nature's "resistance to anything that does not comfortably fit our meaning structures" (Mezirow, 1994, p. 223). In addition, as Knight (2014) described, "confirmation bias" (p. 6) and "habituation" (p. 6) was minimized because the videotaping of teaching and student learning provided a "clear picture of reality in the classroom" (p. 6).

Dweck (2006) stated that just because the "light bulb" (p. 55) might go on, it does not mean that transformation would happen instantaneously. Perceptual errors occur; people tend to view the world through an illusion of objectivity (Mezirow, 1994). They think that they see themselves and the surrounding world accurately; however, in reality, they usually see and understand things through many filters that color their perceptions (Mezirow, 1994). Most adults are engaged in self-directed learning as a part of everyday life, and this learning is not dependent on an instructor or a classroom (Merriam, 2017). This light bulb helps a person to begin to make sense of learning experiences, which, in turn, helps him or her to "identify a change in belief, attitude, or perspective" (Merriam, 2017, p. 25). How did classroom self-observation videos, the autonomy of perception and frame of reference, and accountability to align to school vision affect instructional practices of adult learners? Figure 1 shows the interaction of these variables.

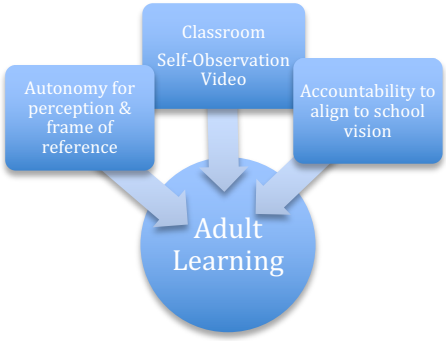


*Figure 1*. Adult learning through the lens of a classroom teacher.

## Assumptions

Creating conditions for people to do their best work empowers them to create goals and to strive to achieve them (Pink, 2009). One assumption in this current study was that, regardless of the initial feelings of self-observation and critiquing, most people would embrace the idea of empowerment and the expectation given to the teachers to observe and critique their own instructional practices. As Pink (2009) stated, "They are partners. And partners, like all of us, need to direct their own lives" (p. 86). Understanding this assumption gave the researcher the insight into the importance of selecting a school district that was currently conducting teacher observations and evaluations with the administration "in the driver's seat" (merely because that was how they had been instructed to implement them), but who were willing to be objective in participating in this research. Teachers could choose to participate or not to participate in video recording and critiquing of their own instructional practices, but administrators' willingness to participate objectively in this research study was necessary.

## Possible Limitations

One limitation to the overall scope of this study was determining the type and availability of technology for use in videotaping the classrooms, which was the key to the success of data collection. As Morgan and Killion (2018) found, many technology products that are necessary to access real-time data about current teaching practices offer teachers opportunities and support for increasing their efficacy, efficiency, and effectiveness. However, these are missed opportunities unless teachers have [easy] access to these products and services within their schools and districts (Morgan & Killion, 2018). A human being videotaping behind a camera is much more intrusive and noticeable in a classroom than is a small device such as an iPhone or iPad sitting innocuously on a SWIVL (2019) device. However, such devices can cost $200–$1,000 each.

Therefore, unless funding for such an expense were available, capturing self-observation by videotaping in a classroom would have been an unpredictable and negative variable.

A second, related limitation of the overall scope of this study was the small sample size because of the possible challenges in finding significant relationships within the data collected. However, having enough SWIVL (2019) devices for videotaping readily available for each teacher was an important variable that had the potential to affect the data collection. Therefore, limiting the amount of participants was a reasonable trade off.

Motivation can be unreliable (Pink, 2009). Therefore, a third limitation that was considered was the possible lack of motivation or negative motivation on behalf of a teacher, once he or she had agreed to be a full participant involved in the video self-observations. Being complacent in one's profession can limit one's desire to improve (Pink, 2009). This unreliable motivation could be connected to how the researcher organized the research implementation of the flipped model of the T-PEPG process or how the researcher asked the study participants to think about it. Regardless of the potential of this research, human motivation was a factor that played an important role. A variable such as intrinsic motivation could alter participant's incentive and invested participation.

The lack of continued support for this initiative from the participating schools and district could possibly have been an unforeseen, fourth limitation. Administrative support and participation throughout the research was the key to gleaning reliable data. In an attempt to alleviate this potential limitation, the school site was selected because the school district was already embracing the use of technology in innovative ways and it had a long-standing, teacher T-PEPG model in place.

Lastly, participant subjectivity and researcher bias was a fifth potential limitation because "we see what we look to see, and prior knowledge and intentional focus shape how we interpret

what we see" (Knight, 2014, p. 64). Contextual information on the respondents' organizational cultures could have been potentially subjective. If an established culture already surrounded any part of this research, it could have shaped perceptions and frames of reference. Using this prior knowledge and intentionality for specific and focused purposes was the key to minimizing subjectivity and personal bias.

## Rationale and Significance

Educational reform has been an ongoing goal for public education for decades; standards-based reform has been around for less time, but long enough. Yet, establishing and adopting formalized curriculum documents does not always align with the reality of classroom instructional practices (Chapman, Wright, & Pascoe, 2016). Change in how teachers teach is paramount in keeping up with the ever-changing demands of a global society. Giving teachers the autonomy and accountability for observing and critiquing their own instructional practices armed them with a sense of ownership of their own professional expectation to improve continuously their craft. This empowerment of being in charge of one's own professional growth also had the accountability expectation of initiating conferencing with administrators to discuss classroom instructional and assessment practices that were observed and making the appropriate alignment to the building and district T-PEPG rubric. In addition, administrators still had the flexibility to visit and observe the classrooms during this time, which contributed to the teacher-initiated discourse. However, the full-participant teachers were "in the driver's seat" making intentional decisions surrounding their current instructional practices and professional growth needs.

## Definitions of Key Terminology

**Creative tension** – This type of tension is a structure that helps to facilitate creativity and change (Mezirow, 1994).

**Curriculum** – The subjects being taught in a specific class or course of study are a curriculum (Great Schools Partnership, 2015).

**Curriculum reform** – This type of reform is the large-scale change in a curriculum around a variety of new principles [i.e., ability grouping, the project method, life adjustment, back to basics, inclusion, critical thinking] (Labaree, 1999).

**Disruptive technology** – This type of technology that one that is so new that it is appealing to a limited audience (Knight, 2014).

**Educational reform** – Making significant changes in public education is educational reform.

**Empowerment** – Having the authority or power to feel in charge is empowerment.

**Flipped model** –Using the same structure or model in a different design is flipping the model to create a flipped model.

**Frame of reference** – Having a set of fixed assumptions and expectations [habits of mind, perspectives, mindset] that make up the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions is having a frame of reference (Mezirow, 2002).

**Instructional practices** – These types of practices are specific teaching methods that guide interaction in the classroom.

**Negative motivation** – When people are motivated for the wrong reasons, they have negative motivation (Dweck, 2006).

**Professional development** – This type of development involves learning opportunities to improve practice in one's work.

**Standards-based** – systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting whose basis is the students demonstrating an understanding or mastery of the knowledge and

skills that they are expected to learn as they progress through their education, that is, their achievement of the required standards (Great Schools Partnership, 2015).

**SWIVL device** – This electronic device allows teachers to video and audio record teacher and student interaction for a holistic understanding of the classroom (SWIVL, 2019).

**Transformative learning** – This type of learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference (Mezirow, 2002).

## Conclusion

As the Nation continues to become more globally connected, the public schools in which children are taught become less relative to the world in which they live (Schwahn & McGarvey, 2011). In many ways, public schools carry on as Industrial Age organizations although they currently exist in an Informational Age world (Schwahn & McGarvey, 2011). Traditional approaches to what is taught (the curriculum), how it is taught (the instruction), and how what is learned is evaluated (the assessment) have been grounded in theories and models of learning that have not kept pace with emerging knowledge of how people learn best (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015). Although educational reform has been at the forefront of decision making concerning the formal curriculum that school districts have adopted in many states and is expected to be taught in all classrooms, the consistency that it is presumed to bring depends on how it is taught in each classroom. In classrooms across the country, instructional practices are not improving and staying current at the rate expected; therefore, student learning continues to suffer. As a result, the educational standing of the United States of America continues to plummet and is currently near the bottom of most international rankings (Schwahn & McGarvey, 2011).

Professional development opportunities are not clearly aligned with individual classroom instructional practice needs. Teachers are observed and evaluated, but the alignment of the classroom observation, evaluation, and improvement design currently in place in many public

school systems is disconnected (Knight, 2011). Dweck (2006) believed that everyone has the fundamental qualities that can be cultivated through one's own efforts, which stimulates a passion for learning. Empowering teachers to observe and evaluate their own instructional practices to improve student learning includes a process that embodies a "mixture of ambition and humility" (Knight, 2011, p. 126). Administrators and teachers alike need to understand and believe that the process is as important as the product.

Currently, the structure by which classroom teachers are observed and evaluated is one of administrative decision making. Administrators decide who will be observed and evaluated and, usually, when they will be observed and evaluated. This decision making is often determined by the busy schedules of building administrators and how they can best fulfill all their duties. Some observations are unannounced (which is also an administrative decision) and they do not necessarily include a postobservation conference. Many administrators unabashedly admit that the success of this type of system is determined more by their ability to get the observations and evaluations done in the period required, which is more of a check-the-box approach. This top-down method leads to teachers feeling disempowered (even if unintentionally) to be in charge of the process.

Empowering teachers with the expectation that they would observe and critique their own instructional practices within their own timeframe allowed teachers to take ownership of their own professional development needs and expectations. This allowed them to take charge of aligning visible and identifiable instructional practices in the classroom with intentionality and purposeful decision making that occurred inside their brains, which could often be invisible and left out of conversations and evaluations. Administrators could then focus more on drop-in, classroom visits that would be much more flexible in timing, would not carry the burden of

planning observations or pre- and postconferences, and would still offer the ability to provide feedback.

This research highlights literature that surrounds measures to improve student achievement. National standards adopted by states such as Maine provide a consistent curriculum. Standardized testing at the state level measures achievement in the core competencies of math, literacy, and science. Teacher observation and evaluation requirements open classroom doors in an attempt to achieve and ensure effective instructional practices. The procedures in which a school district implements the teacher observation and evaluation policy plays an important role in creating a culture that surrounds the effectiveness of improving instructional practices and ultimately student achievement.

# CHAPTER 2

# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Globalization continues to widen the gap between the public schools in which our children are taught and the world that they are embracing. Traditional approaches to what we teach (the curriculum), how we teach it (the instruction), and how we evaluate what is learned (the assessment) have been grounded in theories and models of learning that have not kept pace with today's knowledge of how people learn best (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015; Schafer, 2018). Public schools continue to operate as Industrial Age organizations although they exist in an Informational Age world (Schwahn & McGarvey, 2011). Therefore, the Nation's educational standing has continued to plummet to the bottom of most international rankings (Schwahn & McGarvey, 2011). Although many school districts have adopted a formalized curriculum that legislators expect to be taught in classrooms across the United States as part of the decision making surrounding educational reform, the consistency that decision makers presume such a curriculum will bring depends on what the teaching looks like in the classroom.

## Purpose

This literature review was intended to provide a deeper understanding of (a) the triangulation of curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment measures; and (b) their relation to teacher observation and evaluation; and to provide (c) a conceptual framework for a qualitative research design that adds to the literature and promotes continued conversation around this topic. Using the foundation of previous studies that other researchers have conducted on the topic of adult learning, educational reform, and the potential impact of self-observation for individual professional growth (Kane et al., 2015; Knight, 2014), the researcher explored the essential research question*:* How do the conditions and factors of the teacher observation and

evaluation system implementation affect instructional practices? Four subquestions are related to this overarching question. A secondary interview question was asked of all interviewees: "Do you think the integration of self-observation and evaluation would impact teachers' perceptions of their own professional development and growth needs? If so, in what ways?"

The interviews were conducted with building administrators and full participants at pre- and post-video-observation times to gather in-depth data with which to analyze potential changes in perceptions after the initial videotaping, self-observation, evaluation, and subsequent conversations were completed. The researcher gained perceptual understanding of administrators and teacher participants surrounding the topic of professional growth in relation to instructional practices and observation and evaluation. This insight added to the body of research knowledge that currently exists, which the researcher hoped would continue to evolve.

Knowing the organizational flow gives the reader a beneficial lens with which to read this literature review. The review begins with the history of educational reform, and then progresses to the teacher observation and evaluation model, and thence to the professional development needs for improvement of instructional practices. After these subjects, the researcher connects the professional development needs to the framework for teaching and learning (curriculum, instruction, and assessment), to the mindset of stakeholders, to transformative learning, and finally to the current research on videotaping teaching before concluding in a summary.

## History of Educational Reform

Educational reform is only as good as understanding, and systematically, systemically, and appropriately preparing for the ramifications that the reform has on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In the development of standards-based reform, the states have established challenging, rather than minimal, content and performance standards for all students (Goertz, 2001). As a result, curriculum, instructional design, instructional practices, educational

outcomes, and accountability systems are being redefined. One concern with this redefinition is that the states are focusing on what curriculum to teach and assess, but not how to teach the curriculum (Goertz, 2001).

The success of any curriculum reform is positioned squarely on the shoulders of teachers and their instructional practices, for they must implement the curriculum directly in their classrooms (Huizinga, Handelzalts, Nieveen, & Voogt, 2014). For accountability purposes, most states require teachers to participate in periodic professional development (Goertz, 2001), which is loosely monitored through state recertification requirements. State accountability systems also create incentives, typically monetary, in which schools and districts may participate, and whose incentives are most often connected to student achievement (Goertz, 2001). According to the National Council on Teacher Quality (2006),

> How do we identify the best teachers? The worst? And how do we give teachers the information and strategies to do better—which is, after all, what they all want to do? Research into this area is in its infancy. We need to invest much more time, effort, and money into finding the answers and making them useful to policymakers. (p. 67)

In addition to state accountability, the 2015 ratification of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) hold a federal priority to ensure that all students have access to high-quality educators (Anderson, Butler, Palmiter, & Arcaira, 2016).

Goldman and Pellegrino (2015) firmly believed that research on how people learn provides the necessary insight to support the "revamping" of the educational system so that it will be successful in creating 21st century citizens (p. 33). Such a reform movement should redefine both the student outcomes (shown in the assessment measures) and educational accountability (shown in the instructional practices; Goertz, 2001). Some researchers have debated whether teacher observation and evaluation is truly about accountability and

measurement (Gabriel & Woulfin, 2017). If it were about accountability and measurement, one would approach by using certain tools, making decisions, and setting some issues aside, but focusing on other issues (Gabriel & Woulfin, 2017). According to Dweck (2006), "If you are oriented toward learning . . . you need accurate information about your current abilities in order to learn effectively" (p. 11).

Assessments should measure not only what students are taught but also how they are taught, and this should be in alignment with today's curriculum standards (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015). Alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (in this sense) means that the three functions support one another in working toward the same desired results (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015). However, the states spend more time and money on monitoring the results (product) rather than on the process of education (Goertz, 2001). One of the biggest challenges in Kindergarten–Grade 12 education is finding an effective, meaningful, and sustainable process with which to observe, evaluate, and improve teacher performance.

## Teacher Observation and Evaluation

Many years of research show that teacher effectiveness is one of the most important factors in student growth and learning (Will, 2018). It is clear that efforts are being implemented across the country to transform teacher evaluation into a useful tool for improving teaching and learning (Anderson et al., 2016; Moss, 2015). In addition, state and local efforts have given rise to a design implementation of teacher evaluation systems that federal resources have funded through several programs, including the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Race to the Top, the Teacher Incentive Fund, and the Investing in Innovation Fund (Anderson et al., 2016). States that elect to use Title II, Part A, funds to develop, improve, or provide help to local educational agencies to design and support the implementation of the evaluation plans of teachers, principals, or other school leaders must

describe in their state plans how they will use student growth and other measures of educator performance to provide clear, timely, and useful feedback to teachers, principals, or other school leaders (Anderson et al., 2016). Currently, the implementation of district teacher observation and evaluation protocols is primarily the responsibility of the individual building leaders.

Many school leaders do their best to provide authentic feedback that is aligned to core propositions within the observation and evaluation system that has been adopted by the district. However, according to Knight (2014), the conversations that come out of these observations can, at times, have an "element of confrontation" (p. 130) because the teacher is remembering what she or he thinks happened from her perspective, and the administrator is remembering what she or he thinks happened from a differing perspective. These practices have been "heavily criticized" by educators, who are most affected by the outcomes of the teacher accountability programs (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012, p. 8). Research shows that many teachers have a heightened sense of insecurity because they believe that the observation and evaluation systems were primarily designed to identify and remove ineffective teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). Clearly, the teacher evaluation process has caused much apprehensiveness. Disare (2018) stated, "As legislation is considered, we must be thoughtful and deliberate to ensure it does not bring unintended consequences for students, teachers, and principals across the state" (p. 2).

According to the Anderson (2016), all states should have a comprehensive teacher evaluation system as a central component in place to support improved teaching and learning in elementary and secondary education by providing information about a teacher's strengths and weaknesses (Anderson et al., 2016). When fully implemented, these evaluation systems were expected to inform an array of personnel decisions, including decisions relating to teacher support and professional development, career advancement and tenure, and compensation.

However, even with all of these efforts, the teacher evaluation reform fell markedly short of its goal (Anderson et al., 2016).

Will (2018), who began a study when states were implementing the new teacher observation and evaluation systems, believed that this shortfall occurred because "very few teachers in participating districts were classified as ineffective, which researchers believe is, in part, because of an unwillingness among school leaders to give harsh ratings based on classroom observations" (p. 3). Another unintended result could be that administrators are inundated with classroom observations and evaluations that involve preconferences and postconferences with all of their teaching staff. This added responsibility could lead to a shift in focus about the true meaning behind the observation and evaluation system. Therefore, one might ask, "Does the focus shift from ensuring that instructional practices improves, to ensuring that the goal of a specific required number of completed observations and evaluations is met?"

Since the stakes are high for teachers, questions have surfaced about the validity and reliability of these teacher effectiveness and accountability systems, especially regarding the subjectivity potential (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012, as cited in Williams, 2015). If these systems make teachers fearful of being labeled ineffective and make administrators uncomfortable in giving less than effective ratings raises, one should be concerned about the soundness of the current observation and evaluation process. If administrators are challenged by what they are expected to do to evaluate accurately their teaching personnel, and if the teaching personnel criticize the same system, policy makers should pay close attention to where a breakdown occurs in support between the state-adopted formalized curriculum and the student assessment. There is where attention must be placed to improve instructional practices. Adopting formalized curriculum documents, and establishing teacher observation and evaluation systems does not always align with the realities of classroom practices (Chapman et al., 2016).

Comprehensive teacher evaluation systems are a fundamental component of current state and local efforts to support improved teaching and learning in public schools across the Nation (Anderson et al., 2016). Such systems have the capacity to contribute to improved instructional practices by informing teachers of their individual strengths and weaknesses. Thus, one might ask, "How can a system be meant to provide teachers with professional development opportunities and concurrently be meant to remove ineffective teachers without instilling fear in all of them?" Students and adults learn and grow more readily in an environment where feedback is given and received without being fearful for any reason (Hattie, 2013).

One of the biggest challenges in Kindergarten–Grade 12 (K–12) education is finding an effective and productive method for evaluating instructional practices (Greenberg, 2016). Greenberg (2016), who conducted a 2-year impact study that ended in May 2015, divulged that teachers who were in charge of videotaping their own classroom lessons and instructional practices for observation and evaluation purposes noted three main reasons for preferring this method instead of administrators being in charge of the observations. First, the conversations were less adversarial; second, the teachers felt as if they received more specific and "actionable" feedback from their administrators; and third, the teachers saw more of what was actually going on in the classroom during their lessons (Greenberg, 2016, pp. 2–3). As a result, the teachers were motivated to seek out specific professional development (Knight, 2014). The building administrators also agreed that the conversations with the teachers who were in charge of videotaping their own instructional practices were much more beneficial (Greenberg, 2016). Having a clear picture of the classroom teaching and learning through the lens of the teacher and appropriately aligning the lens to a research-based rubric could support the shift to teacher self-assessment and empowering teachers with the expectations of using current best practices in

their classrooms. As Knight et al. (2012) stated, “Cameras help educators (teachers, coaches, administrators, and others) obtain an objective, accurate view of themselves at work” (p. 19).

## Professional Development Needs

Educational reform should be designed to promote teacher learning in addition to student learning within the curriculum framework (Davis & Krajcik, 2005). Teachers are held accountable for adopting and implementing new curriculum and assessment measures with varying degrees of professional development to support these educational reforms. Even if teachers avail themselves of professional development opportunities, more often, each individual teacher must interpret the professional development content, apply it to her or his current practices, and translate it into specific action in the classroom (Fishman et al., 2013). Teachers need not only to understand, but also to do a wide variety of things, many of them simultaneously. In addition, despite the level of professional development opportunities, teachers are being situated within perpetual states of comparison against their peers and former selves to be more effective and excellent (Ball, 2015).

It is vital that teachers understand their roles and responsibilities as professionals in schools that must prepare all students for equitable contribution to a democratic society (Ball & Cohen, 1996; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Teacher learning involves integrating one’s knowledge base about the curriculum being taught, how it is being taught, and how the learning results are being assessed. Helping teachers learn to teach more effectively requires those supporting these efforts not only to develop the ability to “think like a teacher” but also to put what they know into action—what Kennedy (2016) termed “the problem of enactment” (p. 947). Meeting this challenge requires much more than simply supporting teachers in teaching students to memorize facts and procedures or even discuss ideas. Kennedy (2016) spoke of developing a curricular vision, which is the ability to construct a curriculum for the students in

relation to standards adopted by school district with the expectation of being taught in the classrooms. Teachers should have an intentionality that is often invisible in classroom observations, but is a window into perceptions and knowledge about student learning.

Understanding how students learn provides principles for revamping education systems to develop citizens who will be prepared for the 21st century and beyond (Ball & Cohen, 1996; Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015; Kennedy, 2016). Teachers must understand the prior learning experiences of their students and use this information to make thoughtful and intentional decisions to meet the individualized needs. These decisions must be related to all of the intersecting pieces, including the selection of appropriate instructional resources, parent and community outreach, the sequence of assignments, the pace of lessons, classroom behavior management, assessment activities, and the assessment of students on a continuum.
Aligning curriculum to what is being taught in individual classrooms might seem straightforward, but the authors of several reports over the last 2 decades have indicated how challenging it is to attain effective alignment among curriculum, instruction, and assessment (e.g., Bransford et al., 2000; Gordon Commission on the Future of Assessment in Education, 2013; Kilpatrick & Quinn, 2009; National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007; Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012, as cited in Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015; Rowan, 2009; Shepard, Hannaway, & Baker, 2009; Wilson, 2009). Significant and sustainable improvement is not a simple matter and will necessitate changes to many facets of the educational system. Ball and Cohen (1996) represented instructional design as the ways in which teachers, students, and content interact and intersect with each other within environments that influence all of these.

Ball and Cohen (1996) provided a base of evidence that supported a systematic and principled approach to effective teaching. In addition, Morgan and Killion (2018) said that on-

going improvement of practice is a “hallmark” (p. 2) and requirement of most professions. Most states regulate teacher accountability requirements, ensuring that teachers participate in periodic professional development (Goertz, 2001). With all of the support from the federal government and individual states, teachers commonly do avail themselves of professional development when given the opportunity. However, participating in professional development without a systematic plan for the way it will connect to the needs of the school or district does not significantly affect instructional practices in the classroom (Goertz, 2001).

Careful change-management protocols can prevail over potential obstacles and barriers and can provide necessary insights for leaders when regarding specific mandates or requirements (Morgan & Killion, 2018). Providing opportunity or choices that are related to change, allowing innovation to grow organically and through natural means, and offering alternative approaches is imperative to a successful protocol system (Morgan & Killion, 2018). However, an unintentionally overlooked area is that many teachers, although willing to participate in professional development and try out new ideas, are not compelled to change some of their deep-rooted teaching practices until they see themselves in action (Knight, 2014). Knight (2014) gave three reasons why teachers do not, otherwise, have a clear picture of what their teaching looks like. Reason 1 is that teaching is such an all-encompassing intellectual task from which it is difficult to step back so that one can reflect on exactly what is happening in any given moment. Reason 2 is that teachers, like all people, are accustomed to what they see every day, which psychologists call *habituation.* Reason 3 is that all people are prone to seeking out data that support their beliefs of what they believe reality looks like, which psychologists call confirmation bias (Knight, 2014).

As Fritz (1984) and later Senge (2012) described, two factors are essential for professional growth: (a) professional development opportunities that are connected to specific

goals and (b) a clear picture of reality directly in the classroom (as cited in Knight, 2014). The essential piece that is often missing is the clear picture of reality in the classroom. Teachers are observed and told what their teaching looks like, but this reality is presented through someone else's lens. In decades of collaborating and research, Knight's (2014) biggest finding was the power of video cameras for self-observation. Knight (2014) stated, "When used in a manner that respects the professionalism of teachers, video cameras can have a positive effect on teaching and learning" (p. 18).

## Framework for Teaching and Learning

The principles and practices of learning and instruction provide a system of aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As Goldman and Pellegrino (2015) stated, "Alignment, in this sense, means that the three functions are directed toward the same ends and reinforce one another" (p. 37). Goldman and Pellegrino (2015) went on to say that assessment practices should measure not only what the students are being taught, but also how the students are actually being taught; what is being taught should parallel the curriculum one wants the students to master (p. 37). To be effective, the alignment of curriculum and assessment must cross through instructional practices directly in the classroom. This thinking begs the question, "If they did not learn it, did I truly teach it?"

### Curriculum

Anyon (1980, as cited in Ball & Cohen, 1996) stated that the "hidden curriculum" (p. 170) of the classroom—how teachers create conditions that enable or disable certain kinds of learning and identify construction for students—is often "invisible to students and novice teachers" (p. 170). According to Chapman et al. (2016), a chasm exists between the formalized curriculum documents that states adopt and the student outcomes coming out of classrooms, and that chasm lies within the reality of the classroom and instructional practices. According to Davis

and Krajcik (2005), by design, “heuristics” (p. 6) should guide curriculum designers in providing context for guided conversation around how these curriculum materials support teacher learning and student learning. School districts should ensure that this professional development is part of the implementation of curriculum reform.

In addition to teachers needing support for learning and adopting new curriculum, the rhetoric of the curriculum documents does not always correspond to the reality of the classroom (Chapman et al., 2016). According to Magrini (2015), students and teachers dwell in an authentic space of the curriculum that transforms their reality. Morgan and Killion (2018) reported that teachers highlighted their feelings about how their research project “insufficiently addressed teachers’ desires for continuous, nonevaluative feedback to support and strengthen their teaching” (p. 2). Educational reform that encompasses curriculum, instruction, and assessment requires a systematic approach that, according to Knight (2014), should involve teachers seeing themselves teach. Adult learning is motivated by the desire to see the problem, to figure out how learning would help resolve it, and to experience the impact that the learning had on the problem (Morgan & Killion, 2018).

**Instruction**

Teaching is such a comprehensive and intellectual responsibility that it is difficult to step back and reflect on all of the intricacies in every given moment. When teachers see themselves teach, they see that reality is often very different from what they think it is (Knight, 2014). In addition, like most people, teachers are desensitized to what they see every day and with which they are familiar. Some of these familiarities have developed over many years. Making significant changes in teaching practices from simply requiring students to memorize facts and procedures to now having a student-centered classroom that encourages students to know the “why” and “how” will require teachers to be supported in learning how to teach more effectively

(Hammerness et al., 2005). The focus must shift from what teachers have planned to being more sensitive to the impact that their instructional practices have on students and their learning (Hattie, 2013). According to Hattie (2013),

> So often, what we do is we have a script, and we have a plan, and we execute it. And sometimes we get concerned when students interrupt the flow of the lesson. So we look around the classroom and find a student who can answer the questions we are asking and we say, "Aha, you've got it!" and we generalize this to the whole class. And then we carry on with the flow of our lesson. (p. 4)

Teachers are also inclined to seek out the data that supports their preconceived belief of what is reality.

School districts need to make teacher observations and evaluations a meaningful tool to nurture teacher growth, endorse success, and hold poor performing teachers accountable (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2006). In a recent study that the Center for Education Policy Research conducted, improving instructional practices directly correlated with improving student achievement (Kane et al., 2015).

In part, teacher quality is keeping the world of education from moving into the informational world in which everyone else in the global economy lives. The United States is economically the wealthiest nation in the world (Sherman, 2015). Yet, it struggles with figuring out how to invest monies in developing human potential; Glisczinski (2007) reported that American society "arguably spends more effort pursuing cultural capital than developing human capital" (p. 317). To develop human capital, according to Glisczinski (2007), one must commit to dedicating not only words, but also energy and resources to supporting the possibilities possessed by individuals.

State accountability systems create incentives for school districts to give attention to student achievement and progress, but they are neglectful in ensuring that teacher accountability includes systematic professional development opportunities, expectations, and empowerment (Goertz, 2001). Students are assessed on their learning of the curriculum, but teachers might not have had the necessary professional development support needed to continue to hone their instructional practices to grow and change along with the world around them. The theory of action in educational reform seeks to create high student outcomes by using increased information about student achievement coupled with strong accountability provisions for increased performance (Kurz, Elliott, Wehby, & Smithson, 2010). Fishman et al. (2013) stated, "How teachers teach matters tremendously for students' learning, and given high-quality professional learning opportunities, all teachers have the capacity to improve students' learning outcomes" (p. 1). Therefore, to assess students on learning effectively, a clear and direct alignment between what is being taught, how it is being taught, and how assessment practices are used must be understood and implemented in classrooms.

**Assessment**

Teachers who hold their students to high expectations are more likely to lead these students to have high expectations of themselves and of their own achievement (Dweck, 2006; Hattie, 2013). What follows from this thinking is that "it is not just about what teachers *know* and *do* but also about what they *think"* (Hattie, 2013, p. 3). Many people, including a number of teachers, have assumed that students' background demographics are the biggest determinant for large gaps in student achievement, but Ball and Cohen (1996, as cited in Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) found that the quality of teaching and assessing could have an effect at least as big. As Dweck (2006) stated, "If you are oriented toward learning . . . you *need* accurate information about your current abilities in order to learn effectively" (p. 11).

## Mindset

People with growth mindsets are open to accurate information about their current abilities, regardless of how unflattering they might be (Dweck, 2006). One of the most reliable ways to capture the effectiveness of classroom teaching is to videotape and preview oneself teaching students. According to Knight (2014), when teachers watched themselves teaching for the first time, “It hurt to watch the recording, but that 45 minute video made me want to improve” (p. 2). According to Dweck (2006), people with growth mindsets believe that they can continue to develop themselves. Dweck (2006) stated, “They believe that a person's true potential is unknown (and unknowable); that it’s impossible to foresee what can be accomplished with years of passion, toil, and training” (p. 7).

Knight (2014) stated that the major reason video is such a useful learning tool is because it helps teachers to see exactly what it looks like when they are teaching or watching their students learn. When people record themselves doing their work, the reality of what they see is more often very different from what they think they see (Knight, 2014). This type of framework, according to Ball and Cohen (1996), provides a set of lenses on any teaching situation, even the unexpected, that can be used to reflect on and improve instructional practices. According to Knight (2014), video is a powerful tool for “growth and professional development” (p. 2) and allows for more “professionally rich conversations” (p. 2).

Schein (2009, as cited in Knight, 2014) said, “All human relationships are about status positioning and what sociologists call ‘situational proprieties’” (p. 11). It is remarkable how much more objective and richer the discourse is after teachers have had time to watch, reflect, and critique video of their own teaching practices (Knight, 2014, p. 20). If they were able to do so, would teachers’ mindsets shift from thinking of teacher observation and evaluation as something being done to them to thinking that they were empowered and expected to be

accountable for their own professional growth and development? This shift in mindset could affect student learning, for as Knight (2014) pointed out, “When educators are accountable, their professional learning has an unmistakable impact on student learning” (p. 13).

Would administrators’ mindsets shift from thinking about how they are going to find time to get through all of the required teacher observations, evaluations, preconference and postconference conversations to what the impact of having more valued conversations with the teaching staff could be? Could this flipped model of empowering teachers with the expectation of taking charge of their own professional growth and development by using self-observation and evaluation to align to the district-adopted observation and evaluation system support the shift needed to put the focus where it belongs, which is directly in the classroom? As Glisczinski (2007) stated, “Despite its wealth of information and resources, American society suffers from a poverty of understanding” (p. 317). Schools need to distinguish which instruments are appropriate to use in assessing teachers’ skills and abilities to build expertise of personnel and leaders who can support continued efforts in this arena (Blazer, Kane, & Thal, 2018). Today, across the Nation, on-going efforts are underway to transform the teacher evaluation system into a useful and manageable tool for improving teaching and learning in the classrooms (Anderson et al., 2016).

## Transformative Learning

A key understanding that informs the authors in the literature cited here is the idea that teachers, as educated adults, bring much experience and prior learning to their classrooms and instructional practices (Mezirow, 1996, as cited in Calleja, 2014). This prior learning and experience creates a frame of reference from which an adult holds beliefs and truths by which she or he lives. Learning, according to Mezirow (1996, as cited in Calleja, 2014), is the process of using prior knowledge and interpretations to construe a new or revised interpretation of the

meaning of one's experience to guide future action. For learning actually to change the way one thinks, perceives, or acts requires a change to her or his foundational frame of reference, which has been made over many years (Calleja, 2014). This change requires a person to undergo a disorienting experience, critical self-reflection, and rational discourse (Calleja, 2014). As Perry (2000, as cited in Glisczinski, 2007) noted, "Transformative learning may produce significant, far-reaching, and drastic changes in the learner" (p. 319). To believe that one's frame of reference will change because someone else shared her or his thoughts and perceptions about an experience and the way it could be improved is an unrealistic expectation. However, much money, time, and effort has been poured into creating a system supports the expectation of having teachers with effective instructional practices guide students' growth and learning.

## Current Research on Videotaping Teaching

Although videotaping classroom teaching would give credence to authentic teaching practices, it would need to be an empowerment measure to support the expectations of teachers for continued professional growth and development that are directly connected to what they observed and know about their current teaching practices in comparison to best practices. Knight's (2014) decade and a half of global research and collaboration with schools has led to the discovery that effective professional development honors the autonomy of teachers, while keeping a form of accountability grounded in that autonomy. People aren't even contemplating change for themselves, not because they can't see a solution, but instead they can't see the problem (Prochaska et al., 1994, as cited in Knight, 2014). Videotaping classroom teaching and learning allows a more professionally rich conversation (Knight, 2014). According to Knight (2014), "It's amazing how much more objective and richer the dialogue is after teachers have had time to think about the video" (p. 20).

For convenience, some leaders might be tempted merely to tell teachers to videotape their classes and then watch their lessons (Knight, 2014). However, that was not the intended goal of this researcher's study. Rather, the goal was to research the impact of flipping the current model of teacher observation and evaluation to empower teachers to monitor and critique their own instructional practices through self-observation, to align the practices to the district evaluation rubric, and to expect the teachers to provide self-observation and critiquing evidence during postobservation conference conversations with their administrators. To engage in a dialogue that is teacher initiated offers both the empowerment and expectation that lead to change.

In addition, Knight (2014) stated that leading schools in a way that supports the potential for empowering teachers with the expectation of taking charge of their own professional development needs will increase the likelihood for professional learning to occur. This framework and autonomy provides a set of lenses on any teaching situation that teachers can use to reflect on and to improve their practice (Ball & Cohen, 1996) in particular, when aligned with a comprehensive rubric providing clear expectations (Knight, 2014). Videotaping classes is an easy way to capture everything that is evaluated. It also allows the viewer to watch clips repeatedly, to compare clips for evidence of growth, and to have conversations about what is being observed.

Teachers need to have a clear picture of what it looks like when they teach. Video is a powerful and untapped tool for growth and professional development opportunities. Decidedly, one of the major justifications in why video is so useful for learning is that it helps teachers to "see exactly what it looks like when we teach or our students learn" (Knight, 2014, p. 4). Fritz (1984) has shown how the juxtaposition of accountability and autonomy can work to create structural tension, which Senge (2012) later labeled as creative tension. Developing a situation in

which both the desired goal and the current reality come together to create ambition to move towards that goal generates creativity within that tension at the prospect of change.

## Conclusion

Contrary to popular belief, according to DuFour and Marzano (2009), the hours that principals devote to formal teacher evaluation and walkthroughs contribute little to the overall improvement of a school. DuFour & Marzano (2009) stated, "When the Teaching Commission (2006) examined ways to improve schools through improved teaching, it dismissed teacher evaluation as 'arcane and ineffective'" (p. 63). In addition, Goldman and Pellegrino (2015) stated, "National and international assessments such as NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress] and PISA [Programme for International Student Assessment] indicate that many educational systems fall short in equipping graduates with these [college and career readiness] competencies" (p. 34). Stakeholders in the world of education and economy are desperate to see these rankings improve. Policymakers, leaders, and educators are pulling out all of the stops to find a solution to this endemic problem. Thus, Taylor and Tyler (2012) noted, "American public schools have been under new pressure from regulators and constituents to improve teacher performance" (p. 84).

As state and district leaders reflect on their teacher evaluation policies, they are urged to consider enhancements such as self-observation and evaluation to empower teachers with the expectation of accountability for their own professional growth and performance (Gabriel, 2018). As Knight (2014) noted, "When educators are accountable, their professional learning has an unmistakable impact on student learning" (p. 13).

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 is organized to give the reader an overview of the methodology of this research. It is divided into seven sections that move from this methodology introduction to the setting, participants, and their rights. Then, the researcher discusses culture, environment, and the demographics of the setting. The data collection methods are described along with the data analysis. The researcher then outlines the potential limitations and delimitations of the study, and concludes with a summary.

The methodology that guided this research was a qualitative design in which the researcher collected survey data to provide the breadth to correlate with the qualitative data. The researcher described the research that was conducted, asking in the initial survey for teacher and administrator participation. The six-question survey was used initially to collect data from the teachers and administrators on their perceptions of the current, teacher observation and evaluation system, implementation practices. In the description, the flipped model of the teacher self-observation and evaluation system is explained, as well as the way that perceptual data was gathered through individual interviews both before and after the flipped model was completed. Then, district administrators, building administrators, and all consenting teachers completed the survey. The intent was to collect baseline data related to the research to understand better the overall culture surrounding the current teacher observation and evaluation practices. Teacher participants, who agreed also to participate in the self-observing and critiquing by videotaping research, were identified as full-research participants; the teachers who consented only to participate in the initial survey were identified as partial research participants.

The full-research participants' self-observing and critiquing of instructional practices was conducted by each participant at least 3 times over the period of 2 months. Initiating conversation with administrators took place at least twice during this same period; each full-research participant individually determined when these conversations would happen. This purposeful design allowed the researcher to gather data on any intentionality of the full-research participants in choosing when to meet with their administrators for a conference.

Once full-participant teachers were selected and necessary consent paperwork was completed, an implementation timeline (see Appendix I for the Research Timeline: Rethinking the Teacher Observation and Evaluation Model) and technology for video recording was issued to each participant. They were also shown how to use the SWIVL (2019) devices. In addition, teacher participants were provided with guidance on purposeful self-observation and critiquing by participating in a meeting to share the "Teacher Video Selfie: A Self-Guided Module for Analyzing Videos of Your Own Instruction" resource adapted from *The Best Foot Forward Project: Substituting Teacher-Collected Video for In-Person Classroom Observations* (Kane et al., 2015). The participants were reminded to reach out to the researcher with any questions or concerns as they went through this process.

Empowering teachers to take ownership of viewing and critiquing their own instructional practices directly in the classroom gave teachers not only autonomy for their professional development, but also the expectation and responsibility to align their classroom practices with the research-based best practices that the district had adopted. The purpose of this qualitative research design was to gain insight into the value-added measure of studying the perceptual impact of both administrators and teachers in sharing the ownership of the teacher observation expectations by having teachers critique their instructional practices on the formal observation rubric, and then initiating a conference with administrators. To grasp fully (a) the impact of this

added component in the teacher observation and evaluation system, and (b) impact of the researcher's ability to gain insight on the teacher's perceptions by empowering and expecting them to observe and critique themselves, the additional variable of videotaping the classroom instructional practices provided the actual experience in which teachers actively engaged. The researcher gained perceptual insight from the research participants after experiencing the idea rather than just hearing and thinking about it.

This study was guided by the desire to know whether the positive results of Knight's (2014) research and Kane et al.'s (2015) research on the power of seeing oneself teach could be translated into teachers taking control of their own professional development needs, expectations, and growth. This desire helped formulate the following overarching question: How do the conditions and factors of the teacher observation and evaluation system implementation affect instructional practices? Four subset questions were included in the initial interviews. A secondary question was also asked during the initial interviews. Do you think the integration of self-observation and evaluation would affect teachers' perceptions of their own professional development and growth needs? If so, in what ways?

The survey questions that were asked of all teacher participants (partial and full) and building administrators provided insight into the current practices within one school district, and helped to provide the researcher with the necessary foundation to conduct the research informatively. Once all of the participants had completed the survey questions, full-participant teachers were selected. They were expected to videotape and critique a minimum of three classroom lessons in alignment with the current district T-PEPG rubric. In addition, each full-participant teacher initiated a minimum of two conferences with her or his building administrator prior to the final interview. Full participant teachers and administrators were interviewed before and after this process.

## Setting

The study site was a school district in rural western Maine with public education teachers, administrators, and other nonteaching personnel who were already using technology in innovative ways such as videotaping for coaching purposes. This school district adopted the teacher observation and evaluation model from the Maine Schools for Excellence 2 years ago, after participating in a TIF grant for 4 years. The grant provided professional development opportunities for teacher observation and evaluation training and expectations for administrators and teachers. This purposeful sampling was selected because of the district's familiarity and forward thinking of effective and innovative ways to use technology.

It was beneficial to have school district leaders who had an open mindedness and objectivity toward the study and exploring the idea of a flipped teacher observation and evaluation model. In addition, both the administrators and the teachers were required to have a minimum of 2 years of experience with the district-adopted teacher observation and evaluation model. The selected schools represented the typical public education environment and were in no way atypical, exceptional, or unusual. As a result of this purposeful selection of setting, generalizability increased.

## Participants

Several school district superintendents in central and southern Maine were invited initially to grant permission for the building leaders in their district to participate through a participant invitation letter sent out at the end of July 2018. The participant invitation letters asked for initial informed consent, pending Institutional Review Board approval to conduct this research. Once district consent (Appendix J) was granted from each district, building leaders were sent a separate participant invitation letter in August 2018. After consent was gained from

two building leaders of one school district, teachers from both schools were invited to participate.

The superintendent, both building administrators, and consenting building teachers initially participated in this research by completing a survey. As a part of the survey, the teachers were also asked to respond to a question inquiring about their interest and desire to be full participants, which included consent to conduct self-observation and evaluation through videotaping their own instructional practices a minimum of 3 times. From these results, four teachers were selected to become full participants. They then participated in the remainder of the research, which included pre- and postinterviews, videotaping classroom lessons, and initiating conferences with their administrators over the course of approximately 2 months.

## Culture and Environment

In selecting the participants for this research, it was important that the study be conducted in a public school district that had already fully implemented a formalized teacher observation and evaluation structure, according to the State of Maine Rule Chapter 180, which follows the *Maine State Statute Revision* (State of Maine, 1991). This rule sets forth requirements for implementing Title 20-A: Education, Part 6: Teachers, Chapter 508: Educator Effectiveness of the Maine Revised Statutes (2011), which requires school administrative units to develop, pilot, and implement systems of T-PEPG for teachers and principals (State of Maine, 1991). Research in a school that had already fully developed and piloted a formalized system of T-PEPG strengthened the validity of this research. Familiarity and innovative use with technology also supported the validity of this research. The research was focused on the methods of teacher observation and evaluation; therefore, the classroom grade levels selected were not a concerning variable. The classroom teachers who were selected were a fourth-grade teacher, two middle-school teachers, and one high school teacher, which selection lent itself to a broad range of

instructional philosophies. In addition, the four, full participants selected work in three different schools under two different building administrators.

## Data Collection Methods

Initially, the surveys were administered to building administrators and all consenting teachers. In addition, the researcher secured the Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 44 *School Board Policy, Section G: GCOA: Supervision and Evaluation of Professional Staff* (Appendix M) that related to teacher observation and evaluation, and to the current teacher observation protocols, rubrics, and any other pertinent documentation. At the end of the teacher survey, the following question was asked: Would you be willing to be a full participant in this research, which will involve videotaping at least three of your lessons over the next 2 months and initiating conversations with your building administrator?

Four teachers were selected according to their willingness to participate fully and whether they had a minimum of 2 years of experience with the current teacher observation and evaluation system. Then, pre-video-observation interviews were conducted with the four selected teacher participants and two building administrators. Quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews offered both breadth and in-depth data collection. The quantitative surveys allowed data to shed light on the current teacher observation and evaluation system practices by collecting data from multiple consenting teachers and the two building principals. The surveys were categorized and analyzed according to the results, which provided insight into other common trends, themes, and patterns. The interviews with select full participants then complemented the survey data with more detailed, specific information that was transcribed, coded, categorized into themes, and analyzed.

During the initial survey that was conducted with all of the consenting teachers and building leaders, the teachers were asked to consider participating in the flipped model design of

the current teacher observation and evaluation system that would require them to videotape their classroom teaching a minimum of 3 times, to watch the videos, and to critique their instructional practices in alignment with the teacher observation and evaluation rubric that the school district had adopted. In addition, they also prepared for and initiated a minimum of two postobservation conferences with their building administrator where they discussed professional practices and shared video observation clips if desired. Teachers were offered support in this process, using "The Teacher Video Selfie: A Self-Guided Module for Analyzing Videos of Your Own Instruction" toolkit adopted from the *Best Foot Forward Project: Substituting Teacher-Collected Video for In-Person Classroom Observations* (Kane et al., 2015), which is a self-guided module for analyzing videos of one's own instruction.

This study was conducted in a rural public school district in the western foothills of Maine, using purposeful sampling, as Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) described it, because the researcher had "reasons for selecting specific participants, events, and processes" (p. 148). The site school district was selected from two, willing respondents to the researcher's outreach (see Appendix A for the Letter to District Superintendents; see Appendix B for the Letter to Building Administrators). The selected school district had already participated in the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grant for training teachers and administrators in the T-PEPG process for 5 years. The selected district also exhibited innovative ideas and uses of technology. Therefore, staff were well suited for this type of research. Site participants included the building administrators of the participant schools who had at least 2 years of administrative experience and a minimum of 2 years of using the observation and evaluation model that the district had adopted. The building administrators also needed to be open to exploring this innovative idea with objectivity.

Both building administrators completed a survey, and participated in the pre- and post-observation interviews. The surveys were then offered to the teachers, at which time they

determined whether they were willing to participate as full or partial participants (see Appendix C for the Survey Questions for Building Administrators, and Appendix D for the Survey Questions for All Teacher Participants). To qualify to be a full participant, the teacher had to have at least 2 years of experience with the district observation and evaluation model. Within the survey given, teachers who qualified were asked whether they would consider being full participants in this study. Of the 24 teacher participants, four teachers agreed to be full participants across the school district. The full participants, along with their building administrators, were also interviewed both before and after using the flipped model design of T-PEPG to gain in-depth perceptual insights and potential changes in perceptions. The superintendent was only interviewed once because he was not directly involved in the flipped model observations and evaluations study (see Appendix E for the Pre- and Post-Self-Observation Interview Questions for Full-Participant Teachers, and Appendix F for the Pre- and Post-Self-Observation Interview Questions). In addition, full participants had the option to participate in the Teacher Video Selfie activities in preparation for videotaping themselves (see Appendix G).

## Data Analysis

When analyzing the data that was collected during this research, it was also important to note how the data was managed, organized, and reported. To report the data honestly, the data findings were not changed or altered to satisfy certain predictions or interest groups (Creswell, 2015). This research communicates the practical significance to the community of researchers and practitioners to support further inquiry (Creswell, 2015).

The district's current teacher observation and evaluation system, including the district rubric, related policy and handbook were gathered. The surveys that were initially taken by the building administrators and consenting teachers were aggregated to seek trends in a large

population of individuals (Creswell, 2015). The survey results provide an overall understanding of current teacher observation and evaluation understandings, practices, and perceptions. This survey was done confidentially. Therefore, names were coded and removed from the survey results. The results from this survey helped to inform future data collection.

Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, analyzed, coded, organized into constructs to determine patterns and themes (Creswell, 2015). There is no way for a researcher to tell for sure when a participant is being truthful or accurate when providing information, especially when the information tends to be a subjective experience (Stufflebeam, 2006). In addition, a researcher is not able to share in an experience. Rather, the experiences are shared with the researcher through the lens of each participant. The intent of this research was to gain insight into feelings, beliefs, and perceptions of empowering and expecting teachers to be "in the driver's seat" with respect to their own self-observations and evaluations, which would then be used to initiate conversations with administrators. The introspection that the participants gained was according to the actual experiential design.

Full participants were required to have a minimum of 2 years of participating in the district observation and evaluation system; this research allowed the teacher participants to flip the model to conduct their own self-observation of instructional practices, to critique and evaluate the observation, and to initiate a conference with the administrator. Pre- and postobservation interviews with the administrators and teachers captured the perceptions of this change in process. Specific quotations were derived from interviews through In Vivo coding when deemed worthy of maintaining originality.

When transcribing, the professionals at REV transcription service maintained efficiency, verifiability, and integrity of the data. Notable perceptions were extracted from each interview, were lumped together, and then were grouped into categories. Constructs were identified, and,

over time and journaling, themes began to emerge. The validity was justifiable because the researcher used multiple sources of data collection, technology to handle data, time management to give careful consideration to data mining, and support from peer and advisor reviews (Creswell, 2015). From the analysis, a written report described the findings. Every attempt was taken to ensure confidentiality and professionalism throughout the research process. For example, participant names were immediately coded, removed from any research documentation, and stored in a secure location. Confidentiality was maintained at all times. Being clear and transparent about the process was the key to the validity and integrity of the research (Creswell, 2015).

## Participants' Rights

It was top priority to provide clarity and transparency for this research, including the purpose of the study, the potential use of the data collected, and the continuous voluntary nature of participation. This type of research design, which was purposefully flexible, posed more opportunity for breaches in confidentiality throughout the investigation process. Therefore, it was conducted with the mindfulness of the involvement of human subjects and with consideration for proactively addressing ethical issues that were unique to qualitative research.

Safeguards that were established to protect the rights of participants included informed consent, protecting the participants from harm, retaining the ability to maintain autonomy, and ensuring confidentiality throughout this research. All participants had the ability, through informed consent, to decide for themselves what risks were worthy of taking with the intent of furthering scientific knowledge. They also had the ability to option out at any point, and for any reason, throughout the research. For confidentiality purposes, individual identifying information was immediately removed from the data as it was collected and was stored in a secure location before being aggregated, coded, or publicized.

## Potential Limitations

The limitations of a study might be the design characteristics or chosen methodology that affect the interpretation of research findings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Limitation 1 of this study was the time constraint with the chosen methodology of having the research participants do the classroom self-observations, critiquing, and initiating conversations with their building administrators. These additional research methods take much more time than simply interviewing research participants. Ultimately, the goal of this research was to isolate conditions that affect student learning and to figure out how to manipulate them. However, the authors of previous research studies indicated that identifying the variables that affect student learning within the educational system is the first step of many to the positive change that results from educational reform. Therefore, this researcher did not attempt to include a direct correlation to student learning. Another step with this type of research was to offer training to the full-research participants on how to be effective self-observers and evaluators. Last, but certainly not least, a longitudinal research project to study the impact of this type of research on student learning would be ideal.

Limitation 2 of this study was the small participant selection. Finding partial research participants who would be willing to become full-research participants was challenging. In addition, the number of SWIVL (2019) devices that were available for use during this research was limited; therefore, the number of research participants also needed to be limited. The researcher felt that it was more important for fully participating teachers to have immediate access to the SWIVL devices when desired so that the inability to access necessary technology when desired would not become a limitation. One public school district in Maine was selected to participate, and four classroom teachers from three different schools were selected to participate

in the full-research design. Small samplings such as this could limit the potential generalizability. Therefore, every attempt was made to randomize the selection process.

The state-required implementation of a formalized teacher observation and evaluation system does not formally require or acknowledge the potential for including a component of empowering teachers with the expectation of ownership in development and refining their own instructional practices, using the same teacher observation and evaluation model adopted by their respective districts. However, the participating district's policy does state, "Provide the opportunity for all staff members to analyze their own strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the instructional process and give staff the ability to discuss the contribution they have made to the District objectively with their supervisors." Therefore, the impact of the change that this research has suggested would fit well within the scope of the current policy wording.

## Delimitations

The initial, conceptual design considerations of this study, that were made by the researcher about the broader, overall system of teacher observation and evaluation that needs further investigation, should continue to be highlighted in the world of research. Although a limitation of time constraints was noted, the more research on the potential benefits of using disruptive technology to place the expectation and empowerment of self-observation and critiquing on the teacher, the closer the world of public education will come to seeing the correlation between curriculum, instructional strategies, and student learning.

## Chapter Summary

The teacher observation and evaluation model that is currently a mandated requirement in most public schools across the Nation continues to hold optimism for the key changes that will lead to improved student learning. Attaching student test scores to incentive funds, using teacher evaluation scores to determine future employment, requiring peer observations, and determining

the number of observations per year according to the number of years a teacher has taught or the teacher's previous evaluation scores are all actions that are done to teachers. Empowering teachers with the expectation that will they take control of self-observing and evaluating their own instructional practices in preparation to initiate conversation with administration to discuss instructional practices, both current and desired, would allow teachers (and expect them) to take control of their own professional development. This researcher investigated how administrators and teachers perceived the effectiveness of this approach after they had an opportunity to immerse themselves in the flipped model design of teacher observation and evaluation.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS

The educational reform journey and the reality that becomes known when implementing reform requirements in school districts have provided the foundation for intrinsically motivating the researcher to delve deeper into understanding the bridges between curriculum and assessment, which are the instructional practices of the teacher in the classroom. The United States has long since moved away from the industrial age that formed the beginnings of this prosperous Nation, and has embraced the technologies that connect this society to the global world. As public educators attempt to keep up with these transformative changes, they continue with educational reform to strive for excellence.

All students within the United States are offered access to a free public education that is expected to keep pace with the dynamic global changes of the world and to anticipate beyond current educational practices. Recent nationwide reform efforts have led states such as Maine to adopt its current formalized curriculum. The Common Core State Standards for math and literacy are an effort to provide more consistency with the curriculum that is being taught from classroom to classroom, between school districts within the state, and across the states. These efforts have provided some common language and practices in understanding what to teach. One struggle that continues is how to teach effectively. As a result, "Many school administrators are drowning in crisis" (Senge, 2012, p. 123). According to Senge (2012),

> Increased pressure for accountability in American public schools is evident from the intense focus on measuring students' performance. Low-performing schools face punitive solutions and public recrimination. For all the uproar and attention, we've seen few to no

> results to indicate that schools are closing the achievement gaps among student subgroups or that learning has increased overall for students. (p. 233)

This leaves policymakers and other stakeholders asking how teacher effectiveness is identified, defined, and assessed. Rule Chapter 180, as required in Title 20-A: Education, Part 6: Teachers, Chapter 508: Educator Effectiveness of the Maine Revised Statutes (2011) and adopted by Maine in 2014, required the state to develop at least one complete state teacher performance evaluation and professional growth (T-PEPG) model providing teacher effectiveness expectations for school district alignment (Maine Department of Education [MDOE], 2018). The effort that went into the creation of the state model was informed by the work of the Maine Schools for Excellence and the development of PEPG systems in other states (MDOE, 2018).

As part of the current educational reform, public school districts in Maine are required to have a vetted and state approved teacher T-PEPG model completely implemented by 2017–2018. The implementation procedures of the T-PEPG accountability system that are most widely practiced among districts in Maine, to meet these state requirements, require building administrators to conduct a minimum number of classroom observations, both announced and unannounced. In addition, the announced observations typically include pre- and postobservation conferences that the administrator organizes. Although administrators state that one of the most rewarding parts of their jobs is being in the classrooms with students, they more readily admit that, all too often, other demands of the job prevent this from occurring nearly as often as they would like. While conducting this research, one research participant stated, “That’s (classroom visit) a very small microscopic snapshot of what’s happening on a day-to-day basis in an entire school year.”

The scope of this qualitative case study was pre-eminently significant for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding into the perceptions of the T-PEPG accountability process. This process is meant to provide both performance evaluation and effective professional growth. Understanding the perceptions surrounding its effectiveness to primarily create a culture that empowers teachers with the expectations of guiding their own professional development needs and growth that have been derived from the understanding and alignment of their current instructional practices with the teaching and professional standards adopted by the district guided this research. This central phenomenon generated the overarching research question, "How do the conditions and factors of the teacher observation and evaluation system implementation affect instructional practices?" To fully understand this question, four subset questions guided the initial interviews.

Public educators strive to implement systems to aid in the improvement of student learning and to support students in becoming college and career ready by the time they graduate high school. As advances in technology continue to evolve and become part of the world we live and work in, educators need to adapt to align themselves to the changing needs and expectations. The changes that are continually needed affect instruction as well as content. Educational leaders need to create a culture of understanding that adult learning is optimal when they are allowed to make their own interpretations rather than being expected to "act on the purposes, beliefs, judgments, and feelings of others" (Mezirow, 2002, p. 5). Adults learn differently when learning to perform and learning to understand what is communicated to them (Knight et al., 2012; Mezirow, 1991).

This chapter includes the research design, research selection process, and the methodology used for collecting and analyzing the data. It also provides an interpretive

understanding of the findings as they relate to the interrelation between administrators and teachers in connection with T-PEPG process.

## Research Design

For this research design the researcher used Knowles' (1988) adult learning theory, known as andragogy, which is different from child learning (pedagogy) because adults, over time and maturation, desire learning experiences that are expected to have an "immediacy of application" (p. 45). One of Knowles' (1988) principles of andragogy theorizes that adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction so as not to disrupt the individual andragogy of learning. According to Feinstein (2004, as cited in Mezirow, 2002), two processes that are used to facilitate transformative learning are critical reflection and rational-reflective discourse. Mezirow (2002) further contended that transformative learning develops autonomous thinking, which is the foundation of Knowles' (1988) adult learning theory.

This principle, from the theory of andragogy, was collocated with Mezirow's (1994) transformative learning theory that created a conceptual framework of studying the perceptual impact of juxtaposing empowering (autonomy) teachers with the expectation (accountability) of self-observing their instructional practices. This framework also encompassed aligning teachers' self-observations with the district's observation and evaluation model rubric, critiquing to determine one's strengths as well as professional development needs, and finally initiating the discourse with their administrators to convey professional growth and development insights.

The researcher intentionally used "quantitative and qualitative approaches in this single study as a way of complementing each other by providing results with greater breadth and depth" (Roberts, 2010, p. 145). Roberts (2010) described this process of including numerical data in a qualitative study as a way to "get a broad perspective to then select cases to study in depth by conducting open-ended interview[s]" (p. 145). This design was an appropriate way for a lone

researcher to broaden the scope of the research, while maintaining the capability of deepening the understanding. In summation, this research is an amalgamation of surveys, experiences, perceptual insights, and policy review as they culminate in findings.

**Research Selection Process**

The research site selection process began in July 2018, with the researcher reaching out to 23 school district superintendents in the western and southern part of the State of Maine. The superintendents were initially provided a description of the research and an invitation to allow their school district to participate in the research. That initial summer e-mail invitation yielded no results. Gathering data such as this often requires persistence, patience, and relationship building because a sense of trust must exist that the data will be reported with integrity and because participation takes time that typically is not monetarily rewarded (Jensenius, 2014). In August 2018, a second e-mail was sent to a select group of superintendents with whom the researcher had a professional relationship and about whom the researcher was confident that a follow-up phone call would be well received. This effort did allow for some productive conversation around the research, and it proved successful with two districts agreeing to allow the researcher to move forward by granting necessary consent to contact building principals within each district. Of the two districts that initially accepted an invitation to participate, more conversation with district administrators made one district a more viable selection because of other obligations that were revealed and because of where each district was in the T-PEPG process.

Once the district consent form was signed, the researcher moved forward with an invitation to building administrators. Administrators were required to have a minimum of 2 years of experience with the T-PEPG process of observation and evaluation to participate in this research. One elementary school in the district was not eligible to participate in this study

because the teaching principal at that school had been in an administrative position for only 1 year. The researcher individually met with the two building principals who were eligible to participate, and they both agreed to allow her to move forward with approaching the classroom teachers in their respective schools.

Of the 26 teachers who were approached and told about the research, 20 agreed to be partial participants and completed the initial survey. Four other teachers who completed the survey also agreed to become full-research participants using the "flipped model" of the current T-PEPG protocols. The process of gaining school district acceptance and approval to conduct this research, building administrator consent, and teacher consent took approximately 3.5 months (see Appendix K for the Participants' Informed Consent). Once all of the necessary consents were confirmed, the research immediately began.

**History of district selected.** Before this study, the selected school district received a teacher incentive fund (TIF) grant spanning from 2013–2017 to provide funding and training to meet these T-PEPG requirements being set forth by the state. After the grant ended, this district applied for and was granted approval in adopting the model on which they had been trained and that the Maine Schools for Excellence, a rendition of the state's model, had provided. Having the professional development training and funding to support a district in moving towards a systematic approach for educator effectiveness with the ultimate goal of improving student learning positioned the selected district perfectly for this type of research.

## Data Collection Method

The researcher created a slide show presentation that initially shared the literature review findings and subsequent research design with the teachers (and administrators) and asked for participation. Subsequently, 24 willing participant teachers and their 2 building administrators were surveyed to gain insight into the culture and climate surrounding the district's current

implementation policy and procedures of the T-PEPG system. This six-question survey was an attempt to identify an already-established culture surrounding the context of this research. The surveys were completed immediately after the consent forms from all participants were secured.

The survey questions provided five possible responses generated on a Likert scale of similar meaning for each response. The results were color coded and then quantified with numbers and percentages (see Appendix L for the Survey Responses), which yielded a broad measure of baseline data. This baseline data referenced the culture surrounding the perceptions of the T-PEPG model protocols that were then being implemented in the district as related to state requirements. Contextual information on the respondents' organizational cultures could be potentially subjective in shaping the perceptions and frames of reference of the participants, which should be a noted part of this research.

The survey that was given to consenting teachers also expressed the invitation to consider being full-research participants, with the stipulation of being a teacher who had participated in the district's T-PEPG protocols for a minimum of 2 years. This intentional design minimized the prospective for uncertain variables (e.g., new teacher inexperience or unfamiliarity with the T-PEPG process) that could potentially skew the findings. From the 24 teachers who participated in the survey, four teachers volunteered and were selected to become full-research participants. One participant taught at the elementary level, two participants taught at the middle-school level, and one participant taught at the high-school level.

Once full-research participants were culled out of the partial participants, they and their building and district administrators were individually interviewed and given more in-depth details of the research expectations. The in-depth interviews in which the full participant teachers, the building principals, and the superintendent each participated captured deeper understandings and personal perceptions of the current T-PEPG process being used in this

district. The interviews also began to encapsulate their initial perceptions about initiating the flipped model design of self-observation and evaluation as a measure of teacher T-PEPG strengths and needs.

Following the initial interviews, the full participant teachers were armed with the technology of SWIVL (2019) devices and iPads to begin the process of self-observation. The expectation was that each participant would videotape himself or herself a minimum of 3 times, so that they could capture video of their classroom instructional practices with students. Then, they would use the videos for self-observation and critiquing of their teaching practices in alignment with the expectations of the T-PEPG model being used in the district.

The full participant teachers were offered an opportunity to participate in the "Teacher Video Selfie" training to understand how to observe themselves with intentionality. This training was meant to help the participants move past inconsequential concerns (e.g., what clothes they were wearing or what their voice sounded like on the video) and allow them to focus on the specific goals that they had set for themselves in relation to the T-PEPG standard indicators that the district had adopted. Three of the four full participants had previously participated in the National Board Certification process and stated that they were already very comfortable videotaping themselves with intentionality (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2019). The fourth full participant also expressed feeling comfortable and confident with being in front of a camera. All of the participants reviewed the "Teacher Video Selfie" training materials and conversed with the researcher about the expectations. Each participant individually decided to opt out of the formal six-step training and moved directly to the "Your Turn" Independent Practice of This Teacher Video Selfie training to guide them initially in this process.

During that time of videotaping and critiquing, the teachers also initiated conferencing and conversation a minimum of 2 times with their building administrator about what they saw as

their own professional development growth needs and strengths in direct alignment with the district's T-PEPG rubric. The purposeful intention of the number of video recordings (three) and postobservation conferences (two) was to allow the potential of autonomy in how each teacher would choose to do this. For example, one teacher might choose to videotape once and conference immediately after. Another teacher might choose to videotape, determine growth targets to work on, videotape again, and then conference with administrator to discuss potential professional growth. The teacher participants were offered this opportunity for autonomous decision making because their decisions might expose the differences in adult learning in connection with Knowles' (1988) adult learning theory.

Upon completion, the researcher then conducted postobservation interviews with the full participant teachers and building administrators to identify any impact that this flipped model process might have had on the perceptual understandings and beliefs of each individual. As Knight (2014) stated, "It is remarkable how much more objective and richer the discourse is after teachers have had time to watch, reflect, and critique video of their own teaching practices" (p. 20). The researcher had a genuine interest in understanding perceptions of the teacher observation and evaluation model from both the administrative point of view, as well as the teachers' point of view and perceptual changes of when the variable of conducting classroom observations, critiquing the observations using the district rubric, and providing feedback had changed. This process occurred between November 2018 and February 2019.

**Research Analysis Method**

Although quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection are grounded in different paradigms, combining them can offer in-depth insight that might otherwise be unattainable in certain studies (Roberts, 2010). Baseline data, initially gathered through the survey results, provided a breadth of quantitative data about the culture surrounding the current

teacher evaluation and professional growth model being used in this school district. As Saldaña (2016) stated, "Assuming that quantitative and qualitative research, with their distinctive systems of meaning, are two separate approaches to inquiry, it is possible to achieve comparable types of results when each approach examines the same local phenomenon" (p. 26). Then, interviews conducted with a smaller sampling provided more in-depth qualitative data. According to Roberts (2010), blending the "what" with a possible "why" adds "power and richness" (p. 145) to the explanation of data. This intentional qualitative design offered a way to gather multiple and in-depth perspectives in a timely manner with which the researcher could then correlate results, which in turn proved to be a successful design to gather the strongest evidence for a lone researcher (see Figure 2).

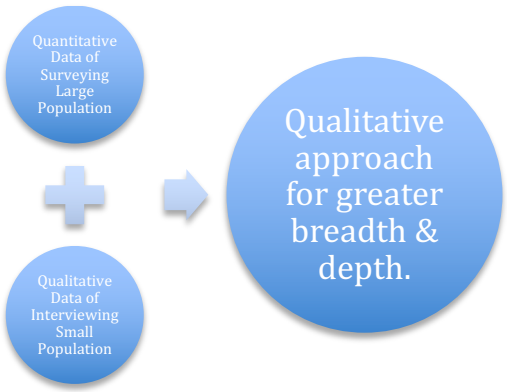


*Figure 2.* Representation of purpose for research design.

Creswell (2015) stated, "A target population (or the *sampling frame*) is a group of individuals with some common defining characteristic that the researcher can identify and study" (p. 141). In this case, the common defining characteristic was that everyone in this district used the same T-PEPG rubrics, protocols, and guidelines for teacher observations and evaluations.

**Survey results.** The survey results were initially color coded to determine, at a glance, any visible patterns with the results. As Saldaña (2016) stated, "A datum is initially, and when needed, secondarily coded to discern and label its content and meaning according to the needs of

the inquiry" (pp. 15–16). In determining the best way to analyze further the quantitative data that had been gathered from the survey, the researcher looked at different ways to interpret the color-coded survey responses, taking into consideration how to best use the data within this qualitative study. The color coding showed an overwhelming amount of responses in the positive range (i.e., *fully aware and confident, agree and somewhat aware, confident, agree*) to the questions that asked about participant knowledge, confidence, and satisfaction with the current state mandated T-PEPG system. The best approach should be determined by the context of each individual situation. Therefore, for this research, Percent Agree was the best approach because it allowed the researcher to "summarize the percent of the respondents who agreed" and use executive comprehension to explain the results (Sauro, 2011). Although this type of data analysis is not as precise as coefficient of variation, statistical precision was not needed.

Each question was coded with "self" if it was primarily within the teachers' control, "admin" if it was primarily within the building administrator's control, and "district" if it was primarily within the district's control. The noticeable patterns propelled the researcher to apply numbers and percentages to the results to quantify and confirm. Out of the six survey questions that teacher participants answered, three of the questions scored an overall 96% rating and one scored an 88% rating of *fully*- and *somewhat*-, which is a positive response category. These ratings were all related to self or building administrator. The two lowest ratings of 83% and 75% in relation to the positive response category were both related to the survey questions connected to district implementation.

The researcher notes that the teacher and administrator responses were not combined to aggregate the responses. The researcher made this intentional action because the question design was not completely comparable. In particular, Survey Question 5 on the two surveys differed in both question issue and response potential. The researcher's interpretation of the survey results

was that, overall, the teachers and administrators who had participated in the survey had a positive cultural attitude and behavior in relation to the current implementation of the T-PEPG system, with the notable exception of Survey Question 5 on the administrator survey. Both building administrators *somewhat disagreed* with the statement, "I am able to keep up with the number of teacher observations and evaluations, including the preconferences and postconferences I am responsible for." The results of the survey committed the researcher to move forward with the research questions as designed for the preobservation interviews.

**Interviews.** Preobservation interviews were conducted with the four full-research participants and the two building administrators; the interview responses were immediately uploaded to REV, a secure audio record and transcription service, for transcription. Once transcribed, each transcription was sent back to the respective interviewee to check for accuracy in wording and meaning, and changes were made if necessary. As the data accumulated, the researcher manually organized this raw data from the preobservation interviews. Then, as Clarke (2005, as cited in Saldaña, 2016) suggested, before the initial coding, it was important to have a period of "digesting and reflecting" (p. 115) on the data. This time allowed the researcher to recall the direction of the research and, in particular, how to design questions that would be later asked during the postobservation interviews.

***Coding the interviews.*** Tables were created using Google technology, allowing for the organization and shifting of data as the coding process progressed. The interviews were initially coded using In Vivo coding simultaneous with descriptive coding. The researcher found that some of the statements that were made during the interview process were captivating in their entirety, and In Vivo coding provided a way to minimize the potential of losing any meaning in the translation. The descriptive coding was the first attempt to determine patterns that might emerge within this collective data. However, coding the interviews with single-word

descriptions, even if alongside In Vivo coding, felt as though some of the meaning of the interviewees' responses was lost. Upon further consideration of various coding methods that Saldaña (2016) recommended was a caution regarding the use of descriptive coding with interview transcript data. Saldaña (2016) stated, "Topic-based nouns do not tell you as much about the human condition" (p. 78). This caution explained why single words such as *responsiveness*, *meetings*, *explanations*, and *intention* seemed to lose some of what Saldaña (2016) described as "conceptual actions" (p. 78) that, in this study, the participants were relayed.

Saldaña's (2016) acknowledgement of, "Rarely will anyone get coding right the first time" (p. 11), permitted the researcher to understand the need to reflect back on the interviews for another angle of viewing the phenomenon within the answers. Saldaña (2016) also cautioned that a potential hazard of eliminating data from coding could be that portions of deleted data "might contain the as yet unknown units of data that could pull everything together, or include the negative or discrepant case that motivates rethinking of a code, category, theme, concept, assertion, or theory" (p. 17). Therefore, the researcher put this descriptive coding aside and thought more about the survey results, the culture that currently existed, and the conceptual framework from which this research culminated as next coding process was determined.

In Vivo coding captured each participant's exact phrasing derived from the interview responses because, as Saldaña (2016) stated, "Sometimes the participant says it best" (p. 109). Knowing that the researcher was ultimately searching for potential changes in perceptions between the initial interview and the second interview because of the flipped model experience, capturing the essence of meaning through exact phrasing helped this process. Coding is not merely labeling; it is linking and making connections (Saldaña, 2016). Twenty-two In Vivo codes were pulled from the first set of interviews and were safely stored. This type of coding would corroborate the intentional research design for this case study to reveal any shifts in

mindset between the initial interviews and the final ones. As Saldaña (2016) described it, the coding process became an "interrelationship with analytic memo writing" (p. 55) to get at the heart of why the researcher was drawn to some of the powerful quotes that remained authentic in In Vivo coding.

Analytic memo writing allowed the researcher to "establish connections between herself and the social world she was studying" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 46). It also allowed the researcher to examine the researcher's own values, attitude, and beliefs about the phenomenon (Saldaña, 2016). Serving in a variety of roles in public education from teacher, literacy coach, dean of students, principal, and now curriculum director over the last 21 years has shaped the perceptions and frame of reference that have influenced the thinking of this researcher. In particular, now that the study that the researcher had shaped around this phenomenon was coming to fruition, these influences were resonating with the data. Memo writing helped the researcher leverage previous perceptions from life experiences to intermingle with the newfound knowledge gleaned from the first set of interviews to shape the analysis.

In addition, as Glaser (1978, as cited in Saldaña, 2016) suggested, pattern coding created an alternate starting point for the researcher to explore analytic leads for further exploration and "to see the direction in which to take this study" (p. 115). As with any research, it is an exploration of the unknown and the "what ifs." One can predict the results, but true research does not allow that prediction to shape the results; rather, research is about letting the results inform the prediction. Pattern coding led the researcher to capture 103 phrases that did not lose their intended meaning when separated from the interviewer's question or the interviewee's complete response as descriptive coding seemed to have initially done. They were short phrases "symbolically . . . attributed to certain clusters of data" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4). Continued gathering and studying of this collection of phrases through the lens of pattern coding

categorized them into four identifiable clusters they could be organized within (Saldaña, 2016, p. 74). These clusters were initially labeled feedback, systematic approach, struggles, and self-observation. Within each cluster, the phrases were still separated into separate sections of teacher or administrator.

***Clustering the codes.*** Once phrases were pulled away from the entire transcription of interview responses and organized within clusters, coding became, as Saldaña (2016) described it, an "interpretive act in which summarizes, distills, and condenses the data" (p. 5) even further. Merriam (2017) stated, "Our analysis and interpretation—our study's findings—will reflect the constructs, concepts, language models, and theories that structured the study in the first place" (p. 48). Thinking about the conceptual framework that this research was designed within, the active role of self-observing that the participant teachers enacted, and the analysis of perceptual changes of teachers and administrators, the researcher looked for possible threads or connections within the contents of the four clusters.

This research intentionally included participants actively engaging in self-observation through video recording to capture any changes in perception that were developed from the actual participation in the flipped model design and not merely thinking about what it might feel like to be empowered with these expectations. According to Knight (2014), an important part of professional growth for teachers is "getting a clear picture of reality" (p. 1). Knight (2014) stated, "When teachers look at a video of their lessons or review their students' work, they can identify professional learning goals and plans that can have a real, positive impact on students' learning experiences" (p. 1).

A clear picture of current reality (where we are) relative to vision (where we want to be) has the potential to generate creative tension, which is at the heart of authentic personal growth (Fritz, 1984; Senge, 2012). Defining "where we are" in relation to "where we want to be" in a

global sense speaks to the intent of educational reform resulting from the United States continuing to fall near the bottom of many international rankings when using student learning as the benchmark (Schwahn & McGarvey, 2011). That is where the United States is as a country, and in its schools, the people have a vision and obligation to provide educational experiences for students that will prepare them to be ready for college and a career. Educational reform is created out of a vision of where the people want to be and it creates accountability mandates from these global results, but it is implemented with stakeholders who need the empowerment and autonomy to bring that vision to reality directly in the classroom.

Fritz (1984) described how accountability could coexist with autonomy in a concept of creative tension that is related to personal growth; later Fritz's ideas were summarized by Senge (2012):

> The juxtaposition of vision (what we want) and a clear picture of current reality (where we are relative to what we want) generates what we call creative tension: a force to bring them together, caused by the natural tendency of tension to seek resolution. The essence of personal mastery is learning how to generate and sustain creative tension in our lives. (p. 77)

***Correlating data between interviews.*** Determining whether accountability can coexist with autonomy is dependent on the ability of all stakeholders to have a clear vision of what is desired and to see the current reality. The researcher continued the pattern coding process with the second round of interviews first to extract the phrases that resonated with the research design. Once the second round of interviews were all coded with phrases extracted, the researcher correlated those phrases with the phrases from the first interview that were still in the four clusters labeled feedback, systematic approach, struggles, and self-observation.

This correlation process was color coded to differentiate between the first interview and second interview data. In doing this, the researcher could then look at possible relationships between responses to discern any perceptual changes. Correlating also involved crossing out certain first-interview phrases that were in contrast with second-interview phrases. For example, under the struggles cluster was the phrase "missing the intentionality" that was repeated by all of the full-research participants in reference to observations and evaluations that were conducted solely by the administrators. The second round of interviews captured the phrase of "knowing the intentionality behind the teaching" in reference to teachers observing and evaluating their own instructional practices. Therefore, "missing the intentionality" was crossed out as though it would no longer be considered a struggle.

***Emerging constructs.*** Through this continued process of aligning the open-coded phrases and In Vivo codes of the second interview with the pattern-coded cluster phrases and In Vivo codes of the first interview, constructs began to emerge. Phrases in the feedback cluster (e.g., "aware of what is being evaluated," "formal observations," "informal observations," "according to lessons observed," and "different perspective" alongside an In Vivo code, "I have nothing to complain about because I get good scores") all spoke to a certain culture of expectation deriving from it. When thought about through the lens of current reality and vision, the feedback cluster then became "expectations."

Using this same process, the struggles cluster became "a lack of empowerment." This was, in part, also because of the coding of the second round of interviews in relation to the first round. Many of the struggles (e.g., "lost in translation," "one and done approach," "hard to capture goal-focused planning," and "scripting takes away from the actual observation") were eliminated when the teachers felt empowered to self-observe and self-evaluate. One In Vivo code summed up the experience, "So if we can be involved in our own evaluating of what we are

doing, in a more intentional way, I think that, combined with our own understanding of what we're intending to do, can give us a nice picture of what we need."

As these clusters continued to turn into constructs, the self-observation cluster became a construct of "empowerment." Seeing the "lack of empowerment" phrases, which were mostly crossed out at this point in the coding process, in a column right next to "empowerment" provided insight for the researcher to return to the idea of how creative tension comes about. Being able to have a clear picture of where one is relative to where one wants to be creates a tension that seeks resolution (Fritz, 1984; Senge, 2012). Many of the current realities related to lack of empowerment disappeared with the empowerment of self-observation.

***Understanding the phenomenon.*** Using Clarke's (2005, as cited in Saldaña, 2016) advice, entering the final stages of analysis, the researcher took some time to digest and reflect on the data and coding (p. 115). This time allowed the researcher to return to the question of how autonomy could be effectively juxtaposed with accountability in relation to the district where the research was conducted. The data collection, reflection, coding, and analysis allowed the consideration of being able to see where the district was (current reality) and where it want to be (vision) in relation to the T-PEPG process (see Figure 3).

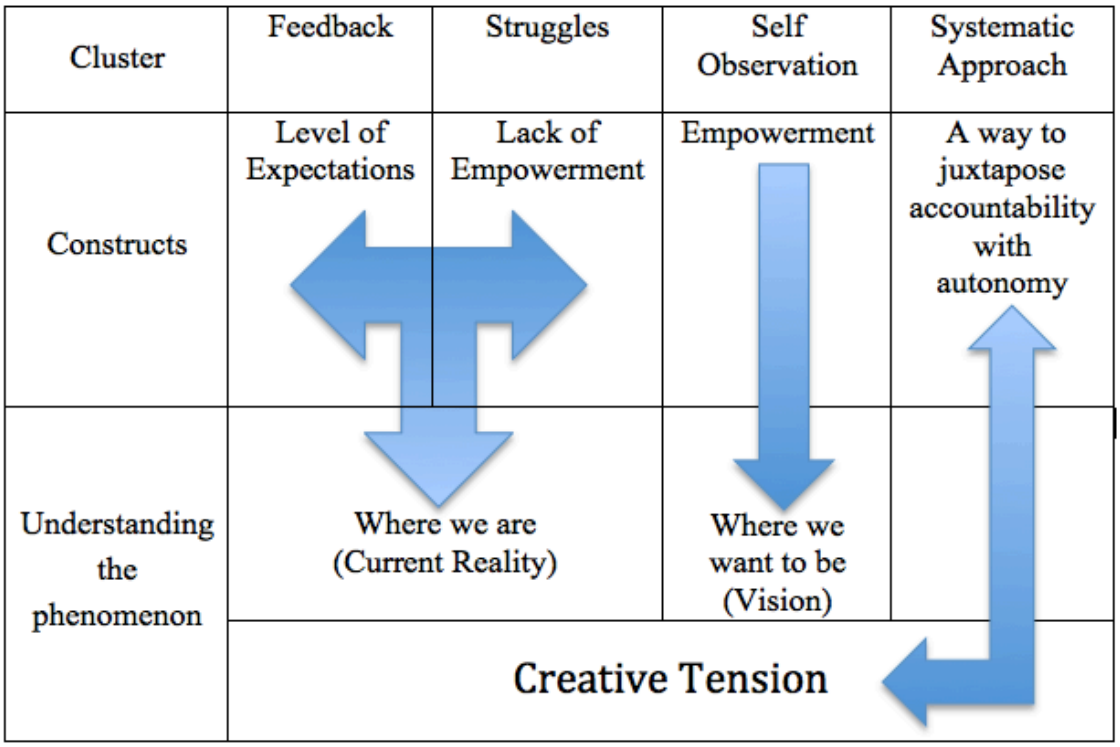


*Figure 3*: Organizing data to understand the phenomenon.

The coding process through this lens was continuous; therefore, the four organized clusters the data that were originally organized within had now become constructs that began to shed light on the "gap in our knowledge/understanding of this phenomenon" (Merriam, 2009, p. 65). Including building administrators and teachers, the two most influential impacts on student learning, as participants in this research was crucial in defining the systematic approach cluster that then became the construct of "a way to juxtapose accountability with autonomy" (see Figure 3). As Fritz (1984) stated, "The discrepancy between current reality and vision is to be *cultivated*, not avoided" (p. 55). Thus, creative tension emerges, allowing for movement towards understanding the phenomenon and a resolution of the problem (Fritz, 1984).

**Identifiable themes.** Possible themes emerged from the research data using the flipped model design of the T-PEPG process of empowering teachers to be in charge of self-observing and evaluating their own instructional practices. Initially, the teachers and administrators could

see the potential for self-observation, as stated in their preobservation interview responses. If there was a pre-established culture surrounding any part of this research, it could be used to shape perceptions and frames of reference. The forward thinking mindset positioned this district for the use of disruptive technology such as the SWIVL (2019) devices to study the potential shifts in perceptions and beliefs of the research participants as they participated in the flipped model process of observing and evaluating teachers. Participating in the experience of the flipped model design allowed any shifts in perceptions to be the result of actual experiences.

## Presentation of Results

The problem studied within this research was the insufficient growth and advancement in teachers' instructional practices in the public school system, which was determined by student achievement or lack thereof. As a part of educational reform to attempt to rectify this problem, the State of Maine (Maine Revised Statutes, 2011) mandated a T-PEPG implementation protocol that began in this school district in 2013. Like most school districts, typical implementation of an observation and evaluation mandate put the onus of teacher observation and evaluation implementation primarily on the building administrators. As a result, the decision inherently created a culture of disempowerment within the teachers whom the mandate most directly affects. This misplaced accountability could inadvertently create a school culture that is stuck in a system that is at odds with its own intentions of providing autonomy. The pinnacle of this research was Fritz's (1984) assertion, which Senge (2012) later confirmed, that autonomy can coexist with accountability. It is culminated in a culture that understands and embraces the need for both the expectations that derive from accountability and empowerment that derives from autonomy.

One research participant summed up this district's readiness to look at the realities surrounding "I think the staff, as a whole, are more receptive to the whole notion of

conversations around how to improve instruction." Vision and current realities were established from this research by identifying individual understandings, perceptions, and district expectations related to the implementation of a teacher observation and evaluation system. Having full-research participant teachers actively engaged in the flipped-model design that required self-observation, with the expectation of aligning instructional practices with the district T-PEPG rubric, and initiating conference conversations with building administrators, offered insight into perceptual changes in relation to both vision and current reality. Constructs emerged from the multifaceted coding process, leading to a better understanding of the research phenomenon as the themes became transparent.

**Current Reality**

The first round of interviews elicited responses from teachers saying that the feedback from administrators "depended on the administrator." Overall, findings suggested that feedback was an important part of the observation and evaluation process, but that outside feedback was just that—outside feedback.

**Level of expectations.** Historically, the timing of when the formal observation, critiquing, and conversation would happen was determined by building administrators. In addition, one research participant stated, "Using feedback to try to figure out where I can improve is sometimes challenging." Another research participant clearly expressed, "I think there is no way they (building administrators) can understand it (lessons) as well as I do because I am the one doing it."

A research participant summed up the perceptions of outside feedback, "I think just coming in and seeing just a slice, not even a slice, no I don't think that they [administrators] understand where my kids are, where we've been, where we need to go. No, I don't think they really do understand it."

Another research participant references the struggles faced with the infrequency of observations, “Taking two/three sit ins as a perspective for a performance rating for an entire year is too infrequent.” The current reality is that building administrators provide feedback to guide expectations and professional development that has been primarily generated because of a few snapshots throughout the year. Another In Vivo quote captured a research participant touting, “If they [teachers] could take ownership, it could really bring another dimension or layer into the whole thing.”

Coupling the essence of the interview responses with the teacher survey results created a high (88%) level of confidence in understanding the state expectations regarding implementation of the T-PEPG guidelines, and an even higher (96%) rating of both teacher and administrator ability to observe and evaluate current instructional practices provides a reasonable belief in the measures of accountability. Some teachers indicated that, although the current method of observation and evaluation provides some time for administrator and teacher conversation, it is not always helpful or timely.

**Lack of empowerment.** The building administrators are approachable and willing to engage in conversation about teaching. One administrator participant stated, “I enjoy listening to teachers talk about their teaching.” The current expectation was that the building administrators would schedule the formal observations and the accompanying pre- and postobservation conferences. However, this research required the participating teachers to initiate the conferences and guide the conversation around their teaching practices. One research participant stated in the postobservation interview, “I don’t know that a lot of teachers would feel that that’s (initiating conference conversation) an available option to them.” Other struggles that led to the lack of empowerment construct were captured in the following phrases:

- Subject to interpretation.
- Missing the intentionality (that isn't always visible).
    - Not everything is apparent and visible.
- Someone else's feedback.
- Missing the relationship goal such as responsiveness to students.
- Causes anxiety.
- Changes my persona.
- Things are missed.
    - Scripting takes away from the observation and observation takes away from the scripting.
- Potential disagreements.
    - What was observed
    - What score was given
- Difficult to align some data with rubric.

With many struggles leading to the feelings of disempowerment, one research participant stated, "I still don't think it (T-PEPG system) brings in the global role of the teacher in the building enough." This feedback aligned with the overall lower survey rating (75%) of the current district implementation of the T-PEPG system and the slightly higher survey rating (83%) of the impact this implementation has on professional growth and development. One research participant spoke to the vision of empowerment, "If they [teachers] know what they want, then they're going to take ownership and invest in it more." Another research participant envisions empowerment with expectation, "She [teacher] was responsible to come to me."

**Empowerment**

Autonomy, Pink (2009) asserted, is different from independence: "It means acting with choice—which means we can be both autonomous and happily interdependent with others" (p. 88). After participating in the flipped model of the T-PEPG protocol, one research participant summed up her thinking, "I feel like the whole process of self-critiquing and videotaping let me open up a window to myself that I never would have seen in the [current] T-PEPG process, and a perception of myself that never came about in the process [before]." Another research participant stated, "I think it opened me more to look for things that I was lacking rather than thinking from the perspective of I need to prove that I'm a three, or I need to prove that I'm exceeding the standard because I think I am."

Speaking to the interdependency of autonomy, the changes in perceptions were continually striking. One research participant stated,

> It was nice to be able to just sit down, connect, and discuss some of the things that I was thinking, hear his perspectives, and hear that he supports some of the things that I'm thinking about doing and better understand how we can work together to make some goals happen. I feel good about it, and I was glad that the self-reflection process was able to prompt that conversation.

Another research participant echoed these sentiments when speaking of teachers taking ownership, "It could result in improved practices, and "It's not being done to them. They're not perceiving it as something that they're not as much a part of."

**Vision**

Current school district policy on the supervision and evaluation of professional staff includes the opportunity for teacher autonomy and empowerment as it relates to professional growth and development. "Evaluations will include a self-evaluation component." This policy

positions a district to embrace the inclusion of self-observation and evaluation in the procedures set forth. As Fritz (1984) stated, “The structure of anything refers to its fundamental parts, how those parts fit together, and how they function in relation to each other and to the whole” (p. 5).

One administrator responded to the idea of this flipped-model design in relation to who would be providing the feedback by saying,

> It would be interesting to find out from teachers how they feel about this, but I suspect it would be the same. Folks are pretty interested in finding out not what they're doing great, although that's always nice, but maybe how they could improve their instruction.

Researchers are convinced that nothing is more powerful, yet still underused, as strategically employing the use of self-observation for determining professional growth and development needs (Godber, 2019; Greenberg, 2016; Kane et al., 2015; Knight, 2014). Teacher participants used SWIVL (2019) devices to video themselves teaching lessons directly in the classroom with students. As Godber (2019) stated, “Think of athletes who regularly watch recordings of themselves, analyzing every nuanced step to visualize, internalize, and guide their next attempt” (p. 1). For this research, teachers were in control of what lessons they recorded and who could preview any or all of the video recordings. The teacher participants then used the district’s T-PEPG rubric to critique their own instructional practices. One research participant stated, “I think there's no way they [administrators] can understand it as well as I do because I am the one doing it.” Another research participant elaborated (In Vivo) saying,

> Just like with an observation, sometimes the observer sees things that you don't see. Filming gives you an opportunity to track the progress you might be making on something or to do it more often, because you can't always have somebody to be in your classroom either filming or watching you.

Comments such as these confirmed the creative tension that spawns readiness for empowerment within this district.

**Creative Tension**

Senge (2012) described creative tension as the ability to refine your vision to get a clear awareness of current reality. Senge (2012) stated, "Like a rubber band seeking equilibrium, the system will pull to resolve the tension" (p. 78). One end of the rubber band will inherently move toward the other end. This creative tension creates opportunity within the system (Figure 4).

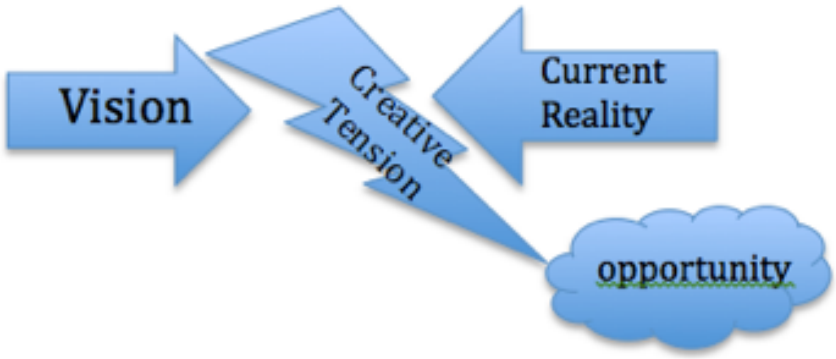


*Figure 4:* Creative tension allowing for opportunity.

**Systematic approach.** Teachers need to know and understand that self-observation is for their professional growth and development (Godber, 2019). As the district policy states, "Provide the opportunity for all staff members to analyze their own strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the instructional process and give staff the ability to discuss the contribution they have made to the District objectively with their supervisors."

Although many of the teachers who participated in this research as partial-research participants (survey) or as full-research participants (flipped model) felt satisfied with the way their building administrator used the current T-PEPG process to observe and evaluate them, they expressed a marked decline in how they felt about the way the system overall was being implemented in the district. One research participant expressed, "It actually gives me a ton of

anxiety, and I tend to be on eggshells a lot when I think about the surprised unannounced observations, and it changes my whole persona in the classroom and how I approach my lessons." This data suggests that shared ownership of the T-PEPG process could give teachers the autonomy and accountability that would provide administrators the ability to oversee the process rather than implement it.

## Conclusion

The researcher could not formulate a formal theory from this research because of the limited number of research participants and the limited window of time. However, as Saldaña (2016) suggested, "a key assertion, like a theory, attempts to progress from the particular to the general by inferring transfer" (p. 15). The results of this research offer key assertions of the benefits of empowering teachers with the expectation of self-observation, critiquing, and evaluation. Inspirational motivation could result, as Northouse (2016) suggested, from teachers being empowered and expected "to become committed to and a part of the shared vision in the organization" (p. 169). Allowing this research to be conducted opens up this district and public education in general, to transparency that offers a window into current realities, stakeholder visions, and the creative tension that suggests promise.

Entrusting professionals to make decisions relative to the day-to-day practices involved in teaching offers the potential to improve dramatically instruction (Knight, 2014). This research offers insight into the value of autonomy in particular when making instructional decisions according to where they have been, where they are now, and where they will be in relation to individual student learning and classrooms as a whole. Intentionality speaks to the deliberate decisions that come from a culmination of all of the information gathered over time and which is not always completely visible to others during a single observation in a classroom. As Knight (2014) cautioned, "Teachers' knowledge should be embraced, not suppressed" (p. 9).

Sometimes, suppression can be done unintentionally and unknowingly through the observation and evaluation process.

Giving teachers the option of self-observation and evaluation is far different for many reasons from having such observation be an engrained part of the system. One idea that arose that was not part of the research, but that was integral to it, was the technology used for videotaping. Although the SWIVL (2019) devices worked relatively well in capturing video and audio, some concerns such as ensuring that the equipment was operational (i.e., fully charged, available, and working properly) were considered. Potential challenges such as this make the process feel like a forced initiative rather than allowing it to be part of what everyone could do. Another relevant aspect worth mentioning was the amount of exposure and interest that the SWIVL devices received during the active full-research participant phase of the research. This interest suggests that support might be forthcoming to make it part of the system and not merely an add-on if desired.

Putting systems in place to provide structure helps organizations run effectively and efficiently. This research suggests that the observation and evaluation system currently in place in this district appears to be efficient, at least on paper. Building administrators are checking off the boxes that mandated classroom observations are being done, and they are seeing results in some global changes in instructional practices. However, teachers stated that their own individual instructional practices are not necessarily affected by the feedback that they receive from administrative observations.

The findings of this research suggest, in reality, that this system is minimally effective at best in supporting teachers' professional development. Administrators admitted that they struggle in trying to keep up with the required number of observations and evaluations. They also stated that it is an important part of their job, but that it is only a snapshot of teaching. It should

also be noted that, during the data collection window of this research, building administrators agreed not to observe and evaluate formally the full-research participants. However, they were encouraged to continue to drop in to visit the classrooms to see what the students were learning. One administrator was able to visit the full-research participants' classrooms during this time. The other administrator was disappointed that time did not allow visits to the research participants' classrooms.

This research suggests that putting teachers "in the driver's seat" provides them with the autonomy and accountability that would offer more empowerment and expectation in the responsibility of their own professional evaluation and growth needs. Having the teachers aligning their own instructional practices to the district evaluation rubric was an important step in the process and guided the conversations with administrators. The teachers accepted a share of the responsibility, and therefore, had a feeling of purpose and commitment toward it. One administrator in this research commented that he could not believe the difference in the conversation. Although many benefits accrued to having the current T-PEPG system in place, teachers yet felt as though it was something being done to them and that they were not necessarily part of the decision-making process. Being expected to self-observe and evaluate in alignment with a system such as T-PEPG and then initiate conversation with the building administrators appeared to give the teachers a sense of ownership and control in guiding that conversation and in looking at themselves as professional educators.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSIONS

The overarching research question that addressed the central phenomenon of this research was, “How do the conditions and factors of the teacher observation and evaluation system implementation affect instructional practices?” In the preobservation interview, this question was followed by four, related, subset questions. Research Question 2 was, “Do you think the integration of self-observation and evaluation would affect teachers’ perceptions of their own professional development and growth needs? If so, in what ways?”

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) stated, “Good teaching is a collective accomplishment and responsibility” (p. 14). Fullan expounded on the fallacy in thinking that the quality of the (single) teacher is the most important factor in student learning. Fullan (2012) showed that transforming the entire culture (within the district) would lead to sustainable improvement: “These high-performing systems deliberately develop professional capital in their teaching force” (p. 18). The motion of singular practices put into place constrains systems. However, the intrinsic nature of systems operations can require much reflective practice to isolate singular areas that might need attention (Fullan, 2012; Senge, 2012). In addition, when looking at the operations of public schools and school districts, the system of operations is bound by the government and state mandates that come with funding.

Having an external bar to set the standard for school accountability within a state, while offering internal autonomy for insight and expertise to determine educational practices according to local culture and needs also helps provide a triangulation that is needed from classroom to classroom, district to district, and state to state. Regardless of where a student’s educational journey takes him or her, alignment with what all students are expected to know (curriculum)

and be able to do (assessments) should be reconcilable. Teachers teach and assess students and, at the heart of it, have the commitment to improve student learning. Research has repeatedly shown that effective teachers are one of the most important elements contributing to student achievement (Sanders, as cited in Tucker & Stronge, 2005). However, the instructional practices of the industrial age are not congruent with the needs of today's student. Just as changes in what is taught needed to happen to keep up with the needs and desires of our global society, changes in the expectations of how teachers teach also need to happen. These accountability systems focus on student achievement and continuous progress (Goertz, 2001).

One method to ensure that this accountability was happening in school districts across Maine was to require policymakers to enact a law that required all districts to create or update policy on T-PEPG requirements. The statute, Title 20-A, Part 6: Teachers, Chapter 508: Educator Effectiveness, gives some autonomy to school districts to develop and implement a T-PEPG system for educators that includes multiple measures of effectiveness (Maine Revised Statutes, 2011). MSAD 44 has created a *School Board Policy, Section G: GCOA: Supervision and Evaluation of Professional Staff* that has self-evaluation opportunities within it. The board believes that appraisal of teacher performance should include the following provisions:

- Provide a systematic process that will, on a continuing basis, enable staff to measure and improve the effectiveness of their instructional services,
- Provide the opportunity for all staff members to analyze their own strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the instructional process and give staff the ability to discuss the contribution they have made to the district objectively with their supervisors.

However, the onus of teacher observation and evaluation typically has fallen on the shoulders of building administrators. This researcher explored (a) the culture of a system in

which the same teacher T-PEPG model has been used for several years, (b) the perceptions of the effectiveness of the current system, and (c) any change in perceptions of research participants once they engaged in the flipped model design of the T-PEPG process.

In this chapter, the results are presented by a review of the survey and research questions and summary of responses. Then, an interpretation of the findings was aligned with the foundational literature for this research, which is followed by implications and recommendations for action. A path for further study is recommended, after which the researcher concludes.

## Review of Survey and Research Questions

The six survey questions were designed to gain a broad overview of the culture of understanding and perceptions of the T-PEPG process being currently used in this district. The responses to each question were created on a Likert scale to rate opinions on a symmetrical scale of positive, neutral, and negative responses. Each question was also labeled with a determination of whose responsibility (teacher, building administrator, or district) the question was most closely related. Each survey response was color coded in alignment with a color-coding key. When the color-coding of all of the responses was aggregated, the overwhelming number of positive responses led the researcher to use the "percent agree" to finish coding in preparation for aligning results with survey questions and responses (Sauro, 2011). This allowed the researcher to summarize the percent of respondents who chose the agree side of the scale.

The results were used to shape the more in-depth research questions that were asked of the building administrators and teachers who participated in the flipped design of the teacher observation and evaluation model. Through the interviews, the researcher collected pre- and post-observation responses that encompassed any changes in perceptions after participating in the flipped model design; they were coded using In Vivo and pattern coding, along with analytic memo writing. These coding methods first allowed categories to be created, which were then

followed by emerging constructs from each category. When phrases from pattern codes were aggregated under these constructs, and survey results were considered, themes relating to the central phenomenon then became evident.

Once the full-participant teachers completed the self-observations, critiquing aligned with the district rubric, and initiating conferences with their building administrator, a final interview was conducted. Three questions were asked that inquired about any changes in perceptions related to the T-PEPG process, instructional practices, and professional development and growth needs after participating in the research.

## Summary of Responses

The survey results showed a district in which the participating teachers shared high, positive rankings in relation to the current self and building administrator responsibility (Survey Questions 1, 2, 4, & 5) in relation to teacher performance and the professional growth model used with an aggregated average of 94% of the respondents feeling *fully aware, very aware,* or *somewhat aware, satisfied,* and *confident*. The results presented a significantly lower 79% teacher satisfaction in the way the T-PEPG model was then being implemented in the district. These results could not be correlated with the building administrator survey results because the questions were not completely aligned. Therefore, administrator results were presented separately.

The two building administrators who participated in this research were 100% positive in their responses to teacher and building administrator responsibility in understanding and using the T-PEPG model. In addition, they also were 100% positive about the effectiveness of professional growth and development. Both building administrators said that they *somewhat disagree* with their ability to keep up with the number of teacher observations and evaluations for which they are responsible. The number of teacher observation and evaluations for which

building administrators are responsible during any given school year is a district decision. Although the survey questions of the teachers and the administrators were not directly aligned, these responses also correlated with of the pattern coding of the interviews, giving more validity to the data.

Once all of the phrases and quotes were pulled from the interviews and put together, they were categorized by likeness. Then, each construct was given a label that summarized the phrases and In Vivo quotes within. Coded phrases such as “depends on the administrator,” “feels like a one and done approach,” and “very small microscopic snapshot” were initially labeled with the construct of “struggles.” Continued analytic memo writing and pattern coding led to three other constructs, which were labeled “outside feedback,” “systematic approach,” and “self-observation.”

When the second interviews were coded, they were cross-referenced with the initial coded phrases and In Vivo codes. Perceptual changes emerged when initial phrases from the final interview were aligned with phrases in the first constructs. One example was an initial response of “Self-observation is not necessarily a part of our current system,” and three related responses in the final interview were “Self-observation could happen more times throughout the year,” “Self-evaluation has proved to be really extremely effective,” and “So it gave me the ability to actually see for myself and make those discoveries that maybe my perceptions are not always absolutely true.” As a result, most of the initial phrases that were aggregated in the category of struggles were eliminated during the coding process of the second round of interviews.

The surveys and first round of interviews gave insight into individual perceptions of where the school district was in relation to the current implementation and effectiveness of the T-PEPG model, as well as where they would like to be. The last question of the first round of

interviews gave the research participants an opportunity to think about the potential of using the flipped model design. After the flipped model expectations were completed by the full participants, the second round of interviews were conducted. These interviews gave insight into the perceptual changes because of experiencing self-observation and evaluation of instructional practices, as well as the teacher participants initiating the postobservation conferences with the building administrator. When cross-referencing the perceptual changes that emerged during the second interviews with the coded interview responses from the initial interviews, the researcher saw creative tension building by bringing the vision of what was desired closer to where interviewees currently were. Creative tension is the result of knowing the vision of where you want to be and knowing where you currently are (Fritz, 1984; Senge, 2012).

The constructs then became concepts that aligned with the conceptual framework of transformative learning. When studying the phrases and In Vivo codes that were in the construct of outside feedback, the researcher interpreted this as expectations; the construct that was originally labeled “struggles” became “a lack of empowerment.” All but two phrases in this concept were eliminated during the second round of interviews. The two phrases were “instructional side only” and “leaving out school community,” which had implications that did not fit within the scope of this research. The expectations to which teachers and administrators were expected to align their practices on the T-PEPG rubric was also beyond the scope of this research. The responses from the first interview that were in this construct seemed no longer relevant when the teacher participants were empowered with the expectation to guide their own T-PEPG process (Figure 5).

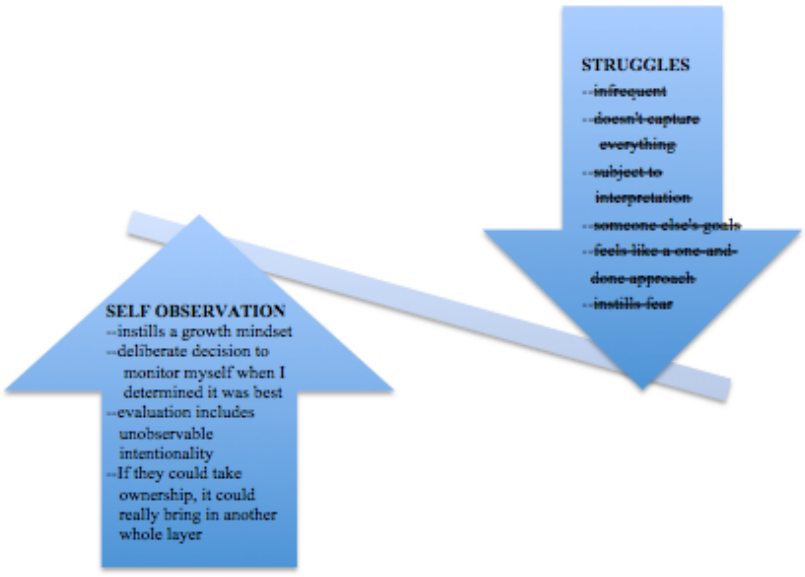


*Figure 5.* Process of self-observation eliminating struggles.

Senge (2012) stated that aspiration is not a natural occurrence in most school settings, but rather it is something that needs to be cultivated. During the initial interviews, the research participants revealed perceptions that were coded and categorized as "struggles." After participating in self-observation, most of these struggles were perceived to be eliminated. Building administrators also perceived that the teachers were more reflective about their teaching practices and took ownership of having a solid understanding of the T-PEPG process and expectations. This revelation was significant in determining the vision and where it was in relation to current reality. The evidence suggests that taking the opportunity to explore vision and current reality, with the intent of using creative tension to bring them closer together began happening.

## Interpretation of Findings and Alignment with Literature

The central phenomenon this research was founded on the question of why the United States, one of the most prosperous countries in the world, continues to remain near the bottom of most international rankings of student learning (Labaree, 1999; Schwahn & McGarvey, 2011).

Educational reform continues to address the phenomenon with mandates that are typically tied to funding that is so desperately needed in public education. One area that has recently been addressed with such mandates is teacher effectiveness. The State of Maine requires that all school districts to have a teacher T-PEPG model in place (MDOE, 2018). Much time, effort, training, and money has gone into the T-PEPG model that is currently being used in this district.

The research participants, which consisted of the superintendent, building administrators, some teachers who were partial participants, and some teachers who were full participants, agreed that the benefit of being a district recipient of the TIF was that it enabled everyone to participate in the training and professional development. They also agreed that this grant, that required teachers to set professional goals and create student-learning objectives after triangulating student data as well as classroom profiles, provided a system that has remained in place and continues to provide consistency within and among the schools in the district. One research participant summed up, “Everyone knows the system and has had experience with the T-PEPG process.” As a result, this district was well positioned for this type of research. Another research participant commented, “This [self-observation] seems like a next natural step for teachers who are in that three and four range–great protocol.”

Knight et al. (2012) and Hager (2018) stated that appropriate use of videotaping for self-observation evaluation could improve teaching. Disruptive technologies are now being used in classrooms more than were ever before (Knight et al., 2012). Video cameras can capture the complex details and intricacies of instructional practices that are at the heart of conversation around student learning. As Superintendent Dr. David Murphy stated, “Teacher evaluation is a complicated issue” (Personal communication, January 7, 2019). Building administrators are exerting a lot of energy simply by trying to keep up with the pressures of being responsible for conferencing, observing, and evaluating all of the teachers in the building in addition to the day-

to-day demands that are the reality of a building administrator. When this happens, the vision of this process, being one that supports teachers in their professional growth and development, can quickly become lost. One research participant lamented that it felt as though the focus had become "check the boxes and fill out this form, and you do feel like the gerbil in the wheel just going through the process." Other unintentional consequences can happen as well.

The MSAD 44 *School Board Policy, Section G: GCOA: Supervision and Evaluation of Professional Staff* on which this research was conducted states that the district will

> Provide the opportunity for all staff members to analyze their own strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the instructional process and give staff the ability to discuss the contribution they have made to the District objectively with their supervisors. (MSAD 44)

The current T-PEPG process places the onus on the building administrators, which might not empower or expect teachers to take charge of their own professional growth and development. In relation to this, a research participant stated, "There is also a tendency for teachers to go into a compliance orientation." Creative tension is lost when one must focus solely on current reality without taking time also to look at the vision. One research participant said, "This needs to be an investment for everyone." During the active part of this research phase, when teachers were using the SWIVL (2019) devices to video tape their classroom instructional practices, other teachers noticed and were interested in learning more about it. Knowles (1988) stated that adults, when undertaking learning on their own, need to learn through their own pedagogical sequence rather than through someone else's.

## Implications

Fritz (1984, as cited in Senge, 2012) designed a three-stage process for adopting "creative tension" (p. 77). All stakeholders must first articulate and adopt the vision. The focus then shifts

to looking truly at the current reality, including the aspects of the vision that are far from being realized. Fritz (1984) determined, and Senge (2012) later confirmed, that by cultivating the ability to keep both the vision and current reality in mind, creative tension can help people ultimately become aware of the opportunities that might have otherwise been missed (Figure 6). When time is taken to look at reality through a critical lens, including one's own lens, this reality can begin to move closer to the vision. However, Heath and Heath (2013, as cited in Knight 2014) caution that, when people have the opportunity to gather information within their world, they are most likely to select information that supports their pre-existing attitudes, beliefs, and actions.


*Figure 6*. How accountability can coexist with autonomy.

The natural propensity to seek out support for what one thinks is reality can keep members of an organization from having a clear picture or the same picture (Knight, 2014). Disentangling the intricacies of teaching should involve the ability to review it and isolate

specific qualities to critique. One research participant stated nicely, “It helped me to just be able to pick apart really specific things that I think I could tweak in my practice.” According to Kauchak and Eggen (2005, as cited in Knight, 2014), “Teachers make somewhere between 800 and 1,500 decisions every day” (p. 6). Knight (2011) also stated that dramatically improving instruction takes a systematic approach that involves many aspects (Figure 7). This researcher suggests that addressing the aspects of teaching without employing the reality of teachers seeing and critiquing their own practices to determine their own professional growth needs is a missed opportunity.

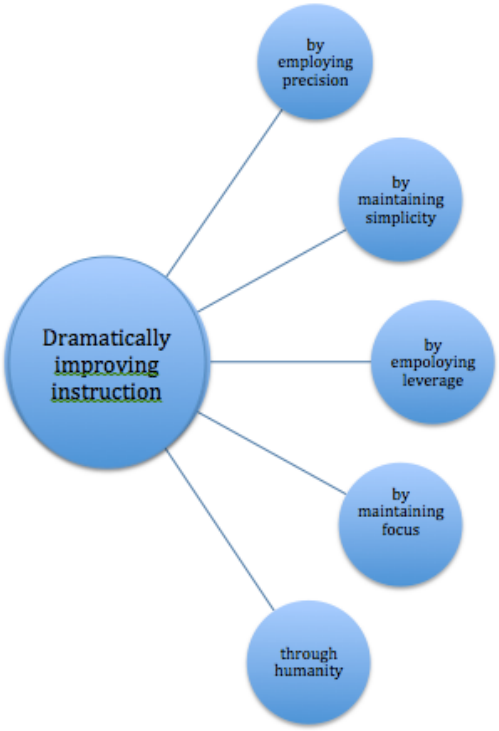


*Figure 7.* Aspects involved in dramatically improving instruction (Knight, 2011).

One reason that traditional teacher observations and evaluations fail to foster improvement in instructional practices is that teachers often think administrators did not “get it right” (i.e., they missed the intentionality or did not see the global picture) when they observed the class (Knight, 2014). These feelings could extinguish the potential for autonomy to exist

alongside accountability (Fritz, 1984; Senge, 2012). If teachers are not committed to this process that Mezirow (2004) described as an important aspect in the role of cognitive development in transformational learning theory for adult learning, instructional improvements are not likely.

## Recommendations for Action

Having the results of this research allowed the research district to reflect on the results and to ask "What is standing in the way?" What kinds of barriers and obstacles might exist that could prevent this district from moving towards this vision?

### Research District

It is not enough to talk about vision; one must also see the current reality more clearly (Senge, 2012). Then, creative tension will be the motivator to embrace active steps. The research district is well positioned to use the results of this research as a first step in reflecting on the system that is currently in place for teacher observation and evaluation and to realign it with the district's vision and mission. Herber (1998, as cited in Glisczinski, 2007) condensed Mezirow's (2000) adult learning theory into three phases: critical reflection, rational dialogue, and action.

**Critical reflection.** By disclosing their struggles in keeping up with the required number of teacher observations and evaluations on top of all of the other responsibilities a building administrator has, the administrators allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the process and to understand how nuances exist when determining effectiveness. It might not be readily apparent when all of the boxes have been checked off at the end of the year; however, one might ask whether, considering the amount of hours being dedicated to teacher observation and evaluation, a sufficient number of instructional practices and student learning are being positively affected. The scope of this research did not explicitly include student learning, but some of the conversations extended to it. Phrases from research participants encompassed

student learning as an integral part of the process: “Intentional strategies to help students succeed academically” and

> I don’t think that’s something that’s built into what I’m being asked to do directly, but I think it’s important based on the knowledge I think kids need to be able to relate to other people and be successful in today’s world.

Therefore, the researcher suggests that it would be worthwhile to include student learning in the reflective conversation. In addition, the teacher participants conceded that getting good scores on the rubric could cause them to be satisfied and, therefore, they might not extend themselves to looking for ways to continue improving.

Participating in self-observation allowed reflection within In Vivo quotes:

> I think it opened me more to look for things that I was lacking rather than thinking from the perspective of I need to prove that I’m a three, or I need to prove that I’m exceeding the standard because I think I am.

Another participant stated, “When I saw myself, I really wanted to improve [certain areas] and not just defend the things that I thought I was doing best.” Other researchers could delve further into this cultural shift. Ball and Cohen (1996) stated that understanding the systematic and principled aspects of reflection of this nature is verifiable evidence to support this work. Empowering teachers with the expectations of self-observation and evaluation puts much of the onus on the teachers; it also allows building administrators to visit classrooms on a more flexible schedule and to converse with students about what they are learning.

When teachers feel as though administrators are not seeing the complete picture in the few classroom observations that they make, they sense a missed opportunity, especially if there does not seem to be much possibility of having a deep and reflective conversation around it.

Much more intentionality goes into teaching than that which is currently visible and in the moment of a lesson. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012)

> How motivated will you be by an evaluation system that rates what your Word Wall looks like, whether you are at the decreed point in the Literacy Teachers' Manual, or whether you have posted the lesson's standards on the board—but doesn't account for how you inspire your students whether you can detect specific learning disabilities, or how you've helped a distraught child deal with a bereavement? (p. 20)

When teaching is evaluated on specific and visible details alone, the deliberate decisions of a teacher might not be exposed to an observer.

**Rationale dialogue.** The MSAD 44 *School Board Policy, Section G*: *GCOA: Supervision and Evaluation of Professional Staff* currently states that the superintendent will seek appropriate involvement of the staff in the development and periodic review of the supervision and evaluation of the program. The recommendations for action invite all stakeholders to engage in the process of dialogue in a systematic way. The potential for leveraging observation and evaluation systems built for accountability can serve dual purposes by supporting teacher autonomy in improving their practice for instructional improvement rather than assuming that these systems that were built for accountability are strictly for evaluation. According to Labaree (1999),

> They observe teaching from the [classroom] seats and become imprinted with a detailed picture of what the teacher's curriculum-in-use looks like. They can't see the reasons that motivate the teacher's curriculum choices. All they can see is the process, the routines, the forms. (p. 3)

**Action.** Identifying and including the appropriate instruments to use in accessing teachers' skills and building expertise of teaching personnel and school leaders is more than

determining appropriate rubrics (Blazer et al., 2018). From this research, experienced teachers wished the time that they spent preparing for formal observations could be put to better, more meaningful use. Similarly, administrators continued to wonder how they could best support the growth of their teachers (Fried, 2015). This research has highlighted one way of giving teachers both empowerment and expectation to improve their instructional craft. Self-directed growth plans (involving self-observation) have the magnitude to transform teaching and learning (Fried, 2015).

All of the full-research participants were adamant that providing teachers with the opportunity to self-observe was not the same as making self-observation part of the culture. As the research participants stated, self-observation and evaluation takes time and dedication, which needs to be a part of the system. One research participant stated, “If everyone is doing it as part of their practice, it doesn’t feel like additional work for some of us.” Building a culture that is bound by the autonomy and accountability that involves everyone in expressing their aspirations, building their awareness, and supporting them in developing their capabilities supports schools that learn (Senge, 2012). One of the building administrator participants echoed this sense of teacher autonomy and accountability, “It’s not being done to them. They’re not perceiving it as something that they’re not as much a part of.” Another research participant also stated, “Filming also gives you the opportunity to track the progress you might be making on something [over time] . . . because you can’t always have somebody in your classroom.”

## Further Study in the World of Public Education

There is nothing more powerful in seeing reality than being able to observe a person’s own self. Using videotaping for self-observation has proven effective as a tool for professional growth in many arenas including education (Hager, 2018; Knight et al., 2012). This researcher studied the perceptual changes when teachers were empowered with the expectation of self-

observing, critiquing, and initiating conversation with building administrators. However, the small participant size and short time frame placed limitations on the ability to study beyond perceptual changes. One recommendation for further study would be to increase the number of research participants and length of research time. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012),

> Research-based practices might get good results in small-group experiments, well-funded pilot projects or innovative schools. But when they are mandated for all schools, with less support, and with fewer resources, and with whole classes rather than smaller groups, they sometimes can't be implemented even by the schools that invented them. (p. 48)

A second recommendation would be to include the study of student achievement as it correlates with teacher self-observation and evaluation. A third recommendation would be to use Fritz's (1984) concept of generating creative tension as a way to build capacity and change.

## Conclusion

One educational reform mandate required states such as Maine to implement a formal teacher T-PEPG model for which school districts would then create implementation policy and procedures (MDOE, 2018). This research was bound by the scope of examining the literature surrounding widely practiced policies and procedures resulting from this mandate. The literature reviewed exposed less than effective procedures in improving instructional practices (Anderson et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Hill & Grossman, 2013). Often, success with observation and evaluation expectations were connected more to getting the job done rather than to showing data that an improvement in teaching had occurred (Hill & Grossman, 2013). Literature also uncovered a growing culture in which building administrators openly admit that they rarely score a tenured teacher *unsatisfactory* for fear of retribution or confrontation (DuFour & Marzano, 2009). Marshall (2012) highlighted inadequate training that leads to inaccurate evaluations. Teachers become complacent because many of them feel as though the observations

and evaluations are something that is being done to them rather than feeling as though they are valued members of the process (Hill & Grossman, 2013; Marshall, 2012). This researcher has shown an alternative potential to these risks.

Self-observation, reflection, and evaluation have been a successful strategy in many realms of professional growth. It is a powerful lens into one's own reality (Knight et al., 2012). The sports world uses it as a strategy for players to practice the intentionality of their moves. The business world uses it as a successful growth model. The world of education has seen success with using self-observation as a part the instructional coaching aspect (Knight et al., 2012). Kane et al., (2015) conducted research surrounding the added benefits of selecting self-observation and evaluation as one option in relation to teacher evaluation and effectiveness. They are now conducting continued research in relation to the effects on student learning (Kane et al., 2015).

Morgan and Killion (2018) investigated elements of the Teacher Feedback Resources Project that compel teachers to embrace or challenge the use of technology designed to support improvements in practice. Morgan and Killion's (2018) findings included four recommendations:

1. Create a clear vision and compelling purpose, including a well-articulated theory of change.
2. Approach adoption and use of any new product and service through a robust change management process.
3. Engage teachers in the decision-making process in authentic ways.
4. Allocate adequate resources for capacity building including time, training, ongoing support, and technical assistance. (p. 14)

This current researcher's study was bound by the scope of Fritz's (1984) work that Knight et al. (2012) and Senge (2012) later researched and that proposed that autonomy could coexist with

accountability by ways of juxtaposing vision alongside current reality to generate creative tension. Self-observation and evaluation can create that autonomy.

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# APPENDIX A

## LETTER TO DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

Cheryl L. Lang
UNE Doctoral Candidate
419 Wilson Hill Road
Turner, ME 04282
clang@une.edu

August, 2018

Dear Superintendent _____,

**Research Proposal**
**University of New England Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership**

This proposal serves as the request to conduct research in MSAD #____ School District per Administrative Regulation 6162.8

**Name of Researcher**

My name is Cheryl Lang, and I am a graduate student in the doctorate program Educational Leadership at the University of New England, Biddeford, ME.

I am conducting a research case study designed to investigate the impact of giving autonomy and accountability to teachers to conduct self-observations and evaluations using the current Teacher Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (T-PEPG) Rubric being used in your district. This will require the use of video technology that will be provided for this research study.

**Method of Study**

The method of study I will use includes conducting interviews with the superintendent and site administrative staff charged with creating policy and implementing policy requirements relating to teacher observation and evaluation measures. In addition, I will survey and interview participant teachers at the selected school site. There will be no direct student involvement in this research project.

**Benefits to the school or district**

Though there are no direct benefits to you or the MSAD ____ School District for participating in this research, it is my hope that the findings of my study will provide insight that will help MSAD ___ and other school districts to improve the development and implementation of teacher observation and evaluation to ensure continued improvement of instructional practices, and ultimately student achievement, linked to district goals.

**Proposed Project Period**

The research proposed research period is from September 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019.

**Participation**

All participants will be asked to sign an informed consent to participate. All participants will be informed of the purpose of the research, and I will be responsible for obtaining consent from each participant. Participants will be informed that their participation is completely voluntary. Participants can choose to answer only the questions with which they feel comfortable and can discontinue participation at any time. Some of the data may be used for future research purposes consistent with the original purpose stated in the consent document. The final data will be stored for a period of not longer than two years after which it will be destroyed.

There is a risk of loss of privacy. However, no names or any other identifying information will appear in any published reports of the research. The research material will be kept in a secure location, and only I will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all audiotapes of interviews will be deleted and any other identifying information from the transcripts will be removed.

**Certification**

This letter is to certify that information obtained from research will not include names of interviewees, schools, districts, student names or personal information.

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS

Cheryl L. Lang
UNE Doctoral Candidate
419 Wilson Hill Road
Turner, ME 04282
clang@une.edu

August, 2018

Dear Building Administrator,

**Research Proposal**
**University of New England Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership**

This proposal serves as the request to conduct research in your building within the MSAD # ____ School District per Administrative Regulation 6162.8

**Name of Researcher**

My name is Cheryl Lang, and I am a graduate student in the doctorate program Educational Leadership at the University of New England, Biddeford, ME.

I am conducting a research case study designed to investigate the impact of giving autonomy and accountability to teachers to conduct self-observations and evaluations using the current Teacher Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (T-PEPG) Rubric being used in your district. This will require the use of video technology that will be provided for this research study.

**Method of Study**

The method of study I will use includes conducting interviews with the superintendent and site administrative staff charged with creating policy and implementing policy requirements relating to teacher observation and evaluation measures. In addition, I will survey and interview participant teachers at the selected school site. There will be no direct student involvement in this research project.

**Benefits to the school or district**

Though there are no direct benefits to you or the MSAD ___ School District for participating in this research, it is my hope that the findings of my study will provide insight that will help MSAD ___ and other school districts to improve the development and implementation

of teacher observation and evaluation to ensure continued improvement of instructional practices, and ultimately student achievement, linked to district goals.

**Proposed Project Period**

The research proposed research period is from September 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019.

**Participation**

All participants will be asked to sign an informed consent to participate. All participants will be informed of the purpose of the research, and I will be responsible for obtaining consent from each participant. Participants will be informed that their participation is completely voluntary. Participants can choose to answer only the questions with which they feel comfortable and can discontinue participation at any time. Some of the data may be used for future research purposes consistent with the original purpose stated in the consent document. The final data will be stored for a period of not longer than two years after which it will be destroyed.

There is a risk of loss of privacy. However, no names or any other identifying information will appear in any published reports of the research. The research material will be kept in a secure location, and only I will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all audiotapes of interviews will be deleted and any other identifying information from the transcripts will be removed.

**Certification**

This letter is to certify that information obtained from research will not include names of interviewees, schools, districts, student names or personal information.

# APPENDIX C

## SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS

1. I am _____ of the State of Maine laws regarding full implementation of teacher observation and evaluation systems.

   Fully aware
   Somewhat aware
   Had not really thought about it.
   Somewhat unaware
   Completely unaware

2. Overall, I am _____ with the district implementation of the teacher observation/evaluation system.

   Very satisfied
   Somewhat satisfied
   Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
   Somewhat dissatisfied
   Very dissatisfied

3. I am _____ in my ability to objectively observe, evaluate, and provide professional growth recommendations and resources.

   Fully confident
   Somewhat confident
   Neither confident nor lacking confidence
   Somewhat lacking confidence
   Completely lacking confidence

4. I am _____ in my ability to identify a specific change in teaching practices of the teachers as a result of the feedback received from me this/last year.

   Fully confident
   Somewhat confident
   Neither confident nor lacking confidence
   Somewhat lacking confidence
   Completely lacking confidence

5. I am able to keep up with the number of teacher observations and evaluations, including preconferences and post conferences, I am responsible for.

   Fully agree
   Somewhat agree
   Neither agree nor disagree
   Somewhat disagree
   Fully disagree

6. The way this district implements the teacher observation/evaluation system has proven effective in professional growth and development.

   Fully agree
   Somewhat agree
   Neither agree nor disagree
   Somewhat disagree
   Fully disagree

# APPENDIX D

## SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR ALL TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

1. I am _____ of the State of Maine laws regarding full implementation of teacher observation and evaluation systems.

   Fully aware
   Somewhat aware
   Had not really thought about it.
   Somewhat unaware
   Completely unaware

2. Overall, I am _____ with the district implementation of the teacher observation/evaluation system.

   Very satisfied
   Somewhat satisfied
   Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
   Somewhat dissatisfied
   Very dissatisfied

3. I am _____in my administrator's ability to objectively observe, evaluate, and provide professional growth recommendations and resources.

   Fully confident
   Somewhat confident
   Neither confident or lacking confidence
   Somewhat lacking confidence
   Completely lacking confidence

4. I am _____ in my ability to identify a specific change in my teaching practices as a result of the feedback received from my administrator this/last year.

   Fully confident
   Somewhat confident
   Neither confident or lacking confidence
   Somewhat lacking confidence
   Completely lacking confidence

5. My administrator and I _____ on what was observed and evaluated when conducting classroom visits.

   Fully agree
   Somewhat agree
   Neither agree or disagree
   Somewhat disagree
   Fully disagree

6. The way this district implements the teacher observation/evaluation system has proven effective in my professional growth and development.

   Fully agree
   Somewhat agree
   Neither agree or disagree
   Somewhat disagree
   Fully disagree

# APPENDIX E

## PRE- AND POST-SELF-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FULL-PARTICIPANT TEACHERS

Questions to guide the pre-self-observation teacher interview:

1. How do the conditions and factors of the teacher observation and evaluation system implementation impact your instructional practices?

    a. How well do you feel your administrator understands your lesson plans and your goals for the class that he or she is observing?
    b. Do you feel that the anecdotal notes and scripting that accompany the observation scoring capture the essence or intentionality of the lesson objectives? Why/Why not?
    c. How confident are you that your classroom observations provide an accurate rating of your teaching and instructional practices in general?
    d. Can you describe a specific change that you have made in your own instructional practices as a result of the feedback from your school administrator?

2. Do you think the integration of self-observation and evaluation would impact teachers' perceptions of their own professional development and growth needs? If so, in what ways?

Questions to guide the post-self-observation teacher interview:

1. How did the experience of self-observation (videotaping), the self-critiquing, and initiating conferencing with your building administrator in relation to the expectations as a professional educator affect your perceptions of the T-PEPG process?

2. How did self-observation, self-critiquing, and initiating conferencing with your building administrator about this in relation to the expectations you are held accountable to as a professional educator affect your perceptions of your own instructional practices?

3. How did self-observation, self-critiquing, and initiating conferencing with your building administrator about this in relation to the expectations that you are being held accountable to as a professional educator impact your perception of your own professional development and growth needs?

# APPENDIX F

## PRE- AND POST-SELF-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Questions to guide the administrator interview before teachers conducted self-observations:

1. How do the conditions and factors of the teacher observation and evaluation system implementation impact your teachers' instructional practices?

    a. How well do you feel you understand your teachers' lesson plans and goals for the class that you are observing?
    b. Do you feel that the anecdotal notes and scripting that accompany the observation scoring capture the essence or intentionality of the lesson objectives? Why/Why not?
    c. How confident are you that the classroom observation and evaluation process you do provides an accurate rating of your teachers' teaching and instructional practices in general?
    d. Can you describe a specific change that your teachers have made in their instructional practices as a result of the feedback from you?

2. Do you think the integration of self-observation and evaluation would impact teachers' perceptions of their own professional development and growth needs? If so, in what ways?

Questions to guide the administrator interview after teachers conducted self-observations:

1. How did the experience of teachers initiating conferencing with you during and after they had observed and critiqued themselves teaching impact your perceptions of the current T-PEPG process?

2. How did the experience of teachers initiating conferencing with you during and after they had observed & critiqued themselves teaching impact your perceptions of their accountability for their own instructional practices?

3. How did the experience of teachers initiating conferencing with you during and after they had observed and critiqued themselves teaching impact your perceptions of their ability to determine their own professional development & growth needs?

APPENDIX G

TEACHER VIDEO SELFIE

## A Self-Guided Module for Analyzing Videos of Your Own Instruction

****You will see "YOUR TURN" throughout this self-guided module.**
**This indicates that you should participate in the brief exercise described.**

**Learning Objectives:**

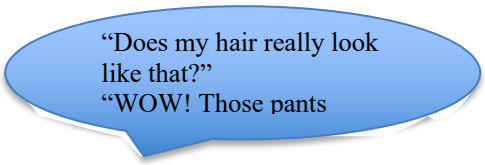
- ✓ To watch yourself with purpose
- ✓ To highlight priority evidence
- ✓ To analyze evidence & make self-directed adjustments to your instruction

**You'll Need:**

- Two 10–15 minute video clips of your own instruction
- Paper & pencil

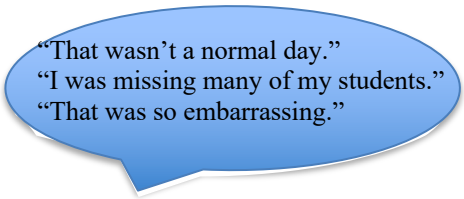
**Hey good lookin'**
**Are you good at looking at yourself?**
****YOUR TURN:**

- Watch the 1st video clip of your instruction.
- Jot down what you notice while watching yourself.
- Set aside your notes for analysis.




**Effective noticing is hard.**

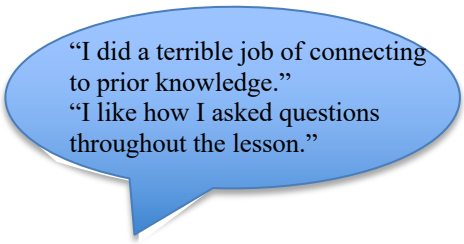
- ➢ When initially watching ourselves on video, it is easy to be distracted by irrelevant details (e.g., details not related to learning).
- ➢ Our responses can be emotional or reactive.
- ➢ We focus mostly on ourselves, instead of our students.




**Baseline Assessment**
Go back to your self-observation notes. Did you…

- ❑ Describe an irrelevant detail?
- ❑ Use emotional or reactive language?
- ❑ Describe your actions more than students' actions?

If so, you may be in need of a selfie intervention.




**Selfie Intervention**
It's okay. We'll take steps toward effective video self-analysis together.

- Step 1: Establish a clear goal for viewing.
- Step 2: Focus on evidence, rather than irrelevant or reactive details.
- Step 3: Focus on evidence that is important (teacher observation rubric).
- Step 4: Use context to reason about classroom interactions.

- Step 5: Make connections with principles of effective teaching (teacher observation rubric).
- Step 6: Plan future instruction.

**Step 1: Establish a goal for viewing.**

**Why?**

- Having a goal will put you in the driver's seat. What footage do you need to capture for your selfie?
- Purposeful watching will help you filter out extraneous, irrelevant details.

**Ideas for goal development**

- Focus on struggling students or small groups.
- Use video to think about new curriculum material.
- Use observation or student survey data to diagnose your development areas

****YOUR TURN:**
1. Write down some ideas for video self-observation goals (e.g., things you want to work on this year).

**Step 2: Filter out irrelevant and reactive details.**


**Step 2 (cont.): Filter out irrelevant and reactive details.**

There is SO much visual and auditory information in a few minutes of footage. What should you be looking at?

Distinguish between "details" and "evidence."

**Details**
Features of your classroom loosely related or unrelated to instruction.

**Evidence**
Features of your classroom that can be used to draw conclusions about

| Evidence Examples | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DELETE<br>~~I say "um" and "like" too much. It's distracting~~.<br>[This is a distracting detail, not a piece of evidence strongly connected to student learning.] | | | | |
| DELETE<br>~~I didn't handle that student very well.~~<br>[Focus your evidence on what happened, not whether or not it went well.] | | | | |
| KEEP<br>Only 30% of students raised their hands to answer questions. | | | | |

****YOUR TURN: Delete <u>irrelevant</u> or <u>reactive</u> details from your baseline assessment and add pieces of <u>evidence</u> to above table.**

**Step 3: Focus on important evidence.**

**What kind of evidence is important?**

- ✓ **What teachers do in their interactions with students that influences student learning.**
- ✓ **What students do that demonstrate whether they are learning or distracted from learning.**

| Piece of Evidence | Importance |
|---|---|
| **EXAMPLE:**<br>While watching my video, I observed that a student in the back of the classroom is throwing his hands in the air and waving them like he just doesn't care. | **EXAMPLE:**<br>This piece of evidence is important because six or seven students are distracted from the independent activity I created. Is it rigorous enough? Have I handled the disruption appropriately? |
| **EXAMPLE:**<br>While watching my video, I observed that only 30% of my students raised their hands to answer questions. | **Importance**<br>**EXAMPLE:**<br>This piece of evidence is important because six or seven students are distracted from the independent activity I created. Is it rigorous enough? Have I handled the disruption appropriately? |

****YOUR TURN: Identify the pieces of evidence collected in Step 2 that are important.**

**Step 4: Use context to help you reason about classroom interactions.**

- **Taking time to consider context gives you a chance to press pause and <u>contemplate root causes</u> for student behavior or interactions.**
- **Recalling contextual clues will help you <u>explain and explore the evidence</u> you collect.**

| Piece of Evidence | Importance | Context |
|---|---|---|
| **EXAMPLE:**<br>While watching my video, I observed that only 30% of students raised their hands to answer questions about new content. | **EXAMPLE:**<br>This piece of evidence is important because I need to determine whether 70% of my class isn't following the content, or whether they do not feel comfortable participating in class. | **EXAMPLE:**<br>• Some of the students raising their hands participating in a quiz bowl about Italy last year.<br>• My wait time for questions is only about 5 seconds. It may not be enough time for students to think. |

****YOUR TURN: Now layer in contextual details that might help explain the evidence you have identified as important.**

**Step 5: Make connections between classroom interactions and broader teaching principles.**

> **"When analyzing a video of a class discussion, for example, novice teachers generally provide only a literal description of the events they see. In contrast, expert teachers describe the segment in terms of issues related to…principles of teaching and learning rather than seeing each instance as an isolated event."

| Piece of Evidence | Importance | Context | Connections |
|---|---|---|---|
| **EXAMPLE:**<br>• While watching my video, I observed that only 30% of students raised their hands to answer questions about new content. | **EXAMPLE:**<br>• This piece of evidence is important because I need to determine whether 70% of my class isn't following the content, or whether they do not feel comfortable participating in class. | **EXAMPLE:**<br>• My wait time for questions is only about 5 seconds. It may not be enough time for students to think.<br>• Some of the students raising their hands participating in a quiz bowl about Italy last year. | **EXAMPLE:**<br>5. In the Framework's third domain, "Instruction," in order for a teacher to attain "Distinguished," for this component, "Engaging Students in Learning," the following must hold true: The lesson's structure is highly coherent, allowing for reflection and |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | closure. Pacing of the lesson is appropriate for all students. |

****YOUR TURN: Make a fourth column for connections between the specifics of classroom interactions and the broader principles of teaching.**

**Step 6: Think about how you plan to make change.**

Evidence is meaningless to consider if not connected to planning and practice for the future.

| **Piece of evidence** | **Importance** | **Context** | **Connections** | **Next steps** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **EXAMPLE:**<br>6. While watching my video, I observed that only 30% of students raised their hands to answer questions about new content. | **EXAMPLE:**<br>7. This piece of evidence is important because I need to determine whether 70% of my class isn't following the content, or whether they do not feel comfortable participating in class. | **EXAMPLE:**<br>8. My wait time for questions is only about 5 seconds. It may not be enough time for students to think.<br>9. Some of the students raising their hands participating in a quiz bowl about Italy last year. | **EXAMPLE:**<br>• From the Framework – *The lesson's structure is highly coherent, allowing for reflections and closure. Pacing of the lesson is appropriate for all students.* | **EXAMPLE:**<br>• Lengthen wait time.<br>• Use cold calling.<br>• Group quiz bowl students & differentiate their content.<br>• Pair quiz bowl students with students new to material for activities. |

****YOUR TURN: Brainstorm actionable ideas in relation to your collected evidence.**

**Are You Ready for Effective Selfie-Analysis?**

****YOUR TURN: Independent Practice**

1. Before you watch your second video, jot down at least one observation goal.
2. Watch your second video.
3. Write down important evidence of student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions.
4. Contemplate context for each piece of evidence.
5. Make connections with visions of teaching excellence.
6. Determine at least one "next step" you can try.
7. Videotape yourself trying to implement changes.

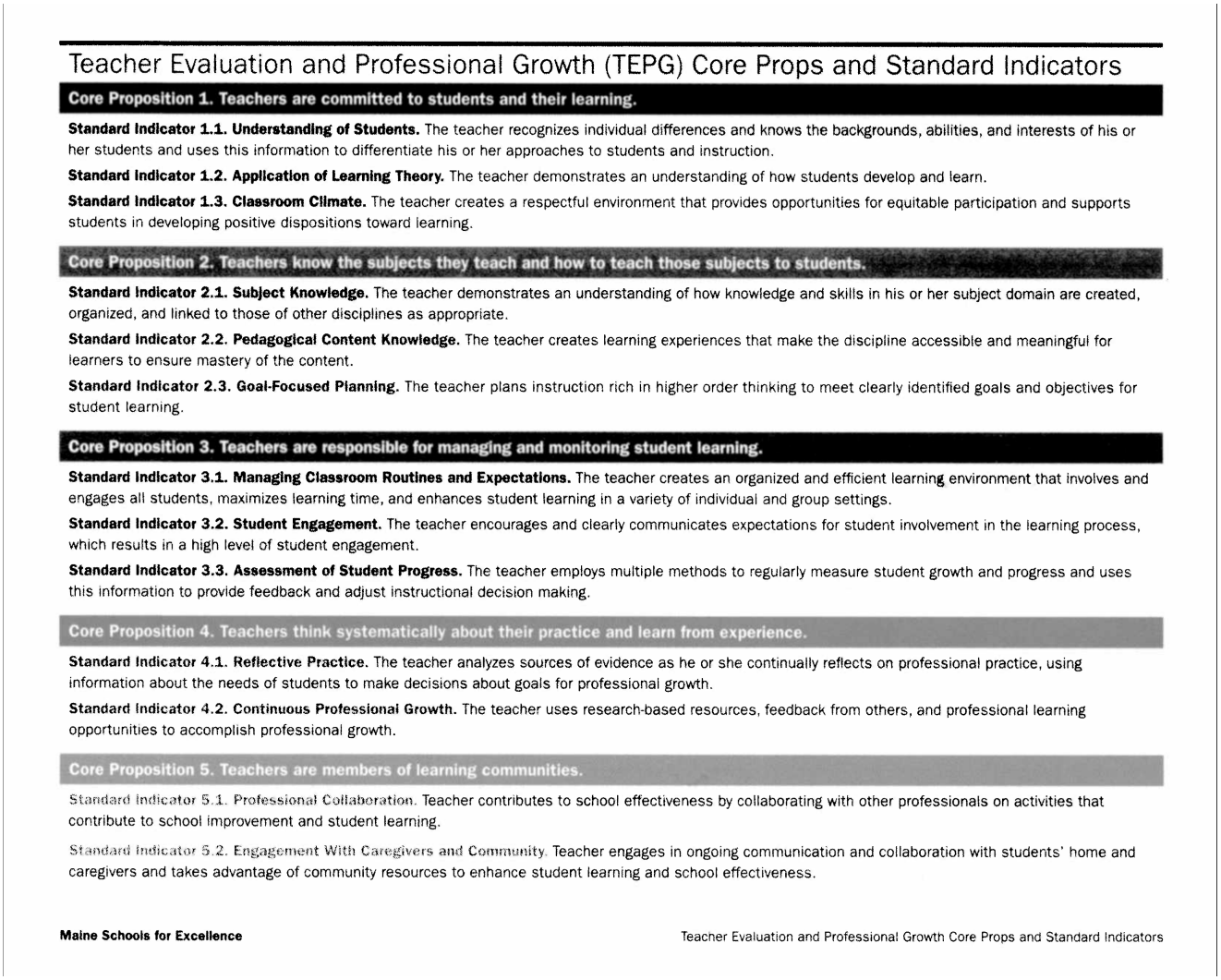
| Steps | Advanced | Proficient | Needs improvement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Identifying what's important | I identified what was most important in my classroom & instruction. | I identified details related to instruction but did not highlight the most important details. | I did not differentiate between important and unimportant details. |
| Making connections | I made connections between important parts of classroom instruction & principles of effective teaching. | I made connections between multiple parts of classroom instruction. | I made connections between unimportant parts of classroom instruction or made no connections at all. |
| Incorporating contextual knowledge | I readily incorporated contextual knowledge into my analysis. | I incorporated some contextual knowledge into my own analysis. | I did not incorporate contextual knowledge into my analysis. |
| Drafting next steps | I generated multiple next steps in my analysis and implemented them. | I generated some next steps in my analysis and plan to implement them. | I did not incorporate next steps into my analysis. |

*Note*. From Teacher Video Selfie: A Self-Guided Module for Analyzing Videos of Your Own Instruction, adapted from *The Best Foot Forward Project: Substituting Teacher-Collected Video for In-Person Classroom Observations* by T. J. Kane, H. Gehlbach, M. Greenberg, D. Quinn, & D. Thal, 2015, Cambridge, MA: Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University. Adapted with permission?

# APPENDIX H

## SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER EVALAUTION AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH RUBRIC

## PLACEMAT



Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth (TEPG) Core Props and Standard Indicators

**Core Proposition 1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.**

**Standard Indicator 1.1. Understanding of Students.** The teacher recognizes individual differences and knows the backgrounds, abilities, and interests of his or her students and uses this information to differentiate his or her approaches to students and instruction.

**Standard Indicator 1.2. Application of Learning Theory.** The teacher demonstrates an understanding of how students develop and learn.

**Standard Indicator 1.3. Classroom Climate.** The teacher creates a respectful environment that provides opportunities for equitable participation and supports students in developing positive dispositions toward learning.

**Core Proposition 2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.**

**Standard Indicator 2.1. Subject Knowledge.** The teacher demonstrates an understanding of how knowledge and skills in his or her subject domain are created, organized, and linked to those of other disciplines as appropriate.

**Standard Indicator 2.2. Pedagogical Content Knowledge.** The teacher creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to ensure mastery of the content.

**Standard Indicator 2.3. Goal-Focused Planning.** The teacher plans instruction rich in higher order thinking to meet clearly identified goals and objectives for student learning.

**Core Proposition 3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.**

**Standard Indicator 3.1. Managing Classroom Routines and Expectations.** The teacher creates an organized and efficient learning environment that involves and engages all students, maximizes learning time, and enhances student learning in a variety of individual and group settings.

**Standard Indicator 3.2. Student Engagement.** The teacher encourages and clearly communicates expectations for student involvement in the learning process, which results in a high level of student engagement.

**Standard Indicator 3.3. Assessment of Student Progress.** The teacher employs multiple methods to regularly measure student growth and progress and uses this information to provide feedback and adjust instructional decision making.

**Core Proposition 4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.**

**Standard Indicator 4.1. Reflective Practice.** The teacher analyzes sources of evidence as he or she continually reflects on professional practice, using information about the needs of students to make decisions about goals for professional growth.

**Standard Indicator 4.2. Continuous Professional Growth.** The teacher uses research-based resources, feedback from others, and professional learning opportunities to accomplish professional growth.

**Core Proposition 5. Teachers are members of learning communities.**

Standard Indicator 5.1. Professional Collaboration. Teacher contributes to school effectiveness by collaborating with other professionals on activities that contribute to school improvement and student learning.

Standard Indicator 5.2. Engagement With Caregivers and Community. Teacher engages in ongoing communication and collaboration with students' home and caregivers and takes advantage of community resources to enhance student learning and school effectiveness.

**Maine Schools for Excellence** Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth Core Props and Standard Indicators

More detailed version:
Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth Rubric Companion Guide 2017

APPENDIX I

RESEARCH TIMELINE: RETHINKING THE TEACHER OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION MODEL

| Date | Researcher | Superintendent | Building Admin. | Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • Send letter of request to superintendents in Maine | | | |
| Beginning to mid-August | • Send letter of request to building administrators of interested districts | • Allow access to building administrators<br>• Send written consent to access building administrators | | |
| Mid to end of august | | | • Show interest in participating in research<br>• Send researcher written letter of interest | |
| Mid to end of August | • Secure school sites | | | |
| Beginning to mid-September | • Meet with district & building administrators<br>• Share "Teacher Video Selfie" model with administrators<br>• Share consent form with administrators | • Ask any questions of researcher<br>• Discuss possible technology devices for video taping<br>• Sign and give consent form to researcher | • Ask any questions of researcher<br>• Discuss possible technology devices for video taping<br>• Sign and give consent form to researcher | |
| Mid to end of September | • Meet with teachers at school sites | | • Completes survey | • If willing to participate, sign and give consent |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • Go over research<br>• Give survey to willing participants<br>• Ask qualified teachers to consider being full participants | | | form to researcher<br>• Complete survey<br>• Consider being full participants |
| End of September | • Select and notify full-participant teachers | | | • Receive notification of selection to be a full-research participant |
| Beginning to mid-October | • Meet with teacher participants and building admin. Determine technology to be used to video tape classroom self-observations<br>• Share "Teacher Video Selfie" activity opportunity<br>• Conduct preobservation interviews | Participate in interview | • Consider using "Teacher Video Selfie" activities<br>• Participate in preobservation interview | • Teacher participants & building admin. meet with researcher<br>• Participate in interview |
| Mid October to mid-January | • On standby to answer questions. | | • Do drop-in informal classroom observations<br>• Conference with teachers, as requested, a minimum of two times | • Video tape a minimum of three classroom lessons<br>• Observe, critique, & evaluate classroom videos and align against district evaluation rubric<br>• Initiate conferencing with |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | administrator a minimum of two times |
| Mid-January to mid-February | • Conduct interviews with building administrator(s) and active teacher participants | | • Participate in interview with researcher | • Participate in postobservation interview with researcher |
| Mid-February to end of March | • Individually thank all participants<br>• Finalize Research – Chapters 4 & 5 | | | |

# APPENDIX J

## DISTRICT CONSENT

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT NO. 44
One Parkway, Suite #204 • Bethel, Maine 04217
Tel. (207) 824-2185 Fax (207) 824-2725

David W. Murphy Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

August 16, 2018

Ms. Cheryl Lang
419 Wilson Hill Rd
Turner, ME 04282

Dear Ms. Lang,

Please be advised that you have my consent, pending IRB approval, to conduct the research associated with your doctoral program in SAD 44 during the 2018-2019 school year.

As we discussed earlier, please note that participation in this work will need to be voluntary by any staff member who agrees to be involved.

Good luck with your efforts.

Sincerely,

David W. Murphy, Ed.D.
Superintendent

APPENDIX K

PARTICIPANTS' INFORMED CONSENT

**University of New England**
**Department of Doctoral Studies**

**PART 1: Research Description**

Principal Researcher: Cheryl L. Lang
Research Title: Rethinking the Teacher Observation/Evaluation Model

You are invited to participate in a research study that explores the teacher observation and evaluation process. Your participation in this study requires completion of a short survey and possibly an interview during which you will be asked questions about your perceptions, opinions and attitudes relative to your experience in the teacher observation and evaluation process. The survey should take less than 15 minutes to complete. If selected to also participate in the interview, the duration of the interview will be approximately 45–60 minutes. With your permission, the interview will be audiotaped and transcribed, the purpose thereof being to capture and maintain an accurate record of the discussion. Your name will not be used at all. On all transcripts and data collected, you will be referred to only by way of a pseudonym. This study will be conducted by the researcher, Cheryl L. Lang, a doctoral candidate at the University of New England. The interview will be undertaken at a time and location that is mutually suitable.

**Risks and Benefits**
It is the intent of the researcher to contribute to the understanding of the intricacies of the teacher observation and evaluation process through this research. Therefore, the potential benefit of this study is continued improvement of the teacher evaluation and observation process. Participation in this study carries the same amount of risk that individuals will encounter during a usual classroom activity. There is no financial remuneration for your participation in this study.

**Data Storage to Protect Confidentiality**
Under no circumstances whatsoever will you be identified by name in the course of this research study or in any publication thereof. Every effort will be made that all information provided by you will be treated as strictly confidential. All data will be coded and securely stored and will be used for professional purposes only.

**How the Results Will Be Used**
This research study is to be submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at the University of New England, Biddeford, ME. The results of this study will be published as a dissertation. In addition, information may be used for educational purposes in professional presentation(s) and/or educational publication(s).

**PART 2: Participant's Rights**

I have read and discussed the research description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.

- My participation in this research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future employment, student status, medical care, or other entitlements.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information becomes available that may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- If, at any time, I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the researcher, Cheryl Lang, at (207) 381-0377. I may also contact the researcher's lead faculty advisor, Dr. William Boozang, at (508) 446-7685.
- If at any time I have comments or concerns regarding the conduct of the research, or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact Liam Harrison at the University of New England Institutional Review Board (IRB). The phone number for the IRB is (207) 602-2244. Alternatively, I can write to the UNE IRB at University of New England, 11 Hills Beach Road, Biddeford, ME 04005-9599.
- I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.
- Audiotaping is part of this research. Only the principal researcher and the members of the research team will have access to written and taped materials.

Please check one:
___ I consent to being audiotaped.
___ I do NOT consent to being audiotaped.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____Date: ____/____/____

Name: (Please print) _____

**Investigator's Verification of Explanation**

I, Cheryl L. Lang, certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to _____ (participant's name). (S)He has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all of his/her questions and (s)he provided the affirmative agreement (i.e., assent) to participate in this research.

Investigator's signature: _____Date: ____/____/____

(Adapted from *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A road map from beginning to end*, by L. D. Bloomberg and M. Volpe, 2016, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Appendix N, Sample Research Consent Form.)

# APPENDIX L

## SURVEY RESPONSES

**Teacher Survey and Responses**

**Survey Question 1:** I am _____ of the State of Maine laws regarding full implementation of teacher observation and evaluation systems.

**Survey Question 2:** Overall, I am _____with the district implementation of the teacher observation/evaluation system.

**Survey Question 3:** I am _____in my administrator's ability to objectively observe, evaluate, and provide professional growth recommendations and resources.

**Survey Question 4:** I am _____in my ability to identify a specific change in my teaching practices as a result of the feedback received from my administrator this/ last year.

**Survey Question 5:** My administrator and I _____ on what was observed and evaluated when conducting classroom visits.

**Survey Question 6:** The way this district implements the teacher observation/evaluation system has proven effective in my professional growth and development.

| **Teacher and administrative participants answer key** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Survey Question 1 | Fully aware | Somewhat aware | Had not really thought about it | Somewhat unaware | Completely unaware |
| Survey Question 2 | Very satisfied | Somewhat satisfied | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Somewhat dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied |
| Survey Question 3 | Fully confident | Somewhat confident | Neither confident nor lacking confidence | Somewhat lacking confidence | Completely lacking confidence |
| Survey Question 4 | Fully confident | Somewhat confident | Neither confident nor lacking confidence | Somewhat lacking confidence | Completely lacking confidence |
| Survey Question 5 | Fully agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Fully disagree |
| Survey Question 6 | Fully agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Fully disagree |

| Teacher responses | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ID** | **Survey Question 1 (Self)** | **Survey Question 2 (District)** | **Survey Question 3 (Admin)** | **Survey Question 4 (Self)** | **Survey Question 5 (Admin)** | **Survey Question 6 (District)** |
| 1 | Somewhat aware | Somewhat dissatisfied | Somewhat confident | Fully confident | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree |
| 2 | Somewhat aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Fully confident | Fully agree | Somewhat agree |
| 3 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Fully confident | Somewhat agree | Somewhat agree |
| 4 | Fully aware | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Neither confident nor lacking confidence | Neither confident nor lacking confidence | Fully agree | Somewhat agree |
| 5 | Somewhat aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Somewhat confident | Somewhat agree | Somewhat agree |
| 6 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Fully confident | Fully agree | Fully agree |
| 7 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Somewhat confident | Fully agree | Somewhat agree |
| 8 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Somewhat confident | Fully agree | Somewhat agree |
| 9 | Somewhat aware | Very satisfied | Fully confident | Somewhat confident | Somewhat agree | Fully agree |
| 10 | Fully aware | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Fully confident | Fully confident | Somewhat agree | Somewhat agree |
| 11 | Somewhat unaware | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Fully confident | Fully confident | Fully agree | Neither agree nor disagree |
| 12 | Completely unaware | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Somewhat confident | Fully confident | Somewhat agree | Somewhat agree |
| 13 | Somewhat aware | Somewhat dissatisfied | Fully confident | Fully confident | Fully agree | Somewhat disagree |
| 14 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Somewhat confident | Fully agree | Somewhat agree |
| 15 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Somewhat confident | Fully agree | Somewhat agree |
| 16 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Somewhat confident | Fully agree | Somewhat agree |

| Teacher responses | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ID** | **Survey Question 1 (Self)** | **Survey Question 2 (District)** | **Survey Question 3 (Admin)** | **Survey Question 4 (Self)** | **Survey Question 5 (Admin)** | **Survey Question 6 (District)** |
| 17 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Fully confident | Fully confident | Fully agree | Fully agree |
| 18 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Fully confident | Fully confident | Somewhat agree | Somewhat agree |
| 19 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Fully confident | Somewhat agree | Fully agree |
| 20 | Somewhat aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Somewhat confident | Fully agree | Somewhat agree |
| 21 | Somewhat aware | Somewhat satisfied | Fully confident | Fully confident | Fully agree | Somewhat agree |
| 22 | Somewhat unaware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Somewhat confident | Fully agree | Somewhat agree |
| 23 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Fully confident | Somewhat confident | Somewhat agree | Somewhat agree |
| 24 | Somewhat aware | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat confident | Somewhat confident | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat disagree |
| 24 | Fully aware **13** Somewhat aware **8** Hadn't thought about it **0** Somewhat unaware **2** Completely unaware **1** | Very satisfied **1** Somewhat satisfied **17** Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied **4** Somewhat Dissatisfied **2** Very dissatisfied **0** | Fully confident **8** Somewhat confident **15** Neither confident nor lacking confidence **1** Somewhat lacking confidence **0** Completely lacking confidence **0** | Fully confident **12** Somewhat confident **11** Neither confident nor lacking confidence **1** Somewhat lacking confidence **0** Completely lacking confidence **0** | Fully agree **14** Somewhat agree **9** Neither agree nor disagree **0** Somewhat disagree **1** Fully disagree **0** | Fully agree **4** Somewhat agree **16** Neither agree nor disagree **1** Somewhat disagree **3** Fully disagree **0** |
| **100%** | **Self** + 88% +/–0 % –12% | **District** + 75% +/–17% –8% | **Admin** +96% +/–4% –0% | **Self** +96% +/–4% –0% | **Admin** +96% +/–0% –4% | **District** +83% +/–4% –13% |

**Building Administrator Survey and Responses**

**Survey Question 1:** I am _____ of the State of Maine laws regarding full implementation of teacher observation and evaluation systems.

**Survey Question 2:** Overall, I am _____ with the district implementation of the teacher observation/evaluation system.

**Survey Question 3:** I am _____ in my ability to objectively observe, evaluate, and provide professional growth recommendations and resources.

**Survey Question 4:** I am _____ in my ability to identify a specific change in teaching practices of the teachers as a result of the feedback received from me this/last year.

**Survey Question 5:** I am able to keep up with the number of teacher observations and evaluations, including preconferences and post conferences, I am responsible for.

**Survey Question 6:** The way this district implements the teacher observation/evaluation system has proven effective in professional growth and development.

| **Building administrator survey and responses** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ID** | **Survey Question 1 (Self)** | **Survey Question 2 (District)** | **Survey Question 3 (Admin)** | **Survey Question 4 (Self)** | **Survey Question 5 (Admin)** | **Survey Question 6 (District)** |
| 25 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Fully confident | Fully confident | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree |
| 26 | Fully aware | Somewhat satisfied | Fully confident | Fully confident | Somewhat disagree | Fully Agree |
| **100%** | +100% | +100% | +100% | +100% | –100% | +100% |

# APPENDIX M

## DISTRICT POLICY GCOA TO SUPERVISION AND EVLAUTATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

**Policy: Section G: GCOA**

**SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

A well-planned and systematic program of supervision and evaluation of performance tied to educational outcomes is vital to the ongoing improvement of the instructional program. Through this policy, the Board seeks to ensure that sufficient administrative time and energy are expended to supervise our teaching staff through observation and assistance, and evaluate our teaching results using standardized measurements and assessments. The supervision and evaluation program shall address all aspects of teaching performance and recognize that the fulfillment of student needs is of primary importance.

The Board believes that appraisal of teacher performance should:

A. Provide a systematic process that will, on a continuing basis, enable staff to measure and improve the effectiveness of their instructional services,

B. Provide the opportunity for all staff members to analyze their own strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the instructional process and give staff the ability to discuss the contribution they have made to the District objectively with their supervisors,

C. Provide an evaluation process that administrators can use to assist staff in developing professional objectives and increasing personal competencies relating to instruction and their professional responsibilities,

D. Provide administrators with a process for developing and making recommendations concerning staff assignments and employment, when appropriate.

The Superintendent or his or her designee shall be responsible for development, implementation and periodic review of a comprehensive program of supervision and evaluation. The program shall provide for minimum standards for the number and frequency of formal performance reviews, with the understanding that probationary staff members require closer support and more frequent performance reviews.

A. Evaluative criteria shall be in written form and made permanently available to the staff member,

B. Evaluations shall be made by an immediate supervisor or administrator,

C. Evaluations will include a self-evaluation component,

D. Results of the evaluations shall be put in writing and shall be discussed with the staff member,

E. The staff member being evaluated shall have the right to attach a memorandum to the written evaluation,

F. Results of all evaluations shall be kept in confidential personnel files maintained at the Central Office.

In keeping with the Board's goal of employing the best-qualified staff to provide quality education for all students, all staff members are expected to participate fully in the process of evaluation, self-appraisal, and continuous improvement of professional skills.

Although supervision and evaluation policies and procedures are not negotiable in collective bargaining, the Superintendent is to seek appropriate involvement of staff in the development and periodic review of the supervision and evaluation program.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA 1055, 13802
Ch. 125 4.02(E)(3), 8.08 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule)

Adopted: August 20, 2004

Revised: July 13, 2015