Spring 5-6-2022

The Value of Peer Supervisory Practices

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THE VALUE OF PEER SUPERVISORY PRACTICES

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

(in Educational Leadership)

The Graduate School

The University of Maine

May 2022

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An Abstract of the Dissertation Presented
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Across the country schools have continuously looked to find ways to increase student achievement. In response to state and federal policy, school districts have used evaluative processes and accountability measures to increase teacher effectiveness. Despite a significant body of research that supports the effect of supervisory practices on teacher effectiveness, this focus on formal evaluation has detracted from the time and resources allocated to instructional supervision. Due to COVID-19, schools across the nation have been forced to provide remote learning opportunities to students. Essentially, this new style of teaching has turned all educators, regardless of experience, into first-year teachers. The learning curve needed to navigate this new educational landscape has forced teachers to learn from one another in order to educate their students. This case study of a rural high school in Maine will examine the impact of supervisory practices in regards to teacher efficacy. The study will examine how teachers have used such practices to aid them in this new way of teaching.

Keywords: Peer feedback systems, evaluation, supervision, adult learning models, COVID-19, remote learning.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wonderful wife Miranda and incredible son Dominic. Without the support that I received from these two, I would have never completed this work. They continuously allowed me to sacrifice family time so that I could conduct my research and write this dissertation. Throughout the entire process, they had my back and let me know that I could do this. There is no doubt in my mind that this would not have been possible without these two supporting me along the way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all of the staff at the school where this study was done. They are an amazing group of educators who work tirelessly to improve the education of their students. Without their willingness to participate and provide honest feedback, this study would not have been possible or produced valuable findings. It is an honor and a privilege to work with such a great collection of people. Also, I would like to thank the RSU 25 school board and Superintendent James Boothby for allowing me to pursue this academic goal.

I want to give a special thanks to my committee chair, Dr. Ian Mette, for encouraging me to start this journey, and for all of his ongoing guidance and support throughout the entire process. Also, thank you to the other members of my committee, Dr. Catherine Biddle and Dr. Maria Frankland. I would also like to pass along my appreciation to Dr. Richard Ackerman who served as a mentor throughout my graduate work.

Additionally, I want to express my extreme gratitude and appreciation to the members of the cohort that supported me for the past four years. To say that I could not have done this without them is an understatement. For four years, I could count on them to take a phone call when I had a question, look over my writing, and provide critical feedback. The friendships forged during this time are ones that I will always cherish and never forget. Thank you to each and everyone of you for not only the support that you provided me, but for everything that you do to support students throughout the state of Maine.

Finally, I would like to thank all of my family, friends, and colleagues who have helped me while I pursued this personal goal. There are so many people who have supported me, and I am grateful to them all.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For decades school districts have looked to improve the quality of their education system, primarily by addressing how they evaluate their teaching staff (Fairman & Mette, 2017; Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2019; Gordon, 2020; Hazi, 2019; Ingle, 2019; Mette et al., 2017; Mette et al., 2017; Zepeda & Jimenez, 2019). Starting with *A Nation at Risk* and continuing through *No Child Left Behind* and *Every Student Succeeds Act*, accountability measures and high stakes testing have been used to determine teacher effectiveness (Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2019; Mette et al., 2017; Ingle & Lindle, 2019). These evaluative processes are beneficial when looking at the retention of teaching staff, but have not met the desired effect of improving teacher effectiveness (Mette et al., 2020; McGhee, 2020; Zepeda & Jimenez, 2019).

As a high school principal, I have used these evaluative practices to accomplish the human resource tasks that they are best designed for. However, I have found them to be far less effective as an instructional leader within my building. During my time as an administrator, it has become evident that instructional supervision provides me the best opportunity to implement practices that will increase the effectiveness of my staff. Furthermore, supervisory practices that are supported by appropriate professional development engage teachers in meaningful and intentional ways that are solely intended to improve classroom instruction (Hazi, 2019; Ponticell et al., 2019; Zepeda & Jimenez, 2019). Starting in March of 2020, schools face the many challenges of learning how to educate students during a global pandemic, due to COVID-19 (Mette, 2020). Veteran teachers now need the support that brand-new teachers typically receive because they are reinventing themselves as educators. This period of remote learning has shown

the importance of peer feedback and the support needed from colleagues in order to be successful as a staff.

Evaluation and supervision practices have long been used in education in an effort to improve the effectiveness of teacher instruction. To accomplish continuous instructional improvement, school districts allocate valuable resources for development and implementation of evaluation systems. Teacher evaluation, often the summative aspect of feedback "focuses on the organizational need for accountability, determining and documenting the level of a teacher's performance over a specific time period" (Mette et al., 2017). These types of evaluation systems are useful for the purpose of teacher retention and accountability, but are not widely used to effectively improve teacher instruction or effectiveness. Contrary to evaluation, there has been a lot of research that indicates supervisory practices that focus on formative feedback structures are more effective in aiding teachers to grow as professionals and improve their craft (Glanz, 2019; Mette, 2017; Zepeda, 2019). As such, American schools across the nation are looking for ways to systematically implement processes that will improve the quality of instruction within their classrooms with the ultimate goal of improving students' achievement.

In regards to both of these goals, there are a number of supervisory practices that have been developed and implemented in schools. Professional learning communities, teacher reflection models, and peer observation tools are all examples of such practices (Fairman & Mette, 2017; Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2019; Glanz & Hazi, 2019; Hamilton, 2013; Ponticell et al., 2019). The key components for the success of these practices are that they should be separate from formal evaluation processes and promote professional growth and reflection (Mette et al., 2017; Ponticell et al., 2019). Having these practices ingrained into a school's culture allows teachers to learn from one another to improve their craft without fear of impacting their

employment. The desired effect of these practices is to positively influence student achievement by improving teacher instruction and leveraging educators' individual strengths (Mette, et al., 2017). One such practice is a peer feedback system. Peer feedback systems, including peer observations, have not been thoroughly researched in public school systems. Because of this, there is an opportunity to see how adult learning theory models, paired with continuous professional development, can be used to develop peer feedback systems within schools to improve instructional practices (Hamilton, 2013).

Problem of Practice Statement

This case study will look at the impact of peer supervisory practices and how they impact teachers' perceptions of their own effectiveness. Hamilton (2013) says that:

> teachers need long-term opportunities to participate in professional communities of practice in which they study their own work as well as that of their peers, doing so with purpose and peer interaction. When this happens, we will have a model that provides teachers with opportunities to learn with and from their colleagues. (p.59)

This study is not intended to determine if schools should implement these practices. Rather, its intent is to determine how implementation can be accomplished effectively and what circumstances need to be present to do so.

In Maine, the policies established in LD 1858 and Chapter 180 required districts to create PE/PG committees and plans (Doore et al., 2013). This process was implemented in the school that was chosen for this case study. Significant amounts of time and resources were dedicated to put together a plan that focused almost solely on evaluative practices. Outside of the PE/PG plan, the district committed to dedicating an hour a week to Professional Learning Communities where

supervisory practices were more prevalent. This case study gathered data from participants within a school to determine their perceptions on how the established evaluative and supervisory practices improved their own effectiveness. In particular, the study looked at how the peer supervisory practices were used out of necessity in response to COVID-19 and remote learning.

This study has significance because of the timing of the data collection. Initially, the study's primary focus was on the effectiveness of a comprehensive peer feedback system. Given the circumstances facing public education due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a unique opportunity to collect information on how teachers learn from one another in such a challenging time. Teachers have been forced to reinvent themselves as educators, and they need support from one another now more than ever due to the impacts of COVID-19. Consequently, this study captures how educators supported one another through the use of non-evaluative feedback and improved their practices in the process. These findings can be extended from a time when it was necessary (the current pandemic) to improve and augment a more traditional academic setting. How staff provide and receive feedback out of necessity can become their new normal and drastically improve the quality of teacher instruction.

This study looks to identify how scholarly practitioners can improve the instruction within their schools through the use of peer supervisory practices. It will also address the challenges that federal and state policies have presented through legislated accountability measures and make suggestions for change. Finally, this study looks to address the lack of research within schools in Maine in regards to how they are implementing supervisory practices.

Purpose Statement

We know that teachers not only benefit from feedback but also crave it (Drago Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017). Generally speaking, teachers desire to improve their ability to instruct students. There are a variety of adult learners within every school, and they have unique needs when it comes to giving and receiving feedback. Feedback is one of the primary ways we can support others' development and grow the internal capacities needed to meet the complex demands of our educational world. Yet, throughout the education sector, there remains a growing sense that teachers and leaders need to do something different in terms of feedback, not just something more (Drago Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017). We know that feedback is wanted and needed and that it needs to be differentiated. What we do not have is a perfectly clear understanding of the processes and conditions that need to be present for this feedback system to be effective (Drago Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019; Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2020). This is even more unclear when you look at feedback systems being implemented in schools where remote or hybrid learning systems are in effect due to COVID-19 (Mette, 2020). This study will look to identify what conditions need to be in place to aid the implementation of peer feedback systems, as well as those conditions that might impede the implementation.

Specifically, this study will examine how peer feedback systems support teachers in their professional growth. The focus will be on the use of peer feedback in regards to improving instructional practices specifically related to remote learning. Due to COVID-19, many schools across the country have been forced to adopt a hybrid or remote schooling model (students attend school both in-person and at home via technology). This has created a situation where even veteran teachers have become "first-year teachers" because they have been forced to completely

reinvent themselves professionally to meet these new circumstances. This study will explore how supervisory practices helped staff meet the continuously changing needs of students in a hybrid or fully remote academic setting.

Research Questions

Through the examination of our supervision system, this study will help determine the effect of non-evaluative feedback on teacher effectiveness. Through this process, the study will answer the following questions:

1. How do peer feedback supervisory practices improve teacher effectiveness in both a remote and in-person classroom setting?
2. How do building leaders cultivate a culture amongst staff that is supportive of peer supervisory practices?

The major focus of the study will be on the first question, but it will also look to address what aspects of a school's culture help support the implementation of peer feedback systems. Due to COVID-19, the change in delivery of education in schools has created a lot of stress for all educational stakeholders. The study will look to identify key components of the school climate and culture that were prevalent or missing in regards to the implementation of these systems.

Overview of Methodology

For this case study, a mixed methods approach was implemented. A rural northern Maine school was chosen that has 355 students and 30 full-time teaching staff. The study consisted of two parts: a survey that generated quantitative data and a semi-structured interview that generated qualitative data. The data collected from both of these instruments was analyzed to generate findings relative to the two research questions.

The survey created for this study collected some basic demographic information and had four constructs. The majority of the questions were on a four-point Likert scale. This electronic survey was emailed to all teaching staff in the school. The survey generated an 83% completion rate. The data was analyzed and the findings generated were primarily used to answer the first research question which focused on the impact of peer supervisory practices on both in-person and remote/hybrid learning. The last question on the survey invited participants to volunteer to be part of the semi-structured interviews.

After the survey was distributed and the data was collected, participants who volunteered to be part of the semi-structured interviews were contacted and interviews scheduled. Fourteen participants volunteered to be part of this process, and all of them were included in this section of the study. The interviews were conducted by a research partner to protect the identity of the participants. The interviews were transcribed and personally identifiable information was removed before being returned to the primary researcher for analysis. This data was used to develop findings for both research questions; however, the findings that addressed the second research question about the impact of the school climate and culture primarily came from this qualitative data.

Positionality

My current role is a high school principal of a rural northern Maine school that has about 355 students and 30 full-time teaching staff. This school is the one that was used for this case study. As the principal for this school, I am in charge of evaluating all teaching and support staff in the building. This evaluation process is also supported by my assistant principal. Also, I am a member of the district's Professional Evaluation and Professional Growth (PE/PG) committee which establishes the evaluation process for the district.

As the principal, I am also in charge of developing the agendas for our weekly professional learning community meetings. Agendas are also developed with the assistance of the school's leadership team which also meets weekly. PLC meetings provide groups of teachers and support staff time to meet and discuss instructional practices and other departmental needs.

For this study, great consideration of the impact of my role as the direct supervisor in the school was taken into account. This study explored both the evaluative and supervisory practices within the school and the perceived impact of both on teacher effectiveness. Safeguards were put in place to protect participants' anonymity and to allow reliable data to be collected. This was primarily achieved by partnering with another researcher.

Considerations for Scholarly Practitioners

Along with existing literature, the findings from this study show that supervisory practices are critical to improving instructional practices and positively impacting teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy. While evaluative practices are prevalent within schools and serve a purpose as a human resource tool, they should not be relied upon for professional growth. Leaders within schools need to identify intentional time for peer feedback to be provided to staff so that they can improve their craft. This study also provides practitioners with a model to conduct research within their own school with the intent of improving the delivery of instruction and student achievement.

There is also a need for policy change, particularly at the state level. Currently, the focus of policy is on the implementation of evaluative practices with the intent of improving student achievement through accountability measures. Policy needs to be written so the appropriate resources can be provided to schools to effectively implement the practices known to improve

teacher growth. The findings from this study provide some specific policy recommendations to make this implementation possible.

Finally, in regards to the impact of supervisory practices, there are recommendations for future research. This case study was done in one school with a small number of teaching staff. A similar study could be replicated in multiple school districts to identify peer supervisory practices that are being implemented effectively.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter I will review the literature that helped inform the development of this study and its findings. The literature was also critical in the development of the conceptual framework that will be presented at the end of this chapter. This chapter will explore the historical context of evaluation and supervision, as well as specific supervisory practices. Understanding how these practices have developed over the years, as well as how they are being legislated and used within schools, is an important foundation for this study. Two of the key components in my conceptual framework are the understanding of adult learning theory and the impact of school culture and climate. In this review of the literature, both of these topics have sections dedicated to them.

History of Evaluation and Supervision

Over the last several decades, evaluation and supervision have often been conflated in schools (Gordon, 2020; Hazi, 2019; McGhee, 2020). A literature review of evaluation and supervisory practices within schools shows that the two have very different definitions and purposes. Evaluations in schools serve primarily as a human resource tool, one that is used to determine whether or not a teacher should be retained (Gordon, 2020; Hazi, 2019; Mette, 2017). Instructional supervisory practices are used for the sole purpose of improving a teacher's instructional practices (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019; Ingle & Lindle, 2019; Mette, 2017).

Educational policy, such as *A Nation at Risk* and *No Child Left Behind*, have driven accountability measures and evaluative practices in school districts (Fairman & Mette, 2017; Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2019; Hazi, 2019; Mette et al., 2017). In Maine, LD 1858 and Chapter 180

were the policies that forced districts to create Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PE/PG) systems (Doore et al., 2013). In Maine, as in most other states, this system is used primarily as an evaluative process and accountability measure (Doore et al. 2013; Mette et al., 2020). These plans are driven by administration and have the tendency to be more focused on student achievement (Glickman et al., 2013; Hazi, 2019; Mette et al., 2017; Mette et al., 2020).

Evaluation is often perceived as a negative tool, used to hold teachers accountable through measures such as student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Hazi, 2019). Additionally, these practices do not show that they achieve their desired goal of improving student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Glickman et al., 2013; Hazi, 2019; McGhee, 2020; Zepeda & Jimenez, 2010). This study looks to show that there is a place for evaluative practices within schools, but not with the intent of improving teacher instruction.

Instructional supervision has been thoroughly researched for a long period of time in the United States (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969; Gordon, 2019; McIntyre & McIntyre, 2020). This supervision has commonly been defined as practices that focus on the development of teachers and their instructional practices (Gordon, 2019; McGhee, 2020; Ingle & Lindle, 2019; McIntyre & McIntyre, 2020). These practices, unlike evaluative practices, are considered to be driven by teachers and supported by administration (Glickman et al., 2013; Glanz & Hazi, 2019; Mette et al. 2020). Instructional supervision within a school creates systems that allow educators to support one another in their instructional growth, that aide in the retention of teachers, and promote collegiality amongst staff as they support one another (McGhee, 2020; Glickman, 2013; Glanz & Hazi, 2019).

Differentiating between evaluative and supervisory practices is essential for this study. Supervisory practices are ones that are implemented with the intent of improving teacher effectiveness (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019; Ingle & Lindle, 2019; Mette, 2017). This study focuses on the use of peer feedback systems to support teacher effectiveness. Teachers need support and feedback in order to grow as professionals, and this feedback is often more effective when it is provided by a colleague (Hamilton, 2013; Kohut et al., 2007). These practices will be essential for schools to successfully adapt and continuously evolve to meet the challenges brought on by COVID-19 (Mette, 2020).

Eady and Zepeda (2018) say that "the goal of supervision in schools should be to assist professional educators in achieving both instructional efficacy and professional growth. To achieve this goal, supervision should not be an event, but rather a formative process" (p. 6). This process is comprised of various practices that are embedded within the school. Examples of such formative practices are peer observation systems, reflective practices, and professional learning communities (Ponticell et at., 2019). All of these practices are separate from the formal evaluation process of teachers. At the heart of each practice is feedback given from colleague to colleague. Peer feedback will allow teachers to explore both the strengths and weaknesses of their instruction (Glickman, 2013; Ponticell et al., 2019)

To support this type of peer feedback, many schools have implemented professional learning communities (PLCs). Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2019) define PLCs as "the improvement of student learning outcomes through the collective efforts of teachers to strengthen their teaching practices" (p. 212). This collective effort is made by teachers as PLCs give them the opportunity to develop and discuss a common understanding of what effective teaching and learning is within a school (DuFour & Mattos, 2012). For these communities to be

successful, it is imperative that the building leader ensures that these groups of teachers are working together towards common school-wide goals and initiatives (Ponticell et al., 2019). It should not be assumed that a group of teachers will naturally work towards this common goal. Professional development should be provided to staff so that they understand the purpose of PLCs, and how they can collaborate in a way that feedback is given and received in a productive manner (DuFour & Mattos, 2012).

Peer-to-peer observations are another supervisory practice that promote collegial feedback within schools. Peer observations serve as a type of embedded professional development within schools (Hamilton, 2013). Hamilton (2013) defines peer-to-peer observations as "teachers identifying goals and watching colleagues teach in order to expand their knowledge, practice and pedagogy" (p. 42). Teachers have a belief of what good teaching and learning looks like, which is very often similar to their own style (Courneya et al., 2008). Peer-to-peer observations can allow teachers to see different teaching styles and engage in conversations that can improve instruction. This type of on-going and intentional professional development within a school can expose teachers to a variety of instructional practices to inform their own instruction (Courneya et al., 2008; Hamilton, 2013).

There are challenges and obstacles that impede the implementation of peer supervisory practices within schools. One of these obstacles is finding time for these peer-to peer observations to be intentionally implemented within a school (Hamilton, 2013; Ponticell et al., 2019). The number of on-going mandates and school initiatives make it difficult to carve out time and energy for these practices to take place (Hazi, 2019; McGhee, 2020). Another challenge is the capacity of staff to give meaningful feedback to one another. Teachers and administrators

must be provided on-going professional development and opportunities to give and receive high-quality feedback (Glickman, 2013; Ponticell et al., 2019).

Adult Learning Models

In order to successfully implement peer supervisory practices such as the ones that I am analyzing in this case study, attention needs to be given to how adult learning happens within the school. In order for educators to successfully give and receive feedback, they need to be enabled to do so based on their developmental level (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018). Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2018) talk about a developmental approach to feedback systems and say:

> "It is one of the most powerful ways we can help each other grow, improve instructional and leadership practices, examine assumptions, raise collective consciousness, and build professional and internal capacity" (p. 63).

It is necessary for the supervisor to know the developmental strengths and needs of the staff in order to properly support them as adult learners and ensure that supervisory practices will be effective (Anderson, 2019; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018; Glickman, 2014; Gordon & Gordon, 2019).

Some research suggests that adult learners are intrinsically motivated, operate under a theory of andragogy, or they are self-directed learners (Glickman, 2013). This type of individual learning often is paired with reflective learning practices (Anderson, 2019; Glickman, 2013). Anderson (2019) describes how adult learning happens at the individual, group, and organizational level. Within schools, there are adult learning needs at all levels, and they do not happen in isolation; they happen simultaneously (Anderson, 2019).

For this study, much attention was paid to the work of Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2018) which was influenced by the work of Keegan. For the peer feedback systems that I am studying to be successful, it is essential that there is an understanding of the types of knowers that there are within the school (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018). Supervisory practices need to be crafted and implemented in an intentional way that will allow the adult learner to give and receive feedback and grow as a professional (Anderson, 2019; Drago-Severson, 2009; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018).

Professional Development

Professional development is critical to the development and implementation of practices designed to improve instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Hill and Desimone (2019) argue that "the critical problem in education reform is our failure to both cultivate and capitalize on the full potential of teacher….one key to unlocking their potential and thereby improving our public schools is professional development" (pp. 101 – 102). This professional development must be both continuous and consistent for it to be effective within schools (Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2019; Hill & Desimone, 2019). Professional development needs to align with school-wide goals and initiatives so that teachers see a purpose for the work that they are being asked to do (Hill & Desimone, 2019; Glickman et al., 2001).

Professional development is most effective when delivered with the understanding of the needs of the adult learners it is intended for (Drago-Severson & DeStefano, 2018; Hill & Desimone, 2019). Knowing how the teachers in the building learn, and then embedding learning into the fabric of the school so that it happens on a continuous basis is imperative (Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2019). "Treating teachers as learners, promoting inquiry and reflection, facilitating

experiential and collaborative learning that is consistent with policy and school goals, building in evaluation and feedback mechanisms; and ensuring that professional development is embedded within the school's daily practice, builds a shared knowledge base, and creates opportunities to learn" (Hill & Desimone, p. 115, 2019). Ponticell et al. (2019) suggest that a comprehensive supervision system can be successful if professional development focuses on these four competency areas: knowledge about teaching, ability to demonstrate this knowledge while being observed, willingness to sustain this ability, and a commitment to professional growth. This type of effective and on-going professional development promotes collaboration and peer feedback between colleagues (Glickman et al., 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2019).

School Climate and Culture

A school leader's effectiveness is often linked to the climate and culture of the school, as well as how successfully programs are implemented within the school (Anderson & Pounder, 2019). To successfully implement supervisory practices, the climate of the school has to be one of shared beliefs about how students learn in that school. There also must be a collective sense of responsibility for learning (Anderson & Pounder, 2019; Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018; Glickman, 2013). These shared perspectives allow teachers to provide feedback to one another with a common lens (Anderson & Pounder, 2019; Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018). The school leader can directly impact the success of supervisory practices by shaping the climate and ensuring there is a collaborative culture amongst staff (Anderson & Pounder, 2019; Glickman, 2013).

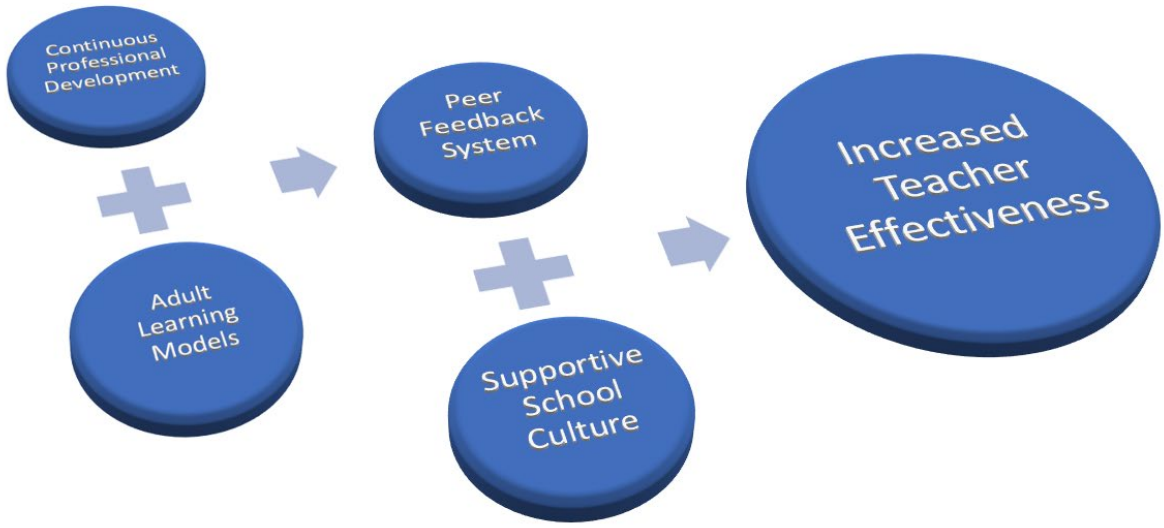
An important aspect to this study is looking at the school climate and culture through the lens of supervisory practices. When schools have a shared understanding of teaching and

learning, and the culture shifts from one where teachers are focused on accountability to one where they are focused on collaboration, then supervisory practices can be effective (Anderson & Pounder, 2019; Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2001). Arnold (2019) states that "when teachers and leaders experience positive emotions and perceptions about school climate, administrative support, and peer support, teachers are more responsive to interventions and the need to make changes" (p. 579). Administrators can promote supervisory leadership when they are building this shared vision within their schools and creating an atmosphere where teachers feel safe to collaborate with one another (Anderson & Pounder, 2019; Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018; Glickman, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework was developed to show the relationship between the concepts of adult learning models, professional development, peer feedback systems, and school culture. The intent of the framework, shown in Figure 2.1, is to illustrate how these concepts work together to improve teacher effectiveness. This framework was developed to show how the combination of these supporting components (professional development, adult learning models, and school culture), paired with supervisory practices (peer feedback systems) can positively impact how teachers perceive their own effectiveness. For this framework the following definitions are used:

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



Professional development

Professional development is defined as intentional activities designed for staff to implement supervisory practices within the school. Examples of professional development activities include professional learning communities, in-service day activities, conferences, assessment tuning protocols, classroom walks, etc. Professional development is essential in providing opportunities for staff to learn about best instructional practices and to give and receive feedback to one another (Gordon, 2020; McGhee, 2020).

Adult Learning Models

Adult learning models refer to specific models that target how adult learning happens within the school. This framework was informed by the research of Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2016), and a developmental approach they called feedback for growth.

Peer Feedback System

For this framework I am focusing on peer feedback systems that allow teachers to provide and receive feedback from one another with the intent of improving instructional practice. In many ways, colleagues provide more effective feedback to one another than that which is obtained through the traditional evaluation process (Kohut et al., 2007). There is a focus on the impact of these systems being implemented in fully remote, hybrid, and in-person academic settings. Peer observations will be one of the systems studied.

Supportive School Culture

Supportive school culture refers to aspects of a school culture that aid the implementation of peer feedback systems directly impacted by school leaders. A school culture that is conducive to supervisory practices is one that has a focus on school-wide growth and providing and receiving critical feedback from one another (Drago Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2018).

Increased Teacher Effectiveness

Increased teacher effectiveness will be measured by teacher perceptions of their ability to successfully instruct students and increase student achievement. Specifically, I will be looking at how peer feedback systems have changed those perceptions.

This conceptual framework illustrates the idea that if a school can take existing adult learning theory and combine it with continuous professional development, it can create the circumstance where a comprehensive peer feedback system can be developed. Once this system has been developed to meet the needs of the school, and the school culture is such that it can support the system, it can be implemented with the end goal of increasing teacher effectiveness.

There are a number of underlying programs and structures within each of these four major components. Included with the framework is a design map that helps illustrate the connections between these items. Even though the framework is set up as a horizontal equation, there are no equal signs intentionally, only arrows. It cannot be assumed that if professional development is in place paired with an adult learning model that a comprehensive peer feedback system has been created. This framework intends to show that these are major components in the development of that system.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Setting and Context

I will be doing a case study on a rural high school in northern Maine. A case study was chosen to look at the impact that peer feedback systems had on this school and how those systems helped improve teachers' perspectives of their own instruction in the new world of hybrid and remote teaching. For this case, the chosen school has just over 355 students and 30 full-time teaching staff. As the lead administrator in this school, I have unique insight to the implementation of the hybrid and remote learning systems. This also means that I had an enormous ethical responsibility and obligation to protect the participants if they decided to participate in my study.

The make-up of the staff is predominantly teachers who have taught for more than ten years. There are 15 core teachers (math, science, English and social studies) and 15 non-core teachers (art, music, physical education, special education, foreign language, technology, etc.). There are two guidance counselors, a social worker, one librarian, and seven additional support staff. There is one full-time principal and one assistant principal who also serves as the school's athletic director. The school consists of a predominantly white staff and student body. The special education population for the district is at 16%, and 56% of the students receive free or reduced lunch.

The district has a Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PE/PG) committee as required by policy. This committee is comprised of administrators and teachers from all of the schools, the curriculum coordinator, special education director, and the superintendent. This committee is in charge of creating the PE/PG plan for the district that establishes how teachers

will be evaluated in accordance with state policy. This committee meets as needed to make changes to the plan and stay compliant with the law.

For just over ten years the district has implemented professional learning communities (PLCs) for all schools. Students are released an hour early once a week so that these groups of teachers can meet. Professional development was provided during the early implementation of these PLCs. The goal was to provide teachers time to work with their colleagues to discuss instruction, work on assessments, and work towards other school and district goals. The agendas for these meetings are set by the building principal with input from each school's leadership team.

In 2010, the school was chosen to be part of a grant to implement the BARR (*Building Assets Reducing Risks*) program. This program is a model that provides schools with an intentional framework to implement teaming structures within the school. Initially, BARR was implented by the 9th grade teaching team but has since been implemented at the 10th and 11th grades as well. Through the implementation of this model, the school developed a schedule that allowed the four core teachers (math, science, English and social studies) to have a common planning period in addition to their regular planning period. This time is dedicated for the teachers to intentionally discuss students in regards to their academic standing as well as their social and emotional well-being. This intentional teaming model provided teachers with a structure to not only communicate with one another about their common students, but also to share effective practices used within their classroom. This intentional structure has allowed for a transparency of instructional practices that was not present in the past. It has also contributed to a school culture that promotes collaboration and working together to help students achieve academic success.

In March of 2020, schools in the state of Maine, including the one in this study, were forced to go entirely remote for the rest of the academic year. Teachers had to re-invent themselves on the fly with little to no professional development. Obstacles such as technology, access to internet, truancy, and a number of other issues, made delivering instruction to students almost impossible. In the summer of 2020, the school in this study prepared for students to return the next school year in a hybrid model. During the 2020-2021 school year students attended class in-person for two days and remotely for three days. This study was conducted in the spring of 2021.

Understanding that evaluative and supervisory practices are often conflated, this case study looked to understand the role of each practice within the school. The intent of the study is to focus on the impact of peer supervisory practices and how teachers perceive these practices improve their instruction and overall effectiveness. The study was conducted while the school was delivering instruction in a hybrid model. It looked to capture how teachers relied upon their peers and their feedback out of necessity, and how this could translate to a more normal setting.

Research Design

A mixed methods approach was used in this case study. All faculty members were sent a recruitment email explaining the purpose as well as the informed consent document. Additionally, a staff meeting was used to describe the scope and purpose of the study. All participants were given a survey electronically (see Appendix A). The intent of the survey was to gather demographic information, as well as data regarding the perceptions of teachers around the effectiveness of peer feedback systems in improving instructional practices. This survey consisted of a mix of question types, including Likert scales and open-ended questions. There were four constructs for this study: understanding of current evaluation and PE/PG system, peer

supervisory practices and their impacts on teacher effectiveness, peer supervisory practices and their effect on remote learning, and school culture and climate. There was also a short demographics section at the beginning of the survey.

The demographics section gathered information regarding the years of teaching experience of the participants, as well as the content area that they teach. I used this information to look for trends in how peer feedback systems are used more or less effectively within different groups of teachers. The first construct was used to gauge the understanding and the perceptions of the participants on the effectiveness of the current evaluation and PE/PG system in the school. Specifically, the questions asked about how teachers perceive the evaluation system has made them more effective educators. The next two constructs were looking to gather very similar information except they focused on supervisory (non-evaluative) practices. One of those constructs focused more intentionally on how supervisory practices have aided educators in delivering effective instruction in a remote learning environment. The final construct looked to gather data on how the culture and the climate of the school aides or impedes the implementation of peer supervisory practices.

After the collection of the survey data, I identified themes and used purposeful sampling to determine participants to interview based on their indicated interest from the survey. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the identified participants (see Appendix B). The interview questions took a deep dive into how peer feedback systems have affected their perceptions of their own effectiveness. Specific attention was paid to how these systems have aided the participants in their approach to the hybrid learning model. Also, the interviews intentionally gathered data about the conditions of the school culture that supported these systems.

This study was designed to get a comprehensive look at the peer supervisory practices used within this school. It also was looking to identify the conditions that need to be present in order for these practices to be implemented with fidelity. The intent is to use the data collected to inform practice within the school, inform potential policy change, and guide future research.

Research Questions

Through the examination of our supervision system this study will help determine the effect of non-evaluative feedback on teacher effectiveness. Through this process the study will answer the following questions:

1. How do peer feedback supervisory practices improve teacher effectiveness in both a remote and in-person classroom setting?
2. How do building leaders cultivate a culture amongst staff that is supportive of peer supervisory practices?

Methods

Participant Selection

A recruitment email was sent to all members of the teaching staff in the selected school. I chose to use this method because of the small n-size (N = 30) of the teaching staff. There was a high response rate on this survey as 25 participants responded (83%). The last question of the survey asked each participant if they would like to volunteer to be part of the semi-structured interviews.

To find internal generalizability (Maxwell, 2013), the intent was to select a diverse group of participants (i.e. years of experience, content areas, knowledge, and experience in regards to peer supervisory practices). There were 14 participants who volunteered for the interviews, and all but one had more than 10 years of teaching experience. There was diversity in the group in

regards to the content areas that they taught. All 14 participants were selected to be part of the interview process.

Data Collection

The survey consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data collected was used to gauge the staff's perceptions of how peer feedback systems are being implemented, as well as how effective they perceived them to be. There were questions that spoke to the culture and climate of the school and how they impact the implementation and effectiveness of peer feedback systems. The qualitative items on the survey addressed the same topics. This qualitative data was used to develop some of the questions for the semi-structured interviews.

After the survey data was collected and analyzed, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the purposefully sampled participants. These interviews were recorded and transcribed using a third-party vendor. The semi-structured interviews were conducted by an action-research partner to protect the identity of the participants. The research partner scrubbed the data by removing any personally identifiable information to ensure anonymity before returning the transcripts to myself.

Instruments / Protocols

The electronic survey sent to participants consisted of 27 questions made up of primarily Likert scale questions. There were also a few multiple choice and open-ended questions. The first part of the survey collected basic demographic information: years of experience and content area taught. The rest of the survey consisted of four constructs: Evaluation and PE/PG System, Supervisory Practices and the Impact on Teacher Effectiveness, Supervisory Practices and their

Impact on Remote/Hybrid Learning, and School Culture and Climate. The survey was piloted in two different schools. The entire survey had a Cronbach's Alpha of .919.

The semi-structured interview consisted of nine questions. The interviews were conducted by a co-researcher. One pilot interview was conducted to ensure the appropriate data was being collected. All participants were asked the same initial questions, but different follow-up questions were asked based on the flow of the conversation. After every three interviews, the primary and co-researchers met to make sure that the interview questions were gathering the desired data.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of the survey, the quantitative data was collected to begin analysis. Both descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (independent t-tests) were used to analyze the quantitative survey data. For the demographics data, the information was collapsed into two groups for each question so that inferential tests could be run. For years of experience, participants were separated into two groups: 0–10 years and 11+ years. For content area taught, the two groups created were core teachers (math, science, English, and social studies) and non-core (art, music, physical education, special education, technology, etc.).

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were determined for all of the items on the survey. They were also determined for each construct of the survey. Highest and lowest means for items in each construct were identified and used in the determination of the findings. Additionally, independent t-tests were run to compare results of participants based on years of experience and content area taught. The data from this survey produced findings that answered both research questions, but primarily spoke to research question one, the impact of peer

supervisory practices on in-person and remote/hybrid learning. The data from the survey also informed the questions that were developed for the semi-structured interviews.

After the first three interviews were completed, the researcher conducting the interviews met with the primary researcher to adjust any questions as necessary. This process was done again after the next three interviews. Upon completion of the interviews conducted by the co-researcher, the data was de-identified and returned to the primary researcher. The data was coded using Nvivo and used to develop themes relative to the two research questions. Structural coding methods were used for the qualitative data collected (Saldana, 2016). Themes from the qualitative data emerged on the first pass, and the data was furthered refined on additional reviews. These themes were compared to the quantitative data sets to validate the findings. While the findings from the qualitative analysis spoke to both research questions, the second research question was answered primarily from this data. The analysis of the data produced five findings, three that speak to research question one, and two that speak to research question two.

Study Timeline

This study was conducted in the spring academic semester of 2021. All teaching staff of the school received an email with the survey link embedded into the message. After two weeks, a second email was sent out to all staff again as a reminder. After the third week, the survey window was closed. At the conclusion of this window, I created a list of the participants who volunteered to take part in the follow up interviews and passed this along to the research partner in charge of conducting the interviews.

After receiving the list of volunteers, the research partner sent out an invitation to all participants to set up a time to conduct the interviews. Over the course of three weeks, each of the 14 interviews was conducted. After completion of the interviews, the research partner spent

the next two weeks transcribing and scrubbing the data. Once this was done, the data was returned to myself to be analyzed.

Starting in the late spring of 2021 and through that summer, both the survey and interview data was analyzed. During this time, findings were developed and further exploration into literature was done to help validate what was found. Upon completion of the analysis and the development of the findings, a presentation of these findings was made at the COPIS (Council of Professors of Instructional Leadership) 2021 annual meeting.

Positionality

This study was conducted within the school where I am currently the principal. Conducting a case study within the school where I am the direct supervisor certainly poses some risks. In a staff meeting, I was transparent with the participants in regards to the purpose of the research and how I would be using the data. Being in a position of power had the potential of suppressing the participation rate for my study, so this transparency was critical. I also used this faculty meeting to openly discuss any potential risks so that staff felt comfortable to participate. For the interview process, I used a third party to conduct the interviews with the chosen participants. The third party helped scrub the data so that when I analyzed it I was not able to trace it back to individual participants. Questions were intentionally worded so that they would not put participants in a situation where they felt that their job performance was being evaluated or that their opinions would be held against them.

While accounting for my positionality in this study, there are some direct benefits to me and my school. The purpose of this research is to identify how peer supervisory practices are being implemented within the school, and to what extent teachers perceive them to improve their own efficacy. As the building leader, I am able to use the results from this study to make

structural changes to our school that are responsive to the feedback gathered. This type of action research provides me with the opportunity to identify areas of growth and address them accordingly. It also provides a data set that I can in turn use to validate program changes both with my superintendent and school board.

Validity / Trustworthiness

One of the biggest validity threats that I had to account for was researcher bias (Maxwell, 2013). As a supervisor in the building where this case study was conducted, there were findings that I hoped participants would reveal to be present within the school. To account for this validity threat, I triangulated my survey data with my semi-structured interview data (Maxwell, 2013). Especially given the small n-size, it was important to this case study that the findings were verified through both data collection methods.

To ensure that I was getting the intended data from the semi-structured interviews, I worked closely with the participant action-researcher partner who conducted the interviews. The co-researcher that I partnered with was doing similar action research as myself. We were in the same doctoral cohort for three years and had a very clear understanding of each other's problems of practice. The co-researcher that I recruited for this study is in a similar position as myself. As a high school administrator, he has extensive experience with evaluative and supervisory practices, such as the ones that I am studying. Prior to the interviews, we worked together extensively on how I would like the interviews to be conducted. We practiced by doing a mock interview, and we also conferenced after every third interview to ensure that the intended data was being collected and adjusted as necessary. Through our work prior to conducting the interviews, we created a common understanding about the desired approach and the lens which we viewed these interviews.

Limitations

This case study is limited because of the small n-size. Because of this, I relied on a high response rate from my staff. This small n-size posed some challenges when trying to analyze the quantitative data. I did use inferential statistics; however, the small n-size was an inhibiting factor in gathering a large number of statistically significant results (Krathwohl, 2009). Consequently, I will not be using this data to try and generalize my findings to other settings. This data will be used to describe what is happening in this case study and perhaps set the stage for a larger study using some of the same methods.

Admittedly, it would be difficult to take any findings from this case study of one high school and try and transfer the results en masse to other schools. The findings from this study will illustrate the successes and challenges that this staff had with peer feedback systems. Even though the results may not be generalizable, the intent is that pieces of this study can be used to inform and aid other educational institutions in their efforts to improve their supervisory practices. It also will identify other areas where more expansive studies can be done to address the research gap in peer feedback systems in public education.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This mixed methods study was focused on peer supervisory practices within the school and how they impact teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy. The two research questions that were explored are:

1. How do peer feedback supervisory practices improve teacher effectiveness in both a remote and in-person classroom setting?
2. How do building leaders cultivate a culture amongst staff that is supportive of peer supervisory practices?

The findings for this study have been broken into four parts. Quantitative data from the survey portion of the study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews allowed themes to emerge that describe supervisory practice that helps cultivate a supportive culture which values peer feedback. Using the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3, the findings speak to how peer supervisory feedback can be used to improve teacher effectiveness.

The survey was distributed to all teaching staff in the school. The school in this study is a rural high school with approximately 355 students and 30 full-time teaching staff. Of the staff, 25 participants completed the survey which produced an 83.33% response rate. Participants were asked how many years of experience they have as well as the content area that they deliver instruction. Of the 25 total participants, 32% of the respondents had 0-10 years of experience and 68% of the respondents had 11+ years of experience (see Table 4.1). Additionally, 48% of the respondents taught core content courses (math, English, social studies and science) and 52%

taught non-core subjects, such as music, special education, art, industrial technology, health, physical education, etc. (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.1: Years of Experience of Participants (Survey)

Years' Experience	N - Size	Percentage
0-10 Years	8	32%
11+ Years	17	68%

Table 4.2: N - Size of Core and Non-Core Teachers (Survey)

Teaching Assignment	N - Size	Percentage
Core Teacher	12	48%
Non-Core Teacher	13	52%

The survey produced an overall Cronbach alpha of .919. Table 4.3 shows the Cronbach alpha for each of the four constructs. There were four constructs for this study: (1) understanding of current evaluation and PE/PG system, (2) peer supervisory practices and their impacts on teacher effectiveness, (3) peer supervisory practices and their effect on remote learning, and (4) school culture and climate. The survey was made up of Likert scale questions that were based on a four-point scale (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Somewhat Disagree, 3-Somewhat Agree, 4-Strongly Agree).

Table 4.3: Cronbach's Alpha by Construct

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Evaluation and PE/PG System	.847	6
Supervisory Practices and the Impact on Teacher Effectiveness	.889	6

Table 4.3 Continued.

Supervisory Practices and their Impact on Remote/Hybrid Learning	.881	5
School Culture and Climate	.819	6
Entire Survey	.919	23

The first construct, understanding of current evaluation and PE/PG system, measured participants' knowledge and perceptions of the evaluation process used within the school. It measured participants' beliefs of how the evaluation system improved their instruction and their perceptions of their self-efficacy as a teacher. It also looked to gauge whether participants viewed the evaluative process as a teacher growth tool, or if they believed it to be used primarily for teacher retention.

The second construct looked at the impact of supervisory practices on teacher effectiveness. Similar to the first construct, it looked to measure how these supervisory practices improved teacher instruction and their perceptions of self-efficacy. Additionally, it looked to identify the structures and supports available to staff in order to implement these supervisory practices.

The third construct was designed to measure the impact of supervisory practices in regards to remote/hybrid learning. Specifically, participants were asked about how these practices were beneficial to delivering remote instruction. As in the second construct, these questions also looked to measure the effectiveness of the support and structures provided to participants during remote learning.

The final construct focused on measuring the effects of a positive school climate and culture and how they support the use of supervisory practices. This construct measured how

comfortable participants were with giving and receiving feedback to one another. It also focused on if the school climate provided a conducive environment for these peer supervisory practices to be implemented.

In addition to the 25 participants who completed the survey, there were also 14 educators who agreed to take part in a semi-structured interview. As seen in Table 4.4, all but one participant had 11+ years of experience. This could be explained by the fact that in this school a majority of teachers are veterans with 11+ years of experience, or that teachers with less experience didn't want to participate in the study. Additionally, nine participants who took part in the interviews came from core classes (language arts, math, science, social studies) and five of the interviewees were from non-core content areas such as music, special education, art, industrial technology, health, physical education, etc.

Table 4.4: Individual Participant Demographics (Interviews)

Participant Number	**Years of Experience**	**Core or Non-Core**
Interviewee #1	0 - 10	Core
Interviewee #2	11+	Core
Interviewee #3	11+	Core
Interviewee #4	11+	Core
Interviewee #5	11+	Core
Interviewee #6	11+	Core
Interviewee #7	11+	Core
Interviewee #8	11+	Core
Interviewee #9	11+	Core
Interviewee #10	11+	Non - Core
Interviewee #11	11+	Non - Core

Table 4.4 Continued.

Interviewee #12	11+	Non - Core
Interviewee #13	11+	Non - Core
Interviewee #14	11+	Non - Core

Presentation of Findings

The intent of this mixed method study was to look at the impact of peer supervisory practices and how they impact teachers' perceptions of their own effectiveness. The focus was not to try and determine whether or not these practices should be implemented, but rather what structures and circumstances need to be in place for supervisory practices to be effective. Additionally, the intent was to pay close attention to the effect that supervisory practices that teachers were forced into over the last two school years had on remote and hybrid instruction.

In the section below, there will be an overview of the survey data that will allow the reader to review descriptive statistics. Then, the findings will be presented. The first finding, evaluation as a human resource tool, speaks to research question one, specifically the foundation of separating evaluation feedback (summative) from supervision feedback (formative), to drive improvement of teacher effectiveness. The second finding, the perceived impact of supervisory practices, speaks to research question one, specifically the various forms of formative supervision feedback that teachers consider effective in helping them reflect on their instructional practices. The third finding, supervisory practices and their impact on the implementation of remote/hybrid learning, speaks to research question one, specifically the importance of how peer feedback can drive improvement efforts in both remote and in-person instructional settings. The fourth finding, school culture and climate fostering the

implementation of peer supervisory practices, speaks to research question two, specifically how the school climate and culture positively impacts the implementation of peer supervisory practices within the school. The fifth finding, peer feedback is critical to a healthy supervision climate and must be continually supported with structures, speaks to research question two, specifically how structures need to be intentionally built into the school so that peer feedback systems can be implemented with fidelity.

Overview of Survey Data

Table 4.5 displays the overall mean and standard deviation to each of the 23 survey questions given to participants. Each of these questions was rated on a four-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree). There were six questions in each of the first two constructs, five questions in the third, and six questions in the fourth construct.

Table 4.5: Overall Mean and Standard Deviation by Survey Question

Survey Question	Construct	Overall Mean	Standard Deviation
I am familiar with the district's evaluation system.	1	3.48	0.586
I agree that the evaluation process in my district improves teacher effectiveness.	1	3.08	0.584
In my experience the evaluation process has improved my instructional capacity.	1	3.08	0.640
In my experience the evaluation process has improved my effectiveness as a teacher.	1	3.04	0.676
In my experience the evaluation process is used as a professional growth tool.	1	3.00	0.707
In my experience the evaluation process is used as a human resource tool (teacher retention).	1	3.08	0.702

Table 4.5 Continued.

The use of supervisory practices are prevalent within the school.	2	2.96	0.889
In my experience supervisory practices have improved my instructional capacity.	2	3.08	0.702
In my experience supervisory practices have improved my effectiveness as a teacher	2	3.04	0.79
There is time provided for the implementation of supervisory practices.	2	2.75	0.737
Staff are encouraged to give and receive feedback about instruction from one another.	2	3.36	0.700
Peer feedback is given and received consistently throughout the school.	2	2.60	1.041
The amount of support needed from peers has increased due to remote/hybrid learning.	3	3.32	0.988
Peer feedback systems were available in preparation for remote/hybrid learning.	3	2.96	0.841
Professional development was adequately provided in preparation for remote/hybrid learning.	3	3.08	0.862
The feedback received from their peers was essential to their instructional practices during remote/hybrid learning.	3	3.24	0.926
I have relied on peer feedback more heavily during remote/hybrid learning.	3	3.08	0.954
The school culture and climate is supportive of supervisory practices.	4	3.52	0.586
The school culture and climate is conducive to peer feedback systems.	4	3.28	0.843
The school culture and climate is one that promotes collaboration amongst staff.	4	3.48	0.653
I feel comfortable giving feedback about instruction to their peers.	4	3.20	0.764
I feel comfortable receiving feedback from my peers.	4	3.76	0.436

Table 4.5 Continued.

The school climate and culture promotes a common set of expectations about student learning.	4	3.20	0.913

Constructs: (1) Evaluation and PE/PG System, (2) Impact of Peer Supervisory Practices, (3) Impact of Peer Supervisory Practices on Remote Learning, and (4) School Climate and Culture

The statement the participants agreed with the most in the entire survey was that they felt comfortable receiving feedback from their peers (M = 3.76). The statement that participants were in the least agreement with in the entire survey was that peer feedback is given and received consistently throughout the school (M = 2.60).

The Evaluation and PE/PG construct had an overall mean of 3.13. In this construct, participants had the most agreement with the statement that they were familiar with the district's evaluation system (M = 3.48). Participants had the least agreement with the statement that the district's evaluation process was used as a professional growth tool (M = 3.0). They were in slightly higher agreement that it was used more as a human resource tool (a tool for teacher retention) (M = 3.08).

The Impact of Supervisory Practices construct had an overall mean of 2.97, the lowest of the four constructs. Participants were in the most agreement with the statement that staff were encouraged to give and receive feedback about instruction from their peers (M = 3.36). Interestingly, participants were in the least agreement with the statement that peer feedback is given consistently throughout the school (M = 2.60). This was the lowest scoring item on the entire survey. The second lowest scoring item, both in the construct and on the survey, was that there was time provided to staff for the implementation of supervisory practices (M = 2.75).

The Impact of Supervisory Practices on Remote Learning construct had an overall mean of 3.12 which had the highest standard deviation of .914. The participants agreed more with the statement that the need for peer support has increased with the implementation of remote/hybrid

learning (M = 3.32). The second highest agreement was with the statement that the feedback received from their peers was essential to their instruction during remote/hybrid learning (M = 3.24). They were in the least agreement with the statement that peer feedback systems were available in preparation for remote/hybrid learning (M = 2.96).

The final construct of School Culture and Climate had the highest overall mean of 3.41. The statement that participants agreed most with was that they felt comfortable receiving feedback from their peers (M = 3.76). This was the highest scoring item on the survey. The second highest scoring item on the survey also came from this construct and that was the statement that the school culture and climate was supportive of supervisory practices (M = 3.52).

To better understand and analyze the constructs of the survey, variables were computed for each construct providing the mean and standard deviation for the average of each construct (see Table 4.6 below). The overall survey had a mean of 3.16. The construct the participants agreed with the most was School Culture and Climate (M = 3.41) and the construct participants agreed with the least was Supervisory Practices and the Impact on Teacher Effectiveness (M = 2.97).

Table 4.6: Overall Mean and Standard Deviation by Construct

Construct	Sample Size	Overall Mean	Standard Deviation
Evaluation and PE/PG System	25	3.13	.649
Supervisory Practices and the Impact on Teacher Effectiveness	25	2.97	.810
Supervisory Practices and their Impact on Remote/Hybrid Learning	25	3.12	.914
School Culture and Climate	25	3.41	.700
Entire Survey	25	3.16	.762

Finding #1: Evaluation as a Human Resource Tool

As it relates to practices to improve teacher effectiveness (research question one), participants responded to their familiarity with the district's evaluation system and their perceived effectiveness of this system. The survey was used to determine if participants identified the formal evaluation system as a growth tool or more as a teacher retention and human resource tool. This was done in an effort to establish a difference between evaluative practices and supervisory practices within the school, and how teachers perceive the effectiveness of each.

In the survey participants were asked six questions in regards to the evaluation process (see Table 4.7). Only 4% of participants disagreed that they were familiar with the district's evaluation system. Conversely, 84% of participants either "somewhat" or "strongly agreed" that the evaluation process in the district improved teacher effectiveness. Also, 84% either "somewhat" or "strongly agreed" that the evaluation process has improved their instructional capacity. Additionally, 76% of participants either "somewhat" or "strongly agreed" that the evaluation process is used as a professional growth tool, and 80% agreed that the evaluation process is used as a human resource tool.

Table 4.7: Teacher Knowledge and Perception of Evaluation and PE/PG System

Survey Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I am familiar with the district's evaluation system.	0%	4%	44%	52%
I agree that the evaluation process in my district improves teacher effectiveness.	0%	12%	64%	20%

Table 4.7 Continued

In my experience the evaluation process has improved my instructional capacity.	0%	16%	60%	24%
In my experience the evaluation process has improved my effectiveness as a teacher.	0%	20%	56%	24%
In my experience the evaluation process is used as a professional growth tool.	0%	24%	52%	24%
In my experience the evaluation process is used as a human resource tool (teacher retention).	0%	20%	52%	28%

When looking at the comparison between core and non-core teachers (Table 4.8), there were some notable differences. Core teachers score lower or the same on every item (M = 3.50, 3.00, 3.08, 2.92, 2.83, 3.00) compared to non-core teachers (M = 3.46, 3.17, 3.08, 3.15, 3.15, 3.15). The only exception was their familiarity with the district's evaluation system which was the first item. In general, it appears from the data that core teachers are less in agreement about the effectiveness of the evaluation system compared to the non-core teachers. An independent t-test did not reveal any statistically significant difference between the perceptions of core and non-core teachers.

Table 4.8: Core vs Non-Core Evaluation and PE/PG Construct Means

Survey Question	**Sample Size**	**Core Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Sample Size**	**Non - Core Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
I am familiar with the district's evaluation system.	12	3.50	.522	13	3.46	.660

Table 4.8 Continued

I agree that the evaluation process in my district improves teacher effectiveness.	12	3.00	.603	13	3.17	.577
In my experience the evaluation process has improved my instructional capacity.	12	3.08	.669	13	3.08	.641
In my experience the evaluation process has improved my effectiveness as a teacher.	12	2.92	.669	13	3.15	.689
In my experience the evaluation process is used as a professional growth tool.	12	2.83	.718	13	3.15	.689
In my experience the evaluation process is used as a human resource tool (teacher retention).	12	3.00	.739	13	3.15	.689

Table 4.9 shows the comparison between the teachers with 10 years or less experience and 11 years or more experience within the Evaluation and PE/PG construct. An independent t-test was run and there were no statistically significant differences on any items between these two groups. The biggest difference was that the more experienced teachers (M = 3.59) were more familiar with the district's evaluation system then less experienced teachers (M = 3.25).

Table 4.9: Years of Experience Comparison of Evaluation and PE/PG Construct Means

Survey Question	**Sample Size**	**0 - 10 Years**	**Standard Deviation**	**Sample Size**	**11+ Years**	**Standard Deviation**
I am familiar with the district's evaluation system.	8	3.25	.707	17	3.59	.507

Table 4.9 Continued.

I agree that the evaluation process in my district improves teacher effectiveness.	8	3.14	.378	17	3.06	.659
In my experience the evaluation process has improved my instructional capacity.	8	3.00	.756	17	3.12	.600
In my experience the evaluation process has improved my effectiveness as a teacher.	8	3.13	.641	17	3.00	.707
In my experience the evaluation process is used as a professional growth tool.	8	3.00	.756	17	3.00	.707
In my experience the evaluation process is used as a human resource tool (teacher retention).	8	3.13	.835	17	3.06	.659

In response to research question one, and specific to the evaluation/PEPG system within the district, the interview participants made statements that showed less value in these practices. Participants saw these evaluative practices more as a formality and a single snapshot in time. One participant said:

> "So, if you're relying on that (formal evaluations) to make you a more effective teacher, you're waiting a long time for feedback, which is why I think outside of that, we have just become more open and collaborative with each other because that's where you get the most help."

Another teacher had this to say:

> "And, when you're just doing it to make sure that it looks good for someone who's coming in, it doesn't improve your growth or anyone else's for that matter….so, I'm pleased that

> we're looking at sort of using peer mentoring and other ways of getting at some of those performance indicators that are evaluative, because there just is only so much time in a day and so much time to see someone."

Participants referred to the infrequency of these evaluative practices and the belief that the more frequent, short conversations had greater impact on their instruction than these annual (or sometimes more infrequent) observations. One participant commented:

> "I get it that you have to have formalized methods of evaluating people, just because of the legalities of it, unfortunately. But certainly, for me, personally, over the years, I much prefer getting constant feedback from people of what I'm doing well and what I'm doing not so well so that I can change it as I go."

Participants felt that the feedback that they received from their peers that taught the same content was more valuable to them. Another veteran special education teacher said:

> "From my perspective, though, having a good relationship with my special ed peers and being able to go to them for feedback, or 'I'm having this problem. You got any ideas?' That is so much more effective than having a principal sit in my classroom and give me feedback based on one snippet in time."

Finding #2: The Perceived Impact of Supervisory Practices

The findings in this section relate directly to research question one, and speak not only to the perceived effectiveness of supervisory practices, but also to the conditions and structures that participants indicated need to be present. Of the respondents, 80% either "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that supervisory practices have improved their instructional capacity. Additionally, 72% of them "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that these practices improved their effectiveness as a teacher. Of the respondents, 88% also agree to some extent that they are encouraged to give and receive feedback about instruction to one another. However, only 56% either "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that there is sufficient time for these practices to be

implemented, and only 60% agree to some extent that peer feedback is given consistently within the school (See Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: Supervisory Practices and the Impact on Perceived Teacher Effectiveness

	Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
The use of supervisory practices is prevalent within the school.	4%	28%	36%	32%
In my experience supervisory practices have improved my instructional capacity.	0%	20%	52%	28%
In my experience supervisory practices have improved my effectiveness as a teacher	0%	28%	40%	32%
There is time provided for the implementation of supervisory practices.	4%	40%	40%	16%
Staff are encouraged to give and receive feedback about instruction from one another.	0%	12%	40%	48%
Peer feedback is given and received consistently throughout the school.	20%	20%	40%	20%

A separate item on the survey was included in this construct that was not included in Table 4.11. This item was not a Likert scale question, so it is presented in a separate table (see Table 10). This question asked participants to choose one practice from a list of practices that had the greatest impact on their teaching. Only 8% of the responses indicated that evaluative formal observations (done by the administrator) were the most impactful. While 40% selected reflective conversations, 36% chose casual walkthroughs as the most impactful practices.

Table 4.11: Which of the Following Practices has the Greatest Impact on your Teaching?

Peer Observations	16%
Reflective Conversations	40%
Formal Observations	8%
Informal Observations	0%
Casual walkthroughs with follow up conversation	36%

Table 4.12 looks at the comparison between core and non-core teachers in this construct. There are noticeable differences between the scores of the two groups, with the core teachers scoring lower on all items. Both groups consistently agree that staff are encouraged to give and receive feedback. The largest difference is in the third statement about supervisory practices improving their effectiveness as a teacher. Core teachers had an average mean of 2.67 and non-core teachers had a mean of 3.38. An independent t-test was run and revealed that this difference was statistically significant at ($p = .019$).

Table 4.12: Core vs Non-Core Teachers Perceptions on Impact of Supervisory Practices on Teacher Effectiveness

	Sample Size	**Core Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Sample Size**	**Non - Core Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
The use of supervisory practices are prevalent within the school.	12	2.83	1.030	13	3.08	.760
In my experience supervisory practices have improved my instructional capacity.	12	2.83	.577	13	3.31	.751

Table 4.12 Continued.

In my experience supervisory practices have improved my effectiveness as a teacher	12	2.67	.651	13	3.38	.768
There is time provided for the implementation of supervisory practices.	12	2.50	.674	13	3.00	.739
Staff are encouraged to give and receive feedback about instruction from one another.	12	3.33	.778	13	3.38	.650
Peer feedback is given and received consistently throughout the school.	12	2.33	.985	13	2.85	1.068

A comparison was also done for the different groups of teaching experience (See Table 4.13). An independent t-test did not reveal any statistically significant data, but there were some notable differences. On all items, the teachers with less experience were in more agreement with the statements (M = 3.13, 3.38, 3.25, 2.88, 3.63, 3.00) compared to the more experienced teachers (M = 2.88, 2.94, 2.94, 2.69, 3.24, 2.41). The biggest difference was in regards to peer feedback being given and received consistently throughout the school. Teachers in the 11+ year's experience group had a mean of 2.41 and the 0-10 years' experience group had a mean of 3.00.

Table 4.13: Years of Experience Comparison of the Impact of Supervisory Practices on Teacher Effectiveness

	Sample Size	**0 - 10 Years**	**Standard Deviation**	**Sample Size**	**11+ years**	**Standard Deviation**
The use of supervisory practices is prevalent within the school.	8	3.13	.835	17	2.88	.928

Table 4.13 Continued

In my experience supervisory practices have improved my instructional capacity.	8	3.38	.744	17	2.94	.659
In my experience supervisory practices have improved my effectiveness as a teacher	8	3.25	.886	17	2.94	.748
There is time provided for the implementation of supervisory practices.	8	2.88	.835	17	2.69	.704
Staff are encouraged to give and receive feedback about instruction from one another.	8	3.63	.518	17	3.24	.752
Peer feedback is given and received consistently throughout the school.	8	3.00	1.195	17	2.41	.939

In response to research question one, specifically focusing on peer supervisory practices and their impact on teacher self-efficacy, interview participants spoke positively about such practices. When asked about the impact of these practices, one participant said:

> "To me, a peer advisory is so much more important because they're the ones that see me day in and day out. And I would really like to go back to that more often. More is just better."

Participants were asked how school leadership helped support peer supervisory practices. One participant made this comment in regards to the implementation and support of these practices:

> "Our administration has been really good about just throwing out, 'Hey, this is what I think, maybe you want to go and sit in on this class and we can find someone to cover for you, so you can just look at...' But it doesn't come from the evaluator saying, 'I think you need help with this,' so much as it comes from that reflective component of the evaluation, where the teacher has to provide their feedback on how the lesson went. And then, the administrator comes in and says, 'Okay, well, you're interested in that, maybe you want to go sit in here and see that.'"

While all participants agreed that these peer supervisory practices are encouraged by administration and desired by teaching staff, there were concerns about the ability to implement them effectively. Similar to the quantitative data (See Table 9) from the survey, a theme emerged that there was not enough time intentionally built into the day for these practices to take place. Of the interviewees, 64% indicated that there needed to be additional time provided outside of existing practices such as PLCs and grade level team meetings. One participant said this:

> "So, I have to find time out of my schedule to go down and talk with my colleagues. But I still do it. I mean, we still do it. We're still encouraged to do it by our supervisor, but we just don't have the formal time set aside."

During one of the interviews, the interviewer made this comment about what he was hearing the interviewee say:

> "So, at least what I'm hearing in the middle of this, is that there's this culture of positive feedback and being open to feedback. So, it sounds to me like that this is encouraged and it's kind of safe for people to say, 'Give me a hand here.'"

Finding #3: Supervisory Practices and their Impact on the Implementation of Remote/ Hybrid Learning

As it relates to supervisory practices and their impact on the implementation of remote/hybrid learning (research question one), participants responded to five questions in this construct. The overall mean of this construct was (M = 3.12). Of respondents, 80% either "somewhat agree," (20%) or "strongly agree" (60%) that the amount of support needed from peers increased during remote learning. Additionally, 76% agreed to some extent that the feedback from their peers was essential to their instructional practices during this time. Also, 76% agreed to some extent that they relied more heavily on peer feedback during the remote learning period (See Table 4.14).

Table 4.14: Supervisory Practice and their Impact on Remote/Hybrid Learning

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The amount of support needed from peers has increased due to remote/hybrid learning.	8%	12%	20%	60%
Peer feedback systems were available in preparation for remote/hybrid learning.	4%	24%	44%	28%
Professional development was adequately provided in preparation for remote/hybrid learning.	4%	20%	40%	36%
The feedback received from their peers was essential to their instructional practices during remote/hybrid learning.	4%	20%	24%	52%
I have relied on peer feedback more heavily during remote/hybrid learning.	8%	16%	36%	40%

When comparing core and non-core teachers within the items in this construct, it again held true that the core teachers had a lower mean on all items (See Table 4.15). An independent t-test was run to compare these two groups and only one item proved to have a statistically significant difference. That item was that non-core teachers agreed more strongly (M=3.46) that they relied on peer feedback more heavily during remote learning than core teachers (M=2.67, p = .04).

Table 4.15: Core vs Non-Core Teachers Reliance on Peer Feedback During Remote/Hybrid Learning

	Sample Size	**Core Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Sample Size**	**Non - Core Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
The amount of support needed from peers has increased due to remote/hybrid learning.	12	3.00	1.206	13	3.62	.650
Peer feedback systems were available in preparation for remote/hybrid learning.	12	2.67	.778	13	3.23	.832
Professional development was adequately provided in preparation for remote/hybrid learning.	12	2.75	.866	13	3.38	.768
The feedback received from their peers was essential to their instructional practices during remote/hybrid learning.	12	3.00	1.044	13	3.46	.776
I have relied on peer feedback more heavily during remote/hybrid learning.	12	2.67	1.073	13	3.46	.660

The data in Table 4.16 compares the means of the groups of teachers based on their years of experience. The independent t-test did not produce statistically significant data. As in the previous construct, the participants with less experience agreed more strongly than the teachers with more experience on all five items. Both groups agreed more closely that they relied on peer feedback more heavily during remote learning.

Table 4.16: Years of Experience Comparison of the Impact of Supervisory Practices on Remote Learning

	Sample Size	0 - 10 Years	Standard Deviation	Sample Size	11+ years	Standard Deviation
The amount of support needed from peers has increased due to remote/hybrid learning.	8	3.50	.756	17	3.24	1.091
Peer feedback systems were available in preparation for remote/hybrid learning.	8	3.25	.707	17	2.82	.883
Professional development was adequately provided in preparation for remote/hybrid learning.	8	3.38	.744	17	2.94	.899
The feedback received from their peers was essential to their instructional practices during remote/hybrid learning.	8	3.50	.926	17	3.12	.928
I have relied on peer feedback more heavily during remote/hybrid learning.	8	3.13	.991	17	3.06	.966

Finding #4: School Culture and Climate Fostering the Implementation of Peer Supervisory Practices

The findings from this construct relate directly to the impact of the school culture and climate on the implementation of supervisory practices (research question two). This construct produced the highest overall mean (M = 3.41). Of the respondents, 96% either "somewhat agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the school culture and climate is supportive of supervisory practices. Additionally, 92% agreed to some extent that the school culture and climate is one that

promotes collaboration amongst staff. Finally, 100% either “somewhat agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they felt comfortable receiving feedback from their peers (See Table 4.17).

Table 4.17: School Culture and Climate

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The school culture and climate are supportive of supervisory practices.	-	4%	40%	56%
The school culture and climate is conducive to peer feedback systems.	4%	12%	36%	48%
The school culture and climate is one that promotes collaboration amongst staff.	-	8%	36%	56%
I feel comfortable giving feedback about instruction to their peers.	-	20%	40%	40%
I feel comfortable receiving feedback from my peers.	-	-	24%	76%
The school climate and culture promote a common set of expectations about student learning.	8%	8%	40%	44%

When comparing core and non-core teachers (See Table 4.18), there was once again the trend of core teachers agreeing less strongly than the non-core teachers on all items. An independent t-test showed that the difference between the non-core (M=3.69) and core teachers (M=2.83) in regards to the school culture and climate being conducive to peer feedback systems was statistically significant ($p = .012$). The difference between the two groups on the item that stated the school culture and climate promotes a common set of expectations about student learning fell just outside the confidence range to be statistically significant ($p=.51$).

Table 4.18: Core vs Non-Core Teachers Responses to School Culture and Climate Being Conducive to Peer Feedback Systems

	Sample Size	**Core Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Sample Size**	**Non - Core Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
The school culture and climate is supportive of supervisory practices.	12	3.33	.651	13	3.69	.480
The school culture and climate is conducive to peer feedback systems.	12	2.83	.937	13	3.69	.480
The school culture and climate is one that promotes collaboration amongst staff.	12	3.25	.754	13	3.69	.480
I feel comfortable giving feedback about instruction to their peers.	12	3.00	.739	13	3.38	.768
I feel comfortable receiving feedback from my peers.	12	3.58	.515	13	3.92	.277
The school climate and culture promotes a common set of expectations about student learning.	12	2.83	1.115	13	3.54	.519

The final comparison in this construct was between the two years of experience groups (See Table 4.19). These differences were not as drastic as the comparisons between these same groups in the other constructs. An independent t-test showed that the difference between the two groups in regards to agreement on how the school culture and climate promotes collaboration amongst staff was statistically significant ($p = .010$). Again, both groups strongly agreed that they felt comfortable receiving feedback from their peers ($M = 3.50, 3.53$).

Table 4.19: Comparison of Teaching Experience Responses in Regards to a School Culture and Climate that Promotes Collaboration Amongst Staff

	Sample Size	**Core Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Sample Size**	**Non - Core Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
The school culture and climate is supportive of supervisory practices.	8	3.50	.535	17	3.53	.624
The school culture and climate is conducive to peer feedback systems.	8	3.38	.744	17	3.24	.903
The school culture and climate is one that promotes collaboration amongst staff.	8	3.88	.354	17	3.29	.686
I feel comfortable giving feedback about instruction to their peers.	8	3.13	.835	17	3.24	.752
I feel comfortable receiving feedback from my peers.	8	3.88	.354	17	3.71	.470
The school climate and culture promotes a common set of expectations about student learning.	8	3.63	.744	17	3.00	.935

In response to research question number two, interviewees were asked questions about the impact of the school climate and culture on the implementation of peer supervisory practices. All of the interviewees agreed that that the school culture and climate was conducive to supporting peer supervisory practices. This is consistent with the survey results where that item had a mean score of M = 3.52. One participant stated:

> "I think that concept of school, culture and climate, especially around things where some vulnerability is required, is often morphing and often very personal. So, I'm not really

> sure. Not really sure what that means, except for that, the external and group feeling about the Bucksport culture is very positive. Teachers always talk about how lucky we are to be here."

Another participant had this to say about the school climate and culture:

> "Really, it's hard to describe. Since I've been here, my support is just a great place to be where people just really, really push hard for the kids above and beyond in every sense. I have one of my own kids is my last kid here and he receives special ed services. And really minimally now because of the support all through that he's gotten in this district. And it's just the energy that people bring. I think that's just, when you come here you're expected to work hard. You work out for the kids and you support each other. And that's just a very, it's just a culture. That's like I said, hard to put into words, but when you come here, you know that."

Finding #5: A Healthy Supervisory Climate Must be Supported with Intentional Structures

Participants in both the survey and the interviews agreed that a healthy climate that is supportive of supervisory practices needs to be supported by intentional structures. The interviewees went into depth about the importance and impact of existing structures on the schools' culture and climate. The responses given by participants about school culture and climate revealed three consistent themes: (1) existing practices have created a conducive climate and culture for giving and receiving peer feedback (see finding #4), (2) the school culture and climate helped support peer supervisory practices that became even more critical during remote/hybrid learning, (3) and the need to make peer supervisory practices more prevalent throughout the school.

In the survey, participants agreed that this positive school climate and culture is supportive of peer supervisory practices ($M = 3.52$). This also holds true for the participants that took part in the interviews. Participants identified existing practices that have helped create this positive climate and culture. All of the participants identified the existing PLC structure as the primary practice that promoted peer feedback. One participant said this about the PLC structure:

> “With the PLC's that we used to have (pre-pandemic) where all departments kind of got together and I would say 100% supportive in looking at other people's work and giving them that feedback of "This might be better if it was done this way." Or "That's a great lesson. I think I'm going to take this from that." So, I just think that the culture here is one of growth. And I think that in every aspect that I've been in, each one of these PLC's, it has been about what can I take from it or what can I give to it to help. And I think most people are responsive to that.”

Another participant described their PLC experience as:

> “We have PLCs and they always change a little bit....you get to work with people from other departments and share out a lesson plan and get feedback from different teachers’ perspectives and those are really nice to get the outside view because as a department, we all chit chat with each other anyway, but to have English look at what you're doing from an English perspective or social studies or math, it's nice to get outside eyes on that.”

All of the participants spoke positively about the effect of the PLC structure and how they were beneficial to assessment development and delivery of instruction. In addition to PLCs, other existing structures were mentioned that promoted collaboration and communication amongst staff such as the school’s leadership team and their grade level teams. These teams also have intentional time built into the schedule, but they do not focus specifically on delivery of instruction.

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was how the school culture and climate supported the use of peer supervisory practices during remote and hybrid learning. Participants spoke about the obstacles and challenges that remote and hybrid learning presented to them and how the support of their peers was essential to them being successful. Participants talked about how they basically had to learn how to teach all over again. One participant had this to say about the difficulty that they experienced and their reliance on their peers:

> “Yeah. Misery loves company. Yes. We went through it together. I mean, it's a trial by fire. And I think when you go through something like this, like that's never happened before with people who are also working as hard as they have ever worked and they’re 20 years in, you all feel like it's your first year again.”

The participant continued by saying:

> "So, having that sort of shared adversity, I think to any group of people, it's going to make you come together. I mean, you either come together or you fall apart. And I think we've really come together because we know that it takes all of us doing all of these things consistently to literally keep our kids here and safe and healthy, us included. So, I mean, you have to have a team sort of mentality to survive this year."

Interview participants talked about this shared adversity of remote learning and how they consistently turned to one another for support and answers. Teachers were presented with problems that they had never encountered, a number of these centered around technology and instructional strategies, and they were looking to their peers for possible solutions. Participants all indicated how much more difficult it was to talk to their peers because of increased teacher responsibilities and social distancing rules. Participants indicated that they had to intentionally find time and unique ways to connect with one another. One participant said this about the difficulty and the need for peer support:

> "We're always in and out of each other's rooms, helping each other figure things out. It's just that we are working completely as a team; nobody is functioning on their own here at all. Because there are so many darn things going wrong with things like technology. It's just unbelievable and so many little moving parts I guess."

Another participant described weekly lunches on Fridays where a number of teachers come together to just decompress from the week. That participant stated:

> "And so, someone will get up, whether it's me or someone else and go to my board and start like, 'Oh here, let me show you.' So, there sort of becomes this just organic component to giving feedback, helping and assisting. The other thing is through our email chain, people started in the school email like, 'Hey, did anybody else find that they couldn't get this to work or have this assessment?'"

Participants also mentioned that there were some missing components during the remote and hybrid learning period. The most glaring one was the removal of the PLC structure.

Participants explained that this structure was removed to allow teachers to have Friday afternoons to plan for their remote instruction. While they found that time valuable, they also missed the structure that PLCs provided for peer supervisory practices. One participant stated:

> "So, it's kind of ironic because in a year that we need to see each other kind of more than ever, now we're told, I think our union kind of argued for this, now you have this free time to work alone in your room. I'm like, 'Really? Because I will just online shop.' I need to kind of get back to that PLC time. I really need that. So, I'm looking forward to that next year when we can get back into actually meeting again."

This lack of time for PLCs falls into the last theme that emerged from the interviews, and from the survey data, that there needs to be more intentional time built into the schedule for teachers to implement peer supervisory practices. Participants expressed that PLCs are successful because they are built into the weekly schedule and if other practices want to see the same amount of success, then they should be built in as well. One participant said about the need for more time to implement peer supervisory practices:

> "I think that for me, I don't know if I'm ever satisfied. I think that the school doesn't provide as much time for that as it should."

Another participant offered this as a suggestion in regards to mentors that would provide peer feedback:

> "I think sometimes though, that if someone doesn't ask for it, it's not necessarily offered, when maybe it should be. And, I think that if you maybe provided a mentor for everybody, if everybody had a mentor, or coach or a buddy, I don't know, that might help facilitate some of that a little bit."

Two other participants said:

> "I would say again, we have a period dedicated to it every single day and that is why that works, but not everybody gets that. So certainly, someone who's a teacher of mainly juniors and seniors, or maybe teaches Spanish or gym or whatever, certainly gets more isolated than somebody that works in a freshman team. So, generating a schedule that would have more of that time for collaboration would be pretty useful. I would be on the lucky end of those things, but I know there are people that aren't."

> “I mean, short of saying at a faculty meeting for example, we're going to try this peer feedback thing, you're welcome to sign up and we'll pair you with somebody and you can ask that person to sit in your room for 20 minutes and watch for whatever you want them to watch for. Short of setting it up formally, which I think would be a good idea. I personally think that would be an amazing opportunity, because I think a lot of us would like to do it, but I'm not just going to up and decide on my own to go see some random teacher and say, ‘Hey, will you come sit in my room?’ The only time I do that is when I'm in trouble. But that doesn't mean that I'm not open to it and that I don't think others would be open to it.”

In summary, the five findings illustrated in this chapter are meaningful in an effort to answer the two research questions for this case study. In the next chapter, I will explain how these findings relate to existing literature surrounding peer supervisory practices. Additionally, I will show how they support the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2.

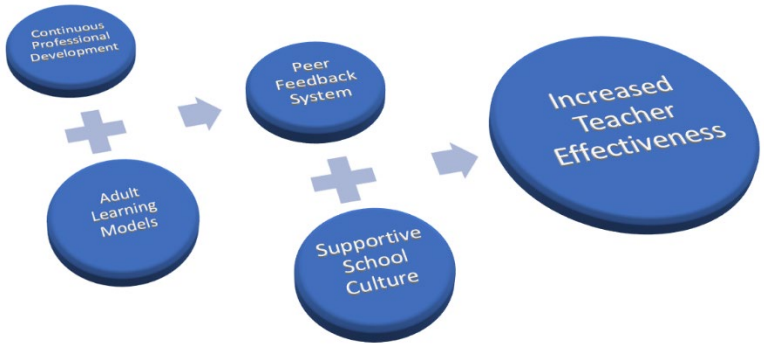
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to look at the impact of supervisory practices on teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy, both in remote and in-person settings. The study also analyzed the impact of school culture and climate on the implementation of supervisory practices. The first three findings were directly related to the first research question: (1) teachers see evaluation as a human resource tool, (2) peer supervisory practices positively impact perceived teacher effectiveness, and (3) supervisory practices were critical to the implementation of remote/ hybrid learning. The last two findings were directly related to the second research question: (4) a strong school culture and climate fosters supervisory practices and (5) a healthy supervisory climate must be supported with intentional structures.

In Chapter 2 the conceptual framework for this study was presented (see Figure 1). This conceptual framework was developed to show the relationship between the concepts of adult learning models, professional development, peer feedback systems, and school culture. This framework illustrated how these different components work together to improve teacher

Figure 5.1: Conceptual Framework



effectiveness. The findings from this study, existing literature, and this conceptual framework will be used to answer both of the research questions.

Research Question #1: How do peer feedback supervisory practices improve teacher effectiveness in both a remote and in-person classroom setting?

Finding #1: Teachers See Evaluation as a Human Resource Tool

In Maine, as in other states, legislation has forced schools to create evaluation structures with the intent of creating accountability structures for teachers. In Maine, LD 1858 and Chapter 180 legislated school districts to create Professional Evaluation and Professional Growth (PE/PG) plans (Doore et. al, 2013). Districts spent considerable time and resources forming these plans within their schools. These plans are almost entirely focused on evaluative measures and structures with school. The accountability measures built into these plans are focused on student achievement (Doore et. al, 2013, Mette et al., 2017; Mette et al., 2020) rather than focusing on improving instructional practices.

This case study found that the participants had a solid understanding of what the PE/PG process is within the district. Of the participants in the study, 80% were in some agreement that the process is used primarily as a human resource tool. Historically, evaluative practices have long been used throughout the United States as a tool to determine teacher retention (Gordon, 2020; Hazi, 2019). The participants in this study indicated that they understand the need and use of the evaluation system as a gatekeeping tool for teacher retention. While they understand the need for this type of tool to achieve that gatekeeping purpose, it is not a tool that is relied upon to improve teacher effectiveness. It is important to highlight that participants identify these practices as a formal evaluation tool and not one that is meant to improve teacher effectiveness.

This agreement was slightly more prevalent among teachers with 10 years or less experience. That same group of teachers were in slightly greater agreement that the evaluation process improved their own effectiveness as a teacher. This could be explained by the fact that the district's PE/PG plan requires newer teachers to have more frequent observations. They are required to have five observations per year for the first three years where more veteran teachers only need to have one. Newer teachers also have annual summative evaluations the first three years where more experienced teachers are on a three-year cycle. Because they are observed and evaluated more frequently, teachers with less experience see evaluation as both a human resource tool and as a process that helps their professional growth.

Through the interviews, participants were more consistent with their remarks about the evaluation process. All but one of the participants has taught for more than 10 years and collectively they agreed that the evaluation process was less effective than non-evaluative practices. Participants indicated that they did not find the infrequent formal observations as valuable as the informal conversations that they have with their peers and administration. Formal evaluative practices that are used for teacher accountability do not improve teacher effectiveness (Adams et al., 2018). This is a theme that emerged from the interviews that this formal feedback loop was not what participants relied upon to improve their instructional practices. Participants spoke to the time in between formal observations and the time it takes to receive feedback as an impediment to teacher growth.

Finding #2: Peer Supervisory Practices Positively Impact Perceived Teacher Effectiveness

Traditionally, supervisory practices have been defined as ones that are implemented with the intention of developing teachers and their instructional practices (Gordon, 2019; McGhee,

2020; Ingle & Lindle, 2019; McIntyre & McIntyre, 2020). Supervisory practices clearly have a positive impact on teachers perceived self-efficacy; however, the use of peer feedback systems can be used to a greater extent for educators to support one another and promote collegiality (Glanz & Hazi, 2019; Glickman, 2013; McGhee, 2020). These practices are non-evaluative in nature and come in a variety of forms such as peer observation, PLCs, and reflective practices (Ponticell et at., 2019). These practices have been well-researched, and there is evidence of their success (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969; Gordon, 2019). Even so, these practices are less prevalent in schools compared to their evaluative counterparts, even though we know that they are more effective in improving instructional practices (Glanz & Hazi, 2019; Glickman, 2013; McGhee, 2020).

This case study looked at the perceived impact of formative feedback structures within the school. From the analysis of the survey and interview data, participants agreed that the impact of supervisory practices is beneficial to their individual practices, promotes teacher growth, and increases teacher effectiveness. This finding aligns with the literature in regards to the impact of supervisory practices (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019; Ingle & Lindle, 2019). Of participants, 88% agreed to some extent that they are encouraged to give and receive feedback to their peers, and 80% agreed that their instructional capacity has improved because of this feedback. When given a choice of formal observations or four different supervisory practices, only 8% of participants chose formal observation as the practice that had the greatest impact on their teaching. Practices that are non-evaluative and rely on feedback being provided from colleague to colleague are more impactful on improving teachers' instructional practices (Glickman et al., 2013; Glanz & Hazi, 2019; Ponticell et al., 2019). As stated in my conceptual

framework, when these practices are implemented with the proper support and resources, it can result in increased teacher effectiveness.

Because of the subjects they teach, teachers of core subjects (math, English, science, and social studies) have inherently added stress due to accountability measures in regards to student achievement. This focus on accountability is entrenched in evaluative practices (Doore et al. 2013; Mette et al., 2020). Also, because of legislated accountability measures, core teachers, specifically the survey, were less agreeable than non-core (art, music, physical education, technology, special education, etc.) teachers in regards to the impact of supervisory practices, due in part to these perceived pressures to perform. In the survey, core teachers were in much less agreement that supervisory practices improved their effectiveness as a teacher. They were also in less agreement that peer feedback is given and received consistently, and that there was sufficient time provided for these supervisory practices to be implemented. In the interviews, core teachers were more supportive of the impact of supervisory practices than they indicated in the survey. All of the participants in the interviews indicated that supervisory practices were impactful, but that there was not enough time for them to be implemented effectively. This lack of time was a consistent theme in regards to the implementation of supervisory practices. Teachers understand the importance of peer feedback, but there are not intentional opportunities provided for this collaboration to happen consistently within schools. These opportunities need to be made available to educators so that they can communicate about their practices (Brock et al., 2021).

Identified in the conceptual framework is the need for professional development and the awareness and understanding of adult learning to be in place to implement peer feedback systems. The data collected in this study suggests that different subsets of teachers within the

school view the impact of these supervisory practices differently. Participants clearly identified the school climate and culture as a strength, and one that promotes collegiality and support for one another. This culture needs to be continuously supported by leaders so that this type of collegiality remains prevalent throughout the school (Glickman, 2013). Consistent with the work of Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2018), it is essential for educational leaders within a building to understand the type of learners that they have on their staff in order to address their individual needs. Understanding the different needs of the groups within a building (i.e. core versus non-core teachers or experienced versus inexperienced teachers) will allow administrators to differentiate the professional development that needs to be provided to make these practices successful.

Finding #3: Supervisory Practices Were Critical to the Implementation of Remote/Hybrid Learning

COVID-19 has presented schools with numerous challenges when it comes to delivering instruction to students. Many of these obstacles revolve around the remote/hybrid learning models employed by schools. In these models, students learned through online platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom. Often, teachers have been asked to teach to both remote and in-person students synchronously. This new way of teaching has turned even our veteran teachers into first-year teachers in regards to the learning curve that they have had to go through and the support that they need. Teachers have had and will continue to rely on the support of their peers and supervisory practices in order to navigate this new realm of teaching (Mette, 2020).

Out of necessity, teachers became more reliant on peer feedback in order to navigate remote/hybrid learning. This case study produced data that showed that teachers within this school relied more heavily on peer supervisory practices in response to remote and hybrid

learning. Of the participants, 76% agreed to some extent that these practices were critical in their delivery of instruction in the remote/hybrid environment. It was noticeable that non-core teachers were in much more agreement about their reliance on peer supervisory practices compared to core teachers. One could infer that since the non-core teachers are primarily singletons, they are the only teachers in their department. For example, there is only one music teacher, one art teacher, one industrial arts teacher, etc. Not having another counterpart in their department to share ideas with could have made them more reliant on school-wide feedback and other types of supervisory practices.

Peer feedback systems provide educators a vessel to collaborate and learn from one another (McGhee, 2020; Glickman, 2013; Glanz & Hazi, 2019). Throughout this study, a common theme in regards to teaching during a pandemic was how there were so many unknowns in regards to instructional delivery, technology, and assessment construction. Participants commented on how overwhelming these unknowns were at times and described how they relied on practices such as school-wide email threads that were topic specific to help them out. A teacher would send out a question via email, and there would be a number of responses and follow-up questions. These emails came from both less-experienced and more veteran teachers as this situation was new to all of them. This type of vulnerability shown by teachers to share problems that they have in an attempt to find solutions allows for collaboration that leads to improved instruction (Hamilton, 2013; Kohut et al., 2007). The culture of the school supported this type of practice to be successful, and as stated in the conceptual framework, when you pair this supportive culture with peer supervisory practices it leads to more effective instruction.

One of the cornerstones of my conceptual framework is the importance of professional development in the implementation of supervisory practices. Continuous professional

development that is relevant and geared towards teacher improvement is essential (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2019). Participants in this study indicated that professional development provided during this time could have been enhanced to make the transition to remote and hybrid learning easier. There was also general agreement that the removal of PLC time during the week was detrimental in some ways. Although teachers were happy to have extra planning time, they felt there was a missed opportunity to capitalize on intentional time dedicated to having teachers talk about teaching and learning, especially since it had changed so drastically.

In reviewing the data used to formulate this finding, peer supervisory practices were beneficial to staff during this time of need. This finding is consistent with the emerging literature about instruction during the pandemic (Brock et al., 2021; Mette, 2020). Teachers were able to see the direct benefit because it was addressing a gap in their practice that they had during the remote/hybrid instruction. Schools need to provide opportunities for these types of practices to be supported with time and intentional structures. When schools move beyond their current realities, and return to a more normal school structure, there is reason to believe that these supervisory practices will remain in place and be accepted by staff because of their success during this time. For that to happen, consideration needs to be given by administration as to what conditions should be put in place so that they can be implemented with fidelity.

Research Question #2: How do building leaders cultivate a culture amongst staff that is supportive of peer supervisory practices?

Finding #4: A Strong School Culture and Climate Fosters Supervisory Practices

For the implementation of supervisory practices to be successful, there needs to be a school culture and climate that both cultivates and supports these practices. There needs to be a

shared understanding of what successful teaching and learning is within the school (Anderson & Pounder, 2019). A school culture that is conducive to supervisory practices is one where the staff within the school have a collective responsibility for learning (Anderson & Pounder, 2019; Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018; Glickman, 2013).

A strong theme emerged from this study where participants conveyed how they felt that there is a supportive school climate and culture of supervisory practices. This construct produced the highest overall mean on the entire survey. All participants agreed that they feel comfortable giving and receiving feedback and that they were encouraged to do so. Participants in the interviews consistently commented on the culture and climate being an overall strength of the school. This is significant because a strong school climate and culture pave the way for supervisory practices to be implemented with fidelity (Anderson & Pounder, 2019; Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018; Glickman, 2013). When educators feel comfortable within the school and trust the people that they work with, it allows for open dialogue and collaboration that can be used to improve professional growth (Anderson & Pounder, 2019; Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018).

School leaders can shape a positive school climate and culture by ensuring that collaboration amongst staff is both encouraged and practiced through intentional structures (Anderson & Pounder, 2019; Glickman, 2013). The data from this study reflects this notion. There was a common thread that these supervisory practices cannot be implemented effectively without a supportive climate. This is a major component in my conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. This framework and literature support the idea that peer feedback systems need to be paired with a healthy school culture and climate in order to create the environment where you increase teacher effectiveness (Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018; Glickman, 2013). It

does appear that this is a two-way street. By that I mean the implementation of peer supervisory practices can have a positive effect on the school culture and climate as well. These practices promote collaboration and encourage staff to work with one another towards the common goal of improving instruction. At the same time, an existing positive school culture and climate allows these practices to be implemented with fidelity (Anderson & Pounder, 2019). The partnership of these two components is critical in attaining the ultimate goal of improving teacher effectiveness.

Finding #5: A Healthy Supervisory Climate Must be Supported with Intentional Structures

The final finding speaks to how a healthy supervisory climate can be fostered and supported. The findings show that existing practices have strengthened the school culture and climate. Participants clearly identified PLCs as one of these structures. PLCs provide teachers the opportunity to develop and discuss a common understanding of what effective teaching and learning is within a school (DuFour & Mattos, 2012). A reason why this structure has been so critical in developing and maintaining a healthy supervisory climate is due to the intentionality of the structure. The PLCs within the school have dedicated time set aside weekly for teachers to work together with specific tasks. There are weekly agendas that are set by the school's leadership team that consists of teachers and administration. The agendas have teachers working together, talking about instructional practices and assessment design. This creates an intentional feedback loop for teachers on a weekly basis. There was professional development given to all staff before PLCs were implemented so that there was a common understanding of what they were and how they should operate. This has been identified as a key element in the successful implementation of PLCs (DuFour & Mattos, 2012).

Participants also alluded to the positive impact of grade level teams that meet twice a week. These teams have common planning time built into their schedule so that they can discuss

student progress. While not designed to specifically tackle the issues of instruction, this practice does contribute to the healthy supervisory climate because it creates time for teachers to communicate with one another. By providing these opportunities for interaction, grade level teaming has created a culture where the teachers' classrooms have become open and vulnerable because they are sharing with one another the instructional and assessment strategies that they are using. This openness allows for teachers to be more comfortable with giving and receiving feedback to their peers.

To speak directly to research question two as to how building leaders cultivate a school culture that is supportive of peer supervisory practices, it is quite clear that these leaders need to be intentional about providing time for these practices to happen (Adams et al., 2018; Ponticell et al.; Zimpher & Neidl, 2019). Building leaders cannot realistically expect that these practices will happen organically and within a normal schedule. Intentional structures and dedicated time need to be built into the school day for these practices to happen with fidelity. Along with these structures, professional development should be provided so that there is a common understanding of the purpose and what the desired outcomes are. When these practices are supported by time and professional development, there is a greater buy in from staff. It appears that the residual payoff is that staff see the direct benefit from peer feedback, and this benefit helps create a culture where they begin to seek this feedback out on their own outside of the built-in structures.

Conclusion

This study was designed to look at the impact of peer supervisory practices within a rural school. The findings from this study show that there is a need for these practices to be present within a school so that teachers can improve their own self-efficacy. Literature has long said that

these practices are the most effective way to improve instruction, and the findings follow suit. School leaders need to provide intentional time for the implementation of these practices and provide professional development so that they can be implemented with fidelity. COVID-19 leveled the playing field in regards to the support that teachers needed from one another. Regardless of experience, all teachers needed to rely on peer feedback to navigate the new educational environment. A strong school culture and climate can create a foundation for these practices to be successful.

In the next chapter I will make recommendations for practice, policy, and theory in regards to supervisory practices. I will give specific recommendations that if implemented in unison could create a situation where peer feedback is given frequently and successfully within schools. This will include recommendations for future studies that should be conducted to further explore the impact of these practices within schools.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS

Through this case study of a rural school in Maine, and through a review of the literature, there is evidence that supervisory practices are more effective than evaluative practices in regards to improving instructional practices and positively impacting teachers' perceptions of their own effectiveness (Glickman et al., 2013; Glanz & Hazi, 2019; Mette et al. 2020; Zepeda & Ponitcell, 2019). Participants saw a need for formal evaluations but also a greater need for the implementation of peer supervisory practices. They also identified the need for intentional time and support to be dedicated to such practices. The study showed evidence that a strong school climate and culture can help support the implementation of these practices. This chapter will present recommendations for practice, policy, and research. The application of these recommendations made from the findings of this date can help improve the quality of instruction delivered in schools.

Implications for Practice

One of the direct benefits of doing a participant action research case study is that the findings clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement within the school being studied, but these findings can also be helpful for other practitioner-scholars looking to improve instructional feedback structures in their school buildings. This case study elicited feedback from a large percentage of the staff from all content areas and a variety of years of experience. While the findings from this study may not be generalizable for all schools, there are specific implications and action steps for the school being studied which others could look to use within their own school.

Participants in the study identified the formal evaluation process used within the district as one that has an essential role as a human resource tool for teacher retention. This process should be used with the very specific intention of determining teacher retention and not as a tool that is used with the primary intent of improving teacher growth. Having a common understanding within the district of the role of these evaluative practices is essential so that administrators and teachers are clear as to the purpose of these practices when they are being implemented. Certainly, there are some ancillary benefits to evaluative practices, and teachers can show some growth from their implementation, but they should not be seen as the instrument necessary for teachers to make large gains in their instructional capacity. Explicit conversations between teachers and administrators about the differences between evaluative and supervisory practices, and their desired outcomes, is a necessity. There cannot be an assumption that all educators work with a common understanding of the definition of these two types of practices, or that there is a common understanding of their purposes. Intentional conversations can help define what these practices look like within the school and what the desired outcomes are. Ultimately, administrators need a method to determine whether or not a teacher is effective enough as an educator to continue to be employed. This should not be hidden within a process that uses student achievement as an accountability measure, nor should it be presented as one that has a primary purpose of improving teacher effectiveness.

Teachers do see a direct benefit of the use of non-evaluative, formative practices in regards to their own self-efficacy. Both research and the findings from this study clearly indicate that supervisory practices are critical to promoting teacher growth and improving instructional practices (Gordon, 2019; Hazi, 2019; Kohut et al., 2007; Mcintyre & Mcintyre, 2020; Mette et al., 2017; Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019). However, administrators cannot assume that these practices

are going to happen organically and without support. For these practices to be implemented consistently and with fidelity, there needs to be intentional time and support given to them. This means that administrators need to look at their own buildings and identify where these formative feedback systems can be intentionally incorporated into everyday practice. This may mean enhancing existing structures or creating new ones. Time needs to be created for teachers to intentionally interact with one another with the sole purpose of providing feedback to one another.

Also, it should not be assumed that teachers are capable of giving and receiving feedback effectively without ongoing support and training. Targeted professional development needs to be provided so that teachers can implement supervisory practices in a way that promotes professional growth. Administrators need to have a firm understanding of the type of adult learners within the organization and what those learners need to be successful (Drago Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017). With this understanding, appropriate professional development can be provided, and the feedback structures within the school can be tailored to meet the needs of the staff. By creating these intentional and supported structures, administrators provide a system where teachers do not feel another thing has been added to their already overburdened schedule.

In addition to time and professional development to support supervisory practices, building leaders also need to pay attention to the school climate and culture, specifically, creating one that values the idea of developing reflective stances among all educators -- teachers and administrators. The findings from this study clearly pointed out that a strong positive school culture and climate supports the implementation of peer supervisory practices. This positive culture and climate promotes collaboration amongst staff as well as a common understanding of what effective teaching and learning looks like within the school (Anderson & Pounder, 2019). It

is also a two-way street in the sense that intentional structures that promote collaboration, such as PLCs, help foster a healthy school culture and climate. A school culture that allows for teachers to show their vulnerability and ask for help from one another will increase teacher effectiveness.

Implications for Policy

In Maine, policies such as LD 1858 and Chapter 180 have required school districts to create Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PE/PG) committees so that they could create district evaluation plans (Doore et al., 2013). Committees were forced to create plans that contained accountability measures, driven by administrators, that focus on student achievement (Mette et al., 2017; Mette et al., 2020). While the intent of the legislation is not only to evaluate performance, but also promote professional growth of teachers, it falls short in the latter of those two goals. Both research and this study suggest that Maine policy should emphasize the use of supervisory practices to achieve the goal of professional growth of teachers. To inform these policies, the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) and the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee need to identify where this is happening successfully. In turn, they can highlight the success these districts and schools are having implementing supervisory practices so that others can learn from their successes.

Additionally, there is a lack of emphasis and resources dedicated to the supervisory practices that are shown to be more effective in improving the effectiveness of teachers. Policy needs to provide support for schools to implement these practices. While Chapter 180 does provide some support with the additions of practices, such as peer mentoring, this alone is not adequate to meet its desired goal of teacher growth. It is not sufficient to simply put these formative practices into policy. They need to be supported with adequate resources, both fiscally and by providing time for them to happen. The Maine Department of Education needs to support

school districts by providing training that will help them with the implementation of supervisory practices, similar to what they have provided for evaluative practices over the last several years. There needs to be personnel from the MDOE who will work with school leaders so that they can develop practices and structures within their buildings to help build instructional growth amongst their staff.

Also, building leaders need to be adequately trained and supported to implement supervisory practices within their buildings. This support needs to come from a number of different levels. School districts need to train their building administrators not only on how to conduct performance evaluation, but also how to cultivate a climate that allows these peer supervisory practices to thrive. Professional development is continuously provided to implement evaluative systems; the same professional development needs to be given for their supervisory counterparts.

Administrators need the appropriate training and resources to ensure that these practices can be implemented within their schools with fidelity. They need to be allowed to create intentional time within the school day for teachers to give and receive feedback to one another. This training and professional development needs to be funded at the state level. Monies need to be given to districts to be specifically used for professional development geared towards the improvement of instructional practices. If the MDOE does highlight a few school districts who have been successful implementing supervisory practices, as suggested above, then they can use them as model districts and leverage them to help other districts within the state. When this type of support for school districts happens, we will begin to see an increase in teacher effectiveness.

This support for building leaders is not limited to school districts. It needs to extend to educational leadership programs as well. Aspiring educational leaders need to be well-versed in

the difference between evaluative and formative practices. Educational leadership programs need to develop future administrators who understand the distinct functions of these types of practices. Specifically, they need to provide these educational leaders with the knowledge of how to leverage supervisory practices within their schools so that they can improve the instructional practices of their teachers. In Maine, there is a need for a policy that requires accredited educational leadership preparation programs to incorporate coursework specifically geared towards supervision. This coursework will create a foundation for all administrators who go through a Maine program to implement these practices within the schools that they will eventually lead.

Implications for Research

This case study produced five findings relative to the two research questions that it was looking to answer. These findings were consistent with literature and showed the value of peer supervisory practices. One of the limitations to this research was the size of the study. With a small number of participants, it was difficult to get numerous points of statistically significant data. A similar study, across several schools and with a larger number of participants, could produce findings that are more generalizable. A larger study could not only validate the findings from this study, but it also could explore with more depth the differences in perceptions of core and non-core teachers, as well as between more and less experienced educators. This study found some significant differences, and a larger study could elaborate on the different types of supports each of these subgroups need. The larger study could further explore the differing support needs between core and non-core teachers, as well as between newer and more experienced teachers. Also, this larger study could look more specifically at what supervisory practices are successful

and why. The findings from a larger study could go a long way to inform the policy recommendations made in the prior section.

In this study, one of the important components was the use of a participant action researcher. This study was constructed in a way where the researcher was able to protect the participants, even as their direct supervisor. It is important for scholarly practitioners to be able to conduct this type of research in order to produce data that can benefit the various stakeholders within their organizations. By providing safeguards for the participants, researchers can produce honest data that can result in powerful findings. This study produced a very high participation rate from the survey, which means the data collected truly did represent the vast majority of teaching staff within the school. By partnering with another researcher for the interviews, participants were able to give honest feedback about the school and the use of supervisory practices. This model can be used by other scholarly practitioners not only for future research, but also for program evaluation within a school. Building leaders can partner with their counterparts in other schools so that they can get honest and reliable feedback about the programs within their school and make any necessary adjustments.

In addition to a replication of this study with multiple schools, there is a need to do a different study in regards to supervisory practices within the state of Maine. The Maine Department of Education should look to partner with a number of pilot districts that are implementing supervisory practices within their schools. This study should look to identify the successful implementation of supervisory practices and the impact that they are having on teachers' instructional practices. This study should look to highlight what practices are being implemented, what supports and structures are present, and how they were integrated into the school. In addition to this, there also needs to be an understanding of what resources are

necessary for the implementation of these practices. The results from this study could then be used to inform policy and provide other districts with a framework to implement within their own schools. Additionally, the MDOE could look at the resources necessary to implement these successful supervisory practices and make necessary fiscal adjustments so that all school districts are able to adopt the suggested framework. As is evident from the findings of this study, as well as the implications for practice detailed at the beginning of this chapter, the data from these types of studies provide opportunities for growth and change within an organization. Schools seeking to make substantial change should do so with data that supports this change. Engaging the decision makers within a district with findings from a study such as this will allow them to make informed decisions and provide them with some confidence of their potential success. This type of study also provides a voice to the teachers within the building. Encouraging teachers to buy into substantive change is much more plausible when it is in direct response to the data gathered from the staff.

Also, there is a need for an increase in literature that focuses on the field of supervision. Additional, current literature would help support practitioners in the field as they look to implement supervisory practices within their schools. One spot that this is happening is in the *Journal of Educational Supervision* (JES). Their website states that "JES offers a wide range of opportunities for academics and practitioners to add to the literature on supervision that addresses the nexus of theory and practice." Journals such as JES provide scholarly practitioners an avenue to access literature that can both inform and support their work. Future submissions to such journals should continue to look at the need for change in both federal and state policy in regards to evaluation and supervision. Additionally, future research should look at the wellness of both teachers and administrators, due to the effects of providing an education to students

during a pandemic, and how supervisory practices can support them. It is my hope that I can use the results from my study and contribute to the literature through this venue.

Conclusion

As a building administrator for the past eight years I have struggled with my obligation to formally evaluate my teaching staff and simultaneously trying to use this as the same tool to promote teacher growth. During this time, I have seen no direct correlation between the time and effort that I have committed to this process and the instructional growth of my teaching staff. While the evaluative process that my district uses has been useful as a human resource tool, it is not promoting the professional growth that I desire. This study was important to me as the building administrator because I wanted to know how my teaching staff perceives the impact of both evaluative and supervisory practices on their instructional performance. Also, conducting this study within my school allowed me to give back to the organization that has allowed me to pursue my own professional and educational goals.

The findings from this study reaffirmed my personal beliefs about the impact of supervisory practices. Throughout my tenure as both a teacher and administrator, I have grown as an educator because of the great feedback that I have received from my peers over time. We need to continue to make a push, both at the policy and practitioner level, to make the use of these supervisory practices more prevalent. With financial support, professional development, and changes to educational leadership training programs, there is a pathway to make this prevalence possible. As districts and administrators look to reinvent their schools' post-pandemic, they should be doing so with a mindset of allowing teachers to grow and learn from one another.

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APPENDIX A: Staff Survey

Demographics

How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?

What department do you teach in?

Evaluation and PE/PG System (Likert Scale 1-4)

Are you familiar with the district's current evaluation system?

I agree that the evaluation system in my district improves teacher effectiveness.

In my experience the evaluation process has improved my instructional capacity.

In my experience the evaluation process has improved my effectiveness as a teacher.

In my experience the evaluation process is used as a professional growth tool.

In my experience the evaluation process is used as a human resource tool (teacher retention).

Supervisory Practices and the Impact on Teacher Effectiveness (Same Likert Scale as above)

The use of supervisory practices is prevalent within the school.

In my experience, supervisory practices have improved my instructional capacity.

In my experience, supervisory practices have improved my effectiveness as a teacher.

There is time provided for the implementation of supervisory practices.

Staff are encouraged to give and receive feedback about instruction from one another.

Peer feedback is given and received consistently throughout the school.

Which of the following practices has the greatest impact on your teaching? (Multiple Choice)

- Peer observation
- Reflective conversations
- Formal observation
- Informal observation
- Casual walkthroughs with short follow up conversation

What is the most common way that you receive feedback from your colleagues? (Short answer)

Please describe the supervisory practices that are most beneficial to you as an educator. (Short answer)

Supervisory Practices and their Impact on Remote/Hybrid Learning (Same Likert Scale as above)

The amount of support needed from my peers has increased due to remote/hybrid learning.

Peer feedback systems were available to staff in preparation for and delivering remote/hybrid learning.

Professional development was adequately provided in preparation for and delivering remote/hybrid learning.

What was the most valuable supervisory practice in preparing and delivering remote/hybrid learning? Why was it the most valuable? (Short Answer)

School Culture and Climate (Same Likert Scale as above)

The school culture and climate is supportive of supervisory practices.

The school culture and climate is conducive to peer feedback systems.

The school culture and climate is one that promotes collaborations amongst staff.

I feel comfortable giving feedback about instruction to my peers.

I feel comfortable receiving feedback from my peers.

The school climate and culture promote a common set of expectations about student learning.

APPENDIX B: Semi-Structured Teacher Interview Questions

1. Describe your experience with different evaluation systems during your time as an educator.
2. Describe your experience with different supervisory practices (peer observations, reflections, PLCs, etc.) during your time as an educator.
3. Prior to COVID-19, describe the impact that these supervisory practices had on improving your classroom instruction.
4. Describe how you have implemented feedback from a colleague to improve your own instruction.
5. Describe the different ways that you give or receive peer feedback.
6. How have supervisory practices impacted your teaching in a hybrid/remote learning environment?
7. How does the school encourage or provide time for these practices to happen?
8. In what ways is the school climate and culture supportive of peer feedback systems?
9. How could the school climate and culture be more supportive of peer feedback systems?

APPENDIX C: Structural Coding from Semi-Structured Interviews

- Climate and Culture
    - Additional Support
    - Relationships
        - Staff to Staff
        - Staff to Students

- Evaluation (Formal)
    - Non-BHS Evaluation Systems

- Supervisory Practices
    - BARR
    - Experience
    - Leadership Team
    - Pandemic Related
    - Peer to Peer Feedback Systems
        - Assessment
        - Instruction
    - PLCs

- Professional Development

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Josh Tripp was born in Frankfort, Maine on February 12, 1980. Tripp was raised in Frankfort and graduated from Searsport District High School in 1998. He attended the University of Maine and graduated in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with a concentration in mathematics. After receiving his degree, Tripp was hired as a math teacher at Bucksport High School, where he taught for 12 years. While teaching, he received his master's degree in Educational Leadership at the University of Maine. Upon completion of his graduate degree, Tripp was hired as the principal at Bucksport Middle School. He served as the principal for the middle school for three years before transferring to the principal's position at Bucksport High School. Josh Tripp is a candidate for the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Maine in May 2022.