

IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW TEACHER EVALUATION PROGRAM:  
PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

---

A Dissertation  
presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctorate of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

---

by  
KURT HANER  
Dr. Lisa Dorner, Dissertation Supervisor

DECEMBER 2017

The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW TEACHER EVALUATION PROGRAM:  
PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

Presented by Kurt Haner,  
a candidate for the degree of doctor of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis,  
and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

---

Dr. Lisa Dorner

---

Dr. Chris Belcher

---

Dr. James Sebastian

---

Dr. Lori Wilcox

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to start by thanking my wife for her support and encouragement as we have both traveled down the path towards a doctorate. We make a great team in balancing raising our kids, our careers, and personal endeavors. To my three kids, thanks for putting up with me as I read and wrote papers while traveling to your sporting events and even on our vacations.

I have gained many incredible friends while pursuing this doctorate. In particular, thanks Sarah, Wayne, and Gary for your friendship as we have also traveled this path together. Your texts of encouragement were much appreciated.

To my committee, I have felt so blessed to have such an incredible committee. Dr. Wilcox, thank you for sharing your data collection knowledge in the classroom and your expertise and words of encouragement as I have pursued my research interest. The practical applications you gave in data collection made collecting my data go smoothly. Dr. Sebastian, I greatly enjoyed attending your leadership class. The knowledge you imparted made writing the leadership analysis section a breeze and the nearly two-hour commute to Columbia every Wednesday easier to bear. Dr. Belcher, I am grateful to have had you on the committee for all the past experience and expertise you have in the area of teacher evaluation. Thank you for all your time and knowledge shared.

To my advisor, Dr. Dorner, I thank you for sharing your intelligent insights and your support through this process. I am so grateful to have had an advisor who was well read and has published in my area of interest. I am thankful to say we have engaged in research for more than the sake of attaining a doctorate, but have given a voice to those who are most affected by policy.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	ii
List of Tables .....	vii
Abstract.....	viii
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background.....	2
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose of the Study .....	5
Research Questions.....	6
Conceptual/Theoretical Framework.....	6
Theories of Policy Implementation.....	6
Sense-making and Policy Implementation.....	7
Design of the Study.....	10
Setting .....	10
Participants.....	11
Data Collection Tools .....	12
Data Analysis .....	16
Design Controls .....	18
Limitations and Assumptions .....	19
Definitions of Key Terms .....	20
Significance of the Study .....	21
Summary .....	23
2. PRACTITIONER SETTING FOR THE STUDY .....	24
Introduction.....	25

History of the Organizations .....	25
Creeksville .....	25
Prairieview .....	26
Organizational Analysis.....	26
Creeksville High: From a Human Resource to Structural Framework.....	27
Prairieview High: A Political Framework .....	29
Leadership Analysis.....	30
Relationships and Evaluation.....	30
Expertise and Evaluation .....	31
Supportive of Evaluation .....	32
Implications for Research in the Practitioner Setting .....	33
Summary .....	34
3. SCHOLARLY REVIEW FOR THE STUDY .....	35
Introduction.....	36
History of Teacher Evaluation .....	36
Current Policies Impacting Teacher Evaluation .....	39
Purpose and Methods of Teacher Evaluation .....	40
Educational Policy Implementation.....	42
Policy Implementation History .....	42
Theories of Policy Implementation.....	44
Sense-making about Educational Policy Implementation .....	45
Individual Sense-making About Teacher Evaluation .....	45
Implementation on a Social Level .....	48
Studies on Teacher Evaluation.....	53
Summary .....	54

4. CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOLARSHIP .....	56
Perceptions and Experiences of Teacher Evaluation .....	57
Guiding Frameworks .....	58
Methods.....	59
The Policy Context: NEE Teacher Evaluation in Missouri .....	61
Overview of Findings .....	65
Perceptions on the Implementation of NEE.....	65
Finding One: Ten Minutes Too Short.....	65
Finding Two: Experience Matters .....	69
Finding Three: Input on Indicators .....	74
Summary of Perceptions .....	78
Experiences of Teachers and Administrators .....	79
Finding One: Framework Affecting When Observation Occurs .....	80
Finding Two: Length of Observation .....	82
Finding Three: Relationships Affecting Communication.....	84
Summary of Experiences .....	87
Discussion and Research Implications Regarding Policy Implementation .....	89
5. CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE.....	92
Introduction.....	93
Recommendations to NEE.....	93
Focus on Activity not Timeframe .....	93
Experience Matters .....	94
Input on Indicators .....	94
Building Rapport Before Evaluating .....	95
Recommendations to Schools.....	95

Rationale of Case Study Brief.....	96
Case Study Brief .....	97
6. SCHOLARLY PRACTITIONER REFLECTION .....	98
Influenced as an Educational Leader .....	99
More of an Effective Evaluator.....	99
Desirous of Input from all Stakeholders .....	100
Influenced as a Scholar .....	101
How to Engage in Scholarly Research.....	101
Further Research Interests.....	102
Greater Awareness .....	102
Summary .....	102
REFERENCES .....	104
APPENDICES	
Appendix A Survey for Teachers .....	117
Appendix B Survey for Administrators .....	119
Appendix C Teacher Interview Questions .....	121
Appendix D Administrator Interview Questions .....	122
VITA.....	123

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Matching Data Collection Methods with Research Questions .....	14
Table 2: Timeline for Data Collection and Analysis .....	18
Table 3: Indicators used by Prairieview.....	62
Table 4: Indicators used by Creeksville.....	64
Table 5: Sampling of the Teacher Survey Responses to Short Time Period .....	66
Table 6: Experiences Based on Size and Framework.....	88



## ABSTRACT

This study examined the implementation of the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) teacher evaluation system within two Missouri schools, one comprehensive high school of 1,000 students and another with 350. Framed by theories of sense-making and policy implementation, the study asked: How is the NEE teacher evaluation system being implemented within two different-sized school districts? While most studies of teacher evaluation programs solely use questionnaires, this study collected the following: 64 surveys from teachers and school leaders, 16 observations of teacher evaluations, and 22 interviews of the teachers and leaders involved in those evaluations.

Findings suggest that each school's context shaped how teacher evaluation was implemented. While the larger school operated from a structural framework, the smaller school operated from a human resource framework. These frameworks affected how the evaluation was implemented. When the observations occurred, the length of the observation, and how the teachers received the results of their evaluation were experienced differently between the two differently-sized school districts operating from different frameworks. The study also found that most teachers and administrators in this study believed evaluators' observations should (1) last longer than 10 minutes; (2) be completed by experienced evaluators, and (3) allow stakeholders to choose the evaluation indicators. Lengthened observations would allow administrators more time to see the indicators, the transitional points in the lesson, where the lesson came from and is going, and how students apply the activity. Teachers wanted experienced evaluators who could give recommendations specific to their classroom on how to improve as teachers. The

stakeholders wanted input on the indicators used and also wanted those indicators to be building specific.

The findings presented in this paper give educators a voice in educational research and will assist in the improvement of teacher evaluation. Listening to the voices of administrators and teachers at the local level will not only help foster a better teacher evaluation system, but also in the end produce a better educational system for students.

**Section One**-Introduction to the Dissertation-in-Practice

## Background

Since the development of public education in America, teacher evaluation has changed and evolved. Initially, in the 1700s, teacher evaluation was about supervising teachers and firing them at will (Burke & Krey, 2005). Such “summative” evaluations focused on the retention, promotion, or dismissal of teachers (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007). Then, in the mid-1800s, teacher supervisors began to focus on improving instruction through individual training (Blumberg, 1985). These were a kind of “formative” evaluation, designed to support the professional growth of the educator (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007). Over time, schools in the U.S. have embraced both summative and formative evaluations, believing they are necessary “for student achievement and overall school improvement” (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007, p. 89), and these beliefs carry over to the present time.

Since the passage of the federal education act *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), there is a renewed focus on teacher evaluation across the country. A major intent of NCLB was closing the achievement gap between students from differing backgrounds (NCLB, 2001). NCLB (2001) required all public school teachers to be “highly qualified” and to use scientifically research-based teaching methods. The law also expected students to achieve proficient scores on state standardized tests, but too many schools never made their goals of “Adequate Yearly Progress” or AYP (NCLB, 2001). Therefore, in 2011, states were granted the option to apply for “waivers” from the requirements of the law, and in return, they had to use “research-based, teacher evaluation methods” (Center on Education Policy, 2011). In turn, new systems of teacher evaluation came into being, such as the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) in the

state of Missouri. There is little known, however, about the process of implementing such evaluation systems: How do teachers perceive the intentions of such systems? How do principals understand their purpose and then enact them?

Implementing a new policy, such as the NEE evaluation system, is a complex process. Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) defined implementation as what “takes place between the formal enactment of a program by a legislative body (or, in some instances, a chief executive or the courts) and its intended and unintended impacts” (p. xi).

Implementation research reveals that policy design, people, and places affect implementation (Honig, 2006). Individuals can advance or impede the outcomes of a policy. The purpose of this study was to analyze the implementation of new teacher evaluation systems, specifically, how NEE has been implemented in two rural Missouri school districts. Before studying whether a new teacher evaluation system works, its implementation must be understood. In particular, how do teachers and administrators understand (and then implement) the process? The findings of this study can be used to assist principals if they choose to implement new teacher evaluation systems, such as NEE.

### **Statement of Problem**

In Missouri, school districts are given multiple options for research-based teacher evaluation methods including, but not limited to: the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) program, NetChemia, Marzano’s iObservation, Charlotte Danielson’s Teachscape, and the NEE program. Nearly half of Missouri school districts have chosen to implement the NEE program and over 25,000 teachers are being evaluated on their teaching effectiveness using NEE (NEE, 2015). However, despite its

widespread use, there has been very little systemic study of its implementation, which depends upon the social interactions and perceptions of teachers and principals. There are three specific reasons to examine the principals' and teachers' perceptions of NEE, which will ultimately provide insight into the effective and ineffective components of such systems.

First, the mission of NEE is to use evaluation to enhance the effectiveness of K-12 educators and, in turn, to improve student achievement. NEE trains and provides resources to school administrators to be evaluators in (what aims to be) a uniform evaluation system. According to NEE website (2015), “The system is designed to be fair, trustworthy, and applied equally for all teachers” (Advantages for administrators section, para. 3), but this requires shared understandings across all participants, as teachers are evaluated through classroom observations, student surveys, units of instruction, and professional development plans. At the time of this writing, there was one study, a dissertation (Katzin, 2014), focusing solely on whether *teachers'* instructional practices changed after their NEE evaluations. A second study (Bergin, Wind, Grajeda, & Tsai, 2017) describes the accuracy of principals' evaluation ratings using the NEE process. However, these are the only two studies published about NEE. There are very few on teacher evaluation systems in other states, as described in detail in Section 3.

Second, little research has addressed “the silent voices of the teachers” (Smit, 2005, p. 295) in regards to policy implementation. Smit (2005) recommended “better informed choices regarding policy implementation could be made if qualitative findings from teachers as local knowledge were considered” (p. 294). Principals and teachers ultimately are the ones implementing and directly impacted by policymakers' creation of

new evaluation practices. Listening to the voices of administrators and teachers at the local level will help foster a better teacher evaluation system and in the end produce a better educational system for students.

Third, NEE is primarily being implemented in rural school districts across Missouri, perhaps in part because the director of NEE had personal connections to rural areas. Educational research in general has focused on urban schooling, to the neglect of rural contexts (White & Corbett, 2014). Missing information from rural areas “keeps us from learning more answers” (Sherwood, 2000, p. 3). This study will help to alleviate the gap in literature in the area of rural research and give a wider array of educators a voice in the implementation of teacher evaluation.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The objective of this qualitative study was to explore how NEE is being implemented through the perceptions of teachers and evaluators who are the most important stakeholders in this system. Examining how NEE is being implemented in two school districts may shed light on the influence of context on educational policy implementation. Moreover, methods and strategies can be discovered to help schools effectively implement the NEE program and teacher evaluation. Ultimately, these methods and strategies could then assist administrators and teachers in the development of good teaching and in turn help students experience success. In summary, by analyzing educators' perceptions of the NEE implementation process, this research study sought to help administrators more effectively implement teacher evaluation, which research suggests is an important component to provide effective educational experiences for students (Darling-Hammond & Young, 2002; Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011).

### **Research Questions**

The overarching question for this study was: How is the NEE teacher evaluation system being implemented within two different-sized school districts? The sub questions for this study were:

- What are the perceptions of teachers and administrators on the implementation of teacher evaluation?
- How do teachers and administrators experience the evaluation process?

### **Conceptual/Theoretical Framework**

As discussed in more detail in Section 2, this study was framed by theories on policy implementation, sense-making in educational policy implementation, and studies of teacher evaluation systems. Individuals in an organization affect the implementation of policy, or in the case of this study, the implementation of teacher evaluation systems. Reviewing the theories and research on how individuals or groups of individuals can advance or impede policy outcomes will assist the researcher in understanding all of the components that may shape the implementation of teacher evaluation systems, in particular those created as a result of federal NCLB policy waivers.

### **Theories of Policy Implementation**

Three theories of policy implementation include: technical-rational, mutual adaptation, and sense-making. Technical-rational perspective builds on classical management theory (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). This perspective views change as top down, placing control of organizations in the hands of policy makers. The second perspective of mutual adaptation stresses how policies interact between the local level and the policy makers. Factors and the context affect policy outcomes (McLaughlin,



1987). This perspective puts importance on how policy works from the bottom up in conjunction with top-down mandates. From this perspective, blame for success or failure of a policy may be placed on the local implementers. The third perspective of sense-making is closely related to mutual adaptation. According to Datnow and Park (2009), this perspective builds on mutual adaptation by “elaborating on the interconnections between actors and explaining just exactly how context has shaped policy implementation” (p. 350) by highlighting how implementers’ context, experiences and thinking influence implementation outcomes.

### **Sense-making and Policy Implementation**

The focus of this study was the sense-making of the local participants (the administrators and teachers) in a teacher evaluation system. Specifically, this study looked at implementation through a cognitive lens because “cognition is an essential lens for understanding policy implementation, especially the implementation of policies that demand significant shifts in teachers’ practice” (Spillane, Reiser, and Gomez, 2006, p. 48). Cognitive theory focuses on how individuals use prior knowledge and experiences to make sense of policy and how they accept, alter, or ignore policy based on the mental models they possess (Spillane et al., 2006). This study also looked at sense-making from a constructivist perspective because participants use their prior knowledge and experience to construct meaning of educational policy.

There were two important components to consider on the implementation of teacher evaluation. The first component to consider was how individual’s experiences, values, and knowledge affect implementation. The second component to consider was how an individual’s social context and interactions within the social context affect

implementation. As briefly reviewed in the following paragraphs, this study builds upon the small body of research that examines the teacher evaluation process through these lenses.

**Implementer's individual experiences, values, and knowledge.** According to Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002), an individual's use of new information is impacted by "prior knowledge, expertise, values, beliefs, and experiences" (p. 393). A teacher's or administrator's prior experiences may cause them to misinterpret policy and implement the policy in a way inconsistent with the designer's original intent (Spillane et al., 2002). An individual's experiences also affect their values. Dorner's (2011) research on implementing dual language education found individuals' values do shape the outcomes in the implementation of educational policies.

Knowledge or lack of knowledge also influences the implementation process. A study by Herlihy et. al. (2014) showed concern with how much training administrators received to effectively rate teachers. The study also expressed concerns on whether the rater was an expert in the subject area s/he was rating. Lack of knowledge by the implementer can affect their sense-making and implementation of the policy. Hill and Grossman (2013) found three quarters of teachers in their survey felt their evaluations failed to show any areas for improvement. According to Hill and Grossman (2013), teacher evaluation reformers must carefully consider designing policies supporting teacher learning. Particularly, policy design must include examination of evaluation instruments, raters, and teacher feedback.

**Social context and local interactions.** Interacting and talking with others can assist in interpreting and making sense of policy (Brown & Campione, 1990; Brown,

Collins, & Duguid, 1989). Spillane et al. (2002) stated, “Group interactions bring insights and perspectives to the surface that otherwise might not be made visible to the group” (p. 406). When teachers frequently interacted with colleagues on policy, their interpretations led to more engagement with the policy and to understanding policy standards in ways which “resonated with policymakers’ proposals” (Spillane et al., 2002, p. 407). If teachers isolate themselves, they miss out on ideas, knowledge, and being exposed to different understandings of the policy. Teacher evaluation is an interactive process between the teachers and administrators. Therefore, studying both groups and how they interact in the implementation process is important.

McLaughlin (1987) stated, “Organizations don’t innovate or implement changes, individuals do” (p. 189). McLaughlin (1987) wrote the implementer’s willingness is one of two main factors on which the successful implementation of policy depends. Tuytens and Devos (2014) shared that a teacher evaluation system can be outstanding, but such a system may fail to meet its aims if the principal or implementer is unsupportive of the policy. Research by Firestone (1989) showed how implementers tend to modify or oppose policies that do not fit into their own interests or agendas. It is important for policies to be clear and for proper supervision to occur during the implementation of policy to guard against self-interest of the individuals involved. Individuals will interpret policies to meet their own self-interests.

**Teacher evaluation policy research.** A few studies have explored teachers' perceptions of teacher evaluation (Atkins, 1996; Wang & Day, 2002; Zimmerman, 2003; Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003), and one of the studies further examined teachers' perceptions of principals during the evaluation process (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton,

2003). A common theme among the studies was teachers wanted to be more involved in the teacher evaluation process and have an opportunity to give input into the process. As reviewed in more detail in Section 3, these studies used surveys or questionnaires to collect data, but did not include observations. Furthermore, principals' perceptions were not a component of these studies.

### **Design of the Study**

This study was a qualitative, comparative case study (Merriam, 2009) focused on two rural high schools in Missouri, one with over 1,000 students and one with 350 students. Data collection methods included classroom observations, document collection, personal interviews, and surveys. The purpose was to find commonalities and differences in the implementation and interpretation of the NEE evaluation system. As discussed in more detail in the following sections, the study began with a survey of all teachers and administrators within the two high schools, and then continued with observations and interviews of sixteen teachers and six administrators.

### **Setting**

For this qualitative study, two school districts with rural ties were chosen. The study focused on the implementation of NEE at the districts' high schools, as the researcher has been an educator on the high school level for twenty-two years and Business Department chair for ten years. Each high school was in at least its second year of implementing NEE, meaning implementers had completed at least one year of training. Also, the schools were chosen based on the willingness of the principals and superintendents to participate.

## **Participants**

Purposeful sampling was used to select the schools and the participants within those schools. Merriam (2009) defines purposeful sampling as selecting a sample from whom the most can be learned. Hence, schools that had implemented NEE for at least two years were selected. Anonymous surveys (see Appendices A and B) were sent out to all teachers and administrators within each high school building to not only collect data about the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of teacher evaluation, but also to provide the researcher's contact information for those interested in the opportunity to further participate in the study through observations and interviews. At the larger school fifty-one teachers out of fifty-two returned the surveys for a response rate of 98%. The smaller school had a much smaller response rate of twenty-two percent with eight teachers out of thirty-six teachers returning the survey. Five of the six administrators returned the survey.

Next, using criterion-based selection, sixteen teachers who expressed interest on the consent form were asked to participate in additional research activities. LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch (1993) defined criterion-based selection as making a list of criteria and then finding participants matching those criteria. The criteria for this study aimed to include, from each school: (1) at least four teachers who were new to teaching (0-3 years experience); (2) at least eight teachers who had experience with at least two different teacher evaluation models (5+ years experience); and (3) at least one administrator/evaluator from each school. Having such criteria and purposeful sampling techniques allowed this study to tease out whether and how teacher life stage and prior experience with evaluation models might impact their sense-making about the NEE

process (Drake, Spillane, & Hufferd-Ackles, 2001). Due to great interest in the study at the larger school, the researcher had to randomly select from the teachers who returned the consent form. The makeup of the participants, eleven teachers at the larger school and five at the smaller school, met all the desired criteria.

As evaluation is a very personal matter, each of the sixteen teachers gave their consent to participate in the study and their evaluators consented to participate, as well. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, the researcher felt redundancy or saturation was reached by including sixteen teachers and six administrators.

### **Data Collection Tools**

Multiple data collection tools were used in this study to answer the research questions. Specifically, the study included building-wide surveys for teachers and administrators, observations of 16 teacher evaluations, and follow-up interviews of teachers and evaluators involved in the process. See Table 1 for a connection between the data collection tools and the research questions.

**Surveys.** Appendices A and B include the surveys used in this study to explore participants' perspectives on the implementation of NEE within their buildings. Such a building-wide survey gave all stakeholders an opportunity to voice their opinions anonymously. The teacher survey included three demographic and four open ended questions. The demographic questions were to determine the teacher's years of experience, their curricular area (to make sure all areas were represented), and how many evaluators they have experienced in their teaching career. The first open-ended question asked for effective components of an evaluation system. The second question was a three part question. The first part asked how teachers have experienced the Network for

Educator Effectiveness (NEE) with sub parts including what is your opinion of the ten minute administrator observation and how does NEE compare to other evaluation systems? The third question was: has NEE helped improve your teaching and if yes, how and if no, why not? The last question was what teachers would recommend to help improve teacher evaluation.

A separate survey was prepared for the administrators to find how they specifically experienced the NEE evaluation process. The administrator survey also began with three demographic questions. The first question asked how many years did you teach, followed up by how many years as an administrator. The last question was how many teachers they evaluated. These demographic questions were followed up with five open-ended questions. The administrator questions nearly mirrored the teacher's question with the addition of how has NEE changed in its implementation in your district since its inception? Both surveys also had a consent form attached asking for contact information of any teacher wanting to participate further in the study, specifically in interviews and observations.

The surveys were given out to the teachers during their monthly building-wide meeting at the larger school, and the principal left the surveys in the teachers' mailboxes at the smaller school. The surveys were paper and pencil surveys rather than electronic. There is a perception electronic surveys are not anonymous and the researcher wanted the teachers and administrators to feel free to give honest feedback. To encourage participation, teachers and administrators were also given a ticket by the building secretary when they placed their surveys in a drop box. This ticket gave them an opportunity to have their name drawn for a \$100 gift card at each school.

**Table 1***Matching Data Collection Methods with Research Questions*

Research Question(s)	Data Collection
How is the NEE teacher evaluation system being implemented within two different-sized school districts?	Answered by surveys, interviews, and observations of both teachers and administrators
What are the perceptions of teachers and administrators on the implementation of teacher evaluation?	Answered by surveys given to teachers and administrators Answered by interview questions given to teachers and administrators
How do administrators and teachers experience the evaluation process?	Answered by the interview questions and observations

**Observations and Interviews.** The next step of the study was to select teachers and then observe them during their ten-minute classroom observations with the principals. In the NEE evaluation system, the teachers do not know when the evaluator will pop-in. For this study, the administrators knew I was coming, but all visits with the evaluators were unscheduled visits as normal for all but one teacher, whose administrator gave her a forewarning. With participants' permission, the ten-minute sessions were voice recorded to aid in transcription and coding of the data. Not only were the observations and interviews recorded but they were transcribed, resulting in one hundred and one pages of single spaced field notes.

After the observation, NEE trains the evaluators to do a formal post observation meeting with the teacher. The researcher did not attend the post observation meeting to allow openness between the teacher and principal. Merriam (2009) shared "the mere presence of the observer in the setting can affect the climate of the setting" (p. 127). The researcher then returned to separately interview the teacher and evaluator about the post



observation meeting (see Appendices C and D for the interview guides). These interviews took place after the teachers received their NEE formative report.

The teacher interview questions (Appendix C) began with the teacher describing their teaching background to learn about the teacher's experience in education. Questions in the second section were then asked to learn how teachers experienced the observation. Questions included whether the observation went as planned, or if they felt the post observational meeting was beneficial to them, or how the observation and post-observation helped improve their teaching. Another question was how their evaluator noticed their strengths as well as areas for improvement. The last question on how teachers experienced the observation concerned the communication with the evaluator during the post observation--whether the communication was one-way or two-way. A final set of open-ended questions included teachers' opinions of department chairs evaluating teachers and their recommendations to help improve the teacher evaluation process.

The administrator interview questions (Appendix D) began as the teacher questions with asking administrators about their educational background. The second set of questions pertained to how the administrator experienced the observation. Questions included when the administrator typically chose to conduct an observation (beginning, middle, or end of a block) and whether the observation went as planned. A third section in the administrator's interview pertained to how the evaluator implemented the NEE process. One question asked: How do your prior experiences affect the conducting of an evaluation? Another question asked how the evaluator used the rating scale provided by NEE during the observation. How the post-observation meetings helped improve

teaching in their building was another question. The last section included questions on how NEE had helped educator's teaching and what recommendations would they make to improve the teacher evaluation process.

### **Data Analysis**

During the data collection process, the researcher began to analyze as data was gathered (see Table 2 for the timeline of data collection and analysis). The first step in data analysis was to compile and analyze the data received from the building-wide surveys. The surveys helped the researcher better understand the context and assist in observing within the context. Secondly, the researcher analyzed the transcriptions of the ten minute observations and the post observation interviews conducted with the teachers and administrators.

**Survey Analysis.** To analyze the surveys, they were first put in order by the teachers' years of experience. The researcher then read, reread and reread the surveys looking for common themes emerging from the surveys. The common themes which emerged from the teacher surveys were: ten minute observations were not long enough, teachers wanted experienced instructional leaders evaluating them who could give suggestions on how to improve their teaching, and teachers want to have input on the indicators used to evaluate them. The researcher wrote those common themes each on their own separate sheet of paper. Then the researcher went through each survey again writing down statements supporting the themes. The surveys were numbered so the statements could be looked at by the teacher's years of experience. Next, the researcher looked at the statements again to see if they could be further broken down to assist in the writing process.

To analyze the administrators' surveys, the researcher read, reread, and then typed them because some were not easy to read. Next, the researcher read and reread the typed surveys, highlighting the common themes emerging. For administrators at the larger school, a theme emerged on how the evaluation experience gave teachers an opportunity to self-reflect on their teaching. Furthermore, three of the five administrators expressed the ten minute evaluations were too short.

**Observation and Interview Analysis.** The next step was open coding of the documents of the observations and interviews. The researcher went line-by-line looking for categories emerging from the data and identifying descriptive words for those categories. These categories centered on the perspectives and experiences of the teachers and administrators as they implemented NEE. The researcher created key words for the themes and wrote the key words next to the text which supported the theme. The interviews were then condensed and put into a table again arranging the teachers by years of experience. Within the table, the researcher used code words to identify the data related to the emerging themes.

The third step in the coding process was to move from open coding to axial coding. Merriam (2009) defines axial coding as "the process of relating categories and properties to each other" (p. 200). The axial coding was used to find categories emerging across the two sites. To do this, the researcher laid out all the tables from the interviews and the thematic papers and notes created from the surveys. With all the documents laid out, they were examined for similar or contradictory themes from both schools.

To integrate the findings from the surveys, observations, and interviews, the researcher created a chart. The chart helped the researcher to organize the topics to assist

in the writing of the findings. Another table was created with the themes emerging from the integrated themes. The themes were linked to the literature review. This table also helped in the writing of the findings.

**Table 2**

*Timeline for Data Collection and Analysis*

Time Frame	Data Collection and Analysis
April 2016	Obtained IRB approval
Fall Term 2016	Administered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator Surveys</li> <li>• Teacher Surveys</li> </ul> Analyzed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator Surveys</li> <li>• Teacher Surveys</li> </ul>
Spring Term 2017	Gathered and Analyzed Data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Field Notes</li> <li>• Semi-Formal Follow-up Interviews</li> <li>• Voice Recordings Transcriptions</li> </ul>
Summer Term 2017	Finished Data Analysis Wrote and Reported Findings

### **Design Controls**

Merriam (2009) shared strategies to ensure reliability and validity of qualitative research, including the use of data triangulation, member checking, and peer examination. The researcher triangulated multiple sources of data to verify the reliability of the findings by gathering documents, observing in the natural setting, and conducting interviews. Having two sites with six administrators and sixteen teachers helped in the triangulation of data. To aid in reliability and validity during data analysis, one other individual evaluated the codes. Creswell (2009) called this intercoder agreement. The

individual was a veteran educator who has been through the doctoral process. The researcher had previously discussed the literature reviewed for the topic. When all data was analyzed the researcher showed the individual the pages containing the main themes with the supporting statements and the tables created from the observations and interviews. The individual encouraged the researcher to create another table linking the research findings to the studies shared in the literature review.

While the researcher was a student in the College of Education at the University of Missouri at the time of this study, and NEE is a part of the College of Education, the researcher had no personal connection with NEE or its affiliates. Having no formal connection to the implementation of NEE gave the researcher an objective eye on the NEE process. However, as a teacher who has been evaluated by NEE, the researcher approached the project with prior experiences that can both hinder and support the research, as discussed in the section that follows.

### **Limitations and Assumptions**

As a teacher being evaluated under the NEE system, the researcher may have biases related to teacher evaluation and the NEE system. The researcher's biases come from over twenty years of teaching experience and being evaluated under several different evaluation models. The researcher has had nine different evaluators in their twenty-two years of teaching. Each of those evaluators implemented evaluation in different ways and under different systems. Biases could have also crept in as the researcher became well-read on how teacher evaluation should be implemented.

Peer examination with a veteran educator not associated with the NEE system or either schools helped to alleviate these potential areas of bias. In addition, having insider

knowledge and having personally experienced a system such as this also helps the research process because the researcher intimately knows the NEE process and how NEE trains their evaluators to implement NEE. The researcher knew what the evaluators were looking for during the observation and ways the researcher's own evaluator has encouraged his growth as an educator.

A second limitation to this study was considering the implementation of only one teacher evaluation system. Further studies could be conducted of other teacher evaluation systems, allowing for comparative analysis between the studies. However, for the time frame of this study and the interests of the researcher, NEE was selected for its newness, its occurrence in rural districts, and its accessibility.

A third limitation was focusing only on the high school level. Teacher evaluation may be implemented differently on the high school level compared to elementary. The perceptions of teachers and administrators at the elementary level may also differ from teachers and administrators on the secondary level. The limitation of focusing on the high school level also is a benefit in that the researcher has twenty-two years of experience working on the secondary level.

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

**Implementation** refers to what “takes place between the formal enactment of a program by a legislative body (or, in some instances, a chief executive or the courts) and its intended and unintended impacts” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1981, p. xi).

**Sense-making** refers to how the implementers' experiences and context influence implementation outcomes (Datnow & Park, 2009).

**NEE Formative Report Form** is the form the evaluator must fill out on the teacher following the required ten minute observation. The formative report contains four areas, also called criterion. A perfect score on a criterion will result in a seven. The results of the formative report are made available online for the teacher to examine before the evaluator and teacher conference about the ten minute observation.

**Summative Evaluation** refers to evaluation focused on holding teachers accountable for their performance, using established criteria. The results of this type of evaluation result in the retention, promotion, or dismissal of teachers (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007).

**Formative Evaluation** refers to evaluation which focuses on the professional growth of the teacher. This type of evaluation helps the teacher grow and improve in their teaching abilities (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007).

### **Significance of the Study**

Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston (2011) asserted 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher evaluation should ensure teachers develop expertise. NEE (2015) is an evaluation platform which encourages educator growth with the intent of improving student achievement. A good teacher evaluation program should support strong teaching, which in turn should support student learning and achievement. Understanding the perceptions of teachers about teacher evaluation can provide insight into how effective or ineffective the evaluation system is at supporting strong teaching. This current study will add to the existing literature on teacher perceptions of teacher evaluation by including observations, interviews, and principals' perceptions.

Most significant, according to Marc Doss, director of NEE at the time of this research, this study will be the first of its kind in Missouri (M. Doss, personal communication, May 6, 2015). Due to over 25,000 teachers being evaluated using NEE in Missouri, this study can have statewide significance, in starting the conversation about how individuals and social contexts may shape implementation of this system, in particular. Moreover, this study provides a voice to rural teachers and administrators implementing NEE, individuals who are not often included in academic research (Sherwood, 2000). Their perceptions will inform educational leaders and policy makers on how to effectively implement a teacher evaluation tool to support good teaching. To inform educational leaders the researcher will share findings through scholarly journals and a case study brief. Educational leaders will then be able to use the knowledge gained on how to effectively implement teacher evaluation in their own districts. This knowledge will support them in their efforts to assist teachers in improving their practice, which hopefully will result in students experiencing success.

The ultimate goal of this study was to help give implementers additional tools to improve teacher evaluation by giving the stakeholders a voice. Not only will this study help educators and principals in Missouri, but it will also inform those who design teacher evaluation policies for school districts. Listening to the voices of those who implement a policy, like teacher evaluation, at the local level will provide insight into effective and ineffective methods and strategies. The hope is for NEE to be implemented justly and equitably to all teachers. This study will also give policy-makers feedback from rural educators who need a voice in the creation of policy. By effectively



implementing teacher evaluation within districts, administrators can help to improve student success which makes this study significant.

### **Summary**

With the waivers received from NCLB and the revamping of Missouri's teacher evaluation, many schools have been thrust into new evaluation systems. The purpose of teacher evaluation is to foster teacher expertise, which in turn increases student achievement as measured by standardized tests. Implementing policy, such as a new teacher evaluation, is a complex process. The sense-making of local participants must be considered as they can affect the success or failure of implementation. While studies exist on the perceptions of principals and teachers on evaluation using surveys and questionnaires, there are few studies on evaluation using observations and interviews. This study adds to the existing literature. It provides a voice to rural educators. Studying the perceptions of the stakeholders on how the NEE system is being implemented will help identify methods and strategies to improve teacher evaluation systems.

**Section Two**—Practitioner Setting for the Study

The following section will give background information on the two schools selected for this study. Pseudonyms are used for both schools in this study. The larger of the two schools, Creeksville High, has been implementing the NEE system for teacher evaluation since NEE's inception in the spring of 2012. Prairieview High School has been implementing the NEE system since 2014. This section will analyze the two school organizations and provide some insights into how leadership at the two schools may impact the implementation of a new teacher evaluation model. The section will end by explaining the implications for the research.

### **History of Organizations**

#### **Creeksville**

Creeksville High is located in a rural town with a population approaching 18,000. The city contains five major factories, a regional hospital, a private university, a community college, and the public school system. The area also has a strong tourism base.

Within the school district there is an early childhood building, five elementary schools, a middle school, a high school, and a career and technical school. The apex of the school district consists of a superintendent, an assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, an assistant superintendent of student services, and a business manager. According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE, 2015), there are more than 500 staff members working together to educate more than 3,600 students.

The administration of the high school consists of a principal, two assistant principals, and a dean of students. The school contains about 1,000 students in grades 9-

12 (DESE, 2015). The percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch is 45% (DESE, 2015). While students come from economically diverse backgrounds, the school is not racially diverse. The school district's ethnic distribution is about 85% white, 10% black, with the remaining students identified as Hispanic, Asian, Indian and Other. There are 52 high school teachers with an average of 13 years of teaching experience.

### **Prairieview**

Prairieview High is located in a rural, farming community. A correctional center, one large factory, and Wal-Mart are the three major employers in the community. Within the school district there are two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The district has one superintendent and two hundred staff members working to educate about 1,300 students within the district (DESE, 2015).

The administration of the high school consists of a principal and assistant principal. The school contains just over 350 students in grades 9-12 (DESE, 2015). The percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch is about 40% (DESE, 2015). While students come from economically diverse backgrounds, the school is not racially diverse. The school district's ethnic distribution is about 90% White. DESE does not list the breakdown for other ethnicities. There are 36 high school teachers with an average of 11 years of experience (DESE, 2015).

### **Organizational Analysis**

The way administrators carry out teacher evaluation and the way teachers experience evaluation is affected by the culture of the organization. To understand the culture of an organization, it is important to have an understanding of four distinct

organizational models described by theories and research, and how these models may affect the implementation of policy within the two districts being studied. Bolman and Deal (2008) named these four organizational frames: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. These frames provide a mental model of organizations, which helps us to understand their makeup and how individuals negotiate within them. This section will consider the two research sites in relation to the organizational frame they seem to mirror. The descriptions here were further examined throughout the course of the research.

### **Creeksville High: From a Human Resource to Structural Framework**

Three years prior to the study, in 2013, Creeksville High most closely resembled a human resource framework. The human resource frame focuses on interpersonal relationships and sees the organization as an extended family (Bolman & Deal, 2008). This frame is all about people, responding to and meeting their needs. Perrow (1973) described an organization focused on human resource where there were natural groups within the organization, upward communication, authority from below rather than above, and leaders who act as a cohesive force. This appeared to be in place at Creeksville High, as it was divided into teams, where the administration had regular conversations with the teams and asked them for recommendations on important issues happening within the school. The administration of the building also met with department chairs and teachers identified as leaders within the building once a month, seeking their input. Prior to such meetings, department chairs and other leaders gained information from their departments, giving many stakeholders a sense of ownership in the decisions made.

Leaders who effectively use the human resource frame empower others (Bolman & Deal, 2008). As discussed in more detail in the following section, studies show effective teacher evaluation systems include teachers and administrators in their development (Stronge & Tucker, 1999; Stronge & Tucker, 2003; Tuytens & Devos, 2014). Involving the stakeholders ensures a sense of ownership and commitment to the successful implementation of the evaluation system (McLaughlin, 1990). Tuytens and Devos (2014) found school leaders, in schools which positively perceived teacher evaluation, were “people-minded” (p. 168). Bigham and Reavis (2001) found the principals who responded to their survey preferred the human resource frame when implementing teacher evaluation over the structural, political, and symbolic frames, meaning that they preferred teacher evaluations that focused on relationships and growth of individuals.

However, leadership changed at Creeksville High in 2014, and this shifted the organizational makeup. At this point, Creeksville more closely mirrored a structural frame. The structural frame emphasizes authority and treats an organization as a top-down process as one might find in manufacturing, where “clear, well-understood goals, roles, and relationships and adequate coordination are essential to organizational performance” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 46). The structural frame focuses on the division of roles to accomplish tasks. Communication is mostly top down. The current administration meets monthly with faculty for fifteen minutes to disseminate information. The principal no longer meets with department chairs or a building leadership team in regular monthly meetings for information exchange. As the scholarly review in Section 3 shows, relationships affect the implementation of policy and the growth of the individuals

within an organization, so this study will continue to carefully consider organizational frameworks throughout the analytical process and as the experiences are shared in Section 4.

### **Prairieview High: A Political Framework**

Prairieview School District most closely resembles the political frame. The political frame is about individuals and groups within organizations competing and negotiating for scarce resources. This frame puts conflict at the center and makes power an important asset (Bolman & Deal, 2008). In the last seven years before this study there were four different principals at Prairieview High. All five teachers who comprised the building leadership team at Prairieview left within the last two years. The quick change in administrators and teachers suggests there might be conflict within this district.

Principals have been compared to the CEO of their building (Haberman, 2011). However, a principal's power may be limited due to expectations and demands that flow from the central office. The culture within the building can also act to limit administrators' power (Kersten & Israel, 2005). Kersten and Israel (2005) surveyed administrators in 102 schools and found 36% of administrators who responded reported unions and the culture of the schools acted as impediments to teacher evaluation. Stronge and Tucker (1999) shared implementing a teacher evaluation system is "emotionally laden and politically challenging." (p. 339).

Furthermore, in the world of education, the school board has the power to create policy and enforce it, so teachers and administrators are not always thought of as political agents in this area (Stronge & Tucker, 1999). However, it is the teachers and administrators who should be a critical part in the creation of teacher evaluation, so they

have a sense of ownership. This sense of ownership can help the stakeholders be committed to the success of the evaluation instrument (McLaughlin, 1991).

### **Leadership Analysis**

The way educators experience teacher evaluation can also be affected by the leadership within the school building and/or district. Northouse (2006) defined leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 5). Studies have found that the school leader plays a crucial role in the implementation of teacher evaluation systems (Hope & Pigford, 2002; Ovando & Ramirez, 2007; Tuytens & Devos, 2014). This section will suggest three key attributes that seem important for school leaders to exhibit when implementing a new teacher evaluation system and how the leaders in the two schools being studied relate to the attributes. The three attributes are building relationships, exhibiting instructional expertise, and being supportive of the evaluation system. By exhibiting these three attributes school leaders should have strong potential to effectively implement teacher evaluation.

### **Relationships and Evaluation**

A study by Wolf, Borko, Elliott, and McIver (2000) found human relationships to be a key component when implementing a new reform. The number one recommendation in a study by Zimmerman (2003) was to build rapport with faculty before evaluating them. Building relationships between administrators and teachers allows for open communication. Danielson (2010) found giving teachers and administrators opportunities to engage in conversations was critical to effective teacher evaluation systems. In a study by Kersten and Israel (2005) sixty-nine percent of



administrators believed having more opportunities for communication with teachers would lead to significant improvements in teaching and learning in their buildings. Stronge and Tucker (1999) also found communication and collaboration between stakeholders to be two of four critical elements of effective evaluation systems.

When principals first sought to build rapport, teacher pedagogy improved and when teacher pedagogy improved so did student achievement. Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton (2003) found, “Relationships between a principal and faculty members has a pivotal effect on instructional effectiveness” (p. 29). The Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton (2003) study shared principals who relied on communication and collaboration created a more positive influence on teachers. Northouse (2013) wrote the key to being an effective leader is how the leader balances relationships and tasks. Relationships are a key component throughout leadership scholarship. Therefore, relationships must be considered as administrative leaders seek to effectively implement teacher evaluation. Of interest during the observation is the hierarchical relationship between the principals in both buildings and their former peers, the teachers.

### **Expertise and Evaluation**

Much has been written in leadership scholarship on leaders possessing expertise. Northouse (2013) shared “knowledge and abilities are needed for effective leadership” (p. 43). Protheroe’s (2002) research brought out how principals must be knowledgeable and experienced in order to evaluate teachers. Zimmerman (2003) stressed evaluators’ lack of skills was one of the primary reasons schools did not benefit from teacher evaluation. When principals are knowledgeable and experienced, they can critique and evaluate. Zimmerman and Dickert-Pelton (2003) wrote, “An experienced and successful educator

is a more effective evaluator” (p. 34). Hill and Grossman (2013) pointed out administrators’ expertise in the content area determines the feedback teachers receive. Therefore, administrators need instructional expertise to ensure a strong teacher evaluation.

The NEE system trains principals on how to rate teachers. The principals are rating teachers on general categories not subject specific areas. The principal of Creeksville High was a classroom teacher for four years before becoming a dean of students for four years.

The principal at Prairieview High was a classroom teacher for twenty years, receiving a distinction in teaching award by a national organization. Teachers within Prairieview High may perceive this administrator as possessing expertise in teaching due to the years in the classroom and the distinguished teaching award. The principal has a strong background in math, science, and vocational courses.

### **Supportive of Evaluation**

In order for teacher evaluation to be successful, school leadership must be supportive of the evaluation system. Greene (1992) stated, “School leadership was the single most influential force in the model’s implementation” (p. 145). “No reform efforts, however worthy, survives a principal’s indifference or opposition” (Evans, 2001, p. 202). Davis, Ellett, and Annunziata (2002) shared case studies showing teacher evaluation has little meaning if school leadership is not supportive of it. Their study also showed school leadership impacted the opinions of teachers on teacher evaluation. The first case study was in a school where the principal was labeled as hostile to the new teacher evaluation system and expressed these concerns to the teachers. When the

teachers were interviewed they expressed these hostile views and mistrust of the new evaluation process. Stronge and Tucker (1999) gave organizational commitment to reform as one of four primary elements to successfully implementing teacher evaluation. Knowing support by school leadership is of primary importance; new teacher evaluation procedures must be sold to school leaders implementing them.

The principal at Creeksville High appeared very supportive of the NEE evaluation system. When the evaluation system was first being implemented, the principal held an early release day to educate the teachers on how the system worked, what they would be looking for, and why the system was beneficial. The principal gave all the teachers an opportunity to evaluate videotaped classrooms using the NEE standards. The videotaped classrooms were ones used by NEE to train the principals.

The teachers at Prairieview High experienced four principals in seven years so they may be longing for consistency in teacher evaluation. NEE is touted as a system which aims to be consistent statewide (Assessment Resource Center, 2014). With the current principal of Prairieview having experienced three principals himself in six years, he may appreciate the consistency of NEE. The principal may also appreciate the support NEE provides to new principals.

### **Implications for Research in the Practitioner Setting**

Engaging in a study on the perceptions of administrators and teachers on the implementation of NEE in two rural school districts will give rural educators an opportunity to have a voice. Teachers and administrators within the practitioner's setting expressed an interest in this study as it was being developed. This was the first time that

administrators and teachers in these locations had the opportunity to participate in a scholarly research study shared outside the district.

The findings in this study can be used to immediately impact the evaluation process within the two schools studied. By considering the stakeholders' perceptions, valuable suggestions may be made as to ways teachers have grown through the evaluation process. These findings can then give evaluators tools to improve the implementation of teacher evaluation. When the participants' perceptions are considered in the evaluation process, the educators in both districts will have a sense of ownership in the outcomes. Stronge and Tucker (1999) say when participants are involved they have a sense of ownership and will be committed to the successful implementation resulting in an effective evaluation system. The study will also give the principals and teachers opportunities to reflect on the mental models they have formed. Reflection can also lead principals and teachers to seek ways to improve their practices.

### **Summary**

This section showed how the culture of the organization and the leadership within a building affects the implementation of teacher evaluation. This study will give rural educators, in two different sized districts, a voice and an opportunity to be participants in scholarly research. The perceptions of principals and teachers will be used to assist in the successful implementation of a new teacher evaluation system.

**Section Three**—Scholarly Review for the Study

Teacher evaluation is receiving significant attention in the United States. In the state of Missouri, a new teacher evaluation system, NEE, was introduced in 2012. Findings from this study will provide insight into the perceptions of those who participate in this new teacher evaluation system: the teachers and administrators. In order to properly engage in a study on the implementation of NEE, one needs to understand the history of teacher evaluation, the purposes and methods of teacher evaluation, and the research and key concepts surrounding educational policy implementation.

### **History of Teacher Evaluation**

Knowing the history of teacher evaluation gives the researcher knowledge of how the process has evolved over time and how teachers and administrators have experienced evaluation in the past. Knowledge of the history also gives perspective on how evaluation processes have evolved into what administrators and teachers experience today. For years, teacher evaluation focused on summative assessment, providing teachers with a ranking and determining their job security based on their evaluation. Now, the primary focus is formative, meaning that the goal of evaluation is to coach the teachers into being better educators. If an educator is struggling in a certain area, resources are to be provided to help them improve upon the area. Some of the changes in teacher evaluation occurred because teacher evaluation literature post World War II stressed teachers as practitioners developing expertise (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011).

Teacher evaluation dates back to the 1700s when towns turned to clergy to oversee education. In early America, education was not considered a discipline (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Therefore, clergy were chosen to supervise

schools because of their abilities to guide religious instruction in communities (Tracy, 1995). These supervisors could hire and fire teachers at will (Burke & Krey, 2005). Beginning in the 1800s, schools chose a classroom teacher to become a principal teacher and carry out administrative duties (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). These supervisors needed to have “subject area knowledge and teaching skills” (Tracy, 1995, p. 323) for which clergy were not trained.

Teacher evaluation in the late 1800s and early 1900s was affected by the writings of Frederick Taylor. Taylor’s engagement in scientific management sought better ways to accomplish factory tasks and increase output (Taylor, 1913/2005). Ellwood Cubberly took Taylor’s scientific approach and adapted it for education. Cubberly (1929) gave examples of how supervisors could apply scientific management when visiting teachers’ classrooms. Teachers were rated from A to F and given feedback for improvement. Wetzel (1929) proposed using aptitude tests, measurable objectives, and reliable measures of student learning to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers.

Following World War II the teacher evaluation literature moved from a scientific approach to a view of teachers as individuals developing educational expertise (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). The importance of teacher observation developed during this era. In 1952, Matthew Whitehead stressed the significance of the principal conferencing with teachers following their observation to help teachers be more effective in their practice. In the 1960s and 1970s clinical supervision emerged in education just like the medical field. According to Goldhammer (1969), discussions about classroom observations between teachers and supervisors allowed both teachers and student teachers to grow. Goldhammer (1969) designed a five phase process for evaluating teachers: a

pre-observation conference, a classroom observation, an analysis of data, a supervision conference, and an analysis of the analysis.

In the 1980s, teachers were evaluated based on the work of Madeline Hunter. Hunter created a seven-step model for lesson design (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Hunter also encouraged professional development and did much to create a common language in instruction. Administrators used Hunter's model to evaluate teachers' classroom performances. An important study also came out in the 1980s on teacher evaluation. This RAND study looked at what evaluation procedures were occurring throughout the United States. Findings from this study showed administrators did not have enough competence to evaluate nor were they offered training (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, & Bernstein, 1984). Furthermore, teachers resisted feedback and evaluations were not uniform (Wise et al., 1984).

Evaluation in the 1990s was influenced by the work of Charlotte Danielson. Danielson (2007) created a framework for evaluation containing four domains. The four domains included: planning and preparation, environment of the classroom, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Each domain contained elements of quality teaching for an evaluator to consider while observing. Performance would be rated as unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished.

In 2009 an important study by Weisburg, Sexton, Mulhern, and Keeling entitled *The Widget Effect* criticized teacher evaluation practices. Twelve districts in four states were studied. Seventy-three percent of the teachers surveyed reported their most recent evaluation did not show any areas for improvement. Of the remaining twenty-seven percent, only forty five percent reported they were given support through the evaluation



to help them improve (Weisburg et al., 2009). Weisburg et al. (2009) suggested an overhaul of the teacher evaluation system. A second study, the Measures of Effective Teaching Project, funded by the Gates Foundation (2013), had major implications for teacher evaluation. The study began in 2009 and lasted three years. Some findings from the study included: (a) effective instruction can be measured, (b) multiple measures such as classroom observations, student surveys, and measures of student achievement gains should be used, and (c) a second observer increases the reliability of the observation (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013).

### **Current Policies Impacting Teacher Evaluation**

By 2015, two federally-managed educational policies were impacting teacher evaluation: *Race to the Top* grant program and the *No Child Left Behind* waivers. President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced Race to the Top in 2009. Race to the Top was intended to create reforms in education and innovation. Through this program over \$4 billion in grant money was available to districts that implemented rigorous teacher evaluation, adopted standards and assessments that prepared students for college and the workplace, and increased achievement in the lowest performing schools (Goodwin & Webb, 2014; Rucinski & Diersing, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). In 2010, the Obama administration presented a plan to Congress to reform and waive the *No Child Left Behind* reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The plan was formally presented in 2011, allowing states to waive the requirements of NCLB if they adopted a comprehensive system of teacher evaluation and a college and career readiness program for all students

(U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The state waivers sparked reform across the country of teacher evaluation systems (Pennington, 2014).

Missouri was one of the states to receive the waiver from the federal government in 2012. This waiver was renewed on June 23, 2015 for three years (Kerr, 2015). To meet the requirement of a comprehensive system of teacher evaluation, districts within Missouri, have multiple options for research-based teacher evaluation methods including: the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) program, NetChemia, Marzano's iObservation, Charlotte Danielson's Teachscape, and the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) program. NEE began in 2012 as the collaborative effort of the Heart of Missouri Regional Professional Development Center (RPDC) and the Assessment Resource Center (ARC), which are all part of the College of Education at the University of Missouri. NEE employees train and provide resources for school administrators to be evaluators in what aims to be a uniform evaluation system. According to their mission statement on their website, NEE is designed to enhance the effectiveness of K-12 educators and, ultimately, to improve students' achievement (NEE, 2015).

### **Purpose and Methods of Teacher Evaluation**

Administrators and teachers will experience teacher evaluation differently based on whether the purpose for evaluation is for the professional growth of the educator or for the purpose of rehire or fire of the educator. The methods used in the teacher evaluation process also affect how both the administrator and teacher experience teacher evaluation. Knowing the two purposes of teacher evaluation and how evaluation is being carried out

will help frame this study focused on administrators' and teachers' perceptions and experiences of the NEE evaluation process.

According to Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease (1983), teacher evaluation is defined as "collecting and using information to judge" (p. 290). Tuytens and Devos (2014) stated "teacher evaluation is really about: the improvement of teaching practice in order to improve student learning" (p. 169). Stronge and Tucker (2003) shared the two purposes of teacher evaluation are performance assessment (summative) and performance improvement (formative). Formative evaluations are designed to help teachers grow professionally. Sheppard (2013) shared formative evaluation is focused on meeting the needs of the individual teachers, and summative evaluation seeks to make sure the teacher has met minimum expectations set by the school or state.

When reading the literature about teacher evaluations, a variety of practices appeared. For instance, classroom observations, student ratings, peer review, and student achievement were some methods of evaluation (Barrett, 1986). Classroom observations are "the most popular evaluation method, usually performed annually by school administrators for experienced teachers and more frequently for beginning teachers" (Barrett, 1986, p. 2). Student ratings include surveys, where students evaluate teacher performance (Barrett, 1986; Cantrell & Kane, 2013). Peer review involves colleagues observing each other's classrooms and examining lesson plans, tests, and graded assignments (Barrett, 1986). Student achievement encompasses looking at nationally standardized achievement tests to evaluate teachers and school systems (Barrett, 1986).

NEE uses teacher observation, student surveys, units of instruction, and professional development plans to evaluate teachers. To understand teachers' and

administrators' perceptions on the implementation of NEE, this study will focus on the teacher observation component.

### **Educational Policy Implementation**

NEE is a fairly new teacher evaluation system in the state of Missouri.

Implementation of a new policy is a complex process (Elmore, 1983). Implementation research reveals that the policy itself, people, and places affect implementation (Honig, 2006). Sabatier and Mazmanian (1981) defined implementation as what "takes place between the formal enactment of a program by a legislative body (or, in some instances, a chief executive or the courts) and its intended and unintended impacts" (p. xi). Knowing the history of implementation and theories on how individuals can advance or impede outcomes will assist the researcher in observation, in data analysis, and in bringing valid recommendations to the evaluation process.

### **Policy Implementation History**

Allan Odden (1991) shared three phases of studies on educational policy implementation, with the first phase beginning in the late 1960s. This first phase focused on the implementation of federal policies, specifically the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was originally passed in 1965 (Honig, 2006; Odden, 1991). Research in this first stage of implementation concluded that a conflict existed between the interests of policy makers and the interests of the implementers at the local level. Policy makers' intent may not have aligned with the values or priorities held by the implementers on the local level. Odden (1991) shared there was a lack of "capacity and will" at all levels in implementing governmental policies. According to Odden (1991),

implementation research during this time argued federal and state educational programs were doomed to fail because of local resistance (will) and lack of know-how (capacity).

Phase two began in the 1970s. Smylie and Evans (2006) shared this second generation of research focused on the role local actors played in implementation. Studies showed policy makers created educational programs to be implemented on the local level (Odden, 1991). Studies found new programs initially were met with contention by school districts (Peterson, Rabe, & Wong, 1986). Eventually, the programs were implemented fully because the professionals at the local level and the political communities produced “a workable program” (Odden, 1991, p. 8). Studies showed variations between policy, people, and places “mattered to implementation” (Honig, 2006, p. 7). However, the studies did not elaborate on how.

Implementing a program is not the same as claiming the program is effective at accomplishing what it was created to accomplish (Odden, 1991). Policy makers began to recognize programs were not having their desired impact (Odden, 1991). Therefore the focus for stage three of implementation research in the 1980s and beyond was on how to make programs and policies work. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 helped shift implementation research to how school-based professionals on the local level shaped the outcomes of implementation. Studies looked at how and why local level communities influenced policy implementation (Honig, 2006).

Cohen-Vogel et al. (2015) shared there could be a fourth stage of implementation research. This fourth wave is called improvement science. It seeks to answer the questions “what works, for whom, and under what conditions” (Cohen-Vogel et al., 2015, p. 261), with the intent to improve quality and productivity. In the education field,

improvement science is being called continuous improvement and is organized in cycles of improvement, where “partners develop, test, and refine interventions designed to solve specific problems” (Cohen-Vogel et al., 2015, p. 262). NEE is operating in this fourth phase. Since its inception in 2012 NEE has made changes to the evaluation process to help teachers grow in their teaching abilities. An example of improvements made include adding specific online professional development tutorials linked directly to individual areas where evaluators feel their teachers have deficiencies.

### **Theories of Policy Implementation**

Three theories of policy implementation include: technical-rational, mutual adaptation, and sense-making (Datnow & Park, 2009), and to some degree, they map onto the history of educational policy implementation studies. The technical-rational perspective on implementation builds on classical management theory (Sabatier & Mazamian, 1981). This perspective views change as top-down, placing control of organizations in the hands of policy makers. The second perspective of mutual adaptation stresses how policies are interpreted at the local level. Factors and the context affect policy outcomes (McLaughlin, 1987). This perspective puts more emphasis on how policy is interpreted from the bottom-up. Local implementers are seen as responsible for the success or failure of a policy. The third perspective, or sense-making, is closely related to mutual adaptation. According to Datnow and Park (2009), this perspective builds on mutual adaptation by “elaborating on the interconnections between actors and explaining just exactly how context has shaped policy implementation” (p. 350). Sense-making focuses on how the implementers’ experiences and context influence implementation outcomes.

Cognitive science is an important framework for studies of sense-making. Spillane et al. (2006) argued, “Cognition is an essential lens for understanding policy implementation, especially the implementation of policies that demand significant shifts in teachers’ practice” (p. 48). Cognitive theory focuses on how individuals use prior knowledge and experiences to make sense of something, such as policy, and how they accept, alter, or ignore information (policy) based on the mental models they possess (Spillane et al., 2006). This study will also look at the sense-making from a constructivist perspective because participants use their prior knowledge and experience to construct meaning of educational policy.

### **Sense-Making about Educational Policy Implementation**

Local participants engage in sense-making on an individual and social level. This following section will integrate the sense-making theories of policy implementation, in particular, and the empirical studies of teachers' and principals' perceptions of and experiences with teacher evaluation systems. Taken as a whole, this relatively small body of research suggests that teachers do not generally experience positive outcomes of administrator evaluations, unless bidirectional communication exists between administrator and teacher throughout the process of evaluation. Individual perceptions as well as social interactions can affect the implementation of teacher evaluation policies.

### **Individual Sense-Making about Teacher Evaluation**

An individual’s sense-making impacts an individual’s implementation of policy. Understanding the sense-making in which teachers and administrators engage during the evaluation process will shine a light on the way individuals experience the NEE process.

Educators are often not a part of the creation of policy; however, they are the ones who will implement policies and are considered responsible for the outcomes. Smit (2005) called educators “a silent voice” (p. 292) in the creation of educational policy. Educators come to their professions with years of training and experience, which affects how they interpret or make sense of policies. Educators filter policies and will adopt the parts that fit into their personal perspectives (Smit, 2005). In particular, prior knowledge and experiences serve as a lens for individuals, affecting what they notice and how stimuli are processed (Spillane et al., 2006). In other words, hidden dimensions such as teachers’ understandings of policy will affect the manner in which policy is or is not implemented (Smit, 2005). In turn, if policy is not implemented properly the result can be local resistance and outcomes differing from those intended (Dyer, 1999).

Spillane has done much in the area of cognitive research on how individuals make sense of policy. In particular, his work considered how individuals construct mental models to make predictions about causes and outcomes (Spillane et al., 2006). Senge (1994) explained mental models as generalizations, assumptions, or beliefs individuals hold, which shape how they act. Furthermore, individuals’ experiences within their culture lead to the creation of tacit knowledge (Spillane et al., 2006). This tacit knowledge then forms individuals’ beliefs and expectations on how they view or act in various situations. Once these mental models are formed, individuals pay particular attention to stimuli which confirms their expectations rather than stimuli which goes against their expectations. Individuals form intuitive models, which become imprinted into their biases, expectations, and explanations about how others think and learn (Spillane et al., 2006). Furthermore, when individuals are learning new ideas, this



involves more than just encoding or adding to mental models (Spillane et al., 2006). The already formed mental models may need to be restructured against already existing complex schemas. Spillane et al. (2006) offered important words of caution regarding the development of mental models and policy implementation. Specifically, an individual may learn about a new policy and understand it superficially based on existing mental models, thereby not getting to the deeper meaning of the policy and missing the intended outcomes (Spillane et al., 2006).

These mental models formed within individuals then interact with what McLaughlin (1991) called educators' will and capacity to implement policy. Both of these are beyond the scope of policy itself; that is, a written legislation or new program of evaluation cannot directly shape someone's own desire and knowledge needed to implement. Instead, "successful implementation generally requires a combination of pressure and support from policy" (McLaughlin, 1991, p. 188). Borko, Wolf, Simone, and Uchiyama (2003) claimed that "teacher capacity is a key determinant of the extent to which schools achieve systemic reform" (p. 174), which is why it is so important for new systemic policy reform to be coupled with instruction and interactions for individuals to implement it as intended.

This study will look at how administrators' and teachers' mental models about teacher evaluation formed from prior experiences, knowledge, and values affect how they experience and implement the NEE evaluation process. Not only do educator's individual capacities affect implementation, but their interactions within societal groups can also hinder or help the implementation process.

**Implementation on a Social Level**

Not only is implementation affected by an individual's cognition, but it is also affected by the collective or social cognition of many. The following section will focus on local participants and how they engage in sense-making on a social level. A variety of studies show how individuals' sense-making helped or impeded implementation of educational policy.

**Collaboration.** Collaboration, professional learning communities and social capital influence educators' sense-making about policies. Professional learning communities reach beyond the scope of the local context and seem to do the most to incorporate reforms (Knapp, 1997). Porter, Fusarelli, and Fusarelli (2015) conducted a comparative case study to explore how teachers were experiencing and implementing the Common Core Standards. A key finding was collaboration in professional learning communities influenced participants' interpretation and ultimately the implementation of the Common Core within two elementary schools in North Carolina.

Social capital affects implementation. Smylie and Evans (2006) defined social capital as "the nature and function of social relations and their capacity to support individual and collective development and behavior" (p. 188). Their study shared how social capital is made through social interactions. There are three major components of social capital which greatly affect implementation. These include: (a) trust, (b) communication, and (c) norms, expectations, and sanctions (Smylie & Evans, 2006). Collaboration is necessary for personal learning and for success in organizations (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991).

**Trust.** Trust also influences the implementation process in many ways. Coleman (1988) shared trust is the foundation for collective activity. Smylie and Evans (2006) pointed out in organizations of high trust there was less conflict, along with open communication, which is the second component of successful implementation. Communication allows new information to be introduced thereby educating the participants. The new information or knowledge then affects decisions made and actions taken by the group. Teachers speaking to one another makes a critical difference in reform (Wolf et al., 2000). When looking at the creation of individual human capital and social capital, talk is a key component (Wolf et al., 2000). The last component of social capital is the norms and expectations created by the group (Smylie & Evans, 2006). These group expectations can influence individuals to take action or constrain individuals from taking action.

Hill (2006) engaged in research on language and implementation within school communities and how language complicated implementation. Having discourse within one's community helped shape implementation (Hill, 2006). Implementers' context shaped their understandings of the meanings of words and thus their sense-making (Hill, 2006). Rules of language can vary across different communities and contexts. Hill (2006) also brought to light the importance of understanding technical language and how this affects implementation.

**Positives of social cognition influencing implementation.** Research has demonstrated that when administrators established relationships, built trust among their teachers, and provided professional learning opportunities, their schools were able to successfully implement reforms. Fullan (1997) stated "the best way to deal with change

may be to improve relationships” (p. 226). The following studies also identified how the social and human capital within school buildings gave teachers and administrators experiences to help implement reforms.

Wolf et al. (2000) engaged in a case study of four Kentucky schools as the schools implemented the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). KERA was motivated by Kentucky Supreme Court declaring the state’s educational system was unconstitutional due to significant numbers of students failing. Kentucky sought a major reform of all public schools. Students were assessed to see if the schools were making progress. The four schools in this study contained diverse students with high levels of students receiving free and reduced lunch, indicating poverty. The schools were selected based on their exemplary status. The study found successful implementation of KERA hinged on school personnel relationships. The relationships supported trust and talk among participants. Wolf et al. (2000) stated “the willingness to meet the needs of a new reform is often based on human relationships among principals, teachers, and students” (p. 386). The study also found trust and talk created and confirmed individual and social capital. They found principals, who had been in their positions for a longer period of time and had built trust among their teachers, were able to implement reforms. Principals who also had cooperative styles of leadership with teachers were also able to implement reforms.

Borko et al. (2003) engaged in a case study in the state of Washington of three elementary and three middle schools, which were identified as exemplary by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, administrators at the Commission of Student Learning, and university faculty. The six schools were working to implement an

educational reform act. This act mandated creation of higher academic standards, a state assessment system, and ways to hold districts accountable for results. The study considered six dimensions of school capacity: principal leadership, professional community, program coherence, technical resources, human capacity of individual teachers, and learning opportunities for teachers. The study found the importance of professional development to meet the individual needs of teachers. The authors also found principal leadership crucial to successful implementation and reform, along with the collective commitment of collaboration among teachers and principals.

Spillane and Thompson (1997) engaged in a five year study of nine school districts in Michigan. The researchers looked at three areas of local capacity consisting of human capital, social capital, and financial resources in implementing math and science reforms. They found the ability of administrators to provide learning opportunities and supports for teachers to be important when implementing new reforms. Spillane and Thompson (1997) shared local educational agencies “rich in human capital and social capital will get still richer in the human capital that ultimately matters most—the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers need to teach challenging subject matter effectively to a broad array of students” (p. 199).

**Negatives of social cognition influencing implementation.** The following section will show how teachers’ interactions can impede educational policy implementation within a school building. These previous experiences then affect how teachers and administrators experience the implementation process.

Coburn (2001) engaged in a case study of a California elementary school trying to improve their reading instruction. Coburn (2001) shared how the teachers’ previous

experiences and worldviews shaped their sense-making and whether they adopted professional development presented. The teachers would engage in informal conversations typically with other teachers who were like-minded. Coburn (2001) found these informal conversations could cause different interpretation of the same policies. An example included teachers thinking the strategies in professional development were inappropriate for students on their grade level, the strategies were too difficult for their students, or the approaches were just inconceivable for them to carry out. Teachers then acted as gatekeepers of what information they would apply or even what information they shared with others.

Datnow, Borman, Stringfield, Overman, and Castellano (2003) engaged in a four year study of thirteen elementary schools in California implementing comprehensive school reform. The root of the study was to examine implementation and outcomes of comprehensive school reform (CSR) and to identify practices to improve education for culturally and linguistically diverse students. The study began in 1995, but late in 1996 the district leadership changed. The new leadership did not have the same interest in CSR as previous leadership. During the study there were teachers who held beliefs about the culturally and linguistically diverse students, which had a negative impact on implementation efforts. Some teachers thought the students lacked the abilities to be able to initiate the reform efforts. These teachers' worldview or beliefs compromised the implementation process.

The preceding studies show how trust, communication, and social norms of school buildings can both help or hinder the implementation of educational policies.

Knowing these factors will assist the researcher in formulating questions to ask teachers and administrators on the survey and during the interview process.

### **Studies on Teacher Evaluation**

As suggested in Section 2 of this dissertation, there are a few studies that explored teachers' perceptions of teacher evaluation programs and processes (Atkins, 1996; Wang & Day, 2002; Zimmerman, 2003; Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003). One of the studies further examined teachers' perceptions of principals during the evaluation process (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003). All of these studies used questionnaires to obtain data.

The first study by Atkins (1996) involved fifty elementary and secondary teachers. The study found teachers wanted to be more involved in the evaluation process. Teachers thought their input should be considered in changing the teacher evaluation process. The teachers wanted evaluation to be formative for growth rather than summative for rehire or fire. Another finding from the study was teachers wanted to conference with their evaluator prior to the evaluator's observation and following the evaluator's visit.

The Wang and Day (2002) study involved sixteen teachers from elementary through secondary school sharing their experiences of being observed at different stages in their teaching career. The study found teachers felt their basic need for collaboration with their evaluator was not being met through the observation and evaluation process. Teachers wanted pre- and post-conferences with their evaluator. Due to this basic need not being met, teachers felt they were not experiencing growth.

Zimmerman (2003) and Zimmerman and Delkert-Pelton (2003) studied eighty-six elementary and secondary teachers. The study found teacher evaluation was not working. The teachers wanted more bi-directional communication with their evaluators. The teachers also wanted to be included in each step of evaluation from creation to the implementation of evaluation. Zimmerman (2003) shared five recommendations to improve teacher evaluation. First, Zimmerman (2003) felt evaluators should build rapport with teachers before evaluating them. Second, the evaluation instrument should be individualized to meet the district's mission and the learning community of the school where it was implemented. Third, teachers must be aware of the link between evaluation, professional development, and student achievement. Fourth, teacher evaluation should include multiple sources of data. Fifth, the administrator should be trained on effective ways to evaluate teachers.

A common theme among the studies was teachers wanted to be more involved in the teacher evaluation process and have an opportunity to give input into the process. The studies above used surveys or questionnaires to collect data, but did not include observations. Furthermore, principals' perceptions were not a component of these studies. In contrast, this research study will include not only surveys of teachers and administrators, but also observations and interviews.

### **Summary**

This literature review sought to share knowledge on teacher evaluation and implementation. Teacher evaluation will continue to evolve as educational practices change and political leaders become more involved in educational decision making. What is important is for instructional leaders to effectively know how to implement



teacher evaluation methods, which will help teachers experience growth and prepare students for their future.

**Section Four-Contribution to Scholarship**

### **Perceptions and Experiences of Teacher Evaluation**

Due to many schools' inability to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), specifically that all students be proficient in reading and math by 2014, the federal government granted waivers to states that were willing to meet certain provisions. One of these provisions required states to adopt "research-based, teacher evaluation methods" (Center on Education Policy, 2011). These waivers thus created a flurry of new teacher evaluation programs across the country. In Missouri, one of the evaluation programs was the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE), developed at the University of Missouri. As of September 2016, two hundred sixty-seven school districts in the state had implemented this new program (NEE, 2017).

Despite nearly half of Missouri's schools using NEE, there has been only one study (Katzin, 2014) that examined whether teachers' instructional practices changed as a result of their NEE evaluation and another (Bergin, Wind, Grajeda, & Tsai, 2017) that described the accuracy of principals' evaluation rating using the NEE Program. Other nationwide studies have examined teacher evaluation broadly (e.g., Atkins, 1996; Wang & Day, 2002; Zimmerman, 2003; Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003); however, they have used primarily questionnaires to explore teachers' perceptions of the evaluation process. In contrast, this comparative case study is framed by theories of policy implementation and uses surveys, observations, and interviews to explore both administrator and teacher perceptions of NEE. Specifically, this study questioned: How is the NEE teacher evaluation system being implemented within two different-sized school districts? (a) What are the perceptions of teachers and administrators on the

implementation of teacher evaluation? (b) How do teachers and administrators experience the evaluation process?

The following sections briefly review the guiding frameworks, context, and methods of this study. Then, an overview of findings is presented before providing evidence that details how administrators and teachers understood and experienced the NEE teacher evaluation process. This chapter concludes with discussion and research implications regarding policy implementation.

### **Guiding Frameworks**

Policy implementation has been defined as, “a complex change process where government decisions are transformed into programs, procedures, regulations, or practices aimed at social betterment” (Degroff & Cargo, 2009, p. 47). It is important to study so that “better informed choices regarding policy implementation” can be made (Smit, 2005, p. 294). Principals and teachers ultimately are the ones implementing and directly impacted by policymakers’ creation of new evaluation practices. Listening to the voices of principals and teachers at the local level will help foster a better teacher evaluation system and in the end produce a better educational system for students.

A cognitive approach to understanding policy implementation draws from theories of “sense-making.” Sense-making is using prior knowledge and experience to construct meaning of educational policy. In policy studies that use a sense-making frame, researchers focus on the implementers’ experiences and how context influences their understanding of a policy, and thereby, the policy’s implementation (Spillane et al., 2006). Datnow and Park (2009) explained this perspective as showing the connections between the implementers and how the context shaped the implementation of policy.

Knowing that sense-making is shaped by one's context (Coburn, 2001), this study also considered the organizational framework of each school following Bolman and Deal (2008). The larger school, Creeksville, operated from a structural framework, which emphasizes authority and treats an organization as a top-down process, much like a factory. The smaller school, Prairieview, operated from a human resource framework. In the human resource framework, the organization is seen as extended family and the frame focuses on relationships (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

### **Methods**

The main research question for this study was: How is the NEE teacher evaluation system being implemented within two different-sized school districts? The sub-questions were: (a) What are the perceptions of teachers and administrators on the implementation of teacher evaluation? (b) How do teachers and administrators experience the evaluation process? To answer these questions, the researcher developed a qualitative, comparative case study (Merriam, 2009) of two differently sized rural school districts in Missouri. A comparative case study like this is useful to developing theory about how new programs and policies are implemented, in the hope findings can support stronger practices. One school, Creeksville, was made up of 1,000 students and the smaller school, Prairieview, contained 350 students. (All names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms.)

Data was collected through surveys of the teachers and administrators, classroom observations, and personal interviews. Specifically, the researcher collected fifty-nine teacher surveys and five administrator surveys, which addressed the following topics: (a) effective components of teacher evaluation, (b) educators' opinions of ten minute evaluations, (c) how teacher evaluation has improved teaching, and (d) recommendations

to improve teacher evaluation. Most significant, sixteen teacher evaluations were observed: eleven in Creeksville with four evaluators and five in Prairieview with two evaluators. Each of these participants joined a semi-structured interview about one to eight days after their evaluation. The teacher interview questions (Appendix C) asked questions pertaining to how teachers experienced the observations. Questions included: (a) did your observation go as planned, (b) how was your post observational meeting beneficial to you, (c) in what ways did your observation and post-observation meeting help improve your teaching, and (d) what is the communication with your evaluator like during your post observation meeting. Other questions asked included teachers' opinions of department chairs evaluating teachers, effective components of an evaluation system, how teacher evaluation has improved teaching, and what they would recommend to improve the teacher evaluation process?

Administrator interview questions included when they typically chose to conduct an evaluation, if their prior experiences affected the conducting of an evaluation, how they used NEE's numerical rating score during evaluations, how post-observation meetings improved teaching, what were effective components of an evaluation system, and recommendations to help improve the teacher evaluation process.

By using qualitative methods, this study gives a voice to the teachers and administrators in two rural school districts who ultimately are the ones implementing the program. Such research is rare but necessary, as there tends to be an urban-centric focus in education research (Information Age Publishing, 2015). Hearing from rural educators who are implementing the NEE program can help improve teacher evaluation and in the end help improve the educational system for K-12 students. Ultimately, this study seeks

to find methods and strategies to assist administrators and teachers in the development of good teaching via teacher evaluation, and in turn help students experience success.

### **The Policy Context: NEE Teacher Evaluation in Missouri**

Before turning to the findings, this section will broadly describe what NEE looked like at each of the participating rural schools. Observations first began at the smaller school, where the researcher had no connections. Then, eleven observations were completed at a school where the researcher had more personal connections.

**Prairieview.** Prairieview's high school was a friendly place where principals sat with the teachers for lunch in the same cafeteria with the students. At Prairieview, the smaller of the two schools, the researcher observed five teachers and two administrators. Here, evaluators were looking for the indicators in Table 3, the indicators had been decided upon at the building level by the two administrators and teachers. During research visits administrators always seemed mindful of the end of the period. When the bell rang to signal the end of a block, the administrators made a point of being in the hall visiting with the teachers and students. While walking down the hall with the administrators, they were engaged in conversation non-stop with the students and teachers.

Not only did the administrators display being mindful about being in the hall, but the administrator who conducted observations with me on the first day also displayed being mindful of when they chose to conduct an evaluation. On the first day of observations, as I was walking down the hall with the administrator, he said, "Let me poke my head into this room to see if it is a good day to observe." After briefly stepping into the room, he came out and said, "This is not a good day to observe this classroom."

He proceeded to the next classroom. On another day the administrator and I observed the bypassed classroom.

At the second classroom, the administrator looked in first, then we entered, and sat near the door. There were three rows of desk chairs on each side of the room facing each other. The administrator opened his IPAD to access the NEE forms he used to evaluate the teacher. The principal was looking for four indicators in the timeframe recommended by NEE of ten minutes. The indicators are located in Table 3 and were decided upon by the administrators and teachers within the building. Teachers are rated on each one of those indicators on a scale of one to seven with seven being the highest score. Administrators are “trained to come in at a 3 which is average” (Administrator interview, p. 56).

**Table 3**

*Indicators used by Prairieview*

Indicator 1.2	Cognitively engages students in the context
Indicator 4.1	Uses instructional strategies leading to student problem-solving and critical thinking.
Indicator 5.2	Managing time, space, transitions, and activities.
Indicator 7.4	Monitors effect of instruction on individual and class learning.

While in this classroom, the students were taking turns reading a modern day version of Shakespeare’s MacBeth and periodically discussing what they were reading. When there was a transition in the activity, the principal nodded toward me and we left. The time was almost ten minutes. Seven days after the observation, when the researcher returned to interview, the administrator and teacher had not engaged in a formal



conversation about the observation, even though NEE recommends administrators engage in a post observation visit with the teacher within twenty-four hours of the observation (Administrator interview, p. 62). To receive the results of an observation, teachers receive an email with a link which takes them to their observation results on the NEE website.

**Creeksville.** At Creeksville, the larger of the two schools, the researcher observed 11 teachers and four administrators. Here, evaluators were looking for the indicators in Table 4, which had been decided upon at the district, not building, level. The halls of Creeksville were very orderly and neat with inspirational quotes placed throughout the halls. The school displayed the artistic talent of the students throughout the halls from well-placed artwork on the walls, to sculptures in showcases and even life-sized sculptures hanging in the three story stairwells of people falling.

My first observation was to be with Administrator Martin, but Martin was detained in a meeting so Administrator Shade met me in the hall and let me know the scheduled observation would be made with Shade rather than Martin. At the larger school, each administrator is assigned to certain teachers to observe. Creeksville was also making an effort for all the high school administrators to visit each teacher in the building as well as their assigned teacher. So switching worked out well for both administrators.

The first observation took place near the beginning of the block and the science class was engaged in an interesting activity on topographical mapping. This was a hands-on activity where they drew lines around their knuckles and then placed their hands flat. The lines around the knuckles were then related to the lines on a topographical map

showing the different elevations of land masses. The class was about to apply the lesson to topographical maps, but the ten minute time window recommended by NEE was up and the administrator left. The evaluator missed seeing how the students applied this new knowledge to an activity. Administrator Martin returned from the meeting, and I was switched back to Martin to continue the next unplanned teacher observation the administrators had scheduled.

**Table 4**

*Indicators used by Creeksville*

Indicator 1.1	Demonstrates content knowledge through the use of academic and disciplinary language and facilitates students' accurate use of academic and disciplinary language.
Indicator 4.1	Uses instructional strategies leading to student problem-solving and critical thinking.
Indicator 7.3	Promotes student-led assessment strategies.
Indicator 7.4	Monitors effect of instruction on individual and class learning.

The teacher and administrator engaged in a post observation conference over the numerical scores the teacher received on the indicators within twenty-four hours of the observation. The teacher did not agree with a low score received so they had open dialogue on why the score was incorrect. The teacher shared where the lesson went after the administrator left. The teacher shared they appreciated the different point of view the administrator had who was not their typical evaluator. The teacher felt the discussion was positive, beneficial, and, upon leaving the conference, felt that both sides were satisfied.

### **Overview of Findings**

The following sections are now organized into two main areas, guided by the study's two sub-research questions: participants' *perceptions* of NEE and their *experiences* with NEE. Regarding perceptions, the researcher will provide evidence from the data to support three claims: First, teachers and administrators in both sites almost unanimously agreed that 10 minutes for an observation—what NEE recommended—was far too short for evaluators to develop an understanding of teachers' craft. Second, respondents believed that the evaluator's past experience and knowledge mattered when conducting an evaluation. Third, teachers and one administrator wanted to have input on the indicators chosen to evaluate teachers in the classroom.

The next section will examine how teachers and administrators experienced the NEE evaluation process. Here, I will make three more claims supported by the data: First, the time of the observation differed by building, which seemed related to each building's organizational framework. Second, the length of the observation differed between buildings. Finally, the organizational framework of the school may have shaped how the post observation results were communicated.

### **Perceptions on the Implementation of NEE**

#### **Finding One: Ten Minutes Too Short**

A main finding from the surveys, observations, and interviews in both the large and small school was the ten-minute observation was too short for evaluating a teacher. Thirty-eight of the fifty-nine teacher surveys (64%) and three of the five administrators (60%) who filled out the surveys expressed a concern with the length of the observation. Nine of the sixteen teachers (56%) interviewed expressed their concern. In short,

teachers and administrators at both schools, and teachers of all experience and curricular levels, shared the common concern that ten minutes was too short a window to properly evaluate a teacher's performance.

**Teacher perceptions.** As shown in Table 5, comments on the teacher surveys included the ten-minute observation did not allow the observer to evaluate all components. Respondents claimed this caused the evaluator to be rushed, which may have led to an unfair evaluation. Not only were the evaluators rushed, but the teachers also said they felt rushed to prove themselves and touch on all four indicators the evaluator was looking for in the ten-minute time-period. Many teachers felt evaluators missed the big picture coming in for short periods of time. Finally, some teachers shared they were given a lower score on an indicator that they covered before or after the evaluator came in.

**Table 5**

*Sampling of the Teacher Survey Responses to Short Time-Period*

Teacher Quote
"not long enough to get a sample. . . doesn't reflect entire teaching process" (Survey 20)
"I find it frustrating that only a tiny segment of my instruction is seen" (Survey 26)
"Only a snapshot, does not reflect effectiveness" (Survey 38)
"Observations as a snapshot not effective if the number is low" (Survey 41)
"isn't very long to get a comprehensive view of what happens in classroom" (Survey 40)
"ten minutes of an eighty-five-minute lesson does not provide an accurate portrait of lesson, student learning, educator effectiveness" (Survey 52)

While the majority of respondents disliked the short window, nine teachers preferred the quick visits or were not bothered by them. One teacher shared, “I like the quick window, but am sometimes frustrated when my ten-minute window occurs” (Survey 21). Another teacher stated, “Does not bother me as long as I get numerous opportunities to cover all indicators” (Survey 44). Another response was, “Yes, if the evaluator comes in at least six times a year it will be a good cross section of my teaching” (Survey 48). However, as seen by these quotes and the majority who disliked such a short observation window, teachers felt it was important to have enough time to thoroughly evaluate a teacher’s performance or at least have enough observations over time to give a fair assessment of the teacher’s performance.

The next step in finding the perceptions of teachers was to observe the teachers while they were being evaluated and interview the teachers following their evaluation feedback. While not a question on the interview, the concern over a ten-minute evaluation came out from over half the teachers from both schools and from teachers on all levels of experience in the classroom. A first-year teacher said s/he wanted the administrator to stay longer than ten minutes and observe the next activity in the lesson.

Teacher Dehner, a veteran teacher with over thirty years’ experience, said a ten-minute observation is problematic because evaluators only get an impressionist view of a teacher; the “sample” of teaching is too small. In regards to the sample being too small, the teacher expressed the reality is the evaluators come in three times for ten to fifteen minutes a year. NEE trains administrators to observe classrooms six to eight times each school year. Dehner shared evaluators are trying to find four indicators in a short time-period. Dehner gave an example of how the evaluators miss transitions between

activities in the short observation window. Likewise, Quinn a teacher with over fifteen years of experience stated, “I get three short ones a year **maybe** [louder, spoken emphasis on maybe] and I do not think that shows me as a teacher” (Quinn Interview). Dehner and Quinn are in different schools, showing this perception of NEE occurred across sites. Regardless of the school, experienced and novice teachers felt the time window was too short to get an adequate picture of their performance as a teacher.

**Administrator perceptions.** Administrators are trained by NEE to limit their classroom visits to ten minutes with six to eight observations per school year. The expectation is for the administrator to look for all four indicators during each observation. Three of the five administrators (60%) who filled out surveys also felt the ten-minute window was too short (Surveys 2, 3, 5). For example, one wrote: “I like the overall idea; however, ten-minutes is a short window to see multiple indicators” (Survey 3). Another administrator felt that especially in block scheduling a slightly longer stay is necessary (Survey 5). When interviewing Administrator Gregg, a teacher was frustrated because Gregg did not fully understand where the lesson had come from or where the lesson was going in the snapshot of ten minutes. Therefore, the teacher did not feel his evaluation of her was accurate. Administrator Shade expressed, “We are in there for only ten minutes which sometimes is frustrating because you do not get to see everything.” Shade went on to say, “I don’t think you can count on just a ten-minute or fifteen-minute snippet of a classroom. You have to get to know the teacher as a whole when you are working with them.” While the observation time was considered too short by administrators and teachers, there was one positive—administrators getting in the classroom more often.

The administrators felt the NEE system got them in the classrooms more often to offer coaching opportunities (Surveys 2, 5). Shade would like to see an evaluator whose only job is to be in the classroom all day. Shade shared the process has gotten “a little watered down from what we hoped it to be in the inception.” Administrator Mason mirrored this concern when asked for a recommendation to improve evaluation. Mason commented, “Our administrators need to get in the room more often.” Administrator Kramsey recommended spending more time with teachers who are struggling and need help than with the high-quality teachers who are excelling and doing what they are supposed to be doing.

**Summary of short time frame.** The surveys, observations, and interviews show the ten-minute window teachers and administrators experience for evaluations should be reconsidered. Teachers and administrators at both schools perceive lengthened observation time would allow evaluators more time to look for their four indicators, allow administrators to see transitional points in the lesson, allow administrators to see where the lesson came from and where it was going, and allow the administrators more opportunities to see how the students apply the curriculum being taught.

### **Finding Two: Experience Matters**

There were no questions on the teacher surveys regarding evaluators’ knowledge or experience. However, thirteen teachers out of fifty-nine surveyed respondents (22%) expressed the importance of having evaluators who were curriculum and instructional leaders. Moreover, in our discussions about whether department chairs should be involved in the evaluation process, 100% of the interviewed teachers volunteered that it was important for evaluators to have experience in their area of curriculum and

instruction. This next section will share teachers' and administrators' perceptions on why experience matters for the evaluator and how respondents perceived that experience would support teacher growth.

**Teacher perceptions.** Teachers perceived a lack of experience affected the evaluators' ability to give recommendations/strategies on how teachers could improve and grow. Experience and knowledge also affected an evaluator's ability to properly and effectively rate the teachers. As shared in the literature review, "An experienced and successful educator is a more effective evaluator" (Zimmerman & Dickert-Pelton, 2003, p. 34).

**Feedback.** Teachers at both schools wanted experienced administrators who could give helpful feedback. A veteran teacher stated, "In essence, an evaluation to be effective needs to do two things: Give honest feedback and offer concrete guidance. Most evaluations, in my experience, can do neither particularly well. The most glaring deficiency is in the area of guidance, however" (Survey 58). The veteran teacher went on to state, "NEE needs to train its evaluators to be able to offer real, useable, immediate, guidance. Not transfer the problem by directing teachers to watch videos or terminology laden articles that do not help" (Survey 58). Similarly, in an interview, Teacher Dehner felt the administrators needed to be trained on how to remediate situations and give feedback and not just say watch videos on the topic on Ed Hub. Finally, a teacher with three to eight years of experience stated, "All I get is a score. I wish our curriculum leader would give a tip, strategy, anything instead" (Survey 11).

**Knowledge of the curriculum.** Teachers wanted administrators with knowledge of the curriculum. A teacher with three to eight years' experience shared, "The people



that evaluate me really have no clue what I am teaching in my elective class. I feel like no matter what I say or do my scores will always be the same because I teach this elective” (Survey 4). There was also a concern expressed among special education (SPED) teachers on administrators not having knowledge of the role of the SPED teachers in the classroom.

Teacher Conley, with eight to fifteen years’ experience, shared communication between the evaluator was one-way and felt it was because the evaluator did not know Conley’s subject area. Teacher Conley also shared an evaluator could look at how the teacher taught curriculum, “but they would never know if what I was teaching was right or wrong and I think that is huge.” Teacher Netton, with more than fifteen years’ experience, shared how there is training for the evaluation process which is different than training for the curriculum. He shared a story of an administrator coming in from another building and saying, “All your students seem to know what you are talking about, but I sure didn’t.” Teacher Netton, who taught an advanced subject, shared how at the high school level, there are challenges with the evaluator not understanding the content, whereas, a department chair would have the needed background knowledge.

One teacher mentioned an effective component of evaluation is to understand the curriculum being evaluated (Survey 17). Related to the evaluators’ experience was their knowledge of the subject matter. A teacher shared an effective component of evaluation to be administrators who were competent teacher leaders (Survey 42).

On the flip side, it was found that teachers were positive about administrators who had been experienced teachers and about department chairs being a part of the evaluation process. All sixteen teachers, who continued in the study, favored having the department

chairs help in the evaluation process. The interviewed teachers, who were department chairs, wanted to be able to observe and give feedback, but they did not want their feedback to influence the hiring or firing of teachers. Teacher Milan, a teacher with three to eight years' experience had an evaluator with many years of classroom experience in the same area, shared how great the post observation meeting was.

One teacher felt, "It is important that someone has some sort of background in your subject area. If that involves finding veteran teachers or someone else to be able to evaluate, then that is what we need to do" (Survey 16). This sentiment was also expressed by another teacher who thought evaluations needed to be a combination of administration and veteran teachers coming in to observe and offer suggestions (Survey 45). One teacher felt more was learned by talking with fellow teachers than the evaluation process (Survey 18). Multiple teachers recognized a department chair could give feedback that an administrator could not because the department chair knows what the classroom should look like. Teacher Maize, another beginning teacher, shared the department chair has lots of insight and a great background. Teacher Dehner, a teacher with over thirty years' experience, shared: "Teachers in the same subject area would know more what is being done correctly or needs help with."

**Rating.** Teacher Rich shared how evaluators "should be able to justify how you got the score. They also need to be able to tell you how to get to the next level." Teacher Rich went on to state, "I have been evaluated by three different people and all three of them say, 'It looks great. Keep doing what you are doing,' and my response is, 'Why am I not getting all sevens, why am I not getting 100 percent?'" Teacher Twitchell, another

teacher with three to eight years' experience shared, "Just because you do not know the subject area does not mean you score someone low or are not able to discuss it later."

Another example of this came from Teacher Nagle, who also had over fifteen years' experience. The evaluator, who came from a different teaching background with little years of experience, graded Nagle down on critical thinking, stating the students were just naming a compound. Teacher Nagle, shared that the students had to go through thirteen or fourteen rules to decide which rules applied to name the compound. Teacher Nagle went on to say a department chair "would have a better understanding of what the look-fors look like. . .and it is harder if you are not from that background." In essence, teachers wanted to be evaluated by administrators who understood what they were teaching and how they were teaching.

**Administrator perceptions.** While one hundred percent of the teachers expressed their desire to have experienced evaluators only two administrators mentioned how their past experience affected their ability to evaluate teachers. The first example of an administrator not having understanding of a subject area came about during an observation of an elective class. Administrator Kramsey shared doing an observation in Conley's specialty area classroom was tough because Kramsey did not have a background in that area. Administrator Kramsey said, "While I am in there, I try to educate myself watching this and doing an observation." Administrator Rice also shared how a fellow evaluator came from a different content area, "so their perspective is different than mine."

**Summary of experience matters.** In short, evaluators' level of experience mattered to teachers in this study. Teachers described wanting experienced,

knowledgeable evaluators who could give them recommendations on how to get to the next level and improve as teachers. While administrators are trained by NEE to provide a numerical score about the indicators, teachers want evaluators to give specific feedback for their classrooms.

### **Finding Three: Input on Indicators**

A third finding was teachers wanted to have input on the indicators chosen to evaluate them in the classroom. The literature review (Stronge & Tucker, 1999, 2003) also confirmed the importance of including teachers and administration in the development of the evaluation process. Including the stakeholders in the selection of the indicators gives them a sense of ownership and a commitment to the success of the process (McLaughlin, 1991).

The surveys and interviews showed the NEE indicators needed to be building specific and content specific, not a one-size-fits-all system. Context matters when implementing new programs and policies (Honig, 2006). There was a feeling among the high school teachers at the larger school that the indicators being used would not help teachers improve, and that some would be more appropriate at the elementary level than the secondary level. Respondents also felt the indicators did not show if teachers were teaching the correct content in their area. The board office for the larger school, Creeksville High, picked all four of the indicators the evaluators used. At Prairieview, teachers voted on one of the four indicators, and the administration within the building selected the other three indicators. Therefore, the indicators were selected at the building level.

**Teacher perceptions.** In the surveys, despite not having any question directly asking about indicators, fourteen teachers (28%) at the large school expressed the concern of not having input on the indicators used to evaluate them. Later, in the interviews it was found at both the smaller and the larger school there were concerns about the indicators as well. Multiple recommendations from teachers were given, including: input from stakeholders, relevancy of indicators, and content-specific indicators.

**Input from stakeholders.** The first recommendation was teachers wanted input in the creation and selection of indicators. A teacher with over fifteen years' experience wrote: "Get politicians out. Teachers and administrators need to have input" (Survey 32). Another veteran teacher shared, "More input from teachers—those that are actually doing the teaching" (Survey 51). Teacher Dehner, a veteran teacher, felt the evaluation criteria needed to be agreed upon, "rather than just having it thrust upon us." Teacher Roland with eight to fifteen years' experience wanted to know if teachers were involved in the creation of indicators and wanted more involvement in the creation of the indicators. Teachers want a voice in the selection of indicators to ensure their relevancy.

**Relevancy of indicators.** There were many comments related to making indicators relevant to how the teachers taught. For example, a teacher with more than fifteen years' experience shared, "Make them [indicators] relevant to me. How can I be observed on something that I need to do only when my person comes into the room?" (Survey 33). Teachers wanted indicators to match the way they teach. A veteran teacher did not understand why an indicator was chosen and stated, "Having indicators that are normally present and observable would be good" (Survey 49). Likewise, another veteran

teacher mirrored this thought: “An effective component would be an evaluation realizing that certain aspects they are looking for are not always being taught all the time” (Survey 35). An interesting recommendation to address this area came from a veteran teacher: “I think that the process should be flipped. Do some observations of a teacher and then look at what indicators fit with instruction” (Survey 34). In essence, teachers want the chosen indicators to match how they are instructing their students.

One thing interesting about the indicators at the larger school was that an evaluator changed the indicators for a specialty area and let the teacher know ahead of time. According to another teacher, this would make an effective evaluation: “Making the evaluation relevant to the role the teacher is in (Sped teacher vs. Reg. Ed. Teacher)” (Survey 18).

While indicators did not come up on the surveys at the small school, Prairieview, possibly because they did get to vote on one, two teachers of the five (40%) observed and interviewed did bring up their concern with the indicators. One teacher was a specialty area teacher and felt her area needed different indicators. This teacher felt specialty area teachers needed to help form those indicators. When the director of special education observed the SPED teachers at Prairieview, the director tried to make the indicators more relevant to SPED teachers. Having the director evaluate made this more of a fair evaluation. There was a concern among SPED teachers at both schools wanting to have input in forming the indicators.

*Content-specific indicators.* In addition, teachers wanted the indicators to match the content they teach. A teacher at the larger school with three to eight years’

experience stated, “Evaluations need to be realistic for content being taught. Thus evaluations have to be adjusted or content specific” (Survey 8).

At the larger school, four of the eleven interviewed teachers (36%) expressed concern over the chosen indicators. Teacher Conley, a teacher with eight to fifteen years’ experience, shared, “Some of these indicators are not appropriate for all subjects or even grade levels. If these are the indicators in your district, I think that could be looked at by school or subject area.” Teacher Conley was also concerned the indicators did not show whether the teacher was teaching the correct content. In addition, Teacher Nagle with over fifteen years’ experience thought some of the indicators fit better at the elementary level and thought they should be chosen by building as well.

In summary, teachers wanted input in the indicators selected for evaluation. They also wanted the indicators to be relevant to how they teach. Finally, they wanted indicators relevant to their content or specialty area.

**Administrator perceptions.** While there were no questions about indicators on the survey or in the interviews, one veteran administrator from the larger school expressed similarly a concern over the lack of input on indicators. The administrator wrote their recommendation to improve the teacher evaluation process: “Maybe indicators not determined at district level but at building/curricular level” (Administrator Survey 1). The smaller school allowed their teachers to have input on the indicators selected. According to Administrator Gregg at the smaller school there was no “blow back” from the indicators they were using.

**Summary.** The surveys and interviews confirmed the importance of involving stakeholders in developing the indicators. The indicators should be content and school-

level specific. By having indicators relevant to the role the teacher was in, teachers will receive feedback that focuses on helping them improve in their curricular areas.

### **Summary of Perceptions**

The main research question guiding this study was: How is the NEE teacher evaluation system being implemented within two different-sized school districts? Three key findings emerged from the data about teacher and administrator perceptions of NEE: (a) Ten minutes is too short of a time-period to evaluate, (b) Experience of the evaluator matters, and (c) Teachers want input on the indicators used to evaluate them.

As stated above, teachers and administrators believe longer observations would provide evaluators more time to look for the four indicators, to see transitional points in the lesson, to see where the lesson came from and where it was going, and to see how the students apply the curriculum being taught. Secondly, teachers want experienced, knowledgeable evaluators who can give them recommendations on how they can improve as teachers. While administrators are trained by NEE, teachers want evaluators who are instructional leaders with the ability to give suggestions specific to their classrooms. Thirdly, stakeholders want to be involved in the selection of the indicators used in their buildings. They want to ensure the indicators are content and building level specific. Teachers want indicators relevant to their classrooms. As the literature review shared, including stakeholders in indicator selection would give teachers a sense of ownership in the evaluation process. In this previous section the perceptions of administrators and teachers were shared on three main findings. These perceptions were a result of the experiences shared by administrators and teachers. The following section



will share three main experiences depending on the size of the school and the framework the school operated from.

### **Experiences of Teachers and Administrators**

This section answers the sub question of how teachers and administrators experienced the evaluation process. These experiences, on how teacher evaluation was implemented, will be shared based upon whether the experiences were from the small or large rural school and how the framework the school operated from seemed related to how NEE was implemented. The small school, Prairieview, operated from a human resource framework which focuses on interpersonal relationships and views the organization as an extended family (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The larger school, Creeksville, operated from a structural framework which emphasizes authority and treats an organization as a top-down process, much like a factory (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

There were three main differences between how teachers and administrators experienced the implementation of evaluation. The first difference was the administrators in the small school were very conscientious of when they observed the teachers. At the larger school if the administrators planned to visit the teacher, they did. Secondly, at the smaller school the administrators did not always follow the ten-minute observation time window set by NEE, while at the larger school the ten-minute observation window was carefully followed. Finally, at the smaller school the teachers and administrators did not engage in a formal post observation visit, while at the larger school the post observation visit was part of the protocol. The larger school with structured bureaucracy was more likely to remain faithful to NEE's prescribed process and the smaller school which operated on a human resource framework, did not.

**Finding One: Framework Shaping When Observation Occurs**

**Small school occurrence of observation.** Administrators at Prairieview were very conscientious of when they conducted an observation. On the first day of observing, while walking down the hall with Administrator Gregg, Gregg said, “Let me poke my head in and see if this is a good time to observe.” When he stepped back from the first classroom into the hall, he said, “This may not be the day to observe this room.” He went on to the next classroom. The administrator’s decision is evidence of the smaller school working from a human resource framework. In the human resource framework, relationships and the feelings of the employees are put first. The human resource frame can be defined as focusing on interpersonal relationships and seeing the organization as an extended family (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

While Administrator Gregg seemed to be careful when he observed he shared how he tries to be “all over the board” for times he pops in, but admitted it was easier to observe at the beginning of the block. He also shared if a teacher was assessing he did not stay in the room. Administrator Gregg, said even though the administrators in his building are in the classrooms often, they understood how their presence in a classroom could change the behavior of the students and they did not want to impair that.

Meanwhile, Administrator Rice shared he tries to go in the first half of a block to evaluate because the original idea behind block scheduling was for the teacher to provide instruction at the start of the block with guided practice and independent practice at the end of the block. However, he expressed a concern of not being able to see how the teacher held the students’ interest and to see an honest appraisal of how engaged the students were by coming in at the beginning.

As seen at the small school the administrators were careful when they observed the teacher and also made an effort to observe toward the beginning of the block.

Observing at the beginning, when the teacher was more likely to be engaged in instruction during block scheduling, gave more opportunities to see the four indicators.

**Large school occurrence of observation.** At the large school, eleven teachers were observed with four administrators. The administrator would schedule a time with the researcher and select specific teacher(s) to observe. Only once did the administrator not observe a teacher. When the administrator planned to observe two teachers and found the first teacher still taking roll, the administrator temporarily passed on that room to go to the second room first. There was one specialty area teacher that had been forewarned they would be observed. This was a rare occurrence, as NEE trains the administrators to have unplanned visits. All other visits were unplanned, and if the administrator planned to visit that teacher on that day, the observation occurred.

Administrator Martin shared in the interview his system for recording the time of the block he visits. When he visits the teacher's classroom on the following evaluation, he tries to observe at a different time of the block. Administrator Mason shared how he typically went towards the beginning of the block. Administrator Shade waited five to ten minutes before going into a classroom, so the teachers can take care of their attendance and general duties. Administrator Shade also did not go into a classroom during the last fifteen minutes of class. Lastly, Administrator Kramsey observes specialty areas, and if Kramsey knows the teacher is going to begin a new unit, he tries to conduct his observation at that time.

Therefore, the larger school kept to the structural framework. The structural framework operates like a factory where the focus is on completing the task. The larger school completed the task as trained by NEE, where the observations were unplanned.

### **Finding Two: Length of Observation**

**Small school length of observation.** While observing at the small school, the administrators did not stick to the ten-minute observation time period NEE trains their administrators to follow. If the administrator felt they had seen enough, they left. One visit was five minutes. The teacher and an outreach professional were working one-on-one with students. The administrator felt five minutes was enough. As we left the room the administrator said, “We got the idea of what was going on in five minutes” (See Field Notes 12). Another teacher was observed for just under eight minutes (See Field Notes, 4). When the activity was finished, the administrator left. The administrators also pointed out in the interviews how they were frequently in the classrooms and not each visit was to perform a formal evaluation. Administrator Gregg shared, “If we are carrying our IPAD they know what we are doing if we walk into their classroom and stay for more than six minutes.” He went on to say, “If we are in their classrooms for less than that, then they know we are just hanging out. The building is small enough that we can have those relationships.”

**Creeksville (Large school) length of observation.** Of the eleven observations at the large school, only two observations were not ten minutes. The administrators were dutiful to keep to the ten-minute observation window. One of the longer observations was fourteen minutes. The administrator wanted to finish writing up the NEE formative evaluation report before leaving the classroom. The second observation also almost

fourteen minutes occurred in a lab where the students were engaged in an interesting activity. There was another instance at this school where the activity was so engaging the researcher wanted to stay longer to see how the teacher applied the activity, but the time was up, so the administrator left.

The teachers at Creeksville expressed frustration at the short time frame for observations. Teacher Twitchell, with three to eight years of experience, expressed how the short ten-minute observation was frustrating and recommended observations be lengthened. Roland, a teacher for more than fifteen years, expressed the desire for the administrator to stay longer. Roland commented, “The rich environment was after you left.” Quinn, a teacher with more than fifteen years, expressed a concern about when the administrator came in. Quinn would have liked the administrator to come in later, stating he was still getting the ball rolling. Quinn further went on to say, “I feel a lot of the things that were supposed to be observed on I hadn’t gotten there yet.” Quinn shared the students had just gotten to the point where they were going to apply the lesson and the administrator left. Because of this quick snapshot, the teacher spent extra-time in the post conference sharing what the evaluator missed before and after the observation.

Mayweather, another veteran teacher, wanted the administrator to come at the start of the block. In the observation, the administrator came in towards the end when the work was individualized. Coming in to observe when the teacher was working one-on-one with students as needed also made it difficult to hear the teacher giving guidance to the students. Another veteran teacher, Mann, with at least thirty years of experience, also shared the concern with the time of the observation, stating the instruction time was missed. Mann made the following suggestion, “At some time they [evaluator] really

need to see the whole sequence [of the lesson] from start to finish.” Mann also suggested that more time needs to be spent with beginning teachers rather than those who have been teaching for a long time and are doing a good job.

In summary, NEE trained administrators to observe for ten minutes in a classroom. At Creeksville, administrators implemented NEE with fidelity. Also, at Creeksville, if the administrator walked into the room, the teacher knew she or he was being formally observed. Again this school operates in a structural framework. In contrast, at Prairieview, the administrators would stay in the classroom long enough to see an activity or if they felt like they had seen enough, whether this was five to ten minutes. Sometimes they would formally evaluate and other times they would visit the classroom just to drop in. This smaller school operated from a human resource framework, where relationships were key.

### **Finding Three: Relationships Affecting Communication**

There were differences between the larger and smaller school when it came to how the results of their evaluation were communicated. These differences specifically came out in the observations and interviews within the schools. It was found that the larger school carried out a formal post conference after each observation as originally intended by NEE. As you will be shown in the next section the smaller school did not have formal sit-down post conferences, but operated from the human resource framework having informal conversations about the observations which could happen at any moment.

**Small school communication.** It was found at the smaller school that formal post conferences did not necessarily happen. Teachers received their NEE Formative

report via e-mail. If they had questions, they had a conversation with the evaluator in the hall or the office. Administrator Gregg at the smaller school stated, “We probably spend less time on the formal post observation meeting than we do with the daily relationship building.” Gregg went on to say, “The post observation meetings are not on the top of our list in terms of the most important things we do. However, we do want to give that teacher the opportunity to hear our perspective and get feedback.” Another administrator at the small school confirmed that he did not do formal post observation meetings, unless there was a problem. Administrator Rice stated, “I will be honest very seldom do I, unless there is a problem. I kind of let the comments and numbers speak for themselves.” Administrator Rice shared how he casually approached teachers in the hall and lets them know how he enjoyed the lesson.

An example of how teachers and administrators casually conferenced in the hall was shared by Woolverton. Woolverton, a teacher with three to eight years of experience shared, “I did look over my observation scores and did not have any questions at all, so I did not ask to talk to anybody about it.” With this said, the administrator did come to speak to this teacher in the hall about the comments made on the formative report. All five teachers observed and interviewed in the small school felt free to visit with their administrator at any time if they had a question. The administrators were also very open to the teachers coming in at any time. This again was strong evidence of the relationships at this small school. While interviewing Teacher Benn in this school, who had three to eight years’ experience, it was shared, “I think for me they [evaluators] know me not just personally, but they know my background, they know what my strengths are.” The daily

relationship building the administrators focused on in the small school, welcomed informal conversations to happen at any time.

**Larger school communication.** At the larger school, a post observation conference was always an expected part of the evaluation process. The larger school implemented the NEE evaluation process as they were originally trained, having the post observation interview after the evaluation. Administrator Martin shared in the interview how NEE training has changed a bit in this area. Recently, NEE changed the post-observation requirement. Now, according to Administrator Martin, as long as an administrator conducts six to eight observations, the administrator does not have to conduct a formal follow-up conversation after each observation. However, the administrators at Creeksville continued to have the post observation meetings after each observation. All three administrators surveyed at the larger school stated how the post observation conference allowed teachers an opportunity to self-reflect. Teachers were sent their NEE formative report via email, expected to reflect on it, and then shared their thoughts with their administrator during the post observation conference. All but one of the eleven teachers felt their communication in the post observation meeting was two-way. The one teacher who felt it was one-way was from a specialty area, and had an administrator who did not have a background in that area.

**Summary.** The observations and interviews at the two schools showed a difference in how the teachers and administrators experience NEE. At the small school, teachers typically do not have post observation conferences with their administrator. The teachers and administrators have established relationships, built rapport, so that they can talk to each other at any time. The administrators were very conscientious of making



themselves accessible to the teachers, which is another example of the school operating from a human resource framework. At the larger school, the post observation meeting was expected. The process of evaluation was implemented as the administrators were trained. The administrators at the larger school felt the post-observation meeting allowed the teachers to self-reflect and improve the educators' teaching. This structured way of carrying out the post-observation conference followed the structural framework of the larger school.

### **Summary of Experiences**

The final section shared findings to answer the sub questions how teachers and administrators experienced teacher evaluation, thus giving the reader a glimpse into how NEE is implemented. The three main experiences considered were when teachers were evaluated, how long teachers were evaluated, and how evaluation results were communicated.

Answering the question how teachers experienced the evaluation process, the researcher found the small school was guided by the human resource framework and focused on relationships. If it appeared to be a bad time to evaluate a teacher, the administrator carried the evaluation out at a different time. The larger school, which had many more teachers to evaluate, operated from a structural frame: observing the teachers to accomplish the formidable task of completing the required number of observations.

Teachers at the larger school could plan on the administrator being in their classroom for ten minutes, as trained by NEE. The teachers at the smaller school experienced the administrators popping in frequently. The teachers knew if the principal was carrying their IPAD then they were being evaluated.

At the smaller school teachers did not experience the formal post observation conference as intended by NEE. However, due to the relationships formed in the small school, teachers felt comfortable speaking to their administrator any time they had a question on the NEE formative report form they received via e-mail. The larger school carried out the formal post observation conference after each conference. These conferences gave the teacher the opportunity to self-reflect and share those self-reflections with their administrator.

The differences in how the teachers and administrators experienced NEE can be attributed to the framework established in their building. Not only the leadership, but actually the size of the building, may dictate to a certain extent which framework the building operates from. A smaller building may foster relationships, where a larger building may necessitate the structural framework. This may be a topic for another research study. The experiences of administrators and teachers are summarized in Table 6 below.

**Table 6**

*Experiences Based on Size and Framework*

	Large School “Structural”	Small School “Human Resource”
Occurrence of Observation	When Scheduled	If not a good time for the classroom, go to the next teacher.
Length of Observation	Ten Minutes	Observation ended when activity ended or if administrator felt enough was seen.
Results Communicated	Formal Conference	Informal conference, if the teacher had a question about their scores or comments on evaluation. Conference could occur at any time.

### **Discussion and Research Implications Regarding Policy Implementation**

This study on how the NEE teacher evaluation system is being implemented within two school districts revealed an important finding. Namely, NEE was implemented differently between two different-sized districts. Whether this difference was due to the size of the school or the framework the leadership operated from is unknown. However, what is known is that Creeksville operated from a structural framework, just as a factory would operate, and the administrators in this district generally carried out NEE as it was intended to be implemented. This involved conducting ten-minute observations and formal post-observation conferences. According to study conducted by Wang and Day (2002), teachers want pre- and post-evaluation conferences with their administrators. Creeksville administrators felt the post-conferences allowed the teachers an opportunity to self-reflect on their teaching, therefore, improving instruction.

In contrast, at Prairieview, administrators did not always observe for ten minutes. Sometimes their observations were less than ten minutes, depending on the activity in the classroom. Also, if the administrator felt it wasn't a good day for a classroom observation, they passed on and went to another classroom. Tuytens and Devos (2014) found school leaders, in schools which positively perceived teacher evaluation, were "people-minded" (p. 168). Furthermore, Prairieview administrators did not typically conduct a formal post observation conference. Teachers at Prairieview felt a connection with the principals. This connection allowed them to communicate in a more relaxed atmosphere rather than a formal, sit-down post conference. The teachers engaged in informal conversations at any time or any place throughout the school day. Based on Zimmerman (2003), evaluators should build rapport with teachers before evaluating

them. This seemed to be the case at Prairieview with both administrators having recently moved from teaching positions to administrative positions in the building. Leaders who effectively use the human resource frame empower others (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

**Longer observations.** The perceptions and experiences of the teachers and administrators revealed the length of the observation to be inadequate. The teachers perceived that the observation needed to be longer so the administrators could get a full picture of the lesson. The administrators needed a longer observation window to see the scope of the lesson, not be limited to ten minutes. This finding is unique in the area of teacher evaluation research.

**Experience matters.** A third lesson learned was the importance of having administrators who understand the teacher's content area and who have had experience in the classroom. Zimmerman and Dickert-Pelton (2003) wrote, "An experienced and successful educator is a more effective evaluator" (p. 34). By knowing the content area and having years of experience in the classroom, administrators are able to give helpful, concrete feedback to help the teachers improve. This study also brought out how educators are comfortable having their department chairs participate in the evaluation process. The teachers appreciate the knowledge the department chairs are able to share. Hill and Grossman (2013) pointed out administrators' expertise in the content area determined the feedback teachers receive. Protheroe's (2002) research brought out how principals must be knowledgeable and experienced in order to evaluate teachers. This aligns with the Widget Effect where 73% of teachers reported their most recent evaluation did not show any areas for improvement (Weisburg et al., 2009).

Therefore, administrators need instructional expertise to ensure a strong teacher evaluation.

**Input on indicators.** A fourth lesson was the value of giving teachers and administrators input into the indicators used in evaluation. Studies show effective teacher evaluation systems include teachers and administrators in their development (Stronge & Tucker, 1999; Stronge & Tucker, 2003; Tuytens & Devos, 2014). Educators would rather have indicators relevant to their building and content area rather than a one-size fits all using the same indicators from kindergarten through senior year students. Having administrators and teachers involved in the process of selecting the indicators gives them ownership in the process and its outcomes. Involving the stakeholders ensures a sense of commitment to the successful implementation of the evaluation system (McLaughlin, 1990). The teachers and administrators know what is most needed in their building.

This study has given a voice to rural educators in different-sized schools on the implementation of teacher evaluation. By listening to the perceptions of and observing teachers and administrators engaged in teacher evaluation, recommendations can be made to assist NEE and schools throughout the state. These recommendations can then help assist in making teacher evaluation stronger in growing effective teachers for our students. The following section will share recommendations to NEE and to schools throughout the state.

**Section Five-Contribution to Practice**

### **Contribution to Practice**

This final section of this dissertation will present my contribution to practice in the form of a “Case Study Brief.” Specifically, the study points to a series of recommendations both for organizations like the University of Missouri’s Network on Educator Effectiveness (NEE) and for individual schools that want to improve their teacher evaluation processes. In this chapter, I first review the recommendations for each of these entities. Second, I present a “Case Study Brief” summarizing these recommendations.

### **Recommendations to NEE**

While NEE aims to be a uniform evaluation system, each building’s sense-making, experiences, and framework will affect how the program is implemented. From engaging in this research study on how two rural schools implemented NEE there are four key areas which could be further considered. First, focus on the activity being seen not limiting the time. Secondly, have experienced administrators engaged in the evaluation process. Thirdly, give special education teachers input on the NEE indicators available. Also, with this third recommendation, encourage districts to allow their buildings to choose the indicators that are needed by their specific building, rather than a one-size fits all for the entire district. Lastly, train administrators on ways to build rapport with their teachers before, during, and after the evaluation process.

### **Focus on Activity not Timeframe**

While small frequent observations are great; do not focus on ten minutes. Focus on administrators staying for the entirety of an activity within a lesson. This will give the teachers and administrators the benefit of seeing the full scope of an activity. A true

picture of the effectiveness of the teacher and the lesson is seeing how the students are able to apply the lesson.

### **Experience Matters**

The second recommendation is pairing experienced seasoned administrators with new administrators. While administrators are paired up during NEE training to calibrate their numbers watching a video, some of the administrators in the small rural schools may not have another principal with years of experience at their building. Just as beginning teachers need guidance, so do beginning administrators. There may be more than the four indicators during an observation the administrator needs to address. Having an experienced partner in evaluation can assist the administrator in giving concrete specific feedback during the formal post observation conference. To have knowledgeable, experienced evaluators to help improve instruction, expert teachers might be considered as an extra eye during the evaluation process.

### **Input on Indicators**

There are two areas to be considered for input on the indicators. The first is giving special education teachers an opportunity to share their suggestions on potential indicators used to evaluate SPED teachers. Secondly, NEE indicators need to be chosen at the building level rather than a superintendent choosing a one-size fits all for the entire district. Administrators and the teachers who are stakeholders in implementing the evaluation process need to have a voice. The stakeholders know the indicators most needed in their building. These indicators need to be relevant to the needs of their building.



**Building Rapport Before Evaluating**

The last recommendation would be to add training on building rapport with your staff before evaluating them. NEE trainings bring many talented administrators together from throughout the state. Have those administrators share concrete ways they have built rapport which would then allow them to have two way communications on effective teaching with their teachers at any moment. Provide a way for the administrator to show they have actually had two-way communication on an evaluation either informally or formally. As NEE has encouraged having that two-way communication gives teachers one more opportunity to self-reflect on their teaching and see their teaching from another set of eyes.

**Recommendations for Schools**

While schools are diverse in size and in the framework they operate from, there are four main recommendations which could be made to all school-districts. First, quick visits are fine, but make a point to observe an activity in its entirety within a lesson. Secondly, make an effort to hire experienced curriculum leaders to administration positions. Thirdly, allow each building to set their indicators from the list NEE provides. Lastly, encourage formal and informal two-way conversations on what effective teaching is after formal and informal observations.

Ten minute observation windows are fine, but also encourage administrators to stay for the entirety of an activity within the lesson, so they can see the scope of the activity. This will give the administrator and teacher the benefit of seeing the full picture of the activity. Administrators take an opportunity to see how the students apply the

lesson and thus have a better understanding of how effective the teacher truly was. Just do not limit yourself to ten minutes each time you enter a classroom.

Schools make every effort to hire administrators who were experienced classroom teachers. Research shows having experienced, knowledgeable teachers becoming administrators gives added benefits to the evaluation process. Experienced curriculum leaders can give immediate, specific, and useful recommendations to teachers to improve instruction due to their years of classroom experiences. Consider allowing special education directors to participate in the evaluation process. Also, consider department chairs and their wealth of knowledge participating in the evaluation process.

Allow each building to pick their indicators from the NEE list, to give them a sense of ownership in the process. The teachers and administrators within the building know the indicators which the building would benefit most from.

Lastly, encourage administrators to build rapport with the teachers. By having rapport this will allow administrators and teachers not only to have formal post observation conferences where they self-reflect, but also the ability to have informal conversations on good teaching at any moment.

### **Rationale of Case Study Brief**

Briefs present information in a concise manner, allowing a reader to scan key points and findings of a research project. In addition, a case study brief serves as a reminder of the key points of the study for administrators as they return to their home districts. The brief provides a hard copy to share and educate others. Finally, this brief gives participants a way to contact the researcher.

<b>IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHER EVALUATION: ADMINISTRATOR AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES</b>			
<p><i>“There are things that you cannot put a number on and it is my absolutely unfashionable contention that teaching is not a science. <b>It is an art.</b>”</i> Dehner Interview</p>			
<b>Study Rationale</b>	<p>States across the country have been tasked with creating researched based teacher evaluation programs to meet the requirements of receiving state waivers from No Child Left Behind. In Missouri, since 2012, over 260 school districts or over half the districts in the state have implemented a program designed by the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE). Despite its popularity however, <b>we know little about how administrators and teachers have implemented and especially little about what happens in rural schools across our state.</b></p>		
<b>Overarching Research Question</b>	<p>How is the NEE teacher evaluation system being implemented within two rural Missouri school districts?</p>		
<b>Qualitative Comparative Case Study</b>	<p><b>Student Population of Two Rural High Schools:</b> just over 350 and 1,000  <b>Surveys Returned:</b> 59 Teachers and 5 Administrators  <b>Teachers Observed and Interviewed:</b> 16  <b>Administrators Observed and Interviewed:</b> 6</p>		
<b>Findings</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Perceptions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ten minute observations too short</b> Lengthened observations would allow administrators more time to see the indicators, the transitional points in the lesson, where the lesson came from and is going, and how students apply the activity.</li> <li>• <b>Experience of evaluator matters</b> Teachers want experienced evaluators who can give recommendations specific to their classrooms on how to improve as teachers.</li> <li>• <b>Stakeholders want input on indicators specific to their building</b></li> </ul>		
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Experiences</b></p> <p>Context influenced how evaluation was implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When</li> <li>• Length of observation</li> <li>• How the results were communicated</li> </ul>		
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendations to Schools</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quick visits are fine, but make a point to <b>observe an activity in its entirety</b> within a lesson.</li> <li>2. Select <b>administrators who are experienced curriculum leaders</b>. They can draw on their years of experience to give teachers immediate, effective feedback.</li> <li>3. Allow each building to choose their NEE indicators. This gives the <b>stakeholders a sense of ownership in the outcomes</b>.</li> <li>4. Encourage <b>formal and informal two-way conversations</b> on what effective teaching is after formal and informal observations.</li> </ol> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendations to NEE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage administrators to <b>focus on the activity being seen</b> rather than focusing on the time period.</li> <li>2. Consider having <b>administrators partner with expert teachers</b> in the evaluation process.</li> <li>3. Give <b>special education teachers input</b> on the NEE indicators available to school districts.</li> <li>4. Encourage districts to allow their <b>buildings to choose the indicators</b> that are needed by their specific building, rather than a one-size fits all for the entire district.</li> </ol> </td> </tr> </table>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendations to Schools</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quick visits are fine, but make a point to <b>observe an activity in its entirety</b> within a lesson.</li> <li>2. Select <b>administrators who are experienced curriculum leaders</b>. They can draw on their years of experience to give teachers immediate, effective feedback.</li> <li>3. Allow each building to choose their NEE indicators. This gives the <b>stakeholders a sense of ownership in the outcomes</b>.</li> <li>4. Encourage <b>formal and informal two-way conversations</b> on what effective teaching is after formal and informal observations.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendations to NEE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage administrators to <b>focus on the activity being seen</b> rather than focusing on the time period.</li> <li>2. Consider having <b>administrators partner with expert teachers</b> in the evaluation process.</li> <li>3. Give <b>special education teachers input</b> on the NEE indicators available to school districts.</li> <li>4. Encourage districts to allow their <b>buildings to choose the indicators</b> that are needed by their specific building, rather than a one-size fits all for the entire district.</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendations to Schools</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quick visits are fine, but make a point to <b>observe an activity in its entirety</b> within a lesson.</li> <li>2. Select <b>administrators who are experienced curriculum leaders</b>. They can draw on their years of experience to give teachers immediate, effective feedback.</li> <li>3. Allow each building to choose their NEE indicators. This gives the <b>stakeholders a sense of ownership in the outcomes</b>.</li> <li>4. Encourage <b>formal and informal two-way conversations</b> on what effective teaching is after formal and informal observations.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Recommendations to NEE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage administrators to <b>focus on the activity being seen</b> rather than focusing on the time period.</li> <li>2. Consider having <b>administrators partner with expert teachers</b> in the evaluation process.</li> <li>3. Give <b>special education teachers input</b> on the NEE indicators available to school districts.</li> <li>4. Encourage districts to allow their <b>buildings to choose the indicators</b> that are needed by their specific building, rather than a one-size fits all for the entire district.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Researcher can be contacted at: <a href="mailto:kurtchaner@gmail.com">kurtchaner@gmail.com</a></b></p>			

**Section Six-Scholarly Practitioner Reflection**

### **Influenced as an Educational Leader**

When I began the dissertation process, I chose a topic dear to my heart—teacher evaluation. Throughout my career, I was always passionate about my subject of Finance and passionate about making a difference in my students' lives. My desire was to be the best possible teacher to all my students. Also, throughout my teaching career, I experienced teacher evaluations, which did not assist me in growing in teacher pedagogy. In 2012, I began to experience a new teacher evaluation system and at the same time a new administrator implementing the new system. The NEE system was implemented by an administrator who operated from a human resource frame. This administrator was very encouraging to me in the successes of my classroom. I was blessed to have him as my evaluator, but as with every process or policy, there is always room for growth. I desired to gain knowledge on teacher evaluation that would not only benefit me personally, but benefit others in my educational community as I sought to help others grow as teachers. I also believed that if teachers were helped to grow, the result would be a better education for the students in my educational community.

The dissertation process has influenced me as an educational leader in two ways. First, I want to be a more effective evaluator. Secondly, I plan to seek input from the stakeholders when implementing a new process.

### **More of an Effective Evaluator**

I have gained valuable insights on teacher evaluation by pouring over previous scholarship and being engaged in action research. The research I actively engaged in has helped me to see teacher evaluation through others' eyes. Listening to educators' perceptions of teacher evaluation and experiencing evaluations by observing others has

allowed me to uncover what effective teacher evaluation looks like. When I evaluate, I now know the importance of drawing on my twenty-plus years of experience in the classroom to assist and provide feedback to teachers. This study also reminded me of the importance of hiring instructional leaders with histories of high achievement in the classroom, who can draw on their past successes to lead teachers to success in their own classrooms.

I realize the importance of building rapport with teachers before beginning to evaluate them. Building rapport may mean visiting their classrooms a couple times to observe without doing a formal evaluation, but just being able to give encouraging words. I will be thoughtful when assigning a number to a teacher's performance. I know the power of a number to encourage or to demoralize a teacher. I will be thoughtful in making comments which encourage the teacher in their successes, while providing potential areas to grow. I know if I give a low number, I need to have specific advice on how the teacher can achieve a higher score. Giving teachers immediate feedback specific to their individual classroom will aid in their growth.

As an educational leader I see the value of frequent visits to classrooms to have a pulse on what is going on within my school and district. From hearing from teachers, I also understand the importance of seeing the entire sequence of a lesson so that I can have a full picture of a lesson.

### **Desirous of Input from all Stakeholders**

My sense-making on teacher evaluation has changed through my experiences. The dissertation process has given me the luxury of seeing evaluation from different perspectives. I know the importance of seeking input from all stakeholders in the

implementation of a new process. Participants on all levels of implementation have knowledge and different experiences they draw from to share. The knowledge stakeholders have to share has the power to make a system better for all. I learned to seek input from more than just those core academic areas we often focus on, but to also seek input from our special education teachers and specialty area teachers. Input from others also includes recommendations on areas the teachers feel they need evaluated on for growth and not just four indicators chosen at the district level.

### **Influenced as a Scholar**

The dissertation process has influenced me as a scholar in three ways: First, I know how to engage in scholarly research. Secondly, I have further research interests to pursue. Finally, I have a greater awareness of effective and ineffective practices.

### **How to Engage in Scholarly Research**

Prior to my doctoral courses, I was not experienced in searching for research in scholarly journals. I now know where to look to find answers. Prior to engaging in this process, when I was told a process was based upon research, I may have questioned it in my mind, but I would just accept it. Now I know where I can go to find data to see if a practice being implemented truly is research-based. Having this knowledge is powerful. I also have a new network of colleagues who have engaged in scholarly research who I can discuss research and policies being implemented.

The process of writing the dissertation has also given me the ability to narrow down a plethora of data to find the main findings. I have better tools at my disposal to focus on organizing the important topics. Also, I was able to see where the pieces of my research fit into previous research and added to it.

**Further Research Interests**

From engaging in this research I was also able to see where there are other potential areas for research, such as the effect of numerical scores on teachers or the effect of school size on the operating framework. Also, I am interested in exploring if the art of teaching can be truly quantified. This dissertation has caused me to ask more whys and given me a desire to find answers to questions. Finding answers to these questions and sharing findings can make a positive difference in educators' practices.

**Greater Awareness**

The dissertation process has given me greater knowledge and with greater knowledge comes a greater awareness as a scholar. As an example, I look at teacher evaluation differently now. Through my new lenses as a scholar I see ways of implementation which have been ineffective and not aided educator's practices. I also feel confident in my ability to share the knowledge and greater awareness I have gained.

**Summary**

The dissertation process has influenced me as an educational leader by giving me knowledge and skills to assist teachers in being the best possible teacher they can be for their students. The process has grown me as an educational leader to also seek input from stakeholders on not only new policies being implemented but also on longstanding practices. As a scholar, I have the tools to engage in research and the abilities to inform others of my research. The dissertation has also caused me as a scholar to be desirous to find answers to questions to areas related to my research topic. Lastly, this knowledge has given me a greater awareness of inefficiencies in the implementation process.



Without participating in this dissertation process, I would have not had this incredible opportunity, which has increased my abilities to lead and given me more avenues to share my scholarship with others. Having gone through this doctoral process has not only increased my abilities as an educational leader and scholar, but has also given me the opportunity to be an example to students in my district and to my own children on the importance of education. The conclusion of this dissertation is just the beginning of a new chapter in my life, which will give me greater opportunities to have an impact as an educational leader and scholar not only in my building but in my community and for future generations.

### References

- Assessment Resource Center (2014). *Features of NEE*. Retrieved from, <http://nee.missouri.edu/features.aspx>
- Atkins, A. O. (1996). *Teachers' opinions of the teacher evaluation process*. (ED398628). Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov>
- Barrett, J. (1986). *The evaluation of teachers*. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/>
- Bergin, C., Wind, S. A., Grajeda, S., & Tsai, C. L. (2017). Teacher evaluation: Are principals' classroom observations accurate at the conclusion of trainings? *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 55*, 19-26.
- Bigham, G. & Reavis, C. (2001). Preferred leadership frames of principals in implementing a state-wide teacher appraisal system. *Contemporary Education, 72*(2), 52-57.
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2013, January 8). *Ensuring fair and reliable measures of effective teaching: Culminating findings from the MET project's three-year study*. Seattle, WA. Retrieved from <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/press-releases/Pages/MET-Announcement.aspx>
- Blumberg, A. (1985). Where we came from: Notes on supervision in the 1840s. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 1*(1), 56-65.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2008). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership*. (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Borko, H., Wolf, S. A., Simone, G., & Uchiyama, K. P. (2003). Schools in transition: Reform efforts and school capacity in Washington state. *American Educational Research Association, 25*(2), 171-201.

- Brown, A. L., & Campione, J. C. (1990). Interactive learning environments and the teaching of science and mathematics. In M. Gardner, J. G. Greeno, F. Reif, A. H. Schoenfeld, A. diSessa, & E. Stage (Eds.), *Toward a scientific practice of science education* (pp. 111-139). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Brown, J., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated cognition and the culture of learning. *Educational Researcher*, 18(1), 32-42.
- Burke, P., & Krey, R. (2005). *Supervision: A guide to instructional leadership* (2nd ed.). Springfield, IL: Thomas.
- Cantrell, S., & Kane, T. (2013). *Ensuring fair and reliable measures of effective teaching*. Retrieved from [http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET\\_Ensuring\\_Fair\\_and\\_Reliable\\_Measures\\_Practitioner\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.metproject.org/downloads/MET_Ensuring_Fair_and_Reliable_Measures_Practitioner_Brief.pdf)
- Center on Education Policy. (2012). *What Impact Will NCLB Waivers Have on the Consistency, Complexity and Transparency of State Accountability Systems?* Retrieved from [file:///C:/Users/Kurt/Downloads/Riddle\\_Report\\_ImpactNCLBWaivers\\_100212.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Kurt/Downloads/Riddle_Report_ImpactNCLBWaivers_100212.pdf)
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 95-120.
- Coburn, C. E. (2001). Collective sensemaking about reading: How teachers mediate reading policy in their professional communities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 23(2), 145-170.

- Cohen-Vogel, L., Tichnor-Wagner, A., Allen, D., Harrison, C., Kainz, K., Rose Socol, A. & Xing, Q. (2015). Implementing educational innovations at scale: Remaking researchers into improvement scientists. *Educational Policy*, 29(1), 257-277.
- College of Education, University of Missouri (2016). *Educational Leadership (EdD)*. Retrieved from, <https://education.missouri.edu/degree/educational-leadership-edd/>.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cubberly, E. P. (1929). *Public school administration: A statement of the fundamental principles underlying the organization and administration of public education*. New York, NY: Houghton and Mifflin Company.
- Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching*. (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Danielson, C. (2010). Evaluations that help teachers learn. *The Effective Educator*, 68(4), 35-39.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Wise, A., & Pease, S. (1983). Teacher evaluation in the organizational context: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 53(3), 285-328.
- Darling-Hammond, L. & Young, P. (2002). "Highly qualified teachers": What does "scientifically-based research" actually tell us? *Educational Researcher*, 31(9), 13-25.
- Datnow, A., Borman, G. D., Stringfield, S., Overman, L. T., & Castellano, M. (2003). Comprehensive school reform in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts:

Implementation and outcomes from a four-year study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 25(2), 143-170.

Datnow, A., & Park V. (2009). Conceptualizing policy implementation: Large-scale reform in an era of complexity. In Gary Sykes, Barbara Schneider, and David N. Plank (Eds.), *Handbook of Education Policy Research* (pp. 348-361). New York, NY: Routledge.

Davis, D. R., Ellett, C. D., & Annunziata, J. (2002). Teacher evaluation, leadership and learning organizations. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 16(4), 287-301.

DeGroff, A., & Cargo, M. (2009). Policy implementation: Implications for evaluation. In J. M. Ottoson & P. Hawe (Eds.), *Knowledge utilization, diffusion, implementation, transfer, and translation: Implications for evaluation. New Directions for Evaluation*, 124, 47-60.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2015). *Missouri comprehensive data system*. Retrieved from:

<http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/quickfacts/SitePages/DistrictInfo.aspx>

Dorner, L. M. (2011). Contested communities in a debate over dual-language education: The import of “public” values on public policies. *Educational Policy*, 25(4), 577-613.

Drake, C., Spillane, J. P., & Hufferd-Ackles, K. (2001). Storied identities: Teacher learning and subject matter context. *J. Curriculum Studies*, 33(1), 1-23.

Dyer, C. (1999). Researching the implementation of educational policy: A backward mapping approach. *Comparative Education*, 35, 45-61.

- Elmore, R. F. (1983). Complexity and control: What legislators and administrators can do about implementing public policy. In L. S. Shulman & G. Sykes (Eds.), *Handbook of Teaching and Policy* (pp. 342-369). New York, NY: Longman.
- Evans, R. (2001). *The human side of school change: Reform, resistance, and the real-life problems of innovation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.
- Firestone, W. A. (1989). Using reform: Conceptualizing district initiative. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(2), 151-164.
- Firestone, W. A., Fitz, J., & Broadfoot, P. (1999). Power, learning, and legitimation: Assessment implementation across levels in the United States and the United Kingdom. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36(4), 759-793.
- Fowler, F. C. (2000). *Policy studies for educational leaders: An introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Fullan, M. (1997). Emotion and hope: Constructive concepts for complex times. In A. Hargreaves (Ed.), *Rethinking educational change with heart and mind* (pp. 216-233). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1991). *What's worth fighting for? Working together for your school*. Andover, MA: The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement.
- Goldhammer, R. (1969). *Clinical supervision: Special methods for the supervision of teachers*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Goodwin, D., & Webb, M. A. (2014). Comparing teachers' paradigms with the teaching and learning paradigm of their state's teacher evaluation system. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 25, 1-11.

- Greene, M. L. (1992). Teacher supervision as professional development: Does it work? *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 7(2), 131-148.
- Haberman, M. (2011, February 15). Principal CEO [Web log post]. Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/Michael-Haberman/principal-ceo\\_b\\_823375.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/Michael-Haberman/principal-ceo_b_823375.html)
- Herlihy, C., Karger, E., Pollard, C., Hill, H. C., Kraft, M. A., Williams, M., & Howard, S. (2014). State and local efforts to investigate the validity and reliability of scores from teacher evaluation systems. *Teachers College Record*, 116, 1-28.
- Hill, H. C. (2001). Policy is not enough: Language and the interpretation of state standards. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(2), 289-318.
- Hill, H. C. (2006). Language matters: How characteristics of language complicate policy implementation. In M. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education policy implementation: Confronting complexity*. (pp. 65-82). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Hill, H. C., & Grossman, P. (2013). Learning from teacher observations: Challenges and opportunities posed by new teacher evaluation systems. *Harvard Educational Review*, 83(2), 371-384.
- Hill, K. A. (2013). *Walking the tightrope: Secondary school principals' perspective on teacher evaluation* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (3591451)
- Honig, M. I. (2006). Complexity and policy implementation: Challenges and opportunities for the field. In M. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education policy implementation: Confronting complexity*. (pp. 1-23). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

- Hope, W. C., & Pigford A. B. (2001). The principal's role in educational policy implementation. *Contemporary Education*, 72(1), 44-47.
- Information Age Publishing. (2015). *Current research in rural and regional education: Call for proposals*. Retrieved from, <http://www.infoagepub.com/series/Current-Research-in-Rural-and-Regional-Education>
- Katzin, J. L. (2014). Teacher perceptions of change: An evaluation of the network for educator effectiveness system (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://mospace.umsystem.edu>
- Kerr, J. C. (2015, June 24). Mo. gains extension of no child left behind waiver. *The Dexter Statesman*. Retrieved from <http://dailystatesman.com/story/2207420.html>
- Kersten, T. A., & Israel, M. S. (2005). Teacher evaluation: Principals' insights and suggestions for improvement. *Planning and Changing*, 36(1&2), 47-67.
- Knapp, M. S. (1997). Between systemic reforms and the mathematics and science classroom: The dynamics of innovation, implementation, and professional learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 67(2), 227-266.
- LeCompte, M. D., Preissle, J., & Tesch, R. (1993). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. (2nd ed.). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Marzano, R. J., Frontier, T., & Livingston, D. (2011). *Effective supervision: Supporting the art and science of teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1987). Learning from experience: Lessons from policy implementation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 9(2), 171-178.



McLaughlin, M. W. (1990). Embracing contraries: Implementing and sustaining teacher evaluation. In J. Millman & L. Darling-Hammond (Eds.), *The new handbook of teacher evaluation* (pp. 403-415). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

McLaughlin, M. W. (1991). Learning from experience. In A. Odden (Ed.), *Education policy implementation* (pp. 185-195). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Network for Educator Effectiveness (2015). NEE Advantages. Retrieved from <http://nee.missouri.edu/advantages.aspx>

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Public Law No. 107-110, 115, Stat. 1425 (2002).

Northouse, P. G. (2013). *Leadership theory and practice* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Odden, A. R. (1991). The evolution of education policy implementation. In A. Odden (Ed.), *Education policy implementation* (pp. 1-12). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Ovando, M. N. & McCleary, L. E. (1991). The supervision of teaching within a formal appraisal system. *School Organization*, 11(2), 145-151.

Ovando, M. N. & Ramirez, A. (2007). Principal's instructional leadership within a teacher performance appraisal system; Enhancing students' academic success. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*. Vol. 20, 85-110.

- Pennington, K. (2014). *ESEA waivers and teacher-evaluation plans: State oversight of district-designed teacher-evaluation systems*. Retrieved from Center for American Progress website:  
<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2014/05/07/89121/esea-waivers-and-teacher-evaluation-plans>
- Perrow, C. (1973). The short and glorious history of organizational theory. *Organizational Dynamics*, 2(1), 3-15.
- Peterson, P. E., Rabe, B. G., & Wong, K. K. (1986). *When federalism works*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Porter, R. E., Fusarelli, L. D., & Fusarelli, B. C. (2015). Implementing the Common Core: How educators interpret curriculum reform. *Educational Policy*, 29(1), 111-139.
- Protheroe, N. (2002). Improving instruction through teacher observation. *Principal*, 82, 48-51.
- Rucinski, M., & Diersing, C. (2014, May 14). America's teacher evaluation system revolution. *Harvard Political Review*. Retrieved from  
<http://harvardpolitics.com/united-states/americas-teacher-evaluation-system-revolution/>
- Sabatier, P., & Mazmanian, D. (1980). The implementation of public policy: A framework of analysis. *Policy Studies Journal*, 8(4), 538-560.
- Sabatier, P., & Mazamanian, D. (1981). The implementation of public policy: A framework of analysis. In D. Mazamanian & P. Sabateir (Eds.), *Effective policy implementation* (pp. 3-36). Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books.

SAGE. (2016). *Educational policy: Description*. Retrieved from

<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/educational-policy/journal200936#description>

Senge, P. M. (1994). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Doubleday/Currency.

Sheppard, J. D. (2013). *Perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the teacher evaluation process* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Electronic theses & dissertations. (Paper 852)

Sherwood, T. (2000). Where has all the “rural” gone? Rural education research and current federal reform. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 16(3), 159-167.

Smit, B. (2005). Teachers, local knowledge, and policy implementation: A qualitative policy-practice inquiry. *Education and Urban Society*, 37(3), 292-306.

Smylie, M. A., & Evans A. E. (2006). Social capital and the problem of implementation. In M. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education policy implementation: Confronting complexity* (pp. 187-208). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Gomez, L. M. (2006). Policy implementation and cognition: The role of human, social, and distributed cognition in framing policy implementation. In M. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education policy implementation: Confronting complexity* (pp. 187-208). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, 72, (3), 387-431.

Spillane, J. P., & Thompson, C. L. (1997). Reconstructing conceptions of local capacity:

The local education agency's capacity for ambitious instructional reform.

*Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 19(2), 185-203.

Stronge, J. H., & Tucker, P. D. (1999). The politics of teacher evaluation: A case study of

new system design and implementation. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in*

*Education*, 13(4), 339-359.

Stronge, J. H., & Tucker, P. D. (2003). *Teacher evaluation. Assessing and improving*

*performance*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., & Grant, L. W. (2011). What makes good teachers good? A

cross-case analysis of the connection between teacher effectiveness and student

achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 62(4), 339-355.

Taylor, F. W. (2005). The structure of organizations: a synthesis of research. In J. M.

Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y. S. Jang, (Eds.), *Classics of Organization Theory* (6th ed.,

pp. 61-78). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (Reprinted from *Bulletin of the Taylor*

*Society*).

Tracy, S. (1995). How historical concepts of supervision relate to supervisory practices

today. *The Clearing House*, 68(5), 320-324.

Tuytens, M., & Devos, G. (2014). The problematic implementation of teacher evaluation

policy: School failure or governmental pitfall? *Educational Management*

*Administration and Leadership*. 42(4s), 155-174.

U.S. Department of Education. (2009). *Race to the Top program executive summary*.

Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf>

- U.S. Department of Education. (2013). *State granted waivers from No Child Left Behind allowed to reapply for renewal for 2014 and 2015 school years*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/states-granted-waivers-no-child-left-behind-allowed-reapply-renewal-2014-and-2015-school-years>
- Wang, W., & Day, C. (2002, July). Issues and concerns about classroom observation: Teachers' perspectives. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, St. Louis, MO.
- Whitehead, M. (1952). Teachers look at supervision. *Educational Leadership*, 10(2), 101-106.
- Weisberg, D., Sexton, S., Mulhern, J., & Keeling, D. (2009). *The widget effect: Our national failure to acknowledge and act on differences in teacher effectiveness*. Retrieved from The New Teacher Project website: [http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TheWidgetEffect\\_2nd\\_ed.pdf](http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TheWidgetEffect_2nd_ed.pdf)
- Wetzel, W. (1929). Scientific supervision and curriculum building. *The School Review*, 37(2), 117-123.
- White, S. and Corbett, M. (2014). *Doing educational research in rural settings: methodological issues, international perspectives and practical solutions*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wise, E., Darling-Hammond, L., McLaughlin, M., & Bernstein, H. (1984). *Teacher evaluation: A study of effective practices*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- Wolf, S. A., Borko, H., Elliott, R. L., & McIver, M. C. (2000). "That dog won't hunt": Exemplary school change efforts within the Kentucky reform. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(2), 349-393.

Wright, S. P., Horn, S. P., & Sanders, W. L. (1997). Teacher and classroom context effects on student achievement: Implications for teacher evaluation. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, *11*(1), 57-67.

Zimmerman, S., & Deckert-Pelton, M. (2003). Evaluating the evaluators: Teachers' perceptions of the principal's role in professional evaluation. *NASSP Bulletin*, *87*(636), 28-37.

Zimmerman, S. (2003). Five steps for improving teacher evaluation: Focusing on the continual improvement of teaching and learning. *The Professional Educator*, *15*(2), 43-53.

## Appendix A

### Building-wide Survey for Teachers

The purpose of this survey is to gain the perspective of rural educators on the topic of teacher evaluation. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Please do not include your name on this survey. The findings of this study, without any identifying information, will be shared with policy makers and implementers of teacher evaluation throughout the state. You will also have an opportunity to see the results of the survey when the dissertation is published, and, if you like, further participate in the study through an interview and/or observations. Your participation will lead to findings that should help administrators carry out evaluation processes effectively.

The researcher has been an educator in Northeast Missouri for twenty-years. If you have any questions, please direct them to the researcher using the contact information at the bottom of this survey. When you are finished with the survey, please drop it in the box located in the high school office. The secretary will give you a ticket, and you will be included in a drawing for a \$50 gift card.

Thank you for your time and serious consideration of the questions below.

#### Demographics:

1. How many years have you taught?
  - 0-3
  - 3-8
  - 8-15
  - more than 15
  
2. Mark your curricular area:
  - Language Arts
  - Social Studies
  - Science
  - Math
  - Elective
  
3. How many different evaluators have you experienced during your teaching career?

**Open-Ended Questions:**

1. What are effective components of an evaluation system?
2. How have you experienced the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE)? For instance, what is your opinion of the ten minute administrator observation? How does NEE compare to other evaluation systems?
3. Has NEE helped you improve your teaching? If yes, how? If not, why not?
4. What would you recommend to help improve the teacher evaluation process?

**Further Participation** If you wish to participate in this study further and make a contribution to teacher evaluation, my contact information is below. Your participation will include classroom observations and interviews. The researcher will not be present during your post observation meeting with your principal. The interview will take place within two days of your post observation meeting.

**Researcher's Email:** [kurtchaner@gmail.com](mailto:kurtchaner@gmail.com)

**Researcher's Cell Phone:** 217-779-5182

**Thank You!**



## Appendix B

### Survey for Administrators

The purpose of this survey is to gain the perspective of rural administrators on the topic of teacher evaluation. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Please do not include your name on this survey. The findings of this study, without any identifying information, will be shared with policy makers and implementers of teacher evaluation throughout the state. You will also have an opportunity to see the results of the survey when the dissertation is published, and, if you like, further participate in the study through an interview and/or observations. Your participation will lead to findings that should help administrators carry out evaluation processes effectively.

The researcher has been an educator in Northeast Missouri for twenty-years. If you have any questions, please direct them to the researcher using the contact information at the bottom of this survey. When you are finished with the survey, please drop it in the box located in the high school office. The secretary will give you a ticket, and you will be included in a drawing for a \$50 gift card.

Thank you for your time and serious consideration of the questions below.

#### Demographics:

1. How many years did you teach?
  - 0-3
  - 3-8
  - 8-15
  - more than 15
  
2. How many years have you been an administrator?
  - 0-3
  - 3-8
  - 8-15
  - more than 15
  
3. How many teachers do you evaluate?

**Open-Ended Questions:**

1. What are effective components of an evaluation system?
  
2. How have you experienced the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE)? For instance, what is your opinion of the ten minute administrator observation? How does NEE compare to other evaluation systems?
  
3. Has NEE helped improve your educators' teaching? If yes, how? If not, why not?
  
4. How has NEE changed in its implementation in your district since its inception?
  
5. What would you recommend to help improve the teacher evaluation process?

**Further Participation** If you wish to participate in this study further and make a contribution to teacher evaluation, my contact information is below. Your participation will include interviews and the researcher sitting in classrooms you observe. The researcher will not be present during your post observation meeting with the teacher you observed. The interview will take place within two days of your post observation meeting.

**Researcher's Email:** [kurtchaner@gmail.com](mailto:kurtchaner@gmail.com)

**Researcher's Cell Phone:** 217-779-5182

**Thank you for your participation.**

**Appendix C**  
**Teacher Interview Questions**

1. Describe your teaching background.

**Questions pertaining to how teachers experienced the observation:**

2. What course was observed? What age were the students?
3. How long was your observation?
4. What part of the block did the observation occur?
5. Did your observation go as planned? If not, explain.
6. Did you agree with your numerical rating from the NEE scoring guide? If not, explain.
7. How was your post observational meeting beneficial to you? If not, explain.
8. In what ways did your observation and post-observation meeting help improve your teaching?
9. How does your evaluator notice your strengths as well as areas for improvement?
10. What is the communication with your evaluator like during your post observation meeting? Is it one-way? Is it two-way?

**Questions connected to building survey:**

11. What is your opinion of department chairs evaluating teachers?
12. What are effective components of an evaluation system?
13. Has NEE helped you improve your teaching? If yes, how? If not, why not?
14. What would you recommend to help improve the teacher evaluation process?

**Appendix D**  
**Administrator Interview Questions**

1. Describe your educational background.

**Questions pertaining to how the principal experienced the observation:**

2. What course was observed? What age were the students?
3. How long was your observation?
4. What part of the block did the observation occur?
5. When do you typically choose to conduct an evaluation?
6. Did the observation go as planned? If not, explain.

**Questions pertaining to the NEE process:**

7. How do your prior experiences affect the conducting of an evaluation?
8. How do you use the rating scale during your observation of the teacher?
9. How do your post-observation meetings improve the teaching in your building?
10. How do you encourage two-way communication with your teacher during the post-meeting?
11. Have you attempted to calibrate your ratings with a fellow evaluator to be consistent? If so, explain.
  - Do you feel there are merits in doing this? Explain.

**Questions connected to the principal survey:**

12. What are effective components of an evaluation system?
13. Has NEE helped improve your educators' teaching? If yes, how? If not, why not?
14. How has NEE changed in its implementation in your district since its inception?
15. What would you recommend to help improve the teacher evaluation process?

### VITA

Haner has passionately educated students for twenty-two years. Since beginning the finance program in Hannibal, his finance students have been ranked top in the state in the Finance Challenge. His students have also been in the top five of the nation for several years. Haner also gets the community involved in finance by having the presidents and vice-presidents of the local banks compete against his students in finance quiz bowls.

Haner also enjoys preparing future teachers for the classroom. One of his student teachers became the youngest superintendent in the state of Illinois.

Haner founded and lead the Taiwan Project for nearly ten years partnering with three schools in Taiwan and educating his own community on Asian culture.

Outside of the classroom, Haner enjoys being a husband and father to three active children. On the side, Haner enjoys bringing new life to older homes and traveling with his family.

Haner can be contacted at: [kurtchaner@gmail.com](mailto:kurtchaner@gmail.com)