Supervision and Evaluation Practices That Impact Teacher Learning: A Case Study of Rural Teachers’ Perspectives

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Supervision and Evaluation Practices That Impact Teacher Learning: A Case Study of Rural Teachers’ Perspectives

Abstract
The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impacted the extent to which teachers learned and improved instructional practices. The case study explored if teachers in a small, rural school district experienced formative supervision practices that helped them learn or improve their teaching practices. Three implications emerged from the study. First, authentic leadership promotes teacher growth. Second, authentic leadership ensures empowered postconferences, and third, authentic leadership participates in walkthroughs to provide teachers with feedback. This study provides recommendations for future research, policy makers, rural superintendents, principals, and teachers. Policy makers need to revise legislative language in New York State Education Law §30-12d with the removal of independent evaluator observations of teachers. Superintendents of schools need to complete the Rural/Single Building School District Independent Evaluator Hardship Waiver to supersede the requirements that create burdens and/or hardships. Rural administrators need to model the way regarding formative supervision practices, such as walkthroughs to support teacher growth and development. Districts need to ensure that postconferences are a requirement of the teacher evaluation process. Finally, teachers need to assume responsibility of their own learning with the participation in collaborative learning walks with other teachers to learn and improve instructional practices.

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Supervision and Evaluation Practices That Impact Teacher Learning:

A Case Study of Rural Teachers’ Perspectives

By

Jennifer L. Sinsebox

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by
Dr. Shannon Cleverley-Thompson

Committee Member
Dr. Ryan Pacatte

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education
St. John Fisher College

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Dedication

Child activist, Marian Wright-Edelman, stated that “education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you find it.” As I reflect on my dissertation journey, my favorite quote resonates with me in so many ways. I owe it to friends, family, mentors, colleagues, and leaders along my life journey that made this dissertation completion possible.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognize my dissertation chair, Dr. Shannon Cleverley-Thompson, and dissertation committee member, Dr. Ryan Pacatte. Thank you for your guidance and challenging my thinking throughout the dissertation process. You both modeled the way as you both started new executive leadership positions during unprecedented times while continuing to support my completion. I would like to give a special recognition to my advisor, Dr. Marie Cianca. Dr. Cianca served as a role model. Additionally, she taught me the role servant leadership played in the dissertation process, transferrable to my current leadership practice.

I am a firm believer that people are brought into your life at the right time for a variety of reasons. It has been a pleasure to spend the last 28 months with my Cohort 13 classmates. The Cohort 13 members have such unique gifts that impacted my capacity to do better. I was fortunate enough to be assigned to an amazing team who affectionately became known as Jenn and the Men. Thank you to Joe, Carl, and Mike for all their hard work and contributions to our team projects; I learned a lot from each of them. I would especially like to thank Jenn Fay for her unconditional support throughout the program. I
will miss our Friday night phone calls; however, I am blessed to now have her as a forever friend beyond DEXL. Thank you to Matt Frahm for your charming wit and perspective during the program. He was a great sport putting up with Jenn and I in an occasional group text. I look forward to the three of us meeting up at the Pub without having to think or talk about schoolwork or our dissertations, catching up like old friends.

Thank you to my lifelong friends, Patty, Cathy, Julie, Stephanie, Linda, Trish, Debbie, Heather, and Meg, for the constant encouragement and periodic distractions away from homework and writing. The laughter was a much-needed remedy when I did not think I would make it. I cannot wait to have this dissertation journey behind me so that we can begin new adventures together without the pressures of knowing I have work to do.

The opportunity to pursue my dissertation would not be possible without the support of my colleagues from Wheatland-Chili Central School District. Tom Gallagher, former superintendent, and friend gave me my first leadership opportunity. I am forever grateful for Tom for being the first to recognize my leadership potential. I would also like to thank my mentor and current superintendent, Dr. Deborah Leh. Her encouragement and support throughout this process has been second to none. Dr. Leh’s sage advice and experience through the doctoral process was instrumental in my completion. I am appreciative of the support from the Wheatland-Chili leadership team, especially Mary, Danielle, and Cara. Thanks for being my cheerleaders as I crossed the finish line.

My extended family has always been supportive of my educational and career endeavors. Thank you to my sister, Kim, for the chats and visits during the past few years and for my dad, Michael, who would call and ask, “so when can I call you a doctor?” I
appreciated the long distance FaceTimes from my Uncle Mike with words of encouragement. Thanks for the support from afar. A special thank you to my mom, Barbara, and stepfather, David, for the continued support and being proud of my accomplishments. You all mean the world to me.

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved daughters and husband, Hannah, Sarah, and Larry. Hannah and Sarah were both my motivation to serve as a role model as they both pursued degrees in optometry and pharmacy, respectively. Soon, there will be three Dr. Sinsebox in the family. My husband, Larry, has been my rock. Throughout my program, he did everything for me from grocery shopping, weekend cleanings, and most distinctly, he learned how to cook. I would not have been able to get through this process without your unconditional love and support. For this, I am eternally grateful. I cannot wait to enjoy being empty-nesters and living our best lives together.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my silent partner, number one fan, and unofficial emotional support animal, Owen, my 12-year-old chocolate lab. He spent each moment with me while I spent hours writing my dissertation and doing schoolwork. Owen would be found lying under the table with an occasional lick of encouragement. Unfortunately, a few weeks prior to my dissertation defense, Owen crossed the rainbow bridge. Dogs have a keen sense about them. Owen knew I successfully completed writing my dissertation and knew that I was prepared and ready to defend it alone. Although, he was not with me as I defended, he was with me in spirit.
Biographical Sketch

Jennifer Lyn Sinsebox grew up in East Syracuse, New York, graduating from East Syracuse-Minoa in 1987. She attended Nazareth College of Rochester from 1987 to 1991 earning a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in Psychology, minoring in Elementary and Special Education. She completed her Master of Sciences degree in Special Education at Nazareth College from 1992 to 1995. Furthering her education, Jennifer attended The College at Brockport earning a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Educational Leadership. In addition to a career in K-12 education, Jennifer serves as an adjunct professor at The College of Brockport in the Educational Leadership Graduate program teaching Evidenced Based Techniques for Teacher Assessment. Given her passion for teaching and learning, Jennifer enrolled at St. John Fisher College in the spring of 2018 to and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Executive Leadership Program. Mrs. Sinsebox pursued her research in “Supervision and Evaluation Practices That Impact Teacher Learning: A Case Study of Rural Teachers’ Perspectives” under the direction of Dr. Shannon Cleverley-Thompson and Dr. Ryan Pacatte and received the Ed.D. degree in 2020.
Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impacted the extent to which teachers learned and improved instructional practices. The case study explored if teachers in a small, rural school district experienced formative supervision practices that helped them learn or improve their teaching practices.

Three implications emerged from the study. First, authentic leadership promotes teacher growth. Second, authentic leadership ensures empowered postconferences, and third, authentic leadership participates in walkthroughs to provide teachers with feedback. This study provides recommendations for future research, policy makers, rural superintendents, principals, and teachers. Policy makers need to revise legislative language in New York State Education Law §30-12d with the removal of independent evaluator observations of teachers. Superintendents of schools need to complete the Rural/Single Building School District Independent Evaluator Hardship Waiver to supersede the requirements that create burdens and/or hardships. Rural administrators need to model the way regarding formative supervision practices, such as walkthroughs to support teacher growth and development. Districts need to ensure that postconferences are a requirement of the teacher evaluation process. Finally, teachers need to assume responsibility of their own learning with the participation in collaborative learning walks with other teachers to learn and improve instructional practices.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The teacher supervision and evaluation system for K-12 public schools in the United States was originally designed for the purposes of granting teachers tenure. Since 2009, the system for teacher evaluations has undergone many changes due to new federal, state, and local guidelines (Kane, 2015). These changes to the teacher supervision and evaluation system have created many challenges for school districts, principals, and teachers because of a lack of focus on what factors impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve their teaching practices. According to Baker et al. (2013), states across the country have different challenges created by specific state regulations that are characterized as overly prescriptive and rigid and void of teacher development. Teachers are being evaluated based on student achievement scores, new evaluation rubrics, and policies and procedures (Baker et al., 2013). For example, teachers in the lowest performance classification, based on student achievement outcomes in Arizona, are placed on an intervention plan and removed if they do not show adequate progress. Districts in Connecticut are authorized to terminate an ineffective teacher at any time based on teacher evaluation ratings that are aligned to student academic growth. Whereas, Colorado, Florida, and Idaho require that 50% of the teacher evaluation be predicated on student achievement, teachers in New York State are measured by student achievement outcomes as well as other measures of progress (Baker et al., 2013). This study focused on teacher supervision and evaluation in New York State.
Public K-12 teachers in New York State school districts are subject to teacher evaluation systems that are required by Education Law §3012-d (New York State Education Department [NYSED], 2016a). Teachers have limited control over the elements of the evaluation system that provides them with an annual composite score, which is calculated by student achievement measures, as well as effectiveness, based on scores from a state-approved teacher rubric. The terms “evaluation” and “supervision” are used interchangeably in the field of K-12 public education as a method of teacher development and improvement. The interchangeability of these terms causes confusion in the field of teaching regarding the best practices that support improvement in teaching practices. This research study builds on and contributes to the work in the K-12 educational literature regarding the use of teacher supervision and evaluation aimed to improve and develop instructional practice.

Although studies on the use of teacher evaluation systems have examined school principals’ perspectives, there has been limited research that captures the teachers’ perspective (Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Dudek et al., 2019; Mette et al., 2015; Range et al., 2013. In addition, there is an absence of rural teachers’ voice regarding how this process influences the way teachers learn and improve. As such, this study provides additional insight into teacher perspectives of formative supervision practices within the context of a rural K-12 public school district. The focus on teachers’ perspectives, considering the processes and practices of their districts, allowed for within-case and across-case analysis to obtain an understanding of the teachers’ lived experiences with the teacher supervision and evaluation system. This qualitative descriptive case study enables another contribution to the literature.
This case study analyzed public and private documents that were specific to a rural school district pertaining to formative supervision practices. In addition, the case study analyzed information gathered through semi-structured interviews from rural teachers. Although numerous studies have identified principals’ perceptions on the use of evaluative practices to improve teaching practices, little analytic attention has been paid to rural teachers’ perspectives on the use of formative supervision practices to improve and develop their teaching (Boyland et al., 2014; Grissom et al., 2013; Hernandez et al., 2012; Mette et al., 2017; Range et al., 2011, 2012; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014; Range, McKim, Mette, & Hvidston, 2014; Risen & Tripes, 2008; Young et al., 2015). This case study addressed this issue by gathering and analyzing teachers’ voices from a K-12 rural school district perspective on the use of formative supervision practices in helping teachers learn how to improve and develop their teaching beyond the state requirements.

**Purpose of Teacher Evaluation Systems**

The purpose of teacher supervision and evaluation is for school principals to ensure that the school has quality teachers so that student learning occurs. There are two main approaches of teacher supervision and evaluation practices in which a principal takes to ensure a school has effective teachers, which are described throughout the educational literature (Haefele, 1993; Mette et al., 2017; Papay, 2012; Range et al., 2013). The first approach is “supervision,” which is a formative practice characterized as nonevaluative, ongoing, informal, and dynamic (Mette et al., 2017). Conversely, the second approach, “evaluation,” is a summative practice characterized as cumulative, traditional, formal, and static (Mette et al., 2017). Overall, the way principals approach
the supervision and evaluation process can be formative and/or summative. There are emerging tensions and themes presented in the literature on the use and purpose of supervision and evaluation approaches to support improvement in teaching practices (Mette et al., 2017). The terms are often used interchangeably when referring to the approaches in which school district administrators measure, rate, or describe teacher effectiveness. Table 1.1 highlights the type, description, purpose, and examples of teacher supervision and evaluation practices that exist in K-12 public school districts. The table displays how the terms are defined and differentiated for the purpose of this study:

Table 1.1

*Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Practices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Teacher Supervision Practices</th>
<th>Teacher Evaluation Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Nonevaluative</td>
<td>Evaluative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formative/Ongoing</td>
<td>Summative/Culminating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback Provided</td>
<td>Scores Provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District Decision</td>
<td>Required by Education Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distributed Power</td>
<td>Top-Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Teacher Growth</td>
<td>Retention of Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Improvement</td>
<td>Removal of Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Professional</td>
<td>Teacher Tenure Decision-Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Teacher Promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Action Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Walkthroughs/Learning Walks</td>
<td>Pre-/Post-Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching/Mentoring</td>
<td>Announced Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Videoconferencing</td>
<td>Unannounced Observations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The common intention embedded in the definitions of both supervision and evaluation is that they support and monitor target areas of improvement, and they develop a collective building conscious of instruction (Mette et al., 2017). Supervision and evaluation can support teacher growth while also positively influencing student
achievement. However, at the time of this case study, the perspectives from teachers regarding how each of these practices have helped teachers learn how to improve their teaching has not been highlighted in the research. Therefore, the case study sought to better understand what supervision and evaluation approach leads to change and improvement in teacher practices.

**History of the Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Systems**

The history of teacher supervision and evaluation systems in the United States has been researched by educational scholars as early as the 1700s. Teacher supervision and evaluation models have been influenced by the United States societal and political landscape and federal educational initiatives and legislation (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Sullivan and Glanz (2013) provided the background of supervision practices of teachers in eight distinct models. These models date back to from the pre-1900s to present day. The models of teacher supervision and evaluation provide context to the topic of teacher evaluation systems in the United States. Elements from each of the models have had an influence on current teacher supervision and evaluation practices (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Additionally, the models include both supervision and evaluation practices.

The early models of teacher supervision and evaluation were highly criticized by teachers and often characterized as bureaucratic supervision practices (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). The first model was referred to as “supervision as inspection” (Greenwood, 1891, Payne, 1875). The focus of “supervision as an inspection model” was to inspect the classroom with the intention of locating errors in the instructional practices of teachers in the school (Greenwood, 1891). According to Sullivan and Glanz (2013), the late 1800s was the first time teachers were beginning to be rated as effective or ineffective because
of their inspections. This strategy was criticized because it was based on the intuition of the supervision and not on the instructional knowledge of the supervision (Greenwood, 1891).

The second teacher supervision and evaluation model, “supervision-as-social-efficacy,” emphasized supervision with a focus on the scientific management principles of Taylorism or the principles of scientific management, a movement of the American Industrial Revolution (Bobbitt, 1913; Taylor, 1911). Taylor (1911) compared schools to factories and described schools in an analogous fashion (Au, 2011). According to Au (2011), students were compared to raw materials to be produced like supplies according to specified standards and objectives, and teachers were represented as the workers who implemented strategies to get students to meet the standards and objectives. Administrators were considered the managers who determined and dictated to teachers the most efficient approaches in the production process. Therefore, the school was considered the factory assembly line where this process took place. Bobbitt (1913) proclaimed that supervision of teachers should eliminate the personal element and introduce impersonal methods of supervision. According to Sullivan and Glanz (2013), supervision as social efficacy was the first to assign a teacher to a rating score with a focus on organizational goal achievement in lieu of improvement in teaching practices.

Teachers during the supervision-as-social-efficacy model era were compelled to switch the focus from evaluation practices to teacher supervision. According to Sullivan and Glanz (2013), teachers wanted their administrators to provide them with support with the intention to improve their teaching.
Given the continued criticism from teachers regarding how they were being supervised and evaluated by their administrators, a third model, “democratic supervision,” emerged in the field of teacher supervision and evaluation practices from 1870s to 1920s (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Sullivan and Glanz (2013) described the democratic supervision model as practices that involve teachers and supervisors working together to improve teaching. The democratic point of view of supervision prompted the recognition that teaching practices can be viewed in parts or as components (Barr, 1925).

As a result of the democratic approach, a fourth model of teacher supervision and evaluation, “scientific supervision,” emerged during the 1930s and 1950s (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). According to Barr (1925), the scientific supervision model was intended to improve instruction via the observation process with the use of verbatim scripting. The systematic approach of verbatim scripting was the first to introduce administrators objectively observing teachers through scripting or by writing down, without judgement, all the activities or evidence of teaching occurring in the classroom (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). As of this writing, the evidence-based observation technique of scripting is currently part of the New York State Education Law §3012-d, and it is required when conducting teacher observations (New York State United Teachers, 2019). The method of evidence-based scripting aligns most with the summative evaluation practices, which are used in existing teacher evaluation systems.

There was a shift from a democratic viewpoint in teacher supervision and evaluation practices by a fifth model, “supervision as leadership.” According to Sullivan and Glanz (2013), administrators, particularly school principals, focus on five elements of instructional leadership: (a) developing instructional goals, (b) utilization of democratic
supervision techniques, (c) improving classroom instructional practice, (d) analysis of educational problems, and (e) fostering professional leadership. The five elements reinforced that supervision of teachers through instructional leadership was necessary to influence schools and teachers through change (Harris, 1969).

Continuing with the notion of structure, democracy, and instructional leadership in teacher supervision and evaluation models, the supervision practice, referred to as the “clinical supervision model,” was the sixth model introduced into the educational field (Goldhammer, 1969). The clinical supervision model is a formal process of collaboration between the teacher and the supervisor, modeled after the medical profession’s clinical rounds in a hospital (Pajak, 2003; Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). According to Pajak (2003), clinical supervision is the process for refining the focused knowledge and skills of practitioners. Cogan (1973) modified the clinical supervision model to incorporate the three-part process including the preconference, observation, and postconference.

A preconference is a face-to-face meeting between the teacher and the administrator (Pajak, 2003). Pajak (2003) posited that the purpose of the preconference was for the teacher to describe what the lesson was about and what the students would be expected to do and learn while giving the administrator a chance to ask clarifying and probing questions about the pending observation (Pajak, 2003). The observation is the event when the administrator collects data based on the events occurring, while the teacher teaches the lesson (Pajak, 2003). The postconference occurs after the observation. Both teacher and administrator exam the data collected by the administrator and discuss the feedback as to what transpired in the classroom (Pajak, 2003). Currently, the clinical supervision model remains the common existing structure in schools across the United
States when conducting teacher observations, but the observational emphasis has changed (Martinez et al., 2016). According to Bolin and Panaritis (1992), teachers are supportive of the clinical supervision model because of the collaborative nature of the process.

Educational legislation in the 1980s and 1990s created an impetus in education to focus on the eighth model of teacher evaluations and supervision practices referred to as “standard-based supervision” (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Standard-based supervision focuses not only on teaching practices but also on student assessment and accountability measures. A Nation at Risk: The Report of the National Commission on Excellence of Education (United States, National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) ordered by President Ronald Reagan, reported data that illustrated a decline in student achievement on assessment scores and an increase in high school dropout rates. As a result, there was momentum in a philosophical change toward teacher evaluation systems that endorsed teacher professional development for teachers. Glickman (1992) introduced the term “supervision parallel to instructional leadership.” This shift in vernacular emphasized the importance of putting systems into place to improve teaching practices. However, Klein (2012) identified that accountability measures, such as student achievement results on high-stake tests, should be the focus on measuring teacher effectiveness more so than on supervision and instructional leadership. Despite the persistent efforts of stakeholders throughout history to develop effective models of teacher supervision and evaluation practices, teacher evaluation systems in the United States continue to be criticized.

Throughout the 2000s, schools in the United States continued to be scrutinized and under siege because of low performance on Grades 3-8 reading and math scores,
which are part of the federal accountability measures of schools and teacher effectiveness (Moldt, 2016). Moldt (2016) noted that criticisms have been highlighted by newspaper and television headlines such as (a) American’s Failing Schools, (b) Unfit Teachers in Our Public Schools, and (c) Students Graduate Unprepared for College. According to Moldt (2016), students in the United States are ranked 17th on science assessments that were administered to 31 countries around the world. Moldt (2016) expressed that American students are falling behind because their schools are failing them. As a result of low assessment scores, policy makers are seeking to make a change in the public educational systems and teacher practices that yield higher student achievement scores (Moldt, 2016). The different models throughout history had intended to structure teacher evaluation systems around formative supervision practices that were aimed to improve teaching practices (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). However, changes in federal legislation on teacher supervision and evaluation systems continue to emphasize teacher effectiveness, which is predicated on students’ assessment performance and less on how teachers are learning to improve because of teacher supervision and evaluation.

**Federal Legislation Impact on Teacher Supervision and Evaluation**

Federal legislation created mandates and policies on how school districts had to evaluate and supervise teachers. Prior to the mandates, school districts in the United States had more autonomy regarding how teachers were evaluated and supervised. In 2011, the Bush Administration reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), renaming it the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013), to close the achievement gap that was interconnected to ineffective teaching practices (Moldt, 2016). This federal educational legislation, NCLB, or Public Law (PL)
107-110 of the 107th Congress, called for improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged youth (U. S. Department of Education, 2002). As a result, all 50 states were required to implement an accountability system that included mandated high-stake assessments in ELA and mathematics in Grades 3-8. The goal of NCLB (2002) was that all students would make annual yearly progress on these exams to provide evidence of proficiency. NCLB mandated that school districts across the United States ensure that teachers who delivered instruction were highly qualified or certified in their grade level or content area, received professional development, and administered and analyzed high-stakes assessments results to illustrate student success toward standards while improved teaching practices (Moldt, 2016).

Presidential elections in the United States often impact and change the federal educational initiative (Meier, 2002). After the election of President Barack Obama, NCLB (2002) was revoked at the federal level. In 2009, President Barack Obama authorized the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and the United States Department of Education (USDOE) proposed the Race to the Top (RTTT) initiative. RTTT provided states that elected to join the reform an allocation of funds from the 4.3 billion dollar budget. Of the 50 states, 48 endorsed RTTT and took the funds with the intention to improve teaching and learning practices across all districts. Because of the adoption of RTTT, school districts, in negotiations with teacher unions, bargained the terms of the new teacher evaluation system.

There were significant differences between NCLB and RTTT requirements that impacted teachers. NCLB was primarily focused on the acquisition of high academic standards and students making annual yearly progress on state assessments (Lohman,
 Whereas, RTTT required participating states to adopt the Common Core English Language Arts and Mathematic Standards, collect student assessment data to monitor student progress, and design teacher evaluation systems that used student assessment scores to define teacher effectiveness (Lohman, 2010). RTTT legislation was suggesting that the main factor for student success on state assessments was based on the teacher, rather than other factors such as previous year teacher or other supports that the student was exposed to. Overall, changes in federal legislation have impacted educational policies and models of teacher supervision and evaluation systems at the state level.

**New York State Teacher Evaluation System**

Teacher evaluation systems in New York State have undergone significant changes within the last decade (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Policies, such as RTTT, from the USDOE required each state to revise how school districts evaluate teachers’ effectiveness (NYSED, 2016a). The rationale for revisions to teacher evaluation systems derived from the lack of student achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the area of reading, writing, math, and science in benchmark Grades 4, 8, and 12 (NAEP, 2018). Since 1969, NAEP has been considered the nation’s school report card to determine how students are progressing academically (NAEP, 2018). While New York State NAEP student achievement results dipped significantly below the national profile, 84% of New York State teachers were rated effective and highly effective on the teacher evaluation systems (NYSED, 2017). The disparity between low student academic performance scores and high rates of teacher effectiveness raised the question as to how most teachers in New York State can be rated highly when the students are falling behind academically (Disare, 2016). In response to this difference,
New York State changed the teacher evaluation systems to include measures of teacher effectiveness that correlated to proficient student achievement scores (Disare, 2016).

Papay (2012) posited that evaluating teacher effectiveness linked to student achievement on New York State assessments is problematic for school districts and teachers. Linking student achievement to teacher performance is problematic because of the number of factors that can contribute to student performance that are out of the control of teachers, school principals, as well as school districts (Papay, 2012). However, districts are bound to New York State Education Law §3012-d when implementing their teacher evaluation systems. Thus, school districts have limited decision-making power over most of the components mandated by education law (New York State Education Department, 2016). New York State school districts negotiate with the districts’ teachers’ union, individually, to establish the agreed-upon teacher evaluation system. Teacher evaluation plans are submitted for approval to New York State to follow required teacher evaluation system provisions. The purpose of the teacher evaluation system is for each teacher to receive an annual professional performance review (APPR), resulting in a composite score (NYSED, 2018). Depending on the district, the system serves as both supervision and evaluation purposes. According to NYSED (2018), evaluations shall be a significant factor in employment decisions, including but not limited to promotion, retention, tenure determination, termination, and supplemental compensation (evaluation), as well as teacher professional development including coaching, induction support, and differentiated professional development (supervision). In order to develop effective teacher evaluation systems, school districts may benefit from obtaining the teachers’ perspectives on what formative supervision practices provide growth producing
feedback to teachers with the intention for improvements to teaching and teacher development.

Doherty and Jacobs (2015), when publishing a comprehensive report for The National Council of Teacher Quality (NCTQ), summarized all states’ requirements for annual evaluations for teachers. Teacher evaluation systems across all 50 states were compared using eight components required by the federal educational legislation, RTTT (Doherty & Jacobs, 2015). These requirements included:

- annual teacher-required evaluations,
- student growth on state assessments calculated into teacher evaluation scores,
- a set number of required observations,
- teacher-required feedback,
- teacher evaluators must be certified to conduct evaluations,
- student growth measure is applied to teachers of non-tested subjects,
- use of student survey results based on teacher performance, and
- teacher tenure decisions are predicated by performance (Doherty & Jacobs, 2015).

According to Doherty and Jacobs (2015), out of the 50 states, New York State and Georgia complied with all but one of the components, use of student survey results, to rate teacher performance New York State incorporated six of the 11 actions of the Teacher Evaluation System that met the federal criteria: (a) tenure, (b) professional development, (c) improvement plans, (d) reporting of aggregate teacher ratings, (e) student teaching placements, and (f) teacher dismissal (Doherty & Jacobs, 2015).
Because of RTTT, New York State public school districts are held to the majority of the federal educational legislation criteria of teacher evaluation systems. All New York State districts are required, under Chapter 56 of Laws of 2015-Education Law §3012-d, to evaluate teacher performance once a year. According to NYSED (2018) the evaluation, commonly referred to as the APPR, is based on two categories: the student performance category and the teacher observation category, as a measure of teacher effectiveness. The Commissioner’s Regulations urge districts to use the results from APPRs to make employment decisions including promotion, retention, tenure determinations, termination, and supplemental compensation as well as to provide teacher professional development (NYSED, 2018).

**Summative Evaluation Practices**

According to Haefele (2013), summative evaluation practices focus on gathering data during formal teacher observations that are conducted by administrators. Avalos and Assael (2006) depicted summative evaluation practices as a prescriptive approach using the clinical supervision model that includes preconferences, formal announced and/or unannounced observations, and postconferences. The data collected from these evaluations is used to make employment decisions such as hiring, firing, teacher tenure determinations, and/or promotions (Avalos & Assael, 2006; Papay, 2012). Papay (2012) suggested that summative evaluation practices assess how effective teachers are doing their jobs. He explained that summative evaluation practices, such as formal observations, are used to hold teachers accountable, remove teachers who are not meeting the district’s standards, and rewarding teachers for doing an outstanding job (Papay, 2012).
Federal and state regulations and policies provide governance over these summative processes that are utilized in public school districts in the United States (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Modeled after Goldhammer’s (1969) clinical supervision model, classroom observation cycles are “the DeFacto, gold-standard” (Martinez et al., 2016, p. 15) and remain the method of choice for gaining systematic insight into teaching practices in teachers’ natural settings. Garza et al. (2016) described summative evaluation practices as bureaucratic approaches that support the assumption that leaders are the experts with direct authority over instruction.

School districts, teachers, and administrators have limited control over summative evaluation practices, as education law and policies govern and set the requirements for districts on the use of summative evaluation practices (Moldt, 2016). Portions of the teacher evaluation systems are developed through collective bargaining agreements between school districts and teachers’ unions (Kersten, & Israel, 2005). Danielson and McGreal (2000) claimed that legislators and policy makers are in favor of the summative evaluation practices supporting quality assurance and accountability. Legislators and policy makers feel that summative evaluation practices hold teachers more accountable (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Danielson and McGreal (2000) added that when teachers are not performing to the established standards, the policy mandates that the teachers be removed instead of giving them professional development with the intention to promote teacher development. If schools want systematic improvements in teaching and student learning, Donahue and Vogel (2018) emphasized that efforts to supplant summative evaluation practices need to shift focus to formative supervision practices that support continuous teacher improvement and development. However, the research has not asked
teachers if formative supervision practices make a difference in the improvement of their
teaching practices (Donahue & Vogel, 2018).

**Formative Supervision Practices**

Educators believe that systems to support teachers should be designed to focus on
professional development and improvement of teaching practices such as formative
described formative supervision practices as an appraisal system that endorses counseling
and training teachers based on data collected after informal, non-evaluative observations.
In addition, he inserted that formative supervision practices identify teachers’ strengths
and weaknesses, linking future professional development to help improve teaching
performance (Haefele, 1993). For these reasons, many teachers prefer formative
supervision practices to summative evaluative practices that support them to be more
effective in the classroom (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Range et al., 2013).

Papay (2012) indicated that formative supervision practices provide positive and
constructive feedback to teachers, and they support continuous teacher professional
development and growth. Formative supervision practices are defined as informal
methods to enhance professional skills of teachers (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Haefele,
1993; Papay, 2012). Range et al. (2013) described formative supervision practices as
proactive rather than reactive practices. In addition, formative supervision practices
create a more holistic visual for administrators on teacher effectiveness (Range et al.,
2013). Formative supervision practices provide developmental feedback to guide teacher
improvement (Martinez et al., 2016). Examples from the field include constructive
feedback, recognizing and reinforcing quality practice, providing professional
development, and unifying teacher and administrators to advance student learning (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Continuing to support the notion of formative supervision practices within the current teacher evaluation system, Garza et al. (2016) conveyed that there is a common shared belief of enhancing instructional practice of teachers through collaborative approaches. Furthermore, formative supervision practices support the assumption that the administrator is a coach through distributed power and shared responsibility to improve the teaching (Garza et al., 2016). School districts have control over the development and use of formative supervision practices outside of the required summative evaluation practices prescribed in education law.

New York State school districts are required to comply with teacher evaluation policies defined in regulation and education law (nysenate.gov). However, districts have the autonomy to work with their organizations to use formative supervision practices to provide growth-producing feedback to teachers to ensure improvement in teaching practices. Formative supervision practices yield the largest impact on instruction by identifying the professional development needs of teachers (Delvaux et al., 2013). The purpose of this study is to systematically assess the evidence about formative supervision practices that support improvement in teaching and to identify key themes in the empirical literature relating to teacher development and continuous growth.

Exploring teacher evaluation systems with the formative supervision purpose of teacher development and learning has been scarce throughout the literature. Educators and policy makers need to better understand how information collected from formative supervision practices can lead to growth-producing to teachers (Martinez et al., 2016). At the time of this study, Garza et al. (2016) supported that there is an absence of teachers’
voice in the literature regarding if and how feedback from formative supervision practices lead teachers to learn and improve teaching strategies. By further understanding the perspective of how teachers learn to improve their teaching, this information could provide new insight on effective and ineffective supervision practices of school principals. The teachers’ perspectives should provide insights, adding to the empirical research on how to make the process more efficient and effective.

Problem Statement

As a result of the use of student assessment data to evaluate teacher effectiveness, the current teacher evaluation systems in New York State have caused political dissent (Moldt, 2016). Consensus has been growing among teachers, administrators, and policy makers that teacher evaluation systems are broken and needs fixing (Papay, 2012). One limitation in the current system is the tension regarding the definition and use of supervision and evaluation practices (Mette et al., 2017). Another limitation in the current teacher supervision and evaluation system requires administrators to utilize more evaluative practices to assess teachers (NYSED, 2015). However, research has found that formative supervision practices are more effective in helping teachers learn and improve their instructional practices (Delvaux et al., 2013). Additionally, many of the studies exploring teacher supervision and evaluation practices have captured the perspective of administrators from urban and suburban settings.

Challenges in Rural Schools

The National School Boards Association Center for Public Education (2013) reported that 11.1% of students in New York State attend a rural public school, meaning that most of the students in New York State attend suburban and urban public schools. As
a result, policy makers direct their attention to suburban and urban school districts (Lavalley, 2018). Little attention is given to policies that impact rural public schools. According to Lavalley (2018), rural schools are confronted with unique challenges. They have limited advanced-course offerings, low rates of college attendance, low student reading achievement, low student attendance, and limited ability at finding qualified teachers (Lavalley, 2018).

Rural schools are challenged with the recruitment of highly qualified teachers (Lavalley, 2018). Teachers with more superior qualifications are less likely to apply to rural settings (Fowles et al., 2014). Therefore, rural schools employ more novice teachers, or teachers with 2 or 3 years of experience, than experienced teachers, compared to suburban districts (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2012). Player (2015) posited that rural teachers tend to graduate from low quality colleges; consequently, they may be considered less qualified. Teachers in rural schools have limited access to professional development (Johnson & Howley, 2015). As a result of limited access, rural teachers participate in professional learning at a lower rate than teachers in urban and suburban schools (Lavalley, 2018). Due to the identified challenges of rural schools, Johnson et al. (2014) identified that superintendents report that they do not remove poorly performing teachers because of the resulting hardship of recruiting highly qualified teachers. For these reasons, this study sought to better understand teachers’ perspectives from a rural school district regarding the use of supervision and evaluation practices in helping teachers learn and grow their instructional practices to be more effective.
Theoretical Rationale

Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggested that a theoretical framework provides a conceptual lens to identify patterns and generalizations of the topic or phenomena being studied. “This lens becomes a transformative perspective that shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 62). The central theoretical framework that is highlighted in this paper is Knowles’s (1950) principles of adult learning theory, which is andragogy. The andragogy theory provides a framework to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of teachers, within a case study, who participate in the phenomenon of the teacher evaluation process. Data collection and analysis of personal accounts, processes, protocols, and documents of a single case provided an in-depth understanding of the assumptions of teachers as adult learners engaged in supervision practices. Andragogy provided insight into how teachers learn, and it will help the field of education understand formative supervision practices that are more responsive to the needs of teachers and teacher development (Corley, 2011).

Adult Learning Theory of Andragogy

Dating back to the 7th century, the practice of teaching children was referred to as pedagogy (Knowles et al., 2015). The art and science of teaching children served as the foundation of schools in the United States through the 12th century (Knowles et al., 2015). According to Loeng (2017), German educator, Alexander Kapp, was the first to correlate andragogy to adult learning. In 1833, Kapp described the phenomena of adult learning as “perfecting human nature as the ideal” (Loeng, 2017, p. 631). As a result of studying Plato’s writings, Kapp promoted andragogy as the ability to gain insight through
understanding ourselves inward (Loeng, 2017). Consequently, Kapp’s use of andragogy appeared to lie dormant in the research. According to Smith (2010), historian and philosopher, Eugene Rosenstock, used the term again in 1921. In a report, Rosenstock argued that andragogy, or adult education, required special teachers, methods, and philosophy. The term andragogy was used in France, Yugoslavia, and Holland to describe the discipline that studies adult education (Smith, 2010). By the end of World War I, the characteristics of adult learners emerged in the literature. According to Knowles et al. (2015), Eduard Linderman, influenced by John Dewey, laid the foundation of six assumptions to adult learning in 1926.

Scholars of adult learning theory attribute Knowles (1950) as being the originator of andragogy (Merriam, 2009). Knowles (1950) recognized that there was more attention given to teaching children and the concept of pedagogy than adult learning and the concept of andragogy. He also recognized that there were differences in the way adults learned as opposed to the way children learn (Merriam, 2009). Andragogy capitalizes on the unique learning styles and strengths of adult learners. According to Knowles et al. (2015), there are six principles, or assumptions, of andragogy: (a) teachers need to know the reasons to learn, (b) teacher self-concept, (c) teacher prior experience, (d) readiness of the teacher to learn, (e) orientation of the teacher to learn, and (f) motivation of the teacher to learn.

To set the context of the theory as it relates to K-12 teachers as adult learners during the teacher supervision and evaluation process that is intended to make a positive impact on teacher professional learning and development, Appendix A provides a visual representation of the adult learning theory of andragogy. The theoretical framework of
andragogy in this study explored teachers’ perceptions and lived experiences of the purpose and relevancy of formative supervision practices to learn and improve teaching practices. Knowles et al. (2015) identified that adult learners need to see the relevancy and know the purpose of new learning. Additionally, adults are more likely to change or enhance their teaching practices when they are given a choice and are part of the process of collaboration with an administrator (Knowles et al., 2015). Hayes (2016) added that adults are more apt to learn when they are motivated, and they understand how the learning will positively benefit them personally. The primary goal of andragogy is the promotion of growth while taking into consideration the subject area, environment, and learning differences of the individual (Knowles et al., 2015).

**Andragogy’s Connection to Teacher Formative Supervision Practices**

Knowles (1950) identified that adults learn best in informal, flexible, non-threatening settings. Most adult learners are anxious to do their jobs better (Knowles, 1950). Knowles (1950) posited that adult education administrators and teachers do not agree on the use of formative practices, therefore creating tension regarding how to best support teacher development while providing growth-producing feedback to teachers. The adult learning theory continues to support the notion that teachers appreciate having administrators show enough interest in their work to drop in to visit the teachers’ classes and see their teaching in action (Knowles, 1950). “Andragogy is an intentional and/or professionally guided activity that aims to promote a change in an adult person” (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 40). The purpose of the adult learning theory of andragogy is to make an impact on the improvement of teaching practices in elementary and secondary education (Knowles et al., 2015). For the teacher, formative supervision practices are to
be efficient and effective in a school system, this proposed study will explore how the six principles of andragogy play a pivotal role in better understanding how teachers will learn and improve teaching practices.

**Statement of Purpose**

This case study has significance in the field of education in New York State public school districts. The purpose of this research study was to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a rural school district impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve instructional practices. In addition, the study intended to explore if teachers in a small, rural school district had experienced formative supervision practices that helped them learn or improve their teaching practices.

This qualitative descriptive case study aimed to collect and analyze multiple data sources, including interviews and document reviews, to explore a real-life case of teachers who have experienced the New York State teacher supervision and evaluation process. Additionally, this case study obtained an in-depth, rural perspective that may lead to increased understanding of how public-school districts can use formative supervision practices to improve and enhance teaching (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this qualitative descriptive case study:

1. What factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impacted the extent to which the teachers learned and improved their instructional practices?
2. To what extent did teachers in a small, rural school district experience formative supervision practices that led to changes or improvements in their instructional practices?

Significance of the Study

With pending changes in Education Law §3012-d in New York State, the results from this case study could provide new information to researchers, practitioners, and policy makers that may lead to revisions in the existing teacher evaluation systems. Aside from providing new information to researchers, practitioners, and policy makers regarding teacher supervision and evaluation practices, this study addresses the gap in the current literature by capturing the teachers’ voices and learning more about what will help teachers learn and improve their teaching skills beyond the required evaluation practices in the context of a case study. In addition, this case study will add to the existing body of knowledge by reporting on teachers’ experiences of the supervision and evaluation system in a New York small, rural school that intended to support teacher improvement and development.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this study and are defined to provide an essential understanding for the readers:

Administrator(s)/Administration – an individual who holds hold a Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS). Administrators/administration can include the following titles: assistant principal, assistant superintendent, director, manager, principal, superintendent, and/or vice principal. Administrators/administration are the instructional leaders of a
school district who serve as evaluators in the teacher evaluation system and conduct unannounced and announced teacher observations and/or classroom walkthroughs.

Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR). All districts are required, under Chapter 56 of Laws of 2015; Education Law §3012-d, to evaluate teacher performance annually. The evaluation is based on two categories, the student performance category and the observation category, as measures of teacher effectiveness. The results of the evaluations can be a significant factor in employment decisions to promotion, retention, tenure determinations, termination, and supplemental compensation as well as teacher professional development (NYSED, 2018).

Clinical Supervision Model – a three-part process used to formally evaluate teachers’ performance in the classroom. The process includes a preconference, classroom observation, and a postconference between the teacher being evaluated and the school or district administrator (Martinez, 2016; Range et al., 2013).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – signed into law by President Lyndon Baines Johnson. The purpose of ESEA was to establish a commitment by the federal government to quality and equity in educating young people (USDOE, 2015).

Flexibility to NCLB or Race to the Top (RTTT) – act signed into law in 2012 by President Barack Obama. The purpose of RTTT was to allow states flexibility in adopting the college and career readiness standards and accountability plan to close the achievement gap as well as to ensure districts were implementing teacher and principal evaluation plans (USDOE, 2015).

Formative Supervision Practices – processes that focus on the improvement of teaching practices through professional development and collegial conversations (Avalos
& Assael, 2006). Administrators give growth-producing feedback to teachers after walkthroughs or classroom visits to guide teacher improvement (Martinez et al., 2016).

**Growth-Producing Feedback** – information that is intended to support teaching practices after a walkthrough or classroom visit. The feedback often answers the questions, “What was observed that advances student learning and/or what is the next step in the teachers’ learning journey?” (Oliver, 2019).

**Instructional/Classroom Walkthroughs** – unannounced, informal classroom visits that last no longer than 10 to 15 minutes. Walkthroughs are a tool used by administrators to collect data for the purpose of school improvement. Feedback is often provided to teachers with the intention to provide growth-producing feedback on instructional practices and/or district-related initiatives. Walkthroughs provide the leadership with the ability to gauge curriculum and instruction, climate, and ongoing school renewal (DeBoer & Hinoja, 2012).

**National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) or The Nation’s Report Card** – measures for Grades 4, 8, and 12 students’ academic progress in the area of reading, writing, science, and math in school districts in the United States of America since 1969.

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB)** – act signed into law by President George W. Bush. The purpose of NCLB was to expose and close the achievement gap of all learners in the United States. Raised accountability measures for school districts to support students at-risk of failure (Klein, 2015).

**Observation** – the process when an administrator conducts a classroom visit in person or with the use of video for a designated amount of time to observe the teacher
teaching the class. Observations can be announced whereas the teacher and the administrator mutually agree on a time to observe and/or unannounced whereas the administrator visits the classroom without prior knowledge of the teacher (NYSED, n.d.).

*Summative Evaluation Practices* – processes that focus on decision-making for merit pay, tenure, and retention of teachers, based on scores from a standards-based rubric. Summative evaluations hold teachers accountable for student achievement. (Mette et al., 2017).

*Teacher Evaluation Systems* – formal processes a school district uses to review and rate teachers’ performance and effectiveness in the classroom (Sawchuck, 2015).

**Chapter Summary**

The history of teacher supervision and evaluation practices provides the background and context to current evaluation practices that support teacher growth and improvement. The two purposes of teacher evaluation are referred to as summative evaluation practices and formative summative practices. Summative evaluation practices assist school districts in making decisions regarding teacher hiring, retention, termination, and merit pay. These practices are classified as formal observations that are prescriptive in nature. New York State School districts are bound to these provisions as outlined in Education Law §3012-d. Formative supervision practices provide a vehicle for K-12 public school and district leaders to provide constructive feedback and professional development opportunities to teachers with the intention to improve teaching practices. New York State School districts have autonomy to implement formative supervision practices outside of Education Law §3012-d. The literature indicates that there remains tension between the conceptual understanding of supervision and evaluation practices in
supporting teacher effectiveness. In addition, at the time of this study, there was a lack of studies that capture the rural teachers’ perspective and lived experiences regarding how formative supervision practices can provide growth-producing feedback to improve teaching.

The next chapter provides a literature review of the purpose of teacher evaluation systems. In addition, Chapter 2 identifies three perspectives from aspiring school principals, school principals, and teachers on the use of K-12 supervision and evaluation practices that contribute to factors that motivate teacher learning and development. Chapter 3 describes the research context, research population of interest, and instruments used in this qualitative descriptive case study. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the data to report the outcomes, and Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study implications, conclusions, and recommendations.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

Teacher supervision and evaluation practices in K-12 public schools can have an important role in improving teaching and ensuring a school has effective teachers so that students can learn and grow. The way in which some teacher supervision and evaluation systems are carried out in a school district may or may not help with the growth of teachers and the improvement of teaching practices (Boyland et al., 2014; Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Dudek et al., 2019; Garza et al., 2016; Grissom et al., 2013; Ing, 2013; Mette et al., 2017; Range et al., 2011, 2013; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014; Range, McKim, et al., 2014; Reddy et al., 2017; Sundstrom-Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2013; Young et al., 2015).

This chapter includes a review of the empirical research regarding factors of supervision and evaluation practices that help teachers improve and grow. The literature review is broken into three sections based on the unique experiences of (a) school principals, (b) aspiring school principals, and (c) teachers regarding the purposes of teacher supervision and evaluation practices. Unique perspectives from the principals, aspiring principals, and teachers provide insight regarding the most effective and/or ineffective practices used in teacher supervision and evaluation systems, which were intended to provide growth-producing feedback to promote teacher learning and growth. The following research questions guided this qualitative descriptive case study:
1. What factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impacted the extent to which the teachers learned and improved their instructional practices?

2. To what extent did teachers in a small, rural school district experience formative supervision practices that led to changes or improvements in their instructional practices?

**Perception of Teacher Evaluation Systems**

School principals, aspiring principals, and teachers bring a unique perspective to teacher evaluation systems. Principals are the instructional leaders who are responsible for the execution of teacher’s observations and evaluations within a school building (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Six studies explored principals’ perceptions and beliefs regarding the use of teacher supervision and evaluation practices to support teachers’ improvement in instructional practice (Boyland et al., 2014; Grissom et al., 2013; Mette et al., 2017; Range et al., 2011; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014; Young et al., 2015). Additionally, aspiring principals, who were still classroom teachers, also brought their perspective on the teacher evaluation system. According to Mitgang and Gill (2012), aspiring principals encounter teacher evaluations and can provide personal perceptions regarding what supervision and evaluation practices can help teachers learn and improve their instructional practices. Qualitative studies add to the research of how aspiring principals inform the impact of teacher evaluation practices to teacher development (Range, McKim, et al., 2014; Garza et al., 2016). Teachers and principals, together, often provide a joint perspective as each engage in a collaborative approach to teacher evaluation systems. Understanding the attitudes and beliefs of both stakeholder group
will highlight the lived experience of improving teaching (Ing, 2013; Reddy et al., 2017; Sundstrom-Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2013). Finally, teachers’ perception of teacher evaluation systems has been lacking in the empirical research. Donahue and Vogel (2018), Dudek et al. (2019), Mette et al. (2015), and Range et al. (2013) captured the teachers’ voices regarding what supervision and evaluation systems impact teacher improvement.

**School Principals’ Perception of Teacher Evaluation Systems**

School principals are the stakeholders in K-12 education that offer a unique perspective on teacher evaluation systems. The principal is often referred to as the instructional leader of a school in K-12 education. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) identified a three-dimensional model with 10 functions of effective instructional leaders. Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) model highlights a key function that is relevant to the commitment to teacher improvement. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) posited that instructional leaders are characterized as principals who “deeply engage in stimulating, supervising, and monitoring teaching and learning in the school” (p. 226). Therefore, principals play a pivotal role in evaluating, supervising, and helping teachers improve their teaching practices. Because principals are part of the clinical supervision model, their perspective on effective and ineffective practices in the observation process is relevant to the research. This section provides a synthesis of six studies that explore principals’ perceptions and beliefs regarding the use of teacher supervision and evaluation practices to support teachers’ improvement in instructional practice (Boyland et al., 2014; Grissom et al., 2013; Mette et al., 2017; Range et al., 2011; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014; Young et al., 2015).
The purpose of the Range et al. (2011) study was to explore the strategies used to monitor teacher evaluations using evaluation and supervisory practices. Supervisory practices in the Range et al. (2011) study were defined as a means “to build capacity in teachers and application to professional development” (p. 254). Conversely, Range et al. (2011) defined evaluation practices to “rate the performance of teachers, often culminating in reappointment, termination, or assessment of merit pay” (p. 245).

To obtain principals’ perceptions of teacher evaluation systems, principals were surveyed using an adapted survey instrument, developed by Minnerar-Peplinski in 2009, that was divided into three sections (Range, et al., 2011). The first section of the Range et al. (2011) study measured attitudes and actions of principals geared toward formative supervision practices that provide professional development opportunities to increase teacher capacity. The second measured principal attitudes and actions focusing on evaluative practices and teacher behaviors. The final section of the Range et al. (2011) study included open-ended questions to capture the characteristics or descriptive statistics of principals surveyed. Of the principals surveyed, 52% of the principals were from elementary schools, 17% were from middle schools, and 26% were high school principals. Of the principals surveyed, 66% were male and 59% of the principals surveyed were 51 years or older. The Range et al. (2011) study illustrated that there was not a significant difference in preference toward supervisory practices from elementary to secondary principals. The survey results did reveal, however, that elementary principals gravitate more toward evaluative practices compared to secondary principals.

There were three other findings revealed in the Range et al. study (2011). Principals in the Range et al. (2011) study expressed frustration regarding time
constraints, the use of lengthy evaluation tools, and teacher (un)willingness to change. According to Range et al. (2011), principals reported that they were unable to devote as much time to instructional leadership because of conflicting tasks such as running a building and supervising too many staff members. Additionally, the use of evaluation rubrics during the evaluation process took an abundant amount of time. To accommodate for the lengthiness of the rubric, the principals reported that there had been attempts made by the districts to modify the rubric to make it more manageable (Range et al., 2011). However, as an unintended consequence, the modification of the teacher evaluation instrument contributed to the lack of a uniform tool to measure teacher effectiveness that was implemented in a consistent manner. Range et al. (2011) found that principals reported that nontenured teachers implemented the feedback, whereas the tenured teachers were unwilling to change their teaching practices.

Range et al. (2011) ascertained that the principals reported using a variety of formative practices during the teacher supervision and evaluation process. For example, principals delivered coaching to struggling teachers. In addition, teachers were free to use new strategies in their classrooms after being given recommendations from the administrator during the postconference. Range et al. (2011) revealed that instructional leaders provided feedback when engaged in supervisory practices with their teachers. Among the principals in the Range et al. (2011) study, there was a perception that instructional standards drove the instruction. However, the principals reported that the evaluation practices limited the use of informal discussions with the teachers about instruction as well as there was a lack of professional development opportunities that were extended to the teachers after they were evaluated to improve their teaching
practices (Range et al., 2011). Therefore, the Range et al. (2011) study illustrates a gap in the literature. The principals reported that the teachers were not motivated to use the new strategies suggested to them after their evaluation. However, Range et al. (2011) did not survey the teachers to better understand the teachers’ motivation or willingness to change after engaging in formative practices.

Furthermore, Range et al. (2011) found that the principals reported using classroom walkthroughs as a counterbalance to the demands on their time. According to Range et al. (2011), the principals stated that classroom walkthroughs were a more efficient, formative supervision practice that they used to collect information on teachers in real time. The classroom walkthroughs served as a catalyst for feedback and discussion with the teachers. The principals in the Range et al. (2011) study described evaluations or summative observations as “dog and pony shows” (p. 256). Traditional observations are often staged, whereas a classroom walkthrough provides a vehicle to see realistic teaching (Range et al., 2011). Range et al. (2011) did not survey the teachers to understand if the use of formative practices, such as classroom walkthroughs as opposed to evaluative formal observations, provided growth-producing feedback that led to the improvement of teaching practices.

Like Range et al. (2011), Grissom et al. (2013) investigated principals’ perspectives on the topic of teacher supervision and evaluation. The purpose of the Grissom et al. (2013) study was to explore what tasks principals conducted and how they spent their time to exemplify themselves as an instructional leader who was responsible for improving teaching practices. The Grissom et al. (2013) longitudinal study occurred over 3 years with 620 elementary, middle, and high school principals. Grissom et al.
(2013) found that principals in Florida spent most of their time conducting formative supervision practices, such as walkthroughs and coaching, to provide support and feedback to teachers. Additionally, the principals in the low socioeconomically challenged schools spent more time in classrooms supporting the teachers’ instruction because of the diverse instructional needs of the students. Follow-up interviews revealed that the principals reported that having a hands-on approach via walkthroughs not only supported instructional practices, but also it indirectly supported student achievement (Grissom et al., 2013).

The Range et al. (2011) and Grissom et al. (2013) studies support the use of classroom walkthroughs as a formative supervision practice to monitor and provide teachers with feedback on their instruction. Range et al. (2011) and Grissom et al. (2013) identified that there are time constraints placed on principals daily that limit the time they can dedicate to supervision and evaluation of teachers. As a result, classroom walkthroughs are efficient formative practices for some principals to gather information, while allowing them to be visible in the school and provide instructional support and feedback to teachers (Grissom et al., 2013; Range et al., 2011). However, the Range et al. (2011) and Grissom et al. (2013) studies did not survey the teachers to better understand if the feedback from walkthroughs was providing teachers with instructional support to improving teaching practices. When classroom walkthroughs are used as formative supervision methods, as opposed to the evaluation of teachers, the principals stated that they were more able to engage in coaching, provide feedback about teaching, and connect teachers to additional resources and professional development opportunities (Grissom et al., 2013).
Despite the Range et al. (2011) and Grissom et al. (2013) findings, neither study explicitly identified how the growth-producing feedback was disseminated to the teachers nor did they explore if teachers improved or changed their teaching practices. The Range et al. (2011) and Grissom et al. (2015) studies provide evidence that some principals are engaging in formative supervision practices. However, the studies do not provide how the practices were experienced by the teachers and how the feedback helped or did not help the teachers improve their teaching. Although studies in formative supervision practices have examined principals’ perceptions, there has not been a focus on the learning experiences of teachers within the teacher evaluation system. As such, this case study fills the gap by providing additional insight into what formative supervision practices teachers need for timely, relevant feedback that is intended to change and/or enhance teaching practices.

The Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) descriptive study identified factors that can influence the effective implementation of formative supervision practices by principles—besides the lack of time. Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) investigated the role the gender of an administrator may have on effective teacher evaluation processes, particularly when addressing marginal teachers (Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014). An online survey instrument was used to understand the role leadership gender plays throughout the formative supervision process when confronted with marginal teachers. Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) defined a marginal teacher as a teacher who exhibits a negative attitude toward teaching and, consequently, has poor classroom management skills. Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) investigated what formative supervisory methods were used to improve both tenure and nontenured marginal teachers. Regardless
of gender, female and male principals identified that classroom walkthroughs and informal, unannounced observations were the most useful formative supervision method for monitoring marginal teachers’ instructional performance (Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014). Principals in the Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) study stated that the overreliance on formal, announced observations provided inaccurate evaluation data. Female and male principals in the Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) study identified the data as inaccurate because teachers know that the evaluation is occurring; therefore, the evaluation results would be skewed. Use of informal classroom walkthroughs as a formative supervision practice allowed the principals of both gender groups to spend less time in the classroom on a more routine basis (Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014).

In the Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) study, gender played a factor in the execution of supervision and evaluation of teachers. Female principals gravitated toward supervisory practices more than male administrators when addressing marginal teachers (Range et al., 2014). The Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) study showcased that female principals are more proactive and detailed-orientated while adhering to teacher evaluation processes. The identified approaches of the Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) study suggest that the gender of principals may have had an influence in some teacher evaluation systems. When providing remediation to developing and ineffective teachers, female principals might value supervisory practices more than male principals. Nonetheless, Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) suggests that principals, regardless of gender, need to rely on preemptive, organized processes that provide growth-producing feedback to marginal teachers to promote teacher development and growth. According to Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014), the gender of a principal may impact how feedback is
provided to marginal teachers. However, Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) did not include the perspective of the teacher as to whether gender of a principal mattered to their changing or improving their teaching practices.

Like Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014), Boyland et al. (2014) also conducted a quantitative study of elementary and secondary principals to gather principals’ perceptions of the use of both teacher supervision and evaluation practices to improve teacher instruction. The purpose of the Boyland et al. (2014) study was to obtain the principals’ knowledge and use of both teacher evaluation methods and supervision methods that determine teacher effectiveness. Additionally, Boyland et al. (2014) explored the fidelity in which the evaluations were conducted, which were correlated to the principals’ ratings of effectiveness based on the summative and formative approaches used in the districts in Indiana. A survey created by the researchers was distributed to principals in school districts across the state to measure how the principals conducted teacher evaluations that determined teacher effectiveness as well as improved teacher practice.

The Boyland et al. (2014) findings reveal that, of the principals surveyed, the principals had a strong knowledge base of teacher evaluation processes that improved teaching practices. Overall, the study identified that both elementary and secondary principal observation practices fell within the summative evaluation category. Formative practices, such as coaching, feedback, and professional development, were methods used at a lower rate to support improvement in teaching practices. Although formative practices were used at a reduced frequency, principals reported that the use of classroom walkthroughs and teacher goal setting was most effective when engaging in the teacher
evaluation processes (Boyland et al., 2014). Given the structure of Indiana’s teacher evaluation system, the summative evaluation practices, following the clinical supervision model, was the common method of evaluating teachers used by the principals. The principals in the Boyland et al. (2014) study also reported that summative evaluation methods are often time consuming. In addition, the principals perceived that only providing a written narrative to teachers, after an evaluative observation, does not adequately provide feedback to teachers to improve their instruction (Boyland et al., 2014). Teachers in the Boyland et al. (2014) study were not surveyed to better understand if the summative evaluation methods were effective in improving their teaching practices.

Similar to the Boyland et al. (2014) study, the Young et al. (2015) study supports that principals are important in using supervision and evaluation practices to improve teaching. The purpose of the Young et al. (2015) quantitative study was to gather principals’ best predictors of evaluation systems in evaluating teachers, beliefs on the purpose of teacher evaluation systems, and how teacher evaluation systems measure teachers’ behavior and instructional strategies.

The Young et al. (2015) study supported teacher evaluation systems through the lens of both supervision and evaluation practices. Young et al. (2015) found that the best predictor of evaluating teachers was the clinical supervision model used to conduct teacher observations. Principals used preconferences, observations, and postconferences as the mechanisms to collect data on teacher performance to provide a rating and give feedback to the teachers (Young et al., 2015). The principals in the Young et al. (2015) study reported that they supported the purpose of supervision and evaluation practices to rate teachers’ performances and to support teacher development and growth. The
principals stated that the use of multiple measures to evaluate and supervise teachers provided a balance (Young et al., 2015). However, the Young et al. (2015) survey results identified that principals also relied on formative supervision practices, such as walkthroughs, more than evaluative practices (Young et al., 2015). The principals in the Young et al. (2015) study reported that formative practices guided principals to suggest improvements in teaching practices and to provide feedback to teachers rather than just providing the teachers with a score based on the principals’ observations. Formative supervision practices, such as walkthroughs, provided the principals in the Young et al. (2015) study with ongoing opportunities to monitor the teachers’ behaviors and instructional strategies that they used in the classroom and to provide feedback to support the teachers’ development. The results of Young et al. (2015) support that principals can use both supervision and evaluation practices to help teachers learn and grow.

Overall, the studies in this section found that many principals agreed that the purpose of teacher evaluation systems was for principals to provide teachers with the means to improve their teaching practices (Boyland et al., 2014; Grissom et al., 2013; Range et al., 2011; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014; Young et al., 2015). Boyland et al. (2014), Grissom et al. (2013), Range et al., (2011), Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014, and Young et al. (2015) found that principals are the instructional leaders, and they are responsible for providing feedback to teachers. The perceptions of some principals regarding their knowledge and use of teacher evaluation practices were investigated in the studies. In addition, the studies revealed several barriers for principals that can prevent them from engaging in formative supervision practices. For example, the lack of time was found to be a major barrier for many principals. The studies also seemed to
reveal the different types of practices, such as walkthroughs and coaching, to support teacher improvement and promote teacher growth. After the completion of informal observations using walkthroughs and formal observations using the clinical supervision model, it was necessary for the administrators to provide feedback to the teachers in a timely fashion (Boyland et al., 2014; Grissom et al., 2013; Mette et al., 2015; Range et al., 2011; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014; Young et al., 2015). As instructional leaders, principals in the Grissom et al. (2013) study revealed that professional development needs to be provided to teachers as a result of the teacher evaluation process. Principals in the Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) study indicated that coaching is a method that should be used with marginal teachers to address issues identified in teachers’ attitudes and classroom management. Range, Hewitt, and Young (2014) posited that coaching can be an effective method to build the capacity of teachers. However, the findings reveal that the principals spent the least amount of time engaged in the coaching process (Grissom et al., 2013; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014).

Principals in the studies included in this section understood the purpose of teacher supervision and evaluation practices. Range et al. (2011) discovered that despite the understanding of the purpose and importance of teacher evaluation systems, principals voiced frustration with the extensive amount of time observations take and the number of teachers the principals were required to observe. To adequately support the teachers through the clinical supervision model, including preconferences, observations, and postconferences, principals spend much of their time in classrooms (Grissom et al., 2013; Range et al., 2011). Research investigating principals’ perceptions on teacher supervision and evaluation practices suggests that timely feedback, coaching, and walkthroughs were
all formative practices that principals reported being effective to teacher improvement. (Boyland et al., 2014; Grissom et al., 2013; Range et al., 2011; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014; Young et al., 2015). Walkthroughs and coaching as a formative supervision practice allowed the principals with a quick mechanism for collecting data regarding what is occurring daily in the classrooms (Boyland et al., 2014; Range et al., 2011).

There continues to be a gap in the literature of the principals’ perceptions regarding how feedback is disseminated to the teachers after the use of formative supervision practices such as walkthroughs and/or coaching. The studies did not investigate the experience of the teachers about how the different formative supervision practices provided the kind of feedback that led to improving their teaching (Boyland et al., 2014; Grissom et al., 2013; Mette et al., 2015; Range et al., 2011; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014; Young et al., 2015). If teachers are not learning through the principals engaging in formative supervision practices, then they may not improve (Boyland et al., 2014; Range et al., 2011).

**Aspiring Principals’ Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation Systems**

Educational leadership or principal preparation programs in the United States have been a catalyst for school improvement (Hernandez et al., 2012; Range, McKim, et al., 2014); Risen & Tripes, 2008). According to Mitgang and Gill (2012), a critical aspect of aspiring principal training programs is to provide instruction on how principals can provide coaching and professional development to teachers and to provide future principals with a solid definition of the purpose of formative and summative practices that can improve teaching. In Mitgang and Gill (2012), aspiring principals, who were still classroom teachers, provided a unique perspective on teacher evaluation systems because
they were experiencing the teacher evaluation system and can provide insight on what formative supervision practices can help them to learn and improve their teaching.

Range, McKim, et al., (2014) and Garza et al. (2016) conducted qualitative research studies to gather the perceptions of aspiring principals, who are defined as teachers who take graduate-level courses to become certified as principals (Range, McKim, et al., 2014; Garza et al., 2016). Specifically, both the Range, McKim, et al. (2014) and the Garza et al. (2016) studies aimed to understand the aspiring principals’ knowledge base of teacher evaluation systems that provide teachers with growth-producing feedback for teaching improvement. Range, McKim, et al. (2014) and Garza et al. (2016) explored the role of the principals engaged in formative supervision practices as well as barriers to the teacher evaluation process.

The Range, McKim, et al. (2014) qualitative study surveyed 32 graduate students enrolled in an online program at a 4-year Western state university. Range, McKim, et al. (2014) created an online discussion board thread given to the 32 aspiring principals. Axial coding was used to create themes from thoughts from the aspiring principals for further analysis to determine the significant findings (Range, McKim, et al., 2014). Range, McKim, et al. (2014) identified several findings in their study to gather aspiring principals’ perceptions of supervision and evaluation.

Feedback was the first emerging theme from the Range, McKim, et al. (2014) qualitative study of aspiring principals. The participants in the Range, McKim, et al. (2014) study defined supervision as a frequent process culminating in timely feedback that is differentiated based on the level of the teachers. In addition, Range, McKim, et al. (2014) found that aspiring principals reported feeling that feedback needed to be ongoing.
with a focus on continuous improvement of teaching practices. Range, McKim, et al. (2014) also supported the notion of using the post-conference component of the teacher observation process as a setting to provide feedback. According to Range, McKim, et al. (2014), the postconference allowed the principal and teacher to engage in a discussion of what occurred during the classroom walkthrough or observation. The findings suggest that postconferences can provide helpful feedback that can lead to improvement in teaching practices and student achievement. Aspiring principals in the Range, McKim, et al. (2014) study reported that effective formative supervision practices should consist of immediate, valuable feedback that give teachers the means for growth and to promote adult learning.

Range, McKim, et al. (2014) found that aspiring principals indicated that supervision practices of teachers should also be connected to professional development. When professional development is attached to supervision practices, aspiring principals reported that teachers’ anxiety tended to be reduced (Range, McKim, et al., 2014). As classroom teachers who are aspiring to be future instructional leaders, the participants in the Range, McKim, et al. (2014) study viewed summative evaluation processes as high stakes. Aspiring principals perceived the formative supervision practices as more beneficial or providing feedback to teachers (Range, McKim, et al., 2014). The connection of professional development that is linked to formative supervision practices provides teachers with opportunities for growth, and they ensure teachers are improving their instructional practices (Range, McKim, et al., 2014).

Besides the identified theme of connecting professional development to teacher evaluation processes, Range, McKim, et al. (2014) confirmed an additional theme to
contribute to the literature. Range, McKim, et al. (2014) identified that aspiring principals have the knowledge and working understanding of the purposes of supervision and evaluation practices. Aspiring principals defined supervision as the means to provide teachers with ongoing, differentiated feedback that focuses on growth and improvement (Range, McKim, et al., 2014). According to Range, McKim, et al. (2014), aspiring principals stated that effective supervision practices of teachers become more effective when there are trusting relationships between principals and teachers. Finally, the Range, McKim, et al. (2014) study revealed that supervision and evaluation practices should be a collaborative process between principals and teachers to help teachers think about how they can improve based on the feedback received.

Garza et al. (2016) conducted a similar qualitative study 2 years after the Range, McKim, et al. (2014) study of aspiring principals. In a 4-year Western state university Garza et al. (2016) studied how to understand the phenomenon of supervision and evaluation practices—specifically the use of walkthrough practices and the role of the principal. In contrast to the Range, McKim, et al. (2014) study, Garza et al. (2016) surveyed 22 graduate students enrolled in educational leadership programs to inquire about the nature, purpose, challenges, and utility of walkthrough protocols. Walkthroughs were identified as brief, informal, and/or unannounced observations.

Like the Range, McKim, et al. (2014) study, feedback from formative supervision practices was an emerging theme from the Garza et al. (2016) study that focused on perceptions from aspiring principals. Garza et al. (2016) found that aspiring principals had high regard for the use the formative supervision practice of walkthroughs to support improvement of instruction. Participants in the Garza et al. (2016) study identified
walkthroughs as a vehicle to provide critical feedback to the teachers being observed. Immediate feedback, either written or oral, in a formal conference was identified as most impactful for changing or improving teaching practices. Findings from the Garza et al. (2016) study revealed that the type of feedback was often inconsistent. The aspiring principals in the Garza et al. (2016) study stated that, at times, walkthroughs were conducted with a “bureaucratic approach reflecting a hierarchical structure based on the assumption that the principals are the ones who are the experts having direct authority to conduct classroom observations while offering recommendations to improve teachers’ instructional performance” (Garza et al., 2016, p. 7).

The findings of Garza et al. (2016) supported that aspiring principals identified with a more collaborative approach than principals’ use of walkthroughs as a method in teacher supervision and evaluation processes. Like Range, McKim, et al. (2014), the participants reported that when walkthroughs are conducted with a collaborative approach involving both principal and teacher, feedback can be given immediately during a postconference. Garza et al. (2016) found that participants noted the post-conference dialogue was a time for teachers to reflect on their instructional practice with a discussion about future professional development ideas. Despite the variations of the feedback reported by the aspiring principals, Garza et al. (2016) posited that walkthrough observations offer teachers immediate feedback so they can grow as adult learners using the post-conference component of the clinical supervision model.

Professional development was another emerging theme from the Garza et al. (2016) qualitative study on perceptions from aspiring principals. Garza et al. (2016) found that aspiring principals agree that when walkthroughs are done collaboratively, the
data collected by the principals can identify school-wide patterns of practice to determine professional development avenues to help teachers learn. Walkthrough data collected by the principals can be given to grade levels, individuals, and/or departments to design focused staff development opportunities (Garza et al., 2016).

Like prior research, Garza et al. (2016) verified that aspiring principals have a conceptual understanding of the working definition of supervision and evaluation (Garza et al., 2016; Range, McKim, et al., 2014). Garza et al. (2016) identified that the bureaucratic and collaborative approach to walkthroughs are two approaches used to improve teaching practices. Participants acknowledged that walkthroughs served as unannounced or announced observations that served as mechanisms to know what was going on in a classroom. When conducted in a hierarchical fashion, Garza et al. (2016) discovered that observations conducted with the summative evaluation practice purpose created a passive process that solely provides teachers with evaluation scores and directed recommendations that were to be followed by the teacher. This form of evaluation practices was not supportive of the formative supervision practice of providing growth-producing feedback with the intention of teacher development and growth (Garza et al., 2016).

In summary, Garza et al. (2016) acknowledged that classroom walkthroughs that are conducted with the teacher or a walkthrough team yield a more collaborative approach with the common purpose of enhancing classroom instruction (Garza et al., 2016). Regardless of a principal walkthrough or a walkthrough with a team approach, Garza et al. (2016) recognized through data analysis that walkthroughs are one formative supervision practice that is intended to provide growth-producing feedback to improve
teaching. Walkthroughs are a real-time vehicle to capture what is occurring in classrooms, and they are effective when teachers and principals engage in this practice together (Garza et al., 2016).

Aspiring principals, who are still classroom teachers, provide a unique perspective on teacher evaluation systems. Range, McKim, et al. (2014) and Garza et al. (2016) identified that collaborative and trusting relationships between teachers and principals are a key ingredient to the recipe of formative supervision practices. Classroom walkthroughs were highly regarded by the aspiring principals as a mechanism to provide teachers with timely, growth-producing feedback. Teachers, as adult learners, were motivated and ready to learn and/or change their practice when formative supervision practices, such as walkthroughs, were used as professional development opportunities in tandem with the principals. This case study will further explore teachers’ voices to better understand how formative supervision practices improve instructional practices and help teachers learn.

University- and principal-preparation programs are a catalyst for the development of future principals (Garza et al., 2016; Range, McKim, et al., 2014). Principals serve as instructional leaders who provide support to teacher by using supervision and evaluation practices. Studies that sought to gather perceptions from aspiring principals utilized small sample sizes in comparison to the teacher and principal studies. As noted in the review of the literature, aspiring principals provide a unique perspective because they are still in the classrooms, and they undergo informal or formal walkthroughs to improve their instructional practices (Range, McKim, et al., 2014). Their perspective holds credence to the areas of opportunities that may exist in the existing teacher evaluation systems. A gap was identified in the studies that only surveyed aspiring principals. Range, McKim, et al.
(2014) and Garza et al. (2016) suggested that only asking teachers enrolled in administrative programs is limiting. Additional research should continue to be conducted includes teachers using a case study research method.

**Teacher and Principals’ Joint Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation Systems**

Teacher evaluation systems involve both teachers and principals working together while they are engaged in a collaborative teacher evaluation process (Garza et al., 2016). Empirical studies have suggested comparing principal and teacher perceptions to improve teacher development and teaching practices (Ing, 2013; Reddy et al., 2017; Sundstrom-Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2013). Therefore, it is important to understand the phenomenon or lived experiences of both stakeholder groups, teachers and principals, to focus on the collaborative nature of teacher supervision and evaluation processes that may or may not exist in K-12 public school districts in the United States. Both teachers and principals’ perspectives provide the researcher with an understanding of the problem and phenomenon in a real-life setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The studies in this section investigated the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and principals regarding teacher evaluation systems and the use of formative supervision practices, such as informal classroom and learning walks, to improve teaching and learning (Ing, 2013; Reddy et al., 2017; Sundstrom-Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2013).

Ing’s (2013) study investigated what principals do to improve teaching with the use of informal classroom observations. Principals from two large urban school districts were given an online survey that measured perceptions about schools, leadership responsibility, and how they used informal observations. Descriptive techniques were
used to identify system variations in frequency, duration, and instructional focus in districts.

Ing’s (2013) study found that 60% of the principals in the study spent their time conducting classroom visits each day; 94% of principals spend 1 to 10 minutes a day in classrooms, while 75% of principals provided teachers with feedback in verbal or written form. Additionally, 84% of the principals perceived that teachers valued the feedback (Ing, 2015). The findings on the teachers’ and principals’ perceptions were presented as correlated to instructional climate and the principals’ use of conducting informal classroom observations or classroom walkthroughs. Ing (2013) reported that there was a positive significant relationship between conducting observations with a focus on instruction and teachers’ perceptions on the instructional climate of the school. This suggests that teachers have a more favorable view of the instructional climate when principals are visible while conducting classroom visits on a regular basis. Ing (2013) also found that the teachers need to be asked about the impact of the principals’ feedback on their motivation and desire to learn or improve their teaching practices.

The teacher participants in Ing’s (2013) study perceived that principals had a lack of time to conduct formal summative evaluations. The teachers acknowledged that the principals had the skill and will to conduct observations that followed the clinical supervision model, preconference, observation, and postconference; however, they lacked the time needed to do so with fidelity. Conducting observations with fidelity supports the barriers identified by the principals in research by Garza et al. (2016). Teachers’ perceptions support the barrier of time identified in other studies regarding principals’ perceptions on teacher evaluation systems (Garza et al., 2016). Additionally, teachers
reported that they had the desire and motivation to want principals to conduct classroom walkthroughs to work on teaching improvement efforts (Ing, 2013). Ing (2013) found that teachers preferred to share and collaborate with other teachers for support and teaching improvement compared to working with principals. This perception from the teachers was not identified in the principal-perception research. Furthermore, the findings of Ing’s (2013) study did not elaborate on the rationale for the teachers’ perceptions.

The principals’ perceptions in Ing’s (20103) study were complimentary to the teachers’ perceptions regarding the use of formative supervision practices, such as walkthroughs, to provide teachers with growth-producing feedback that is intended to improve teaching. Principals reported being present in teachers’ classrooms frequently between 5 to 10 minutes. Many of the principals reported only giving teachers feedback in the form of a note or, sometime, with a conversation. However, Ing’s (2013) study did not address if receiving feedback in the form of a note or conversation was enough for teacher improvement and/or growth.

Ing (2013) reported that principals perceived that classroom walkthroughs moderately led to professional development opportunities as a result of the feedback sessions. There appears to be a disconnect from the principals’ perceptions and beliefs of the power of the classroom walkthrough formative practice linked to feedback. Ing’s (2013) study reveals a discrepancy between conducting the walkthrough and then providing feedback. Ing (2013) raised the question of the discrepancy as to how teachers can improve teaching from formative supervision practices with limited feedback.

Finally, Ing’s (2013) study unveiled that more attention needs to be spent studying the use of walkthroughs. Teachers and principals in Ing’s (2013) study posited
that more time is needed to discuss instructional improvement after informal classroom visits. Ing (2013) also revealed that teachers and principals supported multiple walkthroughs throughout the year to promote improvement of teaching and learning as opposed to one or two walkthroughs per year. Multiple walkthroughs would provide more opportunities for communication about instruction and promote collaboration in the school setting between teachers and principals (Ing, 2013).

In comparison to Ing’s (2013) study of two large districts, Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014) conducted a qualitative case study in a rural elementary school on the implementation of learning walks as a method of formative supervision. Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014) defined learning walks like walkthroughs. The primary difference is that learning walks include principals and teachers completing the walkthrough together, visiting various teachers’ classrooms while the walkthroughs involve only the principals visiting various teachers’ classrooms. The Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014) study had a small sample size of 19 teachers and two principals to investigate the practices and patterns that occurred in an elementary school during and after professional development courses regarding the use of learning walks. Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014) used the focus group method to investigate teachers’ perceptions after professional development on learning walks and the participation in collaborative learning walks. Data analysis from the focus group transcripts revealed six themes.

The first theme identified in Allen and Topolka-Jorissen’s (2014) study supported the notion of collaboration. The result of teachers engaging in learning walks reduced the feeling of teacher isolation as well as fostering dialogue and reflection among the teachers (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014). Teachers and principals reported that learning
walks broke down isolationism by having the teacher get away from “just close your door” or “going home at the end of the day” (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014, p. 828) teaching by having teachers engage in learning walks. The teachers reported being more willing to try new techniques to improve teaching after experiencing a learning walk.

The second theme identified in Allen and Topolka-Jorissen’s (2014) study was changes in instructional practice. Teachers in the Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014) study were trained in learning walks, and they observed other classroom teachers using a variety of instructional strategies. As a result, the teachers reported being motivated to try new teaching practices that they observed during the learning walk. Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014) found that learning walks not only increased professional learning networking amongst the teachers, but it identified the third theme of the study relating to the impact on the professional instructional culture of the building. Prior to the teachers being trained on how to conduct a learning walk, the principals in the study conducted learning walks as part of the teacher evaluation system in a supervisory capacity. As a result of being trained in how to conduct learning walks, Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014) found that teachers were inviting other teachers into their classrooms to provide each other with feedback. Having both teachers and principals trained, Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014) findings illustrate how learning walks may increase trusting relationships and collaboration efforts in a school or district to support teacher learning.

Reflective dialogue and collaboration amongst teachers, leading to changes in teaching strategies, were additional themes related to the implementation of the formative supervision practice of learning walks including the teachers and principals (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014). Teachers in the Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014) study
recognized the benefits of communication with teachers and principals after the learning walk while discussing instructional strategies that worked well and alternate ways of teaching.

In contrast to the Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2013) qualitative case study, the Reddy et al. (2017) quantitative study utilized a comprehensive 39-item multi-informant assessment called the Teacher Evaluation Experience Scale (TEES) to measure the teachers’ and principals’ experiences with teacher evaluation systems. The four TEES subscales consisted of (a) systems, (b) feedback, (c) process, and (d) motivation to change, and the study included six open-ended questions. The open-ended questions asked participants what was most helpful and least helpful in obtaining feedback within the teacher evaluation system. Data was obtained from 583 teachers and 33 school administrators from four high-poverty urban districts.

Findings from the Reddy et al. (2017) study reveal that administrators had more favorable experiences than teachers with the teacher evaluations. Teachers were neutral on the three out of the four subscale items toward the overall teacher evaluation system, feedback, and process. Motivation to change, as a result of the teacher evaluation system, was the lowest subscale. The overall experience and process subscale on the TEES were slightly more positive for the administrators than the teachers. Administrators’ feedback sub-scale was more favorable than the teachers. Like the teachers in the Reddy et al. (2017) study, the administrators’ motivation to change subscale was the lowest.

The results from the Reddy et al. (2017) open-ended survey questions reveal that teachers reported the use of pre and postconference communication/collaboration, timeliness, feedback, support, the evaluator, teacher training of observation process, and
the process as the most helpful aspects of the teacher evaluation process. The administrators reported time efficiency; specific components of the process; pre and postconferences; comprehensiveness of evaluation system; and clear, comprehensive feedback as the most helpful aspect of the teacher evaluation process. Reddy et al. (2017) revealed that the administrators had a more favorable experience with the teacher evaluation system than the teachers. The teacher evaluation system in the study was administrative centered in nature, therefore there were less findings to report from the administrators’ perspective than from the teachers’ perspective (Reddy et al., 2017).

Teachers in the Reddy et al. (2017) study identified time-related scheduling; preconferences and postconferences; various components of the evaluation, such as reflection, format, and computerized process; and evaluators’ knowledge and experience as the least helpful regarding the teacher evaluation system. The administrators identified time-related scheduling, pre- and post-observation conferences, evaluation method not amenable to practical application, lack of collaboration and teacher input, teacher unpreparedness during the process, lack of educator training, feedback, and specific components of the evaluation process as the least helpful regarding the teacher evaluation system.

Teacher evaluation systems involve both the teacher, as the subject observed, and the principal, as the observer. For teacher evaluation systems to conform to the clinical supervision model, both stakeholders need to participate in the process. Each participant provides a unique perspective on the collaborative nature of the teacher evaluation process within a K-12 school district.
Teachers and principals’ perceptions were similar throughout the studies. Leadership played an instrumental role in conducting observations in the Ing (2013) study. Teachers and principals’ value formative supervision practices, such as the use of walkthroughs, because principals do not have much time to dedicate to the formal summative process. Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2013), Ing (2013), and Reddy et al. (2017) posited that conducting formative supervision practices, such as walkthroughs, results in clear, constructive, and positive feedback and collaborative communication regarding future professional development. These findings were critical when specifically trying to make concerted changes in teaching practices to indirectly support student achievement (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2013; Ing, 2103), & Reddy et al., 2017).

**Teachers’ Perceptions of Teacher Evaluation Systems**

While much of the prior research on the supervision and evaluation of teachers has focused on the principal, there are a few studies that include the perceptions of teachers: Donahue and Vogel (2018), Dudek et al. (2019), Mette et al. (2015), and Range et al. (2013). Donahue and Vogel (2018), Dudek et al. (2019), Mette et al. (2015), and Range et al. (2013) explored teacher perceptions of (a) use of conferences and formative practices in a school district, (b) common leadership traits in high-performing elementary schools, (c) impact of evaluation systems on classroom instructional practices, and data-driven coaching that is designed to improve classroom instruction. These studies provided the perception or voice of the teacher population regarding teacher supervision and evaluation practices in the United States.

According to Range et al. (2013), formative supervision is the proactive method that principals use to provide support that is necessary for continuous teacher growth.
Range et al. (2013) conducted a quantitative study to measure teachers’ perceptions about pre and postconferences in one school district in the state of Wyoming. The purpose of Range et al. (2013) study was to determine if there was a difference in beliefs between initial contract teachers and the tenured teachers regarding preconference and postconference questions using the clinical supervision process. All K-12 teachers ($N = 464$) were asked to complete the survey, and 147 teachers represented elementary ($n = 61$), middle ($n = 25$), and high schools ($n = 38$) agreed to participate in the study.

The Range et al. (2013) findings reveal that teachers value post-observation conferences more than pre-observation conferences. Teachers reported that the preconference protocol was a vehicle to discuss topics such as how students are assessed during and after the lesson being observed. Moreover, teachers viewed the purpose of the postconference was to receive feedback from the administrator regarding the lesson being observed (Range et al., 2013). The findings reveal a difference in perceptions between tenured and nontenured teachers toward elements of the clinical supervision model. In the Range et al. (2013) study, nontenured teachers confirmed that building trust, transparency of the observation report, a focus on standard-based lesson plans, feedback, and identification of growth areas influenced or improved their teaching practices. Alternatively, tenured teachers identified only two aspects that influence or improve their teaching. Range et al. (2013) found that tenured teachers value professional development opportunities as a direct result of the post-conference discussions as well as positive comments that provided feedback to them from the administrator regarding the observation.
In contrast to Range et al. (2013), Donahue and Vogel (2018) conducted a qualitative case study to better understand novice and experienced teachers’ meanings or perspectives of the impact of teacher evaluation systems on their instructional practices. The qualitative case study method was selected by Donahue and Vogel (2018) because the district had been working on developing a system of supervision and evaluation to support teacher effectiveness since the evaluation requirements adopted, after the RTTT federal funding initiative. Donahue and Vogel (2018) interviewed 30 participants representing both novice and experienced teachers (Adams & Lawrence, 2019). Novice teachers were defined as teachers with 3 years or less experience whereas experienced teachers were defined as teachers with 5 years or more experience.

Donahue and Vogel (2018) used axial coding to identify five themes of teachers’ perceptions of the teacher evaluation systems on the impact on their instructional practice. Results reveal that the quality and delivery method of the feedback made a difference in their teaching practice (Donahue & Vogel, 2018). Experienced and novice teachers indicated that they preferred the feedback to be given orally immediately after the evaluation observation. Immediate oral feedback provided them with relevant information that enabled the teachers to make changes and/or improvements to their instruction. The findings in the study did not explicitly state that a postconference would be used as the mechanism to deliver the feedback. Experienced teachers that identified actionable feedback would have the most impact on their instructional practice. Actionable feedback was defined as a recommendation that could be used immediately within the classroom (Donahue & Vogel, 2018). Experienced teachers wanted suggestions or recommendations that they could implement immediately into their
classroom practices right after the feedback was given. In addition, experienced teachers appreciated being given feedback that challenged them to change their practice. Some novice and experienced teachers reported that they were disappointed when principals did not engage in follow-up activities to verify if the feedback given in the postconference was being implemented (Donahue & Vogel, 2018).

Aside from actionable feedback, quality relationships, including principals as coaches, emerged from the semi-structured interviews conducted by Donahue and Vogel (2018). The results reveal that positive relationships with administrators assisted with teacher motivation to grow and improve their instructional practices. Novice and experienced teachers shared that when they had a positive relationship with their administrator, their instructional practice changed. However, when teachers did not have positive relationships, they identified that they were not completely contented with the teacher evaluation system. An important connection from trusting relationships to the theme of the use of postconferences was also highlighted in Donahue and Vogel’s (2018) study. Teachers desired to have multiple observations with several scheduled dialogue sessions with principals to discuss feedback and improvement efforts in a formative fashion aligned to the teachers’ rubric.

Donahue and Vogel (2018) gathered teachers at all levels of their career perspectives on the use of teacher rubrics or checklists during the teacher evaluation process. The consensus from the teachers was that the teacher evaluation rubric was a good criterion that was helpful for teachers to guide and/or change their practice over time. However, there was agreement that the rubric within the Wyoming school district was lengthy and, at times, it was referred to as overwhelming. Novice teachers reported
that there was a lack of training on the elements of the rubric. Finally, all teachers exposed that there were interrater reliability issues with differences in teacher evaluation scores from the various administrators.

Scoring methodology disparities paralleled the differences in how teachers perceived the strategy of modeling within the teacher evaluation system. There was a distinction made from the perspective of the teachers that there is a difference in telling someone how to do something or what to change as opposed to showing or modeling how to engage in the recommended change of instructional practice (Donahue & Vogel, 2018). Donahue and Vogel (2018) posited that administrators can model the recommendations for the teacher in his/her classroom, aside from providing feedback orally or in writing. The final theme of the Donahue and Vogel (2018) study embraced the teachers’ desire to be reflective practitioners to amplify the positive effects of the teacher evaluation system. Teachers’ personal integrity, motivation, and willingness to change were identified as attributes contributing to teacher improvement (Donahue & Vogel, 2018).

Dudek et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study to better understand the benefit of integrating teacher formative practices in instructional coaching to support improvement at the elementary school level using the classroom strategies coaching (CSC) model. The CSC model is a process where teachers are active participants in an instructional coaching process tailored to the teachers’ needs. Instructional coaches conduct observations and collect instructional and/or behavioral strategies used by the teacher. Additionally, instructional coaches provide the modeling of best practices. After the modeling portion of the CSC model, teachers are observed while implementing the
strategies, which are followed by a feedback session (Dudek et al., 2019). Participants in the Dudek et al. (2019) study were predominantly White females (96%), and they were between the ages of 23 and 62 years, with an average of 10.74 years of teaching. There is significance in the lack of diversity and gender in the Dudek et al. (2019) study sample, given that most teachers in the United States are female. The female perception or voice is better understood, and the male teacher voice is limited.

In the Dudek et al. (2019) study, teachers were observed by trained observers, and the teachers were provided with coaching based on the data collected from the observations. The teachers were administered a preassessment before the training on coaching. The instructional coaches collected data through a series of classroom observations. After the observation occurred by the instructional coaches, the participants and the instructional coaches debriefed during a postconference. Feedback was given with recommendations for improvement. The coaching cycle was continuous throughout the year to check for validity and accountability of the intervention (coaching). A post assessment was administered to obtain a shift in teacher perceptions regarding the use of coaching to improve teaching practices and postintervention findings (Dudek et al., 2019).

The CSC observer method was used to measure the effectiveness of the teaching practices after the coaching and it yielded favorable results and contributed to the literature in an alternative method. The findings of the study synthesized many of the findings and recommendations to the field of teacher supervision and evaluation practices of other related studies in this literature review. Coaching was identified as an effective method of providing professional development to teachers. According the Dudek et al.
(2019), teachers received feedback and follow-up that was tailored to the teachers’ existing practices on an ongoing basis. Like the Range et al. (2013) study, Dudek et al. (2019) revealed that novice/initial and tenured/experienced teachers also valued trusting relationships with their evaluator to improve instructional practice. Novice/initial teachers identified building trust between the teacher and principal was most important. The opened-ended responses also corroborated the need for solid relationships and explicit feedback.

Anecdotal comments from teachers included that an educational atmosphere of a trusting relationship fostered a reciprocation during the observation process (Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Dudek et al., 2019; Range et al., 2013). For teacher supervision and evaluation practices to be authentic, teachers perceived that building trusting relationships with the principal is paramount. No matter the experience level or years of service of a teacher, Donahue and Vogel (2018), Dudek et al. (2019), and Range et al. (2013) rapport and positive relationships support the formative function of teacher evaluation systems. Teachers value the use of the preconference and postconference model to receive targeted recommendations on teacher practices. In addition, the teachers appreciated the different approaches, such as coaching and modeling, to provide actionable feedback that is aimed to improve or enhance their teaching practices.

**Factors that Impact Teaching and Learning**

Appova and Arbaugh (2018) conducted a qualitative study with eight middle and high school mathematics teachers on their motivation to learn. Seven themes emerged from the study. Appova and Arbaugh (2018) reported that teachers were motivated to learn to influence students’ learning, to learn from other teachers, to become a better
teacher, to fulfill professional learning requirements, to constantly seek and engage in learning as a habit, to gain knowledge about teacher-directed topics, and to pursue learning when funds, time, and resources were available.

There are a variety of factors identified in the empirical research that highlight factors that impact teachers’ motivation to learn. According to Appova and Arbaugh (2018), existing policy and accountability structures, such as pay-for-performance and evaluation practices, do not foster teacher motivation to learn. Firestone (2014) reported that incentives and the existing evaluation systems compromised teachers’ learning and overall attitude toward teaching. Social cognitive theorists, such as Rotter (1966) and Bandura (1986), endorsed that individuals are motivated to learn when they are in control and engaged in learning (Schunk et al., 2012; Zimmerman, 1989). The adult learning theory of andragogy theorizes that adults learn when they are self-directed, internally motivated and responsible for learning, provide feedback and input on learning, draw from experiences to enhance learning, and apply new learning immediately (Knowles, 1950).

Professional development models have been criticized by teachers (Wei et al., 2009). Wei et al. (2009) reported that teachers’ responses to professional development offerings have been less than favorable. The professional development was characterized as drive-by sessions made up of meetings, workshops, and conferences. Teachers reported that they did not have access to coaching, mentoring, and/or small group reflection based on content-specific learning that could be applied to their classrooms (Wei et al., 2009). Guskey (2002) reinforced that if professional development does not
support teacher learning and development, it has no direct impact on their teaching practices.

**Methodology Review**

The 10 quantitative studies in this literature review presented three population categories: (a) teachers, (b) aspiring principals, and (c) principals (Boyland et al., 2014; Dudek et al. 2019; Grissom et al., 2013; Ing, 2013; Mette et al., 2015; Range et al., 2011, 2013; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014; Reddy et al., 2017; Young et al., 2015). In quantitative studies, survey research tends to obtain participants’ attitudes and beliefs (Adams & Lawrence, 2019). Four of the quantitative studies in the literature review, regarding summative and formative supervision practices to improve teaching, adapted and utilized instruments that were used in existing research studies that investigated variables of teacher evaluation systems (Mette et al., 2015; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014; Range et al., 2011; Ing, 2013 al., 2001, 2004). Range, Hewitt, & Young (2014) modified the Jankord survey (2009) to include both tenured and nontenured teachers when identifying the definition of marginal teacher. Prior use of the Jankord (2009) instrument excluded nontenured teachers. Similarly, Ing (2013) adjusted the Spillman et al. (2001, 2014) survey instruments by only including those questions that elicited teachers’ and principals’ perceptions on informal classroom observations excluding perceptions of formal classroom observations (Ing, 2013). Range et al. (2011) had to adjust the original survey used by Minnerar-Peplinski, in 2009, to include language pertinent to the state of Wyoming. Finally, Mette et al. (2015) adjusted the language of the Clark (1998) instrument to capture perceptual data of the use of pre and postconference practices used to improve teaching practices. By expanding or narrowing
the coefficients or language of survey instruments, the researchers were able to gather more data that aligned with the purpose of their studies hence strengthening the survey instrument.

Four qualitative studies were used for the literature review of teacher supervision and evaluation practices that were used in teacher evaluation systems in the United States between 2009 and 2019 (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014; Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Garza et al., 2016; Range, Hewitt, & Young, 2014). Two qualitative methods for the studies included the case study methods of Sundstrom-Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014), Donahue and Vogel (2018) and Range et al. (2013) and used a slightly different approach for collecting data to obtain aspiring principals’ views of teacher evaluations aligned to their research questions. Range et al. (2013) used an online discussion board for teachers enrolled in educational administration graduate classes with the desire to become principals. Garza et al. (2016) used an open-ended questionnaire to capture aspiring principals’ view relating to the formative supervision practice of walkthroughs. There have been no case studies conducted in rural K-12 school districts in Western New York.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a review of the literature on the topic of teacher supervision and evaluation practices in K-12 public education in the United States from the perspectives of principals, aspiring principals, and teachers. Although several studies included the teachers as participants, researchers have highlighted a gap in the research on the rural teachers’ perspective or voice as it pertains to what teachers’ report will improve their teaching practices (Garza et al., 2016).
Although several of the quantitative and qualitative studies included teachers as participants, researchers have highlighted that there is a gap in the research on the rural teachers’ voice as it pertains to what teachers identify that will change their own practices (Garza et al., 2016). Reddy et al. (2018) identified that teachers’ input in creating or enhancing evaluation systems is lacking particularly in rural and high-poverty schools. Reddy et al. (2018) also stated that teacher supervision and evaluation approaches cannot be one-size-fits all, and they need to meet the needs of teachers who teach diverse student populations.

Mette et al. (2015) only studied principals in high-performing schools on the perception of teachers regarding the impact of teacher supervision and evaluation practices. Title 1 schools, or schools of poverty, were excluded from the study. In addition to high poverty schools, low performing schools were not included in the study. This gap in the research identifies future considerations. Future research should conduct a case study to compare leadership styles, student achievement, and the impact of teacher evaluation systems.

Formative supervision practices using the clinical supervision model should be explored (Mette et al., 2015; Range et al., 2012). The review of the literature uncovered that asking teachers’ viewpoints is a powerful tool to create collaboration in the teacher evaluation process. Range et al. (2013) added that a differentiated approach to teacher evaluation systems needs to be further investigated on the use of formative supervision practices. Reddy et al. (2018) reinforced that teacher input to existing evaluation systems is imperative. Ing (2013) added that the research should consider the use of formative practices such as walkthroughs or coaching.
The common thread of the literature review from the perspectives of aspiring principals, principals, and teachers was to leverage the use of communication and collaboration in the form of a postconference to disburse feedback between a trusting teacher to principal relationship. This research study investigated the use of formative supervision practices, such as walkthroughs or learning walks, to provide feedback to teachers because it is a critical practice of the supervision of teachers (Garza et al., 2016). Additionally, this cased study asked teachers directly what formative supervision practices would assist them in improving their instructional practices (Range et al., 2012).

The purpose of this research study was to conduct a qualitative descriptive case study to provide an in-depth understanding of how K-12 teachers in a rural Western New York public school district experienced formative supervision practices for teacher improvement and growth. This qualitative descriptive case study aimed to collect and analyze multiple data sources, including interviews and document reviews, to explore a real-life case of teachers as they engaged in formative supervision practices. Additionally, the case study obtained an in-depth understanding from a rural perspective regarding how other public-school districts can best leverage formative supervision practices to improve and enhance teaching (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The next chapter provides a thorough explanation of the research method and design, the problem statement, and the guiding research questions. In addition, Chapter 3 includes the plan of action with a timeline that specifies the order of each action step that was carried out to complete the study.
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

Teacher supervision practices have an important role to play in assisting teachers to become more effective (Warring, 2015). According to Taylor and Tyler (2012), policy makers and practitioners need to understand how teacher evaluation processes apprise change in teacher practice and provide teacher growth and improvement. Perspectives of New York State rural K-12 public school teachers have been absent in the research on how to use formative supervision practices that provides feedback intended to improve teaching.

The purpose of this research study was to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impacted the extent to which teachers learned and improved their instructional practices. This case study explored if teachers in a small, rural school district had experienced formative supervision practices that helped them learn or improve their teaching practices. Additionally, this case study obtained an in-depth, rural perspective that might lead to a deeper understanding that will maximize the impact of the evaluation system. According to Yin (2003), a descriptive case study is used to portray a phenomenon or intervention in the real-life context in which it occurs. This qualitative descriptive case study collected and analyzed multiple data sources, including interviews and a document review, to explore real-life cases of teachers experiencing the supervision and evaluation system in Western New York (Creswell & Poth, 2018). With the pending changes in
Education Law §3012-d in New York State, this case study provides some input into newly created APPRs that are intended to support teacher improvement and development.

The following research questions guided this qualitative descriptive case study:

1. What factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impacted the extent to which the teachers learned and improved their instructional practices?

2. To what extent did teachers in a small, rural school district experience formative supervision practices that led to changes or improvements in their instructional practices?

The design of this research is a qualitative descriptive case study. A descriptive case study is used to describe a phenomenon within a context or a bound system (Yin, 2003). According to Yazan (2015), there are agreed-upon approaches regarding how to conduct a qualitative case study that derives from the seminal works of Yin (2014), Merriam (2009), and Stake (1995). The Stake (1995) and Yin (2014) procedures for conducting a case study assist novice researchers in understanding problems and phenomenon occurring in a case. The following five steps were followed when conducting this case study: (a) identification of the problem being reviewed, (b) identification of the intent and sampling procedures of the case, (c) development of data collection from multiple sources, (d) specification of analysis procedures for theme identification, and (e) interpretation of lessons learned and case assertions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A descriptive case study approach was the appropriate methodology because it provided an in-depth description of a bounded system based on a thorough examination
of the data collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, a descriptive case study revealed similarities and differences from individual teacher perspectives within a bound system of a school district. Furthermore, the descriptive case study exposed undisclosed perceptions about the phenomena of formative supervision practices that are used within the context of the teacher supervision and evaluation systems that will provide further insights for other rural districts (Stake, 1995). A descriptive case study is used when one has a research question or there is a need to understand a phenomenon by studying it in a case (Stake, 1995). Yin (2014) identified that it is critical to study cases within a real-life contemporary context or setting. The phenomenon being studied in this case study was teachers’ experience of the teacher supervision and evaluation systems that help teachers learn and improve instructional practices.

Case study approaches have limitations that were taken into consideration for this research study. According to Yin (2014), a case study may be limiting as they often describe a phenomenon instead of predicting future behavior. A case study may tend to incorporate too many details in a lengthy descriptive summary for policy makers and practitioners to analyze and use (Merriam, 2009). Creswell and Poth (2018) posited that case studies may lack rigor or have poorly designed case study methods.

Despite the limitations, a case study has many strengths that can provide a rich descriptive account of the phenomenon being studied (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Prior research has identified unique perspectives from teachers in a variety of school districts across the United States on the use of teacher supervision and evaluation practices (Donahue & Vogel, 2018; Dudek et al., 2019; Mette et al., 2015; Range et al., 2013). Teachers have provided aspects of the teacher evaluation systems, such as on-
going formative practices and feedback delivered during postconferences, that make a positive impact on teacher improvement. At the time of this study, previous research did not capture the perspectives from teachers about increased learning and improving their teaching practices in rural districts in Western New York within the New York State from the teacher evaluation system. In addition to capturing the unique perspectives from the teacher participants, this case study design provided a thorough analysis of multiple sources of information, such as district documents and data related to teacher evaluation systems, in the context of the case (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

**Research Context**

Teacher evaluation systems in New York State are predicated on Education Law §3012-d. Education Law §3012-d provides the guidelines to all public school districts across the state for the creation of the teacher evaluation system. Most districts in New York State work with a designated teacher committee to develop an agreed-upon system that is aligned to the state-provided guidelines as well as district-negotiated process and procedures. Each district is mandated to submit its teacher evaluation system for annual approval from NYSED, indicating how teachers are to be evaluated. Due to differences across school districts in New York State, there are variations among districts’ teacher evaluation systems.

According to the NYSED (2018), there are 713 public school districts, 4,433 public schools, as well as 212,296 teachers serving 2,622,879 public school students. New York State teachers are provided with a performance rating that is reported in the aggregate. Of the 212,296 teachers, 59% were reported as highly effective, 38% were
reported as effective, 3% were reported as developing, and 0% were reported as ineffective on their annual professional performance review (APPR).

To maintain anonymity of this study, the population of interest was characterized as a rural K-12 public school district in Western New York State, using the pseudonym “the Porter Central School District.” The Porter Central School District has been subject to Education Law §3012-d (2016), Subpart 30-3, of the Commissioner’s Regulations regarding APPRs of teachers. The Porter Central School District’s APPR plan follows the Commissioner’s Regulations in fulfillment of the teacher evaluation process to identify teacher effectiveness. The purpose of this research study attempted to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve instructional practices. The study explored if teachers in a small, rural school district experienced formative supervision practices that helped them learn or improve their teaching practices. Additionally, this case study obtained an in-depth, rural perspective that could lead to a deeper understanding that will maximize the impact of the evaluation system. The research study identified formative supervision practices that were used in the district to move beyond the required evaluation system to support improvement in teaching practices that are not required in the submitted APPR plan.

At the time of this case study, the Porter Central School District was located within one campus in one large building that employed 42 teachers, and it had a student enrollment of approximately 350 students in Grades K-12. In addition to the 42 teachers, there was an elementary school principal, a junior/senior high school principal, and a superintendent of schools who conducted teacher evaluations. The Porter Central School
District is categorized by NYSED as rural. According to NYSED (2005), all districts at or above the 70th percentile that have (a) fewer than 50 students per square mile or (b) fewer than 100 students per square mile and an enrollment of less than 2,500, are categorized as rural. Of the districts in New York State, 11% of students in New York State attend rural schools (Lavalley, 2018). At the time of this case study, the superintendent of schools have been employed with the district for 14 months.

Research Participants

The population for this qualitative descriptive case study included K-12 teachers and the superintendent of the Porter Central School District in rural Western New York. Teachers that met the inclusion criteria were eligible to participate in the study. They had to be working full-time, for at least 1 year, teaching in the Porter Central School District, they had to have at least 1 year experiencing the teacher evaluation system of the Porter Central School District, and they had to have taught general education, special education, and/or an intervention class. The researcher selected the first participants that matched the grade-level inclusion criteria. Excluded from the population of interest were teachers who did not work full-time, had less than 1 year of work experience at Porter Central School District, or had not engaged in the teacher supervision or evaluation process.

Purposeful sampling was used to invite teachers who were employed in the district and who were interested in a review of their current evaluation system (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), purposeful sampling is defined as a method that researchers use to choose participants in a study that can purposefully inform a research problem and phenomenon being studied. Specifically, maximum variation sampling was used to capture multiple perspectives of the teachers (Creswell &
Poth, 2018). In addition, maximum variation sampling was used to gather perspectives from a K-12 range of teachers across all grade levels, contents, tenure and nontenure status, years of experience, and gender. This case study sought eight participants, who ideally included a teacher representation from the primary grades (K-2), intermediate grades (3-5), middle school grades (6-8), and high school grades (9-12), to obtain perspectives of the teachers across a wide range of content areas, grades, and evaluation experiences. Criterion sampling was used to select seven volunteers from the teacher group (Creswell & Poth, 2018). One of the teachers incorrectly reported her years of service as more than one on the demographic survey. The teacher emailed the researcher and indicated that she had only been in the district for less than a full year. Therefore, the teacher was eliminated from this case study as she did not meet the inclusion criteria. As a result, there were only seven teachers who participated in the individual teacher interviews.

The superintendent of schools is considered the chief executive officer of a school district. In addition, the superintendent is responsible for the implementation of the teacher evaluation system within a school district. Therefore, the superintendent of Porter Central School District was invited to participate in this case study.

**Instruments Used in Data Collection**

Descriptive case studies are a form of qualitative research that occur in real-life settings of a study of individuals in an organization (Yin, 2014). A demographic survey, individual interview protocol, field notes and reflective passages, public documents and private in-district documents, and a document interview protocol were the primary sources of data in this descriptive case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
**Demographic Survey**

A demographic survey (Appendix B) was given to the participants in this study. The demographic survey was designed to collect data on the participants to help inform the sampling method for the study. The survey had six questions that asked the participants to share their years of experience in teaching (overall); years of experience as a teacher (in the studied district); tenure status; content area(s) in which they were teaching at the time of the interviews; and the current grade level(s) they were teaching at the time of their interviews.

**Teacher Interview Protocol**

An interview protocol (Appendix C) was designed to gather information to help understand the experiences of the supervision and evaluation system of the teacher participants at the Porter Central School District. The interview protocol included 10 questions based on prior research, and the theoretical framework the adult learning theory of andragogy (Knowles, 1950).

**Public and Private In-District Documents**

The following public documents were collected from the NYSED (2019) website: (a) the APPR plan and (b) the public documents that provided information about the components of the APPR plan that aligned with Education Law §3012-d, which was developed in partnership with teacher representatives and district administration. A review of the APPR plan contributed information regarding the supervision and evaluation practices used in the district that helped teachers learn and develop instructional practices. The New York State Public Educator Evaluation Data identified the APPR ratings. The ratings were based on student achievement scores on state
assessments and ratings from observations. This data provided the percentages of teacher effectiveness ratings in the categories of highly effective, effective, developing, and ineffective.

**Superintendent Interview Protocol**

Appendix D includes seven questions that were asked regarding the documents used in this case study. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) asserted to verify the authenticity of the documents, an interview protocol should be used to obtain additional insight to the case. At no time during the study did the researcher ask the superintendent questions specific to the participants. All information gathered from the superintendent was related to the process, procedures, and public and private documents used in the teacher supervision and evaluation process, and the questions were not specific to the individual teachers. Forms and documents that provided information regarding the processes and protocols during the summative and formative supervision and evaluation practices at Porter Central School District were only used for the purpose of this case study.

**Research Binder**

A research binder was used throughout the research study to organize all the documents related to the study.

**Field Notes and Reflective Passages**

During the individual interviews, the researcher made limited field notes pertaining to events, comments, or observations that occurred regarding the participant and/or the process on the interview protocol sheet.
Data Collection

After receiving approval from the St. John Fisher Institutional Review Board (IRB, Appendix E), the researcher collected the public documents, including the Porter Central School District’s APPR plan and the school’s New York State School Report Card from the Internet. The second step was to send an email (Appendix F) inviting the superintendent to participate in the study. The superintendent signed a consent form and agreed to share blank teacher supervision and evaluation forms and protocols used by the Porter Central School District. According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006), case study researchers gather additional information from reviewing existing documents and processes relating to the research question as well as insights on how the supervision and evaluation process and protocols assist in providing feedback to improve teaching practices. The superintendent of the Porter Central School District participated in a 60-minute semi-structured interview and shared the documents that were related to the teacher supervision and evaluation process. The superintendent was informed that the session was audio-recorded using the researcher’s iPhone and an iPad. The superintendent had the option to opt out of being recorded, however, he did not opt out of being recorded. The interview was held at a mutually convenient and private location at an agreed-upon time between the researcher and the superintendent.

After the winter recess in January 2020, the superintendent of the Porter District sent out an initial email notifying the K-12 teachers that an email invitation to participate in a research study was forthcoming. A day after the notification email from the superintendent of schools, the researcher emailed an invitation (Appendix G) to participate in the study to teachers in the Porter Central School District. Teacher email
addresses were obtained from the Porter Central School District website, inviting teachers to participate with the use of Qualtrics, an online survey tool used to build surveys and collect data. A reminder email was sent by the researcher, using Qualtrics, 1 week after the initial invitation was distributed to obtain eight teacher participants. An example of the invitation email, including the description of the research case study, is provided in Appendix G, and an example of the consent form is provided in Appendix H.

All interested participants who were willing to participate were asked to provide consent using a Qualtrics link in the email invitation to participate. Once informed consent was given, the researcher asked the interested participants to complete a demographic survey, which was imported into Qualtrics to assist with the selection of participants.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in this case study upon receipt of IRB approval (Appendix E). According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006), individual interviews produce the most substantial amounts of data from an individual’s perspective. In addition, semi-structure interviews were conducted because they allowed the researcher to modify the questions, as needed, throughout the study based on the responses of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interviews took place before or after school hours and were held in a mutually convenient and private location for the participants and the researcher.

Each interview was conducted face-to-face, and they lasted 60-90 minutes. The participants were informed that the session was being audio-recorded using the researcher’s iPhone and an iPad. The participants had the option to opt out of being recorded. However, none of the participants opted out of being recorded during the semi-
structured individual interviews. The participants were advised that the recorded interviews would be transcribed using the online platform, Rev.com. Once the researcher obtained the transcribed interviews, the audio-taped interviews were deleted from the researcher’s recording devices. To maintain confidentiality, the participants selected their own pseudonyms, which were used throughout the study.

The researcher reconfirmed the ethical components of the qualitative case study including confidentiality and data storage to each participant. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher gave a sealed, handwritten card, including a $25.00 gift card to Amazon to thank the participants for taking part in the study.

During the individual interview sessions, the researcher took limited field notes on the protocol sheet. When not in use, the research binder is stored in a locked filing cabinet for security and confidentiality. A case-coding template (Appendix I) was used to organize the field notes and documents (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Field notes and reflective passages were created during the reading of the data that were collected from the individual interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

**Data Analysis**

The individual teachers participated in semi-structured interviews using the protocol illustrated in Appendix C, and the superintendent of schools participated in a semi-structured interview using the protocol illustrated in Appendix D. All interviews were recorded and transcribed using the electronic online transcription solution Rev.com. The data collected were coded and aligned to answer both research questions as well as the six assumptions of the adult learning theory of andragogy (Knowles, 1950) to determine convergence and divergence within the descriptive qualitative case study.
(Stake, 1995). A triangulation of the teacher interviews, the superintendent interview, and the document review were analyzed. The stage model of the qualitative content analysis process was used during this case study (Lune & Berg, 2017). Analytical themes and/or categories were established. The categorical themes/labels assisted with chunking the data collected from the interviews and document review. Open and axial coding was used to define the themes to provide a description of the themes and the patterns that emerged from the analysis procedures, which were aligned to the research questions, empirical research, and the theoretical framework.

Data collected from this case study were analyzed to determine convergence and divergence within the case (Stake, 2006). According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006), case study research requires ongoing examination and interpretation of data to reach conclusions while summarizing and interpreting the information gathered. A detailed description of this case was developed based on the triangulation of the teacher interviews, the superintendent interview, and the public and private in-district document reviews. The stage model (Appendix J) of the qualitative content analysis process was used during this case study (Lune & Berg, 2017).

The stage model of the qualitative content analysis process included a seven-step process that allowed the researcher to analyze data from multiple sources (Lune & Berg, 2017). First, the researcher began to analyze the data through the lens of the case study research questions. Second, sociological constructs or analytic categories were developed. The categorical themes and/or labels assisted the researcher in chunking the data collected from the field notes and interviews with the teachers and the superintendent during the document review. Third, the researcher read the data, writing
down themes, and creating category labels as a data sort related to the research questions of the study. During this step of the process, the researcher used open and axial coding. After the identification of the codes, the researcher developed explicit definitions or coding rules for the ease of the reader in the fourth step. Once the codes were defined, the researcher sorted the data by using color-coding. This fifth step of the data analysis allowed the researcher to sort the data visually so that they could be put into a Excel spreadsheet for further sorting and analysis. Next, the sixth step required the researcher to count the frequency of the categories, when necessary, to establish thematic patterns of the data collected throughout the case study. The seventh and final step of the data analysis process of this case study was to provide a description and explanation of the themes and patterns that emerged from the data collection that aligned to the research questions, empirical literature, and theoretical framework.

A common template was used to show the relationship of the data collected in this case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The template captured the context of this case as well as the case description. Emerging themes from the data collection are presented in tables for clarity. Cross-case analysis, including document review and interview data, were compared. The comparison of the data revealed similarities and differences with the data sources of this case study.

**Confidentiality and Protection of Data**

All the participants in this study selected their own pseudonym at the onset of the study. Data collected throughout the study will not be shared with anyone in the Porter Central School District. The superintendent and the teacher participants were informed that the recorded interviews were transferred to an external drive and stored securely in
the researcher’s office in a locked cabinet. The participants were advised that the recorded interviews were transcribed using the online platform, Rev.com. Once the researcher obtained the transcribed interviews, the audio-taped interviews were deleted from the researcher’s recording devices. All data collected is stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s home office.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 provided a framework of the research design and method for this research study. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to understand the lived experiences of rural teachers participating in the teacher evaluation system. Multiple data sources were collected. Based on the analysis of data, key issues or themes were identified to provide a within case analysis of the factors involved in the teacher supervision and evaluation process in the Porter Central School District that impacted the extent to which the teachers learned and improved their instructional practices. Additionally, this case study revealed how teachers experience formative supervision practices via an evaluation process that helped them learn and improve their instructional practice (Stake, 2006). Lessons learned, or assertions of the case, are summarized to provide readers with the context of the phenomenon of teacher evaluation systems focused on teacher growth, improvement, and development within a school district. This case study’s lessons learned is put into a written format with the reader in mind. Stake’s (2006) method of presenting assertions or generalizations regarding a case study are accomplished by including vignettes. According to Creswell and Poth (2018) a vignette provides a reader with an inviting introduction to feel the context in which the case takes place as well as a closing vignette to reinforce the lessons learned within a case.
Chapter 4 provides a chronological description and analysis of the data collected through interviews and document reviews on the supervision and evaluation practices that impacted teacher learning from rural teachers’ perspectives.
Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve instructional practices. The study intended to explore if teachers in a small, rural school district experienced formative supervision practices that helped them learn or improve their teaching practices. Additionally, this case study obtained an in-depth, rural perspective that led to a deeper understanding that will maximize the impact of the evaluation system.

The study utilized face-to-face, semi-structured individual interviews with K-12 teachers from Porter Central School District to examine their experiences with supervision and evaluation practices. Additionally, internal and external teacher evaluation documents were reviewed during a face-to-face interview with the superintendent of schools. The responses from the individual teacher interviews and superintendent interview, coupled with the document review, were analyzed qualitatively through the lens of the six assumptions of the theoretical framework of the adult learning theory of andragogy while answering the research questions (Knowles, 1950).

Research Questions

This qualitative descriptive case study was designed to answer the following research questions:
1. What factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impacted the extent to which the teachers learned and improved their instructional practices?

2. To what extent did teachers in a small, rural school district experience formative supervision practices that led to changes or improvements in their instructional practices?

Chapter 4 is divided into three sections. First, the demographic profiles of the individual teacher participants, which allowed the researcher to obtain rich, personalized information, are reviewed (Mason, 2002). Second, the themes that emerged from the teacher and superintendent interviews and from the document review, which provided insights regarding the research questions and theoretical framework, are presented. Finally, Chapter 4 concludes with a summary of the research efforts that were bound by time and space in relation to the case study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

Data Analysis and Findings

Data collected from this case study used semi-structured individual teacher interviews \( n = 7 \) and a semi-structure superintendent interview \( n = 1 \) with a review of district supervision and evaluation documents. Data collection transpired over a 2-month period. Four of the interviews occurred at the Porter Central School District in the teachers’ classrooms, while the other four interviews occurred at locations that were mutually convenient to both the participants and the researcher. As shown in Table 4.1, the years of service of the participants spanned between 2 to 20 years. At the time of the study, three of the teachers had worked in the district between 2-5 years, two of the teachers had worked in the district between 6-10 years, and the final two teachers had
worked in the district between 16-20 years. The superintendent of schools had worked in the district for 14 months. Two of the teachers were categorized as elementary teachers, two teachers taught middle school and high school English, and the remaining three teachers represented special education, intervention, and an elective subject area. Given the small size of the district, the specificity of the intervention and elective subject area were redacted from the demographic profile to ensure anonymity of the participants. Of the teacher participants, six were female and one was male. The gender of the superintendent of schools was male. Finally, four of the teachers were tenured, and three of the teachers were nontenured.

Table 4.1

Demographic Information for Teacher Participants and Superintendent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Years of Service in District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Brown</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Nontenured</td>
<td>2–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. June</td>
<td>9–12</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Tenured</td>
<td>6–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Maetos</td>
<td>6–12</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Nontenured</td>
<td>2–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Potter</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>Nontenured</td>
<td>2–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Rosie</td>
<td>K–12</td>
<td>Interventionist</td>
<td>Tenured</td>
<td>16–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Star</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Tenured</td>
<td>6–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Thompson</td>
<td>6–12</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Tenured</td>
<td>16–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. James</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>14 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Pseudonyms were selected by each participant in the case study.

Four main themes emerged from the data and analysis of the transcripts from the teacher and superintendent interviews and the document review, which were aligned to the six assumptions of the adult learning theory of andragogy (Knowles, 1950) to answer Research Question 1: What factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a
small, rural school district impacted the extent to which the teachers learned and their improved instructional practices? Probing questions sought to extrapolate how the teachers’ lived experiences of the supervision and evaluation process provided relevancy and purpose based on the teachers’ self-concept, experience, readiness, and motivation to improve and change their teaching practices (Knowles et al., 2015). Table 4.2 provides a visual of the themes that emerged from the interview protocols to address Research Question 1.

Table 4.2

Research Question 1 – Themes, Key Concepts, and Subthemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wearing many hats</td>
<td>Stretched-thin</td>
<td>Barrier to supervision and evaluation fidelity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>Leadership steppingstone/high turnover rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional leadership approach matters</td>
<td>Authentic relationships</td>
<td>Relatable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lead vs. independent evaluator</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth producing feedback</td>
<td>Relevant feedback</td>
<td>Praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immediate verbal feedback in postconferences</td>
<td>Constructive criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of written postcards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One size does not fit all</td>
<td>Varied approaches</td>
<td>APPR revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Differentiated by teacher’s preference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wearing Many Hats

Six of the seven teacher participants in this case study recognized that the administration members of the Porter Central School District wear many hats and are stretched thin because they worked in a small, rural school district. Wearing many hats refers to the different roles administration must play and the various responsibilities they need to carry out each day. Because the administration wears many hats, some of the
supervision and evaluation processes impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve their teaching practices. Mrs. Star, an elementary school teacher, reported that the principals were stretched so thin in performing other duties that she felt that supervision practices were pushed aside. She described that the principals are engaged in the discipline of students, in paperwork, and in such tasks as grant writing. She stated:

We don’t have a separate curriculum coordinator. I do not have scientific proof or anything like that, but so they have to respond to parents, have to respond to board members sometimes. They have to respond to teachers; they have to respond to ongoing discipline issues. They have to respond to anything that they might need to in the special education department, and then, they have to respond to teachers as far as what their jobs are as well. Then, they have to provide professional development for us, and they just are wearing a ton of hats, I guess. The supervision processes get pushed aside a little more. (T1, 74-81; 92)

Mrs. Mateos, a middle and high school elective teacher, like Mrs. Star, also reinforced that teachers and administrators in a small district are stretched thin. She stated, “In my first year, I was club advisor and a coach. There’s definitely a lack of resources and administrators. Administrators are spread just as thin performing many duties, for sure, for sure.” (T2, 788-790)

To add to the theme of wearing many hats, Mrs. Brown, a fifth grade teacher, shared an experience that occurred after an announced observation during her postconference with her administrator that negatively impacted the extent to which she learned or improved her instructional practice. She stated, “There isn’t a lot of supervision. The advice I got was not always helpful. One time, I was told, ‘well, I will
get back to you on that' and the administrator never did.” When asked a probing question, Mrs. Brown indicated that the administrator was too busy. She continued to say, “I think it’s because they’re busy and, again, it’s just the lack of resources. I feel like maybe in a bigger school district, there’s more administrators to meet with and talk to and get ideas from.” The administrator, as described by Mrs. Brown’s experience, did not accommodate for the fact that administration wears many hats and the administrator was too busy to follow up and provide recommendations that would have helped Mrs. Brown learn and improve her instructional practice.

On the other hand, Mrs. Potter, a middle school special education teacher, described a scenario that illustrated how her administrator accommodated wearing many hats, unlike Mrs. Brown’s experience. Mrs. Potter shared the experience of when she and her co-teacher were observed by the administrator simultaneously. She described the experience of being observed at the same time as the other teacher as weird, but in a good way. Mrs. Potter rationalized that the principal was able to save time in the principal’s busy schedule and get the two teacher observations done at the same time. Mrs. Potter described, “I got an email saying my evaluation’s done, and then literally 10 minutes later the other teacher got hers [the teacher observation write-up from the principal], and we read them and were like, ‘Oh my God, we just got observed together.’ This example illustrates how the administration accommodated for the fact that they were stretched thin and wore many hats as they fulfilled many roles and responsibility in the small, rural district that included teacher supervision and evaluation.

Strengthening the theme that the previous teachers described, Mrs. Rosie, an intervention teacher, echoed the notion that administrators are stretched thin wearing
many hats and that the administration acknowledged this as well. In recent negotiation meetings to determine if the district should maintain the practice of conducting postconferences, she shared that Superintendent James asked: “If you got a good score on your observation, do you need to waste time engaging in a postconference discussion about it?” Mrs. Rosie discounted Superintendent James’s stance of the elimination of the postconference because they were a waste of time. She shared that she liked the postconference time with administrators. When further probed during the interview, Mrs. Rosie confirmed that postconferences were not a waste of time. She stated, “I liked that time, and I don’t think it’s a waste of time. It’s during that time [postconference] to really have a conversation and really collaborate with and hear the administration [about the lesson].” She acknowledged that administration wears many hats and are stretched thin. Mrs. Rosie reinforced the wearing of many hats by admitting, “Here’s the thing, I know that they [the administrators] are spread thin sometimes, but I know that when I go in there [the administrator’s office] I have their attention.” Mrs. Rosie realized that she could read the documents in the online teacher evaluation system, eDoctrina, but she valued the time with the administrators despite their busy schedule.

During the document review, Superintendent James confirmed that the school district uses the online system, eDoctrina, that Mrs. Rosie discussed in her interview, during the teacher evaluation process. Like Mrs. Rosie’s description of the system, Superintendent James described that eDoctrina is the system that electronically stores all the documents relating to the teacher supervision and evaluation process. He supported Mrs. Rosie’s assertion that teachers have access to the system and can view the observation script, ratings, and feedback. When describing the process and system, he
revealed that teachers and administrators have a postconference after the announced and unannounced observations. He shared:

It is helpful to listen to the teacher during the postconference, responding to questions such as “Why were you doing what you were doing? Or tell me about the students in your classroom.” You can take pictures of the evidence and embed the picture in eDoctrina while timestamping what’s happening in the room simultaneously. Because I think the piece, when it comes to feedback, is [that] you want the evaluator to focus on evidence and not making judgements. I think the postconference gives the teachers the best opportunity to see and reflect on the script of what happened with the evidence of what’s taking place, “ooh, that’s what that looked like?” Or, “Ooh, that 3 minute warm up actually took 12 minutes of my 44-minute classroom.” That’s a big shift. (S1, 309-325)

During the interview, Mrs. Rosie also revealed that she had not had a walkthrough in 2 years. When asked why she thought she did not have a walkthrough in 2 years, Mrs. Rosie expressed that it was because the administrators are busy doing other duties other than teacher supervision and evaluation.

Participants in this study revealed that because administrators are stretched thin and wear many hats, the Porter Central School District serves as a steppingstone for new administrators. High turnover rates of administrators were a factor of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district that impacted the extent to which the teachers learned and improved their instructional practices. The participants shared that the administrators would work in the district for a few years to gain administrative experience. They added that once the administrators gained the
experience, they sought another administrative position in larger school districts where there were more opportunities and/or more salary. Mrs. June, a high school English teacher described that in her tenure in the district, there has been a turnover in administration. She stated:

This is my eighth year here. Our first principal was here for 5 years, give or take. He got a better . . .Well, yeah, a better opportunity to be a principal down in Long Island, [in] a big school. I don’t know if he was going to be a principal or superintendent. Either way, it was basically an opportunity for him. I think that’s the hard thing being a rural district is sometimes we do end up being a steppingstone for larger districts. We get administrators who maybe don’t have a lot of experience, and then [they] use us for the experience. You could tell that he wasn’t putting much stock into the evaluation process. And, so, he gave everybody a canned evaluation, like, “You should introduce more notetaking in your class.” He then admitted that he did not tell just me that; he told everybody that. “I’m like, oh, okay.” A lot of turnover makes it hard to improve teaching, and morale was pretty low. (T7, 508-525)

Mr. Thompson, a middle and high school English teacher, began the interview stating that supervision and evaluation in the Porter Central School District feels different. He indicated that the district tended to be a steppingstone for other administrators. Over his 20 years of teaching in the district, he shared that there have been seven or eight principals come and go. When prompted to clarity the term steppingstone and its impact to supervision and evaluation, Mr. Thompson elaborated by stating:
A lot of times, . . . it’s people who are trying to get the experience they need to go to another district where the pay is probably better, where they don’t have to wear quite so many hats. When you work in a small district, you do a lot. And my wife is an elementary teacher, and she compares what we do to a lot like what they do, which is elementary teachers have to do a lot, and it’s kind of like that within a small district like this is. I teach all of Grade 7, all of Grade 8. I have an upper-level elective. I’ve got two AIS labs. I’m a seventh grade advisor, the History Club advisor, Page Turners advisor, LEGO team coach. We do a lot. You end up doing a lot of things, and the principals do the same thing, so, where in other districts, for example, a vice principal would be the one who would handle disciplinary action. Our principal does that [handles disciplinary actions] too, and a lot of times, they can be in charge of the CSE [Committee on Special Education] and all those kinds of things. So, saying that, the supervision stuff really depends on the principal we’ve had. (T4, 75-108)

When engaged in the document review with Superintendent James, he supported, because administration wears many hats, that there is high turnover in administrators. He added that the high turnover in administrators negatively impacts the fidelity of the teacher supervision and evaluation process. He stated:

I think the difficulty has been how nobody [administration] has ever applied the teacher evaluation rubric with fidelity because of the high turnover rate. For example, in the elementary school, I think in the past 10 years, they’ve had seven principals. So, in the high school, in the past 10 years, they probably had five high school principals. So, the difficulty has become balance and trust, and it comes
down to relationships, and accurately and fairly applying, and having an
evaluation that’s fair that supports growth. An evaluation that isn’t an, “I gotcha.”

(S, 147-157)

Superintendent James understood that the administration was stretched thin with wearing many hats. Because of this, the Porter Central School District has served as a steppingstone for some administrators. He acknowledged that these variables have a negative impact on the fidelity of implementation of the teacher supervision and evaluation process.

The seven teacher interviews and the superintendent document-review interview highlighted that the teachers’ ability to learn and improve their instructional practices were negatively and/or positively impacted depending their experience with the process. Given the fact that the administration, over the years, used the district as a steppingstone, the implementation of teacher supervision and evaluation system was inconsistent. All participants in this study identified that administration was stretched thin, wearing many hats because of the multiple responsibilities in their daily work, which had negative consequences on the supervision and evaluation process for the teachers.

**Intentional Leadership Approach Matters**

Even though administration was characterized as stretched thin by wearing many hats, the intentional leadership approach of the principals was an emerging factor in the extent to which the teachers learned or improved their practices. The participants shared that, over the years, there were administrators who were described as “an ass, checked-out, phony, and/or clueless.” The principals were viewed as just going through the motions of completing the teacher evaluation process and not being intentional in their
actions to improve teaching practices. However, during the teacher and superintendent interviews, this was not a sentiment that emerged. On the contrary, the participants overwhelmingly indicated that it was the intentional leadership approach of the principals that was the secret ingredient that motivated teachers to enhance their instructional practice. When asked the most effective method used in the process, Mrs. Star stated that it matters who is conducting the observations.

Mrs. Star, a Grade 1 teacher, indicated that, in the past, she has had principals who did not care. However, during the interview, she expressed that the two principals that Porter Central School District had, at the time of her interview, are fantastic. She stated, “they know what they are looking for, how to teach, and they work hard to educate themselves; I respect them so much which is part of it.” When prompted to clarify what motivated her, she confirmed it was not the evaluation. As the interview continued, Mrs. Star became visibly emotional and started to cry. After collecting her composure, she said,

What motivates me to improve my teaching is my principal, not the process. Because I respect her, and I value the relationship that we have, and I know she works really hard, so I want to, too, for her, for us, and for me and my students, but she makes us feel valued. So, she makes us feel valued, so I want to do a good job. She [the principal] acts like a normal human being. Some people get on power trips when they become principal. It is very distributed. It feels like a team. It feels like we’re all working together. She’s on our team. We feel supportive. I feel supported by her. (T1, 246-249, 272-278)
The theme of intentional leadership approach was also supported by Mrs. Mateos, a middle and high school elective teacher. Mrs. Mateos described her principal as personable and encouraging. She stated, “The principal will always jot something very thoughtful down after a walkthrough or observation, and I appreciate that. She is very encouraging; where she is noticing not just your teaching, but you as a person outside of that.” Mrs. Mateos proclaimed that because of these actions, her principal’s leadership impacts her teaching in a positive manner.

Mrs. Potter, a special education teacher, supported Mrs. Mateos and Mrs. Star that the intentional leadership approach of the administrator also mattered to her and positively impacted her ability to improve her teaching practices. In the past, she shared, under previous administrations in the district, there were not quality discussions after observations. In the past, Mrs. Potter shared that all information was just put in writing. Currently, she shared that the new administration operates differently. “So, I just think administrative-wise, it’s just more of an open relationship and it’s more of a discussion versus what is wrong, and this is right. It’s the leadership relationship and discussion. We work together; it is more collaborative.” Mrs. Potter revealed that the leadership approach and style during the teacher supervision and evaluation process helped her improve and change her teaching practices. Mrs. Brown also felt more comfortable talking with the administrator in person. “I feel more comfortable, in person, talking with my principal. The dialogue is helpful for my teaching. We talk with them, and they give me something to improve.”

Mrs. Rosie, an intervention teacher, reinforced that administrators made a difference in her improvement of teaching. She said, “My principal telling me tips, just
made it sink in better.” Mrs. Rosie further explained the leadership delivery style and its impact on her ability to learn and grow. “It’s her delivery. Her leadership has really shown me, like, I want to be loyal to her. I like her leadership skills. She’s very supportive of things we want to learn, you know, and including us in the process.” As the interview continued, Mrs. Rosie shared that after the evaluation process and information that the administrator learned from her during the postconference, the administrator found grant money to pay for registration to a national conference. As a result of Mrs. Rosie’s readiness and motivation to learn, she was trained in a nationally accredited intervention program that transformed her teaching.

Like Mrs. Rosie, Mrs. June described how the principal she had made a difference in the improvement of her teaching practices. Mrs. June labelled the principal as wonderful because the principal focused on what the teachers needed to be a better teacher. She explained that the principal was vested in wanting the teachers to do well. When probed about the role the leader played in the impact on improvement in Mrs. June’s teaching, she admitted, “I am fan-girling a little bit; I like her a lot. She is really nice.” Because of her principal’s approach to delivering feedback on adding in more closure to her lessons, Mrs. June is more ready, willing, and motivated to improve and change her teaching practices. She added that the principal tells her, “hey, why don’t you try this strategy, or why don’t you go to this training” after her observation. Mrs. June added, “my principal makes a huge difference in my knowledge and teaching skills.” Mr. Thompson’s interview echoed what Mrs. June conveyed. He described his principal as fantastic and someone who wants the teachers to be better. When referring to supervision practices, Mr. Thompson stated. “She wants to do that [more walkthroughs] to see what
her teachers are doing, and what the teachers need from her to grow and improve their teaching.”

Finally, Superintendent James emphasized the importance that everybody has an evaluation that is fair and supports their own personal growth. Beyond the review of the process, protocols, and supervision and evaluation documents, he believed the improvement will occur through personalized relationships, connections, and growth opportunities between the administration and the teachers.

Based on the interviews of the teachers and the superintendent, leadership matters when it comes to supervision and evaluation processes that impact the extent to which teachers learned and improved their instructional practice in the Porter Central School District. The teachers reported they learned and improved their teaching because the administrators motivated them to change. According to the teachers, the administrators exhibited solid knowledge of instruction and what good instruction looks like. As a result, the teachers reported that they worked hard to learn and change their instructional practices because they respected the administration. They described leadership in the district as collaborative, encouraging, personable, and supportive. The teachers felt that the administrators cared about them as individual teachers. They felt that the leadership was the secret ingredient to teacher growth and improvement. The teachers, in this case study, valued the relationship with the administration through the supervision and evaluation process. The supervision and evaluation process in the Porter Central School District was collaborative and the teachers and administrators work as a team.
Growth Producing Feedback

Of the seven teachers interviewed, all seven teachers indicated that the quality of feedback was a factor that impacted the extent to which they learned or improved their teaching. In conducting the data analysis, the word “feedback” was repeated frequently throughout the seven teacher interviews. Because of the high frequency of the word feedback, a word count was conducted in each of the seven teacher interview transcripts. The word count analysis showed that the word feedback emerged 190 times throughout the interview process. On average, each participant used the word 27 times during their individual interviews. After experiencing the supervision and/or evaluation process, teachers in this case study revealed they received written and/or verbal feedback from their administrators, and that it was the growth producing feedback that impacted the extent to which teachers learned and improved their teaching practices.

Each teacher participant was asked what the purpose was of the supervision and evaluation process. When Mrs. Star, a Grade 1 teacher, was asked the purpose of supervision and evaluation practices, she stated: “I guess I find the purpose would be to get feedback.” Mrs. Star shared that feedback is put in writing and discussed verbally with the administrator within the week of the observation. When asked if there was a time she received feedback during the supervision or evaluation process that led to improvement in teaching, Mrs. Star recalled the following:

After my last announced observation, my principal’s suggestion was about making sure if I’m using observation as a technique to assess students, that I take notes on what I’m observing as well. So, that is something I am working on because of that verbal feedback. (T1, 134-137).
As a result of the growth producing feedback given verbally and in writing after her observation, Mrs. Star’s instructional and assessment practices improved based on her principal’s suggestion. Like Mrs. Star, Mrs. Mateos described her experiences when she received feedback during the supervision and evaluation process.

Mrs. Mateos, a middle and high school elective teacher, provided several examples of receiving growth producing feedback during walkthroughs and after her announced observation. The most elaborate example of receiving feedback that resulted in instructional growth was in the spring, after a walkthrough conducted by the superintendent. Mrs. Mateos explained that all the feedback from the superintendent was written on a small postcard. The superintendent’s feedback instructed her to scaffold her formative assessment practices for the students by providing guiding questions throughout the activities and have numbered papers on the wall with an answer key for each group to check their own answers. According to Mrs. Mateos, the superintendent’s suggestions would alleviate her running around the room and be more student-centered in her assessment practices. Mrs. Mateos said, “I put that formative assessment strategy into practice immediately. It was easy for me to figure out what student was not getting it. I’ve seen their [the students’] vocabulary acquisition go through the roof this year.” She concluded that she was appreciative of the walkthrough feedback, and it was helpful, growth producing, and a more effective and efficient way for her to learn and improve her teaching practices. Mrs. Potter supported Mrs. Mateos’s experience with walkthrough feedback that produced growth in her teaching practices.

Mrs. Potter, a middle school special education teacher, also had numerous examples of experiences when she received growth producing feedback after supervision
and evaluation processes. She started her interview highlighting the impact of the walkthrough postcard. Within a day of the walkthrough, she explained that teachers received immediate feedback based on a common protocol of what the administrator liked, wondered, and the administrator’s suggestions for what they thought could be improved. When prompted further to describe what factor helped her grow, learn, and improve as a teacher, Mrs. Potter stated. “I am able to get that honest, immediate feedback. It might not have been something I thought of before.” She further admitted that her first walkthrough was in a class she was not comfortable in. Mrs. Potter shared that the feedback from her principal was fantastic. She continued to share that the growth producing feedback helped her improve because the administrator’s feedback guided her to refocus on alternate strategies other than the delivery of the content. She continued to describe her self-motivation to learn and grow as a teacher as she experienced the supervision and evaluation process. Mrs. Potter reflected:

I truly try to take any feedback. And I try to figure out how I can turn it into a positive and add something else. Because I don’t like to be that person that says, “I’m not going to try something new. I’m not going to change. I’m not going to change my frame of mind,” because it can be very small. It could be as small as change their seat and put it over here. I’m going to try it. Just kind of how I am. (T3, 131-134).

When asked the same question regarding the role of feedback and its impact on teacher improvement, Mrs. Brown responded similarly to Mrs. Potter. Mrs. Brown stated, “I am constantly willing to change if I’m given advice that makes sense and that is helpful or that I haven’t tried. She shared that after given the advice for anticipatory sets
or lesson warm-ups and alternative approaches to closings of a lesson, she tried the activities in her classroom, and discovered that the students were more engaged. Additionally, Mrs. Brown shared a time when she was given the feedback of implementing turn-and-talk or true-false student engagement strategies. Not only did her students enjoy the activities, she indicated that the growth producing feedback resulted in a change in her instructional practice. Mrs. Brown, a Grade 5 teacher, did reveal, however, there was a time that she received feedback that was not helpful or growth producing. She stated:

I think it was not helpful feedback, because I had already done the suggestion that was suggested to me by my administrator, and my administrator just didn’t see it. So, that [the feedback] was not helpful to me because the administrator did not ask if I had already done it. My administrator just gave me advice that I didn’t necessarily benefit from because I had already done what they were saying to do. (T6, 108-110)

Mrs. Brown’s experience of getting ineffective feedback after the teacher evaluation process highlighted the importance of receiving relevant, growth producing feedback intended to help her learn and improve her teaching practices. Mrs. Brown suggested that receiving feedback in person, in a postconference meeting, allows the teacher and the administrator to talk and ask clarifying questions about the lesson’s feedback. Mrs. Rosie, an intervention teacher, shared an experience where she received relevant, growth producing feedback during a postconference with her principal, just as Mrs. Brown had suggested would be more impactiful for improving teaching practices.
Mrs. Rosie told the story of how she received verbal feedback during a postconference from her administrator to incorporate more student choice in her lesson. Mrs. Rosie revealed that the intervention program that she uses is scripted and does not have an element of student choice. The administrator wanted the lessons to be more student driven. After much reflection, Mrs. Rosie realized that she was not doing that and there was not a reason why she could not. As a result of the growth producing feedback, Mrs. Rosie changed her teaching practices to include offering the students in her intervention class the opportunity to pick the book they wanted to read. “By my elementary principal telling it [feedback] to me, just made it [instructional improvements] sink in better,” said Mrs. Rosie.

Mrs. Rosie did describe, however, a situation when she received ineffective feedback that did not impact the extent to which she changed or improved her teaching. In the Porter Central School District, Mrs. Rosie shared that the high school principal was considered the independent evaluator and conducted all of the unannounced observations, which lasted for approximately 15 minutes. After her unannounced observation, the high school principal’s feedback suggested that Mrs. Rosie incorporate more technology. Mrs. Rosie explained that this ineffective feedback was not relevant to the intervention program, therefore, the feedback was not growth producing and did not change or help improve her instructional practice. She further explained that the intervention program was prescriptive with specific directions that the teacher had to follow with the students who struggled academically, and that technology was not part of the instructional delivery method. Ironically, Mrs. Rosie reinforced that the feedback was also not motivating or useful as she was just moved to a room by the same administrator that did
not have any technology capability in it. Based on the information that was shared by Mrs. Rosie, the use of an independent evaluator to conduct the unannounced observations did not change her instructional practice because the independent evaluator was not Mrs. Rosie’s direct supervisor. Mrs. Rosie indicated that the independent evaluator was not familiar with the specificities of the intervention program as was her principal. The feedback given to Mrs. Rosie was disconnected to the classroom environment and instruction and therefore had no impact to the extent to which she learned or improved her teaching practice.

Opposite of Mrs. Rosie, Mrs. June, a high school English teacher, described the positive experience that she had, during the school year of this case study’s interview, with the high school principal after her announced observation. During the interview, Mrs. June acknowledged that the process of supervision and evaluation had been great this year. She said, “She’s [the high school principal] given really good feedback. It’s obviously the feedback part that makes us better teachers.” Mrs. June continued to describe that the growth producing feedback came in written form first, and then the principal, her direct supervisor, and she discussed it afterwards. Mrs. June admitted that she is more critical of herself than the principal. She explained that her principal provides her with effective feedback that provides closure to the evaluation process, indicating that the observation went better than Mrs. June originally thought. Mrs. June shared a time where the principal was so happy with her teaching, that her principal had the superintendent come watch the last 10 minutes of the lesson. Mrs. June proclaimed, “It was great. I feel like, if you can get concrete feedback that is constructive, it makes a huge difference and my skills and knowledge grow.” Mr. Thompson, a middle and high
school English teacher, echoed Mrs. June’s proclamation of the power of receiving constructive feedback.

Mr. Thompson described that the feedback in the Porter Central School District from his principal had been ongoing, throughout the school year and resulted in instructional growth. He explained that during his 20 years of teaching experience, he sometimes got stuck in a rut and relied on his go-to activities and practices. In the interview, Mr. Thompson identified that the supervision and evaluation process allowed for the administrator to come into the classroom and provide alternative strategies, such as the wingman strategy, to move him out of his comfort zone. He shared that he learned more and received more growth producing feedback when the conversations in the postconference were taken offline from the process. When asked to describe a situation where his knowledge and skills changed, Mr. Thompson stated, “I feel like I’ve gotten more usage and more mileage out of the feedback from the unannounced postconference and walkthrough from my principal.” When probed more to describe additional examples of growth producing feedback, he expressed it was in his personal teaching improvement. He expressed that there was a fault with the use of independent evaluators, supporting what Mrs. Rosie reported during her interview.

Mr. Thompson shared that when being observed by the independent evaluator or the elementary principal, he ran into a problem. He told the story that in the year of this study’s interview, he had a section in his classroom that was filled with personal things or things that the students had given to him over the years. Additionally, this year, Mr. Thompson added a few comfortable chairs, Christmas string lights, and a lamp. During the postconference, after his unannounced observation with the elementary principal or
independent evaluator, he shared that her feedback to him was that the room felt like a hangout. He continued to express that the feedback he received was not growth producing and did not change his practice. Mr. Thompson added that the feedback was ineffective because it did not have anything to do with the components of the teacher’s rubric when addressing improvement in classroom instruction. The principal’s feedback included the following: “If this is going to be a problem next year, the thing to do is just turn the lights off and turn your regular lights on for the observation.” Mr. Thompson added that her feedback goes back to, “that’s not really what the classroom is like; the feedback was not helpful; it didn’t do anything that was going to change my practice at all.” The document review with Superintendent James substantiated Mr. Thompson’s sentiments that the process did not always provide growth opportunities; however, there were documents and aspects of the process that supported growth for teachers.

During the document review interview with Superintendent James, he described that the supervision and evaluation documents as purely evaluative, and they did not always provide the necessary feedback for growth. He stated, “I do not think the teachers and administrators see them [the documents] necessarily as growth opportunities or improvement opportunities or even best practice.” Superintendent James stated that the documents in the annual professional performance review (APPR) helped teachers understand “how” they were being evaluated, which aligned to the state guidelines. He added that the Danielson rubric breaks down and explained the components the teachers were being evaluated on. Superintendent James confirmed that he thought the articulation of the Danielson rubric helped support growth of the best instructional practice. However, during the interview, Superintendent James identified a gap in the evaluation process. He
shared that the related service providers, such as speech, counselors, psychologist, and occupational and physical therapists did not have an evaluation system. Superintendent James indicated that he continued to work with a district APPR committee so that this group of service providers could begin to receive feedback like the teachers. He stated, “I think it is important that everybody [all teachers and service providers] have an evaluation that is fair and supports their own personal and professional growth.” When asked if there was growth and improvement made by teachers within the documents and supervision and evaluation process, Superintendent James confirmed that he did not see any value to teacher growth and development in the current teacher evaluation documents. Superintendent James expressed that there is one piece that could help growth. He described the fact that as part of the state education requirement, independent evaluators conducted the unannounced observations, and the lead evaluators conducted the announced observations. For example, the elementary principal in the district conducts all the high school teachers, unannounced, and the high school teacher conducts all the elementary teachers, unannounced. Superintendent James described:

We’ve had this discussion at the district committee; the fact that the elementary principal should be observing and doing their own observations. High school principal[s] should be doing all their observations. So, principals can see that trajectory and growth of teachers they supervise and evaluate during the observation process. (S1, 182-185)

Superintendent James, like Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Rosie, did not support the use of independent evaluators in the teacher supervision and evaluation process. He confirmed that he was continuing to work with the district APPR committee and explained his
philosophy. “That [removal of the independent evaluator] is a shift that I’d really love to see in our plans.” According to Superintendent James, this shift in philosophy and the evaluation process would be a positive factor for the teacher supervision and evaluation process that would impact to the extent that teachers would learn and improve their instructional practice. Superintendent James confirmed that teachers learn and improve their practice when they are observed and receive growth producing feedback by their direct principal.

Feedback was a prevalent word used to describe a factor that impacts teachers’ ability to learn and improve their instructional practices through the supervision and evaluation process. The teachers in the Porter Central School District reported that the purpose of the teacher supervision and evaluation process was to provide them with effective, growth producing feedback to learn and improve in the classroom. Feedback that was provided immediately, either verbally or in writing, after walkthroughs and observations, was the preferred method of the teachers in this case study. Despite the limited opportunities of feedback in the district documents, administration used an online evaluation tool, had written postcards, and had postconference conversations to share growth producing feedback intended to help teachers learn and improve as a result of the supervision and evaluation process.

One Size Does Not Fit All

After conducting the seven teacher interviews, the theme one size does not fit all emerged. One size is referring to the supervision or evaluation processes, ranging from walkthroughs, preconferences, unannounced and announced observations, and postconferences, did not meet the learning and improvement needs of the teachers in this
case study in the same way. Given the supervision and evaluation process in the small, rural school district, each teacher was impacted differently by each process. When asked the most effective and ineffective method used in the supervision and evaluation process in the Porter Central School District that impacted the extent to which teachers learned and improved instructional practices, the teachers’ responses in this case study varied.

Table 4.3 illustrates the factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process that had the most and the least impact on the teachers in this case study. Out of the seven participants in this case study, five experienced classroom walkthroughs in the Porter Central School District. Additionally, these five teachers indicated that the classroom walkthroughs were an effective supervision strategy that assisted in the improvement of their instruction. During their interviews, the other two teachers voiced a desire to experience classroom walkthroughs. Out of the seven teachers in this case study, four found preconferences, prior to the announced observation, to impact the extent to which the teachers learned or improved their teaching practices. One teacher noted, however, that preconferences were not impactful, while two other participants did not mention preconferences during the interviews. When asked what method of the teacher supervision and evaluation method was most effective, two teachers indicated that unannounced observations were most effective, while five of the teachers in the study indicated that unannounced observations were ineffective. Of the seven participants, four preferred announced observations to impact or improve their instructional practice, whereas three of the teachers did not prefer announced observations. All the teacher participants indicated that the postconference component of the teacher supervision and evaluation process impacted their improvement in teaching practice the most. Table 4.3
illustrates that all teachers in this case study favored the use of postconferences to receive feedback that aided in their teacher development. Overall, the teachers varied in their responses, indicating that one size does not fit all when it comes to supervision and evaluation practices that are intended to help teachers learn and improve instructional practice. The data collected through the semi-structured interviews provides an analysis of the teachers lived experiences with the Porter Central School District’s teacher supervision and evaluation system.

Table 4.3

*Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Practices Perceived by Teachers: One Size Does Not Fit All*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Walkthroughs</th>
<th>Preconference</th>
<th>Unannounced</th>
<th>Announced</th>
<th>Postconference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Brown</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. June</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Maetos</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Potter</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Rosie</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Star</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Thompson</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* + Effective Method; – Ineffective Method; NA – Not applicable/Did not mention.

Mrs. Star identified the announced observation that was conducted by her principal as the most impactful to learning and improving her instructional practice. She indicated that after the announced observation, there was a postconference. During the postconference, Mrs. Star shared that the principal reviewed the scores, provided suggestions, and gave praise based on the observation. She found this process motivating and relevant, and it prompted her to improve her teaching. Counter to the announced
observation, Mrs. Star shared that having teachers attached to the test scores of the students was a method that had little to no impact on her teaching. She said, “I do not know what questions students are being asked. I do not know what questions they got wrong. It gives me no information or feedback of what I need to teach, what I need to work on in my practice to be a better teacher.”

Mrs. Mateos agreed with Mrs. Star. Mrs. Mateos shared that the unannounced observations were the most ineffective method. The elementary principal conducted the unannounced observations for only 20 minutes. She added, “The elementary principal does not know students and she often view typical student interactions as negative.” Mrs. Mateos revealed that this can negatively affect the observation score. She described that the actual announced observation by her principal was the most effective. “I know I need to be well prepared, and I use a very detailed lesson plan. I want to make sure that I have the lesson memorized.” After the announced observation, she indicated that she and her principal were able to engage in a post-conference meeting and discuss the lesson, and she received additional ideas regarding how to enhance the lesson. She said because of the announced observation, her teaching practices improved.

Mrs. Potter did not share the same preference in method of the supervision and evaluation process that impacted her ability to learn and improve her teaching practices. Mrs. Potter shared that she did not favor the announced or unannounced over the other. She shared during the interview that she preferred the formative supervision practice of walkthroughs. She admitted that the unannounced observations were a less stressful practice. Additionally, she described the announced observations as too specific and often
too focused. Mrs. Potter expressed that teachers had the ability to plan for the lesson. She continued:

We knew our observations were coming. So, we’re like, we knew certain things needed to be done a certain way. With walkthroughs the administrators are seeing us on an everyday basis. The reality is, they are [administrators] seeing us on every day; this is what teaching looks like. (T3, 87-90)

Later in the interview, Mrs. Potter shared that she preferred the postconference after her unannounced observation. Here, she highlighted that it was the postconference that the observation itself was discussed, what went well in the lesson, and there was time for her to ask questions of the administrator. She added,

For me, the most important part is the one-on-one discussion, because it gives us time to figure it out, and if something can be improved on, I ask questions, we work on it together, so I improve my teaching as a result. (T3, 200-202)

She indicated that the preconference, with the announced observation, did not help her learn or improve her teaching practices. She stated:

I had my preobservation stuff. I had six to eight questions I had to answer beforehand along with my formal writeup. Along with, there was another piece of writing I had to have. Then, I had to go meet with the administrator for the actual meeting, premeeting, and figure out what piece of the rubric we were going to touch on and things like that. It was so, so formal, and it was so stressful and time consuming.

Throughout the interview, like Mrs. Potter, Mr. Thompson revealed that he favored the use of the walkthroughs as a formative supervision practice that improved his
teaching. He voiced his concern over the New York State mandate for teacher accountability that the Porter Central School District was held to. He raised the concern that the teacher evaluation system appeared punitive and was not about growth. He stated:

So, it doesn’t work. So, what you end up . . . at least in my experience. What you end up with is, so you get these announced observations, and you have this one day, and depending, again, on who your supervisor is, that can influence how you do those, but, in general, you have these super special lessons, even though you’re not supposed to, and you make sure that you crossed all your “T”s and dotted all your “I”s. It’s a terrible cliché. (T4, 133-137)

Mr. Thompson expressed concerns that teachers make sure they give the administration a show because teachers’ jobs are “riding on this quantitative measure of qualitative work.”

Mr. Thompson compared announced observations to the Hawthorne Principle where people act differently when they know they are being observed. “So, you’re not really seeing what a teacher does day to day. The information and feedback given is useless and does not improve teacher,” he reiterated. Despite the unannounced and announced feeling stated, Mr. Thompson identified that he does find value in the post-conference meeting when an organic conversation occurs, and feedback is given.

Mrs. Rosie provided an opposite perspective on which supervision and/or evaluation process impacted the extent to which she learned and improved her instructional practice compared to Mr. Thompson. It is worth noting that Mrs. Rosie and Mr. Thompson had the same number of years of teaching in the school district. Additionally, Mrs. Rosie shared that she had never experienced walkthroughs in the
district. Mrs. Rosie added that her principal always gave her good feedback even though she may not have always liked the score. She revealed that she liked getting feedback during the pre and postconference. As the interview continued, Mrs. Rosie explained that the unannounced observations had less weight, and they only focused on the environment of the classroom and not on the instruction. Because of this, Mrs. Rosie was not motivated or ready to adjust her instruction and said the unannounced observation had little impact on improving her teaching practices. Mrs. Brown was not as definitive as Mrs. Rosie as the method that motivated or helped her learn or improve her instructional practice.

At first, Mrs. Brown was indifferent about the extent to which announced or unannounced observations improved her teaching practices. In the interview, she indicated that that they both were supposed to be helpful, but she did not always find them to be helpful. Mrs. Brown stated, “I don’t always find them helpful because the advice that were given is not; it does not relate. I feel like, or I’m not given exact advice that helps.” When asked what the most effective supervision or evaluation method would be to help improve her teaching, Mrs. Brown selected the announced observation and the pre and postconferences because there was a chance to meet before and after the lesson. She admitted, “I like the postconference as you get to talk about things that I did not touch on.” She revealed later in the interview that the unannounced observations definitely had little impact on her teaching development. She attributed this to the fact that during the unannounced observations, there were a lot of assumptions that were made by the administrators. Mrs. Brown reported that she did not receive a lot of feedback she felt was helpful. She stated, “I did not feel like the unannounced
observation was going to improve my teaching.” Some teachers in this case study felt differently from Mrs. Brown regarding the positive impact that unannounced observations had on their improvement and growth as a teacher.

Opposite of Mrs. Brown, Mrs. June answered that the most effective teacher supervision and evaluation method had been the unannounced observations as well as the informal walkthroughs. She shared that unannounced observations caused less pressure for her. She explained that she gets anxious with the announced observations and that she did not always act like herself. She shared:

I thought the walkthroughs were really useful because it’s like I said. It just takes the pressure off because it is not evaluative. I also really like the unannounced because, like I said, [it] kind of takes the pressure off because it’s going to be what it’s going to be. (T7, 191-194)

During the document review of the Porter Central School District teacher evaluation process and protocols, Superintendent James provided his perspective on what factors impacted the extent to which teachers learned and improved their teaching practices. He shared that the district’s APPR plan met the New York State requirements on teacher evaluation. He added that the teachers throughout the district received unannounced and announced observations by the administration. Furthermore, he explained that the documents describe the frequency of the observations and the methodology of how the observations are weighted. Superintendent James added:

The documents are used by both the principals and the teachers. We use them also with new teachers so that new teachers can understand how they would be
evaluated. In addition, we use Danielson’s rubrics to break down and explain the different components of how they would be evaluated. (S1, 88-90)

Superintendent James indicated that the administrators conduct classroom walkthroughs throughout the year. He added, however, that walkthroughs are not part of the requirements of New York State. At the time of his interview for this case study, he was working with the district APPR committee to make the formative supervision practice of classroom walkthroughs part of the process. Superintendent James conveyed that he does not think the current process of preconferences, unannounced and announced observations, and postconferences helps teachers in the Porter Central School District learn and improve as much as walkthroughs. He stated:

So, the difficulty [in the supervision and evaluation process] has been balance and trust. It comes down to relationships [between teachers and administrators], and accurately and fairly applying, and having an evaluation that’s fair that supports growth. A supervision and evaluation system that isn’t a[n], “I gotcha.” And, I think it’s because, again, in the process of an announced observation being worth 80%, and an unannounced being 20%. And again, combine that with student achievement. Teachers have become a number based on New York State. There is nothing in the APPR documents and current process that promotes teacher learning, growth, and development. (S1, 171-178)

Based on the document review with the superintendent of schools and the teacher interviews, the data collected reveal that there is not one way to support learning and improve instructional practices with the existing teacher supervision and evaluation process in the Porter Central School District at the time of this case study. Supporting the
adult learning theory of andragogy, the seven teachers in this case study had varying perspectives regarding what was the most effective method, as well as the most ineffective method, for teacher improvement. Their perspectives depended upon their self-concept as a teacher, years of experience, orientation to learn, readiness to learn, motivation to learn, and the relevancy of the process.

**Formative Supervision Practices**

After the data analysis, there were two formative supervision practices that emerged from the interviews that the teachers experienced in the Porter Central School District that led to changes or improvements in their instructional practice. Table 4.4 depicts the themes, key concepts, and subthemes aligned to answer Research Question 2: “To what extent did teachers in a small, rural school district experience formative supervision practices that led to changes or improvements in their instructional practices?”

Table 4.4

*Research Question 2 – Themes, Key Concepts, and Subthemes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transparent walkthroughs</td>
<td>Classroom visits by administrators</td>
<td>Nonevaluative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pop-ins</td>
<td>Immediate written feedback via postcards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pop-ins</td>
<td>I saw, I noticed, I wonder protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative learning</td>
<td>Teachers observing and learning from other teachers</td>
<td>Nonthreatening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>walks</td>
<td>Job-embedded professional development</td>
<td>Collaboration amongst teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transparent Walkthroughs**

Of the seven teachers, five indicated that they had experienced formative supervision practices, such as classroom walkthroughs conducted by administration, that
led to changes and/or improvements in their teaching practices. Classroom walkthroughs were described by the participants as quick visits or short pop-in visits to the classroom that were nonevaluative in nature. The purpose or intent of the walkthroughs varied, according to the teachers, to include checking on instruction, checking on the teachers, and checking on the students and providing new strategies to improve instruction. Mrs. Mateos indicated that the superintendent “makes his rounds, popping in and out of classrooms, sometimes with the principals.” At the commencement of the walkthroughs, she reported that the teachers will receive a note in their mailboxes. She described that the note included what the administration saw, noticed, and what the administration wondered about the lesson. Mrs. Mateos added, “I’ve gotten so many good suggestions, such as a study practice, and [an] online solution such as Quizlet” (T2, 106-113). Mrs. Mateos articulated that she was motivated to improve her practice, and she found the walkthroughs encouraging.

Like Mrs. Mateos, Mrs. Potter started her interview describing how the superintendent and the principals engaged in the supervision practice of conducting walkthroughs. She described the phenomenon: “They [the superintendent and/or the principal] just pop in, they have a seat, and they stay for about 10 to 20 minutes. They see what’s going on, check us out, see how the kids are doing” (T3, 43-46). Mrs. Potter indicated that within a few days she would receive immediate feedback in her mailbox via a written postcard. Mrs. Potter acknowledged, because of the walkthrough and the feedback provided, she was able to learn, improve, and grow as a teacher. Mrs. Potter revealed:
Honestly, I’m able to get that immediate feedback. And the feedback might just not be something that I thought of. And in my head, I’m like, Oh, okay, so I can do that differently the next day.” Or if it’s something I did well, I’m like, “Okay, I did that well. I can continue doing that and maybe I can ask for another improvement strategy.” So, it’s that immediate where I can literally boom, boom, boom, and continue to grow and collect new ideas. (T3, 69-73).

Later in the interview, Mrs. Potter admitted that walkthroughs were less stressful and much more effective than teacher-announced or unannounced observations. Mr. Thompson, however, admitted during his interview, he still felt the walkthroughs were a bit stressful. While, at the same time, he proclaimed, “I continue to think walkthroughs are the best things ever; I really do.” (T4, 455) When prompted to describe what it was that made walkthroughs the best and helped improve his teaching, Mr. Thompson shared that the walkthroughs were motivating to him and kept him on his toes. Additionally, he shared:

So, she [the principal] came in for a walkthrough one day, and like[d] what she saw, but was curious about the way that I had the kids working in groups and gave me a suggestion called the “wing-man strategy.” So, you get one kid who’s in charge of making sure the rest of the group is doing the work, and I liked it and so I tried it. (T4, 59-61)

It makes me a better teacher and motivates me. I think we get stuck in our ruts; we have our go-tos with certain activities. Someone comes in your room who provides an alternative, that gets you out of your comfort zone, and it gives you
another strategy to use along the way, and so it makes you a better teacher. (T4, 86-92)

Like Mr. Thompson, Mrs. June confirmed that the walkthrough protocols used in the Porter Central School District were more effective than announced or formal observations because walkthroughs were associated with less pressure. She revealed that she tended to get anxious for the formal observations and did not act like herself. Mrs. June indicated that she wanted to do well. “I feel like I get more organic feedback from walkthroughs,” she said. Mrs. June shared that the principal had been doing an awesome job popping in and giving little postcards that indicated what the principal noticed, appreciated, and wondered about the lesson. “I thought that was really useful because it took the pressure off, was nonevaluative, and provided me with three things I did well.” (T7, 192-194).

Continuing to support the theme of transparent walkthroughs shared by four previous teacher interviews, Mrs. Brown expressed that teacher supervision practices, such as walkthroughs, were becoming more prevalent in the Porter Central School District since the new superintendent had been in the district in the previous year from the dates of this case study’s interviews. She corroborated that the purpose of the walkthroughs was to see what the teachers were doing in their classrooms. “The administration stays in the room for 20 minutes or so; they will just kind of walk through, and then we’ll either get a handwritten note, or an email, with their comments on what they saw” (T6, 25-26). She described:

After a walkthrough, there’s little things that modifying my worksheets for special education students, things like that, and I’ve definitely taken that walkthrough
feedback, and I have tried to improve on those practices. I find those really helpful to me because special education is not an area that I really know. So those are times when I’ve taken the feedback, and it helped. Just even probably simple things like changing the numbers for a certain kid or cutting down on the number of multiple-choice questions. Just little things that, I guess, I wouldn’t have thought of. So those are times where I feel like I have tried to improve from feedback. (T6, 138-144)

Supervision practices, such as walkthroughs, continued to be acknowledged as a formative supervision practice used in the Porter Central School District through the remaining interviews.

However, two tenured teachers in this case study had not experienced the practice of walkthroughs in the year of these study interviews. As a result, it was not known if their instructional practice had not changed or improved because of the lack of experience with formative supervision practices. Mrs. Star, who is beginning her 13th year in the district, stated, “Supervision practices tend to focus on the newer teachers. I think that supervision practices or walkthroughs get pushed aside for teachers like myself” (T1, 51-54).

Mrs. Rosie reinforced what Mrs. Star experienced. When asked what modifications and/or changes could be made the supervision and evaluation processes of the Porter Central School District, Mrs. Rosie, a 16-year veteran teacher, stated that she wished there were more walkthroughs. She revealed that she personally had not experienced a walkthrough from any of the administrators in the district. Mrs. Rosie heard that other teachers received a note with feedback after the walkthroughs. “I would
like a little love pat, you know, I think it would motivate or improve my teaching—people want to be valued” (T5, 671-676).

Contrary to Mrs. Rosie’s experience, Superintendent James acknowledged his philosophy of favoring visiting classrooms as a practice of supporting teacher development. Since he had been the superintendent of schools for slightly over 1 year, the administration had been conducting more walkthroughs of classrooms. When asked how the process and protocols of formative supervision practices support the growth and development of teachers to improve their practice, Superintendent James described:

So, since starting in last November, one of the things we’ve done over the past about a year and a half is the fact that we do visit classrooms. So, I do, either every week or every other week, with the principals, we visit, we take about 45 minutes to an hour and visit classrooms. Some weeks it does get put off, but, for the most part, we can visit two to three classrooms a week. We debrief together based on what we saw, and I will typically generate a card to that teacher, and the principal also generates a communication that they have but with a similar format overall. So, for example, typically, when they’ll do something I liked, something I noticed, something to think about, and we’re using a pretty consistent process when we send our notes with that same type of flow to it, so that the teachers are seeing, “Oh, they liked what I was doing,” and, “Oh, look at that, they noticed something,” and then, “Oh, that’s something to think about.” That is going to be my message and has been my message since arriving to the district. (S1, 275-285)

Walkthroughs have become more prevalent and transparent in the year since the change of superintendents. Of the seven teachers in the Porter Central School District,
five have experienced the nonevaluative, formative supervision practice of classroom walkthroughs. The teachers who experienced classroom walkthroughs described that the practice impacted and improved their instructional practice. Walkthroughs were motivating, encouraging, and less stressful to the teachers who experienced them. After experiencing a walkthrough, teachers were given immediate, written feedback on a personalized card following the protocol of I saw, I noticed, and I wondered. It was reported that this walkthrough feedback protocol helped teachers, who experienced walkthroughs, learn and improve their instructional practice. The Superintendent of Schools is working with the district APPR committee to modify the existing plan to include classroom walkthroughs which aligned to his philosophy to promote teacher growth and development.

**Collaborative Learning Walks**

Another formative supervision practice that five out of the seven teachers experienced in the Porter Central School District was the collaborative learning walks. Collaborative learning walks were like classroom walkthroughs, however, learning walks included the teachers. The teachers could visit other teachers’ classrooms and observe them while they taught. The participants in the study reported that the intention of the learning walk was for teachers to learn and/or get feedback from each other instead of from the administration. A few of the teachers in this case study described the extent to which the formative practice of learning walks led to a change or improvement in their teaching practices.

Although she did not explicitly name the practice, Mrs. Brown participated in collaborative learning walks during her employment at the Porter Central School District.
When asked, during the teacher interview, if she sought out new information to improve her teaching practices, she confirmed that she talked to other teachers regarding what they do in each topic or strategy. Mrs. Brown shared, “I do seek out knowledge and feedback from others than [the] administration.” Mrs. Brown reported that there was a limitation as she was the only one in the grade level that taught a particular content area. As a result, Mrs. Brown described herself as self-directed as she sought out help by observing and talking to another teacher in a different grade level and observed the teacher as she taught the similar content as Mrs. Brown. From engaging in the collaborative learning walk, Mrs. Brown was able to learn new strategies to help her teach her content area more effectively.

Participation in this case study’s interview protocol reminded Mrs. June of the formative practice, collaborative learning walks, that are available to her. Unlike Mrs. Brown, Mrs. June admitted that she has not taken advantage of this opportunity intended to help her learn and grow as a teacher. Mrs. June shared that the district is doing a “pineapple challenge.” She described that the pineapple symbolizes welcoming and hospitality. She stated:

So, the goal is to just go and sit in two other teachers’ rooms for a period. I got to look, again, [at] what the principal said. I don’t think we have to really do much with it. It was just kind of like you go, you tell her you went just to see other people’s practices. I actually really like that, too, because when I was a really new teacher, I feel like sometimes you get in your own little bubble, and it would be really nice. I mean now it's still important, especially since a lot of my coworkers are doing really interesting things. Especially, I’m not always great with
technology. Our global teacher’s really good with technology and using different things and stuff like that. So, yeah, you reminded me that I need to do mine. (T7, 640-648)

Mrs. Potter was in the same situation as Mrs. June. Mrs. Potter realized that she had the opportunity to engage in collaborative learning walks. Mrs. Potter described that, when she needed to improve on something in the classroom after a walkthrough or postconference, she could go to an administrator for help and ask to participate in a collaborative learning walk. She shared, “I would love to observe so-and-so; I can exactly see how this [strategy] is implemented. I am given the coverage; I can go and do so. We actually do what’s called a pineapple thing.” She described:

But we do these little pineapple things where we can go to different classrooms to observe different methods. So, one teacher does, I don’t know, they use technology incredibly well in their classroom. We say, “Okay, this period I want to go observe that teacher use this piece of technology.” Administrator’s fantastic like, “Okay, we’ve got your coverage, you go observe.” And then you get the opportunity to speak with the person you observed but then also speak with the administrator so that you can figure out, “okay what did you learn?” And then if you need help implementing that in your classroom, they will all help try to figure out how to implement that. (T3, 219-225)

Like Mrs. Potter, Mrs. Mateos stated that collaborative learning walks were motivating her to change her instructional practice. She reported that when she saw other teachers teaching a strategy in a lesson a certain way, she was motivated and ready to implement what she saw. She explained, “I actually had somebody observe me 2 weeks ago. It was
interesting, but it was cool” (T2, 592-594). Similar to other teachers in this case study, Mr. Thompson recalled that the teachers had been encouraged to engage in learning walks to observe other teachers to enhance their teaching. However, like Mrs. June, Mr. Thompson admitted. “We just get so busy; I think we all forget” (T4, 780-782). He indicated that he did sponsor a teacher to come into his elective class to complete a collaborative learning walk, in the year that this case study occurred, so the other teacher could learn and improve his teaching practices.

It was uncovered through the interview protocols that the administration in the Porter Central School District looked outside of the district for support and partners within other districts to engage in collaborative learning walks. Mr. Thompson shared that the superintendent arranged a collaborative learning walk at another district. The teacher proclaimed, “I freaking loved it.” He shared that he was struggling to maintain his grades in the student management system and getting feedback to students. His former principal insulted him about it. Mr. Thompson noted that the principal’s approach did not help him improve his instructional practice. Mr. Thompson explained that as a result, he went to his superintendent for assistance. He explained, “Superintendent James did a good job. He knew how to talk to you and how to assuage your fears, and was, like, “No. This is fixable, Mr. Thompson. This isn’t a big deal.” Superintendent James arranged a visit for an entire day at a large suburban district where Mr. Thompson was able to complete three collaborative learning walks. “It was really nice. I completed three collaborative learning walks; I watched him and two other teachers. I even got a unit from him ,and it was just really awesome,” said Mr. Thompson.
A culture of teachers learning from teachers by participating in collaborative learning walks is becoming a formative supervision practice experienced by teachers in the Porter Central School District. Out of the seven teachers in this case study, five reported either acknowledging the option of the collaborative learning walk opportunities and/or participating in the learning walks. Participation in the collaborative learning walks helped the teachers learn from other teachers and helped to improve their teaching practice. The teachers in the district reported that the use of the pineapple chart, as a method to increase the use of collaborative learning walks, as a job-embedded professional development and learning opportunity for teachers, is becoming more prevalent. Because Superintendent James endorsed classroom walkthroughs to be done by administration in the teachers’ classrooms, the superintendent started building the use of collaborative learning walks among the teachers as a formative supervision practice that was intended to help teachers learn and improve their instructional practices—regardless of what grade and/or subject they taught.

**Summary of Results**

Overall, Chapter 4 presented the results of seven semi-structured, individual one-on-one teacher interviews as well as present the document review interview with the Superintendent of Schools of a small, rural school district in Western New York. This case study, bound by space and time, set out to answer two research questions. Data collected for Research Question 1 identified the factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process to the extent that the teachers learned and improved their instructional practices.
Four themes emerged that aligned with Research Question 1. First, the administration in the rural district were described as stretched thin because of wearing many hats. This was attributed to the small district and the administration taking on many roles and responsibilities, which led to high rates of administrative turnover. Performing many duties and having high turnover rates in administration was a factor that impacted how the teachers learned and improved through the supervision and evaluation process. Second, leadership did make a difference in the teachers’ ability to learn and improve their teaching practices. Third, growth producing feedback was a prevalent factor in the data collected that positively impacted teacher growth. Fourth, the teacher supervision and evaluation methods varied from teacher to teacher regarding the most effective method to impact teacher learning and improvement in their teaching practices.

Two themes emerged that aligned with Research Question 2. Understanding how teachers experienced formative supervision practices to improve and change their teaching practices was one of the goals of this case study of the Porter Central School District. The use of, one, transparent walkthroughs and, two, collaborative learning walks were two formative supervision practices that teachers experienced in the Porter Center School District that assisted them in learning and improving their instructional practices. Transparent classroom walkthroughs by the administration provided nonevaluative check-ins for the teachers, which were followed up by written feedback in a postcard, following the I saw, I notice, I wonder protocol. As a result of the administrators conducting walkthroughs, the administration encouraged teachers to engage in collaborative learning walks where teachers visit other teachers’ classrooms and learn from each other. Formative supervision practices, such as transparent classroom
walkthroughs and collaborative learning walks, were becoming more prevalent in the
district to promote teacher growth and improvement.

Chapter 5 discusses the implications of Chapter 4. The limitations, weaknesses,
and/or problems that impacted the results are included. Recommendations for further
research or action based on the findings is presented in Chapter 5, and it is followed by a
summary of this case study.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

Research by others regarding the factors of teacher supervision and evaluation practices that help teachers learn and improve their instructional practice has been conducted through the unique perspectives of school principals, aspiring school principals, and teachers. However, there is a lack of studies that captures the rural teachers’ perspectives and their lived experiences regarding how teacher supervision and evaluation practices can provide growth-producing feedback to improve teaching in rural school districts. The purpose of this research study was to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors involved in the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural Western New York State school district impacted the extent to which the teachers learned and improved in their instructional practices. This case study explored the experiences of teachers in a small, rural school district regarding the formative supervision practices that helped them to learn or to improve their teaching. Additionally, this case study obtained an in-depth, rural perspective that provides a deeper understanding of the impact of the teacher evaluation system on teacher development.

A qualitative descriptive case study was used to collect and analyze multiple data sources, including interviews and a document review, to explore a real-life case of teachers experiencing the supervision and evaluation system in Western New York State (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Yin (2003) indicated that a descriptive case study is used to
portray a phenomenon in a real-life context or bound system. The following research questions guided this qualitative descriptive case study:

1. What factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impacted the extent to which the teachers learned and improved their instructional practices?

2. To what extent did teachers in a small, rural school district experience formative supervision practices that led to changes or improvements in their instructional practices?

Data collected from the teacher interviews, the superintendent interview, and from public and private in-district documents were analyzed and aligned to the research questions, empirical literature, and Knowles’s (1950) theoretical framework of the adult learning theory of andragogy.

Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the findings and results from Chapter 4. In addition, this chapter identifies the limitations, weaknesses, and/or problems of this case study that may have impacted the case study’s results. Finally, Chapter 5 provides recommendations to future researchers on the topic of teacher supervision and evaluation processes that impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve their instructional practices as well as the extent to which formative practices lead to changes and/or improvements.

**Implications of Findings**

Research implications typically suggest how the findings or results are important to subsequent research, theory, professional practice, and/or policy. There are three major implications that emerged from this case study based on the findings from a thorough
analysis of data collected from teacher interviews, a superintendent interview, and a document review. The first implication is that authentic leadership promotes teacher improvement and growth. The second implication is that there is power in the post-conference discussions between a teacher and administrator after an unannounced or announced observation. Finally, the third implication is that formative practices, such as walkthroughs and learning walks, provide an ongoing, collaborative approach to deliver feedback to teachers that is intended to improve instructional practices outside of the New York State mandates of the APPR process. In addition to the discussion of the implications of the findings in this case study, the results are aligned to current empirical literature, and Knowles’s (1950) theoretical framework of the adult learning theory of andragogy.

**Implication 1: Authentic Leadership Promotes Teacher Improvement**

School district leaders or administrators play a pivotal role in the implementation of teacher evaluation systems that effectively help teachers learn and improve their teaching. School principals are key to improving teacher quality (McKay, 2013). The theme intentional leadership approach highlighted that perceived authentic leadership promoted the teachers’ ability to learn and improve throughout the supervision and evaluation process in their small, rural school district. The teachers’ stories during the interviews regarding the leaders’ intentionality toward teacher supervision and evaluation processes are consistent with George’s (2003) authentic leadership approach (Northouse, 2019). Northouse (2019) simplistically describes authentic leadership as real and authentic. The essential qualities of authentic leaders are those that know who they are, have a passion to serve others, and are driven by core values (Northouse, 2019).
Authentic leadership illustrates that there are five dimensions of authentic leadership. The five dimensions of authentic leadership include: purpose, value, relationships, self-discipline, and heart. In addition to the five dimensions, Northouse (2019) indicated that there were five complimentary characteristics that leaders need to cultivate to develop into an authentic leader. These five characteristics include: passion, behavior, connectedness, consistency, and compassion. The intersectionality of the dimensions and characteristics of authentic leadership support the theme of intentional leadership approach. The theme intentional leadership approach implies that for teachers to learn and improve from the teacher supervision and evaluation process, leaders need to be authentic. Additionally, the results imply the importance of administration being purposeful and intentional with their words and actions during the teacher evaluation processes intended to impact on the improvement of teaching practices. Northouse (2019) posits that individuals want access to leaders who are open, honest, and trusting. When these trusting relationships are established, leaders and followers work together for a common goal and purpose (Northouse, 2019).

The theme intentional leadership approach emphasized the importance of authentic leadership in the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district. Consistent leadership that is relatable and respectful made a difference for teachers. Given the high turnover rates of the previous administrators, the teachers were not motivated to change their teaching practices. Intentional leadership approach towards the evaluation process indicated that the previous administrators were perceived to just be going through the motions of getting the teacher evaluations done to be compliant with the APPR process required by New York State. The previous administrations’ perceived
lack of intentional leadership of supporting teacher improvement through the teacher
evaluation system did not impact the extent to which the teachers learned or improved
their teaching practices. The superintendent of schools identified that the inauthenticity of
the administrators contributed to inconsistent implementation of the teacher supervision
and evaluation process of the district. Therefore, many teachers in this district did not
learn and improve their teaching practices until the current administration was in place.

The teachers in this case study shared that their current administrators, at the time
of their interviews, were perceived to be authentic leaders who were committed to the
teacher evaluation process. Despite wearing many hats, the administrators were
characterized by the teachers as driven and passionate about quality instruction and
teacher improvement. The teachers disclosed a convergent viewpoint of the purpose of
evaluations for the promotion of teacher improvement. Intentional leadership approach
matters acknowledged that authentic administrators are those who know the best
instructional practices and who are invested in teachers’ growth and development.
Additionally, the theme suggested that authentic leaders demonstrate a strong work ethic
with the exploration of strategies and resources as well as professional development
opportunities intended for teachers to learn and improve their teaching.

Trust and mutual respect between the teachers and administrators made the
difference for a successful supervision and evaluation process. Intentional leadership
approach matters characterized that authentic leaders were those who were perceived to
be personable, encouraging, and supportive. Success of the teacher supervision and
evaluation system to support teacher growth was predicated on trusting, authentic
relationships as opposed to adhering to the district documents. The theme of an
intentional leadership approach matters implies that teachers learn and improve when the assumptions of the adult learning theory are fulfilled.

Intentional leadership approach matters supported the value of having the direct supervisor or building-level administrator observe their own teachers. The use of an independent evaluator or principals from alternate buildings was not as motivating and did not impact the extent to which these teachers learned or improved their instructional practice as much as with the use of their direct supervisors. Lead versus independent evaluator key concept implies that there is concern that the independent evaluator requirement of the APPR process did not provide teachers with relevant growth producing feedback. Limited trusting relationships with independent evaluators were identified in the authentic leadership framework that did not lead to teacher improvement. Therefore, the results imply that being observed by direct supervisors is a more authentic leadership approach that may lead to changes and improvement in teachers’ instructional practice in a small, rural school district.

The implications that authentic leadership promote teacher improvement is consistent with the empirical literature on the topic of teacher supervision and evaluation systems. Donahue and Vogel (2018) supported the finding of authentic leadership. The intentional leadership approach revealed that positive relationships between teachers and administrators motivate teachers to learn and change teaching practices. Donahue & Vogel’s (2018) study identified that when there was not a positive relationship, teacher instructional practice did not change. Range, McKim, et al. (2014) and Garza et al. (2016) posited that trusting relationships between teachers and principals are the key ingredient to the recipe of effective teacher supervision and evaluation practices.
Additionally, Dudek et al. (2019) found that teachers valued trusting relationships with their direct evaluator or principal to improve instructional practice. Finally, authentic leadership played an instrumental role in conducting observations and promoting teacher improvement and growth in the studies of Ing (2013) and Dudek et al. (2019).

**Implication 2: Conduct Empowering Postconferences**

The second implication of the case study is for administrators to conduct empowering postconferences, based on the study’s theme that one size does not fit all. Clinical supervision is a three-part teacher evaluation model that is used in many school districts across New York State (Goldhammer, 1969). As noted, clinical supervision includes a preconference meeting between a teacher and an administrator, an observation conducted by the administrator, and postconference meeting between the teacher and the administrator. The intention of a postconference is to discuss the evidence the administrator collected during the lesson and the proficiency scores that are assigned to the teacher because of the observation. Additionally, during the postconference, the teacher reflects on what went well and what changes could be made for future lessons. Empowering postconferences implied that the administrators in this case study provided teachers with verbal feedback and recommendations that empowered improvements in the teachers teaching practice during the face-to-face meetings. The power in the postconference is also the gift of time for the teacher and the administrator to engage in instructional dialogue regarding teaching improvements.

Although a theme of one size does not fit all was identified, all the teachers identified that postconferences were the most effective method used in the teacher supervision and evaluation process in their small, rural school district. The power of the
postconference implies that teachers learned and improved their practices the most because of the instructional conversation and growth feedback that occurred after their observation and during the postconference. According to McKay (2013), postconferences engender a culture of professional conversations between teachers and administrators. McKay (2013) professed that professional conversations are the most effective strategy to improve the quality of teaching. By consistently participating in postconferences following their observations, the teachers were provided with growth producing feedback including recommendations for alternative instructional strategies and/or resources that led to changes or improvements in their instructional practice. The findings imply that postconferences are a powerful component of the teacher evaluation process, and they should not be optional for administrators to conduct. Without postconferences, teachers lose the ability to engage in reflective, meaningful instructional dialogue with administrators regarding methods for instructional improvement.

Supporting Knowles’s (1950) adult learning theory of andragogy, the teachers’ responses varied on the most effective method used in the supervision and evaluation process in the Porter Central School District that improved their teaching practices. The theme one size does not fit all detailed teachers’ experiences with the supervision and evaluation process. The teacher evaluation process is characterized as somewhat staged, stressful, and, at times, punitive, because they received a score that was required by education law. However, the findings of this case study show that the postconference was a vehicle for professional collaborative dialogue and feedback on improvements in instruction. Postconferences are a powerful component in the evaluation process that impacted the extent to which teachers learned and improved teaching practices.
Therefore, the implication of empowering postconferences implies that small, rural school districts that do not utilize postconferences may miss valuable learning opportunities for teachers to grow and improve their teaching practices. The adult learning theory of andragogy supports the results of this case study.

The theme one size does not fit all identified that the use of the postconference was the most effective teacher evaluation component that resulted in teacher growth and instructional improvement. Postconferences were powerful because postconferences were a time for the teachers and administrators to have a collegial instructional conversation. The implication of the power of the postconference honors the time for the teachers and principals to talk specifically about additional ideas that could enhance teachers’ instructional practice based on what was observed. This sentiment, shared by the teachers, illustrates that the teachers recognized that there was an art to teaching and there is always room for growth and improvement. The postconferences provided the time to discuss, reflect, and explore alternative strategies beyond the strategies the teachers had in their existing instructional toolbox.

Overwhelmingly, the theme, one size does not fit all, implied that the teachers preferred the postconferences over preconferences. Conducting powerful postconferences assisted in the teachers moving beyond the instructional status quo. Therefore, implications of postconference discussions encountered between the teachers and the administrators may have led to progressing teachers out of ruts, or they may have “unstuck” teachers in a small, rural school district from using the “same ole’ learning activities.” Teachers found value in the postconferences because the teachers received immediate verbal feedback from their administrator after being observed. The
The implications of empowering postconference suggest that not only can teachers receive recommendations and new instructional ideas, at times, teachers may be afforded the opportunity to attend regional professional development workshops, visit adjacent school districts, travel to national conferences, and/or receive specialized training to improve their instructional craft.

The teachers’ adult learning needs being met as a direct result of the teacher and administrator engagement in an instructional discourse after the observation process through the postconferences is consistent with the Knowles’s (1950) adult learning theory of andragogy. Lack of motivation and disappointment was expressed when teachers did not get tangible, helpful tips during a postconference or a follow-up by the administrator with additional resources promised during a session. Knowles’s (1950) adult learning theory of andragogy emphasizes that adults are motivated and more apt to learn when the information they receive is relevant and connected to what they are learning and can be implemented immediately. When teachers engage in purposeful, systematic, and sustained learning activities, they are likely to increase their ability to perform and improve some skills or task (Knox, 1980).

The implication of empowering postconferences confirmed and expanded upon prior empirical research. Range et al. (2013) reported that teachers value postconferences over preconferences. Range, McKim, et al. (2014) also supported the notion of using the postconference component of the teacher observation process as a setting to provide feedback. According to Range, McKim, et al. (2014), the postconference allows the principal and teacher to engage in a discussion of what occurred during the classroom observation. The implications of Range, McKim, et al. (2014) imply that postconferences
can provide helpful feedback that can lead to improvement in teaching practices and student achievement. The implications of the power of the postconference, in this case study, paralleled the findings in the Range et al. (2013) and Range, McKim, et al. (2014) studies. Like teachers in Range et al. (2013) and Range, McKim, et al. (2014), teachers in this case study found value in the positive comments, professional development opportunities, and feedback that led to improvements in their teaching practices.

Additional studies have supported the implication of the power of the postconference to help teachers learn and improve their instructional practice. Donahue and Vogel’s (2018) study indicated that teachers preferred feedback provided to them orally and immediately after the observation. The Garza et al. (2016) study implications of the findings distinguished that feedback should be actionable. Actionable feedback is feedback that can be implemented immediately with ease by the teacher after the postconference. Garza et al. (2016) found that participants noted the postconference dialogue was a time for teachers to reflect on their instructional practice with a discussion about future professional development ideas. Additionally, Garza et al. (2016) posited that the postconference component of the clinical supervision model offers teachers immediate feedback so they can grow as adult learners.

Prior empirical research studies, and this case study, support the theoretical framework of the adult learning theory of andragogy (Range et al., 2013; Range, McKim, 2014; Donahue & Vogel, 2018). According to Knowles (1950), teachers are motivated when they receive timely information that can be implemented immediately. After postconference discussions between teachers and administrators, teachers have the self-concept and readiness to implement recommendations and alternative strategies into their
instructional practice. Additionally, results from prior research and this case study imply that postconferences are aligned to the theoretical framework assumption of orientation to learn. The one size does not fit all finding implies that regardless of the teachers’ experience, the method or approach of the teacher evaluation practices in this small, rural school district varied to the extent that the teachers learned and improved their instructional practices. However, regarding the attendees of the postconference, the teachers in this study changed and improved their teaching because of their postconference with their direct supervisor—not with an unfamiliar observer.

**Implication 3: Walkthroughs and Learning Walks Provide Teachers with Effective, Growth Producing Feedback**

The final implication identified in this case study is formative practice, such as classroom walkthroughs and learning walks, provide teachers with effective, growth producing feedback and impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve their teaching practices. The themes of transparent walkthroughs and collaborative learning walks imply that nonevaluative, classroom visits provide teachers effective growth producing feedback that is needed to change and improve instructional practices. Since the new superintendent’s appointment at the Porter Central School District, the teachers shared that classroom walkthroughs had been a prevalent formative practice that occurred in the district over the year previous to the interviews conducted in this case study. Prior to the new superintendent’s appointment, classroom walkthroughs were not conducted in the district or they were not thought of as transparent. Additionally, collaborative learning walks were not a formative practice used for teacher to teacher development. During the interview and document review, the superintendent of schools revealed that conducting
classroom walkthroughs and learning walks were part of his teacher supervision philosophy. The superintendent of schools reported that since he took the position in the district, he engaged in visiting three classrooms with the two building principals, on average, once a week. Although formative practices were not part of the district’s written policies or procedures of the APPR plan required by New York State, promotion of classroom walkthroughs as a formative supervision method was something that the superintendent strived to make part of the teacher supervision and evaluation culture, process, and protocols of the Porter Central School District.

The implications of the findings regarding walkthroughs providing teachers with effective, growth producing feedback from this case study reveal that there was a common understanding among the teachers of the definition and purpose of the use of classroom walkthroughs as a new formative practice within the district. The teachers in this case study defined classroom walkthroughs as quick, ongoing, check-ins by the administrators. The purpose of the classroom walkthroughs performed by the administrators throughout the district was also understood by the teachers. The finding implies that the teachers characterized the purpose of the classroom walkthroughs as nonevaluative, brief opportunities for the administrators to get a pulse of what was going on in the teachers’ classrooms throughout the district, to monitor instructional and practices, and to provide teachers with feedback. Of the seven teachers in this study, five experienced a classroom walkthrough; however, two of the teachers did not experience them. The two teachers in the study rationalized that they did not experience classroom walkthroughs because of their extensive years of experience. Additionally, the two teachers stated that the supervision practices were used for teachers with less teaching
experience. Despite the teachers’ rationalization and/or explanation of the lack of experience of classroom walkthroughs as a formative practice, the experienced teachers expressed a desire to have administration conduct walkthroughs in their classrooms for them to get feedback. The implications of the results imply that walkthroughs were not previously a transparent process. Additionally, the former administrator was not intentional as an authentic leader throughout the process. Therefore, this case study implies that transparent walkthroughs conducted by authentic leaders provide feedback to teachers for instructional improvement.

Providing teachers with effective feedback after a classroom walkthrough was a pivotal aspect of the results. During the teacher interviews, the word feedback was frequently associated with the formative supervision practice of walkthroughs that impacted the extent to which the teachers learned and improved their instructional practices. Aligned to the adult learning theory of andragogy, after experiencing a classroom walkthrough by the administrator, the teachers learned and improved their teaching practices when they were given immediate, effective feedback. Effective, growth producing feedback that comes in the form of writing in an email or on stationery may lead to changes or improvements in teachers’ instructional practices and meeting the teachers’ self-concept to change and give the teachers an orientation to learn. When common protocols are used by principals to disseminate growth producing feedback to teachers after a classroom walkthrough implies that the teachers are motivated and more ready to implement the relevant feedback into practice. Classroom walkthroughs can provide teachers with feedback that lead to changes and improvements in teaching practices.
Effective, growth producing feedback teachers received after the quick classroom walkthrough was more impactful than the feedback received after an announced or unannounced observation outlined in the district’s APPR plan that is required by NYSED. The teachers were able to reflect on the feedback and implement the suggestions immediately into their existing teaching practices. The results of this case study imply that classroom walkthrough processes are mutualistic to both teachers and administrators. Consequently, classroom walkthroughs are a more efficient use of time for the busy rural administrators who wear many hats while providing relevant, timely feedback to teachers to learn and improve their teaching.

The final implication of the importance of providing effective, growth producing feedback after classroom walkthroughs is limited in the current teacher supervision and evaluation research. Ing (2013) identified that teachers were in favor of principals being more visible while conducting regular classroom visits. Classroom walkthroughs provided the teachers with ample feedback to promote teacher growth. Additionally, Ing (2013) found that teachers in his/her study recognized that principals lack the time to conduct formal summative evaluations. Principals’ lack of time was an identified barrier that contributed to the ineffective fidelity of the teacher evaluation system. As a result, teachers in Ing’s (2013) study did not receive relevant timely feedback for improvement of teaching practices. To support the importance of relevant timely feedback from an earlier study, Range et al. (2011) found that classroom walkthroughs were the most efficient practice that principals used to gather information on teachers in real time. Principals in the Range et al. (2011) study described the classroom walkthroughs as a catalyst for feedback and discussion with the teachers.
During Mr. Thompson’s (the English language arts teacher) interview, he reminded the researcher about the work of Mike Schmoker in the book, *Results Now: How We Can Achieve Unprecedented Improvements in Teaching and Learning*. Schmoker (2006) discussed the danger in teachers being isolated and ascribing to a closed-door policy, prohibiting transparency of their instructional practice. Allen and Topolka-Jorissen’s (2014) study also illuminated the danger of isolation among teachers. The research revealed that classroom walkthroughs reduce isolationism and promote dialogue, reflection, and feedback (Allen & Topolka-Jorissen, 2014). Allen and Topolka-Jorissen (2014) found that formative practices, such as classroom walkthroughs, impacted the extent to which teachers learned and improved, and they opened teachers’ acceptance to formative feedback.

**Limitations**

This case study added to the body of knowledge by bringing the teachers’ voice and experience into the limited and dated research on the teacher supervision and evaluation processes. Additionally, the study captured the voice of teachers from a small, rural school district in Western New York State. Despite adding to the body of knowledge through rural teachers’ perspectives, this qualitative descriptive case study had two limitations that may have impacted the results. First, the scope of the case study was limited to seven teachers and a superintendent of schools in a small, rural school district in Western New York State. Thus, any generalizations that may be inferred are limited to teachers and superintendents working in other rural districts in this part of New York State. Second, Yin (2014) posited that case study designs are limiting as they describe a phenomenon instead of predicting future behavior. Because this case study
describes a phenomenon that occurs in a time-bound system of Porter Central School District, this case study’s findings cannot be generalized to other small, rural school districts.

**Recommendations**

The findings of this qualitative descriptive case study and review of the literature resulted in recommendations for future research, for rural superintendents, for rural principals, and to rural teachers.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the results from this qualitative descriptive case study, there are three recommendations for future research on the topic of teacher supervision and evaluation and formative supervision practices that impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve their teaching practices. The first recommendation is to conduct a similar case study using a focus group data collection method including both principals and teachers of small, rural school districts. The findings indicate in this case study the discoveries on the impact school principals have in the evaluation process. For example, the teachers reported that intentional leadership behaviors made a different in how the teachers learned and improved. The teachers also identified that growth producing feedback delivered by the principals during the process impacted the extent to which the teachers changed or improved their instructional practices. The principals were identified as wearing many hats as they fulfilled many roles and duties working in a small, rural school district. Conducting a study using a focus group of principals and teachers might find significant relationships between the changes in teaching practices and the intentional leadership approaches and effective feedback given by school principals.
during teacher supervision and evaluation systems that are intended to promote teacher growth.

Second, to make this research study more generalized, this qualitative descriptive case study could be transformed into a quantitative study. A quantitative survey tool could be deployed to teachers in small, rural school districts across Western New York State. The results in this case study were collected from seven teachers regarding the factors that impacted them to the extent that the teachers learned and improved in one rural school district. The teachers identified that authentic leadership, feedback from walkthroughs, and postconferences in a small, rural setting, within the context of this case study led to change and improvement. Additionally, formative supervision practices, such as transparent classroom walkthroughs and collaborative learning walks, motivated and promoted the teachers’ adult learning. The distribution of a quantitative survey tool to a larger population of teachers in other small rural schools in Western New York State could draw conclusions about a larger population of teachers to inform the impact of teacher evaluation systems rather than understanding the experience of a single group in a qualitative case study

At the time of this case study, school districts experienced the implications of the global pandemic known as COVID-19 or the Coronavirus. As a result of COVID-19, school districts in New York State entered remote learning. Students and teachers were sent home from March 2020 until the end of the school year to engage in teaching and learning remotely. Given the uncertainty of returning to school or the possibility of remote learning occurring again, school districts need to begin to think about how to support teacher development of online, remote teaching practices. Based on the findings
and a global pandemic, future research needs to be conducted to understand how the clinical supervision model can effectively be carried out during synchronous and asynchronous remote learning environments versus in K-12 classrooms with face-to-face instruction. Future research will need to explore the role of intentional leadership, growth producing feedback from formative practices, and postconference dialogue that lead to change and improvements in instructional practices in remote learning environments.

**Recommendations for Practice**

This descriptive qualitative case study leads to recommendations for practice for educational policy makers, K-12 superintendents, K-12 principals, and for K-12 teachers. Six recommendations address the factors of a teacher supervision and evaluation process in small, rural school districts to the extent to which the teachers learn and improve their teaching practices. Additionally, the recommendations aim to enhance teachers’ experience with formative supervision practices that lead to pedagogical change, growth, and improvement.

The first recommendation is for policy makers to revise legislative language in New York State Education Law §3012-d, which outlines the requirements for teacher observations in New York State. The second and third recommendations in this research study pertain to the superintendents of schools. While it is the duty of the superintendent to ensure that policies and procedures are aligned to the mandates of NYSED, superintendents of schools are also considered the chief instructional leader of their school districts, so they need to meet the unique needs of their educational entity. Recognizing the needs of their districts and the work demanded upon the administration, small rural superintendents need to complete the Rural/Single Building School District
Independent Evaluator Hardship Waiver to supersede the requirements that create burdens and/or hardships.

The third recommendation is that superintendents of schools need to model the way regarding their expectations of formative supervision practices to ensure the implementation of fidelity beyond the mandated evaluation processes. The fourth recommendation is for principals and collective bargaining units to ensure that postconferences are not an optional component of the teacher evaluation process. As indicated, teachers found that postconferences were the component of the teacher evaluation process that helped them learn and improve the most.

Following the lead of the superintendent, the fifth recommendation includes principals establishing an authentic vision of the teacher supervision and evaluation practices that occur at the building level. Given their busy schedules and the fact that school principals wear many hats, principals must expound their approach to support teachers’ learning needs relating to formative, as well as summative, practices. Finally, the sixth recommendation is for teachers to assume responsibility of their adult learning needs by participating in collaborative learning walks with other teachers to learn and improve their instructional practice. When teachers are aware of the adult learning theory: andragogy, teachers are more likely to learn and improve their teaching practices.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

New York State Education Law §3012-d requires that teachers be evaluated by a lead evaluator or by the teachers’ building principals who are their direct supervisors. In addition, Education Law §3012-d identifies that teachers should be evaluated by an independent evaluator, an alternate who is a trained administrator in the district who is
not a teacher’s direct supervisor. According to the New York Education Department website, the legislation reads: “Pursuant to Education Law §3012-d(4)(b)(2), the Teacher Observation/Principal School Visit Category of an educator’s annual evaluation must include a subcomponent based on observations/school visits by an impartial independent trained evaluator or evaluators selected by the district” (NYSED, 2016). Based on the case study results, teachers are better impacted by an intentional leadership approach of their building principals. Therefore, it is the recommendation to NYSED that teacher evaluation policy makers to remove the requirement of the use of independent evaluators in the New York State APPRs as outline in Education Law §3012-d(4)(b)(2).

The results of the intentional leadership approach from direct supervisors or principals reveal that the teachers and the superintendent in this case study did not find merit in the use of an independent evaluator observing teachers. Furthermore, the participants in this study felt that independent evaluators was an ineffective use of everyone’s time and their evaluations did not impact to the extent that the teachers learned and improved their teaching practices. Replacing independent evaluators with teacher evaluations that are conducted by direct supervisors or principals may lead to change and improvement in teaching that is more applicable for teachers in a small, rural school district. Principals conducting observations of their schools’ teachers may assist in the principals’ ability to see teacher growth along a trajectory throughout the year as opposed to only evaluating them one time.

Results from this case study and the existing research have identified the importance of the teacher-administrator relationship. Participating in the teacher evaluation process is often stressful for teachers, and the process leaves them feeling
vulnerable. Teachers in this case study identified that they did not have the trust and rapport with the independent evaluators as much as they did with their direct evaluator or principal. Trust and rapport with direct evaluators made a difference for the teachers’ improvement of their teaching practices. The results of this case study show that independent evaluators are often not connected to the teachers and students enough to comprehend the complexities and dynamics of the classroom environment and/or instructional practice. Based on the results of this study, feedback and recommendations given by the independent evaluators are often irrelevant and unmotivating to teachers. Aligning to the adult learning theory of andragogy, the results of this research study find that the use of an independent evaluator contradicts how teachers learn, and it discounts the teachers’ experience, self-concept, and orientation to learn. In sum, policy makers at NYSED need to advocate for legislative revisions to eliminate the independent evaluator provision in Education Law §3012-d as revised in 2019 for teacher evaluations. It is the recommendation that principals or lead evaluators in New York State observe their teachers’ instruction on a trajectory to promote growth and change during the school year.

**Recommendations to K-12 Rural School District Leadership**

The following section provides recommendations for consideration for K-12 rural school district leaders including superintendents and rural principals.

**Recommendations to Rural Superintendents.** The New York State Board of Regents has made provisions for small, rural school districts to complete a Rural/Single Building School District Independent Evaluator Hardship Waiver based on a requirement under Education Law §3012-d. Pursuant to Subpart 30-3 of the Rules of the Board of
Regents, hardship waivers are only granted for rural school districts or school districts with only one registered school (pursuant to §100.18 of the Commissioner’s Regulations), and due to the size and limited resources of the school district, they are unable to obtain an independent evaluator within a reasonable proximity without an undue burden (NYSED, 2016).

Despite the fact that many small, rural school districts do not always operate as a school district with only one registered school, it is the recommendation of this research study that superintendents of such small, rural school district annually apply for the Rural/Single Building School District Independent Hardship Waiver. By completing the waiver, principals in small, rural school districts will only be responsible for conducting the evaluations in their school. The results in this case study, and in the empirical literature show that administrations in small, rural school districts are stretched thin by wearing many hats. Administrations in small, rural school districts serve in many roles and conduct multiple daily tasks in their workday. Given the many unfunded mandates in the educational policies and initiatives in New York State, the findings indicate that administrations are busy and often unable to dedicate the time required to conduct teacher evaluations with fidelity. Lack of fidelity in the implementation of teacher evaluation systems may inadequately support the extent to which teachers learn and improve their instructional practice.

Finally, given the fiscal hardships and limited resources associated with small rural school districts, obtaining an independent evaluator within a reasonable proximity without an undue burden to the school district may be cost prohibitive. By applying to and successfully being awarded the waiver, administrations in small, rural school districts
may be able to implement the teacher evaluation system with fidelity to endorse teacher development and growth, which will have an impact on student achievement. Principals can focus on providing the teachers in their building with teacher development and learning opportunities based on the supervision and evaluations they see throughout the school year. Removing the expectation to observe teachers who are not directly under principals’ supervision will prevent the principals’ time from being spread even thinner when they are trying to wear an unnecessary “additional hat.”

Aside from supporting the application to the independent evaluator hardship waiver, the finding, authentic leadership promotes teacher growth, supports a secondary recommendation for superintendents of small, rural school districts regarding teacher supervision and evaluation practices. In K-12 public education, the superintendent of schools is the chief executive officer. He/she is responsible for the instructional leadership of the district. According to Kouzes and Posner (2017), to gain commitment and establish high standards within an organization, leaders should be the models of behavior they expect of others. Furthermore, superintendents must articulate their core values, vision, and purpose regarding teacher supervision practices intended to support teacher growth and improvement.

An authentic leadership approach matters and transparent formative supervision practices from this case study imply a strong endorsement of the use of classroom walkthroughs for instructional improvement. As found, the teachers in this study described that formative supervision practices were not prevalent until the superintendent modeled the way for conducting consistent classroom walkthroughs. As a result, the principals in this case study made changes in their leadership approaches, within the year
before this case study’s interviews, that was more intentional and made a difference to
teacher growth and development. The supervision and evaluation philosophy of the
district instructional leader promoted teacher improvement and growth as opposed to the
traditional “I gotcha” style teacher summative evaluation systems outlined by the New
York Education Law §3012-d. Superintendents need to look beyond the mandated APPR
process, protocols, and district documentation to leverage the art and science of
conducting classroom walkthroughs as a formative practice that is intended to help
teachers learn and improve.

Transitioning away from traditional summative evaluation models, which are
required by state educational mandates, superintendents need to illustrate the importance
of formative supervision practices by conducting classroom walkthroughs. Using the
local educational agency decision-making power, school district superintendents should
work with the principals to develop common walkthrough protocols and practice
conducting classroom walkthroughs together with the school principals. According to
Kouzes and Posner (2017), the superintendent can “model the way” for the principal by
setting an example and aligning their actions with the shared values of classroom
walkthroughs. Ultimately, the goal would be for the instructional philosophy of the
superintendent to make a positive difference in the district and create a culture and
climate in which teachers’ instructional practice would change and/or improve. The
superintendent of schools should hold the principals accountable to the agreed upon
values and standards of conducting classroom walkthroughs (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).
Building-level leaders must be the stewards of formative practices, such as classroom
walkthroughs, that provide relevant timely growth producing feedback to their teachers in
their buildings. Principals can “model the way” and create an authentic and intentional culture and climate among the teachers regarding the acceptance of walkthroughs as a formative supervision practice that is intended to promote growth. Teachers will begin to implement growth producing feedback that is given to them during their walkthroughs, improving their instructional practice and student participation and achievement.

**Recommendations to Rural Principals.** Given the multiple roles and job duties throughout the day, finding time for rural principals to focus on instructional leadership presents a challenge (Sheng et al., 2017). Results in this case study found that principals wear many hats and their time is stretched thin. As a result, the teachers found that not all feedback was effective. One size did not fit all in terms of what method of the teacher supervision and evaluation process made an impact to teachers’ ability to learn and grow. However, the teachers desired or experienced the walkthroughs as a formative supervision practice that impacted the teachers to change and improve their instruction. Based on the findings of this case study that classroom walkthroughs promote teacher growth, rural principals need to implement the agreed upon process and protocols for conducting classroom walkthroughs on an ongoing basis. Not all teachers in the study experienced classroom walkthroughs, but they voiced a desire to experience this formative practice. By consistently following the processes and routines, principals can conduct walkthroughs regularly and provide teachers with timely growth producing feedback in writing using handwritten postcards or email correspondence. In doing so, principals will be more intentional in their leadership approach and transparent on the purpose of the formative practice with their teaching staff. Taking a lead from the superintendent of schools, principals could create a collaborative culture to support the
improvement of teacher practices in an iterative frequency using formative practices. By creating a culture of frequent walkthroughs, principals may be able to provide teachers ongoing support throughout the year instead of just the two times required in Education Law §3012-d and outlined in districts APPR plans. Additionally, teachers may be ready and motivated to implement the growth producing feedback received from the principal because of classroom walkthroughs.

The results from this case study add to the body of knowledge by identifying that many teachers find postconferences to be the most effective part of the teacher evaluation process, which impacts the extent of teachers’ learning and improving. Teachers in this study found power in the postconference to improve their instructional practice. New York State Education Law §3012-d is silent on the requirements for teachers and principals to engage in pre and postconferences, which is used in the APPR process. As a result, it is a local school district’s decision to require postconferences as a component of the teacher evaluations. Therefore, it is recommended that principals in small, rural school districts collaboratively work with the district and the teachers’ collective bargaining unit to ensure that postconferences are not an optional component of the district teacher evaluation system. Not having a postconference after an observation represents a missed opportunity for teacher feedback and growth. Postconferences provide an opportunity for teachers and principals in a small, rural school district to engage in conversations to ensure the teachers get what they need based on the teachers’ orientation to learn.

Empowering postconferences support the subsequent recommendation for principals to establish transparent, collaborative process and protocols for the
postconferences. Instead of prescoring the evidence collected during the teacher announced or unannounced observations, the principal and teacher should collaboratively review the evidence collected, reflect on the rubric language, and come to consensus of the performance levels. The principals and teachers can work as teams to then develop professional growth plans that may lead to changes or improvements in the teachers’ instructional practices. Aligned to the adult learning theory of andragogy, this collaborative process and endorsement of the postconference may ensure a differentiated approach for teacher learning and development. During the collaborative process, focusing on the adult learning theory of andragogy, principals will be able to use the teachers’ readiness, self-concept, and orientation to learn to make recommendations, share alternate strategies, and identify professional learning that is both motivating and relevant to the teachers. Aside from an authentic and intentional leadership approach to formative practices of conducting walkthroughs, principals need to ensure that the observation process is collaborative in nature. The teachers in this study valued the postconference conversations as a method of receiving feedback, recommendations, and alternative strategies of instruction. According to McKay (2013), school leaders have the power to shift the process of the postconference to have dialogue on best instructional practices. Teachers desire to be an active participant in the process. Aligned with Knowles’s (1950) adult learning theory of andragogy, feedback given in the postconference needs to be timely, specific, and constructive. Collaborative postconference discussions promote teachers’ self-concept and readiness to learn and improve their teaching. The case study findings and empirical research show that teachers’ orientation to learn from the postconferences was similar.
Recommendations to Rural Teachers. According to Gonzalez and Barnes (2015), teachers are in search of solutions to problems with classroom management as well as new instructional ideas and strategies. The results in the study illustrate that due to limited access and/or budgetary constraints, teachers in a small, rural school district are unable to attend or participate in professional development outside of the district. Due to wearing many hats, principals are not as available to support teachers outside of the required evaluation process. Given the barriers and limitations of small, rural school districts, teachers need to assume the responsibility of their own learning needs. The phenomenon of formative practices needs to cascade from the superintendent, and principals to the teachers. With the use of formative practices to support teacher development by an administration, teachers need to work with principals to create processes and protocols for teachers to engage in collaborative learning walks. Instead of the administration conducting the classroom walkthroughs and providing growth producing feedback to teachers, teachers need to participate in collaborative learning walks with other teachers. Teachers in this study alluded to the use of the pineapple chart system to welcome and invite teachers into each other’s classrooms. The pineapple chart system included teachers placing a pineapple poster outside of their classroom, which represents an open-door policy for teachers to come and observe them teach. This open-door formative practice would serve as a nonevaluative formative practice where teachers could seek new knowledge from their peers. It is the recommendation of this case study that formative practices, such as collaborative learning walks by teachers for teachers, be implemented with fidelity in small, rural school districts to promote continuous instructional growth.
Based on the results of this research study, if postconferences are optional for teachers, it is the recommendation that teachers not opt out of this component of the evaluation process. The postconference provides the opportunity for teachers and principals to engage in collaborative conversations regarding the announced and/or unannounced observation. During the postconference, principals are often able to provide teachers with alternative recommendations, strategies, and/or access to professional development and specialized trainings. Access to resources and professional development opportunities has been identified in the literature as well as in the results of this case study. If teachers do not participate in the postconferences, teachers will decrease their access to opportunities that will help them change and/or improve their instructional practice. If postconferences are not part of the process and protocols of their districts, which is aligned to the adult learning theory of andragogy, teachers need to have the self-concept, readiness, and motivation to request a postconference with their principals after the observation process. The power of the postconference is that teachers will be able to capitalize on their own lived experiences, coupled with the relevant feedback given by their principals, to improve, learn, and grow their instructional practices.

Given the fact that small, rural school districts experience a lack of resources and funding, teachers may be limited to attend professional development workshops and training sessions. In addition, because administrators in small, rural school districts are stretched thin fulfilling their daily roles and responsibilities, teachers may not have adequate access to their administrators for consistent feedback to help teachers improve their instruction. As a result of these limitations, teachers may not learn and improve their teaching practices without the appropriate resources and access. For teachers to improve
their instructional practices, teachers should be cognizant of the adult learning theory: andragogy and take control of their own learning and improvement. Teachers need to be aware of their desired orientation to learn as well as their readiness. They need to use their experience and self-concept to intrinsically seek out learning opportunities that are relevant and motivating to increase the likelihood of teacher improvement. Having knowledge of the six assumptions of andragogy, adult learners [teachers] will be driven to take the initiative aligned to their unique needs without the reliance on external resources and administration.

**Conclusion**

This case study attempted to understand how teachers in a small, rural school district experienced the teacher supervision and evaluation process. Additionally, this study investigated the extent to which teachers learn and improve because of the process. A descriptive qualitative case study was used to explore a teacher evaluation system in a time-bound system of a rural Western New York State school district. Seven teachers participated in the semi-structured interviews, and the superintendent of schools was engaged in a document review interview to determine the extent to which the district’s APPR documents, process, and protocols aided in teacher improvement and growth in the Porter Central School District.

Three implications emerged based on the data analysis. First, authentic leadership characteristics made a difference for teachers to be motivated and ready to make instructional changes as a result of the teacher evaluation process. When teachers felt trust and support from their administrators, they were more receptive to learn and improve their teaching practices. Based on the clinical supervision model, teachers’
practices also improved from the participation in the postconference after being observed. According to McKay (2013), learning occurs through active participation. Collegial conversations contributed to instructional changes and improvements. Postconferences served as the vehicle for administrative feedback, strategy sharing, and recommendations for future improvement. Absent the postconference, teachers would not get their adult learning needs met.

Formative practices of classroom walkthroughs were increasingly prevalent throughout this case study’s findings. An instructional leadership philosophy regarding the use of walkthroughs “modeled the way” and assisted in a shift in teacher supervision and evaluation practices in a small rural school district. The findings recognized that principals were stretched thin due to the many duty’s principals fulfill. Wearing many hats created a barrier for the principals regarding the fidelity of the implementation of teacher evaluation processes as well as the dissemination of constructive growth producing feedback to the teachers. Classroom walkthroughs conducted by the administration afforded the teachers with timely, growth producing feedback, which was given in writing using a three-part protocol of: I Liked, I Noticed, I Wonder, on the part of the administrators regarding the quick nonevaluative check-in. It is inconclusive, given the small sample size, the reasons why all of the teachers did not receive walkthroughs. However, the superintendent of schools’ instructional leadership philosophy “modeled the way” for the endorsement of classroom walkthroughs in the small, rural school district. The principals’ leadership approaches became more intentional and authentic in supporting teacher improvement and growth. The teachers were more receptive to formative practices of classroom walkthroughs. Additionally, the teachers started to take
control of their own learning needs by creating a culture of collaborative learning walks. The teachers in this case study started to observe each other to learn and improve their instructional practices, given that there are limited resources and/or professional development in their small, rural school district.

Due to limited resources and busy administrators in a small rural school district, policy makers in the NYSED need to consider the elimination of the use of independent evaluators. The teachers in the study preferred to be observed by principals with whom they had a trusted relationship. Additionally, the postconference needs to be a required component of the teacher evaluation processes. It is in the postconference that the teachers and administrators can engage in meaningful, collaborative conversations that yield teacher learning and improvement. Teachers are the essential workers in a school district. Teacher evaluation systems need to be implemented with fidelity and with the commitment to support the teaching and learning of the adult learners, especially those in small, rural school districts. According to Weisberg et al. (2009), teaching is the essence of education and teachers have an impact on student achievement.
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Appendix A

The Adult Learning Theory

1. **Learners Need to Know**
   - why
   - what
   - how
2. **Self-Concept of the Learner**
   - autonomous
   - self-directing
3. **Prior Experience of the Learner**
   - resource
   - mental models
4. **Readiness to Learn**
   - life related
   - developmental task
5. **Orientation to Learning**
   - problem centered
   - contextual
6. **Motivation to Learn**
   - intrinsic value
   - personal payoff
Appendix B

Demographic Survey

Answer the following to the best of your ability:

1. Gender:
   - □ Female
   - □ Male
   - □ Nonbinary
   - □ Other (please specify)
   - □ Prefer not to answer

2. Which statement describes you best? Select all that apply to you:
   - □ American Indian or Alaska Native
   - □ Asian
   - □ Black or African American
   - □ Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin
   - □ Multi-racial
   - □ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   - □ White
   - □ I prefer not to answer.

3. What grade level (s) do you currently teach? Select all that apply to you.
   - □ Kindergarten
   - □ 1
   - □ 2
   - □ 3
   - □ 4
   - □ 5
   - □ 6
   - □ 7
   - □ 8
   - □ 9
4. What content area best represents what you are currently teaching? Select all that apply to you.

- [ ] Common Branch Elementary
- [ ] Physical Education
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Library/Media Specialist
- [ ] Computer/Technology
- [ ] English Language Arts
- [ ] Mathematics
- [ ] Social Studies
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Foreign Language/LOTE
- [ ] English as a Second Language
- [ ] Family and Consumer Science/Business/Health
- [ ] Special Education
- [ ] Subject not listed. Please specify:

5. How many years have you taught in the Porter Central School District? Select one category.

- [ ] 2 – 5 years
- [ ] 6 – 10 years
- [ ] 11 – 15 years
- [ ] 16 – 20 years
- [ ] 21 – 25 years
- [ ] 26 – 30 years
- [ ] 31 or more years

6. How many years have you taught total (including current district and other districts)? Select one category.

- [ ] 2 – 5 years
- [ ] 6 – 10 years
- [ ] 11 – 15 years
- [ ] 16 – 20 years
- [ ] 21 – 25 years
- [ ] 26 – 30 years
- [ ] 31 or more years
7. What is your teaching status?

☐ Tenured
☐ Non-tenured
Appendix C

Teacher Interview Protocol

Date/ Time of Interview:

Location of Interview:

Pseudonym:

Script of Project Description:

“The purpose of this proposed research study is to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors of the teacher evaluation and supervision process in a small, rural school district impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve instructional practices. The proposed study intends to explore if teachers in a small, rural school district have experienced formative supervision practices that have helped them learn or improve their teaching practices. Additionally, this proposed case study will obtain an in-depth, rural perspective that might lead to a deeper understanding that will maximize the impact of the evaluation system. With pending changes in Education Law 3012-d in New York state, this proposed case study will provide some input into newly created Annual Professional Performance Reviews that are intended to support teacher improvement and development.

Our session for today will be about 60-90 minute in length. During the session, I will be using two recording devices to ensure that I gather accurate information during the interview. The information gathered today is confidential. You will be given a pseudonym. No information will be share with anyone from the District. If at any time during the interview, you would like to stop, please let me know and the interview will be stopped, and you will be removed from the study. Do you have any questions for me so far?

There will be 10 questions. I may ask some probing or follow-up questions in order to obtain clarity. I will be taking notes in my research notebook. The information captured in my notes will also be transcribed and maintain in a locked filing cabinet in my personal office. The notes will be used during the analysis in the case study to establish similarity, differences, and within case connections.”
There are some teacher supervision and evaluation definitions that I want to share with you before we start the interview to ensure that you understand the terminology used in the study. I will read and review the terms with you. What questions do you have for me at this time?"

**Interview Questions:**

1. In your own words how would you describe the evaluation and supervision process in your district? What is the purpose?
   
   a. Can you tell me more about that?

2. In your experience of teaching and participation in the teacher evaluation process, has the evaluation process informed or expanded upon your knowledge and skills about teaching?
   
   a. If yes, how do you know your practices changed?
   
   b. If no, based on your experience and participation in the teacher evaluation process, why do the evaluation process inform or expand upon your knowledge and skills about teaching?

3. Tell me about a time when you received feedback during the evaluation and supervision process, and it led you to change or improvement in your teaching practices?
   
   a. Can you say more about that?
   
   b. What did that look like?

4. What has been the most effective method used in the teacher evaluation and supervision process in this district that helped improve your teaching practices?
   
   a. Can you tell me more about that?
   
   b. What did that look like?

5. What method used in the teacher evaluation and supervision process in this district that has had little to no impact on the improvement of your teaching?
   
   a. How did you know that it made no impact on your teaching?

6. Is there any part of the teacher evaluation system that motivates you to want to improve your teaching practice?
   
   a. Why does that matter?
7. What strategies do the administrators use to provide growth-producing feedback to teachers with the intent to improve teaching practices?

a. What impact do you think these strategies did to improve your teaching?

8. What suggestions or modification would you make to the teacher evaluation process in this districts that will provide you with growth-producing feedback intended to improve teaching?

a. What else will make a difference in the process: pre-conference, observation, or post-conference?

b. Do you see the role of technology impacting the teacher evaluation and supervision process?

9. Do you ever seek out new knowledge or feedback to improve your teaching practice based on feedback received in the teacher evaluation and supervision process?

a. If yes, when or in what situation do you tend to seek out this knowledge or feedback to improve your teaching practices?

b. How do you do that?

10. Is there any question that you wish I asked during today’s interview that I did not ask that you think will provide additional information?

This concludes our interview session. I would like to thank you for taking your time and sharing your experiences with me today. As a token of my appreciation, here is a card and small incentive for participation. I could not have done my research study without volunteers such as yourself. I appreciate your perspective.

As a reminder, all the information you shared with me will remain confidential and will be aligned to a pseudonym. The taped recorded session will be sent to Rev.com for transcription. After I receive the transcription and the recorded interview will be permanently deleted from both devices. All transcriptions will be maintained in a secured locked filing cabinet in my personal office. No one from your District will have access to the information. In the event I need clarification, I may contact you directly to obtain the information needed. I will contact you via email to schedule a time to discuss the pending question, if needed.
Appendix D

Superintendent Interview Protocol

Date/ Time of Interview:

Location of Interview:

Superintendent of Porter Central School District

Length of Superintendency in the Porter Central School District:

Script of Project Description:

“The purpose of this proposed research study is to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors of the teacher evaluation and supervision process in a small, rural school district impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve instructional practices. The proposed study intends to explore if teachers in a small, rural school district have experienced formative supervision practices that have helped them learn or improve their teaching practices. Additionally, this proposed case study will obtain an in-depth, rural perspective that might lead to a deeper understanding that will maximize the impact of the evaluation system.

With pending changes in Education Law 3012-d in New York state, this proposed case study will provide some input into newly created Annual Professional Performance Reviews that are intended to support teacher improvement and development. The purpose of our session today is to ask a series of questions based on the public documents that I collected from the New York State Websites and the private in-district documents you provided to me pertaining to the teacher evaluation process of the Porter Central School District.

Our session for today will be about 60-90 minute in length. During the session, I will be using two recording devices to ensure that I gather accurate information during the interview. The information gathered today is confidential. You will be referred to as the Superintendent of Porter Central School District throughout the case study. No information will be share with anyone from the District. If at any time during the interview, you would like to stop, please let me know and the
There will be seven questions. I may ask some probing or follow-up questions in order to obtain clarity. I may take additional notes in my research binder during the interview. The information captured in my notes will also be transcribed and maintain in a locked filing cabinet in my personal office. The notes will be used during the analysis in the case study to establish similarity, differences, and within case connections.

There are some definitions that I want to share with you before we start the interview to ensure that you understand the terminology used in the study. I will read and review the terms with you. What questions do you have for me at this time?"

For each document, I will ask you a seven of questions. You may or may not have the information necessary to answer the question. Answer the questions to the best of your ability.

1. What is the purpose or intent of the document?
   a. How do the teacher and administrators understand the purpose and intent of the document?

2. How is the document used and by whom?
   a. Who interacts with the document?
   b. Who has access to the document?

3. What were the sources that help create the document? What is the history of the document?
   a. Was there a State Education Initiative?
   b. Was there a District committee involved in the creation or history?

4. In what ways does this document support the growth, improvement, and development of teachers?
   a. Tell me more how it measures growth?
   b. How do you know there is growth, improvement, and development?

5. How is the information or data on this document shared with the teachers?
   a. Is there a definitive timeline information sharing?
   b. Are there determining factors that dictate the distribution of information/data?
6. Can you describe the processes and protocols that provide feedback to support teacher growth, improvement, and development used in the District?

a. Tell me more about that?
b. What does that look like?

7. Is there any question that you wish I asked during today’s interview that I did not ask that you think will provide additional information?

This concludes our interview session. I would like to thank you for taking your time and sharing your experiences with me today. As a token of my appreciation, here is a card and small incentive for participation. I could not have done my research study without volunteers such as yourself. I appreciate your perspective and information sharing.

As a reminder, all the information you shared with me will remain confidential and will be aligned to a pseudonym, Superintendent of the Porter Central School District. The taped recorded session will be sent to Rev.com for transcription. After I receive the transcription and the recorded interview will be permanently deleted from both devices. All transcriptions will be maintained in a secured locked filing cabinet in my personal office. No one from your District will have access to the information. In the event I need clarification, I may contact you directly to obtain the information needed. I will contact you via email to schedule a time to discuss the pending question, if needed.
Appendix E

Superintendent Email – Case Study District of Interest

Dear Porter District Superintendent:

My name is Jennifer Sinsebox. I am currently a student in the Executive Leadership Doctorate Program in the School of Education at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York. My dissertation study is to examine teacher perceptions regarding current teacher evaluation systems in New York State.

The purpose of this proposed research study is to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve instructional practices. The proposed study intends to explore if teachers in a small, rural school district have experienced formative supervision practices that have helped them learn or improve their teaching practices. Additionally, this proposed case study will obtain an in-depth, rural perspective that might lead to a deeper understanding that will maximize the impact of the evaluation system.

I am currently seeking eight teachers to participate in my dissertation research study. Preferably, two teachers from each category representing primary (k-2), intermediate (3-5), middle school (6-8), and high school (9-12). Teachers can teach any content area and be tenured or non-tenured with at least one year of experience in the District. Participation in the study is voluntary and confidential. Names of the participants will not appear in any report or dissertation resulting from this case study. No information shared during the interview will be shared with the District or anyone else. The District and teachers will be assigned a
pseudonym throughout the process. All information you provide is considered completely confidential.

Selected teachers will participate in a one-time 60-90-minute face-to-face interview before or after school hours. The interviews will be held in a mutually convenient and private location that is mutually convenient for the participant and the researcher. A $25.00 Amazon Gift Card as an incentive and token of gratitude for participation. Additionally, as the Superintendent of Schools, I will ask you to participate in a one-time 60-90-minute face-to-face interview at a time that is convenient for you to review public and private in-district documents related to teacher evaluation processes.

I am excited to begin my research in pursuit to hear directly from teachers and a Superintendent of Schools on what formative supervision practices will help improve and enhance teacher and District process and protocols. If you are willing to participate in the study, please read and sign the attached consent form to initiate your participation in the study and return an email of interest. Once St. John Fisher Institutional Review Board approves my proposed research study, I will contact you to schedule the interview upon receipt of the consent form.

If you have any questions regarding this study, the interview, or need additional information to assist reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at (___) __ ___ or by e-mail ________@sjfc.edu. I hope that the findings of my study will gain an in-depth rural perspective that might lead to increased understanding of how public-school districts can best leverage formative supervision practices to improve and enhance teaching.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Sinsebox
Research Investigator
Appendix F

Teacher Email Invitation to Participate in the Study

Subject: Invitation to Participate in the Research Study
To: ____________ School District Teaching Staff
From: Jennifer Sinsebox, Doctoral Student

My name is Jennifer Sinsebox, and I am a doctoral student in the Executive Leadership program in the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. School of Education at St. John Fisher College of Rochester, NY. I am conducting research to gain an in-depth understanding of what factors of the teacher supervision and evaluation process in a small, rural school district impact the extent to which teachers learn and improve instructional practices. The study intends to explore if teachers in a small, rural school district have experienced formative supervision practices that have helped them learn or improve their teaching practices.

If you are willing to be considered as a participant in this study, you will need to consent to participate and respond to a brief demographic survey to determine your eligibility as a participant. The survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses are completely confidential. If you are eligible, you will be contacted to schedule a mutually convenient, face-to-face, 60-minute interview. The interview will be conducted in a location that is comfortable and private for both the interviewee and the interviewer. All participants will receive a $25.00 Amazon Gift Card.
upon completion of the interview. To complete the consent form and demographic
survey, please open the link below. ________________________________________
I sincerely appreciate your consideration of my request to participate in an interview.
Please contact me at phone (___) ___-____ or e-mail, ________@sjfc.edu, if you have
any questions.

Thank you.

Jennifer Sinsebox
Appendix G

Statement of Informed Consent for Adult Participants

St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board

Statement of Informed Consent for Adult Participants

Supervision and Evaluation Practices That Impact Teacher Learning: A Case Study of Rural Teachers’ Perspectives

SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION:

- You are being asked to be in a research study of formative supervision practices used in teacher evaluation systems. As with all research studies, participation is voluntary.
- The purpose of this study is to capture the teachers’ voice to get an understanding of what will help teachers learn and improve teaching beyond required evaluation practices required in New York State.
- Approximately 8 participants will take part in this study. The results will be used to gain an in-depth rural perspective that might lead to increased understanding of how other public-school districts can best leverage formative supervision practices to improve and enhance teaching as well as fulfill the requirements for Ed.D. in Executive Leadership at the Ralph Wilson, Jr. School of Education at St. John Fisher College.
- If you agree to take part in this study, you will be involved in this study for a 60-90-minute interview one time during the month of January 2020.
- During the one hour and a half interview, the researcher will ask you the purpose of existing supervision and evaluation process as well as effective and ineffective methods used in the teacher evaluation process intended to improve teaching practices. Your involvement in this project will take place outside of the school hours. The interviews will be held in a mutually convenient and private location that is mutually convenient for the participant and the researcher. More information will be provided to you in more detail in the body of the consent form.
• The potential risk and discomforts to you are minimal, as the responses you provide to the interview questions will not be attributed to you as an individual. You are invited to participate and may agree to this participation through email consent. You have the ability to not participate and will have the option to end your participation in the research at any time. We believe this study has no more than minimal risk. Costs to you are minimal. The 60-90-minute interviews will be held in a mutually convenient and private location that is mutually convenient for the participant and the researcher. Participants will be required to sit during the interview. The researcher will provide drinks, snacks, and a $25 dollar gift card to Amazon to thank you for your time.

• The potential benefits of this research include the possible use of your contributions in the improvement of the existing teacher evaluation system to explore the use of formative supervision practices to help teachers improve or enhance their teaching practices. You may not directly benefit from this research; however, we hope that your participation in the study may help inform school districts on how to revise existing teacher evaluation process and procedures to help teachers improve their teaching practices.

DETAILED STUDY INFORMATION (some information may be repeated from the summary above):

You are being asked to be in a research study to share your experiences in the teacher supervision and evaluation process to learn if formative supervision practices informed your teaching practices. This study is being conducted at Central School District, a Western New York Rural K-12 Central School District. This study is being conducted by: Jennifer Lyn Sinsebox in the Ed. D. Program in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College.

You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher in the Central School District that is subject to annual teacher evaluations.

Please read this consent form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be in the study.

PROCEDURES:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Complete a demographic survey and participants will be contacted by the researcher to schedule a 60-90-minute interview session during a time before or after school hours at a time that is convenient to the participant. The interviews will be held in a private location that is mutually convenient for the participant and the researcher. The participants will be given definitions of teacher supervision and evaluation terms that will be available throughout the interview. The participant will be asked ten questions during the interview session, with probing questions when necessary. At the conclusion of the session, the
researcher will thank the participant and give the participant a sealed hand-written card with a $25.00 dollar gift card to Amazon to thank them for their participation.

The following table will be provided to the participants so that they understand the definitions of terms used in the study:

Table 1: *Teacher Supervision and evaluation Practices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Teacher Evaluation Practices</th>
<th>Teacher Supervision Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Evalutative</td>
<td>Nonevaluative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summative/Culminating</td>
<td>Formative/Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scores provided</td>
<td>Required by Education Law</td>
<td>Feedback provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top-Down</td>
<td>Top-Down</td>
<td>District Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Distributed-Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Retention of Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal of Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Tenure Decision-Making</td>
<td>Teacher Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Promotion</td>
<td>Teacher Action Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Pre/Postconferences</td>
<td>Walkthroughs/Learning Walks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Announced Observations</td>
<td>Coaching/Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unannounced Observations</td>
<td>Videoconferencing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visits will be scheduled in the month of January 2020 at a time before or after school hours at the convenience of the participant in a private location. The interview will be 60-90 minutes in duration.

The session will be audiotaped using the researchers iPhone and digital recording device. The participant will be informed of the recording and will be given the choice to agree to the recording at the end of the consent form. Participants will be informed that they can opt out of the recording option and still be part of the study. The participants will be informed that the audio recordings will be transcribed using Rev.com for the researcher to code the responses for further analysis. The transcription will be linked to the pseudonym assigned to the participant. Participants may be contacted by the researcher after the interview to obtain clarity of the transcribed interview, if needed.

**COMPENSATION/INCENTIVES:**

You will receive an incentive to participate in the study. Each participant will receive a $25.00 dollar Amazon Gift Card at the conclusion of the 60-90-minute interview to thank the teacher for participation in the study. The researcher will give the incentive directly to the participant in a sealed hand-written thank you card.
CONFIDENTIALITY:

The records of this study will be kept private and your confidentiality will be protected. In any sort of report the researcher(s) might publish, no identifying information will be included.

Identifiable research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. All data will be kept in the researcher’s home office in a locked filing cabinet and on a password protected laptop used for dissertation work only by the researcher. All study records with identifiable information, including approved IRB documents, recordings, transcripts, and consent forms will be destroyed by shredding and/or deleting after 3 years of the research study in the researcher’s home office.

The recordings collected in the study will only be accessible to the researcher. No district employee will have access to your recording or know you are involved in the study unless you choose to share your experience. All interview data and transcripts will be stored on an external hard drive, in a locked cabinet. This information will be destroyed three years after the completion of this research study. Copies of consent forms will be stored in the locked cabinet as well. These will be destroyed and deleted three years after the completion of this study.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:

Participation in this study is voluntary and requires your informed consent. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. John Fisher College or Porter District. If you decide to participate, you are free to skip any question that is asked. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

CONTACTS, REFERRALS AND QUESTIONS:

The researchers(s) conducting this study: Jennifer Lyn Sinsebox. If you have questions, you are encouraged to contact the researcher at ___-___-____ and/or ________@sjfc.edu or my dissertation chair, Dr. Shannon Cleverly-Thompson, Visiting Assistant Professor at St. John Fisher College Office: ___-___-____.

The Institutional Review Board of St. John Fisher College has reviewed this project. For any concerns regarding this study/or if you feel that your rights as a participant (or the rights of another participant) have been violated or caused you undue distress (physical or emotional distress), please contact the SJFC IRB administrator by phone during normal business hours at (585) 385-8012 or irb@sjfc.edu.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT:

I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understood the above information. I consent to voluntarily participate in the study.
I agree to be audio recorded/ transcribed  ____ Yes  ____ No  If no, I understand that the researcher will [explain alternative to audio recording, if any. If no alternative, state this clearly].

Please keep a copy of this informed consent for your records.
Appendix H

Case-Coding Template (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

In-Depth Portrait of The Porter District Teacher Evaluation System

Case Context

Case Description

Document Review

Within Case Theme Analysis

Cross Case Theme Analysis

Teacher Themes

Document Themes

Similarities

Differences

Assertions and Generalizations
Appendix I

Stage Model of Qualitative Content Analysis (Lune & Berg, 2017)

Identify Research Question

Determine Analytic Categories (sociological constructs)

Read through Data and Establish Grounded Categories (open and axial coding)

Determine Systematic (objective) Criteria of Selection for Sorting Data Chunks into the Analytic and Grounded Categories

Begin Sorting the Data into the Various Categories (revise categories or selection criteria, if necessary, after several cases have been completed)

- Count the number of entries in each category for descriptive statistics and to allow for the demonstration of magnitude.
- Review textual materials as sorted into various categories seeking patterns.
- Remember, no apparent pattern is a pattern.

- Consider the patterns in light of relevant literature and/or theory (show possible links to theory or other research).
- Offer an explanation (analysis) for your findings.
- Relate your analysis to the extant literature of the subject.