

AN EXAMINATION OF FEEDBACK GIVEN TO TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS WITHIN THE  
NETWORK FOR EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS SYSTEM IN MISSOURI

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A Dissertation

Presented to Dissertation Committee Faculty  
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

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By

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May 2016

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AN EXAMINATION OF FEEDBACK GIVEN TO TEACHERS WITHIN SCHOOLS IN THE  
NETWORK FOR EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS SYSTEM IN MISSOURI

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## DEDICATION

To my father, a great educator and leader, who sacrificed getting his doctorate to raise three successful children. This is for you, Dad.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Brett Beutenmiller, my son, for giving back inspiration to me as I had hoped to give him over the years. Watching you struggle to understand life, and to keep pushing forward to succeed, you gave me the courage to go ahead and speak up because it is my life and it is important. Melissa Beutenmiller, my daughter, is another great inspiration for me. Your hard work, perseverance, tenacity, and great personality will serve you well in the medical field and your personal life. I often notice how both, you and your brother, are far and above where I was at your age. That makes me very proud of both of you. My entire family has been a source of motivation, inspiration, support, and love through this entire process. Art Bedsworth, I thank you for coming into my life and listening to my frustrations, joys, sorrows, and drying my tears through everything. You mean the world to me. Jolene Watkins threw me a lifeline when I was feeling completely overwhelmed and drowning during the data phase. Thank you my friend. I must also acknowledge the staff at my school for continually supporting me and cheering me on through the toughest phase of this journey. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

My advisor, Sarah Diem, is one in a million. Your guidance and support led me to the greatest learning of my lifetime. James Sebastian, Juanita Simmons, and Jennifer Fellabaum comprise the absolute best committee anyone could have. The proposal stage to now has been the biggest learning curve of my life. Thank you all for being a light in the fog, a shelter in a storm, and for sharing your knowledge with me. I am not the same as when I started the program. In the beginning of the journey, I remember being asked why I wanted to do this program. My response was that I wanted to know more. It was time. I certainly accomplished that goal. I had no idea it would change me as a human being though. Thank you.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iii
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
ABSTRACT .....	x
Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	5
Purpose of the Study .....	7
Research Questions .....	9
Hypotheses .....	10
Significance of the Study .....	11
Framework .....	12
Limitations .....	14
Definition of Key Terms .....	14
Summary .....	16
Chapter Two: Literature Review .....	18
Teacher Effectiveness Matters .....	20
Traditional Evaluation System .....	24
Big and Formal. ....	24
Time Consuming and Ineffective.....	26
Widget Effect.....	29

School Improvement Efforts.....	30
Pressure.....	32
Feedback.....	35
The Improvement of Teaching Through the Use of Feedback.....	36
Delivery of Feedback.....	40
Using Walkthroughs to Facilitate Feedback.....	43
Dirty Little Secret.....	45
Barriers in the Feedback Process.....	46
MUM is the Word.....	46
Lack of Training.....	48
Other Factors.....	49
Framework.....	51
Conclusion.....	53
Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology.....	58
Purpose of the Study.....	58
Research Questions.....	59
Hypotheses.....	59
Research Design and Rationale.....	60
Context.....	62
Population and Sampling.....	64
Data Collection and Instrumentation.....	65
Research Ethics.....	69
Data Analysis.....	69
Reliability and Validity.....	71

Positionality .....	72
Limitations and Assumptions .....	72
Limitations.....	72
Assumptions.....	73
Significance of the Study .....	74
Summary.....	74
 Chapter Four: Findings .....	 76
Descriptive Statistics for NEE and Non-NEE Schools.....	76
Correlations.....	86
Research Question One.....	87
Independent Samples T-Test.....	88
Regression Analysis.....	89
Research Question Two .....	91
Regression Analysis.....	91
Research Question Three .....	93
Regression Analysis.....	95
Summary .....	100
 Chapter Five: Discussion .....	 102
RQ1.....	102
RQ2.....	105
RQ3.....	107
Recommendations for Practice .....	110
Recommendations for Further Research.....	113
Conclusions and Summary .....	115

REFERENCES ..... 119

Appendix A: Survey Items..... 129

Appendix B: IRB Exemption Letter ..... 130

IRB Determination Notice Project #2004980 Review #213149 ..... 130

VITA..... 131

# LIST OF TABLES

	Table Page
Table 1. <i>Survey Questions Addressing Face-to-Face Feedback, Type, and Content</i> .....	68
Table 2. <i>Comparison Among Means and Standard Deviations of Network for Educator Effectiveness and Non-Network for Educator Effectiveness Schools</i> .....	80
Table 3. <i>Comparison of Network for Educator Effectiveness and Non-Network for Educator Effectiveness Schools by 2014 and 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Performance Groups</i> .....	82
Table 4. <i>Descriptive Statistics of Missouri Assessment Program 2015 Index by Performance Group for Network for Educator Effectiveness Schools and Non-Network for Educator Effectiveness</i> .....	83
Table 5. <i>Descriptive Statistics of Network for Educator Effectiveness Survey Questions by Missouri Assessment Program Performance Group</i> .....	85
Table 6. <i>Correlations Among Five Survey Questions and 2015 English Language Missouri Assessment Program Index</i> .....	87
Table 7. <i>Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program and NEE Participation with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index</i> .....	90
Table 8. <i>Correlation Between 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index Scores of Network for Educator Effectiveness Schools and Face-to-Face Feedback</i> .....	91
Table 9. <i>Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program and Face-to-Face Feedback with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index</i> .....	93
Table 10. <i>Correlation of 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index Scores and Feedback</i>	

<i>in Areas Needing Improvement</i> .....	94
Table 11. <i>Correlation of 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index Scores and Feedback Areas of Strength</i> .....	95
Table 12. <i>The Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program, and Specific Feedback to Improve with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index</i> .....	96
Table 13. <i>The Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program, and Useful and Relevant Feedback to Improve with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index</i> .....	97
Table 14. <i>The Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program, and Specific Feedback on Strengths with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index</i> .....	98
Table 15. <i>The Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program, and Useful and Relevant Feedback on Strengths with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index</i> .....	99

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
<i>Figure 1. 2015 ELA MAP Index mean distribution</i> .....	79

## ABSTRACT

The current study examined the frequency of face-to-face feedback, type of feedback, and content of feedback given in schools participating in the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) system in Missouri. The primary purpose of the study is to provide information to the NEE system, Title I department in Jefferson City, Missouri, and Missouri schools in an effort to assist decision making regarding administrator professional development in the process of giving feedback to teachers.

This study included 206 Missouri NEE schools surveyed with an average of 3187 teachers responding to all five survey questions. The NEE schools' 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program Index scores were then compared to the remaining 1575 school districts in Missouri with 2015 ELA MAP Index scores. Data collected included five survey questions about feedback added to the annual survey with 42 questions sent out by NEE. Demographic data collected from DESE included 2015 free and reduced lunch status, 2015 enrollment, and 2014 ELA MAP Index scores. Three research questions were addressed that focused on feedback in NEE schools, and answered using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

Results of the study revealed findings consistent with previous research with regard to the lack of face-to-face feedback in lower performing schools. Face-to-face feedback was lower overall in occurrence while feedback given in areas needing improvement was next to lowest. When comparing feedback and student achievement, there was no significant relationship found between face-to-face feedback within two working days of an observation, type, and content of feedback given and academic performance in NEE schools.

Future research is necessary in order to determine any longitudinal effects of feedback in relation to student academic performance. This study was limited to one year, whereas it would

be beneficial to collect data over a longer time period. Focusing on collecting longitudinal data might yield a clearer picture of incremental increases in student achievement over time when focusing on giving feedback in a school setting. Implementing feedback training programs for administrators will be necessary in an effort to assess the fidelity of effective feedback given to teachers and the impact on student achievement.

## Chapter One: Introduction

School wide reform is a painstaking process. Administrators are faced with the monumental task of increasing student achievement annually. What should be more of a gradual process of continual improvement over time has turned into reaching for ambiguous goals and experiencing increased accountability pressures (Protheroe, 2005). The process of school improvement is time intensive, and the efforts to improve student achievement often fall directly on the shoulders of the classroom teachers and the administrators who support them.

Several studies have shown that teacher quality affects student achievement (Ferguson, 1991; Haycock, 1998; Sanders, Wright, & Horn, 1997; Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009; Wiggins, 2012). A study of the magnitude of teacher efforts on student achievement by Sanders, Wright, and Horn (1997) demonstrated that teacher effectiveness had more impact on student achievement than individual student achievement level, class size, and class heterogeneity. Haycock (1998) highlights research that was conducted in Tennessee, Texas, Massachusetts, and Alabama that demonstrated the academic gains of students who were with high achieving teachers versus those students who were with lower achieving teachers. Teacher achievement was quantified by placing teachers into quartiles based how well they achieved academic gains with students within a school year. The study showed that on average, teachers from the lower quartile produced gains in academic achievement of low-achieving students of about 14 percentile points while teachers from the higher quartile produced academic gains of low-achieving students of about 53 percentile points. Ferguson (1991) noted in a study involving 2.4 million students involved across 900 school districts in

Texas that students who are taught by more highly qualified personnel achieve at greater rates than students with less qualified teachers.

According to Grissom, Loeb, and Master (2013), spending time coaching teachers and providing feedback is directly related to student achievement and school improvement gains. It is documented that there is a relationship between student achievement and principal leadership (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Through analyzing 30 years of research on the impact of leadership practices, Waters et al. (2003), determined through 70 studies covering 2,894 schools, 14,000 teachers, and about 1.1 million students, that among qualities of principals that demonstrate them as effective leaders and ultimately positively affect student achievement, the practice of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum, evaluation, and assessment had great impact on student achievement.

Principals are charged with the task of evaluating instructional strategies along with teacher performance. Most are not equipped with the necessary training to do so (Protheroe, 2002). It is noted in several studies that time spent by administrators on observing instruction and teachers is very limited (Bridges, 1992; Marshall, 2003, 2009; Painter, 2000). Administrator self-efficacy is essential when they are placed in a position to evaluate instructional practices having been out of the classroom for any length of time. The self-efficacy of administrators is regarded by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) as a foundational element of an effective principal. The instructional leader must collaborate with staff on the best practices regarding instruction, and work in a partnership with faculty in an effort to work together to increase a teacher's instructional skill set (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007).

Ultimately, if the goal is to help young people learn, helping teachers to improve instruction through constructive feedback is essential (Frase, 1992). Two separate studies by Grissom, Loeb, and Master (2013) and Ing (2009) note that feedback is integral in the instructional improvement process. To further this idea, *accurate* constructive feedback to teachers regarding quality instruction is crucial to improvement (Frase, 1992). Up to this point, feedback given by untrained administrators has fallen short and borders on merely giving advice (Wiggins, 2012). Sadly, feedback has also often been inaccurate, superficial, and even mean-spirited (Frase, 1992). Administrators do not get into classrooms often enough to feel confident in giving good constructive feedback to teachers (Brinko, 1993; Ing, 2009). Since evaluative practice in schools has been more of a formal nature and time consuming, it remains a challenge for administrators to find a way to get into classrooms often enough to truly see, on an ongoing basis, what is actually happening with regard to instructional practices. Some administrators use walkthroughs as a way to get into classrooms to see what is going on. Walkthroughs allow an administrator to observe a teacher and provide feedback in an effort to improve instruction. According to Protheroe (2009), a walkthrough is a short 5-10 minute quick mini observation of instruction that is taking place at that time in a classroom.

There exists an abundance of literature concerning feedback in the instructional improvement process, but most studies focus on what type of information is given to teachers instead of the process of how it is given (Brinko, 1993). There are several methods of facilitating feedback to a teacher including informal written feedback that may be on a Post-it note, email, handwritten comments, or a structured checklist. Brinko (1993) also noted that feedback could come in the form of face-to-face in an informal

setting, videotaping, statistical, unstructured, or structured. Since there are so many different modes of delivering feedback, the way it is communicated has been documented to determine its effectiveness (Brinko, 1993). Working together with staff members to increase instructional capacity will enable schools to gain momentum in raising student achievement (Skretta, 2007). The days of an administrator strictly going into classrooms for summative evaluative reasons are transforming into more of a formative development of teacher instructional skill. Tomlinson (2012) states that an evaluation process being most beneficial when someone sits beside us and helps in the growth process. It would then make sense that an administrator would need to help teachers in the professional growth process where giving feedback to the teacher on performance is known to be a very effective tool in the professional growth process (Khachatryan, 2015). The administrator is the steward of this new learning to support school improvement.

The main focus of this study involves collecting data on the face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback utilized by administrators when giving feedback to teachers in schools who are involved with the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) program in Missouri. The NEE is a system supported by staff and researchers at the University of Missouri in Columbia that supports the implementation of their web-based evaluation tool, and provides professional development to school districts who pay a fee to be a part of the system. The NEE has developed a web-based evaluation and feedback tool designed to help districts become aligned with Missouri requirements for evaluation. For a fee, districts can get training and have access to all online tools that are in alignment with Missouri's new evaluation standards that will be addressed in Chapter 3. It is understood that teacher effectiveness affects student achievement (Ferguson, 1991;

Haycock, 1998; Sanders et al., 1997; Weisberg et al., 2009; Wiggins, 2012). Student achievement is linked to administrative actions regarding evaluation of instructional practices in the classroom (Waters et al., 2003), while the need to increase student achievement falls heavily on the shoulders of school administrators, who for the most part remain untrained in evaluating and giving feedback to teachers on classroom instructional practices (Protheroe, 2005). The process of giving effective feedback to teachers is linked with positive professional growth and increased student achievement (Scheeler, Ruhl & McAfee, 2004). Being in a position to provide research on effective feedback practices in high and low performing schools in the NEE system in Missouri situates this researcher's study of increased significance when considering the frequency of face-to-face, type, and content of feedback given in the respective public school districts in Missouri.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is our duty as educational administrative professionals to ensure quality teaching prevails in the classrooms of our schools. It is demonstrated that increasing instructional capacity has a positive impact on student achievement (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995; Ferguson, 1991). Since research points to teacher quality affecting student achievement (Haycock, 1998), as well as being more important than heterogeneity of students or class size (Sanders et al., 1997), it stands to reason that school improvement efforts are well spent focusing on teacher effectiveness.

Principals are charged with managing an educational organization along with evaluating staff members. Part of this job is to observe instruction and give feedback to teachers regarding improvement of instructional practices in the classroom. Since

administrators have little training in the feedback process, they rely on their own background and experience, which at times, may be limited (Brinko, 1993). Wiggins (2012) characterized that much of the feedback given is confused with advice. Just getting advice does not help one improve the specifics of performance outcomes. One barrier felt by administrators when giving feedback is called the MUM effect, which impedes the delivery of negative feedback to teachers by administrators to improve instruction (Yariv, 2006). Yariv also goes on to explain that the nature of dealing with sensitive issues and a strong desire to avoid conflict that otherwise could be painful, principals will approach the issue of feedback with great caution (2006). The effects of whether or not feedback is given, along with the type of feedback given to teachers after a lesson, could affect teacher efficacy with regard to instruction as well as principal efficacy on giving or not giving feedback in the first place (Brinko, 1993).

Research indicates that not only do barriers exist in principals' evaluation of teachers (Painter, 2000a, 2000b; Weisberg, et al., 2009; Yariv, 2006), but also the need of effective relevant feedback is critical in promoting teacher efficacy with regard to instruction (Blase & Blase, 1999; Frase, 1992). The manner in which feedback is given is important to determine its effectiveness. According to Brinko (1993), there has not been adequate research conducted in order to compare different modes of feedback. Marshall (2012) speculates that principals are not giving feedback due to avoidance of the likelihood of having to give teachers information that may be uncomfortable for them to hear let alone uncomfortable for an administrator to give. If an administrator goes on announced visits and sees great lessons, it is in effect allowing the administrator to get the evaluation off their plates and avoid difficult conversations about what is really going on

behind a one-time good lesson (Marshall, 2012). In a widely known study entitled The Widget Effect (Weisberg et al., 2009), it was revealed that when teachers were categorized as needing improvement or who were rated as unsatisfactory, a staggering 62% had no idea there were concerns before their evaluation took place. Out of 15,000 teachers in the study, 42% said they had not ever had a conversation with their administrator about improving classroom instructional performance.

If principals are charged with instructional leadership toward school improvement efforts, to what extent are they giving teachers feedback? If feedback is given to teachers, how much face-to-face feedback is given, and what type of feedback is being given in high and low performing public schools in Missouri? Are administrators giving specific performance feedback or soft-sided advice? It is noted by Khachatryan (2015) that there is still little known about how feedback is given affects changes in instruction. This researcher's study seeks to determine the frequency of face-to-face feedback, type, and content of feedback prevalent in schools in Missouri who participate in the Network for Educator Effectiveness program and have Missouri Assessment Program scores for 2014 and 2015. This information will assist in creating effective professional development for administrators regarding best practice in giving effective feedback.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the relationship in the frequency of face-to-face mode of feedback, type, and also the content of feedback given to teachers by administrators compared to academic performance in public schools in Missouri who are a part of the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) program, and to compare academic performance of NEE schools to other similar schools in Missouri.

Since studies have determined that increasing instructional capacity has a positive impact on student achievement (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995; Ferguson, 1991), and teacher quality affects student achievement (Haycock, 1998), it is necessary to connect feedback to academic achievement when focusing on teacher effectiveness. Academic achievement will be determined in this research by using English Language Arts (ELA) Missouri Assessment Program Index (MAP) score. Each school that takes the MAP test receives a Math Index score and an ELA Index score separately, not a combined MAP Index score. For the purposes of this research, MAP ELA Index scores will assist in determining higher and lower performing schools, since according to Hernandez (2011), reading scores are considered very important in calculating high school graduation rates.

Public schools who participate in the Network Educator Evaluation system with the University of Missouri were surveyed to explore the frequency of face-to-face mode of feedback, type, and content of feedback given to them by principals. This researcher sought to understand if there is a difference in the face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback given and academic performance of public schools in the NEE system in Missouri in an effort to assist in developing administrator professional development regarding the feedback process.

The face-to-face mode utilized in administrative feedback to teachers also deserves attention since several studies have determined that frequent face-to face or verbal feedback to teachers is a critical reinforcement of best practice instruction in the classroom (Marshall, 2009; Scheeler et al., 2004). There are other modes of delivering feedback that deserve mention. These modes include videotaping, emails, checklists, informal written notes, statistical information, and formal written documents. This

researcher has chosen face-to-face feedback for research purposes in this study because the NEE system has a component of mandatory face-to-face feedback to teachers for administrators trained in giving feedback, and that face-to-face feedback has been named as a preference by teachers in several studies (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Brinko, 1993; Frase, 1992; Scheeler, Ruhl & McAfee, 2004).

Some districts mandate a certain amount of classroom visits by an administrator, but fall short on prescribing a particular mode or type of feedback (Kennedy, 2012). Research conducted by Scheeler et al. (2004) on mode and frequency of feedback maintains that both are very important dimensions of reinforcement to consider. It is further noted that reinforcement needs to be immediate or the chances are likely that an intervening behavior can receive reinforcement.

For the purposes of this research, all public schools in Missouri that are subscribers to the Network for Educator Effectiveness System (NEE) were surveyed via their own Data Tool with five questions added to their annual survey to determine the frequency of face-to-face feedback given within two days of an observation, and then were asked questions that elicited the type and content of feedback that is given by NEE administrators to teachers. Surveys are sent to all participating NEE schools annually to assess Missouri administrator licensure standards.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions explored in this study are as follows:

1. What is the difference in academic performance between Network for Educator Effectiveness schools and non-Network for Educator Effectiveness schools on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program?

2. Is face-to-face feedback related to academic performance on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program for Network for Educator Effectiveness schools?
3. Is feedback type and content related to academic performance on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program for Network for Educator Effectiveness schools?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There are no significant statistical differences in academic performance between NEE and non-NEE schools in Missouri.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship of face-to-face feedback given by administrators to teachers with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship of specific (i.e., focused, detailed, or concrete) feedback given to teachers regarding areas needing improvement with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant relationship of feedback that is useful and relevant given to teachers regarding areas needing improvement with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools.

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant relationship of feedback that is specific (i.e., focused, detailed, or concrete) given in areas of strength with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools.

H<sub>06</sub>: There is no significant relationship of feedback that is useful and relevant regarding areas of strength given with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools.

### **Significance of the Study**

It is noted in several studies that lack of training of administrators in observation of classroom practices and giving feedback is limited (Brinko, 1993; Frase, 2001; Ing, 2009). School culture, politics, and self-efficacy of principals all play a part in giving feedback to teachers (Hallinger, Heck, & Murphy, 2013; Kimball, 2011; Tucker, 1997; Yariv, 2006). As a result of this study, principals can participate in professional development that will enhance their knowledge regarding face-to-face, type, and content of feedback that is prevalent in higher performing public schools.

The findings of this study might also assist districts in changing their administrative professional development or even adding relevant professional development to their current administrative training program. This could have implications in the classroom on student achievement if current practice can be evaluated and modified effectively. Student achievement overall could be affected if administrative staff understand the importance of face-to-face feedback, and the type or content of feedback necessary to assist teachers effectively with instructional practices in the classroom. Professional development for teachers can also utilize learning about giving effective feedback to students.

This study might also have implications for the Missouri school districts participating in the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) system through the University of Missouri. The NEE office or participating districts on their own could

design and implement professional development that could have an impact on teachers and principals alike after analyzing the results of the survey to address gaps in current professional development and training for administrators regarding observation and feedback. If a relationship exists between face-to-face feedback and type or content of feedback in higher performing NEE schools, this might prove to be the quickest way to affect student achievement in NEE schools in Missouri.

### **Framework**

Kluger and DeNisi (1996) conducted a frequently cited meta-analysis on the frequency of feedback interventions. This resulted in the birth of feedback intervention theory (FIT). This theory defined feedback intervention as an “action taken by external agents to provide information regarding some aspects of one’s task performance” (p. 255). According to Khachatryan (2015), feedback intervention pays specific attention to: “(a) the self, (b) the focal task, or (c) the details of the task” (p. 169). Feedback that is focused on the details promotes learning, while feedback that focuses on the self gets in the way of learning due to the nature of possible attack on a recipient’s self-esteem. The feedback intervention theory is a frame in which to view what type of feedback is given to a recipient. Giving advice to a recipient relates to the self and demotivates a learner. Feedback must be given at a motivational or task level in order to affect recipient learning (Khachatryan, 2015). An example of motivational feedback given to a recipient might be an overall effect that was created by the recipient when attempting a performance, such as “your learning targets were very clear and in student friendly language.” This provides a motivational statement that engages the recipient in a positive way. When having to give corrective feedback, Scheeler et al. (2004) suggested

conveying the type of error and then going on to suggest a specific way in which to correct the error. This coincides with the FIT model as long as the correction does not pose a threat to the recipient's self-esteem.

Another lens with which to view the feedback process is through Bandura's guided mastery modeling theory of learning (Wood & Bandura, 1989). This model involves three major elements in order to produce effective results. The first involves appropriate modeling of skills to demonstrate the basic idea of what the recipient needs to learn. The second involves guided skill mastery where the recipient will need opportunities to practice and guidance to assist in grasping what is to be learned. The third part of mastery modeling involves providing self-directed success through a transfer type of a situation. This process is described as one where a person must try newly gained skills and be in a situation where positive results could easily occur. After skills and confidence is gained, difficult problems are then added. If confidence is not achieved with guidance, new skills will be applied weakly then eventually the new skills will be dropped due to the person not getting quick results or experiencing failure too often. As stated by Wood and Bandura (1989), "to enhance competencies, people need instructive modeling, guided practice with corrective feedback, and help in transferring new skills to everyday situations" (p. 364). If teachers are placed in new positions or are to stay fresh with industry skills, they must be given formative feedback on these skills. These theories combined illuminate the need for giving the right type of feedback and demonstrate that the process of providing feedback is also important. Giving specific actionable feedback to teachers, according to Hallinger et al. (2013), is much more beneficial for teachers as opposed to traditional evaluation measures, and has received

much support from empirical evidence to enhance instructional quality and therefore support school improvement efforts.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations of this study. First, the findings of this study are limited to Missouri public schools that have subscribed to be a part of the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) system through the University of Missouri in Columbia; it is not a complete comprehensive analysis of all Missouri schools regarding feedback. Second, the findings of this study are also limited to the validity and reliability of the survey instrument used to collect data in this study, and by the perceptions of teachers who complete the survey instrument. Data was not examined pre- and post- giving feedback in the NEE schools, nor was data obtained on schools as to when they entered into the NEE program. Third, limitations result from just utilizing only 2014 and 2015 English Language Arts (ELA) MAP Index scores to determine high and low performing schools. Finally, principals were not surveyed since information about what is done and not done with regard to getting into classrooms and completing evaluation guidelines from each district may be an uncomfortable topic for administrators to discuss openly.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

There are specific definitions of key terms that will provide useful information in understanding the concepts described in this proposal.

**Feedback:** “Feedback is information about how we are doing in our efforts to reach a goal” (Wiggins, 2012, p. 11). It is often confused with giving praise or advice. One example of feedback would include facts that only describe performance as it relates to achieving a goal and not an opinion about how it was done (Wiggins, 2012). A

principal observes a lesson and provides relevant specific critical feedback regarding the lesson instead of saying they did a good job.

**Formative evaluation:** An evaluation that is conducted periodically to give feedback in order to improve instructional practice within the classroom.

**Instructional capacity:** “The maximum level of production of a school or the education system at a point in time is referred to as instructional capacity” (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995, p. 27).

**MUM effect:** “The reluctance to communicate undesirable information” is referred to as The MUM Effect (Rosen & Tesser, 1970, p. 253).

**Self-efficacy:** Self-efficacy is the belief of a person’s ability to succeed in a given situation.

**Super Subgroup:** A broad inclusion of the major groups of students who consistently score below average on state tests. In Missouri, the 5 most significant gaps in achievement are from “black, Hispanic, low income students, student with disabilities, and English Language learners” (“MSIP 5 | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,” n.d.)

**Summative assessment:** Summative assessment is used to evaluate the teacher at the end of a school year comparing it against criteria set by the state and district.

**Walkthroughs:** A walkthrough is a short 5-10 minute quick mini observation of instruction that is taking place at that time in a classroom (Protheroe, 2009).

**Widget Effect:** Describes the tendency of school districts to assume classroom effectiveness is the same from teacher to teacher (Weisberg et al., 2009).

## Summary

The classroom teacher has been proven to be most effective in improving instruction (Sanders et al., 1997). This study brings with it important implications to the teacher improvement process. It attempts to shed light on the relationship between the face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback given by administrators to teachers in public NEE schools in Missouri. Accurate constructive feedback to teachers is crucial (Frase, 1992). Providing feedback via administrative walkthroughs can assist schools in their school improvement efforts (Protheroe, 2009). Increasing instructional capacity will enable schools in gaining momentum in their school improvement efforts (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995).

Teacher quality affects student achievement and administrators are charged with ensuring teacher quality (Weisberg et al., 2009). At times, principals are hesitant to give critical or negative feedback to teachers, even when doing so has been confirmed to support teacher efficacy regarding instruction (Yariv, 2009). The degree of principal efficacy may affect how often and what type of feedback is given to teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). The MUM Effect could have implications on the type and quantity of feedback given to teachers after walkthroughs are conducted (Yariv, 2006).

This study demonstrates a relationship does exist with face-to-face feedback mode, type, and content of feedback and academic performance in NEE schools in Missouri. Further analysis uncovered interesting nuances with regard to controlling for other variables and reveals what type and content of feedback is present in higher and lower performing NEE schools. Understanding statistically significant face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback offers a glimpse into the relationship principal

feedback has upon school improvement efforts regarding improvement of instructional capacity in teachers.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

The recent push for school districts to improve student achievement has been a monumental shift in the educational reform realm. Since educational legislation has directed more pressure on school districts to close the achievement gap and raise student test scores, districts have worked hard to implement initiatives to drive school improvement. It is widely known that quality teachers directly affect student achievement (Sanders et al., 1997). Improving teaching capacity in schools is at the forefront of school improvement efforts across the nation (Khachatryan, 2015). School administrators are responsible for giving teachers feedback regarding their performance in the classroom. Too often, teachers have felt that feedback is not formative in nature to help them improve practice, but often judgmental and at times disheartening and not aimed at helping them become better professionals (Frase, 2001).

Traditional evaluation systems leave much to be desired when it comes to giving teachers feedback on their performance in the classroom (Mahar & Strobert, 2010). Many evaluation systems currently in place are there to direct retention or non-retention of employees and not to help improve their performance (Gordon, Meadows, & Dyal, 2001; Hall, 2013; Kersten & Israel, 2005; Markley, 2006; O'Hanlon & Mortensen, 1980; Varlas, 2012; Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin & Bernstein, 1984; Yariv, 2009). Administrators are left scrambling to come up with a system of giving relevant feedback to teachers and also left questioning what type of feedback to give and on what in particular.

Should feedback be face-to-face, written, emailed, video-taped, peer feedback, informal or formal? No doubt depending on which mode is chosen, the administrator is

faced with the challenge of giving feedback with little training to do so (Ing, 2009). Pressure to improve student achievement forces administrators to muddle through the feedback process even though definite barriers exist in the feedback process.

Research has demonstrated the importance of the teacher in relationship to student achievement (Ferguson, 1991; Haycock, 1998; Sanders et al., 1997; Weisberg et al., 2009; Wiggins, 2012). Grissom et al. (2013) assert that coaching and evaluation of teachers yields more educational gains than any other instructional leadership activity. Getting busy administrators into classrooms is a challenge. Administrators actually giving feedback to teachers after visiting classrooms pose another challenge (Marshall, 2012). As accountability pressures increase demands on administrators to produce increased student achievement (Protheroe, 2005). Research indicates that to increase student achievement, one must start by coaching teachers and giving them performance feedback (Grissom et al., 2013). This rise in accountability pressure has administrators who are not trained in observation or giving appropriate feedback to teachers being in the very position to do it (Protheroe, 2002).

A study conducted by Range et al. (2012) states, “The most persuasive factor in increasing student achievement is teacher effectiveness,” (p. 304). In creating teacher effectiveness, the study concludes that an administrator must utilize instructional leadership skills in order to help teachers improve. It would stand to reason that in order to affect student achievement, the administrator must address building instructional capacity in his or her teaching staff. Visiting classrooms and giving teachers relevant feedback is a major step in this instructional leadership process. Lower performing

schools are in desperate need of making achievement gains, and therefore it is critical for administrators to know how to give relevant feedback to teachers.

In order to develop an understanding of the concepts underlying the role that feedback plays in the instructional setting, this chapter provides a review of relevant literature through the following topics: (1) teacher effectiveness matters; (2) traditional evaluation system; (3) school improvement efforts; (4) feedback; and (5) barriers in the feedback process. Section one, teacher effectiveness matters, begins with how teacher effectiveness affects student achievement in the classroom and ends with discussion of the challenges of evaluating such a complicated task as teaching. Section two, traditional evaluation system, examines the current state of teacher evaluation and how it affects administrators. Section three, school improvement efforts, highlights the pressures placed on administrators to improve student achievement, even in schools with high poverty. Section four, feedback, delves into how feedback fits into school improvement efforts and how feedback seems quite elusive in current education practices among administrators. Section five, barriers in the feedback process, focuses on why effective feedback is lacking in the educational improvement process with educators. Finally, a conclusion is provided to previous sections and summarize the need to examine what mode effective feedback utilizes most often, how often it should be provided to recipients, and the type of feedback that is given most often in higher performing versus lower performing public schools in Missouri.

### **Teacher Effectiveness Matters**

It has been documented by research over the years that a teacher has monumental effects on student academic gains in education (Donaldson, 2011; Ferguson, 1991;

Haycock, 1998; Menuey, 2007; Tucker, 1997; Sanders et al., 1997). According to Hanushek (2010), an effective teacher not only affects the lifetime earnings of each student in a positive manner, but also has an economic impact to the Gross Domestic Product in the trillions. Likewise the effects can also negatively affect student lifetime earnings when exposed to a poor performing teacher. Teacher effectiveness has been found to be more dominant than class sizes and student heterogeneity within the classroom with regard to student achievement, and was also found to be the most dominant factor related to student academic progress (Sanders et al., 1997). It is noted by Weisberg et al. (2009) that students may gain an additional year of growth with a good teacher as opposed to a poor one. If a student has a poor teacher for consecutive years, the problem of not growing as much academically is negatively compounded. A study conducted by Haycock (1998) goes so far as to suggest that a good teacher can have lasting effects on a student for years to come. This is supported by Hanushek's (2010) findings that reveal about 70% of gains made in a year with an effective teacher remain with the student from year to year.

It is also suggested by Range, Duncan, Scherz, and Haines (2012) that principals influence student academic gains by assisting teachers to improve their instructional practices. With this in mind, it would stand to reason that a main focus of principals' school improvement efforts would be well spent in building capacity of teachers within an educational setting. Haycock (1998) supports the idea that teacher quality matters and, in fact, does influence a positive trend in student achievement. Her study boldly stated, "If we but took the simple step of assuring that poor and minority children had teachers of the same quality as other children, about half of the achievement gap would

disappear” (p. 3). This is very enticing to districts that are under pressure to improve student achievement and who serve poor and minority children. Range et al. (2012) finds that a significant strength in instruction by teachers remains at the top of the list as factors affecting student achievement, and that the principal has a great impact on teachers when working to improve instructional practices in the classroom.

However, there exists a problem with hiring and retaining the “highly qualified teachers,” which is mandated by No Child Left Behind (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Highly qualified teachers are able to have more choice which districts in which they choose to work. Working conditions, salary, teacher preparation, and mentoring support have proven to be big barriers in retaining highly qualified teachers in urban and poor rural areas (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Attempts to legislate better teachers is evident with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) striving to provide “highly qualified teachers” in America’s classrooms. NCLB mandated that teachers be “highly qualified” which was mostly left up to each state to determine what meets the highly qualified status (Hanushek & Rivkin 2010). This determinant is mostly based on certification or degree level. What poses a problem with the “highly qualified teacher” status is that according to Hanushek and Rivkin (2010) there has not been a significant connection to just the factor of certification or degree level being linked to student achievement. One of many challenges for administrators is to facilitate excellent teacher support for beginning and veteran teachers alike. This involves getting into classrooms, knowing what is going on, and providing relevant feedback to teachers. Just relying on a degree or certification alone to demonstrate effective teaching is insufficient in today’s classrooms.

Teaching is a complex process that involves the delicate combination of skills blending an art and a science. Charlotte Danielson (2007) creatively thinks of teaching as “similar to not one but several other professions, combining the skills of business management, human relations and theater arts” (p. 5). This mix of skills creates a challenging role for administrators who are charged with helping teachers improve their practice. It is also concerning to know if teachers are most instrumental in student achievement, they can also affect student learning in a negative way (Hanushek, 2010). Bridges (1992) supports the complexity of teaching and further documents that poorly performing teachers present many shortcomings in performance of the job. Administrators are given the daunting task of not only evaluating teachers with often outdated evaluation methods, but also charged with the task of coaching teachers to improve instructional practice, often without any background knowledge or training (Brinko, 1993; Ing, 2009). The complex process of teaching clearly does not fit with traditional methods of appraising teachers or assisting them in improving instructional practices which then leaves teachers trying to guess at what makes them a good teacher and how they will be judged in their performance in the classroom (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Hanushek (2011) speaks of education policy that fails to determine a thorough analysis of effective teacher characteristics which in turn makes it difficult to set criteria for hiring or training standards in the industry. Administrators are left scrambling to find effective ways to help develop skillful teachers in America’s classrooms in order to provide effective teachers that school improvement efforts demand.

## **Traditional Evaluation System.**

The traditional teacher evaluation system was developed to assist school districts in evaluating a teacher's performance in a classroom. It is a critical element in hiring, retaining, or non-renewal of ineffective teachers, and has become a widely accepted organized system across the nation (Gordon et al., 2001). Many current evaluation systems are considered big and formal, time consuming, and due to an inability to collectively define what good teaching entails leaves the evaluator ranking more teachers excellent than should be ranked that high (Weisberg et al., 2009).

**Big and Formal.** A large study conducted with charter and traditional schools in two northeastern states reported findings from 30 principals on the topic of evaluation (Donaldson, 2011). The findings in this study demonstrated the principals believed that the role of evaluation was two-fold: first to improve instruction school-wide, and second to identify teachers who need interventions and support before deciding to pursue separation of employment. The principals felt that the intended purpose of evaluation in a school system had merit, but were unsure as to whether or not the intended purpose was being realized. Almost all of them felt that the formalness of evaluation lent itself to teachers working hard to put on the "dog and pony show" since that might be the only official time they see an administrator in the classroom. They felt that more information about a teacher could be obtained through informal observations more so than formal evaluations (Donaldson, 2011).

Given the time and work involved in the traditional evaluation system, researchers have sought information on whether it serves a useful purpose or is just a purely ceremonial in nature. Kennedy (2012) found that teachers agreed that principal

observations were useful if there was specific and focused feedback given. Follow-up after feedback is given is advised to ensure a teacher is putting feedback into practice. Another large-scale study sought to determine the effectiveness of the evaluation system in several large school districts including Salt Lake City, Utah, Lake Washington, Washington, Greenwich, Connecticut, and Toledo, Ohio (Wise et al., 1984). The participating districts in this study were selected carefully based on a diversity of evaluation systems utilized. It was concluded by this study that, “few school districts have highly developed teacher evaluation systems, and even fewer put the results into action” (p. 3). In general, with a few exceptions, evaluation has not been utilized as an instrument for teacher growth (Hall, 2013). Instead, the traditional system of evaluation for teachers has been used to summatively review a teacher’s performance with regard to contract renewal, which has left teachers with a very uncomfortable feeling when someone comes in to observe, especially if it is a one-time shot (Hall, 2013; Marshall, 2012). Professional feedback to teachers had not been a part of the traditional system of evaluation in a formative nature, and with states trying to tie evaluations into student achievement, teachers are left with feeling helpless and the traditional evaluation system being more punitive in nature (Hall, 2013).

Teacher participants in a study conducted by Mahar and Strobert (2010) reported that, “the traditional method is not effective in providing feedback related to their daily work.” Respondents in the same survey noted that administrator feedback was “vague,” “had little relevance or impact on their educational practice,” and that they “receive many irrelevant and positive evaluations” (p. 152). This would lead to the belief that the link is not being made from formal evaluations to daily student instructional needs. Another

study (Kennedy, 2012) was conducted in a medium-sized urban school district in Texas serving approximately 44,000 students. Kennedy noted in her study of the formal observation process that whether or not the observations are lengthy and formal or short walkthroughs, specific and focused feedback must be given or the feedback recipients feel that the process is just a formality.

**Time Consuming and Ineffective.** The formal process of teacher evaluation is time consuming for the administrator who has to balance many managerial tasks with instructional leader tasks required of the job (Donaldson, 2011). The evaluation models utilized currently by administrators are not only time consuming for them, but for the teachers as well (Kersten & Israel, 2005). Kersten and Israel (2005) studied evaluation and noted that on the average, principals spent more than 50% of their time on the evaluation process each year, which was found to be more than 10 hours per teacher each year.

A study of the formal evaluation process conducted by Gordon et al., (2001) noted the time constraints of the formal evaluation process. The respondents of the study included 148 principals representing the states of Alabama, Pennsylvania, and Washington. The principals were surveyed and asked to give their opinions and experiences with the time consuming nature of the formal evaluation systems. The study uncovered that 59% of the principals conducted two observations annually, 8% made a single visit, 10% observed formally three times or more, and 23% stated that the specific needs of teachers dictated the frequency of the visits. A staggering 97% of all observations required at least half a class period or longer. Fifty-eight percent of principals responded that an entire class period was the norm, where 34% required a half

of a class period or more. Five percent of the respondents stated that they required more than one class period per observation. Since evaluations are mandatory and the sheer number of these that principals are held accountable for in a given year makes the task complicated and time consuming.

As Bridges (1992) notes, “Because they [administrators] are unable to spend much time in a teacher’s classroom, they hesitate to be critical of the teacher’s performance” (p. 26). This leaves administrators with the dilemma of getting into the classroom to give feedback formatively or only getting into the classroom in order to get evaluations done for the already busy school year. This is the purgatory administrators find themselves in when struggling to do the complex job that is asked of them. Feeney (2007) suggests that evaluation should be changed from an isolated time consuming annual ritual to that of giving feedback throughout the year along with professional dialog. Marshall (2012) boldly states, “To put it bluntly, an evaluation process that relies on announced visits is inaccurate, dishonest, and ineffective” (p. 20). If we strive for effective teaching practices consistently, we should expect to see them anytime an observer walks into a classroom, not just during a scheduled observation. Today’s administrator visits classrooms with their technology in hand to fill out a checklist, and then send it to the teacher afterwards. Or even worse, rating the teacher on a scale that only increases the teacher’s anxiousness and fear of failing (Marshall, 2012). Marshall believes that in order to give a teacher effective feedback, an administrator must follow up face-to-face with a teacher within 24 hours of the quick observation for an informal chat, preferably on a teacher’s turf, not in the office. He also suggests at least 10 frequent, short five-minute observations are plenty enough to see what is really going on

in a classroom. However, if the administrator sees signs of a teacher exhibiting unsatisfactory practices, a shift would be made to a more formal process of feedback and evaluation (Marshall, 2009).

Feeney (2007) suggests to start rethinking the evaluative process to direct and support teacher growth through effective feedback and ongoing conversation instead of an annual administrative task to be completed. This leads administrators in a direction of being challenged to learn how to give effective feedback to teachers if educational practice is to improve. Current research points to more of a coaching model with administrators taking the lead in this role (Showers, 1985). Showers (1985) contributes on this topic by noting when the purpose of supervision eliminates evaluation and power issues and moves to a coaching type situation with teachers, this environment is not as prevalent in current and more traditional evaluation systems. The idea of coaching as a model of teacher improvement is in agreement with Bandura's (1989) theory of guided mastery modeling and leads administrators to a more effective model of supporting growth of teachers instead of continuing an outdated traditional model of evaluation.

The job of an administrator is changing and moving more and more to instructional coach combined with the myriad duties of running a school. The weight of instructional leadership is heavy on the shoulders when professional development for principals seems non-existent to support this growing change. How to best help teachers in an age of a growth model in evaluation is what currently looms in the minds of principals. Over the years, feedback to teachers from administrators has been mostly ceremonial due to traditional evaluative demands and has lacked intent to improve instruction (Frase, 1992). Administrators have attempted to give feedback in the

traditional evaluative process, however, “feedback has too often been inaccurate, shallow, and at times mean spirited rather than helpful and uplifting” (Fraser, 1992, p. 179).

Avoiding the practice of giving critical feedback to teachers is common and will be discussed further in this paper. The ceremonial behavior in the traditional evaluation system has resulted in the vast majority of teachers across the country to be rated above average and in many instances well above average (Donaldson, 2010; Weisberg et al., 2009).

**Widget Effect.** There was a national study on teacher effectiveness done by Weisberg et al. (2009) that spanned across 4 states, 12 school districts, 1300 administrators, 80 state education officials, union leaders, policymakers, and survey responses from 15,000 teachers. This study illuminated the fact that too many schools are failing to determine any difference at all in teacher performance. Getting into classrooms enough to truly evaluate teachers and give effective feedback is quite the challenge for a busy administrator. What has occurred over time, resulting from traditional evaluation systems failing to accurately determine individual differences in teacher performance, is a phenomenon called the Widget Effect. “The Widget Effect describes the tendency of school districts to assume classroom effectiveness is the same from teacher to teacher” (p. 4). Evaluations to this point have been more about gathering evidence for teacher dismissal or remediation than about teacher development. This study pointed out that less than 1% of teachers are rated as unsatisfactory out of over 80,000 evaluations studied, three out of four teachers failed to receive adequate feedback that changed their instructional practices, newer teachers are not given adequate attention, and less than half of the districts in this study had dismissed a single tenured teacher for

ineffectiveness in the last 5 years (Weisberg et al., 2009). Donaldson (2010) maintains that there are a majority of educators rated above average and that both principals and teachers alike believe that the ratings are inflated. This is alarming in the education industry. The absence of meaningful feedback is a disservice to the educational system and must be changed. Hattie states that “feedback has one of the highest effects on student learning” (2012, p. 18) Teachers are learners and have developmental needs too, and therefore are no different than students in this respect. Creating an environment where everyone is excellent and few need improvement does nothing but disrespect the complex profession of teaching.

### **School Improvement Efforts**

Federal and state funding with regard to public education seems to play political football with school districts and much needed funds. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and other federal programs allowed money for districts based on demographics and not achievement (McGuinn, 2011). The federal government attempted to legislate achievement by issuing sanctions if districts could not muster up to ever changing standards in No Child Left Behind (NCLB). President Obama’s Race to the Top initiative is an attempt to circumvent the sanctions with incentives in order to increase student achievement across the country (McGuinn, 2011). With states clamoring for Race to the Top funds (RTTT) it comes as no surprise that pressure to produce student achievement comes with it. These initiatives also produce efforts to create educational policy that will help drive school improvement at the state and district level. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which was legislated on December 15, 2015 (“Every Student Succeeds Act | U.S. Department of Education,” n.d.), provides

greater flexibility with the once-size-fits-all NCLB legislation mandates that had a stranglehold on states. This legislation puts more power in states' hands with regard to setting high standards for student achievement, maintaining accountability for school districts, increasing support for preschool, and establishing an assessment that limits unnecessary testing.

There is ample research to support improving teacher performance to strengthen school improvement efforts (Marshall, 1996; Showers, 1985; Skretta, 2007), however, Hallinger et al. (2013) state that research does not yield much supportive evidence that traditional evaluation systems assist in school improvement efforts. Over the years teacher evaluation has been scrutinized, reinvented, and redesigned many times in efforts to improve teacher quality (Wise et al., 1985). This has led to more research that is linking teacher quality with school improvement (Sanders et al., 1997). An analysis of the newer generation of teacher evaluation models yields some interesting information according to Hallinger et al. (2013). A thorough review of literature was conducted after more than a decade of implementation of newer generation teacher evaluation models in an effort to shed light on the effectiveness of teacher evaluation as a means to bolster school improvement efforts. Their study concluded the logic that is driving policy regarding teacher evaluation is stronger than actual positive results of evidence regarding impact of teacher evaluation and growth of student achievement. More evidence was highlighted in this study involving leadership actions within a school that can have positive effects on student learning that are not targeted to improving teacher quality. Directing efforts to practices that are not evaluative in nature, such as giving “actionable feedback to teachers” received much support from empirical evidence to enhance

instructional quality and therefore support school improvement efforts (p. 22). Kimball (2011) echoes this sentiment by supporting evaluation for school improvement efforts only if it is incorporated within a process that includes specific and frequent feedback to the teacher. Hallinger et al. (2013) also add to the research on linking teacher evaluation to student achievement. Rarely do administrators have the skill set to effectively implement teacher evaluation well. Teachers are influenced by who they perceive as more credible in the field which may or may not be the administrator. These two reasons leave administrators unable to fulfill the role of evaluator as effectively as school districts would like. Their research indicates that if principals are to be leaders of the future in education, their time would be better spent in activities other than teacher evaluation. Linking administrator work to teachers being able to refine and polish their skills will possibly yield much better results in increasing student achievement than just working on teacher evaluation.

**Pressure.** High stakes testing and intense pressure on school leaders to produce higher than ever student achievement among all socio-economic groups in public education are the result of these initiatives. Accountability pressures are continually on the rise, which has fostered a movement by districts and administrators to focus on what research says has the most impact on student achievement: the teacher (Donaldson, 2011; Ferguson, 1991; Haycock, 1998; Menuey, 2007; Tucker, 1997; Sanders et al., 1997). Grissom, Loeb, and Master (2013) point out that there are noticeably larger learning gains when teacher coaching and development have taken place. It would stand to reason that an administrator would then begin seeking ways to best support and develop the teaching staff of the school. Hopefully, this is in line with a district's vision of school

improvement plans. If not, the administrator may find that balancing the pressure of student achievement, teacher coaching, and other district initiatives overwhelming at best.

The bottom line is that administrators are faced with the monumental task of learning how to best support teachers to create an optimum learning environment for all students to achieve. Protheroe (2005) explains the growing pressure as requiring “rapid and often significant change” where the burden falls directly on the principal to facilitate the change (p. 54). According to Havard (2009), questions are raised as to whether or not teachers are teaching as effectively as they can due to the focus being placed on NCLB’s ties to student assessment, performance, and funding. This also puts pressure on administrators to make sure they are effectively giving the right feedback to teachers in order to affect student performance. Using student achievement information as feedback to teachers is tempting since the pressures to increase academic achievement are ever present, but it is not advised to link student outcomes to teacher feedback (Khachatryan, 2015).

Even with the current reorganization of NCLB to ESSA, the pressure will continue to exist to close those achievement gaps and remain with districts and individual schools within those districts. Certain stringent requirements under NCLB led states to apply for a flexibility waiver in meeting those requirements. In return the states were mandated to develop a plan that was rigorous and comprehensive enough to improve student achievement among all student subgroups (“Elementary and Secondary Education Act | U.S. Department of Education,” n.d.). Along with this plan, states must identify schools as Reward, Focus, or Priority schools. Title I Reward Schools are

categorized as either “highest-performing school” or a “high-progress school.” The “highest-performing school” are successful in attaining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in all subgroups and not have significant achievement gaps in the subgroups. The “high-progress school” must demonstrate making the most adequate progress towards achieving AYP in all subgroups and closing the achievement gap in those sub groups (“Elementary and Secondary Education Act | U.S. Department of Education,” n.d.). The next two categories are called Title I Priority or Focus Schools. A Title I Priority School is defined as being among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in achievement and lack of progress in the state based on the state assessment in all sub groups. Title I Focus Schools are schools that experience the largest gaps among groups within the school. Focus Schools have room for improvement and are expected to achieve levels of improvement that span over a three year period in order to move out of Focus status (“Elementary and Secondary Education Act | U.S. Department of Education,” n.d.). Even with the passage of ESSA in an effort to reorganize and address the accountability of NCLB, the guidelines remain unchanged that are guiding school improvement efforts. It may be some time before the changes that have been signed by President Obama actually take effect. Until then, we are under advisement to continue our efforts in working to overcome the labeling within the current system according to student academic performance.

The key to turning around a failing school is elusive. According to Yatsko, Lake, Bowen, and Nelson (2015) when the U.S. Government implemented a stimulus program in 2009 entitled the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Money was appropriated for education, namely the turn-around of failing schools. This created an

urgency in school improvement efforts in the country's lowest performing schools. The United States committed over three billion dollars to a Title I program, also known as School Improvement Grants (SIGS), to assist in turning around the worst performing schools. Within the SIG program, the Department of Education forced failing schools to compete for the money which increased the pressure to perform. The results of this study of 18 SIG schools in Washington State, determined that even though there were a few improvements in some school districts, for the most part, the grant money supported current programs already in place and not significant innovative change. In other words, according to Murphy (2013), research is indicating that the "existing bureaucratic system of administration is incapable of addressing the needs of a post-industrial education system" (p. 255).

With the current passage of ESSA, states will need time to figure out how to implement the changes that President Obama signed into legislation. These changes will assist states and school districts in targeting resources to enhance student achievement from preschool to graduation. Instead of being punitive in nature, the resources will target assistance needed in critical high need areas identified at the state level. The question still remains for administrators on how to facilitate required student achievement among all the sub groups in the least amount of time in order to uphold federal and state guidelines previously and now currently in force.

### **Feedback**

What is feedback? Feedback is characterized by Wiggins (2012) as information that is given to a recipient about efforts to reach a specific goal. It is also specific to an individual, action oriented, given in a timely manner, continuous, and consistent. Hattie

and Timperley (2007) describe feedback as information that can be provided about one's performance by a person, an experience, or any number of sources, and provides skill development or knowledge to the recipient. All too often, the person giving feedback confuses feedback with advice. According to Wiggins (2012), there is a difference. Seeing students peering out a window during a lesson or nodding off is feedback to a teacher to change course in the instructional process. Someone is giving advice and not feedback if a comment is made about the lesson telling the teacher that they need to liven things up a bit, or that the lesson seemed boring. Novice teachers are often too engrossed in their delivery of a quality lesson to notice student apathy or distraction. Wiggins refers to a quality of feedback being "tangible and transparent" (p. 13). If the recipient is too busy with the task, important feedback can be missed completely. Assisting novice teachers is critical since their experience is limited in receiving real-time feedback in a classroom setting. According to Scheeler et al. (2004) teachers acquisition of skills that occur early in their development have lasting career effects. It is crucial for beginning teacher development to incur frequent, immediate, and relevant feedback.

When advice is too often given in lieu of useful and specific feedback, recipients become dependent on advice instead of modifying performance based on feedback of current performance. When giving feedback it is wise to consider if the recipient has been given good feedback, and if they know then how to go about improvement. Information must be given to the recipient on how actions will affect progress toward a specific goal, not include judgments of value or ideas on improvement (Wiggins, 2012).

**The Improvement of Teaching Through the Use of Feedback.** Goals for student achievement have evolved along with teaching since what prevailed in the 1970's

(Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Providing effective feedback to teachers seems somewhat like hitting a moving target since there exists plenty of debate on defining great teaching. Teaching is an art form blended with science. Rutherford (2013) suggests that there are literally hundreds of ways for a teacher to achieve excellence with instruction. Change takes time. Even with the passage of ESSA, states will need time to figure out how to incorporate this legislation with current accountability guidelines and targeted assistance. The burden of improving the moving target called instruction still rests with the administrators who desperately need to give quality feedback in the educational setting.

Danielson's (1996) work has contributed in this effort by providing a definition of what skills teachers need to have in order to support student achievement. Rutherford (2013) also lists 23 Artisan Teacher themes that outline a strengths based approach to giving feedback. Again, where does one begin? Danielson and McGreal (2000) point out that according to traditional evaluation models with ratings such as "needs improvement" or "satisfactory," are too simplistic, and according to Wiggins (2012) definition of feedback versus advice, the aforementioned ratings are more like advice than feedback to this researcher. A teacher definitely wants to know how they are doing, but an empty phrase such as "satisfactory" does not provide a teacher with a clear understanding on what to do with such information (Feeney, 2007). Feeney (2007) also suggests three main recommendations when providing feedback to teachers. One involves providing focused feedback where characteristics of effective teaching are defined, the second involves use of a reflection tool that will facilitate teacher reflection upon receiving feedback, and the third is to help coordinate teacher goals that can be measured by student achievement. The feedback process should be an exchange of

information that helps the teacher to clarify the goals and the progress toward those goals. It is a concern of the supervising administrator to help facilitate the appropriate conversation and reflection to help the teacher meet his or her goals.

Blasé and Blasé (1999) conducted a qualitative study involving more than 800 teachers across the country in an effort to get teacher perspectives on how they felt influenced by administrators regarding instructional leadership. Their findings concluded that teachers favored talking with an administrator to promote reflection along with the administrator's assistance in promoting their professional growth. Teachers crave feedback from administrators that promote "inquiry, reflection, exploration, and experimentation" that allows them to "build repertoires of flexible alternatives rather than collecting rigid teaching procedures and methods" (Blasé & Blasé, 1999, p. 359).

Walkthroughs are a means by which an administrator can observe a teacher and provide the necessary accurate constructive feedback to help improve instruction. A walkthrough is a short 5-10 minute quick mini observation of instruction that is taking place at that time in a classroom (Protheroe, 2009). Walkthroughs or mini observations are becoming a popular method of targeted school improvement because they allow administrators to see ongoing instruction and give immediate feedback regarding the observed instruction (Marshall, 2009; Protheroe, 2009). The principal is able to act as instructional leader through utilization of the walkthrough process by evaluating if an instructional strategy or practice is being performed effectively, and giving timely and constructive feedback to the teacher after the walkthrough is completed (Cudeiro & Nelson, 2009). Data collected from the walkthrough process informs administrators if instructional strategies are implemented with fidelity and what type of feedback, if any, is

given to the teacher (Skretta, 2007). A study conducted by Grissom, Loeb, and Master (2013) included findings of walkthroughs being negatively associated with student gains in achievement at the high school level. They contended that the *use* of walkthroughs determined the effectiveness of the walkthrough process. There was a positive association with teachers who viewed walkthroughs as supporting professional development as opposed to those who viewed them as not supporting professional development of the teacher. Their findings positively support the use of feedback in the walkthrough process.

It is suggested by Ovando (2006) that multiple observations of teachers be conducted in an effort to see many different type of instructional experiences that occur in the classroom. Giving great thought and contemplation in composing constructive, positive, and relevant feedback is critical and making sure the feedback does not come across in a negative way. Positive changes in teacher behaviors were noted by Scheeler et al. (2004) when feedback given was positive, specific, and corrective. It was noted that teachers who received this type of feedback demonstrated more positive results from direct instruction with students. Research conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1999) showed that, “Feedback had positive effects on motivation, self-esteem, efficacy, and sense of security” (p. 361). When giving feedback, Rutherford (2009) suggests to think cause and effect. The cause is anything the teacher does or says, and the effect is how that impacts learning. Frame feedback from this standpoint, and it will lead to a much more specific focus and be more goal oriented. Skretta (2007) supports this notion about giving detailed feedback by stating, “The detailed feedback I give teachers enables us to

capture data about the effectiveness of instructional practice and is an excellent means of using observational data to drive improved achievement” (p. 23).

**Delivery of Feedback.** Frase (1992) makes it very clear that giving constructive feedback is essential to improving instruction, which then impacts student achievement. Literature is very limited about the process of giving feedback. Many studies study the kind of feedback and not the process (Brinko, 1993). This includes data on face-to-face feedback along with type and content of feedback. According to Brinko (1993), modes of feedback can take on a variety of forms (e. g., verbal, behavioral, video, statistical, written, unstructured or structured). Other modes can include Post-it notes, email, handwritten comments, structured checklists, or face-to-face. Since feedback can be so varied, the way feedback is communicated can determine its effectiveness along with the content of the message being a critical component (Brinko, 1993).

According to a study conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1999), dialog is noted to be very important to teachers in order to promote reflection and critical thinking about what goes on in classrooms. It was further documented in their study that respondents felt that when the fear of negative evaluation was removed from the walkthrough process, the teacher felt like they could be freer to take risks. Face-to-face dialog with a teacher is noted in some studies to be a preferred mode of feedback by the recipient (Feeney, 2007; Harms & Roebuck, 2010; Marshall, 2009; Marshall, 2012; Scheeler et al., 2004). Brinko (1990) suggests that the recipient of feedback should be consulted on the preferred mode feedback should take.

Literature is also limited on studying the frequency of feedback according to Scheeler et al. (2004). They have also found that “changing a teacher’s behavior through

feedback requires timing and frequency of feedback. If reinforcement is not immediate, it is possible that an intervening behavior will be reinforced instead” (Scheeler et al., 2004, p. 60). There are general conclusions that are supported by literature regarding feedback. 1) Feedback given is better than no feedback given at all, 2) feedback that is given immediately rather than delayed is preferred, 3) feedback that is “specific, positive, and corrective holds the most promise for bringing about lasting change in teaching behavior” (Scheeler et al., p. 68). Ilgen, Fisher, and Taylor, (1979) put forth that too much feedback may not be a good thing, however they noted that most workplaces do not give enough feedback, so any increase in giving feedback yields positive returns. Chhoker and Wallin (1984) conducted a study of feedback in an industrial setting concerning safety performance using a reversal/withdrawal design. They did note that whether feedback was given once a week or once in two weeks, employees’ performance declined when no feedback was given at all, and improved when introduced again.

Feedback must be focused according to Brinko (1993). Marshall (2009) and Ing (2009) support this statement and take it a step further saying that feedback is also critical when given as soon as possible after the observation. Ilgen et al. (1979) posit that, “the longer the delay in the receipt of feedback, the less the effect of feedback on performance” (p. 354). Marshall (2003) found that verbal feedback was the most effective when he was conducting walkthroughs. He noted that when he gave written feedback with no dialog, that there wasn’t a response from the teacher. When a dialog occurred, there was rich conversation about teaching and learning. Rutherford supports this with his research on verbal, face-to-face feedback he calls “5 Minute Feedback” (“Rutherford Learning Group — Developing the Artisan Teacher,” n.d.). The 5 Minute

Feedback provides “shop talk” that involves rich dialog about what is going on in the classroom. Harms and Roebuck (2010) contribute that feedback sessions should be done in person and frequently enough so that the employee is very aware of what is considered important enough to be reviewed on a continuous basis. Teachers’ preference of the mode of feedback, according to Ovando (2006), is to be able to have an opportunity to converse about the written feedback given. They valued the opportunity to have a professional conversation focused on what they are doing in the classroom.

It is an important consideration where the feedback should take place. Wherever feedback occurs should be psychologically safe for the recipient of the feedback according to Brinko (1993). The research conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1999) mentioned earlier demonstrates that feedback does build efficacy of teachers. They also found that even without feedback, administrators had a positive effect on teachers just by walking through classrooms. The teacher felt valuable as an individual and more motivated to collaborate with other staff members to get input and explore more teaching strategies. If a recipient’s self-esteem feels threatened by the feedback regarding task performance, less attention is paid to the feedback itself (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Khachatryan, 2015). Likewise, if the recipient feels a low level of threat to self-esteem, the more attention can be paid to the feedback in the process. Feeney (2007) supports this when speaking of quality feedback. He states, “Constructive and meaningful feedback is needed to promote reflection and allow teachers to plan and achieve new goals, which will ultimately lead to an increased sense of efficacy in their teaching” (p. 193). Marshall (2003) remains a proponent of forcing himself to get into at least five classrooms a day and giving teachers an honest and detail focused account face-to-face

about the visit. It is also indicated that just getting into classrooms physically is not enough. What remains important consistently is what is being done with the information gleaned from classrooms visits. Ing (2009) states:

It is not just how frequently principals are in classrooms or how long they stay in classrooms that matter but what principals do with the information gathered from these observations. Principals can follow-up or discuss what happened in the classroom with teachers by informally meeting in the hallways or on the playground, or by sending an email or written note. This type of follow up is assumed to be a critical component of how informal classroom observations relate to instructional improvement (p. 342).

A study conducted by Ilgen et al. (1979) on feedback in performance oriented organizations, yielded an interesting twist with regard to frequency of feedback. Their findings suggested more frequent feedback may be more detrimental to performance than beneficial. It was noted that if too much feedback is given, the recipient may experience a “loss of personal control” and that too frequent feedback from others may create a situation where the recipient is always awaiting feedback from an external source instead of developing an internal skill to reflect and judge their own performance (p. 367). This notion would support other current research regarding helping a professional learn to reflect upon their performance being more favorable than just providing feedback on performance alone (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Brinko, 1990, 1993; Feeney, 2007).

**Using Walkthroughs to Facilitate Feedback.** Since the onset of public education, walking through a classroom to observe has been a common practice as a means to formally evaluate principals or teachers (Cudeiro & Nelson, 2009). Today,

these visits are now referred to as Targeted Learning Walks (Cudiero & Nelson, 2009), walkthroughs or mini-observations (Marshall, 2009), learning walks (Lemons & Helsing 2009), quick visits, and data walks (David, 2008). It is also mentioned that too many principals and central office administrators continue to walk through classrooms to note if students are on task without checking for rigor or the quality of the task the students are engaged in (Cudiero & Nelson, 2009). A new era has ushered in walkthroughs with a purpose.

Much research supports walking through classrooms as a means for instructional improvement (Archer, 2005; Bushman, 2006; Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007; Cudiero & Nelson, 2009; David, 2008; DeBoer & Hinojosa, 2012; Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002; Lemons & Helsing, 2009; Marshall, 2009; Protheroe, 2009; Skretta, 2007). David (2008) comments about the large number of the types of walkthroughs that can be conducted and a time frame of length anywhere between 2 and 45 minutes. The idea behind walkthroughs is admirable. A walkthrough can help paint a picture of what is going on in classrooms in a short amount of time invested per each completed. Done properly, a walkthrough can inform school improvement efforts by focusing in on teaching strategies being implemented, rigor and relevance of curriculum, assessment, student engagement, classroom safety, behavior management, and in general, can inform future professional development needs of a particular school, and increase trust in professional relationships (Brown & Coley, 2011; David, 2008; Marshall, 2009; Skretta, 2007). It is also commonly believed that walkthroughs should not be utilized as a formal evaluative tool, but should serve the purpose of informing school improvement efforts as a whole (Cudiero & Nelson, 2009; David, 2008; Skretta, 2007).

Given the vast amount of research on conducting walkthroughs, administrators are left with many choices on what they can observe in a classroom, but actually conducting the walkthrough and giving the needed feedback someone deserves is entirely another matter (Skretta, 2007). Research points to making sure that the feedback given after a walkthrough is focused, concrete, specific, relevant, descriptive, timely, and positively framed (David, 2008; DeBoer & Hinojosa, 2012; Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002; MacNeill & Boyd, 2006; Protheroe, 2009; Rutherford, 2009; Skretta, 2007; Wiggins, 2012). These type of targeted walkthroughs can build trust and create a culture within a school that supports teachers' efforts and build self-efficacy among teachers through guided mastery as described by Wood and Bandura (1989). As David (2008) points out, walkthroughs utilized correctly can be immensely helpful, but if they are used in isolation and to enforce rules or staff compliance, they are primed to backfire. Ing (2009) sums it up nicely by stating, "While observations demonstrate principals' involvement in the classroom, they are currently a poor reflection of principals' instructional leadership unless there is a focus on instructional feedback" (p. 338).

**Dirty Little Secret.** Frase (1992) points out that often when administrators did visit classrooms, worthwhile feedback was seldom left with the teacher. "At times," he stated, "feedback and supervision have all too often been inaccurate, shallow, and at times mean-spirited, rather than helpful and uplifting" (p. 179). The emphasis has been on enforcement of initiatives led by the district or rules instead of allowing teachers the opportunity to learn and grow to meet their goals as educators. Donaldson (2010) also agrees that evaluators seldom left any feedback after observing a classroom even though teachers have a strong desire for more feedback from an evaluator. As Marshall (2003)

puts it, “The dirty little secret of American schools is that principals rarely get into classrooms” (p. 702). Feedback on performance cannot be given if no one is getting into the classroom to watch what is going on. Marshall also notes that it is very difficult for a teacher to receive negative feedback if the principal has not visited in months.

### **Barriers in the Feedback Process**

There are definitely barriers that administrators face when giving feedback to teachers. These barriers have made the administrator’s job even more time consuming and complex. If a district’s focus is not on the teacher evaluation or feedback process, an administrator is left with the task of figuring out the best way to muddle through doing both, and at times feeling like they are not doing a very good job of either one (Gordon et al., 2001). Some barriers to giving feedback that are discussed include (a) MUM Effect (b) lack of training (c) bureaucracy of traditional evaluation system, and (d) personal and organizational concerns.

**MUM is the Word.** Rosen and Tesser (1970) conducted a study that demonstrated the actual existence of a phenomenon called a MUM effect, which refers to the reluctance to communicate negative information to someone. Yariv (2006) noted the MUM effect among principals when faced with the task of transmitting negative feedback. Evidence demonstrated that principals favored keeping good relations with staff over maintaining a high level of professional standards (Yariv, 2006). A principal is faced with having to make a decision about when negative information needs to be communicated, what is to be communicated, how can it be communicated effectively, and how to approach giving feedback in a way to not disrupt relationships and culture in

a building. This is a daunting task among many other time sensitive and important tasks an administrator must complete.

Part of the reason negative feedback that needs to be delivered to teachers is possibly not delivered is related to the MUM effect. Asmuß (2008) spoke of an interaction between the supervisor and the employee that demonstrates the supervisor's feeling that giving negative feedback is uncomfortable, therefore the employee not only has to deal with the negative feedback, but also the way the supervisor feels about giving the feedback. The way in which the supervisor approaches delivery of criticism has an important impact on how the employee receives the criticism. If the supervisor hesitates, pauses, restarts or otherwise stumbles through the initiation of critical feedback, this creates a scenario where the employee must decipher more than just how to change job performance. Asmuß (2008) then posits that the supervisor can definitely affect feedback by being too indirect with regard to giving negative or critical feedback to the employee. Overcoming the MUM effect would require districts to provide a support system for administrators in which to evaluate personnel. This might take the form of a team of people at the district level who support the evaluation of teachers across the district. Professional development of administrators in evaluation and how to give effective feedback is also important and supportive in the process.

Critical feedback is needed in a work environment, but according to The Widget Effect (Weisberg et al., 2009), 47% of teachers reported that they experienced absolutely no meaningful conversation about improving their instructional performance. The study also went on to report that, "Evaluations are perfunctory, school districts do not invest in administrator capacity to provide meaningful feedback, and teachers come to expect that

they will receive only positive feedback” (p. 19). Giving negative feedback to improve job performance is sometimes delayed because of the unpleasantness of the task, according to Ilgen et al. (1979). To make the task a bit more palatable, it is advised by Hunsaker (1983) when giving critical feedback to focus on the behavior and not the person, keep judgments out of the situation, and focus on helping the employee explore other options rather than offering advice or automatic solutions or answers. He also advises to be mindful of the amount of critical feedback someone can truly handle at any given time. Too much is not good, and only serves to confuse and dishearten an employee into non-action. It is also noted by Marshall (2003) and Frase (1992) that feedback is rarely if ever given after administrators conduct classroom visits.

**Lack of Training.** Brinko (1993) and Ing (2009) are in agreement that those who are in a position to give feedback often are not trained in the process of giving it effectively. Principals are also lacking the support needed in using the information gathered through observations to formulate relevant feedback to teachers (Ing, 2009). According to Frase (1992), the inadequacy of training for evaluators in giving feedback regarding curriculum and instruction has caused feedback to be non-existent or inferior. This has led administrators to get into classrooms and learn to give feedback “on the fly” (Harms & Roebuck, 2010, p. 414). The implications of this practice can result in principals learning the wrong way to give feedback which can cause mistrust and downright irritation from teachers who might experience an administrator interrupting class, taking notes for an extended period of time, and maybe never even receiving feedback at all (Kimball, 2011). Marshall (2012) suggests to “cancel the dog and pony show,” and see what the teacher is capable of doing on a consistent basis, not just during

an hour long planned observation (p. 19). It is now the common practice of administrators is to grab an iPad, check sheet, or laptop, pop into classrooms, and then send an email as a follow up (Marshall, 2012). According to Marshall (2012), a face-to-face interaction with a teacher is a must for administrators, and to do it as soon as possible after an observation. Preparing aspiring administrators on how to give effective feedback is the current challenge that districts face (Ovando, 2006).

**Other Factors.** A superintendent must be involved in the process of clearing a path for administrators to get into classrooms and give timely relevant feedback to teachers. This is done by cutting the bureaucracy of a traditional evaluation system that has relied on administrators who have not had training on what to look for in an observation, providing good feedback to a teacher, nor provided any follow up support in the instructional feedback process (Marshall, 2012). A competing factor among evaluation systems is held in the purpose of the evaluation. One system may be suited for supporting growth of teachers and another system is more conducive to dismissal of poor performing teachers. It is very difficult to use one system to support both purposes (Wise et al., 1984). A school district has to decide that evaluation and teacher feedback deserve more time and resources in order for school improvement efforts to be successful (Wise et al., 1984). Tucker (1997) supports this with findings that conclude with the most disturbing fact; there was a substantial deficit of any correlation between the components of an evaluation system and an administrator responding to teacher incompetence. Research conducted by Frase (1992) noted that out of five large school districts serving a total population of students around 160,000 students that ratings were inflated toward the high side with regard to teacher evaluation. It was also noted that

when auditors went into classrooms to observe instruction in districts where evaluation ratings were the highest, they found poor instructional practices being implemented (Frase, 1992). In these highly rated classrooms, lower cognitive level questioning was taking place, drill and practice within instruction, limited use or no use of cooperative learning strategies, and a large majority of the principals who were asked to comment on these instructional practices stated that, “instructional practices are very solid and the teacher is doing a great job” (Frase, 1992, p. 178). Tucker (1997) added to this by noticing other deterrents to feedback included both personal and organizational concerns. These include 1) Personality characteristics, such as discomfort with confrontation; 2) Lack of requisite skills for the supervisory process of identification, assistance, and assessment of satisfactory progress; 3) Role conflict for the administrator when required to offer both assistance and final judgment on performance (formative and summative evaluation); 4) Time commitment to work with teachers experiencing difficulty; 5) Lack of support from the superintendent and school board; or 6) Lack of financial resources for all phases of the supervisory process including possible litigation in cases of dismissal (p. 116).

Another possible roadblock in the feedback process is noted by Hallinger et al. (2013) in that a sort of trade-off is made between principals and teachers with regard to teachers having some autonomy in their classrooms and principals leverage with curriculum and uniformity in the delivery of instruction. Any efforts to bolster teacher performance can be viewed as a threat by teachers and therefore upset the culture of a building.

## **Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study involves the blending of two theories. First, according to Bandura's (Wood & Bandura 1989) guided mastery modeling theory, which has produced positive results in developing competence in behavior, includes three elements. When first learning a new skill, people need to learn generalities about the skill by having it modeled effectively. This creates a connection to the learning and builds confidence in the learner and demonstrates how generally rules can be applied to the new competency. Blasé and Blasé (1999) confirms this part of the theory in their study about teacher perspectives on principal feedback. Teachers were impressed with leaders who were capable of modeling in the classroom and providing them with relevant feedback, which they described as effective instructional leadership (Blasé & Blasé 1999; Ing 2009). The second aspect of developing competence in behavior involves guidance and allowing opportunities for the learner to perfect competencies without fear of reprisal. "Corrective modeling" creates conditions that lead to the most effective form of feedback that produces the greatest amount of learning (p. 363). Lastly, the learner must experience success in the new skill by applying the skill. Conditions must be made possible for success and learning to both occur on the job in order for the third element to be successful. The same holds true for students as does teachers when they are set up to learn with success instead of being overwhelmed at the task (Brinko, 1993). Guided mastery modeling exhibits concepts that relate to an administrator giving feedback to teachers in efforts to guide teachers to improve their craft of teaching.

Sharing an importance in feedback theory is a model described by Kluger and DeNisi, (1996) called feedback intervention theory. This theory goes hand in hand with

guided mastery model theory of feedback in that the guided mastery model theory lays the groundwork of how to understand the basics of learning something new by being given feedback about the acquisition of the skill (Wood & Bandura, 1989), and the feedback intervention theory model gets more specific with the nature or substance of feedback provided (Khachatryan, 2015). This model speaks about a feedback intervention (FI), which is described as an “action taken by an external agent to provide information regarding some aspects of one’s task performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996, p. 255). The two theories together explain, from this researcher’s perspective, how learning occurs with feedback and further explains what type of feedback is necessary for success in learning.

Teachers crave meaningful feedback about their performance in the classroom (Blasé and Blasé 1999; Ovando, 2006; Weisberg et al., 2009). Administrators have no time to lose in learning the steps in which feedback is most useful, and begin implementation if school improvement efforts are to be realized. The two theories together lay an important foundation in the development of training administrators in the art of giving feedback to teachers. Administrators must understand the difference in application of guided mastery model theory and feedback intervention theory when feedback to teachers must be given in an educational setting if results are to be seen from classroom visits. Effective feedback can be successfully given to teachers if the administrator has been trained to know where teachers are in their skill acquisition according to each theory, and can apply the type of feedback needed to ensure improvement. Since, according to Scheeler et al. (2004), acquisition of skills early in a teacher’s career can have long lasting effects, early intervention with effective feedback

to acquire proper teaching skills is critical. An administrator must be cognizant of this and give feedback accordingly. Blasé and Blasé (1999) assert that teachers must have an environment that is risk free if true learning is to occur from feedback. This coincides with guided mastery modeling in that the recipient of feedback must be allowed to perfect a skill without the dreaded fear of reprisal (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Administrators must be aware of this aspect of how feedback is processed by the receiver with regard to the environmental culture that is supported surrounding professional learning. Creating positive learning environments for teachers is important according to Feeney (2007) and Showers (1985). Administrative feedback to teachers must be given in an environment that allows teachers to practice or perfect a skill without having to worry about it being on an evaluation in a negative way. It has been noted by Grissom, Loeb, and Master (2013) and Ing (2009) that when teacher coaching and development occur, learning gains are definitely noticeable. Range et al. (2012) state that principals can influence student academic gains by helping teachers improve instructional practices. Effective feedback given to a teacher has the potential to be very powerful in the school improvement process.

## **Conclusion**

It has been noted by several studies that teacher effectiveness matters in the classroom (Donaldson, 2011; Ferguson, 1991; Haycock, 1998; Menuey, 2007; Tucker, 1997; Sanders et al., 1997). Principals also matter when it comes to building capacity among a staff responsible for student achievement (Range et al., 2012). Teachers need support when it comes to improving their performance or setting goals toward honing their professional craft. Approaching the task of giving feedback to teachers on such a

complex task is usually the charge of building administrators. Currently, traditional evaluation systems are time intensive for administrators to complete effectively, and often times the evaluation used is not equipped to support the growth and goal setting of teachers along with removal of poor performing teachers. These traditional evaluation systems have several deficiencies as noted by Danielson (2000). The connection between teacher evaluation and feedback that teachers need to improve practice has not been achieved with the traditional evaluation models (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Mahar & Strobert, 2010). This poses a problem to administrators who are charged with the task of evaluating teachers formatively and summatively along with giving feedback for their growth. Traditional evaluation systems are time intensive and not conducive to the demands of an administrator (Kersten & Israel, 2005). Marshall (2012) is not in favor of a traditional evaluation system that relies on announced visits, which creates an atmosphere of putting on a “show” just for the amount of time a teacher is observed. It leads to inaccuracy, ineffectiveness, and dishonesty in the evaluation system (Marshall, 2012). Showers (1985) supports a learning environment for teachers where evaluation is removed from supervisory tasks with regard to improvement.

Since the main purpose of traditional evaluations in the past has been to gather evidence for dismissal or remediation of a teacher, a phenomenon has occurred called The Widget Effect, which describes the thinking by school districts that teacher effectiveness is the same with all teachers (Weisberg et al., 2009). Frase (1992) studied feedback and noted that many highly positive evaluations that were given to teachers were not substantiated by auditors in a study of instructional quality. Teachers are not

receiving the feedback that they would like to have in order to improve their efforts in the classroom (Weisberg et al., 2009).

There is great pressure for schools to improve given the requirements in legislation such as NCLB and Title I waivers that require districts to demonstrate documented school improvement data regarding student achievement. Even with the passage of ESSA, the states will have even more control over how schools will prepare students for college or careers. This does not completely nor quickly eliminate pressure that school districts and administrators face with school improvement. This does force districts to focus on what has the most impact on student achievement, and puts the administrator in the forefront in teacher development that will lead to student achievement (Protheroe, 2009). A bigger burden rests among Title I principals where student achievement gains seem to falter due to lower achievement in sub groups of students including special needs students, English Language Learners, racial sub groups, and lower income students. The question for these administrators is how to facilitate the most academic achievement in the lowest achieving groups of students in the least amount of time.

Feedback has been noted in several studies to help teachers improve instructional practice and therefore affect student achievement (Ferguson, 1991; Haycock, 1998; Range et al., 2012; Sanders et al., 1997; Weisberg et al., 2009; Wiggins, 2012). Principals are turning to walkthroughs to facilitate the feedback and school improvement process (Protheroe, 2009).

Feedback has been defined by Wiggins (2012) as information given to someone about their efforts to reach a goal. Wiggins (2012) warns that feedback should not be confused

with advice, wherein advice gives an opinion and feedback is related to facts about performance.

Teaching is such a complex task that it is hard to determine where to begin giving feedback. Danielson's (1996) work has contributed sound ideas about what skills teachers need to have to support student achievement. According to Feeney (2007), feedback must be focused, utilize a reflection tool when giving feedback to teachers, and assist teachers in coordinating goals with student achievement. Utilizing data gathered from multiple observations and detailed feedback given to teachers assists the building leader in driving school improvement efforts (Ovando, 2006; Skretta, 2007).

Challenges exist in the process of giving feedback. It was noted by several studies that constructive feedback is missing after administrators conduct observations (Donaldson, 2010; Feeney, 2007; Frase, 1992; Marshall, 2003, 2012). This has led to several barriers noted in the feedback process. One of the barriers noted in the feedback process include the MUM effect, which is a phenomenon of a reluctance to transmit negative feedback (Rosen & Tesser, 1970; Yariv, 2006). Lack of training has also been cited as a reason for not giving feedback to teachers (Brinko, 1993; Frase, 1992; Harms & Roebuck, 2010; Ing 2009; Khachatryan, 2015; Marshall, 2012; Ovando, 2006).

Support from central office is critical for administrators who are bombarded by the sheer number of tasks that must be completed or dealt with when running a school and working to give feedback to teachers or to just complete the evaluation process (Marshall, 2012).

The very evaluation systems that many administrators deal with are set up to be more summative in nature and not to support the growth of a teacher. Providing relevant professional development to administrators who are conducting evaluations and required

to give teachers feedback to better equip them in this process is currently a very important topic in the PK-12 educational realm.

Helping administrators become better equipped to manage student achievement will place emphasis on learning how to give effective feedback to teachers regarding instruction. Chapter 3 outlines how this research addresses the frequency of face-to-face feedback, type, and content of feedback given to teachers in certain Missouri schools. This particular research will help inform school improvement efforts in the area of leadership development. Research states that face-to-face feedback is preferred by teachers (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). Rutherford (2013) supports giving feedback based on strengths of teachers. In any case, feedback must be given to teachers if instruction has any hope of improving.

## Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

It is evident in research that not only do barriers exist in principals' evaluation of teachers (Painter, 2000a, 2000b; Weisberg et al., 2009; Yariv, 2006), but also the need of effective relevant feedback is critical in promoting teacher efficacy with regard to instruction (Blase & Blase, 1999; Frase, 1992). This study compares the face-to-face mode along with type and content of feedback prevalent in higher and lower performing Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) schools in Missouri to inform professional development efforts of administrators who are charged with school and teacher improvement. Providing professional development to principals in observing and giving appropriate feedback to teachers is an important aspect of developing well-trained administrators and enhancing school improvement efforts.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the frequency of face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback given to teachers by administrators in public schools in Missouri that subscribe to the NEE system, and to compare academic performance of NEE schools to other similar schools in Missouri. Missouri teachers in public schools who participate in the Network for Educator Effectiveness system with the University of Missouri were surveyed to explore the face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback given to them in the current academic year. This researcher sought to understand if there is a relationship in the frequency of face-to-face mode, type, or content of feedback given and academic performance in public schools in Missouri that subscribe to the NEE system, in an effort to assist in developing administrator professional development regarding the feedback process.

## **Research Questions**

The research questions explored in this study are as follows:

1. What is the difference in academic performance between Network for Educator Effectiveness schools and non-Network for Educator Effectiveness schools on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program?
2. Is face-to-face feedback related to academic performance on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program for Network for Educator Effectiveness schools?
3. Is feedback type and content related to academic performance on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program for Network for Educator Effectives schools?

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

$H_{01}$ : There are no significant statistical differences in academic performance between NEE and non-NEE schools in Missouri.

$H_{02}$ : There is no significant relationship of face-to-face feedback given by administrators to teachers with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools.

$H_{03}$ : There is no significant relationship of specific (i.e., focused, detailed, or concrete) feedback given to teachers regarding areas needing improvement with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools.

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relationship of feedback that is useful and relevant given to teachers regarding areas needing improvement with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools.

H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant relationship of feedback that is specific (i.e., focused, detailed, or concrete) given in areas of strength with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools.

H<sub>06</sub>: There is no significant relationship of feedback that is useful and relevant regarding areas of strength given with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

This study is quantitative and utilized a cross-sectional survey design to survey teachers on the face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback received from administrators in Missouri public schools who subscribe to the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) system. According to Fink (2009), cross sectional survey design is appropriate when trying to describe the way things are at a given point in time so that future plans can be informed. Based on the review of literature conducted in this study, six hypotheses guided the analysis of data collected. Survey design was utilized to gather data from teachers regarding feedback received by an administrator in the current academic year. An annual survey developed by NEE at the University of Missouri is sent out each year to participating districts to gather data on the evaluation and feedback system utilized within NEE for those districts subscribing to the system. Questions developed by this researcher in conjunction with the NEE department were added to the

annual survey sent out in order to gather specific data relevant to this researcher's topic of face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback given to teachers by administrators. This survey was utilized to gather data from teachers instead of administrators since giving feedback is a part of the requirements of the NEE system, and administrators might be reluctant to discuss how they give feedback if they have not been utilizing the NEE system according to the guidelines. There is a phenomenon with survey design that lends to either over reporting a desired behavior or under reporting a desired behavior according to Krosnick (1999). Surveying teachers instead of administrators decreased under reporting and over reporting of behaviors that administrators deem desirable or undesirable with regard to giving performance feedback.

With a quantitative approach, the analysis of data provided insight into the research questions. It was the desire of this researcher to explore opinions of teachers on the frequency of face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback given by an administrator after walkthroughs have been conducted. Survey design provides a quantitative description of "trends, attitudes, and opinions" of a particular population that is being studied (Creswell, 2009, p. 145). This design is more efficient to send to participants through the NEE office to assist in obtaining timely responses from participants. Survey design is appropriate since it is desired to have a broader range of participants in this study. Krosnick (1999) suggests that response rates that are low can be just as revealing and accurate as high response rates. The demographics of who is being surveyed and how they are surveyed has a large impact on survey results, thus high versus low response rate has shown to not matter in accuracy of findings.

## **Context**

Missouri is one state tackling the issue of formative feedback with teacher evaluation by creating a new evaluation system to address growth of new and seasoned teaching professionals, and to offer professional development to administrators in the process of giving feedback to teachers. In May of 2013, the State Board of Education in Missouri adopted a model evaluation system for educators. Districts are able to adopt the model or demonstrate that their current evaluation system meets the Seven Essential Principles of Evaluation as determined by the state department (“Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation Approved by State Board of Education | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,” n.d.). The Seven Essential Principles of Evaluation include:

1. Using research-based and proven practices to measure educator performance.
2. Establishing performance indicators for educators based on their level of performance.
3. Aligning the evaluation process with an educator's probationary period to provide for an appropriate accumulation of performance data.
4. Using student learning, based on a variety of performance measures, in the evaluation process.
5. Assessing educator performance on a regular basis and providing feedback to teachers and administrators that they can use to improve their performance throughout their career.
6. Ensuring evaluators are highly trained so that evaluation ratings are fair, accurate and reliable.

7. Using the evaluation process to guide school district policies that impact the development of educators and student learning.

Currently, there are several districts in Missouri piloting the Seven Essential Principles of Evaluation and many more districts are modifying currently used models to comply with state mandates. Within the current Performance Based Teacher Evaluation system that some districts still use, there are no guidelines or professional development for principals on how to give effective performance feedback to educators.

The University of Missouri has developed a system to assist districts in the evaluation process of teachers. The NEE has a web based program designed to help bridge the gap between current formal observation guidelines to summatively review a teacher and a system that is more formative in nature to assist in teacher development. NEE is sponsored by the University of Missouri and assists school districts in the teacher evaluation process by utilizing a computer program that tracks classroom visits, feedback given, and blends an element of teacher professional development within a traditional evaluation system that is able to score a teacher based on their goals and improvement within the goals that have been set while maintaining close alignment to Missouri evaluation standards. NEE provides services to over 270 subscribing districts in Missouri. This includes a wide array of academic performance within these 270 NEE districts in Missouri. This researcher has access to data within the NEE department and was able to survey teachers in districts that subscribe to the NEE system on current feedback procedures regarding face-to-face, type, and content of feedback given to them by administrators.

Survey design was utilized to gather data on the face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback that is given to teachers by administrators. Data collected with this study was analyzed and reported to the NEE department office at University of Missouri Assessment Research Center, and to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Title I department.

### **Population and Sampling**

Currently there are 270 school districts that subscribe to the NEE teacher evaluation system. Every teacher in 134 school districts that subscribe to the NEE system was included in the survey due to these districts voluntarily taking the survey earlier than it is usually administered. This accounts for 134 districts out of 563 school districts in the state of Missouri and out of the 270 within the NEE system.

The reasoning behind surveying teachers relates to the possibility of teachers being more open to giving honest responses since it is not a part of their job description to conduct the walkthroughs as it is the principals. Surveys were sent to 134 districts in Missouri, which includes 5789 teachers. Stratification of the sample includes all teachers who participated in the study from the participating districts who subscribe to the NEE system through the University of Missouri. The participating NEE districts are characteristically similar to all districts in the state of Missouri according to size and socioeconomic status differences. The unit of analysis is each of the schools participating in the study since data was analyzed about feedback characteristics and compared to student achievement at the building level. Confidentiality of all participants was maintained by assigning a number to each teacher and building, which resulted in de-identified data collected and analyzed.

Sampling was multi-stage since the researcher has access to all districts that subscribe to the NEE system in Missouri, and then to groups of teachers in the noted Missouri NEE schools (Creswell, 2009). The survey was sent to teachers in 134 NEE subscribed districts in December of 2015, which resulted in 268 K-12 schools participating in the survey. Results from the survey sample were then limited to schools that housed some type of grade level combination from kindergarten age through eighth grade age students who take the Missouri Assessment Program Grade Level Assessment (MAP) which results in obtaining a MAP Index score in Math and English Language Arts (ELA). Defining high and low performing schools can vary greatly in research studies. Some studies rely on growth to determine high and low performing while others rely on a combination of factors that may involve results on some type of state mandated test. The current study utilized the 2015 ELA MAP Index scores to determine academic performance since math and reading cannot be combined into one Index score. Reading scores continue to be a determining factor when assessing student performance and academic growth (Hernandez, 2011). The resulting number of schools in the study was 206 NEE schools. Two of the 206 schools were eliminated from the study since each of those schools did not have both 2014 and 2015 ELA MAP Index scores.

### **Data Collection and Instrumentation**

Data were collected through use of a survey sent to schools in the NEE system and combined with existing data obtained from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The survey included questions designed to elicit responses reflecting the frequency of face-to-face feedback given by administrators to teachers within two days after an observation, and the type and content of feedback

delivered, whether it be specific and focused (content) or just general advice (type) given to the teacher when feedback is given in an area of growth or an area of strength.

Surveys were sent via email from the NEE department and the same department located at the University of Missouri Assessment Resource Center collected responses.

The survey sample was chosen based on the availability of information and data collection through the NEE office at University of Missouri. The NEE office conducts annual surveys of schools that subscribe to the NEE system, and collects data on a consistent basis regarding the feedback process that subscribers have been trained on, and implement in districts all over Missouri. Five survey questions were added to the annual NEE survey to address the research questions in the study regarding the feedback elements being studied (i.e., face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback given) along with utilizing existing data acquired from DESE regarding MAP achievement performance utilizing the MAP Index for English Language Arts (ELA). Since there is not a combined ELA and Math MAP Index score for each building, the researcher chose to use the English Language Arts (ELA) scores to determine higher or lower performing according to the Missouri School Improvement Plan 5 (MSIP 5) categories including Floor, Approaching, On Track, and Target. The school districts that subscribe to NEE are all over the state of Missouri and of varying achievement and socioeconomic levels. Districts that are involved in the NEE were cross-referenced with data at DESE to determine their achievement status based on Missouri Assessment Program Index (MAP Index) for ELA. The results reflect the achievement status of NEE schools which were cross-referenced with the data on face-to-face feedback, type, and content of feedback of survey results to determine if there is a relationship between the face-to-face mode, type,

and content of feedback given and academic performance in NEE schools in Missouri. Schools were categorized and reported utilizing MSIP 5 categories as Target range (385.7 to 500), On Track (367.1 to 385.6), Approaching (300.0 to 367.0), and Floor (100.0 to 299.9) to determine higher achieving and lower achieving schools (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). Any schools that fell into the Target range were considered high performing and any schools that fell in the Floor range were considered low performing. The MSIP 5 Standards were developed by many educators and adopted by the Missouri State Board of Education in 2012. These standards guide school improvement efforts to achieve the goal of being in the top 10 states by the year 2020 (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). The Target range of scores represents a performance level that is closely related to the projected performance of the top 10 states according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The On Track level represents a level where the performance is increasing toward a goal of 75% proficiency by the year 2020 on the MAP test. The Approaching level equals a level of performance that is 100% at the Basic level on the MAP test, and the Floor level represents performance at less than the Basic level on the state assessment.

Survey questions were created with the assistance of a research team from NEE (see Appendix A). Question one on the survey addresses research question two with information regarding frequency of face-to-face feedback received from a teacher's current administrator during the present school year. Survey question two asks if the principal provides specific feedback (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete) regarding ways to improve. Survey question four is similar to question two by asking if feedback is specific

(i.e., focused, detailed, and concrete) regarding teacher strengths. These two questions refer to the content of feedback given. Survey question three asks if the principal provides useful and relevant feedback regarding ways to improve teaching. Survey question five is similar to question three by asking if the principal provides useful and relevant feedback regarding teacher strengths. These questions refer to the type of feedback given. Answers for all questions are on a Likert scale with responses being 0) strongly disagree, 1) disagree, 2) agree, and 3) strongly agree. Table 1 shows each survey question and whether it pertains to face-to-face, type, or content of feedback.

Table 1  
*Survey Questions Addressing Face-to-Face Feedback, Type, and Content*

Survey Question	Corresponding Feedback Attributes
1. This principal typically provides me with face-to-face feedback within two working days of observing my classroom.	Face-to-Face Frequency
2. This principal provides specific feedback to me regarding ways my teaching can improve. (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete).	Content
3. This principal provides useful and relevant feedback to me regarding ways my teaching can improve.	Type
4. This principal provides specific feedback to me regarding areas of strength in my teaching (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete).	Content
5. This principal provides useful and relevant feedback to me regarding areas of strength in my teaching.	Type

## **Research Ethics**

The University of Missouri Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is not needed for this study since data is completely de-identified from NEE. There was no identifying information obtained on participants, and data from pilot testing was not used in the research. Any data obtained through survey results is the property of the NEE department and is not personally identifiable to anyone in particular whatsoever through this study. Since questions were added to an official survey sent out by the NEE department who then provided de-identified data for the purpose of this research, the IRB only requires completion of the Human Research Subject Determination Form, which allows them to write a letter to confirm this determination (see Appendix B).

## **Data Analysis**

The demographic descriptive statistics are reported and coded with the specific NEE schools surveyed. Demographic data includes the 2015 enrollment of each school, 2014 and 2015 ELA MAP Index scores of Missouri non-NEE schools and Missouri NEE schools, and the socioeconomic status based on free and reduced lunch status of each building for the 2015 school year. Descriptive statistical data were analyzed by looking at face-to-face feedback given, type, and content of feedback given to teachers. The content of feedback was quantified as specific, (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete) in ways to improve or specific, (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete) on teacher strengths. The type was quantified as feedback being useful and relevant on ways a teacher can improve or feedback being useful and relevant concerning strengths of the teacher.

The dependent variable included academic performance in Missouri as determined by 2015 ELA MAP Index scores. An Independent Samples T-Test was

performed to evaluate the hypothesis ( $H_1: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$ ) that there are no significant statistical differences in variance of academic performance of NEE and non-NEE schools in Missouri. Multiple regression analysis was also performed to evaluate the relationship of control variables on academic performance regarding Research Question one and hypothesis one. Multiple regression analysis was conducted on Research Questions two and three to determine the relationship between 2015 ELA MAP Index scores of NEE schools and face-to-face feedback, type, and content of feedback given, and to evaluate hypotheses 3 through 6. Levene's test was used to test for equality of variances within the means regarding variables in Research Question one.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted on Research Questions two and three in order to determine the predictory nature of controlled variables on 2015 ELA MAP Index scores. Predictor variables in this case were 2015 enrollment, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and free and reduced lunch status. Thus, with four predictor variables, the multiple regression model equation is expressed with the following equation:

$$MAP\ ELA_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1*(Enrollment_i) + \beta_2*(2014\ ELA\ MAP\ Index\ Score_i) + \beta_3*(Free\ and\ Reduced\ Lunch_i) + \beta_4*(NEE\ Participation_i) + r_i$$

Frequency data were coded and matched with a school's 2015 ELA MAP Index score for schools that housed some combination of grades three through eight, and were categorized and reported as Target range (385.7 to 500), On Track (367.1 to 385.6), Approaching (300.0 to 367.0), and Floor (100.0 to 299.9) to determine higher achieving and lower achieving schools. Higher achieving schools were reflected as Target schools and lower performing schools were categorized as Floor schools as discussed earlier in this chapter. These achievement levels were determined by DESE to coincide with goals

outlined in MSIP 5 Top 10 by 20 status target (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). For purposes of this research, any schools that fell into the Target range were considered high performing and any schools that fell in the Floor range were considered low performing.

Survey data were aggregated from teacher to building level wherein teachers were asked to fill out a survey instrument sent to them electronically via the NEE's online Data Tool system. Survey results were then coded per teacher to protect identity and then grouped by buildings. Survey responses were then averaged for each building, which was also coded numerically for anonymity. Data were entered into Excel and sent via secure transmit to this researcher.

### **Reliability and Validity**

The survey utilized by the NEE department has been tested for reliability and validity by administering the survey to 20 principals the researcher has access to in order to determine through anecdotal analysis if any problems were detected with the survey questions. Researchers at the NEE department also thoroughly analyzed the questions to ensure validity and reliability.

A quality of the NEE system that I believe is beneficial to the validity of the study is that all NEE administrators have received training in giving feedback. This further ensures that results reflect accuracy to the extent that all administrators who are giving feedback have been trained in giving feedback. To enhance validity, a pilot test of the added survey items was conducted with several principals that the researcher has access to. They were given the survey items and data was collected on problems that arose with the survey questions, principal opinions of survey items, and any

misinterpretations of questions on the survey. This was conducted in November of 2015 before the survey was officially given to NEE teachers in December of 2015. Data from pilot survey was not in any way be used in the data analysis of the study.

### **Positionality**

This researcher's experience as a currently practicing administrator is relevant with regard to the study of feedback. With 14 years of administrative experience regarding evaluative practices and giving feedback, some concepts within this paper have made a personal impact. This administrative experience includes training by several top-level administrators and professional development in the practice of performing observations and giving feedback. It is noted by this researcher that prior observations and interactions with educators after those observations demonstrates first-hand knowledge of many ways to give feedback. It has also been observed how educators receive feedback in areas of strength and areas needing improvement. The MUM Effect as described in this paper is real and felt by not only myself, but also other administrators who talk about why they do not complete necessary observations. This researcher acknowledges the personal experience and remains steadfast in the belief that the data analysis will provide a clear picture of teacher perceptions regarding feedback and also provide useful information for future practice with regard to feedback and evaluation.

### **Limitations and Assumptions**

**Limitations.** The study is limited to teacher opinions only and limited to school districts in Missouri who utilize the NEE approach to teacher feedback and evaluation. The study is not a complete comprehensive analysis of all Missouri schools and cannot be completely generalized to all Missouri schools regarding feedback since NEE

administrators are trained in giving feedback, and the extent of administrator training in non-NEE schools is unknown. Only schools that pay a fee to be a part of the NEE department system are surveyed in the study. The high and low performing status is limited to just the schools who are within the NEE system and not compared to the entire state of Missouri.

Another limitation to the study is that data is not known if schools had participated in NEE or not in 2014. It should be noted since the regression analysis controls for 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, data are not obtained on schools as to when they entered into the NEE program. Data on schools' pre-NEE and post-NEE achievement is not collected in this study. Further limitations result from just utilizing only 2014 and 2015 English Language Arts (ELA) MAP Index scores to determine high and low performing schools.

**Assumptions.** There is a documented theory on a reluctance to communicate undesirable information called the MUM effect (Rosen & Tesser, 1970). It is also documented to exist among school administrators when confronted with giving any negative or critical feedback to teachers after observing a lesson (Yariv, 2006). Principals are faced with confronting ineffective educators as observations are conducted in performing the duties of an administrator. School improvement efforts rely on administrators giving corrective feedback to teachers regarding effective instruction in the classroom (Frase, 1992). If this feedback is not given, the teacher is left to face improvement efforts alone if at all, and uncertain of how they are doing as a professional educator. Administrators must face the reality that they have to give critical feedback to teachers in order to bolster school improvement efforts (Protheroe, 2009). Linking face-

to-face feedback from administrators along with feedback given being useful, relevant, specific, focused, and concrete to student achievement will shed light on the path administrators will want to follow in their school improvement efforts.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study informs the NEE office at the University of Missouri on specifics regarding the delivery of feedback by administrators in districts that subscribe to the NEE system. NEE provides training to all administrators in participating districts and will use results of this study to troubleshoot and streamline training within their system. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of Missouri Title I office will utilize data gathered in their professional development efforts of current and future administrators in the use of training them to give effective feedback to teachers. Other school districts in Missouri could utilize data from the study to also improve professional development of administrators with regard to feedback training.

### **Summary**

This chapter offers insight into a description of the quantitative study being conducted and a rationale for the research design (Creswell, 2009). Each phase of the study is described in detail. The purpose of the study is to analyze the frequency of face-to-face feedback within two days after an observation along with the type and content of feedback given to teachers by administrators in NEE schools in Missouri. NEE schools are also compared to all other Missouri schools in this study to determine if there is a difference in academic performance on the 2015 MAP ELA portion of the state assessment. The procedures for addressing the research questions were discussed, and a quantitative cross-sectional survey design is determined to be the best mode of research

method. Data analysis included an Independent Samples T Test, correlation analysis with covariates, multiple regression analysis, and descriptive statistics of demographic information.

Assumptions of the study outline a theory on reluctance to communicate undesirable information called the MUM effect (Rosen & Tesser, 1970). School improvement efforts rely greatly on administrators giving effective feedback after walkthroughs are conducted (Frase, 1992). If constructive feedback is not given, school improvement efforts could be affected. This study assists districts in working to meet the current demands placed on them by NCLB and Title I waivers of increased student achievement by getting trained administrators into classrooms and assisting the professional growth of teachers. Since the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requirements are in the middle of modification and school districts across Missouri await word as to how the changes will take effect and what new guidelines will be required.

## Chapter Four: Findings

Range, Duncan, Scherz, and Haines (2012) found that principals can influence academic achievement in students by improving instructional practices of teachers. Principals' time would be well spent in building capacity of teachers in the educational setting. Quality feedback is missing in the educational setting (Frase, 1992, Marshall, 2003), and in order to increase effective feedback to teachers, administrators need to understand how to give quality feedback.

Even though it is known that quality feedback is essential for supporting growth in effective instruction for teachers, several studies have noted existing barriers in feedback being given to educators (Painter, 2000a, 2000b; Weisberg et al., 2009; Yariv, 2006). The focus of this study is to analyze the frequency of face-to-face mode, type, and content of feedback given to teachers by administrators in public schools in Missouri that subscribe to the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) system, and to compare academic performance of NEE schools to other similar schools in Missouri. This chapter explains the findings of the study, which show that there is not a significant difference in academic performance between NEE and non-NEE schools in Missouri. Findings also showed a lack of face-to-face feedback in lower performing NEE schools in Missouri along with finding more specific (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete) and useful and relevant feedback was given in areas of strengths of teachers more than areas of improvement across all academic performance levels.

### **Descriptive Statistics for NEE and Non-NEE Schools**

This study initially examined academic performance of NEE schools compared to non-NEE schools using the 2015 English Language Arts (ELA) Missouri Assessment

Program (MAP) Index scores. Next, the face-to-face mode of feedback, type, and content of feedback given in NEE schools in Missouri was analyzed. ELA MAP Index achievement and demographic data from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) website were combined with data from five survey questions added to the annual NEE survey that focused on eliciting information regarding the frequency of face-to-face feedback given, the type of feedback, and the content of feedback given. Feedback type refers to whether the feedback given was useful and relevant in areas of strength or areas needing improvement. Feedback content pertains to whether the feedback given was specific (i.e., focused, detailed, and concrete) in areas where a teacher can improve or in areas of strength for a teacher.

The five survey questions about feedback received were added to a NEE survey sent to teachers from schools whose districts subscribe to the teacher evaluation services provided by NEE. The researcher provided the statewide achievement data obtained from DESE to NEE and in return, NEE provided de-identified feedback survey question data from districts who subscribe to their services including 206 K-12 schools that included 5789 total teachers. An average of 3187 teachers answered all 5 questions on the survey from the 206 schools participating in the survey. Results from the survey sample were then limited to schools that obtained MAP Index scores from 2014 and 2015 in order to extract an ELA MAP Index score. The resulting number of schools in the study was 204 NEE schools, since two had to be eliminated from analysis due to no ELA MAP Index score being available.

Survey data were utilized from teachers in schools that had a MAP Index score for 2014 and 2015. Survey data were aggregated from teacher to building level wherein

teachers were asked to fill out an online survey instrument via their own online Data Tool system where all NEE teachers have access. Survey results were then coded per teacher to protect identity and then grouped by buildings. Survey responses were then averaged for each building, which was also coded numerically for anonymity. Data were entered into Excel and sent via secure transmit to this researcher.

There are a total of 1781 schools in Missouri that had 2014 and 2015 MAP Index scores, of which 1575 are non-NEE schools and 206 are NEE schools. The histogram in Figure 1 demonstrates the normal bell-shaped curve distribution of 2015 ELA MAP Index scores for NEE and non-NEE schools in Missouri where the mean score among all schools is 344.18 with a standard deviation of 49.38 points around the mean score. According to Field (2009), this indicates a normality in the frequency distribution of MAP Index scores. The range in scores was from 116.7 to 485.2.

Figure 1

*2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program Index mean distribution for Network for Educator Effectiveness & Non-Network for Educator Effectiveness Schools*

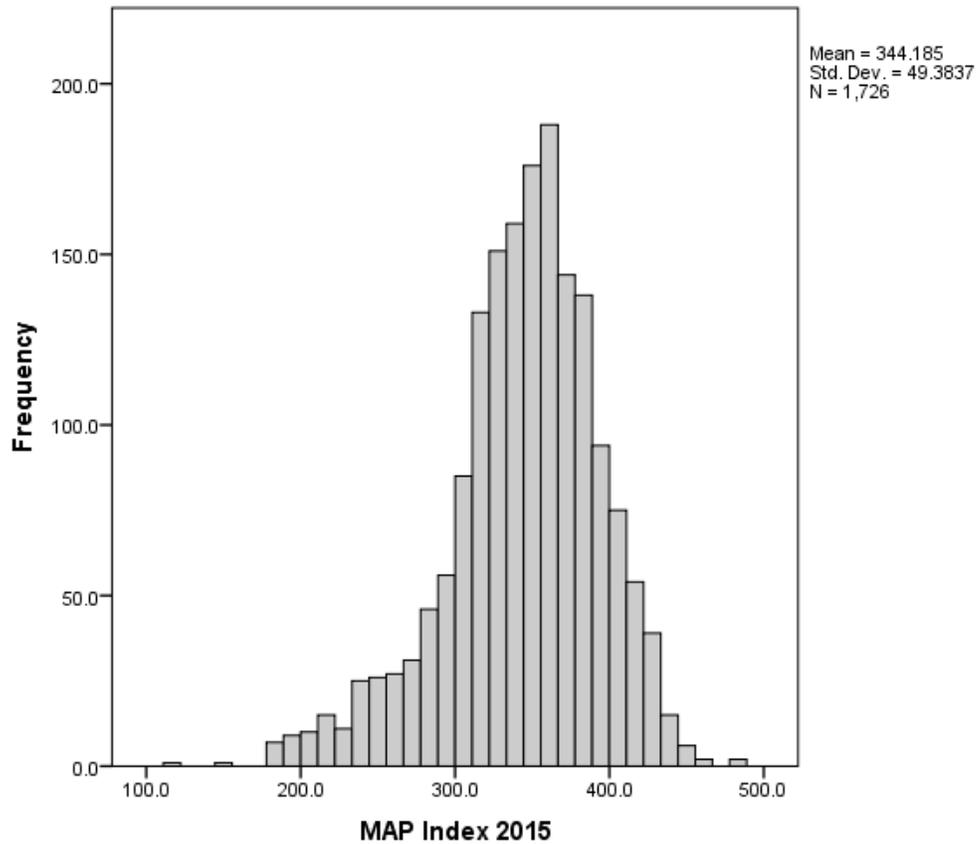


Table 2 shows the mean enrollment of NEE schools (N = 204) is 365 and the mean enrollment for non-NEE schools (N = 1522) is 360. There were 53 non-NEE schools that were removed from the sample due to not having either a 2014 or 2015 ELA MAP Index score. The mean percent of free and reduced lunch at NEE schools is 60.9% and of non-NEE schools it is slightly lower at 57.8%. When comparing the means of MAP Index scores, NEE schools have a 2014 MAP Index mean of 349.8 while non-NEE schools 2014 MAP Index is very close at 349.7. The mean 2015 MAP Index score for NEE schools is 339 and non-NEE schools is slightly higher at 344.8. Although the populations of Missouri non-NEE and NEE schools' demographics are not exact, they bear close resemblance in many buildings that have ELA MAP Index scores.

Table 2  
*Comparison Among Means and Standard Deviations of Network for Educator Effectiveness and Non-Network for Educator Effectiveness Schools*

Variable	NEE Schools		Non-NEE Schools	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
	N = 204		N = 1,522	
Enrollment	365.0	182.47	360.0	220.22
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch	60.9	21.25	57.8	25.13
2014 MAP Index	349.8	23.34	349.7	35.04
2015 MAP Index	339.0	37.96	344.8	50.69

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics of NEE and non-NEE schools 2015 MAP Index performance further separated into Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP) 5 academic performance categories previously described in Chapter 3. As noted in Chapter 3, schools were categorized and reported utilizing MSIP 5 categories of MAP Index scores in four different academic performance ranges including Target range (385.7 to 500), On Track (367.1 to 385.6), Approaching (300.0 to 367.0), and Floor (100.0 to 299.9) to determine higher achieving and lower achieving schools (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). Any schools that fell into the Target range were considered high performing and any schools that fell in the Floor range were considered low performing, according to Missouri standards. After annual MAP testing each spring, there are two reported MAP Index scores for Missouri schools that test grade levels from third to eighth. There is one index score for Math and the other is English Language Arts (ELA). ELA MAP Index scores only were used in this study to determine high and low performing schools.

The descriptive statistics in Table 3 show the number of schools within each academic performance range of NEE and non-NEE schools, the mean enrollment within each category, the mean percent free and reduced lunch, and the mean 2014 and 2015 MAP Indexes for English Language Arts. All mean enrollments were very close in size except for the Target group of schools within NEE buildings. Non-NEE buildings mean enrollment for Target schools was 429 students whereas the mean enrollment for Target NEE buildings was 318. The consistency among the percent of free and reduced lunch status among NEE and non-NEE buildings was found with a noticeable exception. The Target schools within the NEE group of schools had a considerably higher free and reduced lunch status (43.3%) than non-NEE buildings (33.8%). Also, the Floor category of schools within NEE schools had a noticeably lower free and reduced lunch status (81.4%) than that of non-NEE schools (89.2%). Although there is a difference in the percent of free and reduced lunch status between NEE and non-NEE buildings in the Target and Floor groups, the Target group experiences the lowest of free and reduced lunch status among all achievement categories in both NEE and non-NEE buildings.

It is also important to note when looking at the percentages of free and reduced lunch status within NEE and non-NEE schools, and the 2014 and 2015 MAP Index scores, as the percent of free and reduced lunch status goes up, the MAP Index scores follow a downward trend.

Table 3  
*Comparison of Network for Educator Effectiveness and Non-Network for Educator Effectiveness Schools by 2014 and 2015 MAP Performance Groups*

NEE Schools					
Performance Group	N	Mean Enrollment	Mean FRL Status	Mean 2014 MAP	Mean 2015 MAP
Floor	29	377	81.4	316.9	271.6
Approach	133	363	61.3	350.4	338.6
On Track	22	408	47.0	366.6	375.2
Target	20	318	43.3	375	399.4
Non-NEE Schools					
Performance Group	N	Mean Enrollment	Mean FRL Status	Mean 2014 MAP	Mean 2015 MAP
Floor	236	353	89.2	293.4	257.3
Approach	763	328	61.4	348.6	337.7
On Track	220	387	44.4	367.7	376.0
Target	303	429	33.8	383.5	408.2

When comparing NEE and non-NEE 2015 ELA MAP Index scores, it is noted that the Approaching performance category and the On Target categories only slightly differ in their scores, whereas there is a wider spread between scores of the Floor and Target groups of NEE and non-NEE (see Table 4). The Floor category for NEE buildings scored 14 points higher on average than non-NEE schools. The Target category found higher scores in non-NEE buildings than NEE buildings by an average of 8.8 points. Even though the point spread at the Floor and Target levels among NEE and non-NEE buildings is larger than other categories, the difference in 2014 and 2015 MAP

Index scores fluctuates consistently more to the percent of free and reduced lunch status of NEE and non-NEE buildings alike.

Table 4  
*Descriptive Statistics of Missouri Assessment Program 2015 Index by Performance Group for Network for Educator Effectiveness Schools and Non-Network for Educator Effectiveness*

NEE Schools					
Performance Group	N	Mean	Min	Max	Standard Deviation
Floor	29	271.6	191.2	298.8	23.9
Approach	133	338.6	301.6	366.5	17.1
On Track	22	375.2	367.3	385.1	5.7
Target	20	399.4	387.9	447.7	13.2
Non-NEE Schools					
Performance Group	N	Mean	Min	Max	Standard Deviation
Floor	236	257.3	116.7	299.7	34.1
Approach	763	337.7	300.0	366.7	18.5
On Track	220	376.0	367.1	385.4	5.2
Target	303	408.2	387.7	485.2	17.3

Descriptive statistics (see Table 5) were computed for each survey question that was given to all NEE schools. Out of 5789 total teachers who were given the survey, an average of 3187 teachers from 206 schools responded to all 5 questions. As stated earlier, two schools were removed from the data set due to not having a 2014 or 2015 MAP Index score. The respondents chose from a four point Likert Scale from 0 being strongly disagree to 3 being strongly agree with the five statements concerning the administrator who gives them feedback.

The MSIP 5 academic performance category with the lowest mean score among all five questions was the Floor ( $\bar{x}$  = 1.82). The response rate from the Floor category regarding all questions ranged from 41.3% to 41.7% which was also overall lower than the other categories as well. The Approaching category had the highest response rate for all five questions ranging from 60.0% to 61.1% among all of the performance categories. This category also experienced the highest mean score ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.25) for question four, which was *this principal provides specific feedback to me regarding areas of strength in my teaching (i.e. focused, detailed, concrete)*. The next highest was the mean of question five in the Approaching category, which was *this principal provides useful and relevant feedback to me regarding areas of strength in my teaching* ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.24). This indicates that more favorable responses toward administrators involved giving feedback in areas of strength.

Table 5  
*Descriptive Statistics of Network for Educator Effectiveness Survey Questions by Missouri Assessment Program Performance Group*

Variable	Mean	Min	Max	Standard deviation	Response Rate
Floor (n = 29)					
Question 1	1.82	0.00	3.00	.87	41.3
Question 2	1.82	0.00	2.71	.83	41.7
Question 3	1.82	0.00	2.85	.82	41.6
Question 4	1.86	0.00	2.85	.84	41.5
Question 5	1.85	0.00	2.85	.84	41.7
Approach (n = 133)					
Question 1	2.16	0.00	3.00	0.50	60.9
Question 2	2.18	0.00	2.80	0.46	61.0
Question 3	2.16	0.00	2.75	0.45	61.0
Question 4	2.25	0.00	2.86	0.44	61.1
Question 5	2.24	0.00	2.81	0.44	60.9
On Track (n = 22)					
Question 1	2.18	0.00	2.92	0.62	56.3
Question 2	2.14	0.00	2.92	0.56	56.3
Question 3	2.08	0.00	3.00	0.58	56.3
Question 4	2.20	0.00	3.00	0.58	56.3
Question 5	2.17	0.00	2.92	0.56	56.3
Target (n = 20)					
Question 1	2.12	0.00	2.90	0.80	53.2
Question 2	2.06	0.00	2.82	0.76	53.2
Question 3	2.04	0.00	2.77	0.76	53.1
Question 4	2.15	0.00	2.80	0.77	53.2
Question 5	2.16	0.00	2.75	0.77	53.2

*Note:* Question 1: This principal typically provides me with face-to-face feedback within two working days of observing my classroom. Question 2: This principal provides specific feedback to me regarding ways my teaching can improve. Question 3: This principal provides useful and relevant feedback to me regarding ways my teaching can improve. Question 4: This principal provides specific feedback to me regarding areas of strength in my teaching. Question 5: This principal provides useful and relevant feedback to me regarding areas of strength in my teaching.

## **Correlations**

Correlation coefficients were computed among each survey question and 2015 ELA MAP Index scores for NEE schools. The results for the correlational analyses presented in Table 6 show that all five survey questions were statistically significant and all are considered slightly larger than the small category according to Green and Salkind (2005). According to Green and Salkind (2005) and Field (2009), correlation coefficients of .10, .30, and .50 are considered small, medium, and large respectively.

When looking at the correlations among feedback and 2015 ELA MAP Index scores, there are higher correlations of feedback given in areas of strength and face-to-face. Lower correlations prove to be where specific feedback is given in areas needing improvement and the lowest in useful and relevant feedback is given in areas needing improvement. The high correlation among all of the questions determined that respondents answered consistently across the board. Overall when looking at feedback questions and impact on 2015 MAP scores, there was some significance noted at the  $p < .05$  as well as the  $p < .01$  level. Further analysis is necessary with multiple regression to determine control variables' impact on 2015 ELA MAP Index scores.

Table 6  
*Correlations Among Five Survey Questions and 2015 English Language Missouri Assessment Program Index*

	MAP Index 2015	Q 1: face- to-face feedback	Q 2: specific feedback/ improve	Q 3: useful relevant feedback/ improve.	Q 4: specific feedback areas of strength	Q 5: useful relevant feedback areas of strength
Q 1: face-to-face feedback.	0.20**					
Q 2: specific feedback/improve	0.18*	0.94**				
Q 3: useful relevant feedback/ improve.	0.17*	0.94**	0.99**			
Q 4: specific feedback areas of strength	0.21**	0.92**	0.96**	0.97**		
Q 5: useful relevant feedback areas of strength	0.21**	0.92**	0.96**	0.96**	0.99**	

p<.05\* (2-tailed), p<.01\*\* (2-tailed),

### Research Question One

Research question number one asks *what is the difference in academic performance between NEE schools and non-NEE schools on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program*. Research question one was answered initially using descriptive statistics data from NEE and non-NEE schools who had a 2015 ELA MAP Index. Further analysis was conducted utilizing multiple regression analysis controlling for 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, free and reduced lunch status, enrollment, NEE participation, and by conducting an Independent Samples T-Test.

This research question was addressed utilizing existing data on 2015 ELA MAP Index scores on all schools in Missouri obtained through DESE. These data were then compared to NEE schools 2015 ELA MAP scores to determine if there was a difference in performance among these schools. Data were obtained from DESE and MSIP 5 MAP Index performance categories on non-NEE and NEE schools who were categorized and reported as Target range (385.7 to 500), On Track (367.1 to 385.6), Approaching (300.0

to 367.0), and Floor (100.0 to 299.9) on 2015 ELA MAP Index scores in order to distinguish between high and low performing schools.

The mean 2015 ELA MAP Index for NEE schools is 339, whereas the mean 2015 ELA MAP Index score for non-NEE schools stands at 344.8 which is slightly higher. This is broken down even further in Table 3 by MSIP 5 MAP Index achievement categories. Floor schools in NEE have a mean index score of 271.6 which is higher than non-NEE schools at 257.3. The Approaching and On Track levels of both NEE and non-NEE schools were very close. In the Approaching category, NEE schools scored a mean of 338.6 and non-NEE schools scored a mean of 337.7. In the On Track category, NEE schools scored a mean of 375.2 and non-NEE scored a mean of 376. In the Target category, non-NEE schools outperformed NEE schools with a mean of 408.2 compared to NEE with a mean of 399.4. When comparing NEE schools to non-NEE schools in terms of the percentage of Floor and Target level, the data shows NEE schools have 14.1% at the Floor level and non-NEE schools at 15.1%. Comparing high achieving schools at the Target level, NEE schools have 9.7% and non-NEE schools have 19.2%. NEE schools have 64.6% in the Approaching category while non-NEE schools have 48.6% in the Approaching category.

**Independent Samples T-Test** Hypothesis one was tested using an Independent Samples T-Test to determine the difference in the mean variables between the two groups, and to evaluate the hypothesis that there are no significant differences in academic performance of NEE and non-NEE schools. NEE and non-NEE schools' 2015 ELA MAP Index scores were compared to determine if there was a difference in means in the two groups. The results determined that the difference in the two groups were not

statistically significant in 2015 ELA MAP Index scores. Even though the means of each group differed slightly where NEE schools has a mean score of 339 and non-NEE schools had a mean of 344.8, the test determined that the difference was not significant at the  $p \leq .05$  level. The level of significance is set at a p value of .05.

According to Fink (2009), Levene's test tests for equality in variances of two groups. Since Levene's test for equality of variances demonstrated that there was significance at the Equal variances assumed level,  $p = .000$  (significant at  $p < .01$ ), the equal variances not assumed significance was utilized to demonstrate that the variable groups are vastly different in size and the difference determined was not statistically significant  $t(309) = -1.96$ ,  $p = .051$  (where significance is at  $p < .05$ ). Even though the mean index scores of NEE schools ( $M = 339.0$ ,  $SD = 37.9$ ) is lower on the average than non-NEE schools ( $M = 344.8$ ,  $SD = 50.7$ ), the t-test determines that they are not statistically significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. There are no significant statistical differences in academic performance of NEE and no NEE schools with a 2015 MAP Index score.

**Regression Analysis.** A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the relationship of predictor variables with 2015 MAP scores (see Table 7). The predictor variables were 2015 enrollment, free and reduced lunch status, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and NEE participation. The multiple regression model equation is expressed with the following equation:

$$MAP\ ELA_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1*(Enrollment_i) + \beta_2*(2014\ ELA\ MAP\ Index\ Score_i) + \beta_3*(Free\ and\ Reduced\ Lunch_i) + \beta_4*(NEE\ Participation_i) + r_i$$

This model produced an R square of .745, which indicates that 74.5 percent of the variation in 2015 ELA MAP Index scores can be explained by the variability in free and

reduced lunch status, prior performance on 2014 ELA MAP scores, enrollment, and NEE participation. No statistically significant relationships are noted in enrollment and 2015 MAP performance, but there is significance in free and reduced lunch and prior performance with 2014 ELA MAP scores at (.000) which is significant at the  $P < .01$  level. NEE participation is significant (.017) at the  $p < .05$  level.

Table 7  
*Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program and NEE Participation with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index*

Model Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	20.166	10.141	1.989	.047
Enrollment	-.002	.003	-.566	.571
Free and Reduced Lunch Status	-.461***	.034	-13.530	.000
2014 ELA MAP Index	1.006***	.024	41.498	.000
NEE Participation	-4.456*	1.866	-2.388	.017
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.745			

a. Dependent Variable = 2015 ELA MAP Index Score

b.  $p < .05^*$ ,  $p < .01^{**}$ ,  $p < .001^{***}$

Although NEE participation has significance, it is negatively related (-4.456), which demonstrates as MAP scores increase, participation in NEE schools decreases.

Descriptive statistics supported this finding since there was slightly lower 2014 ELA MAP Index scores in NEE schools than non-NEE schools. This would support rejecting the null hypothesis that there are no significant statistical differences in academic performance between NEE and non-NEE schools in Missouri.

## Research Question Two

Research question number two asks if *face-to-face feedback is related to academic performance on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program for Network for Educator Effectiveness schools*. Research question two was answered using feedback survey data from NEE schools that had a 2014 and 2015 ELA MAP Index. Correlation and regression analysis were conducted controlling for 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, free and reduced lunch status, and enrollment.

Hypothesis two was tested using Correlation coefficients computed between 2015 MAP Index scores and question one of the survey which asked *if the principal typically provides face-to-face feedback within two working days of an observation*. The results of the correlational analysis presented in Table 8 shows that the correlation of MAP Index 2015 and research question two was statistically significant at  $r(202) = .18, p < .01$ . The results indicate that as a principal provides face-to-face feedback within two working days of an observation MAP Index scores increase as well.

Table 8  
*Correlation Between 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index Scores of Network for Educator Effectiveness Schools and Face-to-Face Feedback*

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Face-to-face feedback	
Bivariate correlation	
MAP Index 2015	.18*

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\*  $p < .01$  for bivariate correlation

**Regression Analysis.** A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the relationship of NEE predictor variables with 2015 ELA MAP Index scores (see Table 9). The control variables were 2015 enrollment, free and reduced lunch status, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and survey question one which involves face-to-face feedback. The

relationship between the predictor variables and 2015 ELA MAP performance can be expressed as the following equation:

$$MAP\ ELA_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1*(Enrollment_i) + \beta_2*(2014\ ELA\ MAP\ Index\ Score_i) + \beta_3*(Free\ and\ Reduced\ Lunch_i) + \beta_4*(NEE\ Feedback_i) + r_i$$

The linear combination of the predictor variables was significantly related to 2015 ELA MAP Index scores,  $F(4, 199) = 89.68, p < .01$ . Regressing enrollment, free and reduced lunch status, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and survey question one which involves face-to-face feedback produced an R-square of .643, which indicates that 64.3 percent of the variation in 2015 ELA MAP Index scores can be explained by the control variables mentioned. Two significant relationships were found with free and reduced lunch status and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores with 2015 ELA MAP scores. The free and reduced lunch status had a negative relationship (-.396) and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores had a positive relationship (1.029) with 2015 ELA MAP scores. Face-to-face was not significantly related to 2015 ELA MAP Index scores.

Results indicate that the second hypothesis, *there is no significant relationship of face-to-face feedback given by administrators to teachers with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools* was supported in this case.

Table 9

*Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program and Face-to-Face Feedback with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index*

Model Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.460	37.51	.199	.905
Enrollment	-.011	.009	-1.169	.244
Free and Reduced Lunch Status	-.396***	.103	-3.845	.000
2014 ELA MAP Index	1.029***	.092	11.179	.000
Question 1: Face-to-Face Feedback	1.187	2.711	.438	.662
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.643			

c. Dependent Variable = 2015 ELA MAP Index Score

d. p<.05\*, p<.01\*\*, p<.001\*\*\*

### Research Question Three

Research question number three asks if feedback type and content is related to academic performance on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program for Network for Educator Effectives schools, which was answered using data from the NEE survey that were addressed in survey questions two through five. Survey question two asked if *this principal provides specific feedback to me regarding ways my teaching can improve (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete)*. Survey question three asked if *this principal provides useful and relevant feedback to me regarding ways my teaching can improve*. Survey question four asked if *this principal provides specific feedback to me regarding areas of strength in my teaching (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete)*. Survey question five asked if *this principal provides useful and relevant feedback to me regarding areas of strength in my teaching*.

Hypothesis three through hypothesis six were tested using correlation and regression analysis. The mean response rates were also compared on the survey with all 4 categories of MSIP 5 achievement levels along with the mean survey scores for each of the levels as well.

Correlation coefficients were computed for each 2015 MAP Index scores and survey questions two and three to test both hypotheses three and four. The results for the bivariate analysis is presented in Table 10. For survey question two and three the data show that both were statistically significant at.  $r(202) = .18, p <.05$  and  $r(202) = .17 p <.05$ .

Table 10  
*Correlation of 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index Scores and Feedback in Areas Needing Improvement*

	Specific feedback to improve	Useful and relevant feedback to improve.	
Bivariate correlation			
MAP Index 2015	*.18	*.17	
* p <.01 for bivariate correlation			

It is important to note that the mean scores of respondents to survey question two and three were lower than NEE schools in the other MSIP 5 categories. The response rate of question two and three was also lower than NEE schools in other MSIP 5 categories.

Correlation coefficients were computed for each 2015 MAP Index scores and survey questions four and five to test hypotheses five and six. The results for the analysis presented in the top of Table 11 for survey question four and five show that both were statistically significant at.  $r(202) = .21, p <.01$  and  $r(202) = .21, p <.01$ .

Table 11  
*Correlation of 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index Scores and Feedback Areas of Strength*

	Specific feedback areas of strength	Useful and relevant feedback areas of strength
Bivariate correlation		
MAP Index 2015	** .21	** .21

\*\* p <.01 for bivariate correlation

Results revealed when survey question two through five were compared to 2015 ELA MAP Index scores, they were significantly related. When a principal gives feedback that is specific (i.e., focused, detailed, or concrete) along with useful and relevant in areas needing improvement or areas of strength, results were positively related to 2015 ELA MAP Index scores.

**Regression Analysis.** A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the predictor variables' impact on 2015 ELA MAP Index scores (see Table 12). The predictors were 2015 enrollment, free and reduced lunch status, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and survey question two through five which involves the type and content of feedback on either areas needing improvement or on areas of strength as stated earlier in this section. The relationship between the predictor variables and 2015 ELA MAP performance can be expressed as the following equation:

$$MAP\ ELA_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1*(Enrollment_i) + \beta_2*(2014\ ELA\ MAP\ Index\ Score_i) + \beta_3*(Free\ and\ Reduced\ Lunch_i) + \beta_4*(NEE\ Feedback_i) + r_i$$

The linear combination of the predictor variables was significantly related to 2015 ELA MAP Index scores,  $F(7, 196) = 50.96, p < .01$ . Regressing enrollment, free and reduced lunch status, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and survey question two regarding specific feedback to improve produced an R-square of .643, which indicates that 64.3

percent of the variation in 2015 ELA MAP Index scores can be explained by the control variables mentioned (see Table 12). Two significant relationships were found with free and reduced lunch status and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores with 2015 ELA MAP scores. The free and reduced lunch status had a negative relationship (-.397) and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores had a positive relationship (1.031) with 2015 ELA MAP scores. There was no significant relationship in feedback given that is specific (i.e., focused, detailed, or concrete) regarding areas needing improvement with 2015 ELA MAP Index scores.

Table 12  
*The Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program, and Specific Feedback to Improve with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index*

Model Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.489	37.825	.119	.906
Enrollment	-.010	.009	-1.150	.252
2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Percent	-.397***	.104	-3.835	.000
MAP Index 2014	1.031***	.092	11.205	.000
Specific feedback on ways to improve	.901	2.882	.312	.755
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.643			

- a. Dependent Variable = 2015 ELA MAP Index Score
- b. p<.05\*, p<.01\*\*, p<.001\*\*\*

Regressing enrollment, free and reduced lunch status, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and survey question three regarding useful and relevant feedback to improve produced an R-square of .643, which indicates that 64.3 percent of the variation in 2015 ELA MAP Index scores can be explained by the control variables mentioned (see Table

13). Two significant relationships were found with free and reduced lunch status and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores with 2015 ELA MAP scores. The free and reduced lunch status had a negative relationship (-.401) and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores had a positive relationship (1.031) with 2015 ELA MAP scores. There was no significant relationship in feedback given that is useful and relevant regarding areas needing improvement and 2015 ELA MAP Index scores.

Table 13  
*The Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program, and Useful and Relevant Feedback to Improve with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index*

Model Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	5.799	37.756	.154	.878
Enrollment	-.010	.009	-1.131	.260
2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Percent	-.401***	.103	-3.882	.000
MAP Index 2014	1.031***	.092	11.201	.000
Useful and relevant feedback on ways to improve	.384	2.895	.133	.895
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.643			

c. Dependent Variable = 2015 ELA MAP Index Score

d. p<.05\*, p<.01\*\*, p<.001\*\*\*

Regressing enrollment, free and reduced lunch status, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and survey question four regarding specific (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete) feedback on strengths produced an R-square of .643, which indicates that 64.3 percent of the variation in 2015 ELA MAP Index scores can be explained by the control variables mentioned (see Table 14). Two significant relationships were found with free and reduced lunch status and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores with 2015 ELA MAP

scores. The free and reduced lunch status had a negative relationship (-.396) and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores had a positive relationship (1.029) with 2015 ELA MAP scores. There was no significant relationship in feedback given that is specific (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete) regarding areas of strength with 2015 ELA MAP Index scores.

Table 14  
*The Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program, and Specific Feedback on Strengths with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index*

Model Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.565	37.649	.121	.904
Enrollment	-.010	.009	-1.153	.250
2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Percent	-.396***	.103	-3.835	.000
MAP Index 2014	1.029***	.092	11.182	.000
Specific feedback on strengths	1.032	2.922	.353	.724
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.643			

e. Dependent Variable = 2015 ELA MAP Index Score

f. p<.05\*, p<.01\*\*, p<.001\*\*\*

Regressing enrollment, free and reduced lunch status, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and survey question five regarding useful and relevant feedback on strengths produced an R-square of .643, which indicates that 64.3 percent of the variation in 2015 ELA MAP Index scores can be explained by the control variables mentioned (see Table 15). Two significant relationships were found with free and reduced lunch status and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores with 2015 ELA MAP scores. The free and reduced lunch status had a negative relationship (-.397) and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores

had a positive relationship (1.029) with 2015 ELA MAP scores. There was no significant relationship in feedback given that is useful and relevant regarding areas of strength and 2015 ELA MAP Index scores.

Table 15  
*The Relationship of 2015 Enrollment, 2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Status, 2014 Missouri Assessment Program, and Useful and Relevant Feedback on Strengths with 2015 Missouri Assessment Program Index*

Model Predictor	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.854	37.592	.129	.897
Enrollment	-.010	.009	-1.148	.252
2015 Free and Reduced Lunch Percent	-.397***	.103	-3.849	.000
MAP Index 2014	1.029***	.092	11.174	.000

Useful and relevant feedback on strengths	.948	2.911	.326	.745
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.643			

g. Dependent Variable = 2015 ELA MAP Index Score

h. p<.05\*, p<.01\*\*, p<.001\*\*\*

Final results indicate that the third hypothesis stating, *there is no significant relationship of specific (i.e., focused, detailed, or concrete) feedback given to teachers regarding areas needing improvement with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools,* and the fourth hypothesis stating, *there is no significant relationship of feedback that is useful and relevant given to teachers regarding areas needing improvement with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools* were supported in this case. The final results also indicate that the fifth hypothesis stating, *there is no significant relationship with feedback that is specific (i.e., focused, detailed, or concrete) given in areas of strength with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools,* and the sixth hypothesis stating, *there*

*is no significant relationship with feedback that is useful and relevant given in areas of strength with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools* were also supported as well.

## **Summary**

Survey data collected along with existing data from Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provided were analyzed to examine the academic performance of NEE and non-NEE schools based on 2015 ELA MAP Index scores and elements of feedback given in schools within the Network for Effective Educator system throughout Missouri. Quantitative statistical analysis and descriptive statistics were used to compare mean differences among all performance levels of NEE and non-NEE schools regarding student achievement. Survey data from NEE schools were analyzed to report statistics on face-to-face feedback, whether feedback is useful and relevant, feedback being specific (i.e. focused, detailed, concrete), and on feedback given to teachers in areas needing improvement and areas of strength.

Independent Samples-T-Test was used to evaluate if there were any statistical differences between the means of 2015 ELA MAP Index scores of NEE and non-NEE schools in Missouri. Regression analysis was also performed to determine the effect of control variables on 2015 ELA MAP performance. The control variables for this analysis included 2015 enrollment, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, free and reduced lunch status, and NEE participation.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations were performed to determine the relationship among face-to-face, type, and content of feedback and 2015 ELA MAP Index scores of NEE schools in Missouri. Regression analysis was also conducted on NEE feedback to explore the possibility of a predictive relationship that may affect

student achievement in 2015 ELA MAP Index scores. The control variables for feedback analysis included 2015 enrollment, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and free and reduced lunch status.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter provides a discussion of the three research questions posed in this study. A comparison to previous research studies is included within each research question discussion to explain how this research situates within the current body of knowledge regarding feedback practices. Recommendations for current practice are also included as well as implications from this research and how the information presented can be utilized by practicing administrators, and those who will require training in best practices for giving feedback. Future research possibilities are addressed to assist in determining other important aspects that deserve attention that may not have been addressed with this research. The chapter concludes with a summary of the entire research project.

### **RQ1. What is the difference in academic performance between Network for Educator Effectiveness schools and non-Network for Educator Effectiveness schools on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program?**

When comparing mean 2015 ELA MAP Index scores of NEE and non-NEE schools, they appear to be very close. Breaking down the scores into MSIP 5 categories and comparing NEE and non-NEE school student achievement, there were still consistent similarities. This will allow certain generalizations to be made about Missouri schools since they are so closely related in many aspects to NEE schools. These generalizations may include the understanding that lower performing schools do not get as much face-to-face feedback as higher performing schools, and that teachers in schools at all performance levels received more feedback that was specific (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete) and useful and relevant in areas of strength than areas of weakness. This

finding coincides with Rutherford (2009) and his work on giving feedback based on identified teacher strengths and to work teacher development from a strengths standpoint instead of focusing on weaknesses. This researcher agrees with giving feedback on strengths, but administrators must be able to point out errors and support that with ways to fix the errors. This is supported by the feedback intervention theory in that feedback must be actionable and focused on the task and not the self (Khatchatryan, 2015). If the feedback is focused on the self, the ego is highly likely to be involved which can harm self-esteem of the recipient.

This researcher hypothesized that there were no significant differences in academic performance between NEE and non-NEE schools (hypothesis one). This hypothesis was supported by the data when comparing means of 2015 ELA MAP Index scores. There was also a significance in the difference in size of the two groups being compared since the NEE schools numbered 206 and non-NEE at 1522. Two NEE schools were removed from the sample since they did not have both 2014 and 2015 ELA MAP Index scores. The Independent Samples T Test determined that even though the group sizes differed greatly, there was still no statistical significant difference when comparing the mean scores of the groups.

Regression analysis revealed another story. When analyzing the effect of control variables on 2015 ELA MAP Index scores the variables that affect performance most were free and reduced lunch and prior 2014 ELA MAP performance. When analyzing the effect of NEE participation on 2015 academic performance, NEE participation decreased as scores increased on 2015 ELA MAP performance. Overall, NEE schools performed lower than non-NEE schools which is supported in the mean scores of each

sample. It is also noted that the lower performing NEE schools included a slightly higher percentage of free and reduced lunch status than non-NEE schools.

Even though administrators in NEE schools are trained in giving feedback, the NEE schools' performance does not differ than non-NEE buildings that may have a wide variety of principal competency in giving feedback. A limitation mentioned earlier in this study notes that feedback data is not obtained from the non-NEE group of schools in order to adequately compare feedback in the entire data set. Another point that is critical in determining effective feedback within the NEE system is to determine if current feedback training of administrators consists of research based practices in giving feedback. Giving ongoing effective feedback within the NEE administrative training system is critical to ensure fidelity in the feedback system within NEE.

Research by Grissom, Loeb, and Master (2013) shows that walkthroughs were negatively associated with student gains in achievement at the high school level even though they supported feedback given through the walkthrough process. Feedback can be given with positive or negative associations with regard to teacher professional development. It is unknown in the current study if feedback given in NEE schools is positively associated or negatively associated with teacher professional development. This could have an effect on the entire feedback process within the NEE system. There were, however, no significant statistical differences in academic performance between NEE and non-NEE schools in Missouri even when feedback was known to be given in NEE schools as a mandatory part of their system. It is noted by Khachatryan (2015) that there is still little known about how feedback is given affects changes in instruction.

**RQ2. Is face-to-face feedback related to academic performance on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program for Network for Educator Effectiveness schools in Missouri?**

The feedback survey data collected from NEE schools were analyzed and combined with achievement data obtained from DESE on all schools in Missouri. This researcher hypothesized that there is no significant relationship of face-to-face feedback given by administrators to teachers with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools. (hypothesis two).

Face-to-face dialog with a teacher is noted in some studies to be a preferred mode of feedback by the recipient (Feeney, 2007; Harms & Roebuck, 2010; Marshall, 2009, 2012; Scheeler et al., 2004). This aligns with Bandura's guided mastery modeling theory, in that a key concept within the theory includes the need for opportunities to practice, and guidance to assist in grasping what is to be learned (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Being face-to-face with someone creates a more meaningful learning environment for the learner which makes sense for it to be a preferred mode of feedback by recipients as noted above.

The mean scores on the surveys were lower in the Floor category which indicates less frequent face-to-face feedback given by an administrator two days after an observation. It also might indicate that in some instances no face-to-face feedback is given at all. This is in agreement with Ilgen, Fisher, and Taylor, (1979) who noted in their study that workplaces tend to not give enough feedback to workers. Yariv (2006) agrees with this and attributed that the lack of feedback was related to the MUM Effect. Marshall (2012) also concurs with the lack of feedback being given to educators and

documented one reason being attributed to administrators avoid giving feedback that may be critical in nature and therefore much more difficult to give. Weisberg et al. (2009) noted the Widget Effect where three out of four teachers did not receive any corrective and specific feedback to improve performance on their previous evaluations. Not receiving any corrective feedback can lead to a lack of confidence in the learner, which then creates situations where new skills are not applied correctly. The new skills are then dropped if the learner is not experiencing success (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

There is also importance in the mean response rates and mean scores on the surveys. The mean scores for surveys in this study indicate that less face-to-face feedback is given in the lower and higher performing MSIP 5 categories. Responses indicated that more face-to-face feedback is provided in the middle two levels of achievement categories. The lower mean response rates from schools in the Floor category of MSIP 5 might indicate that they are not as interested in filling out surveys as respondents from other higher achieving categories.

Less face-to-face feedback from Floor schools may also relate to the MUM Effect as described by Yariv (2006). Principals approach giving feedback, especially if it is of a sensitive nature, with extreme caution. This coincides with the data collected on face-to-face feedback and with the data collected regarding research question three concerning type and content of the feedback that shows overall lower scores from Floor schools in both categories than all of the other MSIP 5 categories. Face-to-face was lower overall in scores while feedback given in areas needing improvement was next to lowest. This is in agreement with research that speaks to the lack of feedback that is given (Frase, 1992; Marshall, 2003), and that principals may not be comfortable in giving feedback for many

reasons explained earlier (Brinko, 1993; Frase, 1992; Ing, 2009; Kimball, 2011; Marshall, 2012), and are unknown in this particular study.

Regarding performance on 2015 ELA MAP Index scores and face-to-face feedback given in NEE schools, data analysis determined that as face-to-face feedback increased, so did scores on the 2015 ELA MAP Index. However, the significance was lost when free and reduced lunch, 2014 ELA MAP Index scores, and enrollment were controlled in regression analysis. It is determined that previous year academic performance and free and reduced lunch status is more of a determining factor of current performance than face-to-face feedback given to teachers. This study determined that 64% of the differences in MAP index between schools can be accounted for by the combination of all the predictor variables. Although data demonstrated that both free and reduced lunch status and prior 2014 ELA MAP Index scores were statistically significant predictor variables in 2015 ELA MAP Index scores, prior year performance accounted for a slightly larger effect on 2015 ELA MAP Index scores than free and reduced lunch status.

To summarize, even though face-to-face feedback mean scores were lower than other feedback given, there is not enough significance in the relationship to academic performance to demonstrate that more face-to-face feedback will increase ELA MAP Index scores. Free and reduced lunch status and prior performance were more significant indicators of 2015 ELA MAP performance.

**RQ3. Is feedback type and feedback content related to academic performance on the 2015 English Language Arts Missouri Assessment Program for Network for Educator Effectiveness schools?**

The feedback survey data collected from NEE schools were analyzed and combined with achievement data obtained from DESE on all schools in Missouri. This researcher hypothesized that there is no significant relationship of specific (i.e., focused, detailed, or concrete) feedback given to teachers regarding areas needing improvement with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools (hypothesis three), and that there is no significant relationship of useful and relevant given to teachers regarding areas needing improvement with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools (hypothesis four).

It is important to note the mean survey scores on questions regarding giving feedback on areas needing improvement possibly connecting to key findings in what Rosen and Tesser (1970) believe to be the MUM Effect. Yariv (2006) also noted principals' reluctance to transmit negative information when giving feedback. The mean scores on survey questions regarding giving feedback in areas to improve are consistently lower than other feedback categories across all four areas of MSIP 5 achievement categories. This data is relevant with regard to the influence of the MUM Effect in giving feedback.

It is also noted that being provided useful and relevant feedback on ways to improve was markedly lower in every MSIP 5 achievement category. This could mean that there is a deficit with regard to principals even knowing how to give useful and relevant feedback, and if they are doing so, do the teachers still feel that it is useful and relevant? Principals are charged with the task of coaching teachers to improve instructional practice, often without any background knowledge or training (Brinko, 1993; Ing, 2009). This could have also had an effect on why the scores were lower with regard to feedback to improve given to teachers.

According to Khachatryan (2015), the feedback intervention theory (FIT) cues specific attention to, “(a) the self, (b) the focal task, or (c) the details of the task” (p. 169). Feedback that is focused on the details promotes learning, while feedback that focuses on the self gets in the way of learning due to the nature of possible attack on a recipient’s self-esteem. The findings in this study are supported by this theory in that lower mean scores were given by respondents to survey questions regarding useful and relevant feedback given on ways teaching can either be improved or even when given regarding strengths. If useful or relevant details are not given to improve a teacher’s performance or given on strengths of teaching, the important effect of giving constructive and useful feedback is lost. If feedback is not useful and relevant, it could be misconstrued as just plain advice, which relates to what Khachatryan calls “the self” and gets in the way of real learning.

Bandura’s guided mastery modeling theory of learning (Wood & Bandura, 1989) offers another glimpse into how feedback is given. As stated by Wood and Bandura (1989), “to enhance competencies, people need instructive modeling, guided practice with corrective feedback, and help in transferring new skills to everyday situations” (p. 364). Following this theory, corrective feedback is necessary in the process of giving good feedback. According to the findings in this study, corrective feedback to improve, whether it is useful and relevant or specific and detailed scored lower in mean responses than other types of feedback. Yariv (2006) documented the MUM Effect among administrators when giving feedback. The results of this study support the possibility of the existence of this effect when taking into account the lower than average survey scores

in feedback given in areas needing improvement. This finding is also concurrent with studies that report feedback is missing (Donaldson, 2010; Frase, 1992; Marshall, 2003).

This researcher also hypothesized that there is no significant relationship of feedback that is specific (i.e., focused, detailed, or concrete) given in areas of strength with 2015 ELA MAP academic performance in NEE schools (hypothesis five), and that there is no significant relationship of feedback that is useful and relevant regarding areas of strength given with 2015 ELA MAP performance in NEE schools (hypothesis six).

Survey respondents were noted in giving higher marks to receiving feedback in areas of strength as opposed to getting feedback in areas needing improvement. This was the case in every MSIP 5 achievement level of NEE schools.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Ovando's (2006) research points out that preparing aspiring administrators on how to give effective feedback is the current challenge that districts face. This study supports this research in that more professional development in general needs to happen for teachers and administrators on what constitutes effective feedback. It may not be well understood currently among administrators about types or content of feedback that can be given, and why one type or the content of feedback is better received by teachers than another. Wiggins (2012) compares giving strictly advice to giving quality feedback to teachers. Further work is needed to educate administrators and teachers on this aspect of feedback in order for administrators to give better feedback to teachers, and in turn, teachers give better feedback to students.

There are many issues to consider when posing challenges or supports within the current role feedback plays in education. If new teachers are given effective feedback

early on in their career, could this be a factor in retention of quality teachers in the field? Lack of feedback is cited often as an issue, and could very well be a factor in retention of well-qualified teachers (Weisberg et al., 2009). Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) feedback intervention theory along with Bandura's (Wood & Bandura, 1989) guided mastery modeling theory both support giving specific feedback before an incorrect intervening behavior is exhibited that can result in failure of acquisition of the new knowledge as noted by Scheeler et al. (2004).

An unintentional flaw in the teacher evaluation system may possibly influence the quality of feedback. It is important to create a positive learning environment for teachers according to Feeney (2007) and Showers (1985). Administrative feedback to teachers must be given in an environment that allows teachers to practice or perfect a skill without having to worry about it being on an evaluation in a negative way. Combining evaluation with feedback, if not done correctly, can likely create an atmosphere of mistrust and challenge administrators on their intentions regarding the feedback process. Is the feedback given to promote learning formatively, or is it given in a summative nature to promote self-reflection at the end of a task for the learner?

As a practicing administrator for 12 years, this is evident when doing walkthroughs and listening to teachers give advice versus feedback to students. Likewise, it is distressing when doing walkthroughs with other administrators and hearing them pick apart what a teacher is doing instead of focusing on their strengths in order to find a path to help them eliminate weaknesses. Feedback training and modeling needs to occur in schools across our country. Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) feedback intervention theory and Wood and Bandura's (1989) guided mastery modeling can also

apply to administrators just as it does to giving feedback to teachers. In order to train administrators to do the job of giving effective feedback, on the job modeling, practicing, and giving the administrators real time feedback is necessary in order for real learning and change in feedback practices to take place.

Since there were no significant difference in NEE schools and non-NEE schools academic performance, it would be beneficial to reevaluate the training of NEE schools in giving feedback to ensure fidelity of implementation with regard to giving research based effective feedback. NEE teachers definitely received feedback, but the results of this study do not determine the level of quality in the feedback teachers received. Since it is noted by several studies that workplaces tend to not give enough feedback (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979; Marshall, 2012; Weisberg et.al., 2009; Yariv, 2006), and mean scores on face-to-face feedback were the lowest in NEE schools, it might be worth the effort to survey teachers in each NEE school to find out the preferred mode desired by teachers when receiving feedback as noted by Brinko (1990).

Leadership training programs at the state and local school district levels should incorporate intense research based feedback training with administrators if efforts in school improvement are to make an impact. Missouri sponsors a Missouri Leadership for Excellence, Achievement, and Development also known as MoLEAD. They partner with the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) in an effort to train leaders in strengthening instruction in order to improve student achievement (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.). Missouri also sponsors Leadership Academy in support of developing school leaders across the state (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.). This researcher has participated in

Leadership Academy and feels that it would benefit greatly from a module that deals with teaching effective feedback practices.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

A recommendation for future research could delve more into obtaining MAP Index scores the year before either joining NEE and comparing that to each year thereafter in the program. A school that initially begins giving feedback to teachers according to a specific system or style, and subsequent years after the feedback process has started, could better determine the relationship between feedback and school achievement scores over time. It also might be beneficial to do a qualitative study to examine feedback more in depth when comparing feedback type and content. This may yield further information into specific qualities of feedback that teachers prefer overall. Since positive feedback on teacher strengths fared better in scores than giving feedback to improve, this is in alignment with Rutherford's (2009) work on focusing on teacher strengths when giving feedback. A qualitative study would yield information that could dig deeper into the nuances of feedback given to teachers and how it is received.

Since data is not known in this study on NEE schools as to when they entered the NEE system, pre-entrance and post-entrance data could be collected on NEE schools to see if there is an effect on student achievement once they entered into the NEE system of teacher evaluation and feedback. It is possible for NEE to have the existing data on when schools began using their system. Combining that with longitudinal data on existing NEE schools and collecting feedback data along with looking at MAP Index scores prior to entering into the NEE system, a viable link could be determined between feedback and student achievement that statistical models could determine.

Another interesting area to explore further would be a qualitative study on face-to-face feedback comparison between NEE and non-NEE schools to explore teacher opinions of preference in how they receive feedback. To take it a step further, analysis could be conducted on surveyed schools in Missouri who had an overall high satisfaction rating of feedback given to teachers and academic performance. Of course, controlling for other variables is necessary when testing for differences.

Several studies link feedback practices to affecting teacher quality, which then supports school improvement (Hallinger et al., 2013; Kimball, 2011). Evidence determined that giving specific actionable frequent feedback to teachers yielded more positive results on affecting instructional quality, which then supported school improvement. Sanders et al. (1979) added to this in that their study determined that teacher effectiveness can make a difference in student achievement over time. This information coupled with data from this current study, reinforces this researcher's recommendation to conduct a longitudinal study the effects of administrators who are trained in giving feedback on teacher effectiveness and how it affects student achievement.

Another possible area that deserves attention is administrator intentions with regard to feedback. A qualitative study could shed light on this aspect and determine if there is an impact on teacher retention. Do administrators strictly use feedback when addressing a teacher who has several areas of improvement, and are a candidate for separation of employment? Do administrators use feedback to check for teachers who are or are not following district or building initiatives? Are administrators using feedback to assist teachers in areas where there is agreement that growth is needed?

There are several questions that can be addressed regarding administrator intentions with regard to giving feedback. Linking feedback to the culture of a building could also yield very interesting results.

### **Conclusions and Summary**

Previous research has indicated teacher quality affects student achievement (Donaldson, 2011; Ferguson, 1991; Haycock, 1998; Menuey, 2007; Tucker, 1997; Sanders et al., 1997). Does giving feedback improve teacher quality? This particular study focused on linking feedback given to teachers directly to student achievement in an effort to determine significance in this area. Although, according to the data, a substantial link in achievement could not be achieved, the results indicated useful information in the answers given by teachers to the survey questions. Overall, the respondents from every MSIP 5 achievement category ranked receiving useful and relevant feedback lower than receiving face-to-face feedback, and receiving specific (i.e. focused, detailed, concrete) feedback.

Since the results linked more feedback given in areas of strengths, an effort to link feedback on teacher strengths to their areas that need improvement could yield important discoveries in effective feedback given in the educational setting. Rutherford's (2009) work on teacher strengths can open doors to conversations that could assist an administrator in linking strengths to areas that need polishing. This must be done in such a way that allows the teacher to feel safe. As noted by Grissom, Loeb, & Master (2013) in their research, there was a negative effect on learning in a high school setting with regard to administrators using walkthroughs. Administrators noted in this study that the linkage in a decline in student achievement could have been due to the teachers in the

study felt the walkthroughs were not connected to professional development and more connected to checking up on them or the administrator just trying to be visible.

Cultivating teacher leadership in an educational setting could also prove to be beneficial in alleviating some tedious tasks from an already busy administrator. Utilizing teacher leaders who have been trained in giving effective feedback to monitor and mentor early career teachers, or those who are struggling, is a way to facilitate a culture of growth and learning for teachers. It would also free up administrators as well as provide teachers a credible source from which they receive feedback if the administrator does not feel fully qualified in giving effective feedback in certain areas (Murphy, Hallinger, & Heck, 2013).

In the age of technology outpacing itself, are there more technologically advanced ways of giving feedback than have been utilized in the past? There are earbud/microphone systems currently utilized that allow someone to watch a teacher in the back of the room while giving real time feedback through an earpiece. Classroom Dojo allows teachers to give students feedback instantly. This researcher has used Classroom Dojo to give teachers feedback on specific district/building initiatives or teacher personal goals with regard to polishing their practice. Are there other ways to integrate technology in the practice of giving feedback? Can this lead to teachers being comfortable with cameras in the classroom to assist in their growth as a professional? Classroom autonomy, though, has been favored by teachers for many years as well as traded by administrators in order to obtain cooperation and insurance that the school runs smoothly (Murphy, Hallinger & Heck, 2013). Obviously, technology with regard to feedback is an area that is ripe for discovery.

Current evaluation reform in Missouri led the NEE department to incorporate a system of giving feedback to teachers while also incorporating a point system aligned with Missouri's evaluation standards. The model is based on determining where a teacher lies on current practice and where they need to go in terms of skill development. Teacher skills must be developed in an effort to deliver curriculum aligned with Common Core. Tougher curricular objectives forces teachers out of a comfort zone of teaching how they were taught, and into the realm of teaching someone how to think. This requires feedback to be given to teachers in order for them to achieve higher levels within the evaluation model.

A component of knowing how to deliver effective feedback must be imbedded into training programs for administrators and teachers. Kluger and DeNisi's, (1996) along with Bandura's (Wood & Bandura's, 1989) theories of learning fit appropriately in feedback processes. Giving effective feedback must be embedded in training programs, and it must be continually monitored to ensure fidelity of implementation. A reform of feedback practices is necessary in order to keep pace with current evaluation reform.

Murphy, Hallinger, & Heck (2013) found evidence to suggest that principals should spend their time in activities other than teacher evaluation. Their research suggests a principal engage in activities that will have an impact on student achievement; one of those activities includes giving actionable feedback. This researcher agrees with this and notes that traditional evaluation systems need to be modified to fit the changing face of teaching and evaluation. Yes, we need to evaluate teachers, and evaluation definitely has a place in the system, but there should be a distinct line between a principal being a coach and an evaluator. Principals would be better served to hone skills of

observation and evaluation of what is happening in a classroom, and then applying appropriate feedback skills to enhance a teacher's performance. Administrators must be sensitive to the delivery and consequences of feedback on an individual's behavior. Just saying that an observation or walkthrough has been completed and feedback given does not mean it hit the intended mark of improvement for a teacher.

In summary, there is still much to learn about feedback and how it relates to student achievement. This study provided a glimpse into face-to-face feedback, type and content of feedback given, and how it relates to student achievement. Survey results revealed differences in how feedback has been provided to teachers, which can lead to further study regarding feedback given in an educational setting and how it may possibly relate to student achievement.

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## Appendix A: Survey Items

1. This principal typically provides me with face-to-face feedback within two working days of observing my classroom.
  - 0) Strongly disagree
  - 1) Disagree
  - 2) Agree
  - 3) Strongly Agree
  
2. This principal provides specific feedback to me regarding ways my teaching can improve (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete).
  - 0) Strongly disagree
  - 1) Disagree
  - 2) Agree
  - 3) Strongly Agree
  
3. This principal provides useful and relevant feedback to me regarding ways my teaching can improve.
  - 0) Strongly disagree
  - 1) Disagree
  - 2) Agree
  - 3) Strongly Agree
  
4. This principal provides specific feedback to me regarding areas of strength in my teaching (i.e., focused, detailed, concrete).
  - 0) Strongly disagree
  - 1) Disagree
  - 2) Agree
  - 3) Strongly Agree
  
5. This principal provides useful and relevant feedback to me regarding areas of strength in my teaching.
  - 0) Strongly disagree
  - 1) Disagree
  - 2) Agree
  - 3) Strongly Agree

## Appendix B: IRB Exemption Letter



### IRB Determination Notice Project #2004980 Review #213149

Project #2004980

Project Title: AN EXAMINATION OF FEEDBACK GIVEN TO TEACHERS IN HIGH AND LOW PERFORMING ELEMENTARY AGE SCHOOLS IN MISSOURI

Principal Investigator: Angela L Chandler, Doctorate

Primary Contact: Angela L Chandler, Doctorate

Dear Investigator,

The MU Institutional Review Board reviewed your application and supportive documents. It has been determined that this project does not constitute human subjects research according to the Department of Health and Human Services regulatory definitions. As such, there are no further IRB requirements.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact the IRB office at 882.3181.

Sincerely,

MU Institutional Review Board

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## VITA

Angela L Chandler was born on November 6, 1962 in Jonesboro, Arkansas to James D. and Freeda C. Chandler. After graduating high school in Herculaneum, Missouri, she attended Southeast State University in Cape Girardeau, Missouri on a track and cross country scholarship. Angie graduated in 1985 with her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education degree with an emphasis in teaching reading. She received her Master of Science in Secondary and Elementary Educational Administration from William Woods University at night while being a single mother of two in 2004. She obtained her doctorate from the University of Missouri, Columbia in 2016.

Angie taught fifth grade in Winfield Missouri from 1986 to 1988 where marriage took her to Columbia and a different career for nine years as an Allstate Agent. In 1997, she secured employment as a permanent substitute at Derby Ridge Elementary and in 1998 was hired at Cedar Ridge Elementary as a fourth and fifth grade split class teacher. Finally getting her foot back into public education, she stayed at Cedar Ridge for five years then moved onto Lange Middle School to teach sixth grade for one year. Upon completion of her Masters program, she was hired as the administrative assistant at Gentry Middle School and stayed in that position for three years. In 2007, she became the assistant principal at Gentry. In 2008, she went back to be the principal at the best kept secret in Columbia...Cedar Ridge Elementary. She currently has served as principal at Cedar Ridge from 2008 until present.

Ms. Chandler is currently single but extremely happy with the best boyfriend a girl could have-Art Bedsworth. She has two children, an amazing son, Brett

Beutenmiller, and an equally amazing daughter, Melissa Beutenmiller. Angie happily resides in Millersburg on a beautiful farm with her eight chickens and Art.